

3 Green Space Audit and Strategy

Methodology

3.1 PPG17 sets out a five stage methodology to enable a consistent approach to the preparation of open space appraisals. The five stages are:

- Identifying local needs
- Auditing local provision
- Setting provision standards
- Applying provision standards
- Developing draft policies

3.2 The previous section of the report looked at identifying local need, both in terms of previous studies undertaken and new surveys and consultation undertaken specifically for this strategy. The remainder of this section relates to the following types of open space as identified in PPG17:

- Parks and Gardens
- Natural and semi-natural green space
- Green corridors
- Amenity green space
- Provision for children and young people
- Allotments
- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Civic spaces

3.3 Playing pitches and sports facilities are covered by separate methodologies within the following sections of this strategy. Civic spaces are not covered within this strategy as none over the 0.2ha size threshold were identified within the District. Green corridors have been combined with natural and semi-natural green space due to the small number of green corridors identified and the overlap between the two types of open space.

Study Area

3.4 Uttlesford District consists of 57 parishes. Of these 15 parishes were covered by the 2006 Audit. The parishes are not grouped in any particular way for planning purposes and no specific catchment areas have been identified for the main towns and villages. In planning terms Great Dunmow and Saffron Walden are identified as Market Towns and Elsenham, Great Chesterford, Newport, Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley and Thaxted as main villages. The parishes associated with these settlements have therefore been used to analyse existing provision for some typologies.

Site Audit

3.5 To establish Uttlesford District's baseline position with regard to open space, a comprehensive site audit was undertaken. The 2006 Audit identified open spaces within 15 parishes and a further update was undertaken in April 2010 to which nine parishes responded and either verified or amended the locations of open spaces. The 2006 Audit did not consider green corridors, civic spaces or cemeteries and churchyards.

3.6 In order to extend the baseline data to cover all parishes a letter and base map was sent to the Parish/Town Clerk for each Parish/Town Council within Uttlesford in June 2011. The letter requested that the Parish/Town Council should check the open spaces already identified in the 15 parishes previously audited. In the remaining Parishes the Clerk was requested to identify open spaces within each of the open space typologies.

- 3.7 Following receipt of responses from the Parish Councils, individual sites were plotted in GIS and questionnaires were prepared for each site over 0.2ha identified and all children's play areas (see Appendix 1 for main questionnaire and Appendix 2 for allotments questionnaire). These were issued to the Parish Councils for them to complete.
- 3.8 Where Parish Councils had not responded to the initial letter sites were identified and questionnaires completed on site by The Landscape Partnership. Where sites were identified by Parish Councils but no questionnaires were returned/completed the overall quality of the sites has been entered as unknown. The following summarises the responses received from Parish/Town Councils:

Parish	Response to request for sites	Response to questionnaires
Arkesden	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Ashdon	Full response received	Full response received
Aythorpe Roding	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Barnston	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Berden	Full response received	Full response received
Birchanger	Full response received	Questionnaires not issued due to late response – quality of sites unknown
Broxted	Full response received	Full response received
Chickney	Full response received	Full response received
Chrishall	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP with revisions by Parish Council
Clavering	Full response received	Full response received
Debden	Full response received	Partial response received – quality of some sites unknown
Elmdon and Wenden Lofts	Full response received	N/a
Elsenham	Full response received	Questionnaires not issued due to late response – quality of sites unknown
Farnham	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Felsted	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Flitch Green	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Great Canfield	Full response received	Full response received
Great Chesterford	Full response received	Response not received – quality of sites unknown
Great Dunmow	Full response received	Full response received
Great Easton and Tilty	Full response received	Full response received
Great Hallingbury	Full response received	Questionnaires not issued due to late response – quality of sites unknown
Hadstock	Full response received	Response not received – quality of sites unknown
Hatfield Broad Oak	Full response received	Full response received
Hatfield Heath	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Hempstead	Full response received	Full response received
Henham	Full response received	Full response received
High Easter	Full response received	Questionnaires not issued due to late response – quality of sites unknown
High Roding	Full response received	Full response received
Langley	Full response received	Partial response received – quality of some sites unknown

Parish	Response to request for sites	Response to questionnaires
Leaden Roding	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Lindsell	Full response received	Full response received
Littlebury	Full response received	Questionnaires not issued due to late response – quality of sites unknown
Little Bardfield	Full response received	N/a
Little Canfield	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP with revisions by Parish Council
Little Chesterford	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Little Dunmow	Full response received	N/a
Little Easton	Full response received	Full response received
Little Hallingbury	Full response received	Questionnaires not issued due to late response – quality of sites unknown
Manuden	Full response received	Full response received
Margaret Roding	Full response received	N/a
Newport	Full response received	Full response received
Quendon and Rickling	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Radwinter	Full response received	Response not received– quality of sites unknown
Saffron Walden	Full response received	Partial response received– quality of some sites unknown
The Sampfords	Full response received	Response not received– quality of sites unknown
Sewards End	Full response received	Questionnaires not issued due to late response – quality of sites unknown
Stansted	Full response received	Full response received
Stebbing	Full response received	Full response received
Strethall	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Takeley	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Thaxted	Full response received	Response not received– quality of sites unknown
Uqley	Full response received	Full response received
Wendens Ambo	Full response received	Full response received
White Roding	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Wicken Bonhunt	Audited by TLP	Audited by TLP
Widdington	Full response received	Full response received
Wimbish	Full response received	Questionnaires not issued due to late response – quality of sites unknown

- 3.9 The questionnaires were based on a simplified version of the questionnaires used for the 2006 Audit. They identified any designations relating to the site, the primary and secondary use of the site and considered a range of factors, including Welcome, Entrances/Boundaries, Access into/within site, Safety, Seats and bins, Cleanliness, Facilities, Buildings, Nature conservation, Vegetation, Trees and Water features.

Setting Standards

- 3.10 The 'Companion Guide to PPG 17: Assessing needs and Opportunities' identifies five key attributes of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities, these being:

- Accessibility
- Quality
- Multi-functionality
- Primary purpose and
- Quantity

- 3.11 The PPG 17 Companion Guide identifies the following:

Accessibility normally comes first in importance for the simple reason that if a particular open space or facility is inaccessible it will be irrelevant to those who may want to use it. At the same time, however, inaccessible open spaces can nonetheless contribute to the appearance, environmental quality and amenity of an area and contribute to biodiversity.

Quality depends on two things: the needs and expectations of users, on the one hand, and design, management and maintenance on the other – in other words fitness for purpose. In this context 'users' means people of all ages, all social or ethnic groups and abilities or disabilities, and also wildlife. Ensuring that something is fit for purpose requires clarity as to what that purpose is.

Many open spaces, however, are in practice **Multi-functional**. Most grass pitches, for example, are probably used for purposes such as children's play, kite flying, exercising dogs (in spite of the potential problem of fouling) or jogging as well as sport. This can create problems when analyzing an audit of provision and determining whether local needs are satisfied.

'Primary purpose' so that each open space, or sport and recreation facility, is counted only once in an audit of provision. 'Primary' infers that there is at least one secondary purpose; this both reflects the multi-functional nature of many open spaces and brings clarity and consistency to planning, design and management policies. It therefore helps to promote fitness for purpose.

Quantity is the final key attribute. It is usually measured in terms of the amount of provision (for example, area, the number of pitches or allotments or pieces of play equipment). However, this can be over-simplistic for pitches and some other outdoor sports facilities. For example, a pitch can accommodate only one match starting at 1400 hours on a Saturday afternoon. However, the capacity, or maximum number of matches per week, of any given pitch varies with its specification. This means that it is sometimes possible to address an identified quantitative deficiency in provision by improving the specification, or quality, of existing facilities.

- 3.12 Standards have been identified locally for accessibility, quality and quantity through identifying deficits in these attributes via analysis of the site audits and comparing them to both existing standards, and those of comparator authorities.

- 3.13 Standards have been identified across the District authority for each typology of open space where appropriate.

Comparator authorities

- 3.14 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) provides a Nearest Neighbours Model, to enable local authorities to undertake comparative and benchmarking exercises, by identifying the councils that are most closely related in terms of their demography and economic profile.

- 3.15 In terms of comparing open space provision with the most comparable local authorities, an exercise was undertaken to identify Uttlesford's 'Nearest Neighbours', and establish which of these authorities have undertaken similar open space studies, to provide benchmarking data.
- 3.16 The results of the exercise identified Md-Sussex, Cotswold, South Oxfordshire, East Hampshire, Winchester, Test Valley, West Oxfordshire, Vale of White Horse, Harborough, Sevenoaks, Horsham, Stratford-on-Avon, Hambleton, Maldon and South Cambridgeshire, as the most compatible authorities with an Open spaces/PPG17 assessment/Green spaces strategy. Where the 'nearest neighbour' authorities had not set greenspace standards for a particular typology, we also consulted near spatial neighbours with Open Spaces Strategies, such as North Hertfordshire, East Hertfordshire, Braintree, Chelmsford and South Cambridgeshire to see what standard they had set. A summary of the standards set is provided in Appendix 3.

Role of comparator authorities in standard setting

- 3.17 Whilst the primary method of establishing local standards has been through use of the audit and the community consultation, the comparator standards allow proposed local standards to be compared with local authorities with similar economic, social and demographic profile as a further bench-mark exercise, helping to test the validity of the choice of standard.

Limitations and Assumptions

- 3.18 Whilst every effort has been made to identify open spaces, through initial contact with Parish and Town Councils, review of aerial photography, site visits, input from Uttlesford District Council and circulating a summary of the provision by Parish (Appendix 4) to Parish and Town Councils, it may still be possible that some open spaces have not been identified.
- 3.19 Where questionnaires have been returned by Parish and Town Councils in relation to the quality of open spaces there may be some variation in the level of scoring between different Parishes.
- 3.20 It was not possible to assess the quality of all open spaces, given that survey forms identifying open spaces were returned late or not at all by some Parish and Town Councils.

Parks and Gardens



Jubilee Gardens, Saffron Walden

- 3.21 Parks and gardens are generally areas of land normally enclosed, designed, managed and maintained spaces, usually but not exclusively for public use, and including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens⁵. Their primary purpose is identified in the Companion Guide to PPG17 as 'accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events'. The Companion Guide also indicates that very few new urban parks or gardens were created in the UK in the second half of the twentieth century, other than in the new towns, but that parks can be a good use for some contaminated brownfield sites unsuitable for other forms of development.
- 3.22 In addition to having ecological value, parks and gardens have wider benefits such as providing a sense of place or setting for a wider area and the provision of educational opportunities. These traditional sorts of parks often provide for quiet enjoyment, dog-walking, if appropriate, meeting friends, and children's play, as well as providing for more active recreation. They are also critical in providing a green lung within the built environment, providing a valuable green infrastructure function in terms of pollution control, micro-climate mitigation, a setting for residential development as well as a visual amenity for both users and those who just pass by or overlook them.
- 3.23 Parks and gardens are often identified largely as urban greenspace types, but can fulfil a primary function in some rural areas. This includes historic Parks and Gardens that originated as the grounds of private houses within historic rural estates. Such parks, some of which are on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens⁶, may not have open access to the public, or may be substantially controlled by a private landowner. The latter is the case with Audley End in Uttlesford.

Result of audit

- 3.24 There are relatively few parks and gardens within Uttlesford. The 2006 Green Space Audit identified three parks or gardens over 0.15 hectares in size, all within Saffron Walden. These were Bridge End Gardens, Jubilee Gardens and The Common. These sites were categorised as parks and gardens due to their role as visitor attractions and the way they are used.

⁵ Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation

⁶ English Heritage; The Register of Historic Parks and Gardens

- 3.25 Following the current audit, these three parks and gardens remain the only open spaces of this category identified within the District over the revised threshold of 0.2 hectares. All three parks and gardens are owned by the Town Council and access is free of charge. Opening times restrict access to Jubilee Gardens and Bridge End Gardens, but access is unrestricted to The Common.
- 3.26 The overall quality of the parks and gardens, both in the 2006 audit and the current audit, is as follows:

Site Name	Overall quality 2006	Overall quality 2011
Bridge End Gardens	Excellent	Good
Jubilee Gardens	Good	Good
The Common	Good	Good

- 3.27 All of the sites are protected by designations. Bridge End Gardens is a Registered Historic Park or Garden, Jubilee Gardens is a Protected Open Space of Environmental Value and The Common is Protected Open Space for Informal Recreation.
- 3.28 The 2006 audit identified that Bridge End Gardens had undergone a lot of work and was a big visitor attraction in the town. The 2011 audit indicates that although the site is described as a 'lovely feature' there are issues with cleanliness, particularly dog fouling, and car parking is considered to be poor.
- 3.29 The 2006 audit indicated that entrances to Jubilee Gardens were in need of improvement and there were issues with litter. The 2011 audit indicates that entrances are considered to be in good condition and locations. Litter was not highlighted as a significant problem in the updated audit, but the variety and quality of vegetation within the park is considered very poor and the wildlife value and car parking poor.
- 3.30 In relation to The Common, the 2006 audit highlighted litter problems and graffiti as well as low nature conservation value. The 2011 update indicates that the variety and quality of vegetation is considered to be very poor within the park and litter, sports facilities and wildlife value are poor.

Parks and Gardens Standards

Role of Green Flag award in standard setting

- 3.31 The Green Flag Award is the national standard for quality parks and green spaces in England and Wales. The award scheme began over ten years ago as a way of recognising the best green spaces in the country. It was also seen as a way to create a benchmark of excellence within recreational areas.
- 3.32 The key criteria against which the awards are given are:

A welcoming place – such as good and safe access, good signage, and equal access for all members of the community.

Healthy, Safe and Secure – particularly important are that equipment and facilities must be safe to use, the park or greenspace must be secure for all members of the community, dog fouling must be addressed, health and safety policies should be in place and toilets, drinking water etc should be available or close by.

Clean and well-maintained – Litter and other waste management issues must be addressed, grounds, buildings and features must be well maintained and a policy on litter, vandalism etc must be in place.

Sustainability – An environmental policy or charter should be in place, pesticide use should be minimised, horticultural peat use should be eliminated, waster [plant materials should be recycled, high horticultural and arboricultural standards should be used, energy conservation measures etc. should be used.

Conservation and heritage – including natural features, wildlife and fauna, landscape features, buildings and structural features.

Community Involvement – knowledge of user community, evidence of community involvement, and recreational facilities for all sectors of the community.

Marketing – marketing strategy in place, good provision of information to users, promotion of the park.

Management – a management plan should be in place.

- 3.33 Some Local Authorities use the Green Flag as the quality standard for their parks and other greenspaces. It is not known how achievable this is as a proposal, however, and it is therefore thought preferable for Uttlesford to use it as a standard to aspire to, and to set a target within the action plan to achieve the Green Flag standard for key greenspaces over time.
- 3.34 Greenspace managers can also aspire to 'Green Heritage site' status or a 'Green Pennant' award for their sites which recognise heritage value and community or voluntary group management.

Quantity

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.12 ha/1000 population or 0.4 ha/1000 population in Market Towns (8.86ha total)	Proposed standard: Not set
Justification	
<p>The current level of provision is equivalent to 0.12 ha/1000 population across the District as a whole. However, the current provision is entirely contained within Saffron Walden. If the provision is taken to apply to solely the Market Towns this equates to 0.4 ha/1000 population in these settlements.</p> <p>A proposed standard has not been set due to the very small number of sites within this typology in Uttlesford District. A standard was not set in the 2006 audit either. New parks and gardens are unlikely to be created other than in large new developments, so it will be difficult to increase provision across the District. Standards have been adopted by some of the comparator authorities that were studied, but not all of them. Standards that have been set include;</p> <p>East Hertfordshire 0.53 ha/1000 population Chelmsford Borough 2.0 ha/1000 population in Chelmsford Braintree District 1.2 ha/1000 population in urban areas South Oxfordshire 3.5 ha/1000 population in 4 main towns or 1.0 ha/1000 population in larger settlements Harborough District 0.5 ha/1000 population</p> <p>A large number of the comparator authorities had not, however, set a standard for parks and gardens or had combined it with other types of open space such as amenity greenspace.</p>	

Accessibility

<i>Ex i l l f i i</i>	<i>Recommended standard</i>
Not defined	Proposed standard: Not set
Justification	
<p>The current provision is entirely within Saffron Walden. A proposed standard has not been set due to the very small number of sites within this typology in Uttlesford District. A standard was not set in the 2006 audit either. New parks and gardens are unlikely to be created other than in large new developments, so it will be difficult to increase provision across the District. Standards have been adopted by some of the comparator authorities that were studied, but not all of them. Standards that have been set include;</p> <p>East Hertfordshire 10 minute walk from residential areas (0.8km) Chelmsford Borough 10 minute drive time (4km) Braintree District 12.5 minute walk (1 km) South Oxfordshire 15 minute walk (1 km) Harborough District 10 minute drive time (4km)</p>	

Quality

<i>Existing level of provision</i>	<i>Recommended standard</i>
N/A	<p>Proposed standard: Essential: Sites should be clean and litter-free All parks should provide a range of horticultural or natural features appropriate to their size and character. All parks should have appropriate signage particular to that place All greenspace features and facilities should be well-maintained, including play equipment, footpaths, site furniture and soft landscaping</p> <p>Proposed standard: Desirable Uttlesford District Council should work towards achieving 1 No. Park or Garden of Green Flag standard in the next three years. All Parks and Gardens should work towards achieving the qualities described within the Green Flag standard in the longer term. Sites should be managed to give natural surveillance to minimise fear of crime. All parks should have a range of facilities, including those for young and older people, appropriate to their size and character. Access to parks and gardens should be part of an integrated network of footpaths and cycleways, should be of high quality design and use materials appropriate to the setting.</p>
Justification	
<p>The current audit shows that the three existing Parks and Gardens are of good quality, with Bridge End Gardens having been rated as Excellent in 2006. All sites are considered visually attractive, with many providing amenity value, but only The Common offers children’s play and only Bridge End Gardens is considered to have biodiversity value and a good variety of vegetation. There are some problems with litter and dog-fouling.</p> <p>The proposed standard responds to the results of the audit by incorporating essential standards around items currently identified as issues. A standard was not set in the 2006 audit. The standard seeks to promote higher standards over time by seeking to use the qualities in the</p>	

'Green Flag' award as a desirable target, encouraging Uttlesford to achieve one Green Flag in the next three years.

The use of quality standards by comparator authority is variable. South Oxfordshire set a standard of all parks and gardens qualifying for the 'Green Flag' award. This was not thought to be deliverable over the lifetime of the strategy for Uttlesford, hence a focus on delivering the qualities of 'Green Flag' standards without having to achieve 'Green Flag' status. This approach has been followed by other Authorities such as East Hertfordshire and Sevenoaks.

Deficiencies

- 3.35 Bridge End Gardens – poor onsite car parking facilities reported by Town Council and issues with dog fouling, litter and fly tipping
- 3.36 Jubilee Gardens – poor onsite car parking facilities reported by Town Council and little variety in vegetation/wildlife value
- 3.37 The Common – poor onsite car parking facilities reported by Town Council and issues with dog fouling, litter and fly tipping

Draft Recommendations

Parks and Gardens

Policy recommendations

RPG1 Seek opportunities to create new parks and gardens where they arise, to increase provision throughout the District

Other recommendations

RPG2 Seek enhancements in cleanliness and accessibility to all sites

RPG3 Seek to attain 'Green Flag' award standards across all parks and gardens in the long term

Amenity Greenspace



Holloway Crescent, Leaden Roding

- 3.38 PPG17 identifies amenity greenspace as being 'most commonly, but not exclusively in housing areas – including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens'⁷.
- 3.39 These sorts of greenspace tend to consist largely of mown grass which can be of a scale to provide an informal kickabout area, perhaps with some boundary tree-planting or sometimes incorporating play facilities. They do not generally include formal flower or shrub beds or specific seating areas other than occasional benches. Nor do they tend to incorporate areas of high nature conservation value.

Result of audit

- 3.40 Altogether 87 different amenity greenspaces were identified within Uttlesford District that were over the size threshold of 0.2 hectares. A large number of further amenity greenspaces were also identified but were smaller than this threshold. Further auditing of these smaller spaces has not been undertaken.
- 3.41 The single largest green space in this typology is Woodside Green in Great Hallingbury, at 26.37ha which is a large area of common land. With the exception of some of the larger recreation grounds and areas of common land most sites are less than 1ha in size. The character of the Amenity Greenspaces varies greatly but with most consisting of mown grass, a few trees or shrubs, or occasional children's play facilities.
- 3.42 The large majority of Amenity Greenspaces in Uttlesford, by their nature, are in public ownership and therefore allow general public access. This includes 39% of the audited spaces being owned by Parish Councils and a further 12% by Uttlesford District Council. However, areas of amenity greenspace within new housing developments, such as Priors Green in Takeley/Little Canfield and Takeley Park appear to be exceptions to this as they are currently owned by the housing developers prior to being handed over to other bodies.

⁷ Planning Policy 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation

- 3.43 The overall quality of the Amenity Greenspaces, both in the 2006 audit and the current audit, is as follows:

Site Name	Overall quality 2006	Overall quality 2011
Clatterbury Lane, Clavering (x3)	Good	Excellent
Crow Street, Henham	Good	Excellent
Site opposite Woodend Green, Henham	Moderate	Excellent
Brocks Mead, Great Easton	Not surveyed	Excellent
Church Field and All Saints Close play area, Ashdon	Not surveyed	Excellent
Roger's End Village Green, Ashdon	Not surveyed	Excellent
Vernons Close, Henham	Not surveyed	Excellent
Woodend Green, Henham	Good (Reclassified from children's play)	Excellent
Clavering Road, Berden	Not surveyed	Excellent
High Street, Clavering	Moderate	Good to excellent
Woodlands Walk, Great Dunmow	Excellent	Good
Chapel Hill War memorial, Stansted Mountfitchet	Good	Good
Chestnut Drive, Hatfield Heath	Good	Good
Greenways play area, Saffron Walden	Good	Good
Hunter Mead/ Chelmsford Road, Hatfield Heath	Good	Good
Mill Hill picnic area, Stansted Mountfitchet	Good	Good
The Shaw and Chelmsford Road, Hatfield Heath	Good	Good
The Downs, Great Dunmow (x2)	Moderate to good (Part reclassified from children's play)	Good
Land fronting Lower Mill Field, Great Dunmow	Moderate	Good
Land next to Holy Trinity Church, Hatfield Heath	Moderate	Good
Lime Tree Hill, Great Dunmow	Moderate	Good
Stane Street, Great Dunmow	Moderate	Good
Bentfield Gardens, Cambridge Road, Stansted Mountfitchet	Not surveyed	Good
Church Road, Stansted Mountfitchet	Not surveyed	Good
Dunmow Road/Drury Lane, Aythorpe Roding	Not surveyed	Good
Hampit Road and nr church Arkesden	Not surveyed	Good
Holloway Crescent, Leaden Roding	Not surveyed	Good
Land around Silver Jubilee Hall, Takeley	Not surveyed	Good
Land off The Shaw, Hatfield Heath	Not surveyed	Good
Monk's Hill, Saffron Walden	Not surveyed	Good
St Martin's Close, White Roding	Not surveyed	Good
Talberds Ley, Great Dunmow	Not surveyed	Good
The Glebe, Hempstead	Not surveyed	Good
Ugley Green	Not surveyed	Good
Dunmow Road/ Warwick Road, Priors Green, Little Canfield	Not surveyed	Good
Rickling Green Road, Quendon and Rickling	Not surveyed	Good
Brixton Lane, Quendon and Rickling	Not surveyed	Good
B1383 verge, Quendon and Rickling	Not surveyed	Good
Station Road/ Hillside Road – perimeter open space with lake, Flitch Green	Not surveyed	Good
Great Easton Playing Field, Great Easton	Not surveyed	Good
Broadfield Playing Field, High Roding	Not surveyed	Good
Village Green, High Street, Hatfield Broad Oak	Not surveyed	Good
Clarendon Road, Priors Green, Little Canfield	Not surveyed	Moderate to good

Site Name	Overall quality 2006	Overall quality 2011
Takeley Park, Takeley (x2)	Moderate to good	Moderate
Harvest Fields, Takeley	Not surveyed	Moderate
Newton Green, Great Dunmow	Moderate (Reclassified from children's play)	Moderate
Open green space with pavilion, Hatfield Heath	Not surveyed	Moderate
Broom fields, Hatfield Heath	Moderate (Reclassified from children's play)	Moderate
Off Rectory Road, Farnham	Not surveyed	Moderate
Recreation ground, Arkesden	Not surveyed	Moderate
The Wick, Wendens Ambo	Not surveyed	Moderate
Village Hall, Stortford Road, Leaden Roding	Not surveyed	Moderate
Within Priors Fields new housing development, Takeley	Not surveyed	Moderate
Station Road – perimeter open space, Fritch Green	Not surveyed	Moderate
Off Baynard Avenue – perimeter open space, Fritch Green	Not surveyed	Moderate
Braintree Road, Felsted	Not surveyed	Moderate
Evelyn Road, Willows Green, Felsted	Not surveyed	Moderate
Lukins Mead/Nursery Rise, Great Dunmow	Moderate (Reclassified from children's play)	Poor
Village Green, Burnsite Road, Felsted	Good	Poor
Land Off Raven's Crescent, Felsted	Not surveyed	Poor
Beeches Close, Saffron Walden	Good	Unknown
Land behind Little Hallingbury Village Hall	Good	Unknown
St Marys View, Saffron Walden	Good	Unknown
Elizabeth Way, Saffron Walden (x2)	Moderate to good	Unknown
A1060 verge, Little Hallingbury	Moderate	Unknown
Museum grounds and castle ruin, Museum Street, Saffron Walden	Moderate	Unknown
Stansted Road, Elsenham	Moderate	Unknown – originally identified by Parish Council as outdoor sports provision
Birchanger Recreation Ground	Not surveyed	Unknown
Magdalen Green, Thaxted	Moderate (Reclassified from children's play)	Unknown
Motts Green, Little Hallingbury	Not surveyed	Unknown
Radwinter Road, Swards End	Not surveyed	Unknown
Weaverhead Close, Thaxted	Moderate (Reclassified from children's play)	Unknown
Woodside Green Common Land, Great Hallingbury	Not surveyed	Unknown
Wrights Green, Little Hallingbury	Not surveyed	Unknown
Woodside Green Common Land, Great Hallingbury	Not surveyed	Unknown
Village Hall field, Great Hallingbury	Not surveyed	Unknown
Little Dunmow Recreation Ground	Not surveyed	Unknown – originally identified by Parish Council as outdoor sports provision
Rectory Lane Playing Field, Ashdon	Not surveyed	Unknown – originally identified by Parish Council as outdoor sports provision

Site Name	Overall quality 2006	Overall quality 2011
Church End Playing Field, Ashdon	Not surveyed	Unknown – originally identified by Parish Council as outdoor sports provision
Football pitch off Bonneting Lane, Berden	Not surveyed	Unknown – originally identified by Parish Council as outdoor sports provision
Hadstock Recreation Ground	Not surveyed	Unknown – originally identified by Parish Council as outdoor sports provision
Anglo American Playing Fields, Saffron Walden	Not surveyed (reclassified from sport)	Unknown – originally identified by Parish Council as outdoor sports provision
Open space around Leisure Centre, Saffron Walden	Moderate (reclassified from children's play)	Unknown – originally identified by Parish Council as outdoor sports provision
Great Sampford Recreation Ground	Not surveyed	Unknown – originally identified by Parish Council as outdoor sports provision

- 3.44 The audit shows that of the sites where results were recorded most Amenity Greenspaces are of moderate quality or above. Only three sites (3% of those audited) have been classified as Poor overall quality. These are Lukins Mæd/Nursery Rise, Great Dunmow; Village Green, Burnstie Road, Felsted; and Land off Raven's Crescent, Felsted.
- 3.45 A small proportion of the sites are protected by designations. Woodside Green Common Land, Great Hallingbury is a County Wildlife Site; Beeches Close, Elizabeth Way and the Museum grounds and castle ruin all in Saffron Walden, Wrights Green in Little Hallingbury, Weaverhead Close and Magdalen Green in Thaxted and Priors Green in Takeley are Protected Open Spaces of Environmental Value; The Green in Saffron Walden and Mill Hill picnic area in Stansted Mountfitchet are Protected Open Spaces for Informal Recreation; and Greenways, The Downs and Newton Green all in Great Dunmow are Protected Open Spaces for both Environmental Value and Informal Recreation.
- 3.46 The majority of the sites are generally welcoming, with 64% considered to have an Excellent or Good appearance. This is a slight improvement from the 2006 audit. Only Rectory Road, Farnham and Lukins Mæd/Nursery Rise, Great Dunmow were considered to have a poor appearance. The majority of entrances and boundaries of sites were also generally considered to be Excellent or Good, with the same two sites and a site off Baynard Avenue, Flitch Green considered to be poor in relation to these criteria.
- 3.47 Quality of access to the sites, in terms of both disabled access and car parking, was considered to be more variable. 31% of sites were considered to have poor disabled access and 33% poor onsite parking provision, with a further 17% of sites having no parking provision. This is a general improvement from the 2006 audit. It should be noted, however, that car parking close to sites was not always taken into account by respondents to the survey and availability of nearby parking facilities may have an impact on the perceived accessibility of sites.
- 3.48 Litter and vandalism were not considered to be a problem at the majority of sites, in line with the 2006 audit. Only Greenways in Saffron Walden is considered to be poor in relation to fly tipping.
- 3.49 In terms of facilities, 26% of sites were rated as poor or very poor in relation to the provision of seats and bins. Over 36% were rated as poor or very poor in relation to the provision of signage.

Very few sites have sports facilities, with this criterion considered not applicable for 85% of the sites audited. Play facilities are also considered separately to most of the amenity greenspaces, with 28% of the sites considered to be moderate or higher in relation to children's play.

- 3.50 The wildlife or nature conservation value of amenity greenspaces is also variable. 76% of the sites audited are considered to have moderate or higher wildlife value, with the same proportion considered to have moderate or higher variety of vegetation. Greenways in Saffron Walden is considered to have a very poor variety of vegetation. As with the 2006 audit, most sites would have potential to improve nature conservation. Very few sites (72%) have any water features.
- 3.51 A number of the sites presented opportunities for improvement which would enhance the site. The potential to improve sites rated moderate or below is summarised below:

Site Name	Potential
Takeley Park, Takeley (x2)	Improvements needed to disabled access, parking, numbers and maintenance of seats/bins, and play facilities
Harvest Fields, Takeley	Improvements needed to disabled access, parking, numbers and maintenance of seats/bins, and signage
Newton Green, Great Dunmow	Improvements needed to wildlife value and variety of vegetation
Open green space with pavilion, Hatfield Heath	Improvements needed to disabled access, parking, and play facilities
Broomfields, Hatfield Heath	Improvements needed to disabled access, numbers and maintenance of seats/bins, range of facilities, wildlife value and variety of vegetation
Off Rectory Road, Farnham	Improvements needed to general appearance, entrance areas, disabled access, general maintenance, signage and variety of vegetation
Recreation ground, Arkesden	Improvements needed to disabled access, parking, maintenance of seats/bins, signage and wildlife value
The Wick, Wendens Ambo	Improvements needed to disabled access, parking, numbers and maintenance of seats/bins, signage, play facilities, and maintenance of trees
Village Hall, Stortford Road, Leaden Roding	Improvements needed to play facilities and variety of vegetation
Within Priors Fields new housing development, Takeley	Small general improvements
Station Road – perimeter open space, Flitch Green	Improvements needed to signage
Off Baynard Avenue – perimeter open space, Flitch Green	Improvements needed to entrances, parking, provision of bins/seating, and signage
Braintree Road, Felsted	Small general improvements
Evelyn Road, Willows Green, Felsted	Improvements needed to access, provision of bins/seating, and signage
Lukins Mead/Nursery Rise, Great Dunmow	General improvements required
Village Green, Burnsite Road, Felsted	Improvements needed to access, provision of bins and seating, signage, wildlife value and variety of vegetation

Site Name	Potential
Land Off Raven's Crescent, Felsted	Improvements needed to access, provision of bins and seating, signage, wildlife value and variety of vegetation

*Amenity Greenspace: standards*Quantity

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
<p>1.03 ha/ 1000 population</p> <p>(0.51 ha/ 1000 population in Market Towns and main villages and 1.8 ha/ 1000 population in more rural parishes)</p> <p>(77.33ha total)</p>	<p>Proposed standard: 1.0ha per 1000 population</p>
Justification	
<p>A proposed standard has been set that is similar to comparator authorities' standards and existing provision in Uttlesford, with a view to raising the standard above the current in the Market Towns. Some existing deficiencies may already be made up with existing smaller spaces that are below the 0.2ha threshold set for this audit. The current level of provision is equivalent to a range of 0.48 ha/1000 population in Market Towns and main villages and 1.89 ha/1000 population in more rural parishes. No quantity standard was set as part of the 2006 audit</p> <p>The proposed standard has been set above the average standard of the comparator authorities (0.83ha per 1000 population) at 1.0ha per 1000 population. The comparator authority standards were:</p> <p>Winchester - 0.4ha/ 1000 population East Hertfordshire - 0.55ha/ 1000 population (<i>equivalent to current provision</i>) Braintree - 0.8ha/ 1000 population Chelmsford - 0.81ha/ 1000 population (<i>equivalent to current provision</i>) Harborough - 0.9ha/ 1000 population East Hampshire - 1.0ha/ 1000 population Hambleton - 1.38ha/ 1000 population</p>	

Accessibility

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
<p>Not defined</p>	<p>Proposed standard: Within 5 minutes walk (400m) in main settlements</p> <p><i>As set in 2006 study</i></p>
Justification	
<p>The current level of provision shows clusters of Amenity Greenspace throughout the District, both in urban and rural locations. The audit shows that the large majority of Amenity Greenspace is in public ownership and is publicly accessible.</p> <p>The community consultation undertaken for the 2006 audit identified that the majority of the community would prefer to visit open spaces within 5 minutes walk of their home.</p> <p>Comparator standards at other local authorities of similar profile were:</p> <p>East Hertfordshire - within 5 minutes walk of all residential areas (0.4km) Chelmsford - within 10 minutes walk (800m)</p>	

North Hertfordshire - within 5 minutes walk (480m)
Braintree - within 5-10 minutes walk (400-800m)
South Oxfordshire - within 10 minutes walk (600m)
Hambleton - 15 minutes walk in service centres, 10 minutes walk in rural areas
Harborough - within 10 minutes walk (800m)
Vale of White Horse - 5 minutes walk (300m)
Mid Sussex - 5 minutes walk (300m)
Horsham - 200-350m walk
Sevenoaks - within 10 minutes walk of all residential areas (800m)

The proposed standard has been set as a balance between local need and deliverability, and is similar to many of the comparator authorities. Some deficiencies may be covered by existing smaller spaces, below 0.2ha. Others could be delivered through proposed residential development.

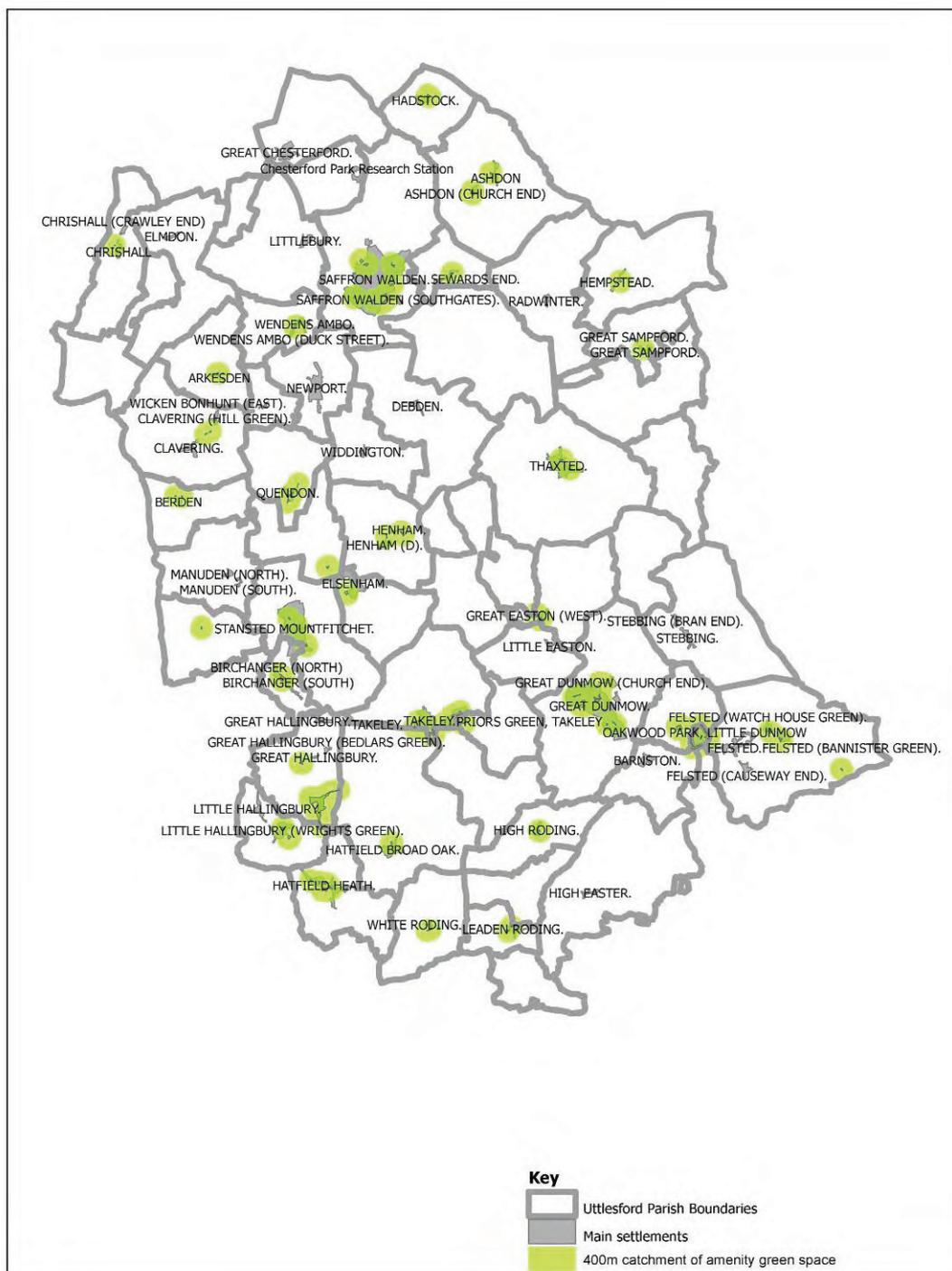
Quality

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
N/A	<p>Proposed Standard:</p> <p>Essential: Sites should be clean and litter-free. Sites should be managed to give natural surveillance to minimise fear of crime. All greenspace features and facilities where provided should be well-maintained, including play equipment, footpaths, site furniture and soft landscaping.</p> <p>Desirable Access to amenity greens should be part of an integrated network of footpaths and cycleways, should be of high quality and appropriate materials for the setting. Site design should take advantage of any existing natural features including trees, shrubs or wildlife areas or these should be introduced where not existing, as appropriate to the size of the site. Site boundaries should be appropriately defined.</p>
Justification	
<p>The current resource audit shows that most Amenity Greenspaces are of moderate or above quality. Only one site is of poor quality. The proposed standard responds to the results of the audit by incorporating essential standards around cleanliness and maintenance, biodiversity and natural qualities, and security.</p>	
<p>The use of quality standards by comparator authority is variable. Many authorities have not set quality standards, with others highlighting authority specific issues that should be addressed. This is the approach recommended for Uttlesford District.</p>	

Deficiencies in local standards

3.52 Patterns of provision: A map showing the location of amenity greenspace in Uttlesford, together with a 400m catchment is below. It shows that most of the settlements within the district are within 400m of their nearest amenity greenspace over 0.2ha, with the exception of some villages and parts of some of the larger towns.

Figure 3.1: Amenity Greenspace Provision in Uttlesford



- 3.53 Deficiencies in **quantity** occur predominantly in the Market Towns and main villages. There are, however, smaller amenity greenspaces and parks and gardens within some of these settlements that would address these deficiencies to some extent.
- 3.54 Deficiencies in **accessibility** in settlements occur in the following areas and are shown below:
 Barnston, Chrishall, Debden, Elmdon and Wenden Lofts, Great Chesterford, Hatfield Broad Oak, High Easter, Littlebury, Little Chesterford, Little Easton, Manuden, Newport, Radwinter, Stebbing, Wicken Bonhunt, Widdington

Varying size parts (often small) of Birchanger, Clavering, Elsenham, Felsted, Great Dunmow, Great Hallingbury, Hatfield Heath, Little Hallingbury, Saffron Walden, The Sampfords, Stansted, Takeley, Thaxted, Wendens Ambo

- 3.55 Deficiencies in overall **quality** occur predominantly in Lukins Mead/Nursery Rise, Great Dunmow; Village Green, Burnsite Road, Felsted; and Land Off Raven's Crescent, Felsted. Specific criteria are also considered to be poor in Greenways in Saffron Walden.

Draft recommendations

RAG1 Seek additional provision particularly in Barnston, Chrishall, Debden, Elmdon and Wenden Lofts, Great Chesterford, Hatfield Broad Oak, High Easter, Littlebury, Little Chesterford, Little Easton, Manuden, Newport, Radwinter, Stebbing, Wicken Bonhunt, Widdington to mitigate for existing and prospective quantitative and accessibility deficiencies

Other recommendations

RAG2 Undertake a review of disabled access with appropriate user-groups across the amenity green provision and identify priorities for improvement.

RAG3 Undertake a review of signage and interpretation across the amenity green provision and identify priorities for improvement.

RAG4 Identify where existing smaller sites < 0.2ha could mitigate for existing deficiencies in quantity and accessibility

RAG5 Identify targeted improvements to sites currently identified as of poor quality or sites attaining poor or very poor for a number of criteria

Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace*Stebbing Green, Stebbing*

- 3.56 PPG17 identifies that this typology can include woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits)⁸.
- 3.57 Natural or semi-natural greenspace is vital for giving people contact with wildlife, especially within towns, or for communities living in rural areas but who work in urban areas. Natural England (NE) has identified that everyday contact with nature is important for personal well-being and quality of life. They also believe that this contact should be close to where people live and accessible to all, including the most vulnerable in society.

Role of ANGSt

- 3.58 With this in mind, Natural England promotes Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt). These standards encourage provision of:
- an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size within 300 metres, or 5 minutes walk from home.
 - statutory Local Nature Reserves at a minimum level of one hectare per thousand population
 - at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home
 - one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home
 - one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home.

Result of audit

- 3.59 79 sites over 0.2ha and publically accessible have been identified within this typology. This includes sites that may also be considered green corridors as there are only a very small number of sites that fall within the later typology. The sites cover a total area of 517ha. Of the audited sites, 82% are currently publically owned, either by Parish Councils or Essex County Council. Of the remaining sites a number are leased by Parish Councils either from Trusts or private landowners.

⁸ Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation

- 3.60 The single largest greenspace in this typology is Hatfield Forest at 383ha. Other sites vary greatly in size, with the next largest sites being Garnetts Wood in High Easter parish at 25.8ha, The Flitch Way at a total area of 20ha and Birchanger Wood at 20.5ha. Their generally large size makes these sites of great significance in Uttlesford. The smallest is located within Langley Parish and is 0.15ha with the average size of site being 6.54ha.
- 3.61 The character of the natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces varies and includes woodlands, grasslands, meadows, scrub, ponds and streams/rivers. 25% of sites contain no facilities, with 89% having no buildings, 70% no sports facilities and 41% no children's play facilities. Where present the quality of this provision varied. This is comparable with the 2006 audit.
- 3.62 The overall quality of the natural or semi-natural greenspaces, both in the 2006 audit and the current audit, is as follows:

Site Name	Overall quality 2006	Overall quality 2011
Clatterbury Lane, Clavering	Not surveyed	Excellent
Hatfield Forest, Takeley	Excellent	Excellent
Stickling Green, Clavering (x4)	Good	Excellent
The Wilderness nature trail, Ashdon	Not surveyed	Excellent
Butts Green, Clavering	Not surveyed	Good to excellent
B1038 Pelham Road, Clavering	Not surveyed	Good
Land at Langleys behind sewage works off A130, Great Dunmow	Not surveyed	Good
Land at Langleys off A130, Great Dunmow	Not surveyed	Good
Land at Langleys, Great Dunmow	Not surveyed	Good
Simon's Wood, Clavering	Moderate	Good
Land next to Holy Trinity Church, Hatfield Heath	Good	Good
Land nr Forge Cottages, Hatfield Heath	Good	Good
Matching Road, Hatfield Heath	Moderate	Good
Pasernage Downs, Great Dunmow	Good	Good
Pond Lane sites 1 and 2, Hatfield Heath	Moderate to good	Good
Pond Lane sites 3 and 4, Hatfield Heath	Good	Good
Pound Lane, Ugley	Not surveyed	Good
Stebbing Green	Good	Good
Stebbing Green, Stebbing (x5)	Good	Good
Stortford Road, Clavering	Not surveyed	Good
The Downs, Manuden	Not surveyed	Good
Nature Reserve off The Street, Berden	Not surveyed	Good
The Green, Little Walden Road, Saffron Walden	Moderate (reclassified from children's play)	Good
Cage End Close, Hatfield Broad Oak	Not surveyed	Good
River Chelmer, Great Dunmow (x2)	Good	Moderate to good
Battle ditches, Saffron Walden	Not surveyed	Moderate to good
Braintree Road/River Chelmer, Great Dunmow (x2)	Not surveyed	Moderate
Chinnel Meadow, Wendens Ambo	Not surveyed	Moderate
Claypits Plantation, Saffron Walden	Poor	Moderate
Flitch Way, Great Dunmow	Good	Moderate
Smiths Green, Takeley (x3)	Good	Moderate
Flitch Way, Takeley	Good	Poor
Marshall Piece, Stebbing	Good	Poor
Flitch Way, Great Hallingbury	Not surveyed	Unknown
Bardfield Road, Thaxted	Not surveyed	Unknown
Bustard Green Common Land, Lindsell	Not surveyed	Unknown
Chelmsford Road, Hatfield Heath	Moderate	Unknown
Common Land off Dewes Green Road, Berden	Not surveyed	Unknown
Common or open access land, Langley (x2)	Not surveyed	Unknown

Site Name	Overall quality 2006	Overall quality 2011
Common or open access land, Langley (x2)	Not surveyed	Unknown
Common or open access land, Langley (x6)	Not surveyed	Unknown
Common or open access land, Park Lane, Langley (x5)	Not surveyed	Unknown
Coptal Lane, Thaxted	Moderate	Unknown
Cutlers Green, Thaxted	Not surveyed	Unknown
Dunmow Road, Thaxted	Not surveyed	Unknown
Greenspace including village pond, Hadstock	Not surveyed	Unknown
Land at Hadstock	Not surveyed	Unknown
Motts Green, Little Hallingbury	Moderate (reclassified from children's play)	Unknown
Site nr Wrights Green, Little Hallingbury	Good (reclassified from children's play)	Unknown
South Street, Great Chesterford	Good	Unknown
Stocking Green woodland, Radwinter	Not surveyed	Unknown
Sweetings Meadow, Lindsell	Not surveyed	Unknown
Wooded area off De Vigier Avenue, Saffron Walden	Not surveyed	Unknown
Birchanger Wood	Not surveyed	Unknown

3.63 Many sites are covered by a wildlife designation of some sort. Hatfield Forest is designated as Ancient woodland, Important Woodland and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Fifteen sites are designated as County Wildlife Sites (CWSs), including Stebbing Green, the Flitch Way, Parsonage Downs, Sweetings Meadow, Bustard Green, The Downs and Linnets Wood. The different elements of Sticking Green in Clavering are designated as CWSs and Important Woodlands, and Claypits Plantation in Saffron Walden is designated as an Important Woodland.

3.64 The first impressions of most sites were Good or Excellent (80%). This is an improvement from the 2006 audit. 84.5% of sites were rated as good or excellent in terms of the safe 'feel' of the sites and 73.3% in terms of the level of vandalism and graffiti. This is comparable with the 2006 audit. Between 9 and 22% of sites were rated as poor or very poor in relation to cleanliness, with dog fouling being the biggest issue. This has changed since 2006 when litter was the biggest problem overall.

3.65 A number of the sites presented opportunities for improvement which would enhance the site. The potential to improve sites rated moderate or below is summarised below:

Site Name	Potential
River Chelmer, Great Dunmow (x2)	Address issues of vandalism, dog fouling, fly tipping and litter. Improvements needed to nature conservation value
Battle ditches, Saffron Walden	Improvements needed to parking provision, seating provision, dog fouling and litter problems, and signage
Braintree Road/River Chelmer, Great Dunmow (x2)	Address issues of vandalism, dog fouling, fly tipping and litter. Improvements needed to nature conservation value
Chinnel Meadow, Wendens Ambo	Improvements need to disabled access and parking provision, as well as signage and other facilities
Claypits Plantation, Saffron Walden	Improvements need to most aspects
Flitch Way, Great Dunmow	Improvements needed to disabled access, seating provision, dog fouling and litter problems

Site Name	Potential
Smiths Green, Takeley (x3)	Improvements need to disabled access, parking provision and play provision
Fritch Way, Takeley	Improvements need to entrances, disabled access and parking provision, to address the feel of the space, bin and seating provision, signage provision, dog fouling and litter problems
Marshall Piece, Stebbing	Improvements need to entrances, disabled access and parking provision, to address the feel of the space, signage provision and maintenance of vegetation

Natural and semi-natural greenspaces: standards

Quantity

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
<p>6.7 ha/1000 population (11.7 ha/1000 population in Market Towns and main villages and 3.0 ha/1000 population in more rural parishes) (517ha total)</p>	<p>Proposed standard: a minimum of 7ha publicly accessible sites/1000 population</p> <p>No standard is set for private sites as the quantity is subject to market forces.</p>
Justification	
<p>The current level of publicly-accessible provision is equivalent to a range of 2.5ha/1000 population in rural parishes - 12.4ha/1000 population in Market Towns and main villages. A proposed standard has been set that is similar to comparator authorities' provision and slightly higher than existing provision, with a view to raising the standard above the current provision. Some existing deficiencies may already be made up with existing smaller spaces that are below the 0.2ha threshold set for this audit or access to open countryside and the rights of way network. No quantity standard was set as part of the 2006 audit.</p> <p>The proposed standard has been set above the average standard of the comparator authorities (4.09ha per 1000 population) at 7ha per 1000 population. This is in line with comparator authorities where standards have generally been set slightly higher than current provision. Comparator authorities that were studied have set the following standards;</p> <p>East Hertfordshire - 7.76ha/1000 population (equivalent to current provision) Chelmsford - 2ha/1000 population in urban areas North Hertfordshire - 1.47ha/1000 population in towns and 6.37ha/1000 population in rural areas Harborough - 8.5ha/1000 population in rural areas, 1.5ha/1000 population in urban areas East Hampshire - 1ha/1000 population</p>	

Accessibility

Not defined	<p>Proposed standard: At least one publicly-accessible site within 5 minutes walk time (300-400m) in main settlements</p> <p>As set in 2006 study</p>
<p>The audit shows that only a small proportion of natural and semi-natural greenspaces are currently over 2ha, although most sites are in public ownership and are publicly accessible.</p> <p>The community consultation undertaken for the 2006 audit identified that the majority of the community would prefer to visit open spaces within 5 minutes walk of their home. The Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard also indicates that there should be an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size within 300 metres, or 5 minutes walk from home. Given the small size of most natural and semi-natural greenspaces within Uttlesford it is not considered possible to attain this standard at present. Many competitors do not set a size threshold for the accessibility criteria, with distances from natural and semi-natural greenspaces varying between 400m and 1600m walk. The proposed standard is at the lower end of this range, in line with the 2006 audit.</p> <p>Comparator standards at other local authorities of similar profile were:</p> <p>East Hertfordshire - urban accessibility standard of 10 minute walk (800m) from residential areas</p> <p>Chelmsford - 20 minutes walk (1.6km)</p> <p>North Hertfordshire - 720m walk under 2ha, 960m walk 2-20ha, 1440m walk over 20ha</p> <p>Braintree - 15 minutes walk (1.2km)</p> <p>Harborough - 20 minutes walk (1.6km)</p> <p>Vale of White Horse - 15 minutes walk (900m), 15 minutes cycle (2250m), 15 minutes drive (5625m)</p> <p>Mid Sussex - 10 minute walk or cycle (600m or 1500m)</p> <p>Horsham - 1000m walk</p> <p>Stratford-on-Avon - 15 minutes walk (720m)</p> <p>East Hampshire - 400m</p> <p>Sevenoaks - 15 minutes walk (1.2km) from residential areas</p>	

Quality

<i>Existing level of provision</i>	<i>Recommended standard</i>
N / A	<p>Proposed Standards:</p> <p>Essential:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sites should be clean and litter free Sites should be of ecological value with appropriate amenity facilities Footpaths should be well-maintained and designed to minimise impact on the natural features and to maximise natural surveillance Site management processes should be maintained <p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All major sites should have an active Management Plan in place Signage should be provided at every site with contact details of managing organisation All sites should seek to have interpretative facilities in place

Justification

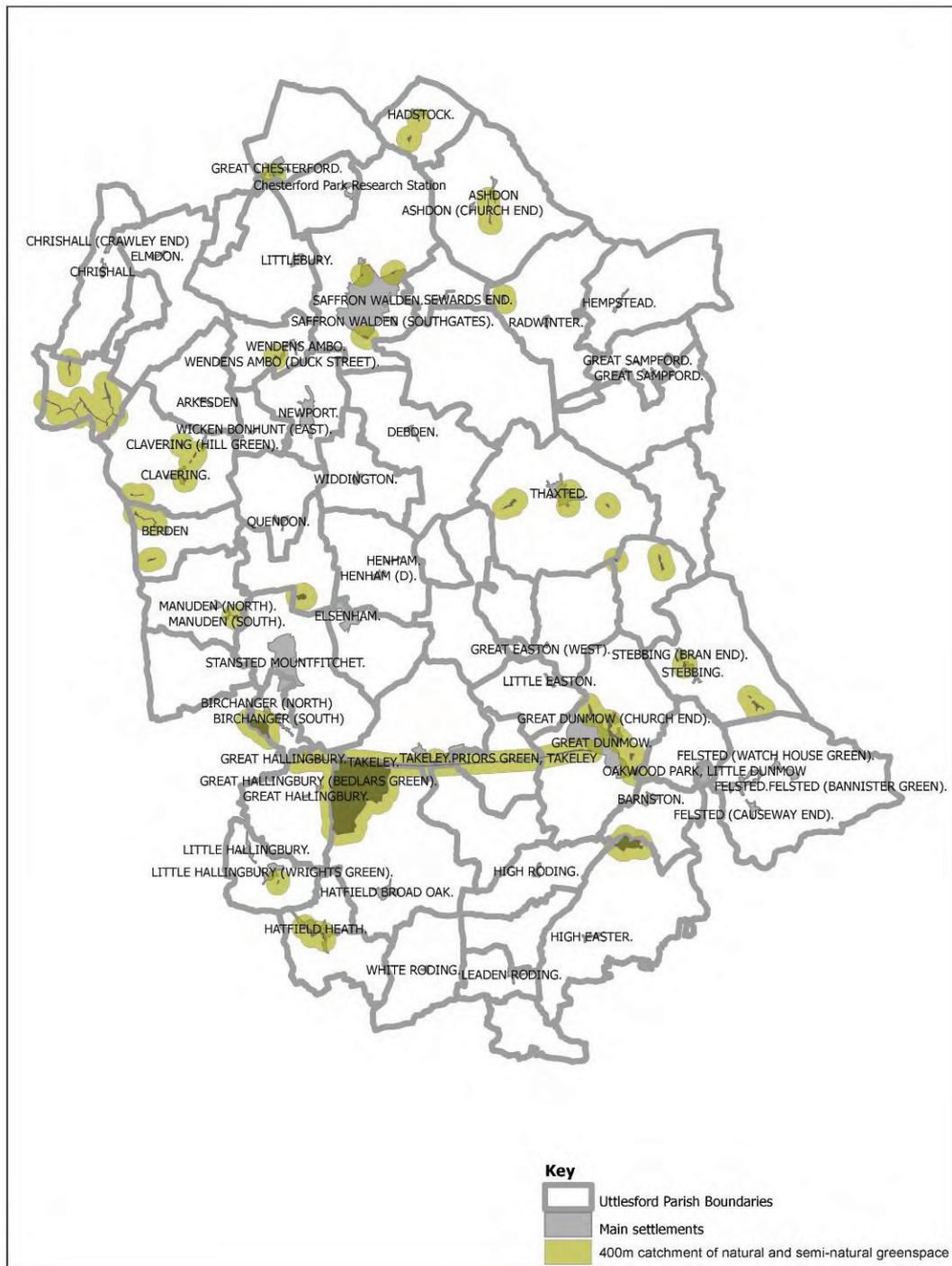
Two of the natural and semi-natural greenspaces are currently ranked as poor quality with a range of issues around accessibility, litter, signage, quality of welcome or of facilities.

Comparator authorities hadn't identified particular standards for quality aside from South Oxfordshire which suggests that all sites should be of high quality, Stratford-on-Avon which suggests all sites should achieve a fair rating using their scoring system and East Hertfordshire and Sevenoaks which set standards based on issues identified through consultation responses.

Deficiencies in local standards

- 3.66 Patterns of provision: A map showing the location of natural and semi-natural greenspace in Uttlesford, together with a 400m catchment is below. It shows the irregular pattern of provision of this type of open space and the poor level of provision in many parishes.
- 3.67 Deficiencies in **quantity** occur predominantly in rural parishes. There are, however, smaller natural and semi-natural greenspaces within some of these settlements that would address these deficiencies to some extent, along with access to open countryside and the rights of way network.
- 3.68 Deficiencies in **accessibility** occur in the following areas and are shown below:
- Arkesden, Barnston, Chrishall, Debden, Elmdon and Wenden Lofts, Elsenham, Felsted, Flich Green, Great Easton and Tilty, Hempstead, Henham, High Easter, High Roding, Leaden Roding, Littlebury, Little Easton, Newport, Quendon and Rickling, Radwinter, The Sampfords, Swards End, Stansted, White Roding, Wicken Bonhunt, Widdington
- Varying size parts (often small) of Ashdon, Berden, Birchanger, Clavering, Great Chesterford, Great Dunmow, Great Hallingbury, Hatfield Broad Oak, Hatfield Heath, Little Hallingbury, Manuden, Saffron Walden, Stebbing, Takeley, Thaxted, Wendens Ambo
- 3.69 Deficiencies in overall **quality** occur predominantly along the Flich Way and in Marshall Piece, Stebbing.

Figure 3.2 Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace Provision in Uttlesford



Draft Recommendations

Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace

Policy recommendations

RN1 Seek additional publically-accessible provision in Arkesden, Barnston, Chrishall, Debden, Elmdon and Wenden Lofts, Elsenham, Felsted, Flitch Green, Great Easton and Tilty, Hempstead, Henham, High Easter, High Roding, Leaden Roding, Littlebury, Little Easton, Newport, Quendon and Rickling, Radwinter, The Sampfords, Swards End, Stansted, White Roding, Wicken Bonhunt, Widdington to mitigate for existing and prospective quantitative deficiencies

RN2 Seek improvements to PRow network and bridleways in rural areas and the urban fringe to maximise amenity benefits of private sites even where these not accessible

Other recommendations

RN3 Review quality of access and interpretation within publically-owned Natural and Semi-Natural sites and identify priorities for enhancement

RN4 Review role and identify enhancement needs as appropriate for Poor quality publically accessible sites, namely the Flitch Way and Marshall Piece, Stebbing

RN5 Identify areas for 'naturalisation' within other typologies e.g. amenity greens or boundary areas of sports pitches, to mitigate deficiencies where new sites cannot be created

RN6 Ensure all major sites have an active Management Plan in place

Provision for Children and Young People



Children's play area, Clavering

- 3.70 PPG17 identifies that this provision can include play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops and other more informal areas (e.g. 'hanging out' areas or teenage shelters for instance)⁹. It is important to emphasise that children and young adults play in spaces other than those that are equipped for play. In particular, the role of more natural environment in play and learning is being increasingly rediscovered.
- 3.71 Skate parks and BMX tracks have been included within this typology in order to comply with the PPG17 guidance. It is recognised that the activities undertaken at these facilities can be enjoyed by both children and adults, with some facilities specifically designed for older children and adults. It is also acknowledged that wheeled sports such as skateboarding, blading and scootering, as well as BMXing are recognised by Sport England as sports.
- 3.72 Play England identifies that children value and make good use of a varied natural landscape¹⁰. Benefits include: exploring and investigating the natural world; exploring their sensory abilities, exploring wildlife, building, digging and demolishing; climbing, jumping and balancing; playing around, behind, over, through and under things; using places to enrich all sorts of play from social to fantasy play. Elements of play that encourage this sort of exploration should be incorporated into the widest range of play spaces and other types of greenspace.
- 3.73 Natural England's recent Childhood and Nature Survey¹¹ has identified how fewer than 10% of children play in woodlands, countryside and parks.
- 3.74 *Definition of LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs:* The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA), now known as Fields in Trust¹², has defined three categories of play areas, known as Local Areas for Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs), and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs). A brief definition of each type is given below:
- Local Areas for Play (LAPs):* These are small landscaped areas of open space specifically designated for young children (under 6 years old) and their parents or carers for play activities and socialisation close to where they live. A LAP should be a safe, attractive and stimulating

⁹ Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation

¹⁰ Play Naturally: Play England www.playengland.org.uk/resources

¹¹ Natural England; Childhood and Nature Survey www.naturalengland.org.uk

¹² www.fieldsintrust.org/

environment which will give young children the opportunity to play and interact with their peers away from their own back garden, thus encouraging the development of a range of social and educational skills.

Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs): A LEAP is an unsupervised play area mainly for children of early school age (4-12 years) but with consideration for other ages. Unlike a LAP a LEAP is equipped with formal play equipment and it should provide a focal point for children when they are responsible enough to move away from the immediate control of parents. A LEAP will need to be provided on a development of more than 30 houses, although where there is an identified lack of play areas in the vicinity, smaller developments may be required to include such provision in order to ensure that the situation is not exacerbated. Each LEAP will normally serve between 30 and 100 dwellings and new residential developments of over 100 houses may need to include more than 1 LEAP.

Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs): A NEAP will serve a substantial residential development and as such should cater for a wide range of children including those with special needs. Play equipment should be aimed primarily at those aged between 4 and 14 and should aim to stimulate physical, creative, intellectual, social and solitary play. Teenage provision should be in the form of kickabout/basketball areas, opportunities for wheeled play (skateboarding, roller-skating, etc.) and meeting areas.

- 3.75 The overall quality of provision for children and young people identified both in the 2006 audit and the current audit is as follows:

Site Name	Overall quality 2006	Overall quality 2011
Play area at Great Easton Playing Field, The Endway, Great Easton	Not surveyed	Excellent
Vernons Close, Henham	Mbderate	Excellent
Mnet Park - Thaxted Road Skate Park and mini-park, Saffron Walden	Not surveyed	Excellent
Mill Road, Debden	Not surveyed	Excellent
Church Field and All Saints Close play area, Ashdon	Not surveyed	Excellent
The Causeway, Great Dunmow	Not surveyed	Excellent
Anglo American Playing Fields, Saffron Walden	Good	Good
Bentfield Green, Stansted	Good	Good
Broadfield, High Roding	Not surveyed	Good
Land fronting Lower Mill Field, Great Dunmow	Not surveyed	Good
Manor Road, Little Easton	Not surveyed	Good
Oakroyd Avenue, Great Dunmow	Good	Good
Play area at Burns Playing Field, off Abbey View, Great Easton	Not surveyed	Good
Play area off Medlars Mead, Hatfield Broad Oak	Good	Good
Play area Off The Street, Manuden	Not surveyed	Good
Playground at Bentfield Green, Stansted	Not surveyed	Good
Ross Close/ Long Horse Close, Saffron Walden	Good	Good
Skate park, The Causeway, Great Dunmow	Not surveyed	Good
Pulford Playing Field	Good	Good
Jolly Boys Lane North, Felsted	Not surveyed	Good
Clarendon Road, Priors Green, Little Canfield	Not surveyed	Good
Play area off St Nicholas Field, Berden	Not surveyed	Good
Jigneys Meadow Adventure Playground	Not surveyed	Good
Talberds Ley, Great Dunmow	Not surveyed	Good
Watts Close play area, Barnston	Not surveyed	Mbderate to good
Rectory Lane Playing Field, Ashdon	Not surveyed	Mbderate to good
Children's playground off The Shaw, Hatfield Heath	Not surveyed	Mbderate

Site Name	Overall quality 2006	Overall quality 2011
Equipped play area, basketball court and open grass off Petlands, Saffron Walden	Not surveyed	Moderate
Land behind cricket ground, Takeley	Good	Moderate
Meadow Ford, Newport	Good	Moderate
Mountfitchet Road, Stansted	Moderate	Moderate
Station Road, Newport	Moderate	Moderate
Harvest Fields, Takeley	Not surveyed	Moderate
Children's play area, Arkesden	Not surveyed	Moderate
Barnston Village Hall play area, Barnston	Not surveyed	Moderate
Burnsite Road, Felsted	Good	Moderate
Evelyn Road, Willows Green, Felsted	Not surveyed	Moderate
Baynard Avenue play area, Flitch Green	Not surveyed	Moderate
Stokes Road, Priors Green, Little Canfield	Not surveyed	Moderate
Saffron Trails BMX dirt track, Plantation Wood, Saffron Walden	Not surveyed	Moderate
Honey Road/ Mortymer Close, Priors Green, Little Canfield	Not surveyed	Moderate
Warwick Road, Priors Green, Little Canfield	Not surveyed	Moderate
Off Rectory Road, Farnham	Not surveyed	Poor
Blacklands Avenue and Seven Devils Lane, Saffron Walden	Good	Unknown
Greenways children's playground, Saffron Walden	Not surveyed	Unknown
The Common children's playground, Saffron Walden	Not surveyed	Unknown
Clatterbury Lane play area, Clavering	Not surveyed	Unknown
Equipped children's play area, Great Sampford	Not surveyed	Unknown
Skate Park, Great Sampford	Not surveyed	Unknown
Land off Pilgrim's Close, Great Chesterford (x2)	Not surveyed	Unknown
Station Road, Elsenham	Not surveyed	Unknown
Newmarket Road, Great Chesterford	Not surveyed	Unknown
Pilgrim's Close, Great Chesterford	Not surveyed	Unknown
Play area off Mboles Lane, Hadstock	Not surveyed	Unknown
Skate park, Newmarket Road, Great Chesterford	Not surveyed	Unknown
Station Road, Thaxted	Not surveyed	Unknown
Walden Road, Thaxted	Not surveyed	Unknown
Birchanger Recreation Ground	Not surveyed	Unknown
Long Lea, Langley	Not surveyed	Unknown
Walden Road, Littlebury	Not surveyed	Unknown
Littlebury Green, Littlebury	Not surveyed	Unknown
Recreation Ground play area, Little Dunmow	Not surveyed	Unknown
Manor Road play area, Little Easton	Not surveyed	Unknown
Recreation Ground play area, Radwinter	Not surveyed	Unknown
Sewards End Recreation Ground play area	Not surveyed	Unknown
Recreation Ground children's play area, Stansted	Not surveyed	Unknown
The Wick play area, Wendens Ambo	Not surveyed	Unknown
White Roding Sports Club play area	Not surveyed	Unknown
Hamel Way play area, Widdington	Not surveyed	Unknown
Wimbish Recreation Ground play area	Not surveyed	Unknown
Stansted Skate Park	Not surveyed	Unknown

Site Name	Overall quality 2006	Overall quality 2011
The Green, Little Walden Road, Saffron Walden	Moderate	Reclassified as Amenity Greenspace
Broomfields, Hatfield Heath	Moderate	Reclassified as Amenity Greenspace
Motts Green, Little Hallingbury	Good	Reclassified as Amenity Greenspace
Wrights Green, Little Hallingbury	Good	Reclassified as Amenity Greenspace
Newton Green, Great Dunmow	Moderate	Reclassified as Amenity Greenspace
The Downs, Great Dunmow	Moderate	Reclassified as Amenity Greenspace
Nursery Rise, Great Dunmow	Moderate	Reclassified as Amenity Greenspace
Woodend Green, Henham	Good	Reclassified as Amenity Greenspace
Magdalen Green, Thaxted	Moderate	Reclassified as Amenity Greenspace
Weaverhead Close, Thaxted	Moderate	Reclassified as Amenity Greenspace
Dunmow Road, Thaxted	Moderate	Reclassified as Outdoor Sports Provision

Result of site audit:

- 3.76 Of the sites identified by the audit and surveyed, most (59%) are in public ownership and a number are on privately owned land but leased to Parish Councils. All allow general public access. The largest space in this typology is located in Blacklands Avenue and Seven Devils Lane and is 1.69ha. The other sites audited vary in size from 0.01-1.63ha. All play areas were audited, regardless of their size, due to the small area usually covered specifically by play areas.
- 3.77 The quality of this provision was generally moderate or above. One site had a poor rating – Land off Rectory Road, Farnham – due to a range of factors including the appearance of the site, its entrances and boundaries and access for the disabled.
- 3.78 The character of the provision for children and young people is generally of a grassed area, mainly in a housing estate, with equipped areas for play or other activity. These types of play areas are often more suitable for younger children. Areas designed specifically as skate parks and BMX tracks have also been identified within this typology. Provision for children and young people was specifically identified separately from areas of amenity greenspace, although much of the play equipment is contained within amenity greenspaces. 80% of spaces for children and young people audited were rated good or excellent for their play provision.
- 3.79 Several of the play areas are located within designated sites. These are Protected Open Spaces of Environmental Value, for Informal Recreation or both. These sites include Bentfield Green playground and open space in Stansted, Mountfitchet Road in Stansted, a Skate park and play area at The Causeway in Great Dunmow, Ross Close/ Long Horse Croft in Saffron Walden and Meadow Ford in Newport.
- 3.80 Most of the sites are generally welcoming and have entrances and boundaries that are considered moderate or better. Within the sites, disabled access was generally ranked as moderate or good, but was poor at Arkesden children's play area, Stebbing playing field, Land behind Takeley cricket ground and Station Road, Newport. It was considered very poor at Meadow Ford, Newport and the play area off Petlands in Saffron Walden. Parking provision was considered more variable, as was issues of litter and vandalism.

- 3.81 A number of the sites presented opportunities for improvement which would enhance the site. The potential to improve sites rated moderate or below is summarised below:

Site Name	Potential
Children's playground off The Shaw, Hatfield Heath	Improvements needed to parking provision
Equipped play area, basketball court and open grass off Petlands, Saffron Walden	Improvements needed to disabled access, parking provision and to address issues of vandalism and dog fouling
Land behind cricket ground, Takeley	Improvements needed to general feel and level of welcome, boundaries and entrances and disabled access
Meadow Ford, Newport	Improvements to address issues identified by the Parish Council are being undertaken
Mbuntfichet Road, Stansted	Improvements needed to entrances and nature conservation value
Station Road, Newport	Improvements to address issues identified by the Parish Council are being undertaken
Harvest Fields, Takeley	Improvements needed to parking provision and nature conservation value
Children's play area, Arkesden	Improvements needed to disabled access, parking provision, entrances and nature conservation value
Barnston Village Hall play area, Barnston	Improvements needed to disabled access and nature conservation value
Burnsite Road, Felsted	Improvements needed to disabled access, parking provision, signage and nature conservation value
Evelyn Road, Willows Green, Felsted	Improvements needed to disabled access, parking provision and signage
Baynard Avenue play area, Flich Green	Improvements needed to signage and vegetation maintenance
Stokes Road, Priors Green, Little Canfield	Improvements needed to disabled access and signage
Saffron Trails BMX dirt track, Plantation Wood, Saffron Walden	Improvements needed to entrances, access and to address issues of dog fouling
Honey Road/ Mørtymmer Close, Priors Green, Little Canfield	Improvements needed to access and signage. Suitable for younger children only
Warwick Road, Priors Green, Little Canfield	Improvements needed to disabled access, signage and bins. Suitable for younger children only
Off Rectory Road, Farnham	Improvements needed to general appearance, entrance areas, disabled access, general maintenance, signage and variety of vegetation

*Provision for Children and Young People: standards*Quantity

<i>Existing level of provision</i>	<i>Recommended standard</i>
0.18 ha/ 1000 population (0.24 ha/ 1000 population in Market Towns and main villages and 0.16 ha/ 1000 population in more rural parishes) (13.98ha total)	Proposed standard: a minimum of 0.2ha/ 1000 population
<i>Justification</i>	
<p>The current level of publicly-accessible provision is equivalent to a range of 0.24ha/1000 population in Market Towns and main villages - 0.16ha/1000 population in rural parishes. A proposed standard has been set that is similar to comparator authorities' provision and slightly higher than existing provision, with a view to raising the standard above the current provision. No quantity standard was set as part of the 2006 audit.</p> <p>The proposed standard has been set below the average standard of the comparator authorities (0.4ha per 1000 population) at 0.2ha per 1000 population. This is in line with a number of the comparator authorities, despite being below the average. Comparator authorities that were studied have set the following standards;</p> <p>East Hertfordshire - 0.2ha/ 1000 population South Cambridgeshire - 0.8ha/ 1000 population Chelmsford - 0.81 ha/ 1000 population North Hertfordshire - 0.2ha/ 1000 population Braintree - 0.2ha/ 1000 population Winchester - 0.8ha/ 1000 population Hambleton - 0.74ha/ 1000 population for children, 0.25ha/ 1000 population for teenagers Harborough - 0.3ha/ 1000 population Stratford-on-Avon - 0.25ha/ 1000 population East Hampshire - 0.25ha/ 1000 population Sevenoaks - 0.1 ha/ 1000 population</p>	

Accessibility

<i>Existing level of provision</i>	<i>Recommended standard</i>
Not defined	Proposed standard: Within 5 minutes walk (400m) in main settlements As set in 2006 study
<i>Justification</i>	
<p>The community consultation undertaken for the 2006 audit identified that the majority of the community would prefer to visit play areas within 5 minutes walk of their home. The standard that has been set meets the needs of younger age groups. It is comparable with several comparator authorities and is consistent with the 2006 audit.</p> <p>Comparator standards at other local authorities of similar profile were:</p> <p>East Hertfordshire - urban standard of 5 minute walk (400m) from residential areas Chelmsford - 5-10 minutes walk (400-800m) North Hertfordshire - 240m for LAP, LEAP or undefined, 600m for NEAP Braintree - 5 minutes walk (400m) for toddler/ junior and 10 minutes walk (800m)</p>	

<p>for teenagers Hambleton - 10 minutes walk for children and 15 minutes walk for teenagers Harborough - 5-10 minutes walk (400-800m) Stratford-on-Avon - 5 minutes walk (240m) for children's play, 15 minutes walk (720m) for young people East Hampshire - 480m for toddler/ junior and 650m for youth Sevenoaks - 10 minutes walk (800m) from residential areas</p>
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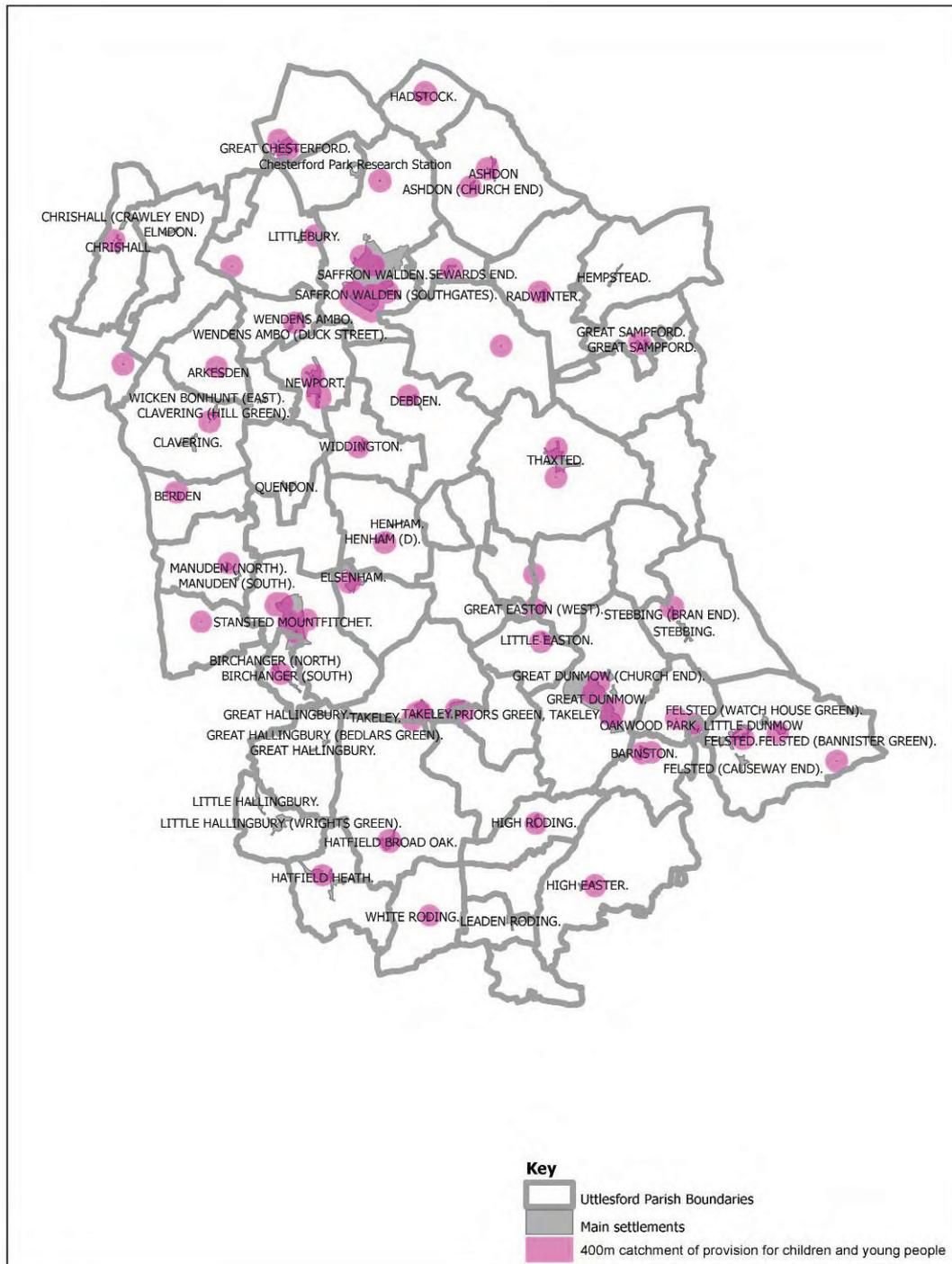
Quality

<i>Existing level of provision</i>	<i>Recommended standard</i>
N/A	<p>Proposed Standards:</p> <p>All play areas must adhere to the Fields in Trust LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play) and NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play) national standards.</p> <p>All play spaces should have natural surveillance and be within sight of walking or cycling routes or desire lines</p> <p>Facilities should be designed in consultation with local children and young people, be clean and litter free, have no vandalism and provide a mixture of formal and informal facilities.</p> <p>Facilities for youth should seek to provide skate/BMX features, or other appropriate facilities, alongside youth shelter areas</p> <p>All play spaces should be designed to maximise experience of natural features.</p>
<i>Justification</i>	
<p>The current resource audit shows that the provision for children and young people is generally good quality with one site identified of poor quality.</p> <p>Comparator authorities hadn't identified particular standards for quality aside from Stratford-on-Avon which suggests all sites should achieve a fair rating using their scoring system and East Hertfordshire and Sevenoaks which set standards based on issues identified through consultation responses.</p>	

Deficiencies in local standards

- 3.82 Patterns of provision: A map showing the location of provision for children and young people in Uttlesford, together with a 400m catchment is below. It shows the dispersed pattern of provision of this type of open space and that the majority of parishes contain at least one play area.
- 3.83 Deficiencies in **quantity** occur predominantly in Market Towns and main villages.
- 3.84 Deficiencies in **accessibility** occur in the following areas and are shown below:
 - Aythorpe Roding, Broxted, Chickney, Elmdon and Wenden Lofts, Great Canfield, Great Hallingbury, Hempstead, Leaden Roding, Lindsell, Little Bardfield, Little Chesterford, Little Hallingbury, Margaret Roding, Quendon and Rickling, Strethall, Ugley, Wicken Bonhunt
 - Varying size parts (often small) of Birchanger, Clavering, Debden, Felsted, Fritch Green, Great Chesterford, Great Dunmow, Hatfield Heath, Henham, High Easter, Littlebury, Manuden, Newport, Saffron Walden, Stansted, Stebbing, Takeley, Thaxted, Wendens Ambo
- 3.85 Deficiencies in overall **quality** occur predominantly off Rectory Road, Farnham.

Figure 3.3: Provision for children and young people in Uttlesford



Draft Recommendations

RCYP1 Seek additional provision in line with the above standards in areas of proposed growth.

Policy recommendations

RCYP2 Identify priority sites where natural play elements can be incorporated within planned new or enhanced facilities.

RCYP3 Seek further information on community demand for the provision of skateparks and BMX tracks

Allotments



Chickney Road Allotments, Henham

- 3.86 By definition, an 'allotment garden' is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of fruit or vegetables for consumption by himself and his family¹³. PPG17 identifies that the primary purpose is 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 inclusion¹⁴. Allotments are an important component of open space which provide recreational value, support biodiversity, and contribute towards healthy lifestyles through physical exercise and the chance to grow fresh produce.
- 3.87 The Government recognises the health benefits of allotment gardening.¹⁵ Increasing people's awareness about food and how it is made and grown can encourage people to eat more fresh vegetables and fruit. Allotment gardening can also:
- bring people together from all age groups around a common interest.
 - there is considerable scope for schools to link up with local allotments societies to use allotments and the skills of plot holders to participate in school education projects.
 - allotments are a potential resource for bio-diversity.
 - the potential exists for allotments and other forms of community gardens to become important recreational assets and open space amenities for people living in dwellings without gardens.
 - allotments can also perform a valuable function as a productive temporary use of open land which may be allocated to some other future open use¹⁶
- 3.88 Allotment sites owned by local authorities can be designated as 'statutory' or 'temporary' where 'statutory' sites are subject to some protection under the Allotments Act 1925. 'Temporary' sites have no security beyond the usual planning system requirements¹⁷.

¹³ Government's response to the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee's report 'The Future for Allotments', 1998

¹⁴ Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation

¹⁵ Government's response to the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee's report 'The Future for Allotments', 1998

¹⁶ www.wirralfedallotments.org.uk

- 3.89 The Local Government Association has revised its advice for allotment officers and associations, to provide an update on the policy framework, legislation and practice affecting allotment gardening¹⁸.
- 3.90 The overall quality of allotments identified both in the 2006 audit and the current audit is as follows:

Brick Kiln Lane, Stebbing	Specific status not given	Excellent
Chickney Road, Henham	Specific status not given	Excellent
The Street, High Roding	Not surveyed	Good to Excellent
Stortford Road, Clavering	Specific status not given	Good to Excellent
Mallows Green Road, Manuden	Not surveyed	Good
Roger's End, Ashdon	Not surveyed	Good
Little Walden Road, Saffron Walden	Specific status not given	Good
Mill Road, Felsted	Specific status not given	Good
Jubilee Allotments, Waldgrooms, Great Dunmow	Specific status not given	Good
Mill Road, Debden	Not surveyed	Good
Allotments off Broad Street, Hatfield Broad Oak	Not surveyed	Good
Frambury Lane, Newport	Specific status not given	Moderate to good
Crocus Fields, Saffron Walden	Specific status not given	Moderate to good
Rickling Green Road, Quendon and Rickling	Not surveyed	Moderate to good
Pennington Lane, Stansted	Specific status not given	Moderate
Off The Street, Manuden	Not surveyed	Poor
Land rear of Magdalen Green, Thaxted	Specific status not given	Unknown
Land off Radwinter Road, Saffron Walden	Specific status not given	Unknown
Off Bardfield Road, Thaxted	Not surveyed	Unknown
Site off Peaslands Road, Saffron Walden	Specific status not given	Unknown
Windmill Hill, Saffron Walden	Specific status not given	Unknown
Birchanger Lane, Birchanger	Not surveyed	Unknown
Church Lane, Elsenham	Not surveyed	Unknown
Off The Street, High Easter	Not surveyed	Unknown
Off Hamel Way, Widdington	Not surveyed	Unknown

Result of site audit:

- 3.91 Of the allotment sites audited, only two were categorised as moderate or poor, Pennington Lane, Stansted and the site off The Street, Manuden. Specific quality gradings for individual allotment sites were not given in the 2006 audit, so it is not possible to make a direct comparison. However, 31% of allotment sites were considered poor in the 2006 audit.

¹⁷ Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee's report 'The Future for Allotments', 1998.

¹⁸ Local Government Association; Growing in the community: a good practice guide for the management of allotments; 2nd ed, 2008

- 3.92 Just over half of the allotments audited are privately owned, although some are managed by the Parish Council. Parish Councils own and managed 33% of the allotment sites and Uttlesford District Council 13%. Of the 25 allotment sites identified only the site of Peaslands Road, Saffron Walden has any form of designation. It is within a Protected Open Space of Environmental Value and for Informal Recreation.
- 3.93 In relation to pedestrian access, only The Street, High Roding was rated as poor. It was also the only site to score very poor for movement around the site. All other sites scored moderate or higher in both categories. Parking was a slightly more widespread issue, with five sites rated as poor and a further site rated as very poor.
- 3.94 The majority of allotment sites scored good or excellent for all aspects of cleanliness and maintenance. The Street, High Roding; Crocus Fields, Saffron Walden; and Broad Street, Hatfield Broad Oak were the only sites to score poor or very poor for any of the criteria in this category.
- 3.95 None of the sites were graded lower than moderate in terms of wildlife value, with 56.3% rated good or excellent. Brick Kiln Lane allotments in Stebbing; Rickling Green Road, Quendon; Broad Street, Hatfield Broad Oak and Rickling and The Street, Manuden were rated very poor for information, although a further five sites considered that the provision of notice boards was not applicable.

Allotments: standards

Quantity

<i>Existing level of provision</i>	<i>Recommended standard</i>
<p>0.2 ha/1000 population (0.24 ha/1000 population in Market Towns and main villages and 0.2 ha/1000 population in more rural parishes) (15.33ha total)</p>	<p>Proposed standard: a minimum of 0.25ha/1000 population</p>
<i>Justification</i>	
<p>The current level of allotment provision is equivalent to a range of 0.2ha/1000 population in rural parishes - 0.24ha/1000 population in Market Towns and main villages. A proposed standard has been set that is similar to comparator authorities' provision and slightly higher than existing provision, with a view to raising the standard above the current provision. No quantity standard was set as part of the 2006 audit.</p> <p>The proposed standard has been set just below the average standard of the comparator authorities (0.27ha per 1000 population) at 0.25ha per 1000 population. This is equivalent to approximately 10 standard allotment plots (approximately 250 sq m) and is in line with a number of the comparator authorities, despite being just below the average. Provision should be off site if less than four allotment plots would be required. Comparator authorities that were studied have set the following standards;</p> <p>East Hertfordshire - 0.22ha/1000 population Chelmsford - 0.3ha/1000 population North Hertfordshire - 0.23ha/1000 population in towns, 0.36ha/1000 in rural area South Oxfordshire - 0.3ha/1000 population in larger settlements, 0.2ha/1000 population in smaller settlements Hambleton - 0.2ha/1000 population Harborough - 0.35ha/1000 population Maldon - 0.2ha/1000 population Stratford-on-Avon - 0.4ha/1000 population East Hampshire - 0.2ha/1000 population</p>	

Accessibility

<i>Ex i l l f i i</i>	<i>Recommended standard</i>
Not defined	<p>Proposed standard: Within 10 minutes drive (4km) of whole population</p> <p>No standard set in 2006 study</p>
Justification	
<p>The community consultation undertaken for the 2006 audit identified that the majority of the community would prefer to drive to sites that are over a mile away. The standard that has been set is comparable with several comparator authorities, as no standard was in the 2006 audit.</p> <p>Comparator standards at other local authorities of similar profile were:</p> <p>East Hertfordshire - 10 minute drive from residential areas Chelmsford - 10 minutes drive (2-4km) North Hertfordshire - 720m walk South Oxfordshire - 10 minute walk (600m) Hambleton - 15 minutes walk Harborough - 10 minutes drive (4km) Maldon - all households within 2km radius Stratford-on-Avon - 10 minutes drive (4.8km) district wide, 10 minutes walk (480m) in larger settlements East Hampshire - 480m Sevenoaks - 10 minutes walk (800m) from residential areas</p>	

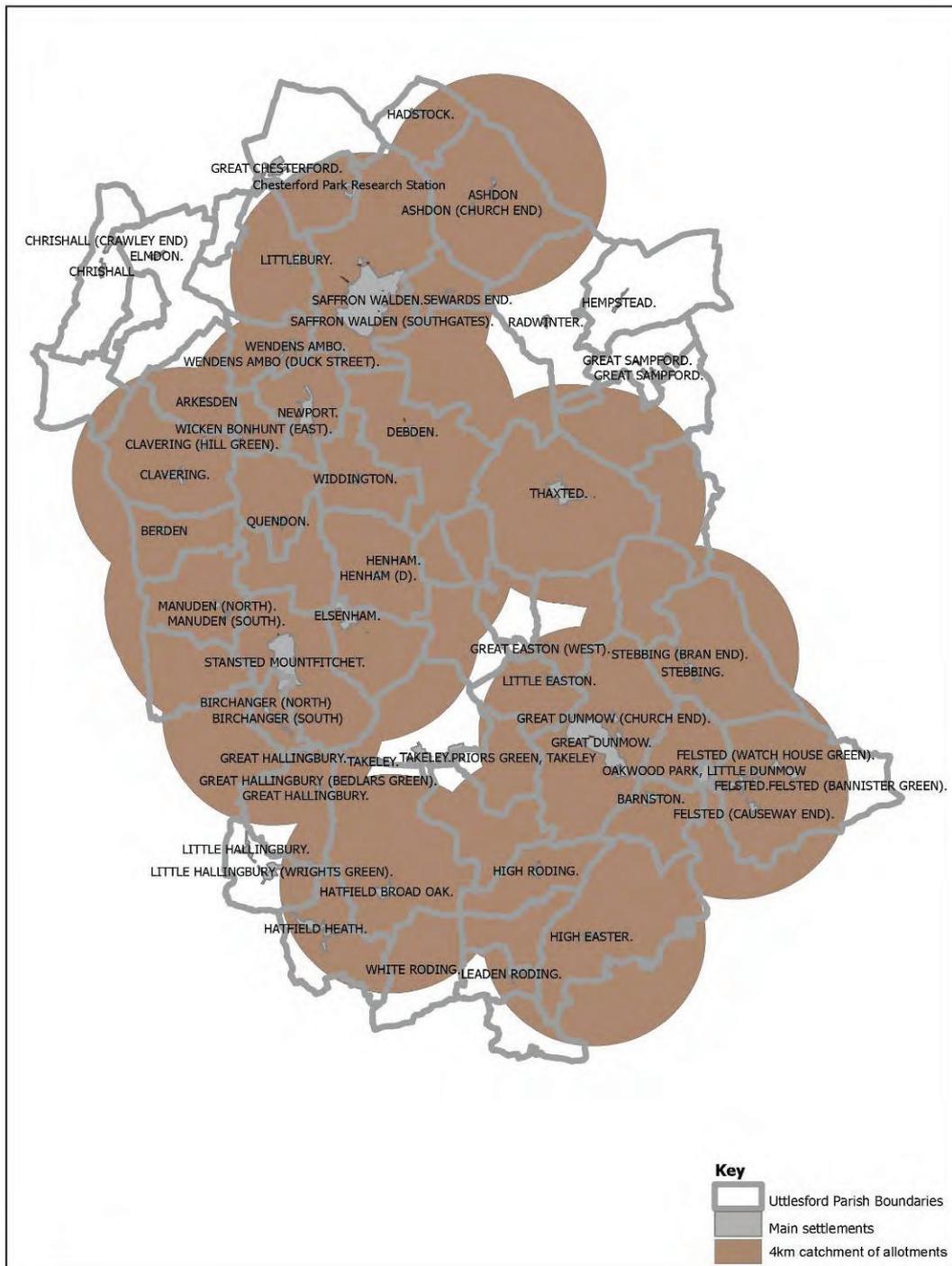
Quality

<i>Existing level of provision</i>	<i>Recommended standard</i>
N/A	<p>Proposed standards:</p> <p>Essential Allotments should have secure fencing, a watering point, water storage facilities, containers for equipment, good quality soils, vehicle access to the allotment entrance and parking facilities. Management of vacant plots Provision for clearance/removal of rubbish and composting</p> <p>Desirable Pathways through the site.</p>
Justification	
<p>The current resource audit shows that the provision of allotments is generally good quality with one site identified of poor quality.</p> <p>Comparator authorities hadn't identified particular standards for quality aside from South Oxfordshire which suggests all sites should be high quality and East Hertfordshire, Hambleton and Sevenoaks which set standards based on issues identified through consultation responses.</p>	

Deficiencies in local standards

3.96 Patterns of provision: A map showing the location of allotments in Uttlesford, together with a 4km catchment is below. It shows that a large proportion of the district is within 4km of their nearest allotment site. There are areas in the north west of the district that have no provision, as well the north east and small areas along the south east and south west boundaries. There is also an area of deficiency at the centre of the district, around Takeley and the Priors Green development.

Figure 3.4: Allotment provision in Uttlesford



- 3.97 Deficiencies in **quantity** occur predominantly in some of the smaller villages.
- 3.98 Deficiencies in **accessibility** occur in the following areas and are shown above:
 Chrishall, Elmdon and Wenden Lofts, Great Chesterford, Hempstead, Priors Green - Little Canfield, Little Hallingbury, Radwinter, The Sampfords, Takeley
 Small parts of Hadstock
- 3.99 Deficiencies in overall **quality** occur predominantly at the allotments off The Street, Manuden.

Draft Recommendations

Allotments

Policy recommendations

RA1 Seek additional provision particularly in Chrishall, Elmdon and Wenden Lofts, Great Chesterford, Hempstead, Priors Green - Little Canfield, Little Hallingbury, Radwinter, The Sampfords, Takeley e.g. through prospective development, to mitigate for existing and prospective quantitative deficiencies.

Other recommendations

RA2 Seek further information on community need for allotment gardens.

RA3 Work with Allotment Associations or Trusts to seek enhancements in quantity, quality and access to sites, especially where demand or deficiencies have been identified locally.

RA4 Seek improvements to access from local communities to allotment sites where these have been identified as below average quality

RA5 Identify areas in existing sites within other typologies, especially amenity greens, but including formal parks or school grounds, where new sites could be created that cannot be delivered through development

Cemeteries and churchyards*Leaden Roding churchyard*

- 3.100 Churchyards can be defined as within the walled boundary of a church while cemeteries are burial grounds outside the church confines. The PPG17 guidance¹⁹ identifies that this typology includes private burial grounds, local authority burial grounds and disused churchyards.
- 3.101 The primary purpose of this type of open space is for burial of the dead and quiet contemplation, but the amenity and visual benefits are also important, as well as the opportunities to promote wildlife conservation and biodiversity, especially in older churchyards. Cemeteries and churchyards can be a significant open space provider in some areas particularly in rural areas. In other areas they can represent a relatively minor resource in terms of the land, but are able to provide areas of nature conservation importance. Some churchyards retain areas of unimproved grasslands and other habitats, thus providing a sanctuary for wildlife in urban settlements and/or heritage value within more rural landscapes.
- 3.102 There is increasing demand for 'natural' or 'green' burials. This can be for environmental reasons – people want to reduce their impact on the environment caused by cremation, for instance, and don't like the 'conveyor-belt' type atmosphere of modern burial grounds and crematoria. Such burials involve simple natural, earth-friendly materials, which make the minimum impact on wildlife habitats and the landscape in the future. This type of burial ground can provide a wide range of greenspace benefits to the community and could be considered as one of the choices if additional burial sites are needed in Uttlesford.

Result of audit

- 3.103 66 sites have been identified within Uttlesford District, although five of these are below the 0.2ha threshold used for other types of open space. Sites are found throughout the District. All of the Cemeteries and Churchyards audited are owned by the associated church, except Chickney Church which is owned by a Trust, and allow general public access into the churchyards.
- 3.104 The sites range in size from Saffron Walden Cemetery at 5.38ha, to the church grounds in Swards End at only 0.03ha. The average size of the sites is 0.58ha. Eight churchyards are located in County Wildlife Sites, including in Aythorpe Roding, Chrishall, Little Canfield and Wicken Bonhunt.

¹⁹ Planning Policy 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation

The Cemetery and churchyard, Church Street, Saffron Walden; Radwinter churchyard and Thaxted churchyard are designated as a Protected Open Space of Environmental Value.

- 3.105 The overall quality of the Cemeteries and Churchyards audited is generally moderate or above with only one site, the upper churchyard in Manuden, identified as very poor. Overall quality from the current audit is as follows (this type of open space was not included in the 2006 audit):

Site Name	Overall quality 2006	Overall quality 2011
Cemetery, Chickney Road, Henham	Not surveyed	Excellent
Churchyard, The Endway, Great Easton	Not surveyed	Excellent
Ashdon churchyard and cemetery	Not surveyed	Excellent
Churchyard, Church End, Clavering	Not surveyed	Excellent
Saffron Walden Cemetery	Not surveyed	Excellent
Chickney Church	Not surveyed	Good
St Peters churchyard, off Patmore End, Ugley	Not surveyed	Good
St Mary's Church, Church End, Great Canfield	Not surveyed	Good
Churchyard, The Street, Manuden	Not surveyed	Good
Churchyard, Church Hill, Hempstead	Not surveyed	Good
Cemetery and churchyard, Church Street, Saffron Walden	Not surveyed	Good
Churchyard, Church Road, Stansted	Not surveyed	Good
St Mary the Virgin churchyard, Hatfield Broad Oak	Not surveyed	Good
Dunmow Town Cemetery and Churchyard	Not surveyed	Good
Off High Street, Little Chesterford	Not surveyed	Good
Chelmsford Road, Hatfield Heath	Not surveyed	Good
Off Wicken Road, Wicken Bonhunt	Not surveyed	Good
Arkesden churchyard, Arkesden	Not surveyed	Good
St Martin's Close, White Roding	Not surveyed	Good
Aythorpe churchyard, Aythorpe Roding	Not surveyed	Good
Holy Trinity Church, Chrishall	Not surveyed	Good
Methodist Chapel, Chrishall	Not surveyed	Good
Holy Cross Church, Felsted	Not surveyed	Good
All Saints Church, Little Canfield	Not surveyed	Good
All Saints Church, Quendon and Rickling	Not surveyed	Good
St Simon and St Jude's Church, Quendon and Rickling	Not surveyed	Good
St Mary the Virgin church and churchyard, Wendens Ambo	Not surveyed	Moderate
Strethall Churchyard	Not surveyed	Moderate
United Reform Church, Stortford Road, Hatfield Heath	Not surveyed	Moderate
Church Lane, Takeley	Not surveyed	Moderate
Stortford Road, Leaden Roding	Not surveyed	Moderate
St Andrew's churchyard, Barnston	Not surveyed	Moderate
Upper churchyard off The Street, Manuden	Not surveyed	Very poor
Churchyard, Bull Lane, Langley	Not surveyed	Unknown
Churchyard, Langley	Not surveyed	Unknown
Churchyard, Gallows Green Road, Lindsell	Not surveyed	Unknown
Churchyard, Church Street, Widdington	Not surveyed	Unknown
Churchyard, The Causeway, Langley	Not surveyed	Unknown
Churchyard, Church Drive, Berden	Not surveyed	Unknown
Cemetery off Bolford Street, Thaxted	Not surveyed	Unknown
St Mary's churchyard, Little Sampford	Not surveyed	Unknown
St Michael's churchyard, Great Sampford	Not surveyed	Unknown
Churchyard, Watling Street, Thaxted	Not surveyed	Unknown
Broxted Churchyard	Not surveyed	Unknown

Site Name	Overall quality 2006	Overall quality 2011
Churchyard, Walden Road, Hadstock	Not surveyed	Unknown
Churchyard, Walden Road, Radwinter	Not surveyed	Unknown
Churchyard, Church Street, Great Chesterford	Not surveyed	Unknown
Churchyard, Church Lane, Debden	Not surveyed	Unknown
Churchyard, Harrisons, Birchanger	Not surveyed	Unknown
St Giles churchyard, Great Hallingbury	Not surveyed	Unknown
St Mary's churchyard, Little Hallingbury	Not surveyed	Unknown
Churchyard, Mill Lane, Littlebury	Not surveyed	Unknown
Chapel and grounds, Littlebury Lane, Littlebury	Not surveyed	Unknown
Church grounds, Walden Road, Swards End	Not surveyed	Unknown
Churchyard, off Maple Lane, Wimbish	Not surveyed	Unknown
St Nicholas Church, Elmdon	Not surveyed	Unknown
St Mary's Church, Elsenham	Not surveyed	Unknown
Cemetery, High Street, Elsenham	Not surveyed	Unknown
St Mary's Church, Farnham	Not surveyed	Unknown
St Mary's Church, High Easter	Not surveyed	Unknown
All Saints Church, High Roding	Not surveyed	Unknown
St Katherine's Church, Little Bardfield	Not surveyed	Unknown
Priory Church, Little Dunmow	Not surveyed	Unknown
St Mary's Church, Little Easton	Not surveyed	Unknown
St Margaret's Church, Margaret Roding	Not surveyed	Unknown
St Mary's Church, Stebbing	Not surveyed	Unknown

- 3.106 Of all the sites 15% are considered to have a poor or very poor appearance. This includes the Upper Churchyard in Manuden and churchyards in Chelmsford Road (Hatfield Heath), Church Lane (Takeley), Strethall and Aythorpe Roding. Entrances and boundaries are also considered poor in Chelmsford Road (Hatfield Heath), Church Lane (Takeley) and Strethall churchyards.
- 3.107 Disabled access is generally not very good, with over 42% of sites rated poor or very poor. This is not surprising given the age of the open spaces. Parking is even more of an issue in relation to cemeteries and churchyards, with 36% graded poor or very poor.
- 3.108 The safety of sites is generally considered to be good. Only Chelmsford Road, Hatfield Heath and Church Lane, Takeley were rated poor in terms of their feel and only Church Lane, Takeley in terms of vandalism. The majority of sites were rated good or excellent in terms of dog fouling, litter and fly tipping. The Upper Churchyard in Manuden scored poorly in all three categories, with the Lower Churchyard also scoring very poor for dog fouling.
- 3.109 Provision and maintenance of seats within churchyards and cemeteries is an issue in around 25% of sites. Nine sites indicated that signage was either poor or not provided. The majority of sites were rated moderate or higher in relation to nature conservation and wildlife value.
- 3.110 Some of the sites presented opportunities for improvement or enhancement. This potential to improve sites rated moderate or below is summarised below:

Site Name	Potential
St Mary the Virgin church and churchyard, Wendens Ambo	Improvements needed to disabled access, parking provision, seating, signage and variety of vegetation
Strethall Churchyard	Improvements needed to general feel and level of welcome, boundaries and entrances, disabled access, parking provision and signage
United Reform Church, Stortford Road, Hatfield Heath	General small scale improvements needed

Site Name	Potential
Church Lane, Takeley	Improvements needed to general feel and level of welcome, boundaries and entrances, disabled access, signage and to address issues of safety, vandalism and maintenance
Stortford Road, Leaden Roding	Improvements needed to disabled access, parking provision and seating provision
St Andrew's churchyard, Barnston	Improvements needed to parking provision, seating provision and wildlife value
Upper churchyard off The Street, Manuden	Improvements needed to general feel and level of welcome, disabled access, parking provision and level of seating, as well as to address issues of dog fouling, litter, fly tipping and maintenance

Cemeteries and Churchyards: standards

- 3.111 It is not applicable to set standards for either quantity or accessibility for cemeteries and churchyards. PPG 17 Annex states: "many historic churchyards provide important places for quiet contemplation, especially in busy urban areas, and often support biodiversity and interesting geological features. As such many can also be viewed as amenity greenspaces. Unfortunately, many are also run-down and therefore it may be desirable to enhance them. As churchyards can only exist where there is a church, the only form of provision standard which will be required is a qualitative one."

Quality

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
N/A	<p>Cemeteries and churchyards should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> have well-kept grass or natural areas, with appropriate flowers, trees and shrubs offer a clean and litter free environment with clear pathways have appropriate and good quality ancillary facilities such as seating, signage and car-parking where appropriate.
Justification	
<p>The current resource audit shows that the provision of Cemeteries and Churchyards is generally good quality with one site identified of very poor quality.</p> <p>Comparator authorities hadn't identified particular standards for quality aside from East Hertfordshire and Sevenoaks which set standards based on issues identified through consultation responses.</p>	

Deficiencies in local standards

- 3.112 *Quality* - Upper churchyard off The Street, Manuden – Very poor

Draft Recommendations

