



# Open Spaces Strategy Review

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## Executive Summary

1. The Environment Partnership (TEP) Limited was commissioned by Harborough District Council (hereby referred to as 'the Council') in May 2025 to produce an Open Spaces Strategy (OSS) for Harborough District (hereby referred to as the 'District').

### Introduction

2. Open space is important due to its valuable contribution to quality of life, health and the economy. Open spaces provide green infrastructure (GI) benefits such as mitigating climate change, flood alleviation and ecosystem services. The provision of these facilities in our cities, towns and villages is of high importance for a sustainable future and is embedded in national planning policy.
3. This Strategy provides robust and up-to-date information concerning the demand and use of open space throughout the District irrespective of ownership up to the Local Plan end date of 2041. The Strategy comprises the following structure:
  - Define the context, purpose and scope of the Strategy (Chapter 1.0);
  - Review of national and local policy (Chapter 2.0);
  - Methodology (Chapter 3.0);
  - Identify local needs (Chapter 4.0);
  - Auditing local provision (Chapter 5.0);
  - Setting local standards (Chapter 6.0);
  - Applying the standards (Chapter 7.0);
  - Policy approach (Chapter 8.0); and
  - Provide recommendations and strategy based on the findings of the Open Spaces Strategy (Chapter 9.0).
4. This Strategy aims to maintain the current level of open space as the population grows, and ensure that all existing and new open spaces are designed, delivered, and managed in accordance with the established quality standards.

### Methodology

5. This Strategy has been produced in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and Local Green Space which have replaced PPG Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (2002) and its Companion Guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to PPG 17 (2002) Outdoor sports facilities are not included in this review, as these are considered as part of the Harborough Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) (2024).

6. Whilst the Companion Guide to PPG17 has been superseded, it is acknowledged that the principles and approach within the guidance have not been replaced, and it is still relevant to apply the methodology to assess needs for open space provision. This strategy acknowledges recent industry publications including the Natural England GI Framework, and the revised Fields in Trust (FiT) Creating great spaces for all document.
7. Information relating to Greenways has been produced based on the Built Sports Facility Strategy (BSFS) to ensure consistency between the two Strategies, and to ensure they complement one and other.

### Open Space Provision as of 2025

8. The current open space provision in the District is shown in the table below. 737 sites are designated as open space, with a total area of 1,142.59 hectares (ha). Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) covers 884.50 ha and accounts for the majority of the District's open space provision. The total open space within the District equates to 11.72 ha per 1,000 population.

Open Space Typology	Current Provision (ha)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	26.36
Amenity Greenspace	147.67
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	43.45
Civic Spaces	1.05
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	884.50
Parks and Gardens	29.21
Provision for Children and Young People	10.35
<b>Total (rounded to two decimal place)</b>	<b>1,142.59</b>
Greenways	1,108km

### Quantity Assessment and Standards

9. The proposed quantity standards are shown in the following table. Civic Spaces have no quantity standard because there is no existing Harborough or relevant National Benchmark standard (Fields in Trust (FiT) Standards: Creating great spaces for all, 2024).

Open Space Typology	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)	Existing 2022 Provision (ha/1,000)	Future 2041 Provision (ha/1,000)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	0.35	0.27	0.21
Amenity Greenspace	0.9	1.52	1.18
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	0.35	0.45	0.35
Civic Spaces	No Standard	0.01	0.01

Open Space Typology	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)	Existing 2022 Provision (ha/1,000)	Future 2041 Provision (ha/1,000)
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	8.5	9.08	7.08
Parks and Gardens	0.8	0.30	0.23
Provision for Children and Young People	0.25	0.11	0.08
Total (rounded to two decimal places)	11.15	11.72	9.14
Greenways	1.3 (3.30km per 1,000 population)	11.37	8.87

10. As of 2022 the population for the District was 97,453. Using the proposed standard, there is a current deficiency in provision of Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards (-0.08 ha per 1,000 population), Parks and Gardens (-0.50 ha per 1,000 population) and Provision for Children and Young People (-0.14 ha per 1,000 population). There is a current surplus in Amenity Greenspace (0.62 ha per 1,000 population), Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds (0.10 ha per 1,000 population) and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) (0.58 ha per 1,000 population).

11. This Strategy aims to ensure that the quantity, quality, and accessibility of open spaces are preserved as the population grows, while ensuring adequate stewardship all existing and new open spaces. Harborough District's population is projected to reach 124,958 by 2041. When compared to the current provision of open space, this increase in population would result in a quantitative deficiency in Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards (-0.14 ha per 1,000 population), Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) (-1.42 ha per 1,000 population), Parks and Gardens (-0.57 ha per 1,000 population) and Provision for Children and Young People (-0.17 ha per 1,000 population). Cemeteries and Churchyards is at a balance (0.00ha per 1,000 population). Future provision calculations do not account for any new open spaces which may come forward up to 2041. Should new open spaces be implemented, the ha per 1,000 population for the specific typology would increase.

12. The table below shows the shortfall, based on 2041 population projections.

Open Space Typology	2022 Surplus/ Deficiency (ha per 1,000)	2041 Surplus/ Deficiency (ha per 1,000)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	-0.08	-0.14
Amenity Greenspace	0.62	0.28
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	0.10	0.00
Civic Spaces	No standard	No standard

Open Space Typology	2022 Surplus/ Deficiency (ha per 1,000)	2041 Surplus/ Deficiency (ha per 1,000)
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	0.58	-1.42
Parks and Gardens	-0.50	-0.57
Provision for Children and Young People	-0.14	-0.17
Greenways	8.07 km/1,000 population	5.57 k,/1,000 population

### Quality and Value Audit

13. Of the 737 open spaces in the District, 328 sites were audited for Quality and Value. The following open space types were not included in the site audits, for the reasons set out below:

- Sites smaller than 0.2 ha with exception of Provision for Children and Young people. Smaller sites have limited usage compared to larger sites and limited multi-functionality;
- Greenways - these are considered separately in the BSFS; and
- Outdoor Sports Facilities - these are considered separately in the PPS.

14. The proposed quality standard is based on the Green Flag Award (GFA) National Benchmark:

- Excellent - 90% to 100%
- Very Good - 80% to 89%
- Good - 70% to 79%
- Fair - 50% to 69%
- Poor - 0% to 49%

15. The following table shows the current Quality scores for the 328 audited sites.

Quality Score Against GFA Criteria	Number of Sites	% of Audit
Excellent	24	7.79%
Very Good	86	27.92%
Good	115	37.34%
Fair	70	22.73%
Poor	13	4.22%

16. The recommended Quality standard is for all sites other than those excluded for reasons previously stated (e.g. smaller than 0.2ha), to achieve a Good Quality Score (70% or above, using the GFA benchmark). All sites audited are able to apply for a GFA if they wished to do so however some typologies such as Allotments,

Community Gardens and Orchards and Provision for Children and Young People are most likely to be entered for an Award as part of a wider open space, such as an Amenity Greenspace, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) or Parks and Garden.

17. Amenity Greenspace, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) and Parks and Gardens should aim for the >70% quality score. Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards and Provision for Children and Young People should use the scoring criteria to improve the open space quality where possible.
18. The value standard is based on 'Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17' and was assessed by TEP's experienced Green Flag Award judges. This allows a balanced assessment of each site. The value standard is:
  - High - 60 to 100%
  - Medium - 40 to 59%
  - Low - 0 to 39%
19. The table below shows the current value of the 328 sites audited.

Value score	Number of Sites	% of Audit
High	34	11.04%
Medium	94	30.52%
Low	180	58.44%

20. The proposed value standard is that all sites other than those excluded for reasons previously stated (e.g. smaller than 0.2ha), obtain a Value Score of 60% or above, classed as "High Value".

#### Accessibility Audit and Proposed Standards

21. Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards, Amenity Greenspace, Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands), Parks and Gardens and Provision for Children and Young People have been assigned an accessibility standard. There is no accessibility standard assigned for Civic Spaces as there is no accessibility National Benchmark (FiT Standards: Creating great spaces for all, 2024) for this typology.
22. The proposed accessibility standards are applied as isochrone buffers, reflecting real-world barriers to accessing open spaces. This has been converted into walking time to show approximately how long it should to walk to the open space. The accessibility standards are shown in the table below.

Open Space Typology	Accessibility Standard
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	2km (5 mins drive/bus)
Amenity Greenspace	800m (10 mins walk)
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	2km (5 mins drive/bus)
Civic Spaces	No Standard
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	720m (10 mins walk)
Parks and Gardens	4km (10 mins drive/bus)
Provision for Children and Young People	400m-800m (5 - 10 mins walk)
Greenways	800m (less than 1 min drive)

23. GIS Plan G11133.009.1-6 show the proposed accessibility standards for each open space typology. Accessibility to open space is generally higher in the Middle sub-area. Full analysis of accessibility to open space by typology is provided in Chapter 5.0.
24. Accessibility maps included within this Strategy show 'on the ground' modelling which uses the nearest junction to open space sites. This modelling type highlights physical barriers to the accessibility e.g. watercourses or motorways.

#### Recommendations

25. Recommendations have been made in Chapter 9.0.
26. The recommendations include:
  - Adopt the recommended standards (Chapter 7.0);
  - Enforce the recommended standards in new development;
  - Production of an Open Space Guidance Document to outline open space standards, commuted sum payments and an open space adoption hierarchy;
  - Enforce planning conditions in new development to ensure long-term management of open spaces is covered;
  - Adopt an open space adoption hierarchy;
  - Protect existing open spaces; and
  - Increase the multi-functionality open spaces where possible, including increasing green travel routes, improving aesthetic, increasing habitat for wildlife and the cultural offering.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Environment Partnership (TEP) Limited was commissioned by Harborough District Council (hereby referred to as 'the Council') in May 2025, to produce an Open Spaces Strategy (OSS) for Harborough District (hereby referred to as the 'District').

### Context

- 1.2 Open space is important due to its valuable contribution to quality of life, health and the economy. Furthermore, open spaces provide green infrastructure (GI) benefits such as mitigating climate change, flood alleviation and ecosystem services. The provision of these facilities in our cities, towns and villages is of high importance to a sustainable future and is embedded in national planning policy.

- 1.3 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated in February 2025, recognises the opportunities that appropriately located and well-designed open spaces can provide. Paragraph 103 states:

*Access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.*

- 1.4 Open space provision crosses many other aspects of the NPPF including:
- Promoting Healthy Communities;
  - Delivering Sustainable Development;
  - Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy;
  - Promoting Sustainable Transport;
  - Requiring Good Design;
  - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment; and
  - Meeting the Challenges of Climate Change.

## Purpose and Scope

- 1.5 This OSS (hereby referred to as the 'Strategy') replaces the 2021 OSS.
- 1.6 This Strategy provides robust and up-to-date information concerning the demand and use of open space throughout the District irrespective of ownership up to the Local Plan end date of 2041.
- 1.7 It will support the Council's corporate objectives<sup>1</sup>:
- Place and Community - ensuring there is housing to meet the needs of all ages, that growth provides employment and is designed well, recognising the rural nature of the District and that communities are involved in how that growth is shaped;
  - Healthy Lives - giving guidance and support to all residents to make healthy life choices, to live longer healthier independent lives, not only physically but in good mental health too;
  - Environment and Sustainability - enhancing and protecting the natural environment with improved access to open and green spaces, addressing climate change issues proactively looking to future sustainable options and reducing environmental crime to further protect the environment;
  - Economy - that local employment options are available to allow residents to prosper in the District, developing and retaining the skills employees need and supporting businesses to be successful.
- 1.8 Proposals identified in this strategy may be provided or funded directly by the District Council, or other organisations. It should not be assumed that the Council will automatically make additional funds available to assist organisations to provide new or improved open spaces.
- 1.9 This Strategy will set standards for new development in terms of quantity, quality, value and accessibility, ensure the Council can prioritise development and investment of open space, ensure that poor quality open spaces are improved and that open spaces receive sufficient developer contributions to provide for new communities.
- 1.10 The Strategy reviews the current approach to the long-term stewardship of open space and proposes an adoption protocol.
- 1.11 The following appendices are included in this report:
- Appendix A - Detailed Audit Results;
  - Appendix B - Consultation Report;

<sup>1</sup> [Harborough Corporate Plan \(2024-2031\)](#)

- Appendix C - Draft Planning Conditions;
- Appendix D - Critical Policy Review;
- Appendix E - Critical Planning Conditions Review; and
- Appendix F - Made Neighbourhood Plans.

1.12 An Index of Maps is also included at the end of the report.

### Analysis Area

- 1.13 The Strategy looks at the overall provision of open spaces across the District and across three sub-areas which are consistent with the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and Built Sports Facilities Strategy (BSFS).
- 1.14 The sub-areas are based on Middle Super Output Area (MSOA) boundaries to align with the existing strategies.
- 1.15 Where an open space falls across two sub-areas, the open space has been counted within the sub-area in which the largest proportion of open space falls. The sub-areas are shown in Figure 1 below.

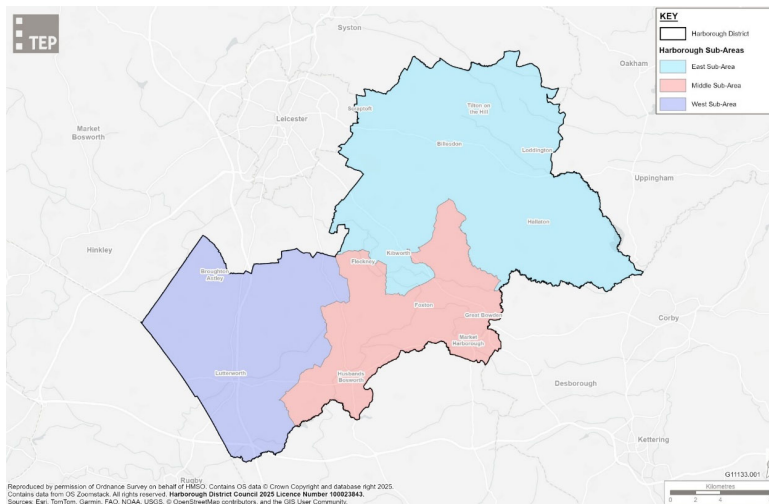


Figure 1: Harborough District Sub-Area Map

### East sub-area

- 1.16 The east sub-area encompasses the villages of Scraftoft, Tilton on the Hill, Loddington, Billesdon, Hallaton, and Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt. These settlements are predominantly rural in character, featuring traditional village forms, agricultural landscapes. Figure 2 illustrates Allexton Park, a Park and Garden located in the eastern sub area.
- 1.17 The A47 runs through the sub-area, offering strong transport connectivity and facilitating access to the city of Leicester (via the A6), and Uppingham market town, thereby enhancing the area's strategic accessibility while maintaining its rural identity. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) PP012 -Age<sup>2</sup>, the eastern sub-area has a current estimated population of 28,496.



Figure 2: Allexton Park: East sub-area (TEP ID: 38)

<sup>2</sup> Take from Nomis on 21 August 2023, and provided by the Council to TEP

Middle sub-area

- 1.18 The middle sub-area encompasses Market Harborough town and the villages of Great Bowden, Foxton, Fleckney and Husbands Bosworth. This area presents a mix of urban and rural characteristics, with Market Harborough serving as a key service centre and transport hub, while the surrounding villages retain a predominantly rural character. Figure 3 illustrates Hursley Park, an Amenity Greenspace located in the middle sub-area.
- 1.19 The A6 provides direct access to Leicester and beyond supporting regional connectivity and reinforcing the strategic importance of Market Harborough within the sub-area. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) PP012 -Age, the middle sub-area has a current estimated population of 38,150.



Figure 3: Hursley Park: Middle sub-area (TEP ID: 13)

West sub-area

- 1.20 The western sub-area encompasses the settlements of Broughton Astley and Lutterworth. This area is characterised by a blend of semi-rural and urban features, with Lutterworth functioning as a local service centre and Broughton Astley offering a mix of residential and community amenities. Figure 4 illustrates Swinford Church, an example of a Cemetery and Churchyard in the western sub-area.
- 1.21 The sub-area benefits from strategic connectivity via the A426 and proximity to the M1 motorway, while the A4304 and local road networks support access to surrounding villages and Leicester. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) PP012 -Age, the west sub-area has a current estimated population of 30,807.



Figure 4: Swinford Churchyard: West sub-area (TEP ID: 178)

## 2.0 Policy Context

2.1 This chapter summarises how open spaces feature in national and local policy. Figure 5 illustrates the hierarchy of planning policy for the District.

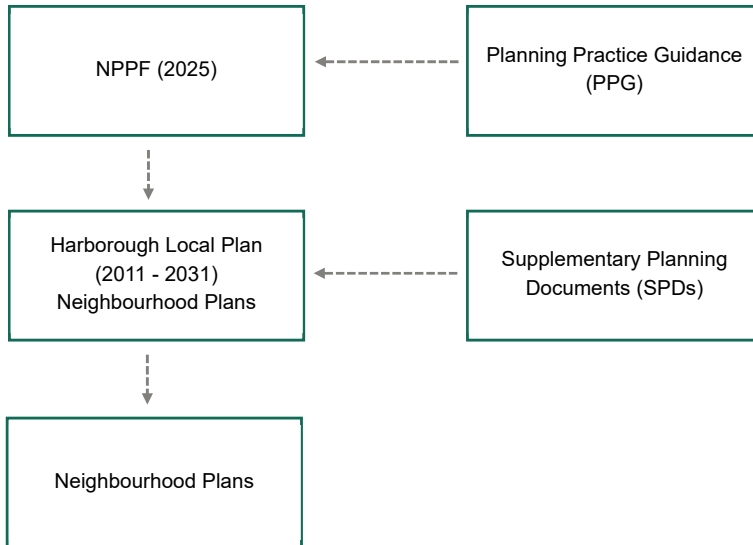


Figure 5: Planning Policy Hierarchy in Harborough District

2.2 The following listed national and local planning policy documents outline the Council's strategic context in relation to open space. These are a key consideration in producing the recommendations provided in this Strategy.

### National Policy Context

#### NPPF<sup>3</sup>

2.3 The NPPF was updated in February 2025 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are to be applied. The NPPF is a material consideration in decision and Local Plan making.

2.4 The NPPF defines 'open space' as:

*"All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity".*

2.5 The NPPF requirements in relation to open space are outlined in the following paragraphs.

#### Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

2.6 Paragraph 96 states that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive, safe and accessible places which promote social interaction and enable and support healthy lifestyles.

2.7 Paragraph 103 states that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. It states that planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision.

2.8 Paragraph 104 states that existing open space, sports and recreational land, including playing fields and formal play spaces, should not be built on unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown:

- the open space is surplus to requirements; or
- the loss would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision.

#### Local Green Space Designation

2.9 Paragraphs 106 to 108 of the NPPF set out the Local Green Space (LGS) designation as a way for communities to identify and protect green space of particular importance to them through local and neighbourhood plans. For the LGS designation to be used the green space must be:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community, it serves;
- demonstrably special to the local community with a particular local significance (aesthetically, historically, recreationally or environmentally); and
- local in character and not an extensive tract of land.

2.10 The NPPF states that local policies for managing development within a LGS should be consistent with those for Green Belts.

2.11 LGS designation is for use in Local Plans or Neighbourhood Plans, and LGS is often designated where the open space has a special connection to the local community whether in a village, neighbourhood, town or city.

<sup>3</sup> NPPF (adopted March 2012, updated in 2024 and amended in February 2025)

- 2.12 LGS is not linked to a specific open space typology. Any open space typology can be designated if it meets the criteria set out in NPPF, paragraphs 106 and 107. There is a size restriction, the space should not be an extensive tract of land or large areas of open countryside.

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

- 2.13 Paragraph 187 of the NPPF states that the planning system has a role to contribute to, and enhance, the natural and local environment. Valued landscapes and ecosystems should be protected, with development prevented from adversely affecting soil, air or water, or from causing noise pollution and land instability.
- 2.14 The NPPF states in paragraph 192 that local planning authorities should plan to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. This should be achieved through identifying and mapping local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; as well as the wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them. Furthermore, plans should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- 2.15 With regards to Green Infrastructure (GI), paragraph 199 states that opportunities to improve air quality or mitigate impacts through the provision and enhancement of GI should be identified.
- 2.16 A draft version of the revised NPPF was published in December 2025 and is subject to consultation until March 2026. As this draft may be subject to change, the evidence base in this Strategy has been prepared using the existing adopted NPPF to ensure compliance with current policy.

**PPG**

Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, Public Rights of Way (PRoW), and Local Green Space<sup>4</sup>

- 2.17 The Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, PRoW and Local Green Space PPG provides guidance on open space, sports and recreation facilities, PRoW and the LGS designation. The guidance states that it is for local planning authorities to assess the need for open space and opportunities for new provision in their areas. It describes the LGS designation in further detail than the NPPF.

Healthy and Safe Communities<sup>5</sup>

- 2.18 The Healthy and Safe Communities PPG sets out key advice on the how to account for health and wellbeing in the planning process in two ways:
- creating environments that support and encourage healthy lifestyles; and
  - identifying and securing the facilities needed for primary, secondary and tertiary care and the wider health and care system.
- 2.19 This PPG states how planning can influence the built environment to improve health and reduce levels of obesity in local communities.
- 2.20 The PPG also covers the promotion of supporting safe communities.

Climate Change<sup>6</sup>

- 2.21 The Climate Change PPG advises how to identify suitable mitigation and adaptation measures in the planning process to address the impacts of climate change.
- 2.22 The PPG states that the impact of climate change needs to be considered in a realistic way and, as part of this, local planning authorities should identify no or low-cost responses to climate risks that deliver a multitude of benefits, for example, GI that improves adaptation, biodiversity and amenity.
- 2.23 Furthermore, the Climate Change PPG states that when local planning authorities are preparing Local Plans and taking planning decisions, they should pay particular attention to integrating adaptation and mitigation approaches and looking for 'win-win' solutions. For example, the provision of multi-functional GI can reduce urban heat islands, manage flooding and help species adapt to climate change whilst also contributing to a pleasant environment that encourages people to walk and cycle.

Natural Environment<sup>7</sup>

- 2.24 The Natural Environment PPG advises on land of environmental value, GI, biodiversity, ecosystems and landscape.
- 2.25 The PPG highlights the importance of GI as a natural capital asset. These include community benefits such as enhancing wellbeing, outdoor recreation, food and energy production and mitigating the effects of climate change, such as urban cooling and flood risk management.

<sup>5</sup> [Healthy and Safe Communities PPG \(adopted March 2014 and updated August 2022\)](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Climate Change PPG \(adopted June 2014, updated March 2019\)](#)

<sup>7</sup> [Natural Environment PPG \(adopted January 2016, updated February 2025\)](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, PRoW, and Local Green Space PPG \(adopted March 2014\)](#)

2.26 The PPG also identifies the benefits of wider environmental net gain to reduce pressure on and achieve overall improvements in natural capital, ecosystem services and the benefits they deliver.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)<sup>8</sup>

2.27 In England, BNG is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021<sup>9</sup>).

2.28 The PPG describes BNG as "a way of creating and improving biodiversity by requiring development to have a positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity."

2.29 Under the statutory framework for BNG, every development must deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.

**National Strategy Documents**

**Promoting Healthy Cities<sup>10</sup>**

2.30 The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) published Promoting Healthy Cities, a document tackling the role of planning in creating healthy cities in October 2014.

2.31 The report calls for the UK to develop more integrated strategies for healthy place making, gather greater intelligence on the social and economic determinants of health and reform and strengthen institutions to ensure integration of health policies. This process should involve a range of professions and community stakeholders.

**GI Framework<sup>11</sup>**

2.32 The Natural England GI Framework provides guidance on:

- Why we need GI;
- What GI should achieve;
- What GI is; and
- GI strategies.

2.33 Natural England states that GI:

*"Contributes so much to the setting and quality of people's living and working environments, and its role in generating economic benefit has often been overlooked".*

2.34 The guidance states that "policies and decisions on development proposals should conserve and enhance environmental assets". Consideration should be made to providing off road, green routes for walkers and cyclists, and consider privately owned land, which provides connectivity for wildlife, and helps tackle climate change and flooding.

**The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature<sup>12</sup>**

2.35 The NEWP (June 2011) states that "People cannot flourish without the benefits and services our natural environment provide. Nature is a complex, interconnected system. A healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing".

2.36 The Government wants to put the value of nature at the heart of decision-making, in Government, local communities and businesses.

2.37 To achieve this the NEWP focuses on 4 key areas:

- Protecting and improving our natural environment - Achieve a better-quality natural environment by taking and promoting actions across farmed land, woodlands and forests, towns and cities, and rivers and water bodies;
- Growing the green economy - Economic growth and the natural environment are mutually compatible. Sustainable economic growth relies on services provided by the natural environment, often referred to as 'ecosystem services';
- Reconnecting people and nature - High-quality natural environments foster healthy neighbourhoods; green spaces encourage social activity and reduce crime. The natural environment can help children's learning; and
- International and EU leadership - Environmental leadership should be demonstrable internationally and within the EU, to protect and enhance natural assets globally, promoting environmentally and socially sustainable growth.

<sup>8</sup> [BNG PPG \(adopted February 2024, updated May 2025\)](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Promoting Healthy Cities \(Royal Town Planning Institute\) October 2014](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Green Infrastructure Framework \(Natural England\) February 2023](#)

<sup>12</sup> [The Natural Environment White Paper \(NEWP\) The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature \(June 2011\)](#)

## Local Policy Context

### Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031<sup>13</sup>

2.38 The Local Plan for Harborough was adopted in April 2019, superseding the Harborough District Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006-2028) and saved policies from the previous 2001 Local Plan.

2.39 The 2011-2031 Harborough Local Plan sets out strategic planning policy, for the District and the approach to future development in the District. The vision for the District and its open spaces, as set out in the Plan is:

*“In 2031, Harborough District will be a vibrant, safe and prosperous place which retains its identity as a predominantly rural area of villages and market towns where local communities enjoy a high quality of life. Residents will benefit from increased access to suitable housing, a wider range of local skilled jobs, and high-quality services and facilities, all of which promote healthy and safe lifestyles.”*

*“The diversity and quality of Harborough’s countryside, natural and historic environment will have improved for the benefit of residents and visitors.... There will be better access to the countryside and an improved range of open spaces for local people to enjoy.”*

*“New development will have been delivered in the most sustainable locations. The historic market town of Market Harborough will have retained its character and strengthened its role as the District’s principal town.”*

*“These two market towns [Market Harborough and Lutterworth], along with settlements near to the edge of Leicester (Scraptoft, Thurnby and Bushby), Broughton Astley and the rural centres, will have been the main focus for development. Residential development will have been delivered to meet strategic and local needs and the necessary infrastructure and community facilities needed to support this growth will have been delivered on time.”*

*“Communities will have access to improved social, recreational, sports, health and educational facilities. Existing valued community services will have been retained and necessary new ones delivered to keep pace with development. The design of the public realm will have responded to the needs of the elderly, young and other vulnerable sections of the community, thereby assisting in a sense of inclusiveness and well-being for all residents.”*

<sup>13</sup> [Harborough Local Plan \(2011-2031\)](#)

2.40 Ten key issues are identified in the Local Plan, Key Issue 5: Green Infrastructure directly relates to open space:

- addressing the biodiversity deficit in the District through the provision of multifunctional greenspace that includes a range of habitats and linkages to established habitats, as part of all new development;
- safeguarding the recognised areas of high biodiversity and geodiversity

2.41 The Local Plan identifies objectives that are central to the delivery of the vision for the District and are the guiding principles for the policies set out in the Local Plan. The following objectives are relevant to open space:

- Objective 4: Infrastructure which states that the Council will support local communities and maintain a high quality of life by ensuring that new development delivers the necessary infrastructure including health, culture, open space and recreation; and
- Objective 6: Natural Environment which states that the natural environment and biodiversity will be protected, maintained, restored and enhanced.

2.42 The following policies are relevant to open space within the District:

#### Policy GD7 Green Wedges

2.43 Policy GD7 Green Wedges identifies two ‘Green Wedges’ within the District:

- Leicester, Scraptoft and Bushby; and
- Thurnby, Leicester and Oadby.

2.44 One of the key aims of Green Wedges is to provide “access from urban areas into green spaces/open countryside and provide recreational opportunities”.

2.45 Further to this, Green Wedges are described as a ‘green lung’ in urban areas.

#### Policy GI1 Green Infrastructure Networks

2.46 Policy GI1 Green Infrastructure Networks states that development which supports the potential for strategic GI assets to contribute to the wider GI network will be permitted. GI assets include:

- Welland, Sence, Soar, Swift and Avon river corridors;
- Grand Union Canal;
- Dismantled railway lines;
- Saddington, Stanford and Eyebrook Reservoirs; and
- Traffic free cycle routes, and long-distance recreational paths and bridleways.

2.47 The GI assets listed above will be safeguarded and, where possible, enhanced.

Policy GI2 Open Space, Sport and Recreation

- 2.48 Policy GI2 Open Space, Sport and Recreation aims to provide access to high quality open space, sport and recreation facilities. Development resulting in the loss of, or reduction in, defined open space, sport and recreational facilities will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:
- the space, or recreational facility is surplus to local requirements and will not be needed in the long term in accordance with local standards; or
  - replacement areas will be at least equivalent in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility, and there will be no overall negative impact on the provision of open space in accordance with local standards; or
  - the proposal is for alternative recreational provision which meets evidence of local need in such a way as to outweigh the loss.
- 2.49 Furthermore, developments of more than 10 dwellings which would result in deficiencies in the quantity, accessibility and/or quality of existing open space, sport and recreational facilities should contribute towards:
- the provision of specific new open space, sport and recreation facilities in accordance with local standards; and/or
  - the enhancement of identified existing facilities to meet the relevant local standards.
- 2.50 New open space, sport and recreational facilities should be provided within residential development sites (unless otherwise agreed by the Council) and should:
- be accessible, usable, of a high-quality design, visible and safe and include facilities for a range of ages;
  - enable links to be created between new development and surrounding recreational networks and facilities (including PRoW);
  - provide an appropriate landscaping and landscape maintenance scheme; and
  - specify, prior to the commencement of development, the responsibilities for management and maintenance in perpetuity of the open space, sport and recreational facility.

Policy GI4 Local Green Space

- 2.51 Policy GI4 Local Green Spaces states that Local Green Space should retain their openness. Construction of new buildings on Local Green Space will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances. Appendix I Local Green Space Designations lists 36 Local Green Spaces.

Policy GI5 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 2.52 Policy GI5 Biodiversity and Geodiversity aims to safeguard nationally and locally designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites. The policy states that development will only be permitted where there will be no adverse impact and must contribute towards protecting and improving biodiversity and geodiversity through:
- protecting and enhancing habitats and populations of priority species;
  - protecting and enhancing the strategic biodiversity network and wildlife corridors, particularly river and canal corridors, disused railways and all watercourses;
  - maintaining biodiversity during construction;
  - providing contributions to wider biodiversity improvements in the vicinity of the development;
  - including measures aimed at allowing the District's flora and fauna to adapt to climate change;
  - including measures to improve the water quality of any water body as required by the Water Framework Directive; and
  - protecting features and areas of geodiversity value and enhancing them to improve connectivity of habitats, amenity use, education and interpretation.

Places and Sites

- 2.53 The Local Plan (2011-2031) identifies significant allocations for development at Leicester Principal Urban Area (PUA), Scraftoft Strategic Development Area (SDA), Market Harborough, Lutterworth, Fleckney and The Kibworths. The policies relating to these allocated sites include provision for open space and GI where appropriate.

*Leicester PUA*

- 2.54 The Leicester PUA comprises the built-up settlements of Scraftoft, Thurnby and Bushby which adjoin Leicester. The Leicester PUA settlements are at the top of District's settlement hierarchy, which means they have relatively easy access to a wide range of services and facilities and therefore are the most sustainable locations for new residential development.
- 2.55 Policy GD7 designates two Green Wedges in and around the Leicester PUA.
- 2.56 The Leicester, Scraftoft and Bushby Green Wedge seeks to ensure the continued separation of Scraftoft village from Leicester, while protecting the upper slopes of the Thurnby Brook valley from development. It incorporates several PRoWs and the disused railway line.

2.57 The Thurnby, Leicester and Oadby Green Wedge is a more extensive designation running south from the edge of Thurnby to the edge of Stoughton Airfield, surrounding the village of Stoughton and preventing coalescence with Leicester. This Green Wedge adjoins similar designations in Leicester City and Oadby & Wigston Borough promoting access from the urban area into the countryside.

2.58 Full details about Policy GD7 are provided in paragraph 2.43-2.45.

*Market Harborough*

2.59 Overstone Park (Policy MH1) is situated to the southeast of Market Harborough town centre and is allocated for 600 dwellings and now has planning permission. Land East of Blackberry Grange (Policy MH2), to the south of Market Harborough, is allocated for the development of 350 dwellings and a planning application has been submitted to the Council. Burnmill Farm (Policy MH3) situated to the north of Market Harborough town centre is allocated for 128 dwellings and is now under construction. Policies for each of these allocated residential development sites provide for an integrated approach to surface water drainage and multi-functional green space, as well as provision for recreational facilities.

*Lutterworth*

2.60 There is an SDA allocated on land to the east of Lutterworth, which will provide a well-planned extension to Lutterworth with its own sense of place, including a community park. Policy L1 East of Lutterworth SDA, states that the masterplan will provide for a multi-functional green infrastructure network including greenways, a community park, natural and semi-natural greenspace, a cemetery and allotments and local public open space with equipped play space and multi-use games areas. There has been a resolution to grant outline planning permission for the SDA.

*Fleckney*

2.61 Fleckney is a large village close to the edge of the northern border of the District, within equal distance of Leicester and Market Harborough. Land off Arnesby Road (Policy F1) is allocated for residential development of approximately 130 dwellings and provision of open space and recreational facilities and has planning permission.

*The Kibworths*

2.62 Land south and west of Priory Business Park (Policy K1) will include provision of new formal and informal public open space and green infrastructure linkages.

Housing

2.63 The Harborough Local Plan (2011-2031) provides up to date information on housing requirements during the Plan period. According to paragraph 5.1.4, the overall

housing required for the District is 557 dwellings per annum, which amounts to a total housing requirement of 11,140 dwellings during the plan period.

2.64 Development will be strictly controlled in the countryside and on designated open space within all settlements.

2.65 The Council is currently consulting on the Proposed Submission Draft Harborough Local Plan (2020-2041) (Draft Local Plan), which will aim to guide development within the District up to 2041. This has not yet been published.

**Neighbourhood Plans**

2.66 Across the District, thirty Neighbourhood Development Plans have been made. These are detailed at Appendix F.

2.67 The Neighbourhood Plans acknowledge the importance of development within the District, whilst requiring a harmony between the natural and built environment. The number of Neighbourhood Plans show that there are active Parish Councils and communities in the District.

**Planning Obligations SPD<sup>14</sup>**

2.68 A planning obligation is a legally enforceable obligation entered into under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal, to ensure a planning application is acceptable. The Council (together with Leicestershire County Council) enters into these agreements with developers to help ensure that obligations are met.

2.69 The Planning Obligations SPD was prepared to inform developers, landowners, infrastructure providers and local communities about the approach of the Council to securing community infrastructure and affordable housing through planning obligations.

2.70 In relation to open space, the Planning Obligations SPD states contributions for open space are required under Local Plan Policy IN1 (Infrastructure Provision) and other relevant site-specific policies. These obligations ensure that new developments provide sufficient green infrastructure to meet the needs of the community and support sustainable growth.

2.71 The SPD draws on the OSS 2021, which sets standards for the quantity, quality, and accessibility of open spaces. It also aligns with the BFS (2020) and the PPS (2018) to ensure comprehensive provision for sports and recreation.

2.72 Where on-site provision is not feasible, developers will be required to make financial contributions towards off-site improvements or the creation of new open spaces.

<sup>14</sup> [Planning Obligations SPD \(adopted January 2017, updated June 2022\)](#)

These contributions are calculated based on dwelling size and population yield, using standards set out in the OSS 2021.

- 2.73 Developers may also be required to provide commuted sums to cover the long-term maintenance of open spaces delivered through Section 106 agreements, ensuring their quality and usability over time.
- 2.74 Planning obligations for open space are typically triggered at defined stages of development, such as upon occupation of a specified number of dwellings, to ensure timely delivery and compliance.

### Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation - Delivery Plan (2021)

- 2.75 The Delivery Plan (2021) outlines how the Council will meet current and future open space needs through planning policy and developer contributions. It sets local standards for the quantity, quality, and accessibility of open spaces and identifies a surplus in Amenity Greenspace but ongoing deficiencies in Allotments, Parks and Gardens, and Provision for Children and Young People.
- 2.76 The Delivery Plan promotes multifunctional, accessible spaces that support health, wellbeing, and biodiversity, requiring developers to provide or fund open space through Section 106 agreements and to prepare landscape management plans to ensure long-term maintenance. The Delivery Plan also provides details on commuted sums and off-site contributions for open space requirements generated by development.

## Local Strategy Documents

### Corporate Property Strategy<sup>15</sup>

- 2.77 The Corporate Property Strategy (2013-2018) incorporates the Council's Asset Register and Disposals, Acquisition and Community Transfer Policy. The Strategy also provides a plan of actions to be taken with regards to the effective management of the authority's property portfolio over the short and medium term.
- 2.78 The vision is *"To enhance Harborough's public service through effective property management"*.
- 2.79 The Corporate Property Strategy, Supplementary Policy and Procedures Disposal & Acquisition Procedure provides a mechanism for adoption of open space. Appendix C, Section 5: Adoption of Public Space of the Corporate Property Strategy outlines the criteria under which the Council will adopt Public Open Space. The Council will not adopt areas of Public Open Space unless one of the following applies:

<sup>15</sup> [Corporate Property Strategy \(2013-2018\)](#)

- A commuted payment is available from the developer in accordance with extant Planning Guidance for developer contributions;
  - The area is of interest to a charitable trust or a Parish Council which will maintain the land; or
  - The Council will utilise an Assessment Toolkit to determine whether the land will be accepted by the Council as shown in the Appendix. A score below 30 is likely to be considered unsuitable for adoption.
- 2.80 In exceptional circumstances, the Council will be considering the adoption of open space after other options have been considered e.g. community organisation or Parish Council maintenance where there is an overriding public interest. These exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis without precedent.

### Cemetery and Burial Strategy<sup>16</sup>

- 2.81 The Cemetery and Burial Strategy 2016 was prepared to inform the Council's Local Development Framework and Local Plan (2011-2031). It provides an evidence base on burial land needs and provision to inform future planning policies and site allocations.
- 2.82 There are seven Parish Council's with insufficient burial space until 2031. These are Fleckney, Foxton, Houghton on the Hill, Market Harborough, Stoughton, Thurnby and Bushby and Tilton.
- 2.83 There are eleven Parish Council's with insufficient cremation ash plots until 2031. These are Claybrooke Magna, Fleckney, Great Easton, Houghton on the Hill, Lubenham, Market Harborough, Misterton with Walcote, Peatling Magna, Stoughton, Thurnby and Bushby and Tilton.
- 2.84 Towards the south of the District, around Market Harborough, there is a significant shortage of burial space and cremation ash capacity. All other Parishes have capacity until 2031 or capacity until 2039.
- 2.85 Most Parishes could achieve the required capacity through intensification. Any extensions or new sites would need further assessment.

### Open Spaces Strategy<sup>17</sup>

- 2.86 The OSS 2021 was prepared by TEP to replace the previous iteration written in 2016. The OSS 2021 comprised an assessment of the quantity, accessibility, quality and value of open spaces within the District, and for each of the three sub-areas. The OSS 2021 provided a robust evidence of the demand and use of open

<sup>16</sup> [Harborough District Cemetery and Burial Strategy \(2016\)](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Open Spaces Strategy \(2021\)](#)

space throughout the District to support the Local Plan (2011-2031) and Council's corporate objectives.

**Leicestershire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy<sup>18</sup>**

- 2.87 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022 - 2043) outlines the Leicestershire Health and Wellbeing Board's approach to reducing health inequalities and improving health and wellbeing outcomes for the people of Leicestershire County.
- 2.88 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy's vision is to *"improve health outcomes for the local population, manage future demand of services and create a strong and sustainable health and care system by making the best use of the available resources"*.
- 2.89 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy aims to:
  - enable people to take control of their own health and wellbeing;
  - reduce the gap in health inequalities;
  - ensure good health and wellbeing for children and young people; and
  - plan ahead for older people to retain a good quality of life.

**Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Study<sup>19</sup>**

- 2.90 A Green and Blue Infrastructure Study was prepared by TEP in 2024 to support the development of the emerging Harborough District Local Plan (2020-2041). The study identifies the locations of existing GBI assets in the District, highlights new GBI opportunities and provides recommendations towards policies for the protection, provision and enhancement of GBI.
- 2.91 The GBI Study involved a review of existing national, local and neighbourhood policies, and existing mapping in the region, alongside consultation with key stakeholders to identify key themes, opportunities and challenges within the District.

<sup>18</sup> [Leicestershire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy \(2022-2032\)](#)  
<sup>19</sup> [Green and Blue Infrastructure Study \(2024\)](#)

**3.0 Methodology**

**Guidance and Best Practice**

- 3.1 This Strategy has been produced in line with the NPPF and PPG for Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, PRoW and Local Green Space which have replaced PPG Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (2002) and its Companion Guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to Planning Policy Guidance 17 (2002)<sup>20</sup>.
- 3.2 Whilst the Companion Guide to PPG Note 17 has been superseded, it is acknowledged that the principles and approach within the guidance have not been replaced, and it is still relevant to apply the methodology to assess needs for open space provision. This strategy acknowledges recent industry publications including the Natural England GI Framework, and the revised Fields in Trust (FiT) Creating Great spaces for all document.

**Stages of the Strategy**

- 3.3 The Strategy process follows five stages as illustrated in Figure 6.

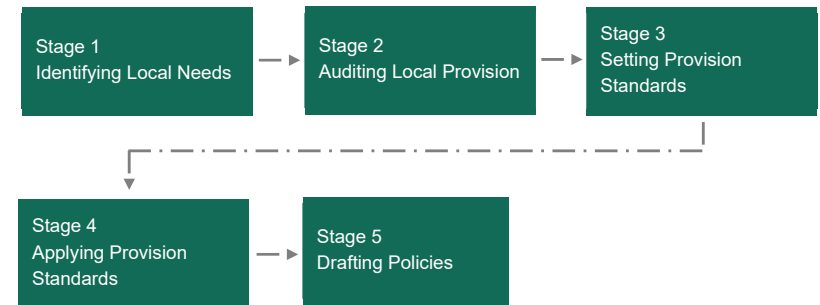


Figure 6: Open Space Strategy Process

- 3.4 The Strategy provides robust and up-to-date information concerning the demand and use of open space throughout Harborough irrespective of ownership up to the emerging Local Plan end date of 2041.

<sup>20</sup> [Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation \(2002\) and its Companion Guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to Planning Policy Guidance 17 \(2002\)](#)

## Typologies

- 3.5 Table 1 provides a description of each of the open space typologies included in this Strategy.

*Table 1: Open Space Typologies included in this Strategy*

Open Space Typology	Description
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
Amenity Greenspace	Most commonly but not exclusively found in housing areas. Includes informal recreation green spaces and village greens.
Churchyards and Other Burial Grounds	Cemeteries and churchyards including disused churchyards and other burial grounds.
Civic Spaces	Hard surfaced areas usually located within town or city centres.
Greenways	These include towpaths and walkways alongside canals and riverbanks, cycleways, public footpaths and disused railway lines.
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (includes Urban Woodlands)	Includes country parks, nature reserves, publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, wetlands and wastelands.
Parks and Gardens	Includes urban parks and formal gardens. Parks usually contain a variety of facilities and may have one of more of the other types of open space within them.
Provision for Children and Young People	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction specifically designed as equipped play facilities for children and young people.

## Quantity

- 3.6 The quantity assessment is undertaken through a desk based Geographical Information Systems (GIS) exercise, using open space data provided by the Council. Updates to the open space data have been captured during the site audits in 2025, and through a review against aerial imagery and basemapping.
- 3.7 Analysis in this assessment is based on a snapshot in time. Open spaces are mapped and then stored in a GIS geodatabase which provides a total area in hectares (ha) for each site. Each site is assigned an open space typology so that the total area of each typology can be calculated.
- 3.8 When combined with population figures, quantity can be expressed in terms of a hectare per 1,000 population figure. This is the way that local authorities express their quantity of open space and is how quantity standards for open space are expressed.

- 3.9 Population figures<sup>21</sup> have been used to calculate the hectare per 1,000 population figures for each typology on a District wide and sub-area basis, for the current and future population. The exception to this is Greenways.
- 3.10 The total length of Greenways is indicative. Where PRoWs and Cycleways directly overlap, or are within 5m of one another, they have been collated to provide a singular section length of Greenway.

## Quality

- 3.11 A sample of sites have been audited as part of this Strategy. Outdoor Sports Facilities have been excluded from the quality assessment as they have been assessed as part of the PPS.
- 3.12 All open spaces were audited in the 2021 OSS, either for a full Green Flag Award (GFA) style audit, or a partial audit to review access and typology. This Strategy audits 328 (44.5%) open spaces out of a total of 737 sites using the same GFA style quality audit allowing a direct comparison against previous results.
- 3.13 The GFA is widely recognised as a quality benchmark for parks and open spaces, and is advocated by FiT and used by many other local authorities as part of their open space assessments.
- 3.14 Greenways and Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards have not been assessed for quality as they do not readily fit within the GFA criteria.
- 3.15 It should be noted that quality audits undertaken as part of the Open Spaces Strategy 2016 to 2021 aligned to Sport England's Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guidance (ANOG) and as a result quality results between the two strategies vary.
- 3.16 The quality assessment method for the site audits uses some of the GFA criteria (described in Table 2) based on those that can be applied to all typologies of open space. This allows a quality benchmark to be applied to open spaces with exception of Greenways as stated prior.

<sup>21</sup> based on ONS sub-national (2022)

Table 2: GFA Criteria

GFA Criteria	Description
Welcoming Place	Signage Entrances Safe Access Access for All Abilities Boundaries Car parking/Cycling Provision
Healthy, Safe and Secure	Facilities and Activities Clear Sightlines Shelter Lighting
Well Maintained and Clean	Bins, Dog Bins and Recycling Overall Site Cleanliness Hard Landscape Features Buildings Soft Landscape Features Site Furniture

- 3.17 The quality assessment does not attempt to 'judge' all sites as to whether they would pass or fail the GFA. This would not be appropriate due to:
- the types and nature of the sites;
  - the proportionate amount of time needed to spend assessing each site in full; and
  - the information available to undertake the assessment.
- 3.18 The full GFA process involves reviewing a management plan for each site, and undertaking a site visit with the site managers, key stakeholders and the local community.
- 3.19 The bandings for the open space quality audits are as follows:
- Excellent - 90% to 100%;
  - Very good - 80% to 89%;
  - Good - 70% to 79%;
  - Fair - 50% to 69%; and
  - Poor - 0% to 49%.
- 3.20 The full site audit results are included as Appendix A.

## Value

- 3.21 The open space value assessment is based on 'Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17'<sup>22</sup> (September 2002). Although PPG17 has been superseded by the NPPF, there has been no supporting guidance published to supersede 'Assessing needs and opportunity: a companion guide to PPG17'. This is the most up to date guidance for value assessment for open spaces.
- 3.22 Table 3 details the value criteria used for this Strategy.

Table 3: Value Criteria

Value	Value Criteria
Context Value	Value as a cycle or pedestrian route. Value in terms of a linked series of green or hard spaces. Value in terms of a linked openness in a densely developed area. Value in terms of providing a setting for buildings (e.g. Georgian square).
Historical/Heritage Value	Value of historic buildings within the space. Value of other historical features (e.g. statues, fountains, headstones).
Contribution to Local Amenity, Vitality and Sense of Place	Contribution to the appearance of the neighbourhood. Evidence of use for events. Value as a noise buffer. Value as a visual screen or buffer. Value in terms of 'sense of place'. Value in terms of 'business' for social interaction. Value in terms of local air quality and amelioration of pollution. Visual attractiveness. Proximity to hospital/health centre/school/other community hub.
Recreation Value	Value for community events. Value in terms of health benefits (e.g. jogging, health walks). Value of informal recreation opportunities (e.g. walking, relaxation).
Play Value	Value in terms of variety of finishes and experiences. Value of space for adventure play. Value of space for kickabout. Value of space for seeing birds and animals.
Ecological/ Biodiversity Value	Nature conservation designation. Value as a green corridor for wildlife. Value for public enjoyment of nature. Value of habitats within the space (including water). Value of trees to the neighbourhood. Buildings have potential for green roofs/walls. Buildings have potential for rainwater harvesting.

<sup>22</sup> [Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17](#)

3.23 The bandings for the open space value audits are as follows:

- High - 60 to 100%;
- Medium - 40 to 59%; and
- Low - 0 to 39%.

**Quality and Value Matrix**

3.24 The value of a site, in conjunction with the quality, can be used to guide planning decisions about the future of the sites as shown in Table 4.

*Table 4: Quality and Value Matrix*

<p><b>Poor Quality High Value</b></p> <p>High value sites that are poor quality should look to be enhanced in terms of their quality</p>	<p><b>Good Quality High Value</b></p> <p>Ideally all spaces should fall into this category, and decisions focused on protection of the best sites</p>
<p><b>Poor Quality Low Value</b></p> <p>Where possible look to enhance quality and value, or review if sites are surplus to requirements</p>	<p><b>Good Quality Low Value</b></p> <p>Where possible look to enhance value in terms of the functions the sites provide, or consider if value could increase by a change of use</p>

**Accessibility**

3.25 The accessibility assessment applies thresholds ('isochrone mapping') to sites. Thresholds are shown on accessibility maps in this report to indicate areas with access to each type of open space, and those without.

3.26 Isochrone mapping has been used within this Strategy, which reflects "on the ground" accessibility conditions through use of the road networks, which identifies physical barriers to access such as motorways or watercourses. Isochrone mapping uses Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) Service Areas in ArcGIS Pro, and access points available through Ordnance Survey (OS) to facilitate this. Supplementary access points were recorded during the site audits.

3.27 Distance for the accessibility thresholds were determined following consultation with the Council, are applied in this Strategy.

3.28 Table 5 sets out the walking distances and walking thresholds from the Fields in Trust (FiT) Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All<sup>23</sup> (2024), which supersedes the FiT Guidance for Outdoor Sports and Play – Beyond the Six Acre Standard and the Open Spaces Strategy 2016 to 2021.

3.29 Table 5 also details how these distances, in metres (m) can be interpreted as a walking time.

*Table 5: Existing Walking Distance, Thresholds and Time*

Typology	Benchmark Standard	Existing Accessibility Standard
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	No standard	4.0km 10 mins drive/ bus
Amenity Greenspace	480 metres	800m 10 mins walk
Churchyards and Other Burial Grounds	No standard	2km 5 mins drive/bus
Civic Spaces	No standard	No standard
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (includes Urban Woodlands)	720 metres	1.6km 20 mins walk
Parks and Gardens	710 metres	4km 10 mins drive/bus
Provision for Children and Young People	LAP - 100 metres LEAP - 400 metres NEAP - 1,000 metres MUGA - 700m	400m-800m 5 - 10 mins walk
Greenways	No standard	20m drive time (taken from BSFS)

<sup>23</sup> [FiT Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All \(2024\)](#)

## 4.0 Identifying Local Needs

### Population

#### Facts and Figures

- 4.1 The Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022 - 2043) states that there is an aging population across the County with a reduction of working age population over the next 20 years, which is in line with the Council's population figures.
- 4.2 The population of Leicestershire is projected to grow by 23.3% by 2043. However, the over 60 population is predicted to grow by 38.9% and the 20-39 population is expected to grow by 12.6%.
- 4.3 The rural population of Leicestershire makes up approximately 30% of the total population. It is growing more slowly than urban areas but growing older more rapidly than the County as a whole.
- 4.4 The County has significantly higher than average life expectancy for men and women for England. However, there is a 6.8-year gap in life expectancy for men and 8.1-year gap for women between residents in the most deprived areas, compared to residents in the most affluent areas<sup>24</sup>.
- 4.5 The County is relatively affluent and experiences low levels of social-economic deprivation.

#### Current Population

- 4.6 For the purpose of this Strategy, the current population figures used, align with the Playing Pitch Strategy are based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) PP012 - Age data. According to ONS estimates the current population of the District is 97,453. Table 6 shows the division of the current population across the three sub-areas.

Table 6: Current (2022) Population Figures by Sub-Area

Sub-Area	Population (2022)
East	28,496
Middle	38,150
West	30,807
<b>Total</b>	<b>97,453</b>

<sup>24</sup> [Heath Inequalities in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland \(2024\) Annual Report](#)

### Future Population

- 4.7 The projected future population for the District in 2041 is 112,220. This is based on ONS subnational population projections for England, released June 2025. Table 7 shows the division of the current population and the projected 2041 population across the three sub-areas.

Table 7: Projected Future Population by Sub-Area

Sub-Area	Population 2022	Population 2041
East	28,496	36,539
Middle	38,150	48,917
West	30,807	30,807
<b>Total</b>	<b>97,453</b>	<b>124,958</b>

### Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

- 4.8 IMD is a government measure that ranks areas based on levels of deprivation using factors such as income, employment, health, education, crime, housing, and living environment. It provides a composite score to identify the most and least deprived areas.
- 4.9 Areas with higher deprivation scores typically have poorer access to quality open spaces<sup>25</sup>, which can impact health, wellbeing, and social cohesion. Improving open spaces in these areas can help address inequalities by providing opportunities for recreation, physical activity, and community engagement, which are linked to better health outcomes and quality of life.
- 4.10 The IMD for Harborough currently averages at approximately 8 decile, calculated against all 33,755 Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) across England (see GIS Plan G11133.010 for National IMD within Harborough). This means Harborough is less deprived compared to England overall and suggests the District is generally more affluent, so national funding streams for deprivation-related improvements may be limited.
- 4.11 The local IMD for Harborough has been adjusted for the 52 LSOAs within Harborough District (see G11133.011 for Local IMD within Harborough). Some areas of Harborough including Tilton on the Hill and Loddington fall into lower deciles indicating pockets of relative deprivation. These areas should be prioritised for accessible, high-quality open space because it supports health, wellbeing and social equity.

<sup>25</sup> [The Health Foundation - Inequalities in access to greenspace \(July 2024\)](#)

## Consultation

- 4.12 In July 2025, TEP and the Council undertook a six-week period of consultation events with residents, parish councils, neighbourhood forums, developers and key stakeholders.
- 4.13 The consultation aimed to gather insights into the current provision, quality, accessibility and management of open spaces across the District. A range of engagement methods including online questionnaires, virtual events, and in-person drop-in sessions were organised to ensure broad and inclusive participation.
- 4.14 Findings from the consultation have been used to inform this Strategy, helping to assess supply and demand, shape future open space standards and guide strategic planning. A detailed methodology, results summary and key conclusions are presented in the Consultation Report at Appendix B.

## 5.0 Auditing Local Provision

### Introduction

- 5.1 This section presents the results of the quantity, quality, value and accessibility assessment for the District as a whole and the three sub-area.

### District Overview

#### Quantity

- 5.2 The number, area and percentage of each type of open space within the District is shown in Table 8.
- 5.3 The highest proportion of open space is provided by Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) (77.41%) this is due to rural nature of the District, followed by Amenity Greenspace (12.92%).
- 5.4 Civic Spaces and Provision for Children and Young People provides the least provision across the District (1% or under).

*Table 8: Open Spaces across the Harborough District by Typology, Number and Area*

Open Space Typology	Description	No.	Area (ha)	Area (%)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.	38	26.36	2.31%
Amenity Greenspace	Most commonly but not exclusively found in housing areas. Includes informal recreation green spaces and village greens.	370	147.67	12.92%
Churchyards and Other Burial Grounds	Cemeteries and churchyards including disused churchyards and other burial grounds.	108	43.45	3.80%
Civic Spaces	Hard surfaced areas usually located within town or city centres.	5	1.05	0.09%
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (includes Urban Woodlands)	Includes country parks, nature reserves, publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, wetlands and wastelands.	140	884.50	77.41%

Open Space Typology	Description	No.	Area (ha)	Area (%)
Parks and Gardens	Includes urban parks and formal gardens. Parks usually contain a variety of facilities and may have one of more of the other types of open space within them.	8	29.21	2.56%
Provision for Children and Young People	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction specifically designed as equipped play facilities for children and young people.	68	10.35	0.91%
<b>Total (rounded to two decimal places)</b>	-	<b>737</b>	<b>1,142.59</b>	<b>100%</b>
Greenways	These include towpaths and walkways alongside canals and riverbanks, cycleways, public footpaths and disused railway lines.	1,410* PRoWs 182* Cycleways	1,108 km	N/A

**Assessment of Quantity Change**

5.5 Table 9 shows the change in number, and hectarage of each typology between the 2021 OSS, and this Strategy.

*Table 9: Change in open space since the 2021 OSS*

Open Space Typology	No (2021)	No. (2025)	Change in No.	Area (ha) 2021	Area (ha) 2025	Change (ha)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	36	38	2	22.85	26.36	3.51
Amenity Greenspace	312	370	58	109.95	147.67	37.72
Churchyards and Other Burial Grounds	109	108	1	43.50	43.45	-0.05
Civic Spaces	5	5	0	1.05	1.05	0.00
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (includes Urban Woodlands)	117	140	23	871.82	884.50	12.68
Parks and Gardens	9	8	-1	38.05	29.21	-8.84
Provision for Children and Young People	66	68	2	10.34	10.35	0.01
<b>Total (rounded to two decimal places)</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>737</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>1097.56</b>	<b>1,142.59</b>	<b>45.03</b>
Greenways				700km	1,108km	408km

5.6 Between 2021 and 2025, the total number of open spaces increased from 654 to 737 (a gain of 83 sites). Overall open space provision increased 45.03 ha to 1,142.59 ha. The largest growth was in Amenity Greenspace (+58 sites, +37.72 ha) and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (+23 sites, +12.68 ha). Allotments and play areas saw small increases, while one Park and Gardens site was removed from the dataset because it was no longer deemed applicable for inclusion in this assessment. Greenways expanded significantly, adding 408 km of routes. This may be due to a change in methodology approach for calculating Greenways which now includes all PRoW (see Chapter 3.0).

5.7 Table 10 shows the quantity of each typology by sub-area in ha.

*Table 10: Ha of Open Space by Typology and Sub-area*

Open Space Typology	East (ha)	Middle (ha)	West (ha)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	2.43	10.56	13.36
Amenity Greenspace	45.84	63.27	38.57
Churchyards and Other Burial Grounds	16.86	0.79	0.26
Civic Spaces	0	13.12	13.48
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (includes Urban Woodlands)	694.61	97.23	92.66
Parks and Gardens	20.36	8.69	0.16
Provision for Children and Young People	3.09	2.73	4.53
<b>Total (rounded to two decimal place)</b>	<b>783.19</b>	<b>196.40</b>	<b>163.01</b>

5.8 Greenways is not considered within sub-area split due to the nature of the typology.

5.9 According to ONS MOSA sub-national population figures, the current population (2022) of the District is 97,453 and the total amount of open space of 1,142.59 ha, current provision of open space is calculated at **11.72 ha per 1,000 population**. This is an increase of 0.03ha per 1,000 population since the 2021 report.

5.10 The future population (2041) for the District is estimated at 124,958 which equates to **9.14 ha per 1,000 population** based on the current open space provision.

5.11 The current (2022) and future (2041) hectarage per 1,000 population for the District is shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Open Space by ha per 1,000 population

Open Space Typology	2022 ha/ 1,000	2041 ha/ 1,000
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	0.27	0.21
Amenity Greenspace	1.52	1.18
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	0.45	0.35
Civic Spaces	0.01	0.01
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	9.08	7.08
Parks and Gardens	0.30	0.23
Provision for Children and Young People	0.11	0.08
<b>Total (rounded to two decimal place)</b>	11.72	9.14
Greenways	11.37km/1,000 population	8.87km/1,000 population

### Accessibility

- 5.12 The existing and benchmark accessibility standards are shown above in Table 5. A review accessibility standards for each typology is included in Chapter 7.0.
- 5.13 GIS Plans (TEP ref: G11133.008.1 - G11133.008.6) show the current standards for accessibility each relevant typology using the thresholds set out in Table 5. Accessibility thresholds have not been assigned to Civic Spaces as they are limited to a very small number of sites located in urban areas, therefore an accessibility threshold would not be appropriate.

### Quality

- 5.14 Initial data provided by the Council at the outset of the project included 839 sites including Outdoor Sports Facilities. Outdoor Sports Facilities are not covered in this Strategy and therefore were omitted from the dataset leaving 737 open spaces. For auditing quality and value, open space sites were selected based on the criteria set out in the PPG17.
- 5.15 Following a desk-based exercise to consolidate the data, a total of 328 sites (44.5% of all sites) were taken forward for audit. Sites were selected based on spatial distribution ensuring a selection of each typology was audited across the three sub-areas.
- 5.16 Of the 328 sites identified for auditing, 308 were accessible and had a full quality audit, 19 were not accessible and one site was unable to be surveyed due to another reason, such as ownership. Quality audit results are shown on GIS Plans (TEP ref: G11133.006.1 - G11133.006.10).

- 5.17 The range of scores from the quality audits are provided in Table 12 and the quality score split by each typology is in Table 13.

Table 12: Open Space by Quality Score

Quality Banding	No. of Open Space Sites	% of Sites
Excellent	24	7.79%
Very Good	86	27.92%
Good	115	37.34%
Fair	70	22.73%
Poor	13	4.22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 13: Quality Score for Open Space Typology

Open Space Typology	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Amenity Greenspace	13	43	64	43	2
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	4	17	21	6	0
Civic Spaces	2	2	0	1	0
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	2	10	14	14	11
Parks and Gardens	3	1	1	1	0
Provision for Children and Young People	0	13	15	5	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>13</b>

- 5.18 The results of the quality assessment by site are broken down in Appendix A.

### Value

- 5.19 The range of value audit scores is shown at a District level on GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.007.1 - G11133.007.10).
- 5.20 The range of value scores from the audits of open spaces are provided in Table 14 and the value scores for each typology are in Table 15.

*Table 14: Open Spaces by Value Score*

Value Banding	No. of Open Space Sites	Percentage of Sites
High	34	11.04%
Medium	94	30.52%
Low	180	58.44%
Total	308	100%

*Table 15: Value Score for Open Space Typologies*

Open Space Typology	High	Medium	Low
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	N/A	N/A	N/A
Amenity Greenspace	20	50	95
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	5	15	28
Civic Spaces	0	2	3
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	4	16	31
Parks and Gardens	1	2	3
Provision for Children and Young People	4	9	20
Total	34	94	180

- 5.21 The results of the value assessment by site are broken down in Appendix A.

### Key Finding on Quality and Value

- 5.22 Table 16 provides an overview of the range of quality and value scores achieved in the site audits. Results by site are presented in Appendix A.
- 5.23 There were only 13 sites that had a Quality score of Poor. These typologies were Amenity Greenspace and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands).
- 5.24 The greatest range of quality score is within Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) typology. The greatest value scores range was for Amenity Greenspace.

*Table 16: Range of Quality and Value Score by Typology*

Open Space Typology	Sites Audited	Range of Quality Scores	Range of Value Scores
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	N/A	N/A	N/A
Amenity Greenspace	165	41-99	3-79
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	48	57-95	10-76
Civic Spaces	5	62-97	20-52
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	51	29-92	9-70
Parks and Gardens	6	67-98	21-68
Provision for Children and Young People	33	60-89	11-81
Total	308	-	-

## Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards

5.25 Allotments, community gardens and orchards provide opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.

### Quantity

5.26 There are **38 sites** providing **26.36 ha** of Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards across the District, this equates to **0.27 ha per 1,000 population**. This is an increase from the 2021 OSS. The increase has occurred owing to an update of the OSS dataset reflecting new sites added.

5.27 FiT's Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All (2024) does not provide a national benchmark for Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards.

5.28 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.0.

### Quality and Value Assessment

5.29 Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards were not audited as part of the Strategy as they do not readily fit with the GFA Criteria.

### Accessibility Assessment

5.30 Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards have been assigned an existing accessibility threshold (mapped using Isochrone) of 4km, or 10 mins drive/bus. The GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.008.1) shows there is good coverage in the west and middle sub-areas but there is less provision in the east sub-area due to its rural nature. Findings align with the 2021 OSS.

## Amenity Greenspace

5.31 Amenity Greenspaces are informal and provide opportunities for informal recreation for local residents whilst enhancing the appearance of the area.

### Quantity Assessment

5.32 There are **370 sites** providing **147.67 ha** of Amenity Greenspace in the District, which equates to **1.52 ha per 1,000 population**. This is an increase from the 2021 OSS.

5.33 FiT's Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All (2024) provides a benchmark of 0.6 ha per 1,000 population. FiT's Guidance is based on a survey of 119 (33%) local authorities in England and Wales which found that the median level of provision of Amenity Greenspace sought was 0.55 ha per 1,000 population.

5.34 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.0.

### Quality and Value Assessment

5.35 The quality and value scores for Amenity Greenspaces can be found within Appendix A and are demonstrated by GIS Plans (TEP ref: G11133.006.1-G11133.006.10).

5.36 165 Amenity Greenspaces received a quality audit. The average quality score for Amenity Green spaces is 75% which falls in the Good banding, shown below in Table 17.

5.37 The average score for Amenity Greenspace has decreased by 6% from 81% in the 2021 OSS.

Table 17: Quality Range for Amenity Greenspace

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
75%	Good	2	43	64	43	13

5.38 Farndon Fields Amenity Greenspace, southwest of Market Harborough, achieved the highest quality score (99%) and is shown below in Figure 7. The site is well-maintained, with ornamental shrub planting present along the boundaries providing habitat and visual interest. Additionally, a sustainable urban drainage system (SuDS) pond is present to manage surface water across the site.



Figure 7 Farndon Fields Amenity Greenspace, southwest of Market Harborough (Middle sub-area) (TEP ID: 879)

5.39 The average value score for Amenity Greenspaces is 36% which falls in the Fair banding, shown below in Table 18.

Table 18: Value Range for Amenity Greenspace

Average Score	Average Banding	Low	Medium	High
36%	Low	95	50	20

**Accessibility Assessment**

5.40 Amenity Greenspace has been assigned an existing accessibility threshold of 800m, or 10 mins walk. The GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.008.2) shows there is good coverage in the west and middle sub-areas. Key populated areas including Market Harborough, Lutterworth, Husbands Bosworth and Broughton Asley have access to Amenity Greenspace within the accessibility standard however there is less provision in the east sub-area due to its rural nature. Access to Amenity Greenspace is generally in unpopulated areas.

**Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds**

5.41 Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds include active churchyards, disused churchyards and other burial grounds e.g. cemeteries.

**Quantity Assessment**

5.42 There are **108** sites providing 43.45 ha of Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds in the District, which equates to **0.45 ha per 1,000 population**. This is a decrease from the 2021 OSS. The decrease has occurred owing to an update of the Strategy dataset reflecting a site which was formerly recorded as a cemetery or burial ground but has been reallocated to another typology.

5.43 FiT's Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All (2024) does not provide a national benchmark for Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds.

5.44 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.0.

**Quality and Value Assessment**

5.45 The quality and value scores for Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds can be found within Appendix A and are demonstrated by GIS Plans (TEP ref: G11133.006.1- G11133.006.10).

5.46 48 Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds received a quality audit. One site was unable to be surveyed as it was inaccessible. The average quality score for Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds is 79% which falls in the Good banding, shown below in Table 19.

Table 19: Quality Range for Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
79%	Good	0	6	21	17	4

5.47 St Joseph's Churchyard in Market Harborough, achieved one of the highest quality scores (94%) and is shown in Figure 8. The site is well maintained, and provides a range of benefits including habitat, visual amenity and space for reflection.



Figure 8: St Joseph's Churchyard in Market Harborough (Middle sub-area) (TEP ID: 676)

5.48 The average value score for Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds is 37% which falls in the Low banding, shown below in Table 20.

Table 20: Value Range for Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds

Average Score	Average Banding	Low	Medium	High
37%	Low	28	15	5

**Accessibility Assessment**

5.49 Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds have been assigned an existing accessibility threshold (mapped using Isochrone) of 2km, or 5 mins drive. The GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.008.3) shows there is fair coverage across all sub-areas.

## Civic Spaces

5.50 Civic Spaces are hard surfaced areas located within town or city centres.

### Quantity Assessment

5.51 There are 5 sites classed as Civic Spaces in the District, which equates to **1.05 ha** of Civic Space. This equates to a quantity provision of **0.01 ha per 1,000 population**. This is the same as the 2021 OSS.

5.52 FiT's Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All (2024) does not provide a national benchmark for Civic Spaces.

### Quality and Value Assessment

5.53 The quality and value scores for Civic Spaces can be found within Appendix A and are demonstrated by GIS Plans (TEP ref: G11133.006.1 - G11133.006.10).

5.54 All 5 Civic Spaces received a quality audit. The average quality score for Civic Spaces is 84% which falls in the Very Good banding, shown below in Table 21.

Table 21: Quality Range for Civic Spaces

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
79%	Good	0	1	0	2	2

5.55 The Square in Market Harborough, achieved one of the highest quality scores (79%) and is shown below in Figure 9. The site is well maintained, of high standard and provides a space for multi-functional opportunities including events, recreation and relaxation.



Figure 9 The Square in Market Harborough (Middle sub-area) (TEP ID: 746)

5.56 The average value score for Civic Spaces is 33% which falls in the Low banding, shown below in Table 22.

Table 22: Value Range for Civic Spaces

Average Score	Average Banding	Low	Medium	High
33%	Low	3	2	0

### Accessibility Assessment

5.57 There is no accessibility threshold for Civic Spaces this is due to the nature and location of this typology.

## Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)

5.58 Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) includes country parks, nature reserves, publicly accessible woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, wetlands and wastelands.

### Quantity Assessment

5.59 There are **140** sites providing **884.50 ha** of Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) in the District, which equates to **9.08 ha per 1,000 population**. This has increased since 2021 OSS.

5.60 FiT's Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All (2024) provides a benchmark of 8.5 ha per 1,000 population for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands).

5.61 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.0.

### Quality and Value Assessment

5.62 The quality and value scores for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) can be found within Appendix A and are demonstrated by GIS Plans (TEP ref: G11133.006.1- G11133.006.10).

5.63 59 Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) received a quality audit. 8 were unable to be surveyed as they were inaccessible. The average quality score for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) is 67% which falls in the Fair banding, shown below in Table 23. Launde Park in Market Harborough (Middle sub-area) achieved the highest quality score (92%).

Table 23: Quality Range for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
67%	Fair	11	14	14	10	2

5.64 The average value score for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) is 36% which falls in the Low banding, shown below in Table 24.

Table 24: Value Range for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)

Average Score	Average Banding	Low	Medium	High
36%	Low	31	16	4

**Accessibility Assessment**

5.65 Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) have been assigned an existing accessibility threshold (mapped using Isochrone) of 1.6km, or 20 min walk. The GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.008.4) shows there is coverage across all sub-areas.

**Parks and Gardens**

5.66 Parks and Gardens are generally multi-functional spaces, providing a range of facilities including landscaped gardens, playing fields, play areas and facilities for outdoor sport provision.

**Quantity Assessment**

5.67 There are 8 sites providing 29.21 ha of Parks and Gardens in the District, which equates to 0.30 ha per 1,000 population. This has increased since the 2021 OSS.

5.68 FiT's Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All (2024) provides a benchmark of 0.8 ha per 1,000 population for Parks and Gardens.

5.69 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.0.

**Quality and Value Assessment**

5.70 The quality and value scores for Parks and Gardens can be found within Appendix A and are demonstrated by GIS Plans (TEP ref: G11133.006.1- G11133.006.10).

5.71 8 Parks and Gardens received a quality audit. 2 were unable to be surveyed as they were inaccessible. The average quality score for Parks and Gardens is 86% which falls in the Very Good banding, shown below in Table 25.

Table 25: Quality Range for Parks and Gardens

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
89%	Very Good	0	1	1	1	3

5.72 Memorial Gardens in Market Harborough achieved the highest quality score (98%) see **Error! Reference source not found.**



Figure 10: Memorial Gardens in Market Harborough (Middle sub-area) (TEP ID: 511)

5.73 The average value score for Parks and Gardens is 40% which falls in the Medium banding, shown below in Table 26.

Table 26: Value Range for Parks and Gardens

Average Score	Average Banding	Low	Medium	High
40%	Medium	3	2	1

**Accessibility Assessment**

5.74 Parks and Gardens have been assigned an existing accessibility threshold of 4km, or 10 min drive. The GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.008.5) shows there is only accessibility to Parks and Gardens in Market Harborough, Lutterworth, Scraptoft and Allexton. There is limited accessibility within all three of the sub-areas within the centre of the District.

### Provision for Children and Young People

5.75 Provision for Children and Young People are areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, multi-use games areas and skateboard parks.

#### Quantity Assessment

5.76 There are **68** sites providing **10.35 ha** of Provision for Children and Young People in the District, which equates to **0.11 ha per 1,000 population**. This is a slight increase from the 2021 OSS.

5.77 FiT's Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All (2024) provides a benchmark of 0.25 ha per 1,000 population for Provision for Children and Young People.

5.78 Standards are covered further in Chapter 7.0.

#### Quality and Value Assessment

5.79 The quality and value scores for Provision for Children and Young People can be found within Appendix A and are demonstrated by GIS Plans (TEP ref: G11133.006.1- G11133.006.10).

5.80 35 site which provide for Children and Young People received a quality audit. 2 were unable to be surveyed as they were inaccessible. The average quality score for Provision for Children and Young People is 77% which falls in the Good banding, shown below in Table 27.

Table 27: Quality Range for Provision for Children and Young People

Average Score	Average Banding	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
77%	Good	0	5	15	13	0

5.81 One of the highest scoring Provision for Children and Young People was Clarkes Piece Play Area in Great Easton (83%) see **Error! Reference source not found.**



Figure 11: Clarkes Piece Play Area in Great Easton (East sub-area) (TEP ID:

5.82 The average value score for Provision for Children and Young People is 36.7% which falls in the Low banding, shown below in Table 28.

Table 28: Value Range for Provision for Children and Young People

Average Score	Average Banding	Low	Medium	High
36.7%	Low	3	2	1

#### Accessibility Assessment

5.83 Provision for Children and Young People have been assigned an existing accessibility threshold (mapped using Isochrone) of between 400m and 800m, or 5-10 min walk. The GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.008.5) shows there is coverage across most major towns however there are gaps in provision for Provision for Children and Young People within the towns and smaller rural centres across all subareas.

### Greenways

5.84 Greenways are used for cycling, walking and horse riding for leisure. They include PRoWs, bridleways, canal towpaths and disused railway lines (where accessible).

#### Cycling

5.85 Long-distance national cycle routes cross the District, including numbers 6, 50, 63 and 64. Of these only the southern section of route 6 is mainly traffic free. The GIS Plan (G11133.012) shows these national Greenway routes plus other promoted cycle routes. The GIS Plan shows that there are promoted routes in many parts of the District, but these are often unconnected. The availability of traffic-free routes (bridleways and off-road routes) is very limited.

5.86 There is a need to provide more opportunities for traffic-free cycling across the District especially within Market Harborough.

5.87 Comments from the Open Spaces Strategy consultation confirm there are several rural areas of the District which have poor connectivity and accessibility to open spaces. Consultation noted that footpaths across the District could be improved including the provision of walking and cycling routes, and access for disabled users.

### Accessibility Assessment

5.88 The BSFS recommends that developer contributions are sought towards improvements in the network of cycle and walking routes; on site to connect the development to the wider network, and off-site to identified projects within a 20-minute drive time catchment.

## 6.0 Setting Standards

6.1 Recommended standards of provision are based on local assessment and analysis and may be the same as a national recommended standard, if appropriate. Where current levels of provision do not meet a national recommended standard, this should be viewed as a minimum. Equally, the existing provision may already meet the future recommended standard and to lose it would significantly change the character of the area. By combining the existing level of provision with local views on its adequacy, it is possible to develop a range of new provision standards.

### Harborough District Existing Standards

#### Quantity

6.2 The 2021 OSS proposed new provision standards where relevant. These were determined by analysis of existing quantity, consideration of existing local and national standards and benchmarks, and evidence gathered from site audits and consultation.

6.3 Table 29 presents the existing quantity standards for each open space typology.

*Table 29: Existing Quantity Standards (ha per 1,000 Population)*

Open Space Typology	Existing Standard
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	0.35
Amenity Greenspace	0.90
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	0.35
Civic Spaces	No Standard
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	8.5 (District wide)
Parks and Gardens	0.80
Provision for Children and Young People	0.25
Greenways	3.30 (km)

#### Quality

6.4 The quality standards in the 2021 OSS were derived using the methodology outlined in Chapter 3.0 of this Strategy. The exception is Greenways, which were excluded as they do not readily align with the GFA criteria, see Table 30.

*Table 30: Existing Quality Bandings and Existing Standard*

Quality Band	Score
Excellent	90% to 100%
Very Good	80% to 89%
Good	70% to 79%
Fair	50% to 69%
Poor	0% to 49%

6.5 The proposed quality standard of **70%** ensures that all sites achieve a least a Good quality score.

**Value**

6.6 The value standards proposed in the 2021 OSS were derived using the methodology outlined in Chapter 3.0 of this Strategy. The exception is Greenways, which were excluded as they do not readily fit with the 'Assessing needs and opportunities: a companion guide to PPG17', see Table 31.

*Table 31: Existing Value Bandings and Existing Standard*

Value Band	Score
High	60 to 100%
Medium	40 to 59%
Low	0 to 39%

6.7 The proposed value standard of **60%** ensures that all sites achieve a High value score.

**Accessibility**

6.8 The accessibility standards in the OSS (2020 to 2025) were set through consultation feedback as well as a review against national benchmark standards. These were set as 'straight line thresholds' as shown below in Table 32.

*Table 32: Existing Accessibility Standards*

Open Space Typology	Existing Accessibility Standard
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	4km 10 mins drive / bus
Amenity Greenspace	800m 10 mins walk
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	2km 5 mins drive / bus
Civic Spaces	No Standard
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	1.6km 20 mins walk

Open Space Typology	Existing Accessibility Standard
Parks and Gardens	4km 10 mins drive / bus
Provision for Children and Young People	400m-800m 5-10 mins walk
Greenways	20 min drive time (taken from BSFS)

**Benchmark Standards**

**Fields in Trust: Creating Great Spaces for All (2024)**

6.9 National Benchmark Standards are from FIT Standards: Creating Great Spaces for All (2024), which replaces FIT's Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard (2015). The revised standards were updated to reflect the need for multi-functional and inclusive spaces, whilst retaining FIT's core mission to raise awareness of the importance of greenspaces, work to drive change, and champion best practice.

6.10 The guidance draws out new recommendations for accessibility and, alongside formal open space such as sports pitches and play areas, introduces benchmarking for informal open spaces.

**Natural England GI Framework (2023)**

6.11 In January 2023, Natural England launched the GI Framework as a tool to help planners and developers turn towns and cities greener. The Framework provides a structure to analyse where greenspace in urban areas is needed the most, ensuring everyone can access good quality greenspace.

6.12 The Framework combines GI tools, standards and principles as well as design guidance, and covers five key standards:

- Urban Recovery Standard - aiming to boost nature recovery, integrate nature-based solutions and building resilience to climate change;
- Urban Greening Factor - to improve GI provision and increase level of greening in urban areas, the standard is set at 0.4 for residential development;
- Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard - promotes an increase in tree canopy cover for urban environments;
- Accessible Greenspace Standards - promote access to good quality greenspace within 15 minutes' walk from home; and
- GI Strategy - supports the NPPF's policy that local authorities should develop strategies and policies for GI.

### Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space (1996)

- 6.13 In 1996, English Nature (now Natural England) produced recommendations for the provision of accessible natural green space, this is often referred to as the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards model (ANGSt). This was updated through the publication of the GI Framework Standards for England (2023). ANGSt was changed to the 'Accessible Greenspace Standard' with an initial focus on access to green and blue spaces within 15 minutes' walk from home.
- 6.14 The Accessible Greenspace Standard defines good provision based on different size, proximity, capacity and quality criteria as set out below:
- 6.15 Within a 15-minute walk:
- Doorstep Greenspace - At least 0.5ha within 200m walk; or
  - Local Natural Greenspace - At least 2ha within 300m walk; and
  - Neighbourhood Natural Greenspace - Medium sized open space (10ha) within 1km.
- 6.16 Beyond a 15 minutes' walk:
- Wider Neighbourhood Natural Greenspace - A medium/large open space (20ha) within 2km;
  - District Natural Greenspace - A large open space (100ha) within 5km; and
  - Sub-Regional Greenspace - A very large open space (500ha) within 10km.
- 6.17 The quality criteria for the Accessible Greenspace Standards aligns with the Green Flag Award Criteria.

### Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard

- 6.18 The Woodland Trust's Woodland Access Standard aspires to the following guidelines:
- no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2 ha in size; and
  - there should be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20 ha within 4km (8km round trip) of people's homes.

### Additional Information on Allotment Standards

- 6.19 There is no legal national minimum quantity provision standard for Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards.

- 6.20 The 1969 Thorpe Report recommended a minimum provision equivalent to 15 plots per 1,000 households<sup>26</sup>, which equates to 6.5 plots per 1,000 population or 0.16 ha per 1,000 population.
- 6.21 The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) recommends a minimum level of provision of 20 allotment plot per 1,000 households, which equates to 8.7 plots per 1,000 population or 0.21 ha per 1,000 population. NSALG advises that the standard plot size is 250 sq. metres.
- 6.22 A Review of Allotment Provision for Cambridge City Council stated that there is difficulty in considering a standard of provision based on household given the trend of falling household size since the 1950s. The report referenced the Survey of Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms, carried out by the University of Derby on behalf of Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in 2006, which showed that the national average provision was 7 plots per 1,000 population, which equates to 0.175 ha per 1,000 population.
- 6.23 In the FiT Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play Review, Phase 2 Survey Findings for England and Wales (2014), the median level of provision for Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards was 0.3 ha per 1,000 population.
- 6.24 A summary of national benchmark standards for Allotments is provided in Table 33.

*Table 33: Summary of National Benchmark Standards for Allotments*

	No. of households	No. of Allotment plots per 1,000 household	Population (based on household size of 2.3)	Hectare (based on plot size of 250m <sup>2</sup> )
Thorpe Report 1969	1,000	15	2,300	0.375
Thorpe Report 1969	-	6.5	1,000	0.16
NSALG	1,000	20	2,300	0.5
NSALG	-	8.7	1,000	0.21
University of Derby	-	7	1,000	0.175
University of Derby	-	-	1,000	0.3

<sup>26</sup> Average Household size in England & Wales is 2.3 (2011 Census)

## Proposed Standards

### Quantity

6.25 The proposed quantity standards are informed by a review of existing provision across the District, with strong consideration given to local context. Standards are locally derived, reflecting supply and demand, and account for the varying characteristics of sub-areas within the District.

6.26 These considerations support setting quantity standards that align with the existing levels of open space provision, aiming to protect, maintain, and where feasible enhance what is already available. Enhanced standards would require additional open space, which may be difficult to deliver due to land and funding constraints, to implement new open space.

#### Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards

6.27 There is no FiT benchmark standard for Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards. Consultation from key stakeholders, 63% suggested there is not enough of this typology and 40% public responses also indicated there is not enough of this typology.

6.28 The proposed standard is to retain the existing standard at 0.35 ha per 1,000 population as it is currently accepted by developers and would allow contribution to be sought to improve existing or provide new growing spaces.

#### Amenity Greenspace

6.29 The national benchmark for Amenity Greenspace is 0.6 ha per 1,000 population. Consultation responses indicated that 57% of key stakeholders and 48% of public respondents feel there is insufficient provision of this typology across the District, while 36% of public respondents believe there is enough or more than enough.

6.30 The proposed standard is to retain the existing standard of 0.9 ha per 1,000 population. Although this exceeds the current national benchmark, there is a current surplus of this typology. Retaining this standard will help to protect the existing level of provision.

#### Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds

6.31 There is no FiT benchmark standard as Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds provision cannot be quantified in this way as their provision is not led by the need for open space and recreation, even though it is acknowledged that they contribute to the overall open space provision of an area.

6.32 Consultation did not identify any specific trends which is expected given that general demand is generated by plot provision (as covered by the Cemeteries and Burial Strategy).

6.33 The proposed standard for Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds is based on the Cemetery and Burial Strategy 2016 which is 0.35 ha per 1,000 population. This standard will allow financial contribution towards new provision to address deficiencies across the District.

#### Civic Space

6.34 There is no FiT Benchmark Standard as Civic Space provision cannot be quantified in this way as their provision is not led by the need for open space and recreation, even though it is acknowledged that they contribute to the overall open space provision of an area.

#### Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)

6.35 The national benchmark for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) is 1.8 ha per 1,000 population. Consultation responses show that 57% of key stakeholders feel they do not manage enough of this typology, and 88% agree there is insufficient provision District-wide. Among parish councils, 67% believe there is not enough locally, though the same proportion feel provision is adequate across the District. Additionally, 59% of public respondents agree there is not enough of this typology.

6.36 The proposed standard is to retain the existing provision of 8.5 ha per 1,000 population for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands). Maintaining this standard helps protect current natural spaces and supports securing contributions toward enhancing existing areas or creating new open spaces. It will also ensure that the rural characteristics of built-up areas retain a sensitive fringe with the countryside.

6.37 It is acknowledged that the standard may not be achieved within the urban areas.

#### Parks and Gardens

6.38 The proposed standard for Parks and Gardens is to retain the national benchmark standard of 0.8 hectares per 1,000 population. Consultation results show that 57% of key stakeholders and 51% of public respondents feel there is insufficient provision of this typology. Parish Council responses were mixed, with no clear consensus.

6.39 Retaining the benchmark help to protect existing spaces and will also provide a basis for securing financial contributions towards improving current provision or delivering new open spaces, including strategic projects.

### Provision for Children and Young People

- 6.40 The proposed standard for Provision for Children and Young People is to retain the national benchmark of 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population. Consultation responses indicate that 71% of key stakeholders and 52% of the public feel there is insufficient provision, while 66.7% of Parish Council respondents believe current levels are adequate.
- 6.41 A strategic approach should be taken to ensure proportionate provision in large developments, or in the absence of new provision off-site contributions could be used to enhance existing facilities and address capital cost challenges.

### Greenways

- 6.42 There is no FiT Benchmark Standard as Greenway provision cannot be quantified in this way as their provision is not led by the need for open space and recreation, even though it is acknowledged that they provide a role in connecting open spaces and places together.

Table 34: Proposed Quantity Standards for the District

Open Space Typology	Existing Provision (ha/1,000)	National Benchmark	Existing Standard (ha/1,000)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	0.27	No Standard	0.35	0.35
Amenity Greenspace	1.52	0.60	0.90	0.90
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	0.45	No Standard	0.35	0.35
Civic Spaces	0.01	No Standard	No Standard	No Standard
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	9.08	1.80	8.5 (District wide)	8.5
Parks and Gardens	0.30	0.80	0.80	0.80
Provision for Children and Young People	0.11	0.25	0.25	0.25
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.72</b>	-	-	-
Greenways	11.37km/1,000	No Standard	3.30	3.30

### Surplus and Deficiencies by Quantity Standard

- 6.43 Table 35 compares the existing quantity provision against the proposed quantity standard for Harborough District to show the surplus and deficiency for the current population 2022.

Table 35: Existing Quantity Provision against the Proposed Quantity Standard

Open Space Typology	Existing Provision (ha/1,000)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)	Surplus/Deficiency (ha/1,000)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	0.27	0.35	-0.08
Amenity Greenspace	1.52	0.9	0.62
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	0.45	0.35	0.10
Civic Spaces	0.01	No Standard	No Standard
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	9.08	8.5	0.58
Parks and Gardens	0.30	0.8	-0.50
Provision for Children and Young People	0.11	0.25	-0.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.72</b>	-	-
Greenways	11.37	3.30	8.07

- 6.44 Table 36 compares the future quantity provision against the proposed quantity standard for the District to show surplus and deficiency for the future projected population of 124,958 by 2041.

Table 36: Future Quantity Provision against the Proposed Quality Standard

Open Space Typology	Future Provision (ha/1,000)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)	Surplus/Deficiency (ha/1,000)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	0.21	0.35	-0.14
Amenity Greenspace	1.18	0.9	0.28
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	0.35	0.35	0.00
Civic Spaces	0.01	No Standard	No Standard
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	7.08	8.5	-1.42
Parks and Gardens	0.23	0.8	-0.57
Provision for Children and Young People	0.08	0.25	-0.17
Total	9.14	-	-
Greenways	8.87	3.30	5.57

## Accessibility

### Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards

- 6.45 For Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards, there is no national benchmark for accessibility. The proposed standard is to reduce the accessibility standard from 4.0km to 2.0km, equivalent to a five-minute drive or bus journey. This adjustment would maintain good access in the middle and western sub-areas of the District, while the eastern sub-area would continue to have sporadic provision, which is considered acceptable given its rural character.

### Amenity Greenspace

- 6.46 The Amenity Greenspace accessibility standard is proposed to be retained at 800m, equivalent to a ten-minute walk. This standard currently provides good coverage in the middle and west of the District, with less coverage in the east. However, the rural nature of the eastern sub-area and existing cross-boundary provision in places like Allexton support the retention of the current standard.

### Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds

- 6.47 For Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds, there is no Fields in Trust (FiT) Standard for accessibility. The proposal is to retain the existing standard at 2km, recognising that use of this typology is generally needs-based and varies significantly between individuals, equivalent to a 5 min drive or bus.

### Civic Space

- 6.48 In the case of Civic Spaces, there is also no FiT Standard for accessibility. Due to the unique nature and location-specific function of this typology, it is proposed that no formal accessibility standard be applied.

### Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)

- 6.49 The accessibility standard for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) is proposed to be reduced from 1.6km to the national benchmark of 720m, or a ten-minute walk. Applying the revised standard shows good coverage in the middle and eastern sub-areas, while the western sub-area has some areas of deficiency. Main settlements such as Lutterworth and Broughton Astley have good coverage and benefit from proximity to the wider countryside, which is consistent with its rural context.

### Parks and Gardens

- 6.50 For Parks and Gardens, the proposal is to retain the current accessibility standard at 4km, equivalent to a ten-minute drive or bus. Only Market Harborough and Great Bowden have good access in the middle sub area, Foxton has limited access. The western sub-area has good access to this typology, while the eastern sub-area has more sporadic provision, reflecting its rural nature.

### Provision for Children and Young People

- 6.51 The accessibility standard for Provision for Children and Young People is proposed to be retained at 400m to 800m, or a five to ten-minute walk. This aligns with the current FiT Standard, which is between a LEAP (Local Equipped Areas for Play) and NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play). There is generally good access across the main towns, although gaps remain in Market Harborough and Lutterworth. The eastern sub-area has limited provision.

### Greenways

- 6.52 The accessibility standard for Greenways is proposed to be reduced from 17-33km to 800m, equivalent to less than a one-minute drive. Consultation responses highlighted the need to improve connectivity between open spaces. This revised standard would help identify areas of concern and support strategic planning, including securing contributions for capital projects to improve connectivity.

6.53 Proposed accessibility standards can be found in Table 37.

*Table 37: Proposed Accessibility Standards*

Open Space Typology	National Benchmark Standard	Adopted Accessibility Standard
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	No Standard	2km (10 minutes bus/drive)
Amenity Greenspace	480 metres (10 mins walk)	800m (10 mins walk)
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	No Standard	2km (5 mins drive/bus)
Civic Spaces	No Standard	No Standard
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	720 metres (10 mins walk)	720m (20 mins walk)
Parks and Gardens	710 metres (15 mins walk)	4km (10 mins drive/bus)
Provision for Children and Young People	LAP - 100m (2-3 mins walk) LEAP - 400m (20 mins walk) NEAP - 1000m (20 mins walk)	400-800m (5–10-minute walk)
Greenways	No Standard	800m (less than 1 min drive)

## Quality

- 6.54 The proposed quality standard for open space across the District is based on the GFA criteria (used to complete the quality audits). A GFA would be awarded to a site which passes a full assessment award criteria which is based on official standards set and recognised in the United Kingdom and internationally.
- 6.55 The GFA Raising the Standard manual has eight sections of assessment, however for the purposes of the Strategy, Section 1: A Welcoming Place, Section 2: Healthy, Safe and Secure and Section 3: Well Maintained. The assessment criteria selected is appropriate to apply to all typologies of open space. Section 1 assesses the signage, accessibility for a wide range of visitors, entrance presentation and the maintenance and definition of boundaries. Section 2 takes into consideration the safety and security of facilities, shelter from the weather, lighting and clear sightlines. Section 3 considers the overall cleanliness of the site and the soft and hard landscaping features present.
- 6.56 The proposed quality bandings and proposed standard are the same as the previous 2021 OSS, see Table 38.

*Table 38: Retained Quality Bandings and Retained Standard*

Quality Band	Score
Excellent	90% to 100%
Very Good	80% to 89%
Good	70% to 79%
Fair	50% to 69%
Poor	0% to 49%

- 6.57 The proposed quality standard of 70% ensures that all sites achieve a least a Good quality score.

## Value

- 6.58 The proposed value bandings and proposed standards are retained from the previous 2021 OSS, see Table 39.

*Table 39: Retained Value Bandings and Retained Standard*

Value Band	Score
High	60 to 100%
Medium	40 to 59%
Low	0 to 39%

- 6.59 The proposed value standard of **60%** ensures that all sites achieve a High value score.
- 6.60 Adding value to open space is very important as it enables them to provide more ecosystem services and the benefits that can be derived from them. Value can be added in a multitude of ways to draw out their contextual, heritage, local amenity/ sense of place, recreation, play and ecological value.

## 7.0 Applying Standards

- 7.1 This chapter analyses the open space provision in each of the three sub-areas across the District. This includes details on each open space typology, including quantity, quality, accessibility and value. Considering the existing provision against the individual characteristics of each sub-area, including the socio-economic factors, will help inform the most appropriate means of future open space provision. Whilst analysis at a sub-area level provides a level of detail to help decision making, it is not the intention that each sub-area should have equal provision due to differences in population and characteristics.
- 7.2 Tables in each section provide a breakdown of open space provision by sub-area as well as where the proposed open space quantity standards are being met. Additional commentary is provided about whether there is access to open space. Quantity provision should not be considered in isolation given that people access open spaces regardless of their geographical and administration boundaries.

### East

#### Sub-area Analysis

- 7.3 The East sub-area is in the eastern part of the Council's administrative boundary and includes the villages of Scraftoft, Tilton on the Hill, Loddington, Billesdon, Hallaton, and Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt.
- 7.4 The East sub-area is predominantly rural in character, featuring traditional village forms, agricultural landscapes, and limited urban development. The East sub-area has the largest supply of open space per 1,000 population:
- Current (2022) open space provision - 27.48 ha per 1,000 population; and
  - Future (2041) open space provision - 21.43 ha per 1,000 population.
- 7.5 The revised quantity calculations are a slight decrease from the 2021 OSS owing to a larger population.
- 7.6 Forty nine Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces provide 89% of the total open space in the east sub-area.
- 7.7 A comparison in current and future quantity provision can be seen in GIS Plans (TEP ref: G11133.004 and G11133.005). There is a current, and future projected surplus of Amenity Greenspace, Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds, and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) within the East sub-area, indicating that residents have good provision of open space and informal green areas. However, there is a deficiency in Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards, Parks and Gardens, and Provision for Children and Young People,

highlighting a need for more structured recreational spaces and facilities that support active use, play, and community food growing. Open spaces such as Allexton Park (TEP ID: 38) provide accessible open space for residents and visitors even in rural parts of the District.

- 7.8 There are no Civic Spaces in the eastern sub-area.
- 7.9 GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.002.1-10) shows open space typologies across the East sub-area.
- 7.10 Table 40 shows a breakdown of the current and future provision by typology in the East sub-area as well as any surplus and deficiencies.

*Table 40: East sub-area Open Space Provision by Typology*

Open Space Typology	Existing Provision (ha)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)	Existing 2022 Provision (ha/1,000)	Future 2041 Provision (ha/1,000)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	2.43	0.35	0.09	0.07
Amenity Greenspace	45.84	0.9	1.61	1.25
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	16.86	0.35	0.59	0.46
Civic Spaces	0.00	No Standard	0	0
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	694.61	8.5	24.38	19.01
Parks and Gardens	20.36	0.8	0.71	0.56
Provision for Children and Young People	3.09	0.25	0.11	0.08

#### Accessibility Analysis

- 7.11 The East sub-area has good accessibility to Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands).
- 7.12 There is little access to Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards, , Parks and Gardens due to the rural and scattered nature of settlements within the sub-area.

### Quality Analysis

- 7.13 GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.006.1-10) shows each open space and the quality score from the open space audits. 114 sites received a quality audit in the East sub-area.
- 7.14 The majority of sites (88) within the East sub-area scored Very Good or Good. 24 sites were Fair, while 2 sites were of Poor quality (TEP ID: 379, Ivy Close Buffer Zone at Great Glen and TEP ID: 507, Meadowbrook Road Balancing Facility Kibworth Beauchamp).
- 7.15 Table 41 shows the direction of change in Quality audit scores since the 2021 OSS in the Eastern sub-area.

*Table 41: Quality Variance from 2021 to 2025 in the East sub-area*

Quality Banding	% of sites in 2025	No. of sites in 2025	% of sites in 2021	No. of sites in 2021	Variance
Poor	2%	2	1%	1	1%
Fair	21%	24	22%	27	-1%
Good	44%	50	40%	49	4%
Very Good	33%	38	26%	32	8%
Excellent	0%	0	12%	15	-12%
<b>Total no. of sites</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>124</b>	

### Value Analysis

- 7.16 GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.007.1-10) shows each open space and the value score from the open space audits.
- 7.17 Open space within the East sub-area ranged from Low to High Value. 25 sites scored High, 24 sites scored Medium, and 65 sites scored Low Value. The Village Hall and Small Play Area at Little Stretton (TEP ID: 797) has the highest value score out of all of the open spaces audited within the sub-area.
- 7.18 Table 42 shows the direction of change in Value audit scores since the 2021 OSS in the East sub-area.

*Table 42: Value Variance from 2021 to 2025 in the East sub-area*

Value Banding	% of sites in 2025	No. of sites in 2025	% of sites in 2021	No. of sites in 2021	Variance
Low	57.02%	65	42.15%	30	15%
Medium	21.05%	24	49.30%	35	-28%
High	21.93%	25	8.45%	6	13%
<b>Total no. of sites</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>71</b>	

### Future Provision

- 7.19 Table 43 below shows the current and future provision for each open space typology within the East sub-area. There is a population trajectory in the eastern sub-area of 36,539 by 2041.

*Table 43: East Sub-area Open Space Provision Current and Future against the Standards*

Open Space Typology	Current (2022) Surplus/Deficiency (ha/1,000)	Future (by 2041) Surplus/Deficiency (ha/1,000)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	-0.26	-0.28
Amenity Greenspace	+0.71	+0.35
Civic Spaces	No Standard	No Standard
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	+0.24	+0.11
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	+15.88	+10.51
Parks and Gardens	-0.09	-0.24
Provision for Children and Young People	-0.14	-0.17

### Middle

#### Sub-area Analysis

- 7.20 The Middle sub-area is south of Leicester and includes the sub-regional centre of Market Harborough and the rural centre of Fleckney and Husbands Bosworth.
- 7.21 The Middle sub-area currently has the largest population of the three sub-areas with a current population of 38,150 (5.15 ha per 1,000 population) and a future population of 48,917 (4.01 ha per 1,000 population).
- 7.22 The draft Local Plan plans for significant growth around Market Harborough (South of the Grand Union Canal - 250 dwellings, east of Market Harborough Road - 850 dwellings, Gallow Fields Road - 500 dwellings and 5 ha of employment), Great Bowden (Dingley Road and Nether Green - 100 dwellings) and Kibworth Beauchamp (Warick Road - 475 dwellings).
- 7.23 There is good range of quality open space typologies in Market Harborough including Welland Park (TEP ID: 829) which provides access to recreational opportunities, informal play areas, social fitness zones and cafés. Welland Park also links to the Riverside Walk East which provides connectivity through the town.

- 7.24 Airfield Country Park (TEP ID: 858) in Market Harborough forms part of the wider Airfield Farm development on the town's north-west edge, linking directly to the Grand Union Canal. It incorporates an improved towpath to create an accessible green corridor between town and countryside. The Country Park features open meadows, woodland edges, and wetland areas designed as attractive SuDS that manage water while supporting biodiversity. Together, these elements provide opportunities for recreation such as walking, cycling and natural play, as well as informal meeting spaces across lawns, seating areas, and viewpoints overlooking ponds and the canal.
- 7.25 There is a current and projected surplus of Amenity Greenspace within the Middle sub-area, providing adequate informal open space for general recreation and relaxation.
- 7.26 There is a current, and future forecasted deficiency across all other typologies. This highlights the need for more diverse and multifunctional open spaces that offer opportunities for food growing biodiversity enhancement and play. Future developments could help address these gaps by integrating community growing areas, formal parkland, play facilities, and natural habitat zones and connecting the GI network.
- 7.27 GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.002.1-10) shows open space typologies across the Middle sub-area.
- 7.28 Table 44 shows a breakdown of the current and future provision by typology in the Middle sub-area as well as any surplus and deficiencies.

*Table 44: Middle sub-area Open Space Provision by Typology*

Open Space Typology	Existing Provision (ha)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)	Existing 2022 Provision (ha/1,000)	Future 2041 Provision (ha/1,000)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	10.56	0.35	0.28	0.22
Amenity Greenspace	63.27	0.9	1.66	1.29
Civic Spaces	0.79	No Standard	0.02	0.02
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	13.12	0.35	0.34	0.27

Open Space Typology	Existing Provision (ha)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)	Existing 2022 Provision (ha/1,000)	Future 2041 Provision (ha/1,000)
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	97.23	8.5	2.55	1.99
Parks and Gardens	8.69	0.8	0.23	0.18
Provision for Children and Young People	2.73	0.25	0.07	0.06

### Accessibility Analysis

- 7.29 The middle sub-area has good access to Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards, Amenity Greenspaces, Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands), and Parks and Gardens, with Welland Park serving much of Market Harborough. There is no access to this typology in smaller settlements such as Fleckney, Husbands Bosworth and Foxton.
- 7.30 Access to Provision for Children and Young People is generally good around Market Harborough and most other main settlements, indicating a need to improve connectivity and availability of dedicated play and youth spaces within this sub-area area. There are localised gaps in access to smaller play facilities when reviewing against the 400m accessibility standard.

### Quality Analysis

- 7.31 GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.006.1-10) shows each open space and the quality score from the open space audits.
- 7.32 The majority of sites (57) within the Middle Sub-area scored Excellent or Very Good. 34 sites were Good, while 35 sites were of Fair quality, further details can be found in Appendix A.
- 7.33 Table 45 shows the direction of change in Quality audit scores since the 2021 OSS in the Middle sub-area.

Table 45: Quality Variance from 2021 to 2025 in the Middle sub-area

Quality Banding	% of sites in 2025	No. of sites in 2025	% of sites in 2021	No. of sites in 2021	Variance
Poor	0.00%	0	0.99%	1	-1%
Fair	13.33%	14	14.85%	15	-2%
Good	32.38%	34	33.66%	34	-1%
Very Good	33.33%	35	19.80%	20	14%
Excellent	20.95%	22	30.69%	31	-10%
<b>Total no. of sites</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>101</b>	

### Value Analysis

- 7.34 GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.007.1-10) shows each open space and the value score from the open space audits.
- 7.35 Open space within the Middle Sub-area ranged from Low to High Value. 4 sites scored High, 29 sites scored Medium, and 72 sites score Low Value. Hursley Park in Great Bowden (TEP ID: 13) has the highest value score out of all of the open spaces audited within the sub-area.
- 7.36 Table 46 shows the direction of change in Value audit scores since the 2021 OSS.

Table 46: Value Variance from 2021 to 2025 in the Middle sub-area

Value Banding	% of sites in 2025	No. of sites in 2025	% of sites in 2021	No. of sites in 2021	Variance
Low	68.57%	72	52.31%	34	16%
Medium	27.62%	29	38.46%	25	-11%
High	3.81%	4	9.23%	6	-5%
<b>Total no. of sites</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>87</b>	

### Future Provision

- 7.37 Table 47 below shows the current and future provision for each open space typology within the Middle sub-area. There is a population trajectory in the Middle sub-area of 48,917 by 2041.

Table 47: Middle Sub-Area Open Space Provision Current and Future against the Standards

Open Space Typology	Current (2022) Surplus/Deficiency (ha/1,000)	Future (by 2041) Surplus/Deficiency (ha/1,000)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	-0.07	-0.13
Amenity Greenspace	+0.76	+0.39
Civic Spaces	No Standard	No Standard

Open Space Typology	Current (2022) Surplus/Deficiency (ha/1,000)	Future (by 2041) Surplus/Deficiency (ha/1,000)
Churchyards and Burial Grounds	-0.01	-0.08
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	-5.95	-6.51
Parks and Gardens	-0.57	-0.62
Provision for Children and Young People	-0.18	-0.19

### West

#### Sub-area Analysis

- 7.38 The West sub-area lies in the western part of the Council's administrative boundary and includes the villages of Lutterworth and Broughton Astley, and the rural centre of Ullesthorpe.
- 7.39 The West sub-area has a current population of 30,807 (5.29 ha per 1,000 population) and a future population of 39,502 (4.13 ha per 1,000 population).
- 7.40 There is currently a surplus of Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards, Amenity Greenspace, and Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds, indicating sufficient provision at present. However, projections show that in the future, only Amenity Greenspace will remain in surplus.
- 7.41 In contrast, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands), Parks and Gardens, and Provision for Children and Young People all show a current deficiency now and up to 2041, highlighting a continued need to provide more provision or improved access for these typologies.
- 7.42 There is a good range of open space especially within Lutterworth and Broughton Astley including Lutterworth Country Park with Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) and Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards in Broughton Astley and on Dunton Road.
- 7.43 GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.002.1-10) shows open space typologies across the West sub-area.
- 7.44 Table 48 shows a breakdown of the current and future provision by typology in the West sub-area as well as any surplus and deficiencies.

Table 48: West sub-area Open Space Provision by Typology

Open Space Typology	Existing Provision (ha)	Proposed Standard (ha/1,000)	Existing 2022 Provision (ha/1,000)	Future 2041 Provision (ha/1,000)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	13.36	0.35	0.43	0.34
Amenity Greenspace	38.57	0.9	1.25	0.98
Civic Spaces	0.26	No Standard	0.01	0.01
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	13.48	0.35	0.44	0.34
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	92.66	8.5	3.01	2.35
Parks and Gardens	0.16	0.8	0.01	0.00
Provision for Children and Young People	4.53	0.25	0.15	0.11

### Accessibility Analysis

- 7.45 The West sub-area has good access to Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards, particularly around Lutterworth (though limited in the southern part of the sub area), as well as to Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds, Parks and Gardens, and Provision for Children and Young People within Lutterworth and Broughton Astley. However, there are gaps in access to Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands) especially around Lutterworth and Broughton Astley, indicating a need to improve connectivity and increase provision to create a more balanced and inclusive network of accessible green spaces.

### Quality Analysis

- 7.46 GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.006.1-10) shows each open space and the quality score from the open space audits.
- 7.47 15 sites within the West Sub-area scored Excellent or Very Good. 31 sites were Good, while 32 sites were of Fair quality and 11 sites were Poor, further details can be found in Appendix A.
- 7.48 Table 49 shows the direction of change in Quality audit scores since the 2021 OSS in the West sub-area.

Table 49: Quality Variance from 2021 to 2025 in the West sub-area

Quality Banding	% of sites in 2025	No. of sites in 2025	% of sites in 2021	No. of sites in 2021	Variance
Poor	12.36%	11.00	1.11%	1	11%
Fair	35.96%	32.00	8.89%	8	27%
Good	34.83%	31.00	11.11%	10	24%
Very Good	14.61%	13.00	28.89%	26	-14%
Excellent	2.25%	2.00	50.00%	45	-48%
<b>Total no. of sites</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>89.00</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>90</b>	

### Value Analysis

- 7.49 GIS Plan (TEP ref: G11133.007.1-10) shows each open space and the value score from the open space audits.
- 7.50 Open space within the West Sub-area ranged from Low to High Value. 5 sites scored High, 41 sites scored Medium, and 43 sites score Low Value. All Saints Churchyard in Dunton Bassett (TEP ID: 32) has the highest value score out of all of the open spaces audited within the sub-area.
- 7.51 Table 50 shows the direction of change in Value audit scores since the 2021 OSS in the West sub-area.

Table 50: Value Variance from 2021 to 2025 in the West sub-area

Value Banding	% of sites in 2025	No. of sites in 2025	% of sites in 2021	No. of sites in 2021	Variance
Low	48.31%	43	66.67%	30	-9.65%
Medium	46.07%	41	31.11%	14	-27.01%
High	5.62%	5	2.22%	1	-4.16%
<b>Total no. of sites</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>82</b>	

### Future Provision

- 7.52 Table 51 below shows the current and future provision for each open space typology within the West sub-area. There is a population trajectory in the West sub-area of 39,502 by 2041.

Table 51: West Sub-area Open Space Provision Current and Future against the standards

Open Space Typology	Current (2022) Surplus/Deficiency (ha/1,000)	Future (by 2041) Surplus/Deficiency (ha/1,000)
Allotments, Community Gardens and Orchards	+0.08	-0.01
Amenity Greenspace	+0.35	+0.08
Civic Spaces	No standard	No standard
Cemeteries and Other Burial Grounds	+0.09	-0.01
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace (including Urban Woodlands)	-5.49	-6.15
Parks and Gardens	-0.79	-0.80
Provision for Children and Young People	-0.10	-0.14

7.53 Key projects to be undertaken to address deficiencies of open space across the District are summarised within the Action Plan in Chapter 9.0. The list is not definitive however draws upon comments received during the consultation phase. The Action Plan details a programme and projects to enhance open spaces across the District, identifying responsible stakeholders, linking to recent studies and consultations, and setting short, medium, and long-term timelines with measurable outcomes.

## 8.0 Policy Approach

8.1 This chapter sets out the framework for delivering open space provision within the District. It includes a critical review of other local authorities and their approach to open space policy and identifies best practice which inform the Strategy.

8.2 It examines the role of planning conditions and obligations in securing open space through development, assessing their effectiveness and alignment with policy objectives. Together, these elements provide a robust foundation for shaping a policy approach that is practical, consistent, and responsive to local needs.

### Planning Policy Critical Review

8.3 TEP has undertaken a review of the Council's current approach, comparing them with approaches used by other local authorities (see Table 52). This highlights several opportunities to strengthen Harborough's current approach including:

- clarifying adoption protocols;
- establishing effective monitoring mechanisms; and
- identifying who specifically is responsible for monitoring the long-term maintenance of open space.

8.4 These enhancements would support greater clarity and help ensure the long-term quality and stewardship of open space (see Appendix D).

Table 52: Comparable Local Authority Approach to Open Space

Local Authority	Policy / SPD	Key Points
Harborough District Council	Local Plan Policy GI2; Planning Obligations SPD	Covers safeguarding, loss mitigation, and provision of open space. SPD provides contribution guidance.
Stratford-on-Avon District Council	Core Strategy Policy CS.25; Developer Requirements SPD	SPD sets clear adoption hierarchy (Parish, then District and then third-party private), quality standards and funding mechanisms.
Warwick District Council	Local Plan Policy HS4; Public Open Space SPD	SPD recommends Local Authority adoption; if declined, a developer must provide a Management Plan replicating the Local Authority standards.
Mansfield District Council	Local Plan Policy IN4; Planning Obligations SPD	Requires 10% of developable area for open space; SPD covers minimum size (0.16 ha) and Management Plans.
Charnwood Borough Council	Core Strategy Policy CS15	Requires open space in new developments, however no specific management procedures are detailed.

8.5 The following recommendations have been identified to enhance the District's approach to open space provision:

- Develop an updated Open Space Guidance Document for open space provision, adoption, and long-term maintenance. The existing adopted SPD is out of date and lacks clarity;
- Introduce a clear adoption hierarchy (e.g., Parish/Town Council, then District Council, then third-party management organisation) to ensure accountability;
- Guidance on financial contributions and commuted sums should be included (e.g. 30-year maintenance funding) to prevent underfunded open spaces;
- Require post-development inspections and monitoring (e.g. safety audits, quality checks) to maintain functionality and safety;
- Ensure maintenance standards for private management organisations match those of Local Authorities;
- Explicitly link open space policy to mandatory BNG requirements and require a 30-year management plan for habitats and landscape elements;
- Secure long-term management plans through legal agreements, covering all GI and site furniture; and
- Require regular reviews by the managing organisation of the management plan to reflect site conditions and user needs.

### Planning Conditions Critical Review

- 8.6 TEP also undertook a critical review of recent planning conditions recently attached to planning consent approvals within the District. The review identified the following gaps:
- Ensure effective long-term management of open spaces;
  - Clearly identify the responsible body for management and maintenance;
  - Introduce monitoring and reporting requirements to track compliance and quality;
  - Establish clear consequences for non-compliance to enforce Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); and
  - Require all information relating to long-term management to be provided prior to commencement of development.
- 8.7 Conditions should be coordinated across project phases, with contingency provisions in place should management fail (see Appendix E).
- 8.8 The critical review of the Council's current approach to open space in policy and planning conditions and comparable local authorities identified key gaps. These findings have directly informed the recommendations set out in Chapter 9.0 to strengthen the Council's approach in ensuring high-quality and accessible open space.

## 9.0 Recommendations

### Adopt the Recommended Standards

- 9.1 This Strategy has been produced in line with the NPPF and PPG for Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, PProW and Local Green Space (2014), which have replaced PPG Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (2002) and its Companion Guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to PPG 17 (2002) as well as the FiT Standard and Natural England's GI Framework.
- 9.2 Whilst the Companion Guide to PPG 17 has been superseded, it is acknowledged that the principles and approach within the guidance have not been replaced, and it is still relevant to apply the methodology to assess needs for open space provision.
- 9.3 This Strategy has reviewed local open space provision within the District, including quantity, quality, accessibility and value.
- 9.4 This Strategy has resulted in recommendations for standards which are robust and can form a basis for addressing any deficiencies resulting from proposed development and population increase.
- 9.5 It is recommended that the proposed standards are adopted by the Council to support the delivery and implementation of Local Plan policies up to 2041.

### Enforce the Recommended Standards

- 9.6 The results of this Strategy should be used to identify which typology(ies) should be included as part of a new development. Multi-functional open space incorporating food growing opportunities, and opportunities for play should be prioritised to address deficiencies across the District.
- 9.7 Funding through planning obligations should be used to improve the quality and value (multi-functionality) of open spaces. A developer's contribution calculator will assist with the open space requirements associated with new development (see separate Developer Contributions Calculator spreadsheet).

### Open Space Guidance Documents

- 9.8 SPD's cover a wide range of issues giving detailed guidance on how local planning policies or proposals in development plan documents will be implemented.
- 9.9 It is recommended that an Open Space Guidance Document is produced to supersede the Open Space Delivery Plan (2021), which covers the open space standards, commuted sum payments, and adoption of open spaces through an

open space adoption hierarchy (this was highlighted as an opportunity within the Critical Policy Review in Appendix D and Chapter 8.0).

- 9.10 The commuted sum payment is recommended at:
  - 30 years for habitat delivery (in line with BNG delivery); and
  - 15 years for hard landscaping as a minimum.
- 9.11 This is based on a review with key Council teams, and a review of best practice and adopted mechanisms for other Local Authorities. The unit rates within the developer contributions calculator should be updated annually.

### Long-Term Management of Open Spaces from New Development

- 9.12 Once development has been granted planning permission, implemented on the site and practical completion has been achieved, the open space is usually transferred to a management organisation who would be responsible for the long-term management.
- 9.13 A Landscape Management Plan (LMP) is essential for the long-term management of open space and should be produced prior to the transfer of open space to the managing organisation as detailed in Chapter 8.0. A LMP should provide the following minimum information:
  - Desktop review of the site including context, designations and history;
  - Site specific information including ecology, arboriculture and PRoW;
  - Aims and objective for the management of the site;
  - The name of the management organisation who will be responsible for the adoption of open space post-practical completion;
  - Funding of long-term maintenance of the site; and
  - Procedure of review and monitoring of the open space and the LMP.
- 9.14 Example condition wording for LMPs and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plans (HMMPs) can be found within Appendix C.
- 9.15 Once an open space has been transferred it is no longer the developer's responsibility to manage the open space.

### Open Space Adoption Hierarchy

- 9.16 An adoption hierarchy is recommended to be implemented to ensure a clear, consistent approach to the management of public open spaces. The approach has been devised to address existing concerns from the Council, and residents.
- 9.17 The hierarchy prioritises transfer to Parish Councils, followed by the District Council, where appropriate and finally to a Third-Party Management Organisation as a last resort. This hierarchy supports local stewardship, efficient resource use, and long-term quality assurance. See proposed adoption hierarchy in Figure 12.

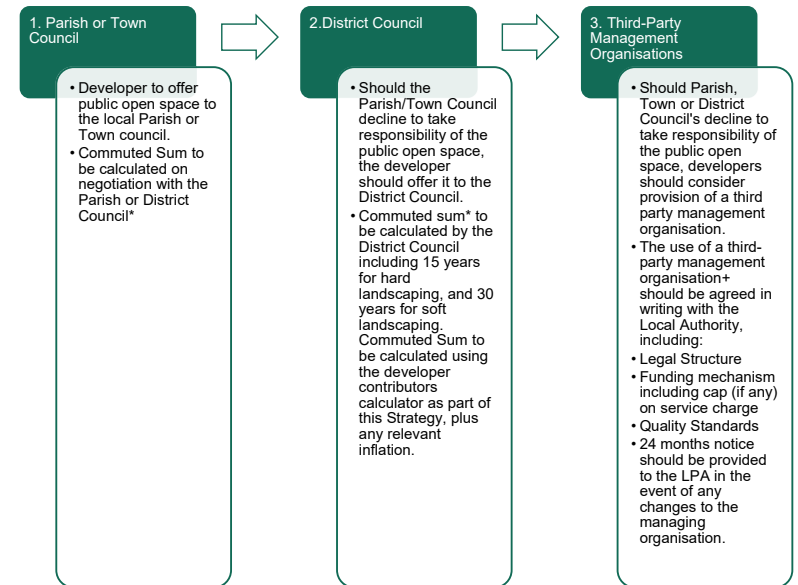


Figure 12: Adoption Hierarchy for Harborough District

[\*] Commuted sums should consider all reasonable costs to ensure the successful long-term stewardship of the open space including any works required in the establishment period, any capital replacement costs, staffing costs, and annual maintenance costs.

[+] Third Party Management Companies may include private management companies, third-sector management companies, and resident-led management companies.

Note Strategic Sites may not be applicable to the hierarchy outlined above, these should be considered on a site-by-site basis.

### Open Space Working Group

- 9.18 Consultation highlighted an Open Space Steering Group may be beneficial to:
- Enable knowledge sharing of best practice;
  - Ensure collaboration in working agreements; and
  - Provide a forum for raising queries or issues.

### Protecting Existing Open Spaces

- 9.19 Under the NPPF (paragraph 104) existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land should not be built on unless an assessment is undertaken, clearly demonstrating the land and or buildings are surplus to requirement, the loss will be replaced or the development is for an alternative sport and recreational provision, where the benefits clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use.
- 9.20 Any assessment should consider quantity, quality, accessibility as well as the surplus and deficiencies of open space provision. When assessing individual sites, accessibility should consider physical barriers such as rivers, main roads and railway lines to alternative open spaces.

### Multi-functional Open Space

- 9.21 There is a growing emphasis on using open spaces to help tackle climate change, create flood risk resilience, reverse biodiversity decline and provide many health and wellbeing benefits for the immediate and wider community. Furthermore, new developments are required to provide measurable net gains for biodiversity under the NPPF (paragraph 192, part b), the Natural Environment PPG (2025), and the BNG PPG (2024). All new development of more than 10 dwellings should continue to provide new open space, but this should be regardless of deficiencies.
- 9.22 Harborough Local Plan, Key Issue 5: GI identified that provision of multi-functional green space including a range of habitats and linkages to established habitats as part of new development is essential for tackling the biodiversity deficit in the District. However open spaces are also important for health and wellbeing and climate change mitigation and adaptation. Wherever possible, the Council should look to open spaces to deliver multiple functions (see Figure 13), including:
- Recreation;
  - Green travel route;
  - Aesthetic;
  - Shading from the sun;
  - Evaporative cooling;

- Trapping air pollutants;
- Noise absorption;
- Habitat for wildlife, possibly through re-wilding;
- Connectivity for wildlife;
- Heritage;
- Cultural;
- Carbon storage;
- Food production;
- Wind shelter;
- Education;
- Water storage;
- Water infiltration; and
- Water interception.

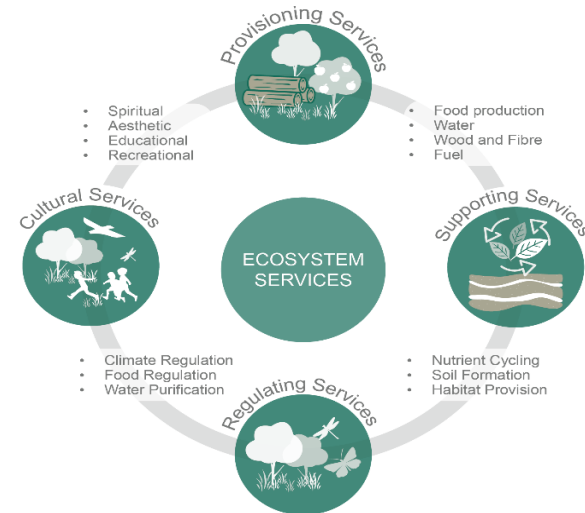


Figure 13: Ecosystem Services Graphic

- 9.23 It is also recommended that in line with the BSFS, Greenways contributions are used to improve and connect the existing network, providing access to open spaces whilst also connecting wildlife corridors.

## Open Space Action Plan (2025 to 2035)

- 9.24 The Action Plan (see Table 53):
- Sets out a draft programme and/or projects to improve open spaces across the District over the next 10 years;
  - Lists programmes and/or projects that will improve open spaces, this includes those identified through the production of the Strategy, as well as providing links to the recently completed GBI Study (TEP ref: 10420.018);
  - Identifies responsible parties and stakeholders for each programme and/or project; and
  - Proposes a timescale for short, medium and long-term projects with specific and measurable outcome criteria.
- 9.25 The Action Plan will be reviewed and updated annually by the Council. Funding to implement this Action Plan will come from a range of sources.

Table 53: *Harborough District Open Space Action Plan (2025 to 2035)*

Item	Description	Stakeholders or Responsible Parties	Timeline
<b>District wide</b>			
Adopt GFA standard for open spaces.	Review the GFA process and consider applying for the award.	Harborough District Council Parks Team	6-12 months.
Create additional GFA open spaces.	Agree target number of greenspaces to achieve and retain GFA in the next 5 years.	Harborough District Council Parks Team	6-12 months.
Adopt a GFA standard.	Align council management and volunteer group activities to this standard.	Harborough District Council Parks Team and Community Groups	18 months.
Promote the use of BNG and other nature recovery funds to enhance management.	Explore the approach to habitat banking within the District including off-site areas which could be enhanced through the planning process.	Harborough District Council Planning Team	18 months.
Implement an open space guidance document.	Create an Open Space Guidance Document to supersede the Open Space Delivery Plan (2021), which covers the open space standards, commuted sum payments, and adoption of open spaces through an open space adoption hierarchy.	Harborough District Council Planning Team	6-12 months.

Item	Description	Stakeholders or Responsible Parties	Timeline
Nature friendly management practices.	Optimise nature friendly management practices across council-owned assets.	Harborough District Council Parks Team	18 months.
Implement proposed standards as stated in this Strategy.	Implement the proposed standards to reduce deficient typologies across the District in: Allotments, community gardens and orchards; Parks and gardens; and Provision for children and young people.	Harborough District Council Planning Team	5 years.
Explore feasibility of setting up an Open Spaces Forum	Seek to explore viability of establishing the forum, including establishing an organisation able to lead and coordinate the forum.	Harborough District Council and Parish Councils	1 year
<b>East sub-area</b>			
Implement proposed standards as stated in this Strategy.	Implement the proposed standards to reduce deficient typologies across the eastern sub-area in: Allotments, community gardens and orchards; Natural and semi-natural greenspaces; and Provision for children and young people.	Harborough District Council Planning Team	5 years.
<b>Middle sub-area</b>			
Establish and maintain the new Country Park near Great Bowden.	Manage the new Country Park to provide opportunities for people and nature, improving health and wellbeing, and access to nature by connecting with greenspaces.	Harborough District Council Parks Team	Ongoing.
Establish a safe (ideally 'traffic-free') cycling and walking routes around Harborough known as the 'Green Wheel'.	Explore the options to increase accessibility around Harborough using disused railway lines, PRoW, and opportunities through development to provide a 'traffic free' cycling and walking route around Harborough.	Harborough District Council	6 months.
Maintain a safe (ideally 'traffic-free') cycling and walking routes around Harborough known as the 'Green Wheel'.	Establish and maintain the 'traffic free' Harborough 'Green Wheel'.	Harborough District Council Parks Team	18 months.

## Appendix A: Detailed Audit Results

Item	Description	Stakeholders or Responsible Parties	Timeline
Implement proposed standards as stated in this Strategy.	Implement the proposed standards to reduce deficient typologies across the middle sub-area in: Allotments, community gardens and orchards; Cemetries and churchyards; Natural and semi-natural greenspaces; and Provision for children and young people.	Harborough District Council Planning Team	5 years.
<b>West sub-area</b>			
Implement proposed standards as stated in this Strategy.	Implement the proposed standards to reduce deficient typologies across the west sub-area in: Natural and semi-natural greenspaces; Parks and Gardens; and Provision for children and young people.	Harborough District Council Planning Team	5 years.

# Audit Results

x11133.012 Version 1.0

Site Name	Typology	Sub Area	Area (Ha)	Total Quality Summary (%)	Quality Banding	Total Value Summary (%)	Value Banding
Kibworth Golf Club Road Amenity Green Space	Amenity greenspace	East	0.022275	80	Very good	63	High
LGS/MED/6a and 6b - Tow path and Gardens Medbourne	Amenity greenspace	East	0.488021	80	Very good	34	Low
Manor Field Park - Thurnby and Bushby	Amenity greenspace	East	0.432625	81	Very good	76	High
LGS/BO/7a - The Old Heather Garden	Amenity greenspace	East	0.079446	82	Very good	63	High
Potwell Road AGS Kibworth Harcourt	Amenity greenspace	East	0.261287	82	Very good	59	Medium
Thackney Leys AGS Kibworth Harcourt	Amenity greenspace	East	0.338425	83	Very good	61	High
The Munt	Amenity greenspace	East	0.223352	83	Very good	70	High
Broadgate / Pitchers Lane Junction AGS Great Easton	Amenity greenspace	East	0.031413	83	Very good	13	Low
Centurion Place POS and Play area	Amenity greenspace	East	0.069774	83	Very good	49	Medium
LGS/MED/8 - Springbank Medbourne	Amenity greenspace	East	0.066231	84	Very good	28	Low
Lakeside Court - Thurnby and Bushby	Amenity greenspace	East	0.249085	85	Very good	69	High
Village Green - Cold Newton	Amenity greenspace	East	0.089316	85	Very good	19	Low
Church Bank AGS Great Easton	Amenity greenspace	East	0.064644	85	Very good	31	Low
Land to End of Hazel Grove North End - Hallaton	Amenity greenspace	East	0.084717	86	Very good	13	Low
The Cross Amenity Green Space - Hallaton	Amenity greenspace	East	0.079095	86	Very good	23	Low
Village Green at Billesdon	Amenity greenspace	East	0.059635	86	Very good	31	Low
Amenity Green Space St James Park, Drayton	Amenity greenspace	East	0.089021	87	Very good	32	Low
Great Easton Village Green 1	Amenity greenspace	East	0.062404	88	Very good	18	Low
Saw Pit Lane/ Lounts Crescent Verges - Gt Easton	Amenity greenspace	East	0.019314	88	Very good	18	Low
Hollies Way 4	Amenity greenspace	East	0.024107	71	Good	43	Medium
Pulford Drive POS 1 (Jelson)	Amenity greenspace	East	0.763288	73	Good	73	High
LGS/BIL/1 - Billesdon Brook	Amenity greenspace	East	5.165193	73	Good	30	Low
Warwick Road POS	Amenity greenspace	East	0.051816	73	Good	59	Medium
The Hollow - Medbourne	Amenity greenspace	East	0.556837	74	Good	47	Medium
Rookery Close POS	Amenity greenspace	East	0.27033	75	Good	72	High
Verge at Alexton	Amenity greenspace	East	0.058289	75	Good	11	Low
Village Green - Lowesby	Amenity greenspace	East	0.138579	75	Good	13	Low
Kings Norton Village Green 1	Amenity greenspace	East	0.040295	75	Good	54	Medium
Larkwood AGS Kibworth Beauchamp	Amenity greenspace	East	0.099012	75	Good	57	Medium
Finch Road AGS Kibworth Harcourt	Amenity greenspace	East	0.084157	76	Good	62	High
Somerby Road Open Space - Thurnby and Bushby	Amenity greenspace	East	0.375255	76	Good	68	High
Common Land - Goadby Road Hallaton	Amenity greenspace	East	0.101342	76	Good	22	Low
Blaston Road Village Green - Slawston	Amenity greenspace	East	0.062883	76	Good	29	Low
Beeby Road POS	Amenity greenspace	East	1.831395	76	Good	41	Medium
Memorial Green Stonehall Court Flats - Great Glen	Amenity greenspace	East	0.166066	76	Good	43	Medium
Hollies Way 6	Amenity greenspace	East	0.048656	76	Good	50	Medium
Hollies Way AGS 3 Thurnby	Amenity greenspace	East	0.044164	76	Good	50	Medium
Warwick Road AGS 1 Kibworth Harcourt	Amenity greenspace	East	0.535784	76	Good	58	Medium
LGS/STO/2 - Natural recreation area Stoughton	Amenity greenspace	East	1.254147	77	Good	76	High
Birdie Close, Kibworth	Amenity greenspace	East	0.09773	78	Good	60	High
Charity Farm POS 2	Amenity greenspace	East	0.732421	78	Good	63	High
Dairy Way 1 AGS Kibworth Harcourt	Amenity greenspace	East	0.102839	78	Good	63	High
Billesdon Woodland and Lake	Amenity greenspace	East	3.100526	78	Good	35	Low
LGS/THUR/1- Green in front of Rose and Crown 2	Amenity greenspace	East	0.053912	78	Good	59	Medium
Village Green in Smeeton Westerby	Amenity greenspace	East	0.030616	79	Good	62	High
Fleckney ROad POS and Play area (DWH)	Amenity greenspace	East	0.429564	79	Good	66	High
Bushby Spinney	Amenity greenspace	East	0.060343	79	Good	68	High
Millenium Green	Amenity greenspace	East	0.112786	79	Good	28	Low
Pulford Drive, Scaptoft	Amenity greenspace	East	0.224705	58	Fair	59	Medium
Charity Farm POS 1	Amenity greenspace	East	0.350976	59	Fair	38	Low
St Catherines/Chapel Close Green - Houghton on the	Amenity greenspace	East	0.119907	63	Fair	25	Low
Chestnut Drive, Stretton Hall, Great Glen	Amenity greenspace	East	1.209384	64	Fair	34	Low
Winkley Close POS	Amenity greenspace	East	1.064739	65	Fair	27	Low
Devana Way AGS Great Glen	Amenity greenspace	East	0.560332	65	Fair	38	Low
LGS/SCRAP/5 - Stocks Road Scraptoft	Amenity greenspace	East	0.115461	66	Fair	17	Low
LGS/GRTG/1 - Post Office Green Great Glen	Amenity greenspace	East	0.053429	66	Fair	25	Low
Fiona Drive AGS Thurnby	Amenity greenspace	East	0.068236	66	Fair	41	Medium
LGS/GRTG/2 - Grassed Area outside Chemist GG	Amenity greenspace	East	0.02324	67	Fair	14	Low
Facers Lane, Scraptoft	Amenity greenspace	East	0.143063	67	Fair	24	Low
John Glover Drive POS	Amenity greenspace	East	0.417824	67	Fair	28	Low
Coulter Close, Scraptoft	Amenity greenspace	East	0.289411	69	Fair	22	Low
LGS/SMEW/4 - Traffic Island Smeeton Westerby	Amenity greenspace	East	0.003465	69	Fair	58	Medium
Rowan Avenue, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.07324	90	Excellent	9	Low
Gartree POS	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.890135	90	Excellent	20	Low
Monroe Close, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.129462	90	Excellent	32	Low
Farndon Fields 1	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.426065	90	Excellent	46	Medium
Crescent Close, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.041683	91	Excellent	15	Low
Lenthall Square	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.177699	91	Excellent	24	Low
Farndon Fields 3	Amenity greenspace	Middle	2.121888	91	Excellent	50	Medium
Bates Close, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.596867	92	Excellent	51	Medium
Scott Close, Market Harborough	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.09949	93	Excellent	22	Low
Ridgeway, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.111821	94	Excellent	20	Low
Arden Way, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.103741	94	Excellent	21	Low
The Green (Airfield Farm)	Amenity greenspace	Middle	2.823946	98	Excellent	61	High
Farndon Fields Balancing	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.18756	99	Excellent	21	Low
Gartree POS	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.130231	80	Very good	13	Low
Laughton Village Green	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.089255	80	Very good	32	Low
Bellfield Recreation Ground AGS, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.402112	81	Very good	42	Medium
Riverside Walk [east], Market Harborough	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.355516	81	Very good	44	Medium
Brookfield Road, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.111258	82	Very good	21	Low
Marmion Drive / Charley Close POS	Amenity greenspace	Middle	1.393901	82	Very good	50	Medium
Hursley Park 2	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.430854	83	Very good	60	High
Grenville Gardens, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.127305	83	Very good	15	Low
March Drive POS	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.643745	83	Very good	36	Low
Sherrard Road Recreation Ground, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.405717	83	Very good	53	Medium
Village Green, Church Lane - South Kilworth	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.018838	85	Very good	18	Low
Kilby Road POS	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.114093	85	Very good	31	Low
Green Lane, Rear of Tungston Factory, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.324336	85	Very good	32	Low
Roman Way Recreation Ground	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.643908	85	Very good	47	Medium
Farndale View Balancing Lagoon, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.36859	86	Very good	25	Low
Green 1	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.037084	86	Very good	26	Low
Dunmore Road, Market Harborough	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.029461	87	Very good	10	Low
Little Bowden Recreation Ground	Amenity greenspace	Middle	3.434805	87	Very good	57	Medium
Hursley Park	Amenity greenspace	Middle	5.243603	89	Very good	79	High
The Headlands Recreation Ground, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	1.005027	89	Very good	51	Medium
Farndon Road (South), MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.921982	70	Good	33	Low
LGS/LAUGH/1 - Village Hall Green/ Paddock	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.086422	70	Good	42	Medium
Nether Green - Great Bowden	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.396206	71	Good	55	Medium
Grassland to South Acorn Close - Lubenham	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.148252	72	Good	28	Low
Saddington ROad POS (Persimmon)	Amenity greenspace	Middle	1.478464	72	Good	32	Low
Gartree POS	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.409675	72	Good	40	Medium
Frank Burditt Drive POS and Balancing lagoon	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.383943	73	Good	58	Medium
Tarmac Area, Coleman Road - Fleckney	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.050716	74	Good	7	Low
Fleckney Village Green	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.127224	74	Good	34	Low
Village Green	Amenity greenspace	Middle	1.311291	75	Good	35	Low
Burford Green Recreation Ground	Amenity greenspace	Middle	2.110578	76	Good	51	Medium
Hursley Park 3	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.210216	76	Good	55	Medium
Paget Road, Lubenham	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.020489	77	Good	3	Low
Village hall green	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.07861	77	Good	31	Low
Simborough Way Open Space, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	1.507576	77	Good	44	Medium

Stamp Close Balancing lagoon	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.108266	78	Good	19	Low
Little Plough POS	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.608664	78	Good	26	Low
Lodge Road, Fleckney	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.037924	79	Good	11	Low
Davies Close, Market Harborough	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.280344	79	Good	31	Low
Great Bowden Village Green 3	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.088299	79	Good	56	Medium
Village Green 3 - Husbands Bosworth	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.043432	50	Fair	10	Low
Fleckney Open Space - Leicester Road	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.757484	53	Fair	21	Low
Gartree POS	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.304772	56	Fair	14	Low
Fairfield Close Open Space, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.154671	60	Fair	29	Low
Butler Gardens Amenity Green Space, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.088584	64	Fair	14	Low
Stockwell Close, Market Harborough	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.156714	64	Fair	28	Low
Doddridge Road A, MH	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.031138	68	Fair	22	Low
Pieces Place POS	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.099337	68	Fair	27	Low
Forge Close, Fleckney	Amenity greenspace	Middle	0.045222	69	Fair	25	Low
Village Pond in Cotesbach	Amenity greenspace	West	0.115161	82	Very good	55	Medium
Burrough Way 2	Amenity greenspace	West	0.060166	84	Very good	27	Low
Priimrose Close POS	Amenity greenspace	West	2.416802	84	Very good	56	Medium
Chapel Fields, Swinford	Amenity greenspace	West	0.068664	88	Very good	44	Medium
Coventry Road POS (Mulberry)	Amenity greenspace	West	1.16507	70	Good	25	Low
Dunley Way Recreation Ground	Amenity greenspace	West	0.42488	70	Good	27	Low
Woodway Road AGS - Lutterworth	Amenity greenspace	West	0.4741	70	Good	31	Low
LGS/LUTT/5 - River Swift Flood plain 1	Amenity greenspace	West	2.51908	70	Good	40	Medium
Leaders Way POS1	Amenity greenspace	West	0.306434	70	Good	46	Medium
Burnside Road, Broughton Astley	Amenity greenspace	West	0.016749	72	Good	23	Low
Ullesthorpe Amenity Green Space 2	Amenity greenspace	West	0.016702	72	Good	24	Low
Blenheim Crescent Amenity Green - Broughton Astley	Amenity greenspace	West	0.071737	73	Good	31	Low
Claybrooke Magna Village Green	Amenity greenspace	West	0.052472	74	Good	33	Low
Leaders Way POS2	Amenity greenspace	West	0.124041	74	Good	34	Low
Amsden Rise, Broughton Astley	Amenity greenspace	West	0.097041	74	Good	46	Medium
Bill Crane Way/Leicester Road Junction AGS - Lutterworth	Amenity greenspace	West	0.666352	78	Good	24	Low
Shearsby Village Green	Amenity greenspace	West	0.290369	78	Good	48	Medium
Pine Close, Lutterworth	Amenity greenspace	West	0.049656	79	Good	15	Low
Village Green, St Peters Road - Arnesby	Amenity greenspace	West	0.15529	79	Good	22	Low
Guthlaxton Avenue, Lutterworth	Amenity greenspace	West	0.043615	52	Fair	8	Low
Townsend Close, Broughton Astley	Amenity greenspace	West	0.03298	57	Fair	27	Low
Cordonnier Close POS	Amenity greenspace	West	0.060451	58	Fair	28	Low
Bike Track in Bruntingthorpe	Amenity greenspace	West	0.239162	59	Fair	44	Medium
Foxglove Close, Broughton Astley	Amenity greenspace	West	0.141453	60	Fair	34	Low
Broughton Way POS (Jelson)	Amenity greenspace	West	1.319265	61	Fair	47	Medium
Falcon Close, Broughton Astley	Amenity greenspace	West	0.093861	63	Fair	31	Low
Orchid Place, Broughton Astley	Amenity greenspace	West	0.053058	63	Fair	31	Low
Uppingham Drive/Warwick Road - Broughton Astley	Amenity greenspace	West	0.237704	63	Fair	42	Medium
St Peters Close Amenity Green Space - Leire	Amenity greenspace	West	0.05399	64	Fair	23	Low
Coventry Road/Broughton Way Junction Green Space - B	Amenity greenspace	West	0.695551	64	Fair	48	Medium
Coventry Road AGS, Lutterworth	Amenity greenspace	West	0.215226	66	Fair	21	Low
Chandler Way POS	Amenity greenspace	West	0.084968	66	Fair	28	Low
Woodcutter Lane POS	Amenity greenspace	West	0.922172	66	Fair	47	Medium
Drage Close, Lutterworth	Amenity greenspace	West	0.194395	67	Fair	22	Low
Mulberry Close AGS	Amenity greenspace	West	0.463157	67	Fair	42	Medium
Arkwright Farm, Burnside Road Balancing Lagoon	Amenity greenspace	West	0.558573	68	Fair	44	Medium
Bill Crane Way, Lutterworth	Amenity greenspace	West	1.052602	68	Fair	47	Medium
Broughton Close POS 2	Amenity greenspace	West	0.206149	68	Fair	49	Medium
May Fair Field	Amenity greenspace	West	0.233264	69	Fair	17	Low
Bruntingthorpe Village Green	Amenity greenspace	West	0.146458	41	Poor	17	Low
Coventry Road Sports Centre AGS - Lutterworth	Amenity greenspace	West	0.101883	48	Poor	11	Low
Keyham Churchyard	Cemeteries and church	East	0.043502	80	Very good	27	Low
Hallaton Churchyard	Cemeteries and church	East	0.208937	80	Very good	28	Low
Churchyard in Smeeton Westerby	Cemeteries and church	East	0.312099	82	Very good	69	High
Baptist Chapel Garden - Billesdon	Cemeteries and church	East	0.146407	82	Very good	19	Low
Hallaton Cemetery	Cemeteries and church	East	0.399336	83	Very good	25	Low
St Andrew Church - Welham	Cemeteries and church	East	0.195623	85	Very good	34	Low
Skeffington Graveyard	Cemeteries and church	East	0.085411	86	Very good	20	Low
Little Stretton Church/Cemetery	Cemeteries and church	East	0.221014	87	Very good	68	High
Bringhurst Cemetery	Cemeteries and church	East	0.110172	73	Good	27	Low
Stanton Wyville Churchyard	Cemeteries and church	East	0.187798	73	Good	32	Low
Cemetery - Billesdon	Cemeteries and church	East	0.561292	75	Good	22	Low
Church in Glooston	Cemeteries and church	East	0.179207	76	Good	37	Low
Kings Norton Churchyard	Cemeteries and church	East	0.177533	77	Good	73	High
St Giles Church - Blaston	Cemeteries and church	East	0.054273	77	Good	18	Low
Skeffington Churchyard	Cemeteries and church	East	0.134506	77	Good	25	Low
Alexton Churchyard	Cemeteries and church	East	0.098078	78	Good	25	Low
Natural Burial Site - Scraftoft	Cemeteries and church	East	3.954123	78	Good	31	Low
St Nicholas Church - Bringhurst	Cemeteries and church	East	0.194625	79	Good	39	Low
Knaptoft Church Ruins and Garden	Cemeteries and church	Middle	0.098968	92	Excellent	47	Medium
St Joseph's Churchyard, MH	Cemeteries and church	Middle	0.055793	94	Excellent	27	Low
Mowsley Parish Burial Ground	Cemeteries and church	Middle	0.130597	94	Excellent	36	Low
Churchyard - Shangton	Cemeteries and church	Middle	0.142275	80	Very good	24	Low
Saddington Cemetery	Cemeteries and church	Middle	0.089291	81	Very good	23	Low
Theddingworth Churchyard	Cemeteries and church	Middle	0.175856	83	Very good	42	Medium
Saint Nicholas Churchyard - (closed) - Mowsley	Cemeteries and church	Middle	0.121961	88	Very good	44	Medium
Saddington Churchyard	Cemeteries and church	Middle	0.198052	71	Good	39	Low
Foxton Cemetery	Cemeteries and church	Middle	0.081619	76	Good	21	Low
St Andrews Cemetery/Churchyard	Cemeteries and church	Middle	0.176646	79	Good	25	Low
Baptist Cemetery - Foxton	Cemeteries and church	Middle	0.06368	57	Fair	16	Low
Theddingworth Cemetery	Cemeteries and church	Middle	0.108779	66	Fair	10	Low
Leaders Farm Cemetery - Lutterworth	Cemeteries and church	West	1.217857	95	Excellent	27	Low
Sutton in the Elms Cemetery - Broughton Astley	Cemeteries and church	West	0.264872	80	Very good	48	Medium
Churchyard - Claybrooke Parva	Cemeteries and church	West	0.397637	80	Very good	54	Medium
St Marys Churchyard - Broughton Astley	Cemeteries and church	West	0.46794	81	Very good	44	Medium
Arnesby Baptist Chapel	Cemeteries and church	West	0.365762	85	Very good	27	Low
Churchyard in Swinford	Cemeteries and church	West	0.159638	89	Very good	48	Medium
Ashby Parva Churchyard	Cemeteries and church	West	0.242695	73	Good	62	High
St Mary's Church - Bruntingthorpe	Cemeteries and church	West	0.348577	74	Good	48	Medium
All Saints Churchyard - Dunton Bassett	Cemeteries and church	West	0.732103	75	Good	76	High
Frolesworth Road Cemetery - Broughton Astley	Cemeteries and church	West	0.787985	75	Good	43	Medium
St Peters Churchyard - Leire	Cemeteries and church	West	0.195068	77	Good	53	Medium
St Mary's Churchyard - Willoughby	Cemeteries and church	West	0.149415	77	Good	54	Medium
Church and Churchyard - Gilmorton	Cemeteries and church	West	0.479813	78	Good	45	Medium
St Leonards Churchyard - Misterton with Walcote	Cemeteries and church	West	0.513243	79	Good	40	Medium
Lutterworth Churchyard	Cemeteries and church	West	0.304734	65	Fair	38	Low
Cemetery at Leire	Cemeteries and church	West	0.09597	66	Fair	40	Medium
Cemetery - Bitteswell	Cemeteries and church	West	0.276713	69	Fair	19	Low
Cemetery - Willoughby	Cemeteries and church	West	0.220695	69	Fair	44	Medium
The Square	Civic spaces	Middle	0.244112	97	Excellent	29	Low
Church Square, MH	Civic spaces	Middle	0.171579	97	Excellent	40	Medium
War Memorial - Lubenham	Civic spaces	Middle	0.10816	80	Very good	26	Low
Fleckney Band Hall	Civic spaces	Middle	0.270569	83	Very good	20	Low
Devitt Way (Community Facility) - Broughton Astley	Civic spaces	West	0.256473	62	Fair	52	Medium
Skeffington Gravel Pit	Natural and semi-natural	East	1.460404	80	Very good	11	Low
Hollands Lane Footpath Great Easton	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.017608	80	Very good	21	Low
Vicarage Lane Great Easton	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.019	82	Very good	23	Low
Hackluts Pond	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.166893	83	Very good	13	Low
Open space between cemetery and St Andrew's Close gt Easton	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.056909	70	Good	15	Low
Warwick Roundabout Attenuation	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.288783	73	Good	57	Medium
Launde Grassland	Natural and semi-natural	East	2.883052	77	Good	9	Low

Brook Lane verges and stream banks Gt Easton	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.139014	79	Good	23	Low
Centurion Place attenuation	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.54461	79	Good	58	Medium
Covert Lane Woodland Belt	Natural and semi-natural	East	2.073439	60	Fair	41	Medium
Oaks Road POS and Balancing Lagoon	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.565095	62	Fair	21	Low
Fish Pond 1 - Launde	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.536957	63	Fair	18	Low
Fish Pond 2, Launde	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.446097	64	Fair	19	Low
Warwick Road attenuation pond	Natural and semi-natural	East	1.550119	66	Fair	70	High
Grand Union Canal, Newton Harcourt/Kilby	Natural and semi-natural	East	13.200801	66	Fair	36	Low
Moulds Lane great Easton	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.031397	67	Fair	24	Low
Furrow Way Balancing Lagoon	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.21678	69	Fair	34	Low
Meadowbrook Road Balancing Facility Kibworth Beauchamp	Natural and semi-natural	East	0.216391	44	Poor	47	Medium
Ivy Close Buffer zone Great Glen	Natural and semi-natural	East	1.046227	48	Poor	49	Medium
Glebe Roa POS	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	2.214903	91	Excellent	45	Medium
Launde Park, MH	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	0.048113	92	Excellent	10	Low
Lubenham Hill buffer strip and attenuation	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	0.323508	82	Very good	23	Low
Gartree POS	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	0.298182	84	Very good	26	Low
Airfield Farm Country Park	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	7.724286	85	Very good	50	Medium
North Kilworth Bogs	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	0.069597	87	Very good	58	Medium
Woodland AGS, MH	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	1.332575	88	Very good	35	Low
Natural Area Beside Stream - Fleckney	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	0.08088	72	Good	21	Low
Fleckny Duckpond	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	0.120204	73	Good	28	Low
Farnon Road POS and attenuation	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	3.49355	73	Good	54	Medium
Victoria Avenue, Market Harborough	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	0.117294	76	Good	24	Low
Kilby Road attenuation pond	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	0.317355	77	Good	17	Low
Manor Road Open Space - Great Bowden	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	0.033821	78	Good	44	Medium
Ridgeway POS	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	0.34618	79	Good	27	Low
Roadside Woodland Belt 2, Welford Road - Husbands Bo	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	0.152915	58	Fair	28	Low
Park Drive, Market Harborough	Natural and semi-natural	Middle	0.038418	60	Fair	20	Low
Walton Gorse Meadow	Natural and semi-natural	West	2.407931	81	Very good	39	Low
Devitt Way Green Space - Broughton Astley	Natural and semi-natural	West	0.61763	74	Good	64	High
Streamside Close Green Space - Broughton Astley	Natural and semi-natural	West	0.547123	74	Good	56	Medium
Frolesworth Irrigation Lake 3	Natural and semi-natural	West	0.387282	56	Fair	32	Low
Ullesthorpe Railway Cuttign 1	Natural and semi-natural	West	1.085592	57	Fair	60	High
Ashby Magna Verges	Natural and semi-natural	West	0.656252	60	Fair	43	Medium
Frolesworth Irrigation Lake 1	Natural and semi-natural	West	2.889429	61	Fair	54	Medium
Old Railway Line, Lutterworth	Natural and semi-natural	West	1.305098	29	Poor	35	Low
Jubilee Walk	Natural and semi-natural	West	4.948912	42	Poor	65	High
School Spinney - Claybrooke Parva	Natural and semi-natural	West	0.083078	44	Poor	31	Low
Land at Leire Lane - Dunton Bassett	Natural and semi-natural	West	0.11248	45	Poor	32	Low
Milestone Hollow - Claybrooke Magna	Natural and semi-natural	West	0.053023	48	Poor	34	Low
Ullesthorpe Railway	Natural and semi-natural	West	1.77008	48	Poor	57	Medium
Frolesworth Irrigation Lake 2	Natural and semi-natural	West	0.770062	49	Poor	33	Low
Willow Pond Grassland 2	Natural and semi-natural	West	1.031864	49	Poor	48	Medium
Willow Pond Grassland 1	Natural and semi-natural	West	5.015686	49	Poor	51	Medium
Allextion Park	Parks and gardens	East	19.735026	67	Fair	21	Low
Welland Park, MH	Parks and gardens	Middle	8.5769	95	Excellent	68	High
Memorial Gardens, MH	Parks and gardens	Middle	0.114827	98	Excellent	29	Low
LGS/LUTT/8 - The Memorial Gardens Lutterworth	Parks and gardens	West	0.045013	92	Excellent	54	Medium
Memorial Gardens - Broughton Astley	Parks and gardens	West	0.079419	86	Very good	42	Medium
Walcote Memorial Garden - Misterton with Walcote	Parks and gardens	West	0.031498	79	Good	26	Low
Play Area - Medbourne	Provision for children at	East	0.060256	81	Very good	19	Low
Queens Head Paddock - Billesdon	Provision for children at	East	0.27097	81	Very good	26	Low
Tugby Play Area	Provision for children at	East	0.03672	82	Very good	11	Low
Wadkins Play Area - Thumby and Bushby	Provision for children at	East	0.220758	83	Very good	61	High
Clarkes Piece Play Area - Great Easton	Provision for children at	East	0.020604	83	Very good	21	Low
Potwell Road Play Area - Kibworth Harcourt	Provision for children at	East	0.046848	84	Very good	62	High
Village Play Area, Gaulby Way - Stoughton	Provision for children at	East	0.315254	86	Very good	60	High
Warwick Road Youth Area	Provision for children at	East	0.187364	73	Good	56	Medium
Houghton on the Hill Playing Field Play Area	Provision for children at	East	0.120624	75	Good	30	Low
Smeeton Road Play Area	Provision for children at	East	0.089737	75	Good	54	Medium
Village Hall and Small Play Area - Little Stretton	Provision for children at	East	0.128412	77	Good	81	High
Hallaton Play Area	Provision for children at	East	0.112512	78	Good	16	Low
Great Glen Recreation Ground Play Area	Provision for children at	East	0.230045	79	Good	43	Medium
Cromwell Road Play Area - Great Glen	Provision for children at	East	0.047785	60	Fair	23	Low
Bellfields Road Recreation Play Area, MH	Provision for children at	Middle	0.042677	81	Very good	45	Medium
Village Hall Play Area - Lubenham	Provision for children at	Middle	0.114703	86	Very good	13	Low
Logan Street Recreation Play Area, MH	Provision for children at	Middle	0.137674	88	Very good	40	Medium
Childrens Play Area, Skate Board Park - Husbands B	Provision for children at	Middle	0.277826	89	Very good	12	Low
Childrens Play Area - Lubenham	Provision for children at	Middle	0.083709	76	Good	30	Low
Robert Monk Play Area - Foxton	Provision for children at	Middle	0.108251	77	Good	31	Low
Childrens Play Area - Fleckney	Provision for children at	Middle	0.163391	78	Good	26	Low
Edward Road Play Area - Fleckney	Provision for children at	Middle	0.175331	78	Good	33	Low
Folly Field Play Area - Mowsley	Provision for children at	Middle	0.167485	69	Fair	26	Low
Coventry Road Recreation Ground Play Area	Provision for children at	West	0.18502	81	Very good	14	Low
Woodcutter Lane POS and Play Area	Provision for children at	West	0.35444	82	Very good	52	Medium
Village Hall and Playground - Willoughby	Provision for children at	West	0.030403	70	Good	31	Low
Mulberry Close Play Area	Provision for children at	West	0.097421	70	Good	46	Medium
Play Area in Gilmorton	Provision for children at	West	0.096677	75	Good	31	Low
The Green Play Area	Provision for children at	West	0.050806	76	Good	39	Low
Buften Playground - Misterton with Walcote	Provision for children at	West	0.132029	78	Good	36	Low
Cottage Lane Play Area - Broughton Astley	Provision for children at	West	0.522912	63	Fair	55	Medium
Childrens Play Area - Leire	Provision for children at	West	0.076545	64	Fair	33	Low
Byre Crescent, Play Area - Broughton Astley	Provision for children at	West	0.416741	66	Fair	58	Medium

## Appendix B: Consultation Report



# Consultation Report

Prepared For: Harborough District Council

Document Reference: 11133.006

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Version 2.0

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Version	Date	Modified by	Check/ Approved by	Reason	Status
1.0	21/11/25	SB	RM	Initial issue.	Superseded.
2.0	23/12/25	SB	RM	Final issue and draft watermark removed.	Issued.

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## 1.0 Introduction

### Purpose of the Consultation

- 1.1 The Environment Partnership (TEP) Limited was commissioned by Harborough District Council (HDC) in May 2025, to review and update the Open Spaces Strategy (OSS) for Harborough District.

### Scope of the Consultation

- 1.2 To support the review and update of the OSS, consultation has been undertaken with members of the public, key stakeholders, parish councils, neighbourhood forums and developers.
- 1.3 This report outlines the consultation methodology, provides a summary of quantitative and qualitative results and summarises key findings.
- 1.4 These findings will inform recommendations within the updated OSS, help to understand the supply and demand of open space in Harborough District, and inform the setting of new open space standards.

## Structure of the Consultation Report

- 1.5 Following the introduction at Chapter 1.0, Chapter 2.0 outlines the methodology and topics for each consultee group, Chapter 3.0 summarises the results and Chapter 4.0 provides the conclusions to the report.
- 1.6
- 1.7 Table 1 shows the consultation method for each consultee group and

1.8 Table 2 states the topics discussed with each consultee

Topic	Public	Developers	Parish Councils	Neighbourhood Forums	Key Stakeholders
Current open space provision	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Barriers to access	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Threats to open space	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Opportunities for adoption of open space	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Implications of open space adoption to developers	No	Yes	No	No	No
Implications of open space adoption to parish councils	No	No	Yes	No	Yes

group.

Table 1: Consultation Methods

	Online questionnaires	Six no. in person drop-in sessions	Three no. online consultation events
Public	Yes	Yes	No
Developers	Yes	No	No
Parish Councils	Yes	Yes	Yes
Neighbourhood Forums	Yes	Yes	Yes
Key Stakeholders	Yes	Yes	Yes

*Table 2: Consultation Topics*

Topic	Public	Developers	Parish Councils	Neighbourhood Forums	Key Stakeholders
Current open space provision	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Barriers to access	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Threats to open space	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Opportunities for adoption of open space	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Implications of open space adoption to developers	No	Yes	No	No	No
Implications of open space adoption to parish councils	No	No	Yes	No	Yes

## 2.0 Consultation Methodology

### Online Questionnaires<sup>1</sup>

- 2.1 Questionnaires were issued to members of the public, parish councils, neighbourhood forums, key stakeholders and developers. The questionnaires were similar to those included in consultation for the previous OSS (2021) to allow for comparison. The questionnaires covered the use, accessibility, quantity and quality of open spaces across Harborough District, and across the three key sub areas of East, Middle and South as outlined in the OSS.
- 2.2 The public questionnaire was made available via HDC's website, newsletter and social media channels. To broaden engagement, a QR code linking to the survey was displayed on community notice boards and in open spaces across Harborough District.
- 2.3 The questionnaires issued to parish councils and neighbourhood forums, key stakeholders, and developers<sup>2</sup> were published through survey links distributed via an email. Follow-up emails were issued to encourage responses and maximise engagement.

- 2.4 Questionnaires were published on 3rd June 2025 and had a closing date of 15th July 2025, providing an engagement window of approximately 6 weeks.
- 2.5 The below paragraphs provide a summary of questions for each consultee group.

---

<sup>1</sup> Online questionnaires were hosted on Microsoft (MS) Forms.

<sup>2</sup> A contact list was provided by HDC.

## Key Stakeholders

- Types of open space(s) used and/or managed?
- How accessible are the open spaces used and managed?
- How accessible are the open spaces across the District?
- Outline any specific areas for improvement in accessibility.
- Rate the quality of open space(s) that used and managed?
- Rate the quality of open spaces across the District?
- Rate the quantity of open spaces used and/or managed?
- How would you rate the quantity of open spaces across Harborough District?
- Which statement is most true for play spaces your organisation uses/and or manages?
  - I don't think there are enough playgrounds;
  - If the current facilities were improved there would be no need for additional playground facilities;
  - Removal of playgrounds would be acceptable if other playground facilities were expanded or improved; and
  - I don't agree with any of the statements above.
- What improvements would you like to see to open spaces use and managed?
- What improvements would you like to see to open spaces across the District?
- When open spaces are provided on new development where should this be provided?
- Who should open spaces on new developments be transferred to, and why?
- What barriers would your organisation face to managing new open spaces?
- Do you have any comment on the current open space adoption hierarchy across the District.
- Does your organisation have any further comments on the management of open space in the District?

## Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums

- Types of open space(s) used and/or managed?
- How accessible are the open spaces used and managed?
- How accessible are the open spaces across the District?
- Outline any specific areas for improvement in accessibility.
- Rate the quality of open space(s) that used and managed?
- Rate the quality of open spaces across the District?
- Rate the quantity of open spaces used and/or managed?
- How would you rate the quantity of open spaces across Harborough District?
- Which statement is most true for play spaces your organisation uses/and or manages?
  - I don't think there are enough playgrounds;
  - If the current facilities were improved there would be no need for additional playground facilities;
  - Removal of playgrounds would be acceptable if other playground facilities were expanded or improved; and
  - I don't agree with any of the statements above.
- What improvements would you like to see to open spaces use and managed?
- What improvements would you like to see to open spaces across the District?
- When open spaces are provided on new development where should this be provided?
- Who should open spaces on new developments be transferred to, and why?
- What barriers would your organisation face to managing new open spaces?
- Do you have any comment on the current open space adoption hierarchy across the District.
- Do you or your organisation have any further comments on the management of open space in the District?

## Public

- What types of open spaces do you frequently use?
  - How frequently do you use each type of open space?
  - Which sub area are you located within in Harborough District?
  - How accessible are the open spaces that you use?
  - How accessible are the open spaces across the District?
  - Outline any specific areas for improvement in accessibility.
  - How would you rate the quality of open spaces that you use?
  - How would you rate the quality of open spaces across the District?
  - What improvements would you like to see to open spaces you use?
  - What improvements would you like to see to open spaces across the District?
  - How would you rate the quantity of open spaces you use?
- How would you rate the quantity of open spaces across the District?
  - What open space typologies would you like to see in the District?
  - When open spaces are provided as part of new developments where do you think the open space should be provided?
  - In your opinion who should open spaces on new developments be transferred to?
  - Who do you think is best placed to maintain the open spaces that you use?

## Developers

- What types of open space has your company provided as part of new development previously?
- What types of open space do you prefer to provide as part of new development?
- How do you manage open spaces post development?
- Identify any barriers to transferring open space to HDC or parish councils.
- Please rank your order of preference in disposing open spaces delivered as part of a new development.
- Do you use the current OSS (2021) to inform the design of your proposed development?

## In person Drop-in Sessions

- 2.6 To maximise consultation responses six, two-hour in person drop-in sessions were held across the District. Locations aligned with those used by HDC to consult on the Local Plan.
- 2.7 The in person drop-in sessions provided an opportunity to gather feedback on the current and future provision of open spaces, with an emphasis on maintaining a high-quality accessible environment that meet the needs of all residents.
- 2.8 The in person drop-in sessions were held at:
- The Alan Talbot Room at Broughton Asley Village Hall - Monday 30th June 2025 between 4:15pm and 5:45pm;
  - Main Hall at Kibworth Old Grammar School - Tuesday 1st July 2025 between 1:15pm – 2:45pm;
  - Great Glen Village Hall - Wednesday 2nd July 2025 between 10.15am – 11.45am;
  - The Lounge at Scraftoft Community Hub - Thursday 3rd July 2025 between 10:00am – 12:00pm;

- The Banking Hub at The Symington Building in Market Harborough - Friday 4th July 2025 at 1:00pm – 3:00pm; and
  - The Community Room at The Wycliffe Rooms in Lutterworth - Monday 7th July 2025 between 4:00pm – 6:00pm.
- 2.9 Each session was attended by the Neighbourhood and Green Spaces Officer from HDC, alongside TEP. Attendees were encouraged to complete the questionnaire if they had not already done so, with assistance provided where required. Facilitators also engaged directly with participants gather qualitative responses including:
- Perceived strengths and weaknesses of current open spaces;
  - Opportunities for future improvement and community use;
  - Threats to the long-term sustainability, accessibility, or management of open spaces; and
  - Recommendations for how open space provision could better meet local needs.

## Online Consultation Drop-in Events

2.10 Three online drop-in events were held via MS Teams including:

- 16th July 2025, 9:30am - 10:30am - Key Stakeholders;
- 16th July, 2:00pm – 3:00pm - Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums; and
- 17th July 2025, 2:00pm - 3:00pm - Key Stakeholders.

2.11 Each session began with an introduction to the OSS, followed by interactive session captured using MS Whiteboard. Participants were invited to share their location and organisation where relevant, and contributed to structured conversation including:

- Provide one key issue which needs to be addressed for open spaces in the District;

### Key Stakeholders

- What currently works well for people, place and nature, and what requires improvement; and
- Actions required to address existing challenges.

## Parish Councils and Neighbourhood Forums

- What currently works well for people, place, and nature, and what requires improvement;
- Actions required to address existing challenges;
- Whether the organisation represented is seeking to adopt new open spaces; and
- The barriers preventing this, and what is needed to overcome each barrier.

## 3.0 Consultation Results

### Online Questionnaires

3.1 The online questionnaires received the following responses:

- Public - 188 respondents;
- Parish council and neighbourhood forums - 3 respondents;
- Key stakeholders - 10 respondents; and
- Developer - 8 respondents.

### Use

3.2 Figure 1 shows that key stakeholders most commonly use or manage natural and semi-natural greenspaces, followed by accessible countryside areas, allotments and community gardens, amenity greenspaces and parks and gardens.

3.3 Figure 2 indicates that parish councils most frequently manage or use parks and gardens, cemeteries and churchyards and amenity greenspace.

3.4 Figure 3 indicates that the public most frequently use parks and gardens, closely followed by natural and semi-natural

greenspaces. This echoes 2020 consultation results however a higher percentage of respondents reported using Amenity Greenspace in the 2025 consultation.

3.5 Figure 4 highlights usage frequency among the public:

- 40% visit amenity greenspaces daily;
- 39% visit parks and gardens daily; and
- 1% visit cemeteries and churchyards daily, likely due to their specific and limited use.

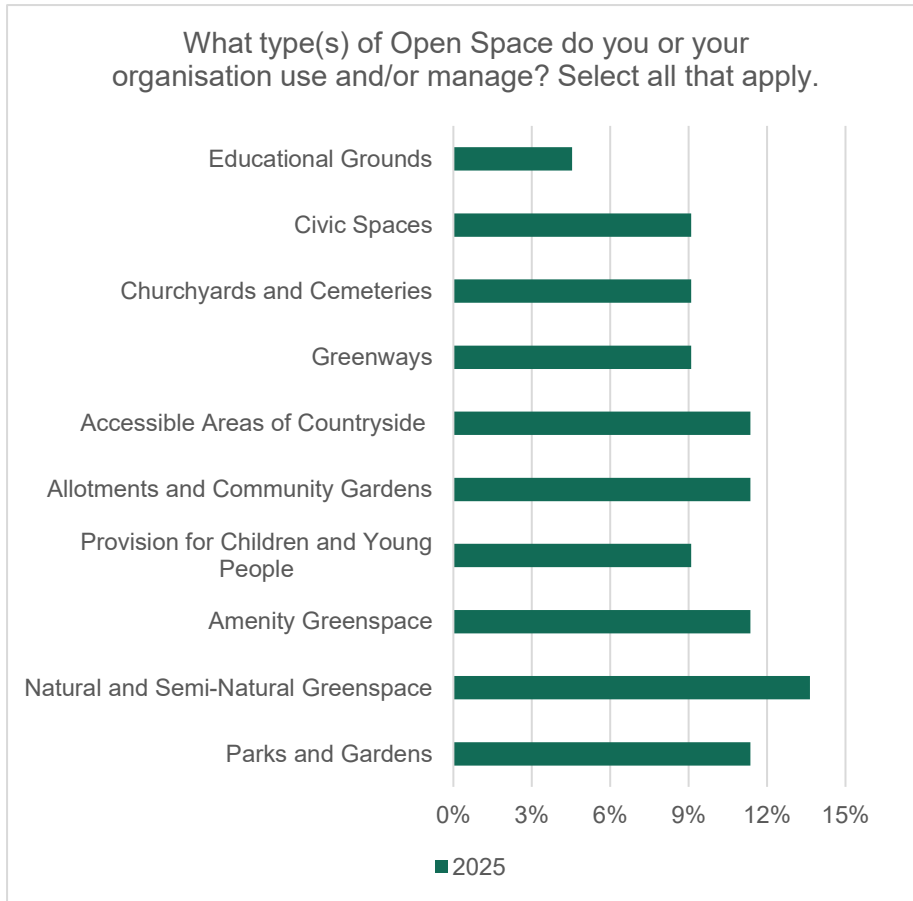


Figure 1: Key Stakeholder - Use

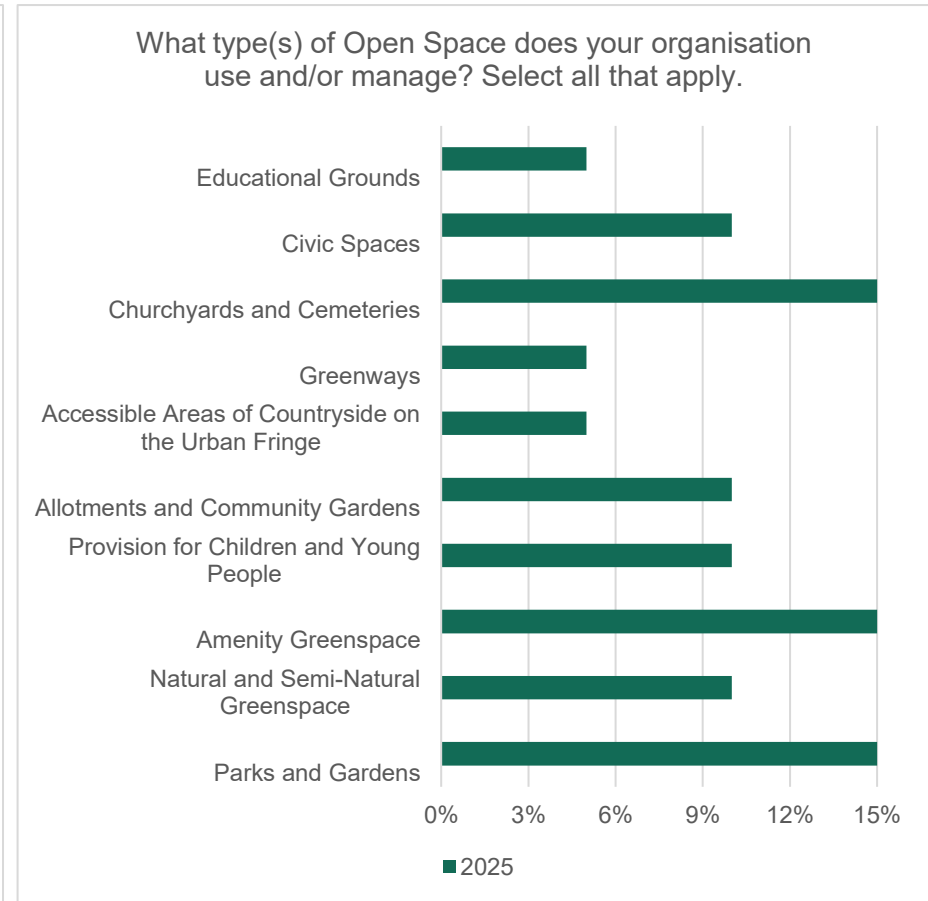


Figure 2: Parish Council - Use

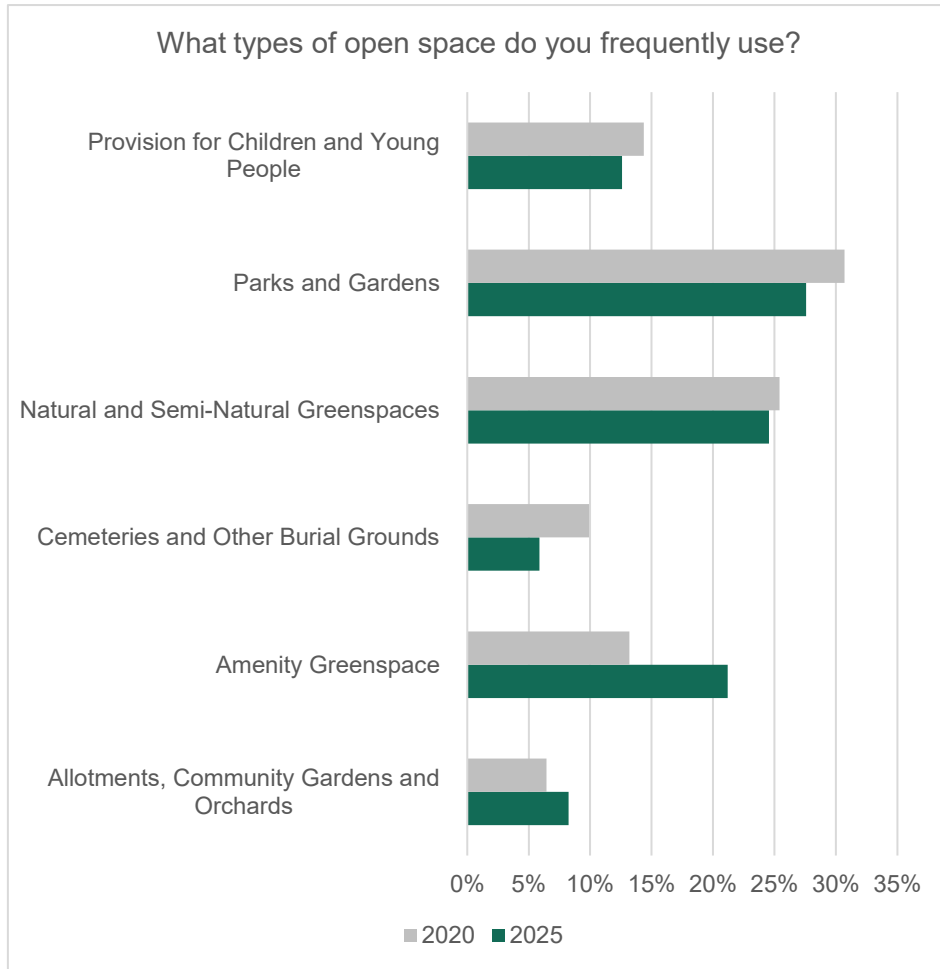


Figure 3: Public - Use

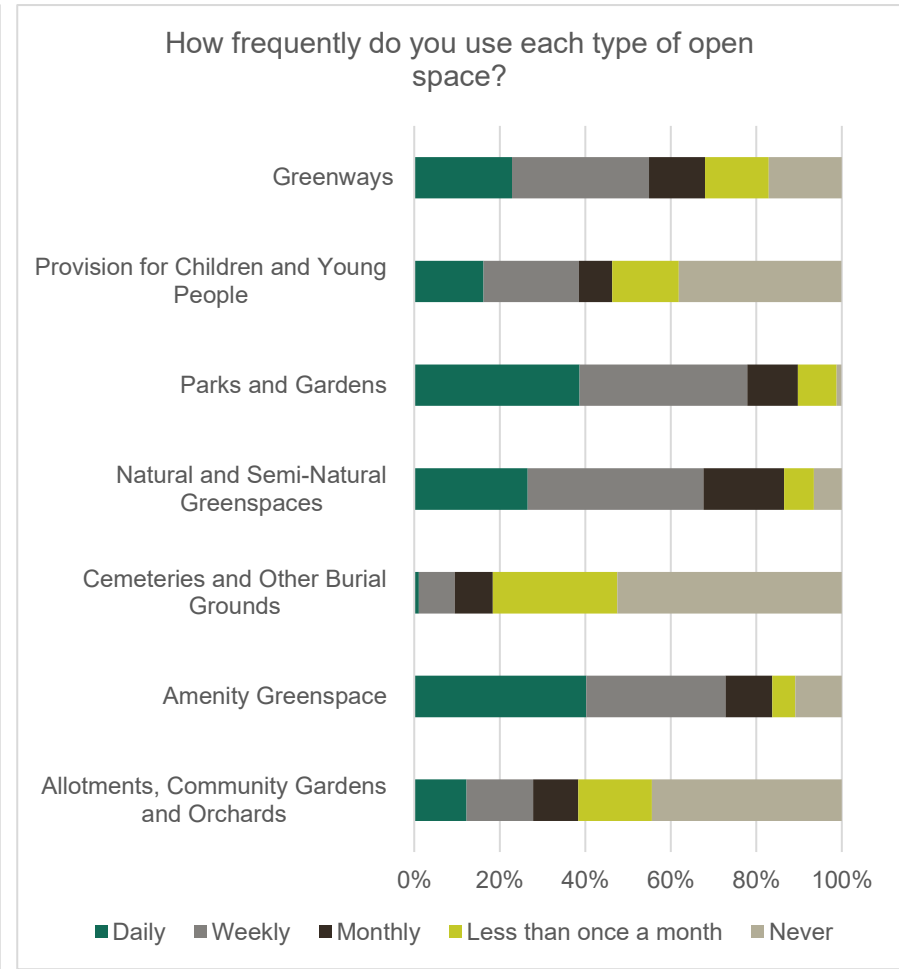


Figure 4: Public - Frequency

- 3.6 Key stakeholders most commonly use or manage natural and semi-natural greenspaces, followed by accessible countryside, allotments, and parks. Parish councils mainly manage parks and gardens, amenity greenspace, and cemeteries and churchyards. The public most often use parks and gardens, closely followed by natural greenspaces. Among public respondents, 40% visit amenity greenspaces daily, 39% visit parks and gardens daily, and only 1% visit cemeteries and churchyards daily.
- 3.7 Allotments and community gardens, and amenity greenspace are in higher demand from the public than they were in 2020.

### Quantity

3.8 Figure 5 shows that key stakeholders identified there is not enough of each open space typology, except cemeteries and churchyards and civic space. There is generally no consensus from Parish Councils as shown on Figure 6 across education grounds, civic space, cemeteries and churchyards, greenways, parks and gardens or accessible countryside. Two of the three Parish Council responses reported enough allotments and community gardens, provision for children and young people, amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural greenspace

3.9 Figure 7 reflects similar views from the Public, who generally reported not enough of open space typology, except cemeteries and burial grounds. This aligns closely with responses from key stakeholders.

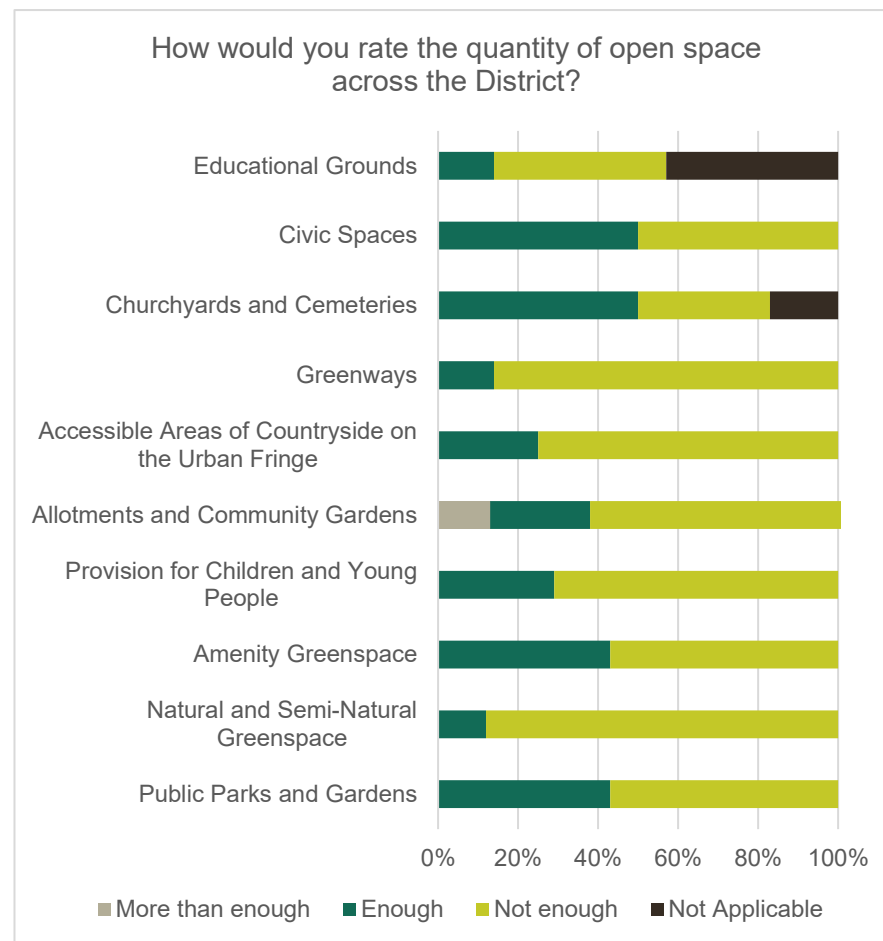


Figure 5: Key Stakeholders - Quantity

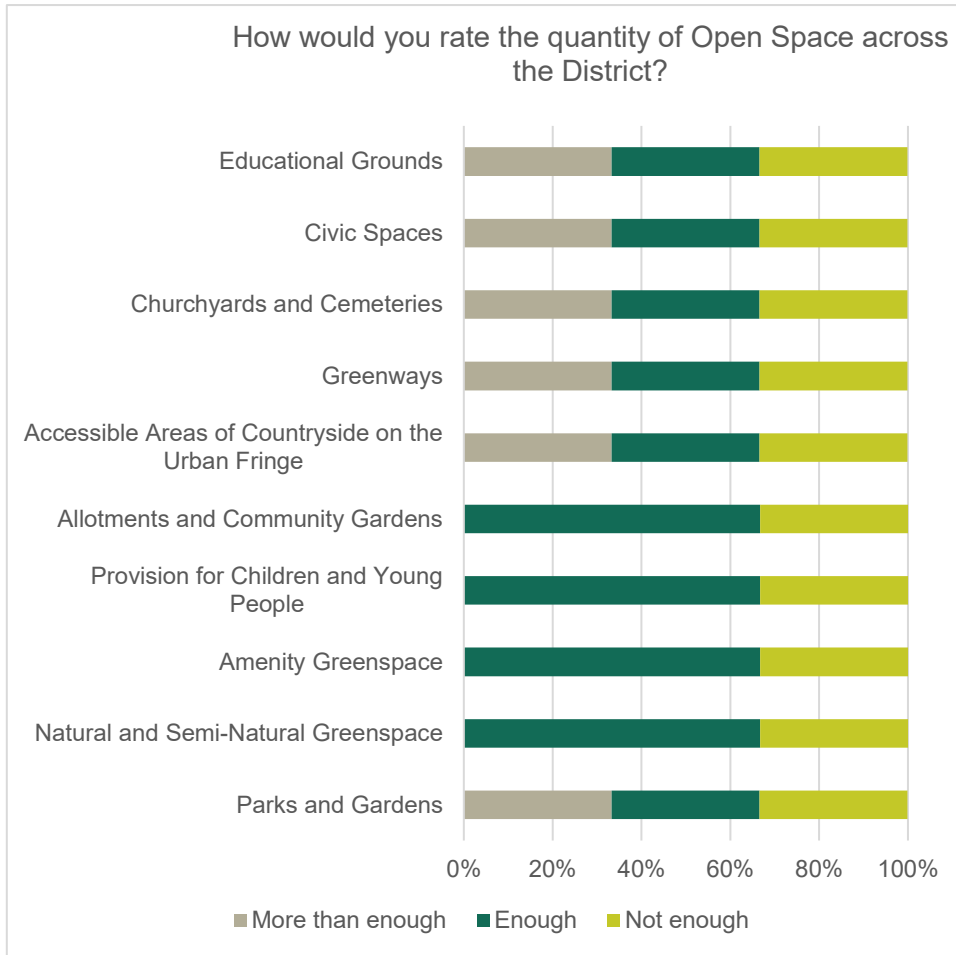


Figure 6: Parish Councils - Quantity

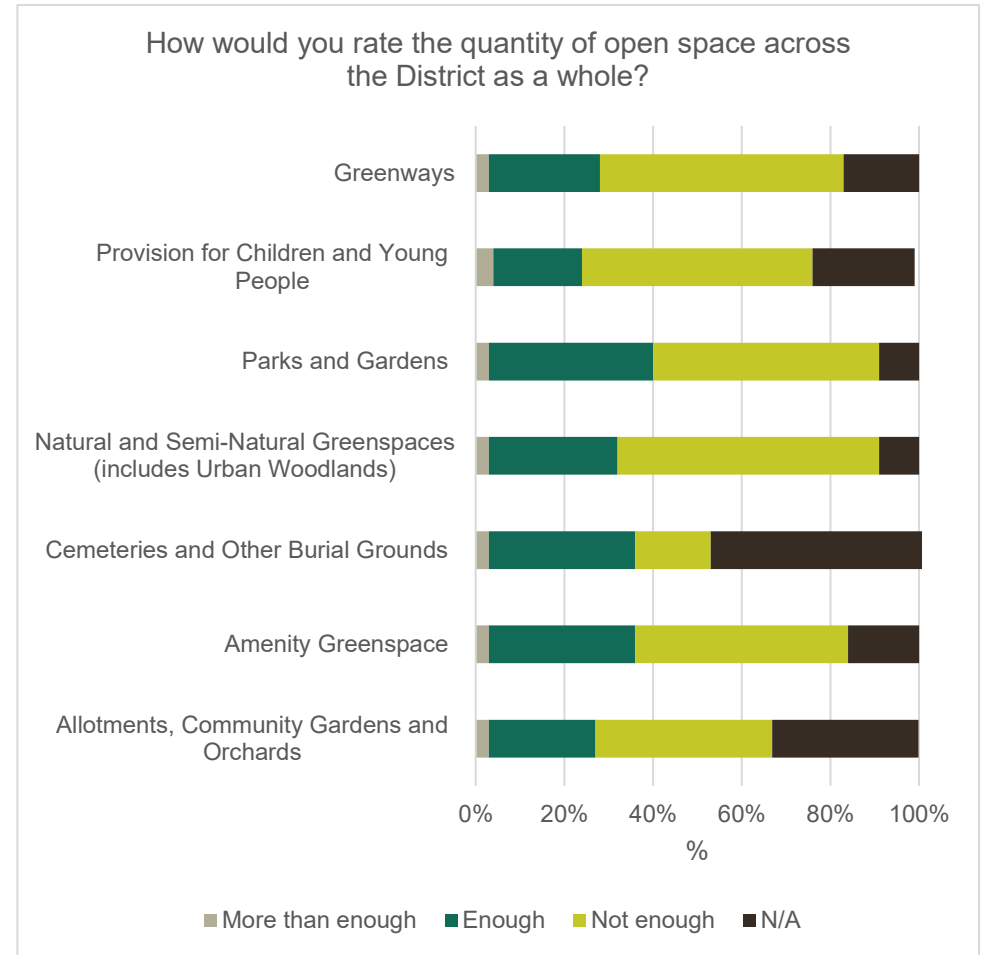


Figure 7: Public - Quantity

- 3.10 Across the District, key stakeholders, parish councils and members of the public note there is not enough natural greenspace, greenways, parks and gardens, and provision for children and young people. While some typologies such as civic spaces, educational grounds, cemeteries, and area of the accessible countryside are seen as meeting current needs.
- 3.11 Overall, across all consultee groups there is a widespread concern about the insufficient quantity and accessibility of high-quality open space. These findings suggest a clear need to prioritise investment in connected, nature-rich, and inclusive open spaces.

### Quality

- 3.12 Figure 8 shows that key stakeholders rated the quality of open spaces they use or manage as either excellent, good, or average, with no responses indicating below average or poor quality. This suggests a generally positive perception of open space quality.
  
- 3.13 Figure 9 illustrates that parish councils mostly rated their open spaces as good, though some identified areas of concern, with only one response considering their sites as poor.
  
- 3.14 Figure 10 presents public perceptions, showing that most respondents rated the open spaces they use as good or excellent. However, when asked about the quality of open spaces across the whole district more respondents selected average. Very few respondents rated any spaces as below average or poor. the District.

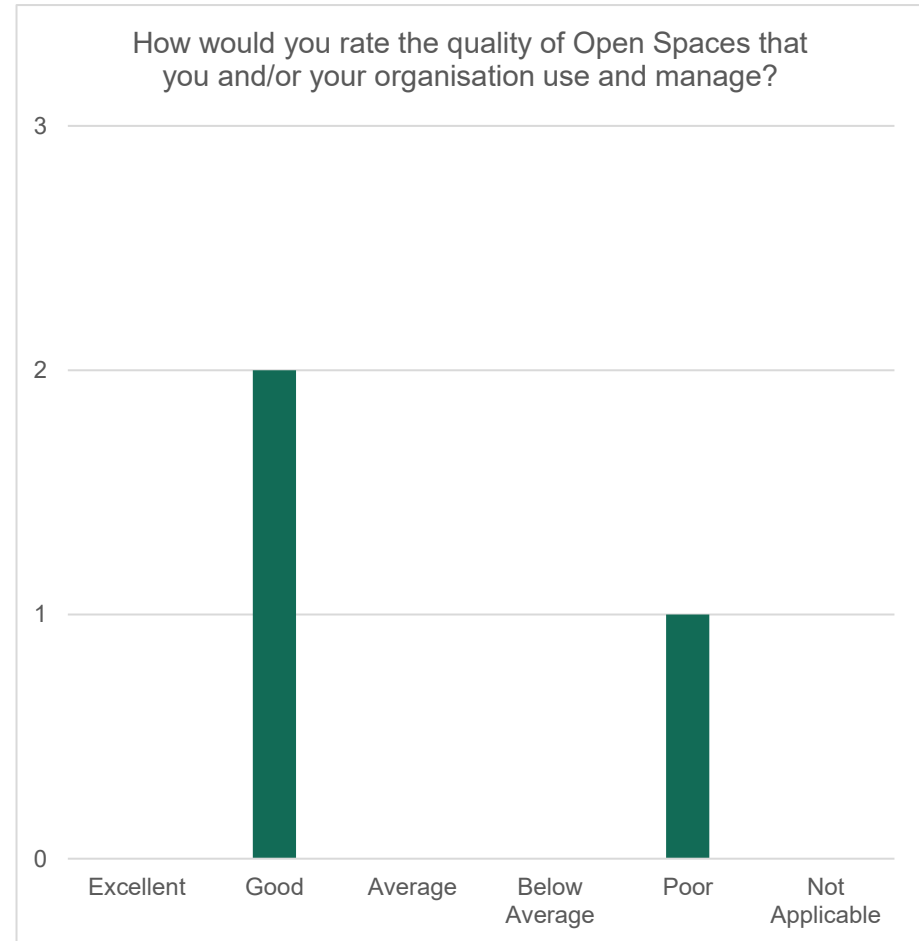


Figure 8: Parish Council - Quality

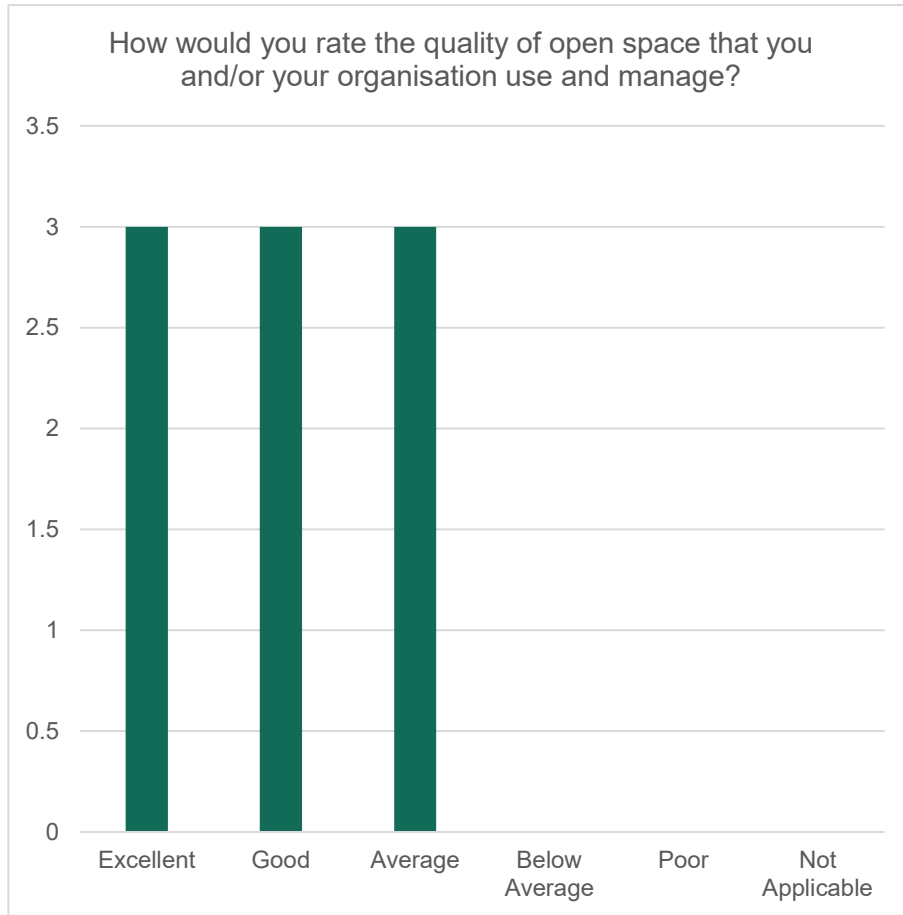


Figure 10: Key Stakeholders - Quality

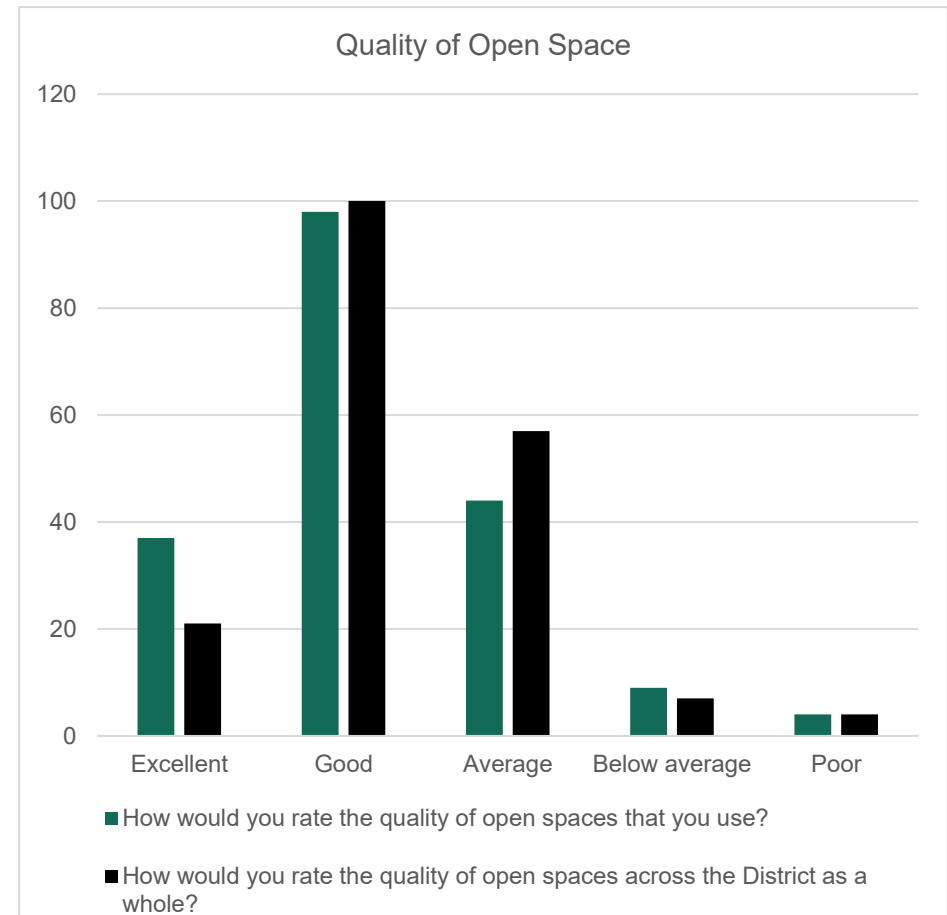


Figure 9: Public - Quality

- 3.15 Across Harborough District, key stakeholders generally rated the quality of open spaces they manage or use as excellent, good, or average, with no poor ratings. Parish councils mostly considered their spaces good, though a few were rated poor. The public viewed the spaces they personally use as good or excellent, but assessed district-wide provision slightly lower, with more average ratings.

## Accessibility

- 3.16 Figure 11 demonstrates the responses from key stakeholders when asked how accessible open spaces are that they use and/or manage. Walking and cycling is generally considered excellent and good, driving good and public transport is average, Just over 10% of respondents felt that public transport and cycling provision was poor.
- 3.17 There was no consensus between the accessibility of walking and cycling. Driving was classed as 'good', with public transport being 'average' and 'below average' when we asked Parish Councils.
- 3.18 Figure 12 illustrates how accessible open spaces are that members of the public use, walking was generally considered 'excellent' and 'good', cycling and driving is 'good' and public transport is 'average'.

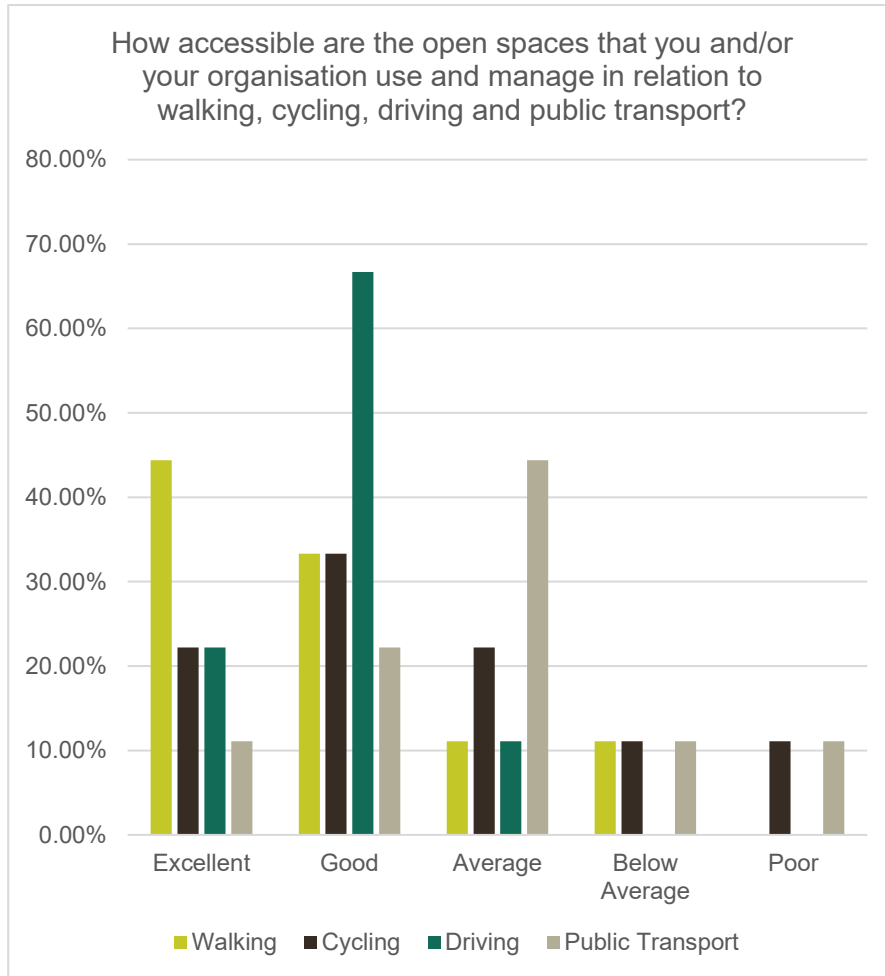


Figure 12: Key stakeholders - Accessibility

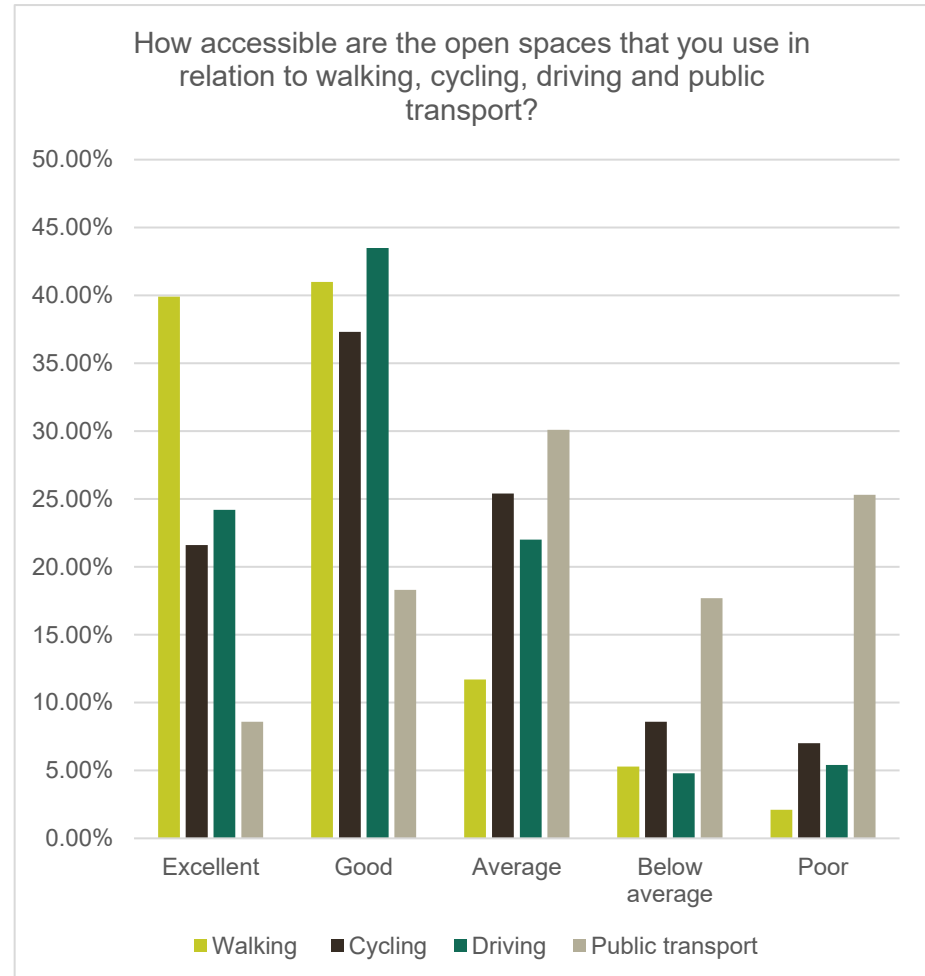


Figure 11: Public - Accessibility



*surrounding countryside via active travel routes and existing footpaths".*

- 3.23 Perceptions of open space accessibility across Harborough District vary. Key stakeholders generally rated walking access highly, cycling as good, and public transport as average, while overall district accessibility was seen less favourably. Parish councils expressed mixed views, with walking and cycling ranging from excellent to poor and public transport often below average. Public respondents were more positive about walking and cycling access, though public transport remained average. Qualitative feedback emphasised the need for better signage, safer routes, and improved connectivity, with initiatives such as strategic Greenways and the proposed Market Harborough Green Wheel aiming to create traffic-free routes linking open spaces and habitats.

### **Issues and Opportunities**

- 3.24 Figures 14 shows that key stakeholders would like to see improvements to maintenance, access, and facilities across open spaces in Harborough District. There is also interest in adding information boards to enhance user experience. Notably, no responses identified a need for improvements to landscaping or entrances, suggesting that functional and operational aspects of open space

management are of greater concern than aesthetic enhancements.

- 3.25 Figures 15 shows that members of the public are keen to see improvements in maintenance and facilities across open spaces, followed by better information boards, landscaping, and entrances. District-wide feedback also emphasised the need for better access, suggesting that functional upgrades and clearer signage are key priorities for enhancing public experience and usability.
- 3.26 This question was not asked of parish councils.

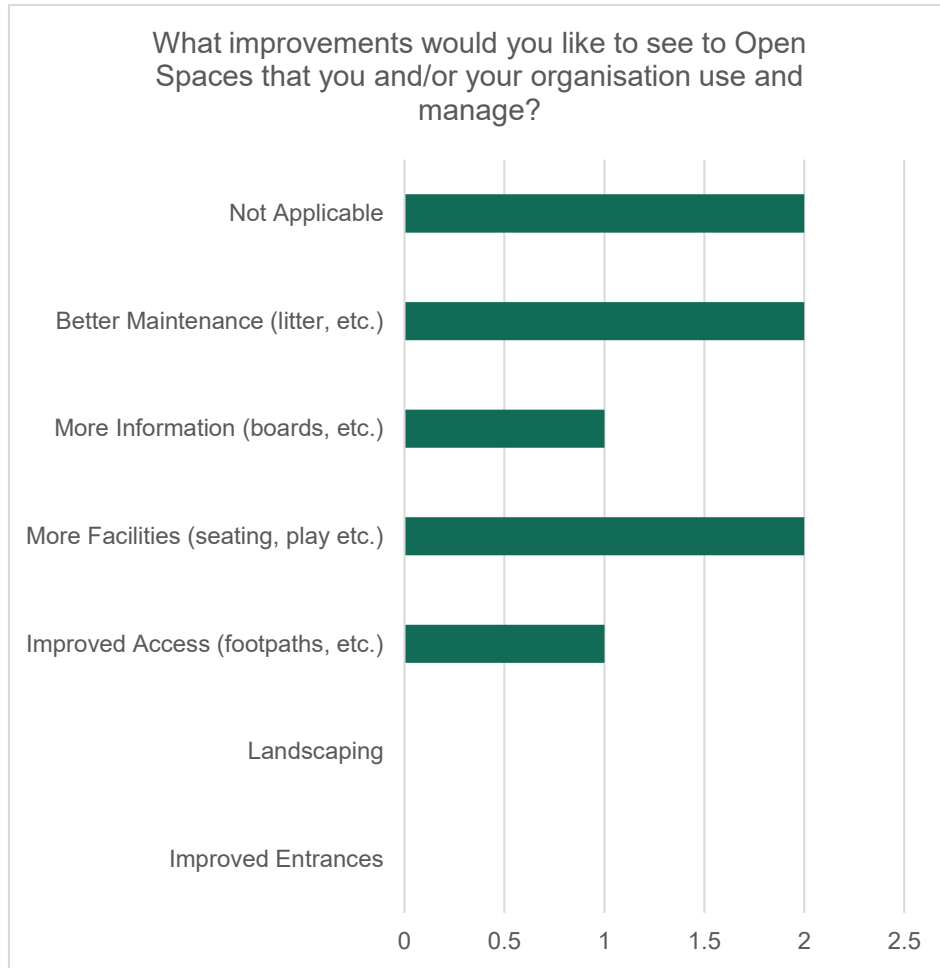


Figure 15: Key stakeholders - Improvements

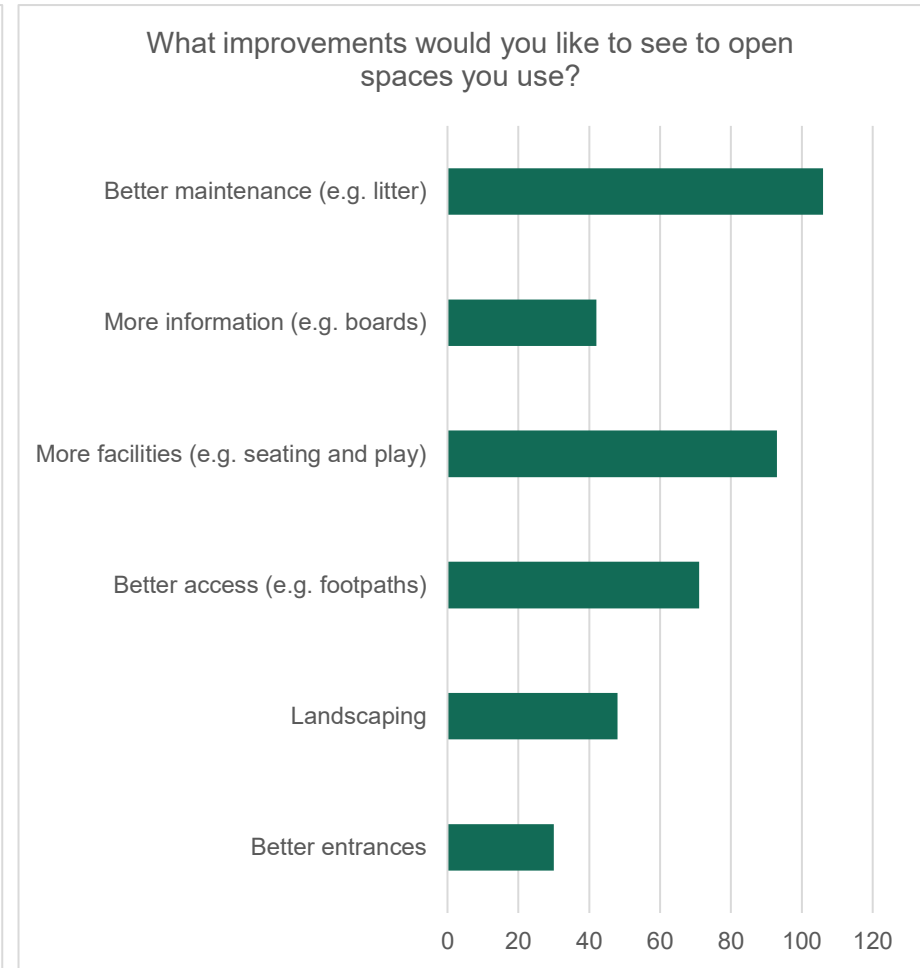


Figure 14: Public - Improvements

### Open Spaces in Development

- 3.27 Key stakeholders, the public and parish councils were asked questions relating to open space in new development. This included where open spaces should be provided.
- 3.28 Figures 16 to 18 show that members of the public and Parish Council are keen for open spaces in new developments to be provided partly on-site and partly off-site. The second most favoured option is entirely on-site, especially for larger developments. Parish councils noted that decisions often depend on the management company appointed, highlighting concerns around long-term maintenance and accountability.

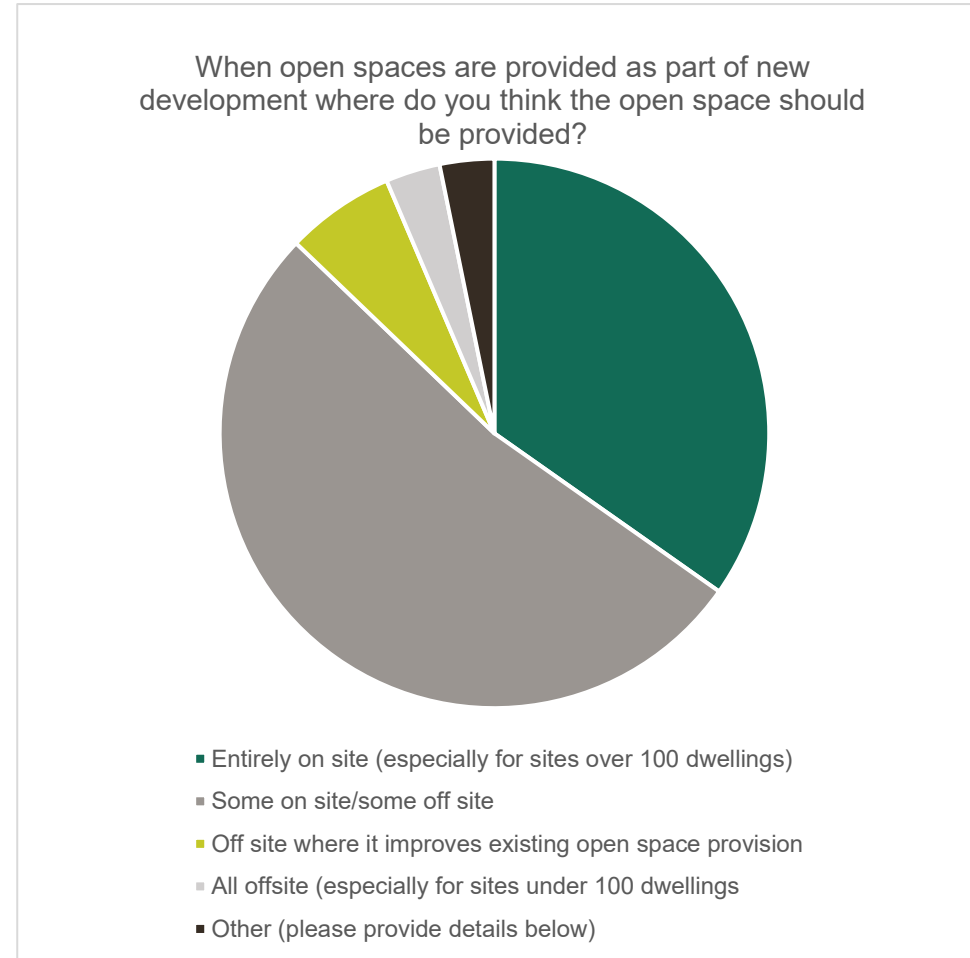


Figure 16: Public – Open Space in New Development

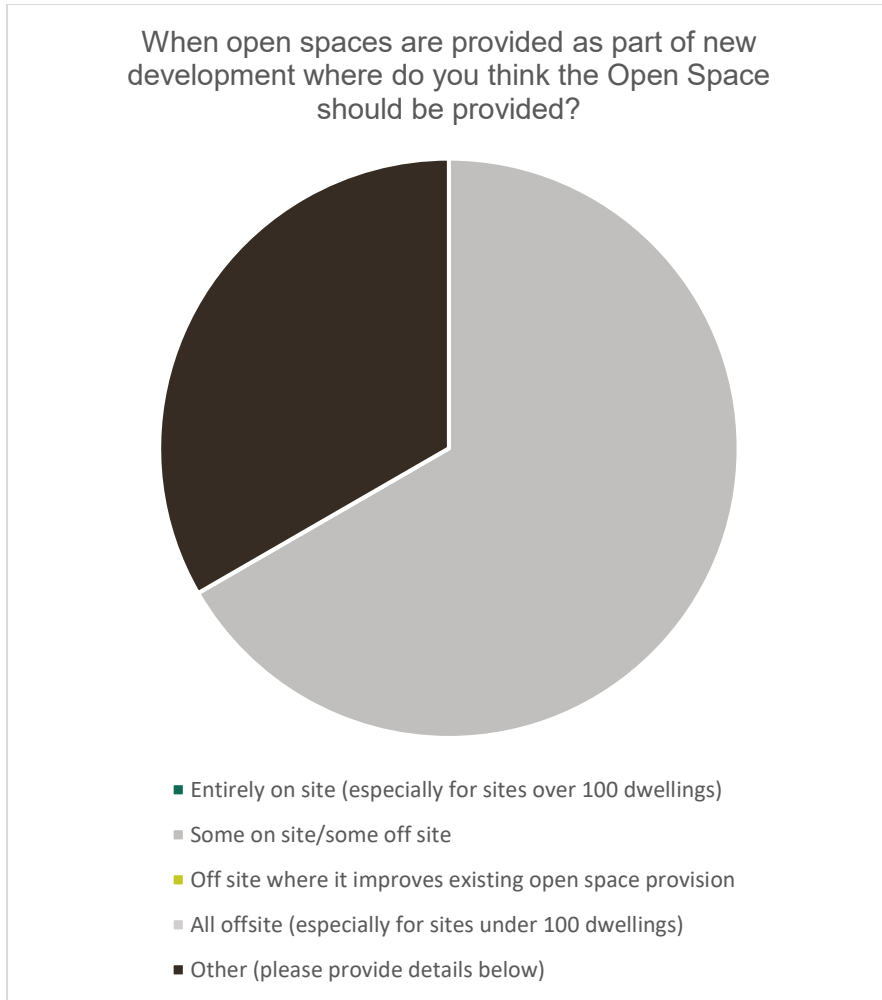


Figure 17: Parish Councils – Open Space in New Development

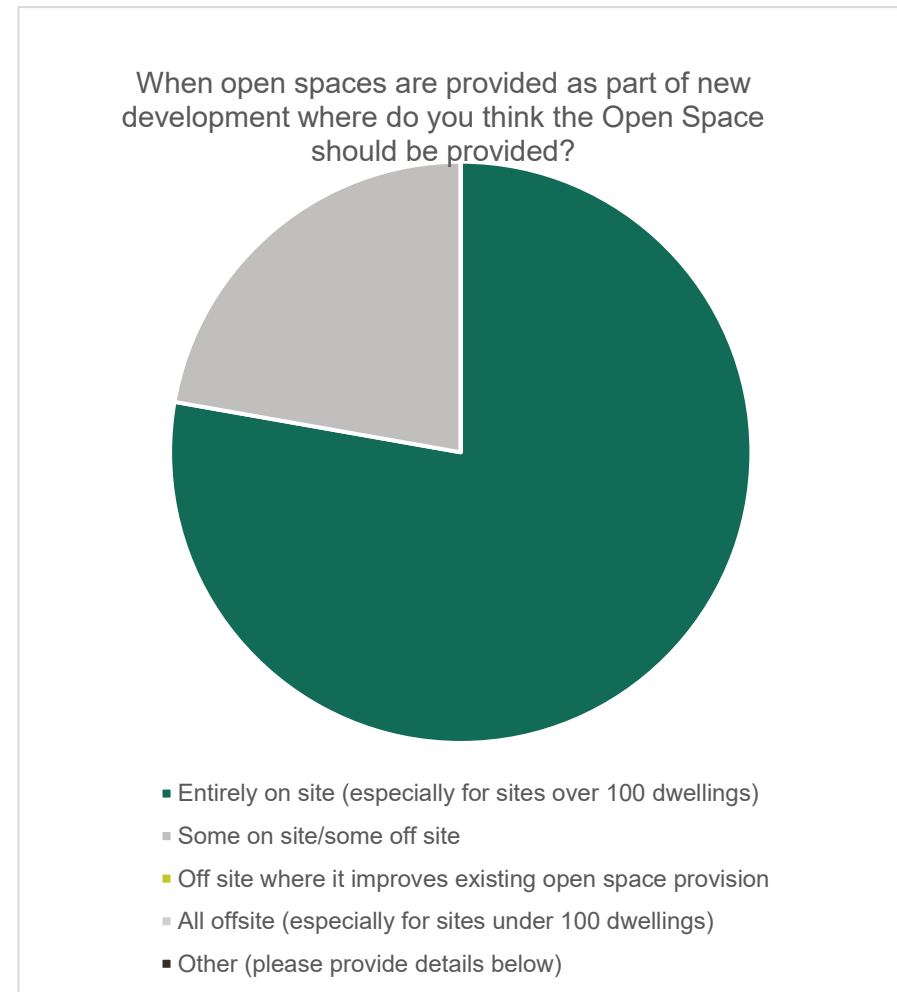


Figure 18: Key Stakeholders – Open Space in New Development

## Adoption and Long-Term Management

3.29 Adoption to long-term management provided differing views of the public and key stakeholders on what type of organisation should manage open spaces. Public consultation responses favoured the District Council taking responsibility for maintenance, reflecting a preference for centralised, accountable management.

3.30 Additional feedback from Neighbourhood Plan Forum were received in relation to the long-term stewardship of open spaces:

*"Residents face rising, unregulated service charges from private management companies, creating financial strain. Private firms lack accountability, offer poor service, and are difficult to replace. Maintenance standards often decline, harming environmental and community value. Property sales are negatively affected due to buyer concerns and added legal costs. Creates inequality across developments, with inconsistent standards and costs. Council is urged to adopt all future open spaces, ensuring fair, transparent management, consistent quality across the District, protection of residents from exploitative practices and better integration into green infrastructure planning."*

## Developer Responses

3.31 Developers were asked questions regarding the management of open spaces post development.

3.32 Developers would prefer to transfer open spaces to external management companies, with fewer opting for internal management or handover to the District Council. The main barriers to transferring spaces to local authorities are the value and duration of commuted sum payments, and the complexity of the transfer process.

3.33 Written response was received from a planning consultancy on behalf of a developer, a summary of the response is outlined below:

- The location of open space should be determined on a site-by-site basis, considering the size and development type, existing local provision and demand;
- The emerging strategy should be flexible rather than prescribing whether open space is provided on-or off-site;
- The viability of provision should be considered, including options for financial contributions instead of on-site provision where appropriate;

- Long-term stewardship should be decided on a site-by-site basis, and the strategy should not prescribe a single transfer route;
- The use of management companies is an established way to ensure open spaces are managed and maintained over the lifetime of a development without placing additional burden on the District Council or Parish Councils;
- The current rural standard of 8.5ha per 1,000 population for natural and semi-natural greenspace is unclear in its application and potentially restrictive to development;
- The OSS should review standards, including allowing existing nearby facilities to be factored into requirements, avoiding unnecessary duplication and permitting a mix of play space types; and
- The updated OSS should be a flexible guide allowing decisions tailored to individual sites.

### Online Questionnaire - Comparison 2021 and 2025

3.34 The below outlines the key changes and consistencies between the consultations undertaken in 2021 and 2025:

- 3.35 In both years, parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural greenspaces were the most used typologies. However, in 2025, there was a stronger emphasis on ecological features like re-wilding, tree planting, and allotments, reflecting a shift toward sustainability and community-led stewardship;
- 3.36 Access to open space has been consistently maintained in 2021 and in 2025. Both years highlighted that public transport and connectivity between spaces required improvement.
- 3.37 The quality of open spaces improved slightly from 2021 to 2025 but concerns about inconsistency and maintenance persisted. The consultation undertaken in 2025 highlighted more specific improvement suggestions, such as better wheelchair access and varied sward heights.
- 3.38 Consultation saw growing dissatisfaction with private management companies. While 2021 noted mixed models, the 2025 feedback showed a clear preference for local authority or community-led management, citing issues with accountability and cost.
- 3.39 Finally, developer contributions remained a challenge. In 2025, developers expressed concerns about commuted sums and sought clearer guidance, while stakeholders emphasized better enforcement and funding mechanisms.

## In-person Drop-in Sessions

- 3.40 Forty attendees participated in the in-person drop-in sessions held across six venues.
- 3.41 Table 3 below provides a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) documented at the in-person sessions.

*Table 3: SWOT Analysis of Open Space Provision Across Harborough (Public Consultation)*

Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Broughton Astley	Well-maintained open spaces. Public appreciation.	Lack of facilities within open space (e.g. toilets and parking). Poor public transport. Inconsistent quality of maintenance by management companies.	Additional facilities (e.g. toilets, children's changing rooms). Support ecological corridors & biodiversity net gain (BNG).	Open spaces sold off and closed, and subsequently not replaced.
Kibworth	Biodiversity-focused open space management e.g. Warwick Road Recreation Ground. Some community engagement.	Poor canal access. Issues with management company transfers.	Improve canal towpath and footpaths (via section 106 agreements (s106)). Support sports and community groups (specifically local football clubs).	Ownership uncertainty. Gaps in open space provision from new developments.
Great Glen	Strong volunteer base. Wild spaces. Knowledge sharing.	Poor public right of way (PRoW) and path connectivity. Play areas need improvement in terms of safety (e.g. gates and locks). Weak dog control enforcement.	Improve access routes and signage. Engage youth volunteers. Streamline management approach.	Poor access & parking. Difficulty engaging with local authorities.
Scraptoft	Woodland owned by parish. Desire for local open spaces.	No youth space. Vandalism.	Increase greenway connection.	Difficulty maintaining open spaces (e.g. access to funding).

Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
		<p>Incomplete open spaces from developers.</p> <p>Weak management company accountability.</p>	<p>Increase the protection of open spaces through allocations in the Local Plan.</p> <p>Improve open space functionality (e.g. cycle access).</p>	<p>Blocked footpaths.</p>
<p>Market Harborough</p>	<p>Diverse access to all open spaces.</p> <p>Well managed and well used open spaces.</p> <p>Good connectivity.</p> <p>Harborough Woodland.</p> <p>Canal towpaths are well maintained.</p> <p>Wellington Place management company cited for good management.</p> <p>Effective partnerships (e.g. Canal &amp; Rivers Trust).</p>	<p>Poor connectivity between open space (e.g. lack of joined up paths around Harborough).</p> <p>Inconsistent, unreliable management companies with little accountability.</p> <p>Weak communication between the local authority and residents.</p> <p>Lack of youth provision.</p> <p>Double-charging concerns (management companies &amp; council tax).</p> <p>Lack of funding for open space maintenance.</p>	<p>Council adoption of open space through commuted sums.</p> <p>Improved signage and contact details.</p> <p>Support for community-led open space initiatives.</p> <p>Joined up paths around Harborough (e.g. wheel).</p> <p>Furniture and facilities improvements (e.g. benches, bins, trees and landscaping).</p> <p>Protect and improve biodiversity.</p> <p>Expand recreational trails (e.g. BMX, sculpture walks).</p>	<p>Poor maintenance where management companies are inactive.</p> <p>Open spaces often neglected due to weak legal or funding structures.</p> <p>Environmental risks (e.g. flooding and ash dieback).</p> <p>Development pressures without adequate open space provision.</p> <p>Transition to unitary authorities increasing burden on parishes.</p> <p>Legal complexity in open space transfers.</p>

Area	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Lutterworth	<p>Adequate open space provision.</p> <p>Available allotments.</p> <p>Parish interest in adopting more open space.</p>	<p>Delayed open space transfer.</p> <p>Poor maintenance.</p> <p>Limited litter bin provision.</p> <p>Drainage issues.</p>	<p>Create event spaces.</p> <p>Parish-led open space management.</p>	<p>High development pressure.</p> <p>Vandalism.</p> <p>Poor connectivity.</p> <p>Increased car dependence.</p>



Figure 19: Photos from in-person consultation

- 3.42 Across all in-person consultation events, several common themes emerged, which are summarised below.
- 3.43 Strengths included a high level of community interest and engagement, with strong community and voluntary engagement for open spaces. There was also a strong appreciation for the variety of open space typologies available across the District.
- 3.44 However, weaknesses were consistently noted around the fragmentation and inconsistent management, particularly where private management companies are involved. Additionally, poor connectivity between spaces, and a lack of suitable provision for teenagers and young people was also highlighted.
- 3.45 Opportunities identified include the potential to use developer contributions (e.g. S106 agreements) more strategically to improve access, path networks and amenities, alongside greater support for community-led initiatives.
- 3.46 Finally, the most common threat included increasing development placing pressure on existing open spaces, limited funding for long-term management, weak accountability from private management companies and environmental risks such as flooding and disease (e.g. ash dieback).

## Online Consultation Drop-in Events

### Key Stakeholders

- 3.47 Below provides a summary of the information gathered during the online drop-in sessions with key stakeholders within the District. The purpose was to explore both strategic and local-level issues, focusing on open space quality, accessibility, community engagement, biodiversity and long-term management.
- 3.48 Representatives from the following key stakeholder groups attended the online drop-in sessions (approximately 14 attendees across 4 organisations).

### *What open space issues need to be addressed across the District?*

- Lack of connectivity;
- Underutilized watercourses e.g. River Welland;
- public access and inclusive infrastructure;
- stronger community ownership and clearer accountability;
- youth engagement and education; and
- Prioritising nature in planning and urban design.

### *What Works Well?*

#### *For People*

- Accessible, well-maintained open spaces near communities;
- Opportunities for recreation, events and social connection;
- Psychological benefits and sense of belonging; and
- Strong volunteer groups.

#### *For Place*

- Multi-functional and health-promoting design features;
- Climate-resilient spaces offering shade and cooling opportunities;
- Quiet/sensory areas for wellbeing; and
- Generally good maintenance, with some exceptions.

### *For Nature*

- Blue spaces and habitat connectivity;
- Use of sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS) and wildflower planting for flood alleviation;
- Native local planting for pollinators; and
- Strong environmental partnerships.

### *What requires improvement?*

- Inclusive design for all ages;
- Better interpretation and education about natural heritage;
- Clarity on long-term maintenance responsibilities;
- Improved connectivity between open spaces;
- Accountability for management companies;
- Consistency in long-term management approaches;
- Community involvement in decision-making;
- Support for volunteer-led management and food growing opportunities; and
- Basic features (e.g. benches) lacking in some areas.

### *What potential actions can address the issues raised?*

- Strengthen planning conditions and enforcement mechanisms;
- Engage communities;
- Implement robust BNG mechanisms to ensure accountability;
- Launch wildlife and habitat improvement programmes;
- Develop landscape management plans which are responsive to community needs (e.g. some operations may be undertaken by members of the local community);
- Improve mapping and public access to open space data;
- Establish volunteer roles (e.g. open space wardens); and
- Promote education to reduce maintenance costs and litter.

### SWOT Analysis

3.49 Table 4 below provides a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) documented at the online key stakeholder drop-in event.

*Table 4: SWOT Analysis of Open Spaces across Harborough District (Key Stakeholders)*

<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strong community engagement and volunteer culture;</li> <li>■ Consistent approach of long-term management;</li> <li>■ Proposed Local Nature Reserve at Great Bowden offers extensive public access;</li> <li>■ Communities express desire for ownership and involvement in open space management; and</li> <li>■ Existing open spaces are generally well-maintained and accessible.</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Over-reliance on private management companies with limited accountability;</li> <li>■ Public access to open space data is poor; mapping interfaces are outdated;</li> <li>■ Community suggestions are often dismissed by HDC; and</li> <li>■ Fragmented ownership and unclear responsibilities across council and private ownership.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improve digital mapping and make open space data publicly accessible;</li> <li>■ Expand river restoration and re-wilding projects linked to community engagement;</li> <li>■ Partner with schools and colleges for outdoor learning, stewardship and education;</li> <li>■ Strengthen planning policies to protect open spaces from development; and</li> <li>■ Empower parish councils to manage and maintain open spaces.</li> </ul>

## Threats

- High-density development risk reducing open space provision;
- Government re-organisation may disrupt the Public Rights of Way network;
- BNG enforcement is weak, with exemptions increasing; and
- Developers have sold off open spaces in some cases, eroding community trust.

### Parish Councils

- 3.50 Below provides a summary of the information gathered within the Parish Council online drop-in sessions
- 3.51 Seven parish councils attended the online drop-in sessions including:
- Tilton on the Hill;
  - Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt;
  - Scraftoft;
  - Lubenham;
  - Arden Neighbourhood Forum representing Market Harborough centre;
  - Great Glen; and
  - Broughton Astley.

#### *What issues need to be addressed in the District of Harborough?*

- Significant loss of land to developers, limiting parish ownership of open space;
- Funding required to manage and maintain new and existing open spaces, especially those taken on by volunteers;

- Accessibility and distribution of open spaces across the District;
- Lack of accountability of management companies;
- Limited play areas and youth provisions; and
- S106 funding is often restrictive, time-limited, or misaligned with each parish's needs and requirements.

#### *What Works Well?*

##### *For People*

- Wide variety of open spaces (e.g. sports, play, events, and nature connection);
- Community ownership increases responsiveness and engagement;
- Examples of well-used and free-access facilities (e.g. Kibworth - sports facilities, footpaths and pond dipping).

##### *For Place*

- Open spaces are currently located in central locations, with ease of access and shady/rain-covered space; and

- Benches and natural design encourage longer visits.

*For Nature*

- Wildflower and re-wilding areas valued;
- Wildlife corridors and pond habitats used for education; and
- Enhance open spaces to benefit biodiversity.

*What requires improvement?*

- Management company accountability and clarity on who maintains what;
- Lack of flexibility and coordination on s106 agreements and funding;
- Cycling access and covered storage;
- Missing signage, leading to a misunderstanding of open space responsibilities;
- Allotment demand is under met in some parishes.

*What potential actions can address the issues raised?*

- Adopt a community infrastructure levy (CIL) approach for greater spending flexibility;
- Create clearer open space mapping and data to inform decisions;

- Provide legal and technical support for parish OS adoption;
- Simplify planning conditions, enable better enforcement, and ensure long-term funding for maintenance; and
- Facilitate training and support forums for trustees and community managers.

*Is the Parish Council you represent seeking to take on new open space?*

- Scraftoft, Kibworth Beauchamp and Kibworth Harcourt, Broughton Astley and Great Glen confirmed they are seeking to take on new open space.
- Lubenham expressed interest in adopting open space specifically in relation to new developments.
- One respondent shared that although they had previously considered adopting open spaces from developers, the opportunity was withdrawn in favour of a management company. They suggested that closer dialogue may have led to a different outcome;
- Some parish councils noted that adoption would be dependent on appropriate funding being secured for long-term management;

- Tilton Parish Council stated it is not seeking to adopt additional open space, mentioning there is already sufficient existing provision and stated they have limited capacity for new facilities; and
- The neighbourhood forum in Market Harborough explained that they do not have the authority to adopt open spaces like a parish council, highlighting the need for an alternative body (e.g. Town Council) to enable future adoption.

- Additional staffing;
- Enforcement needed to implement planning conditions;
- Support negotiating with developer on legal teams particularly when they have not complied with obligations;
- Specialist skills (e.g. management of open water).

*What barriers prevent Parish Councils from taking on new open spaces?*

- Upfront sum of money required;
- Funding in perpetuity;
- Developers prefer management companies;
- Lack of obvious open space to purchase;
- Ownership change;
- Staff or finance to either take on the management in house or to look after contractors; and
- Technical knowledge or expertise (e.g. BNG management).

*What is needed to overcome these barriers?*

- Funding;

## 4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The consultation was undertaken to inform the review of Harborough District's OSS. The consultation engaged with residents, parish councils and neighbourhood forums, developers and key stakeholders. The process involved online questionnaires, in-person drop-in sessions and online consultation events, ensuring accessibility and broad participation.
- 4.2 Across all respondent groups, there was a consistent concern about the quantity of open spaces, particularly natural and semi-natural greenspaces, greenways, and provision for children and young people.
- 4.3 While quality was generally rated positively, there were concerns about inconsistency across the District, often linked to management standards.
- 4.4 In terms of accessibility, walking and cycling routes were viewed favourably, but public transport access and connectivity between spaces were seen as needing improvement.
- 4.5 There was widespread dissatisfaction with private management companies, citing poor service, rising costs, and lack of accountability. Members of the public and parish councils expressed a clear preference for local

authority, parish council and/or community-led stewardship.

- 4.6 The in-person drop-in sessions revealed strong community interest and appreciation for open spaces. Strengths included well-used and maintained spaces, volunteer engagement, and ecological value. Weaknesses such as fragmented management, poor connectivity, and lack of youth provision were raised. Opportunities focused on better use of developer contributions, improved signage, and support for community-led initiatives. Threats included development pressure, environmental risks, and limited funding for long-term maintenance.
- 4.7 The online consultation events with key stakeholders and parish councils highlighted strategic challenges such as poor connectivity between nature corridors, underutilised watercourses, and concerns over the enforcement of BNG. Stakeholders emphasised the need for inclusive design, improved mapping and data access, and stronger planning enforcement. Parish councils raised concerns about loss of land to developers, restrictive funding mechanisms, and barriers to adopting new spaces. Despite these challenges, many expressed interest in taking on open space management if supported with adequate funding, legal clarity, and technical expertise.

## Appendix C: Draft Planning Conditions

## Example Draft Planning Conditions

### Landscape Management Plan (LMP):

*"No development shall commence (excluding site clearance and ground preparation) until a LMP has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.*

*The LMP shall include, but not be limited to:*

- a) A schedule of all landscaped and open space areas (formal and informal), Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) (if applicable), play areas (LAPs, LEAPs, NEAPs) (if applicable), allotments, and green infrastructure corridors;*
- b) Long-term design objectives, management responsibilities including the name of the responsible organisation aligning with the adoption hierarchy, and maintenance schedules for all landscape areas (excluding private domestic gardens);*
- c) Identification of the responsible management body aligning with the adoption hierarchy and evidence of capacity to fulfil obligations alongside details of funding to secure the long-term stewardship of the site;*
- d) Arrangements for monitoring and reporting to the LPA every five years;*
- e) A contingency process to review and update the LMP if objectives are not being met, subject to written approval by the Council; and*
- f) Measures for replacement planting should any trees or vegetation die or fail within the first five years following implementation".*

### Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP):

*"No development shall commence until a HMMP has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council.*

*The HMMP shall be based on the approved BNG Assessment and shall include:*

- a) Details of the habitat creation, enhancement, and management required to achieve the agreed Statutory Biodiversity Metric;*
- b) A timetable for implementation of habitat works and long-term management measures;*
- c) Identification of the body responsible for implementing and maintaining habitat areas (including evidence of funding or contractual arrangements) aligning with the adoption hierarchy;*
- d) Monitoring and reporting procedures to demonstrate delivery of the biodiversity objectives, with results submitted to the Council at Years 5, 10, 20, and 30;*

*e) Adaptive management measures to address underperformance or habitat failure, including replacement planting, re-seeding, or habitat creation alternatives; and*

*f) A mechanism for remedial action if biodiversity units fall below the approved target during the monitoring period".*

## Appendix D: Critical Policy Review



## Open Space Adoption Policy Review for Harborough District Council

The Environment Partnership (TEP) Limited is currently in the process of reviewing and updating the Open Spaces Strategy (OSS) for Harborough District Council, an evidence-based document which will support the production of the new Local Plan.

As part of OSS, TEP has reviewed the adoption protocol of open spaces within new developments. TEP understand the Council's preference is that open space is adopted by the most appropriate local authority. The consultation events undertaken to support the OSS highlighted there is a widespread dissatisfaction among members of the public, parish councils and key stakeholders with the use of private management companies – citing poor service, rising costs and a lack of accountability.

The below table reviews four other, and comparable local authorities to Harborough District Council, as well as Harborough District itself. It provides commentary on the current policy wording, any supporting supplementary planning documents (SPDs) and also provides recommendations for Harborough District Council.

Local Authority	Name of Document and Wording of Policy or SPD	Recommendations and Comments
<p><b>Harborough District Council</b></p>	<p><u><b>Local Plan 2011 to 2031</b></u>  <b>Policy GI2 Open Space, Sport and Recreation</b></p> <p>The District's open space, sport and recreation facilities (as shown on the Policies Map) and any future additional facilities provided as part of new development will be safeguarded and enhanced through improvements to their quality and use.</p> <p>Development resulting in the loss of or reduction in defined open space, sport and recreation facilities will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A robust assessment clearly demonstrates that the space or recreational facility is surplus to local requirements and will not be needed in the-long term in accordance with local standards; or</li> <li>• Replacement areas will be at least equivalent in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility, and there will be no overall negative impact on the provision of open space in accordance with local standards; or</li> <li>• The proposal is for alternative recreational provision which meets evidence of local need in such a way as to outweigh the loss.</li> </ul> <p>Developments of more than 10 dwellings which would result in deficiencies in the quantity, accessibility and/or quality of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities should contribute towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of specific new open space, sport and recreation facilities in accordance with local standards; and/or</li> <li>• The enhancement of identified existing facilities to meet the relevant local standards.</li> </ul>	<p>Policy GI2 covers all scenarios in terms of open space including mitigating from the loss of open space through development, providing new open space and open space of residential dwellings of 10 or more.</p> <p>Policy GI2 lacks information with regards to management responsibilities, leaving uncertainty on what organisation undertakes the management of a site, and who oversees and enforces it.</p> <p>Policy GI2 does not include a mechanism for monitoring the quality or usage of open space after development is completed.</p> <p>Policy GI2 could signpost to other policies in the Local Plan which address Green Infrastructure (GI), Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and climate change.</p> <p>Community involvement and stewardship is not addressed in Policy GI2, which could limit local engagement and long-term success.</p> <p>Policy GI2 lacks additional information on the above which could be included in a supporting SPD.</p>

Local Authority	Name of Document and Wording of Policy or SPD	Recommendations and Comments
	<p>New open space, sport and recreation facilities should be provided within residential development sites (unless otherwise agreed by the Council) and should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be accessible, usable, of high quality and good design, visible and safe and include facilities for a range of ages;</li> <li>• Enable links to be created between new development and surrounding recreational networks and facilities (including Public Rights of Way);</li> <li>• Provide an appropriate landscaping and landscape maintenance scheme; and</li> <li>• Specify, prior to the commencement of development, the responsibilities for management and maintenance in-perpetuity of the open space, sport and recreation facility.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Planning Obligations SPD 2022</u></b></p> <p>Harborough District Council seeks contributions for open space.</p> <p>In most cases open space will be provided on-site by developers. However, some typologies of open space may be unsuitable for on-site provision in which case an off-site contribution can be accepted. There is an expectation that developers of residential schemes will mitigate the impact of development via the provision and enhancement of public open space in the District irrespective of whether this is done on or off-site.</p> <p>Proposed development will be assessed against the existing levels of provision within the accessibility thresholds specified in the current provision for Open Space Strategy 2021 which will determine the need for additional provision.</p>	<p>Harborough District Council has a planning obligations SPD which provides additional information on open space delivery and contributions.</p> <p>The SPD provides additional information on how financial contributions or commuted sums should be calculated.</p>

Local Authority	Name of Document and Wording of Policy or SPD	Recommendations and Comments
	<p>The Open Space Strategy 2021 provides information on local standards for open space provision following an assessment of recreational provision. It contains an approach to determining the level of contributions towards open space, sport and recreation facilities that will be sought from developers applying for new residential development where needed to make development acceptable.</p> <p>The level of contributions will be periodically reviewed to ensure that they are accurate and will be calculated for each development from a detailed assessment of the range of existing open space in the area. Generally, contributions towards open space typologies would be required where there would be a capacity issue or an under-supply. A Playing Pitch Strategy was prepared in 2016 to inform future requirements for sports provision.</p> <p>A commuted sum will normally also be requested to ensure arrangements for the maintenance of the facilities over the initial 30-year life of the facility are in place should the Council decide to take ownership of a site. It should not be assumed that open space will be inherited by the local authority. Each case will be considered individually.</p> <p>Since the proposed method of calculation related to open space contributions needs to consider existing provision and is based on a number of types of open space required to make the development in planning terms acceptable, a specific contribution figure for the amount of on and off-site provision is calculated at the determination of the relevant application. The commuted sum for maintenance will be similarly calculated to reflect the type of open space expected to be provided.</p>	

Local Authority	Name of Document and Wording of Policy or SPD	Recommendations and Comments
	<p><b>Proposed Submission Draft Harborough Local Plan March 2025</b>  <i>Policy DM05: Green and Blue Infrastructure and Open Space</i></p> <p>1. All development must:</p> <p>a) contribute to creating high-quality multifunctional green and blue infrastructure in accordance with the Open Spaces Strategy 2021 (or subsequent revisions) and Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (2024), including using trees and other planting where appropriate, to provide access to shade and manage surface water run-off as part of a wider resilience to climate change and, where needed, use noise and pollution barriers/absorption measures;</p> <p>b) create and enhance accessible links for all between new developments and surrounding recreational networks and facilities; and</p> <p>c) enhance access to publicly accessible open space.</p> <p>2. Residential development of 10 or more homes will meet the requirements set in 1 (a) to 1(c) and local standards below or as set out in up-to-date evidence of open space requirements published by the Council. Developments will be expected to provide an appropriate landscaping and landscape maintenance scheme, ensuring high standards of maintenance. In accordance with Open Spaces Strategy if on-site provision is not feasible by virtue of location, management limitations or the open space will not be of a sustainable size (see Provision for Open Space Sport and Recreation - Delivery Plan 2021), a payment equivalent to the cost of off-site provision will be required, taking into consideration the Provision for Open Space Sport and Recreation – Delivery Plan 2021 or subsequent revisions.</p> <p>3. New open space or outdoor sport and recreation facilities, such as playing pitches, must be:</p>	<p>The proposed submission for Harborough’s Draft Local Plan, covers open space within policy DM05.</p> <p>Policy DM05 provides for green infrastructure and open space, integrating climate resilience and water management.</p> <p>The policy also strengthens the link and refers to supporting documents and requires the delivery of open space on developments of 10 or more homes.</p> <p>The policy requires high quality, safe and age-inclusive open space and states that management responsibilities should be clearly defined.</p> <p>This policy also includes Local Green Space protections.</p> <p>The policy could be strengthened, for example, the policy does not outline the requirement to provide details of the management organisation. Neither does it include an adoption hierarchy or refers to an Open Space Guidance Document.</p>

Local Authority	Name of Document and Wording of Policy or SPD	Recommendations and Comments
	<p>a) accessible, usable, of high quality, safe and include facilities for a range of ages; and</p> <p>b) secured, prior to the commencement of development, with clear responsibilities for management and maintenance in perpetuity.</p> <p>4. Development on Open Space or Playing Pitches will not be permitted unless one of the following criteria is met:</p> <p>a) It is for a use ancillary to its primary use as open space, sport or recreation and is designed and located in a way that preserves the open character of the space; or</p> <p>b) a robust assessment clearly demonstrates it is surplus to local requirements and will not be needed in the long term in accordance with local standards; or</p> <p>c) it can be demonstrated that replacement provision will be at least equivalent in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility, and there will be no overall negative impact on the provision of open space in accordance with local standards; or</p> <p>d) it can be demonstrated that the proposal is for alternative provision which meets evidence of local need in such a way as to outweigh the loss.</p> <p>5. Local Green Spaces are allocated on the Policies Map and will retain their openness permanently. Further Local Green Space may be identified in Neighbourhood Plans providing it meets the relevant criteria in relation to scale, beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity, or ecological value and it does not conflict with the strategic policies of this Local Plan.</p> <p>6. The construction of new buildings on Local Green Space will not be permitted other than:</p>	

Local Authority	Name of Document and Wording of Policy or SPD	Recommendations and Comments
	<p>a) buildings providing appropriate facilities for outdoor, sport, recreation, cemeteries, burial grounds and allotments as long as the facilities preserve the openness of the Local Green Space; or</p> <p>b) replacement buildings, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces; or</p> <p>c) except in very special circumstances where the potential harm to the Local Green Space, including to its openness, special character, significance to the local community, and any other harm, are clearly outweighed by other considerations.</p>	
<p><b>Stratford-on-Avon District</b></p>	<p><b><u>Core Strategy 2011 to 2031</u></b>  <i>Policy CS.25 Part B Open Space and Recreation</i>            New housing development will enable an increase in or enhancement of open space and recreation facilities to meet the needs of its residents. Where it is justified by the scale of new development, developers will be expected to contribute towards the provision of open space in order to help achieve the standards set out in the Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment.            New open space provision will be designed to complement and enhance the existing open space provision in the area. Where appropriate, improvements to the quality and/or accessibility of existing provision will be sought. Where developments are of a suitable scale provision will be made on site.</p> <p>Development proposals that would result in the loss of public or private open space, including allotments, without suitable replacement being made, will be resisted unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It can be demonstrated that there is an absence of need, or it is surplus to requirements; and</li> </ul>	<p>Policy CS.25 covers all scenarios in terms of open space including mitigating from the loss of open space through development and providing new open space.</p> <p>Policy CS.25 includes very little information on management responsibilities and funding, however, the policy is supported by an SPD.</p> <p>The supporting SPD is not referred to in the Policy GI2.</p>

Local Authority	Name of Document and Wording of Policy or SPD	Recommendations and Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It does not make a valuable contribution to the amenity and character of the area.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Developer Requirements SPD – Part L Open Space – Adopted April 2024</u></b></p> <p>The Core Strategy 2011 to 2031 is supported by the Developer Requirements SPD. This SPD sets out guidance for the provision, enhancement, adoption, and future maintenance of new public open spaces required in conjunction with new residential development across Stratford-on-Avon District.</p> <p>The SPD will be used by Stratford-on-Avon District Council to help reach decisions on whether to approve or refuse planning applications. There is an expectation that the following open space typologies will be, normally be transferred to the Parish/Town Council. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Type 1 Parks &amp; Gardens and Amenity Greenspace</li> <li>Type 2 Unrestricted Natural Accessible Greenspace</li> <li>Type 3 Children and Young People’s Equipped Play Facilities</li> <li>Type 4 Allotments and Community Gardens</li> </ul> <p>Where the Parish/Town Council do not accept the transfer, the District Council will consider the management of Types 1 to 3 only. Transfer to the District Council is subject to ensuring the open space can be effectively maintained under the current management programme in operation. Where any of these types of spaces cannot be managed by the Town/Parish Council or District Council and are to be retained by the developers or transferred to a management company, the quality of management and maintenance must be maintained to a high standard. The Council will also ensure that costs to residents where they arise remain reasonable.</p>	<p>The SPD for Stratford-on-Avon provides information on management responsibilities and funding which support the delivery of Policy SC.25 of the Core Strategy.</p> <p>The SPD provides a clear three-step adoption hierarchy for determining which organisation should manage new open spaces; offering Parish and Town Councils the open spaces first, then to the District Council and finally transfer to a private management organisation.</p> <p>If both Parish and Town Councils and District Council decline, it leaves only transferring to a private management organisation which could potentially result in inconsistent standards and reduced public accountability. A quality standard has been adopted by Stratford-on-Avon to ensure the management undertaken by a private management organisation is at the same standard as that undertaken by the Parish or District Council.</p> <p>The SPD does cover how the requirement of open space is calculated.</p>

Local Authority	Name of Document and Wording of Policy or SPD	Recommendations and Comments
	<p>The maintenance and management strategy should be provided as part of the application clarifying which organisation(s) the open space will be transferred to for maintenance. This highlights the importance of developers engaging early on with the Parish/Town Council and the Council.</p>	<p>The SPD also provides protection for residents by regulating future charges through Council oversight.</p> <p>The SPD allows the involvement of multiple organisations for management accommodating site specific needs e.g. complex water management.</p> <p>The SPD encourages early engagement in long-term management.</p>
<p><b>Warwick District Council</b></p>	<p><u><a href="#">Local Plan 2011 to 2029</a></u>  <i>Policy HS4 Improvements to Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities</i></p> <p>Contributions from developments will be sought to provide, improve and maintain appropriate open space, sport and recreational facilities to meet local and district-wide needs. The exact level and form of contributions required will have regard to the location, nature and size of development.</p> <p>Where appropriate, applicants will be required to ensure that provision is made for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-designed open space in accordance with the requirements of the Open Space SPD (or any subsequent document);</li> <li>• Appropriate children’s play facilities that are visible from nearby houses but not so close they would cause disturbance, and;</li> <li>• Outdoor and / or indoor sport accessible by walking, cycling and public transport.</li> </ul>	<p>Policy HS4 covers providing open space within a new development and also advises where more appropriate improvement or enhancement should be undertaken.</p> <p>Policy HS4 refers to the supporting SPD, which provides additional information in terms of provisions of open space across the District and catchment areas. The SPD specifically states what provisions will be made in terms of the delivery of open space typologies and refers to the Open Space Strategy.</p> <p>Policy HS4 also refers to and encourages new open spaces provide good connectivity to the existing public right of way network.</p>

Local Authority	Name of Document and Wording of Policy or SPD	Recommendations and Comments
	<p>Applicants will be expected to include a proportion of the site to meet its requirements for open space, sport and recreation requirements, except where it would be more appropriate to provide, improve or enhance recreation facilities off-site, provided that this is within its catchment area. Wherever possible, good connectivity to the existing public rights of way network will be required.</p> <p><b><u>Public Open Space SPD – Adopted April 2019</u></b></p> <p>It is expected that new open spaces will be offered to the Local Authority for adoption. In the event that the LA does not adopt the open space then the developer will be required to deliver a maintenance programme to an agreed Management Plan, which will replicate the quality of maintenance prevalent throughout the LA-managed POS. Where one is required, the satisfactory completion of a Management Plan will be a requirement prior to commencement.</p> <p>Public open spaces require unfettered access for members of the public throughout the year. In order to ensure safety and other considerations elements of gating and fencing may need to be included within the design. These matters should be discussed at the earliest available opportunity to ensure appropriateness and to also ensure that the Local Authorities maintenance vehicles can access the site post adoption. A post-installation independent safety audit of the POS will be required.</p>	<p>The SPD provides clear information on what the Council expects to see in terms open space delivery in new developments and also provides information on the adoption process and provides additional information on management regimes. The SPD provides information on how the quantum of open space can be calculated.</p> <p>The SPD states that it is ‘expected’ that new open spaces are offered to the Local Authority for adoption. Where this is not possible or is rejected then the developer must create and have approval of a maintenance programme which replicates the quality of those delivered by the Local Authority. The SPD also advises a post-installation audit is undertaken to ensure access and safety is provided. This provides the Local Authority to inspect the condition of the new open space.</p>
<p><b>Mansfield District Council</b></p>	<p><b><u>Local Plan 2013 to 2033</u></b>  <i>Policy IN4 New Community Open Space</i>            New residential development of 10 or more dwellings (net) will be required to contribute towards:</p>	<p>Policy IN4 covers providing open space within a new development and also advises where more appropriate improvement or enhancement should be undertaken.</p>

Local Authority	Name of Document and Wording of Policy or SPD	Recommendations and Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The creation of new community open space (including play) and outdoor sports provision; and/or</li> <li>Improving the quality of and/or accessibility to existing community open space, natural green space, play and outdoor sports provision.</li> </ul> <p>New on-site provision and/or contributions towards enhancements to existing provision should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be informed by the council's community open space assessment and playing pitch assessment and strategy, including the Mansfield Green Space Standard and Sport England pitch standards;</li> <li>Be proportionate to the size of the development;</li> <li>Be multi-functional, accessible, of good quality and fit for purpose; and</li> <li>Have appropriate mechanisms to ensure their future satisfactory maintenance, management and sustained community use.</li> </ul>	<p>Policy IN4 advises developers to review the Open Space Assessment for provision standards and supports long-term management by requesting the mechanism for maintenance and management.</p> <p>The policy does not refer to the supporting SPD, however the District Council has an overarching SPD for Planning Obligations which provides additional information on long-term responsibilities for new open spaces.</p>
	<p><b><u>Planning Obligations SPD – Adopted 2022</u></b></p> <p>Obligations may be sought for new open space or improvements to existing open space including those specifically identified in sites allocated for housing in adopted local plan policy H1;</p> <p>Amount - A minimum of open space provided on-site is 10% of the developable area (local plan appendix 11, please see part D). The amount of off-site open space should be relative to the development to best fit the needs of future residents (see Fields in Trust guidance).</p> <p>Size of open spaces – the size of a new open space (either on or off-site) should be large enough to meet the needs of the development and to perform its required function(s) and design needs e.g. play space, natural green space, outdoor gym, SuDS, etc. The minimum size</p>	<p>The Planning Obligations SPD provides additional information on the minimum amount and size of open space to be provided as part of a new development.</p> <p>The SPD also provides information in cases where the Local Authority does not adopt the open space, the SPD lists what information should be provided. The SPD has limited information on how the management of spaces will be enforced.</p>

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	<p>requirement for new open space is 0.16 hectare, which is based on Fields in Trust LEAP requirements. The size of open space should be of a functional and maintainable size. It should be noted that the minimum size requirement will apply, even where 0.16 hectares is greater than 10% of the developable area (see above);</p> <p>If public open space is not to be maintained by the District Council, then a maintenance plan should be submitted as part of the planning obligations.</p> <p>This should include sufficient detail for those managing these areas to allow it to be practically applied.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It should address what, where, how, who by, and when GI assets will be managed;</li> <li>• Contributions for future maintenance of on-site open space; and</li> <li>• The design of new open space and enhancements sought to existing open space should be informed by the Mansfield Green Space Standard.</li> </ul>	<p>The SPD also includes information on how open space is calculated for delivery through new developments.</p>
<p><b>Charnwood Borough Council</b></p>	<p><b><u>Core Strategy 2011 to 2028</u></b>  <i>Policy CS15 Open Space, Sports and Recreation</i>            We will work with our partners to meet the strategic open space needs of our community by 2028. We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requiring new developments to meet the standards set out in our Open Spaces Strategy, having regard to local provision and viability</li> <li>• Requiring masterplans for our sustainable urban extensions that deliver quality open spaces; retaining open space, sport and recreation facilities unless they are clearly surplus to</li> </ul>	<p>Policy CS15 covers the delivery of new open spaces, supports masterplanning for urban extensions and protects the loss of open space unless clear justification is provided.</p> <p>Policy CS15 suggest that the developer should provide details on long term management, however the wording is vague and could therefore lack enforceability and limited information on the hierarchy of adoption for example.</p>



Local Authority	Name of Document and Wording of Policy or SPD	Recommendations and Comments
	<p>requirements or replacement provision of at least equal quantity and quality will be made in a suitable location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Responding positively to development which contributes to open space, sport and recreation provision, including Local Green Space, identified through a Neighbourhood Plan or similar robust, community led strategy; and securing long-term management and investment plans for existing, and new facilities.</li></ul>	<p>Charnwood Borough Council does not have a supporting SPD.</p>

## Recommendations

When comparing the policy wording and supporting SPDs of other Local Authorities, several distinctions emerge that highlight opportunities for Harborough District Council to improve its approach to open space provision:

### Provision of a supporting Open Space Guidance Document

Harborough District Council currently relies on an outdated SPD for planning obligations which covers open space provision and provides some guidance on the adoption and long-term responsibility, funding and maintenance of open spaces. Even though an SPD is present, it is outdated and lacks additional information which could create ambiguity for developers and decision makers. It is understood that SPDs are currently being phased out. Local Authorities such as Stratford-on-Avon, Warwick and Mansfield District Council have adopted SPDs that clearly outline expectations for adoption of open space, provision of open space, management responsibilities and long-term maintenance strategies.

All Local Authorities assessed, use their SPD to provide additional information on how the quantum of open space or developer contributions is calculated on new developments. Following on from reviewing Harborough's draft policy for open space, the Council would benefit from a dedicated and updated Open Space Guidance Document that reflects current best practice, while strengthening links to supporting documents.

### Adoption Protocol

There is no clearly defined adoption hierarchy in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Policy GI2 for Harborough District Council, leaving uncertainty around who should manage open spaces in the long term. Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Council both address this through a clear a tiered adoption protocol in their SPD, prioritising Parish Council and Local Authorities followed by private management if necessary. This structured approach ensures accountability and consistency in open space management. Further to the review of Harborough's draft policy for open space, detailing an adoption hierarchy would help to re-enforce accountability.

### Mechanisms

Harborough District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Policy GI2 does not include guidance on financial contributions such as commuted sums or long-term funding arrangements. This could potentially lead to underfunded or poorly maintained spaces. Stratford-on-Avon District Council includes information on finance mechanisms requiring a 30-year commuted sum.

### Monitoring

Harborough District Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Policy GI2 does not include guidance on post development inspections or monitoring of open space, which could provide uncertainty that open spaces may not remain function and safe. Warwick District Council

enforces monitoring through the Public Open Space SPD, where spaces are adopted by management organisations, developers are required to submit and adhere to a Landscape Management Plan that replicates the quality of maintenance delivered by the Local Authority. Additionally, Warwick mandates a post-installation safety inspection allowing the Council to inspect the condition and accessibility of open spaces prior to their adoption. Similarly, Stratford-on-Avon District Council ensures quality standards are upheld even when open spaces are managed by external management companies, by requiring that maintenance meets the same standards as those provided by Local Authorities. These mechanisms provide accountability and help maintain consistent quality across developments.

To ensure high-quality, sustainable open space provision, Harborough District Council should consider developing a dedicated Open Space Guidance Document that addresses adoption protocols, funding mechanisms as well as monitoring requirements.

### Additional Considerations

BNG is now a mandatory requirement for developments in England. Developers must demonstrate a minimum uplift in biodiversity supported by a Biodiversity Gain Plan and Statutory Metric.

To ensure compliance and long-term delivery, Local Authorities should require a long-term management plan. This management plan should cover management operations for all created, enhanced and retained habitats capable of being rolled out on a 30-year basis and should be secured through a legal agreement.

Equally as important, broader landscape elements should also be covered, such as hard landscaping or furniture that may not contribute directly to BNG but are essential for the overall site quality. Management plans should be reviewed periodically to reflect site conditions and user needs. Developers should confirm scope and responsibility within a management plan for the site.

Harborough's draft policy for open space integrates climate resilience and water management, and promotes high-quality, safe, and age-inclusive open space and accessibility as well as highlighting linked up places but could be strengthened by explicitly linking to BNG requirements and broader landscape management planning.

## Appendix E: Critical Planning Conditions Review

## Appendix F: Made Neighbourhood Plans

- Arnesby;
- Billesdon;
- Broughton Astley;
- Burton Overy;
- Dunton Bassett;
- East Langton;
- Fleckney;
- Foxton;
- Gilmorton;
- Great Bowden;
- Great Easton;
- Great Glen;
- Hallaton;
- High Leicestershire;
- Houghton on the Hill;
- Hungarton;
- Husbands Bosworth;
- The Kibworths;
- Leire;
- Lubenham;
- Medbourne;
- Misterton with Walcote;
- North Kilworth;
- Saddington;
- Scraftoft;
- Shearsby;
- South Kilworth;
- Swinford;
- Thurnby and Bushby;
- Tugby and Keythorpe; and
- Tur Langton.

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