

# **Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study for the New Forest Area**

**for New Forest District Council  
and the New Forest National Park Authority**

## **FINAL MAIN REPORT**

**February 2007**

**Bennett Leisure and Planning Ltd  
Leisure and the Environment  
(Inspace Planning Ltd)**

The Authors of this report would like to thank all the residents, clubs, organisations, schools and other agencies in the New Forest Area who contributed to the Study, by completing questionnaires and by taking part in focus groups and interviews. In particular, we greatly appreciate the time and effort taken by Town and Parish Councils throughout the New Forest Area to supply and verify data on the hundreds of open space sites covered by the audit.

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## **PARISH PROFILES – see separate document**

All Parishes in the New Forest District Council area except where indicated

### **AVON VALLEY SUB AREA**

BRANSGORE  
ELLINGHAM, HARBRIDGE AND IBSLEY  
RINGWOOD  
SOPLEY

### **FORDINGBRIDGE AND NORTH WEST PARISHES**

BREAMORE  
DAMERHAM  
FORDINGBRIDGE  
MARTIN  
ROCKBOURNE  
SANDLEHEATH  
WHITSBURY

### **COASTAL SUB AREA**

HORDLE  
LYMINGTON AND PENNINGTON  
MILFORD ON SEA  
NEW MILTON

### **TOTTON AND WATERSIDE SUB AREA**

FAWLEY  
HYTHE AND DIBDEN  
MARCHWOOD  
TOTTON AND ELING

### **NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK SUB AREA**

ASHURST AND COLBURY  
BEAULIEU  
BOLDRE  
BRAMSHAW  
BROCKENHURST  
BURLEY  
COPYTHORNE  
DENNY LODGE  
EAST BOLDRE  
EXBURY AND LEPE  
GODSHILL  
HALE  
HYDE  
LANDFORD (Salisbury District)  
LYNDHURST  
MELCHETT PARK & PLAITFORD (Test Valley Borough)  
MINSTEAD  
NETLEY MARSH  
REDLYNCH (Salisbury District)  
SWAY  
WELLOW (Test Valley Borough)  
WHITEPARISH (Salisbury Borough )  
WOODGREEN

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## The Study and Its Aims

- 1.1. This is a report of an assessment of open space, play, sport and recreation facilities in the area covered by New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority.
- 1.2 The New Forest Area has been a fascinating area of Study, given its diverse, high quality landscapes and variety of settlement patterns. It lies in the south west corner of Hampshire, stretching from the more rural county of Dorset and the Avon Valley in the west to the urban outskirts of Southampton in the east and forms part of South East England for national planning policies.
- 1.3 The centre of the area – the New Forest National Park itself – is very rural in character. The main centres of population are located around the Park, including Totton and the Waterside towns of Marchwood, Dibden, Hythe and Fawley to the east, Fordingbridge and Ringwood to the west and the coastal settlements of New Milton and Lymington to the south. Just outside the area to the west and north east lie the major conurbations of Bournemouth and Southampton.
- 1.4 The New Forest District Council area (forming the large majority of the Study Area) covers 290 square miles (75,100 hectares). The newly designated New Forest National Park lies almost exclusively within the New Forest District Council area (with a small area extending into Salisbury District (Wiltshire) and Test Valley Borough (Hampshire), and covers three quarters of that district.
- 1.5 A strong recommendation for local authorities to carry out local assessments of the need and demand for open space is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation. Essentially, such studies are now needed because:
  - Local Plan policies are commonly now out of step with revised PPG17 guidance
  - Existing standards are generally based solely on quantity and ignore issues of quality and accessibility
  - There is a need for more robust policy and standards
  - There is a desire to tailor standards to better achieve what local residents, community groups, district and parish councils and other strategic partners want.

- 1.6 The scope of this Study in terms of the kinds of open space and recreation opportunity being covered was initially determined by guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, together with its Companion Guide.
- 1.7 The aims of the Study are that it should provide the following:
- An indication of existing open space and recreation needs within the Area, taking into account the requirements of the Government's Planning Policy Guidance 17 requiring local authorities to undertake such assessments.
  - A framework of guidance to inform the future development planned in the New Forest Area, including the Local Development Framework.
  - A means to help determine future decision making and investment decisions by the Authorities and relevant partners with regard to the improvement of local recreation and open space opportunities.
  - An articulation of the views of local residents and interest groups through drawing upon the results of consultation exercises.
  - Assistance in helping to draw together all other relevant policies and strategies having a bearing upon open space and recreation opportunities to enable better joined up planning and decision making.
- 1.8 In practical terms, the information which is gathered can be used in the following ways, for example:
- By highlighting areas where new provision (open space, sports facilities, play areas) and improvements are required it can help to inform budget allocations and support funding bids
  - Information on patterns of behaviour (how far people are prepared to travel for example) is essential for preparing policies for developer contributions, which can be secured from new residential development
  - It can be used as a basis for discussions with local schools and the education authority to widen use of school pitches and grounds for use by the local community, particularly in areas which are deficient in playing pitches and sports facilities
  - It provides the necessary detailed evidence to protect areas of open space from development. Even if an area of open space is not well used for, say sport, it may be able to be transferred to other open space uses where a demand has been expressed (e.g. allotments); this helps to protect land and keep it in open space use
  - By focusing on the management and maintenance of open space it can help to improve these services for people in the New Forest Area

- By highlighting the particular concerns of parish councils in maintaining and managing open space, specific information and advice can be developed and given to parish councils to support and assist them
- Other initiatives involving local authorities – for example, Continuous Performance Assessment - focus on residents' satisfaction with local open/green space which the information gained from this survey can help to inform
- To inform work on and make an important input into the LDF process, in terms of assisting the review of existing allocations and designations. People's behaviour in their use of open space, as well as analysis of quantitative deficiencies, will all help to inform policies for developer contributions.

### **Specific Objectives**

1.9 Beyond the general context of the Study, the process has from the outset attempted to provide findings and clear, practical guidance in respect of the following:

- Recommended local standards of provision to guide requirements for developer contributions for open space, sport and recreation provision arising from new development; and, to assist in the conservation, planning and management of existing and future recreation opportunities of all kinds
- A review of existing open space and recreation designations within the existing local plan with a view to ensuring a clear rationale and consistency in future development plan documents
- An assessment of local and area wide provision of open space and recreation facilities in terms of the existing and projected needs of the population.
- Establishing strategic options and recommendations for the planning and management of opportunities to help inform any proposed green space strategies
- Making the links between open space, sport and recreation opportunities and the wider 'cross-cutting policy agenda at both national and local level, including:
  - Health
  - Children's and young people's services
  - Community well-being
  - The Environment
- Identify policy and action which logically derive from the Study and address the above policy priorities.

- In the course of undertaking this project a large amount of information has been collected on features and facilities of all kinds. There has been value in collating and recording all this information on one large database for future ease of reference.

## The Value of Open Space

1.10 The benefits of good quality open space, parks and sport and recreation provision are now well extolled and promoted, and covered extensively in other literature (see Section 3)

1.11 In summary, open space provides the following benefits:

*For people, open space:*

- Gives an area for recreation and play
- Enables lifelong learning and education
- Encourages equality and diversity
- Promotes community development and regeneration
- Establishes community cohesion and social inclusion
- Tackles community safety issues
- Empowers communities

*For the environment, open space:*

- Encourages biodiversity
- Provides wildlife habitat
- Promotes education
- Contributes to sustainable environmental resource management
- Creates a natural amenity
- Gives safe, sustainable transport routes
- Alleviates flood risks
- Regulates the local microclimate
- Can instil unique character to an area, and provide a sense of place and local identity.

*For health, open space:*

- Improves physical health through exercise
- Contributes to good mental health and well being
- Provides positive community health through sense of space

*For the economy, open space:*

- Attracts economic development and local investment
- Provides local employment
- Increases land and property values
- Encourages ongoing revenue streams through tourism
- Improves the image and standing of an area
- Influences location decisions for both employers and employees

## **The New Forest Area: Challenges for an Open Space Study**

- 1.12 For a study of open space, the New Forest Area presents some interesting challenges:

### ***The New Forest National Park***

- 1.13 A very diverse and complex landscape, this is the largest remaining area of lowland heath in Britain and Europe, giving the flavour of a landscape that was once much more extensive. More than half (56%) of the National Park is of national or international value for nature conservation: much of it is a SSSI, a Ramsar site, a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area of Conservation.
- 1.14 At the heart of the National Park lies the area known as the Open Forest - some 20,000 ha of unenclosed land and commons which has long been open to public access on foot and on horseback. The unique landscape of the Open Forest has been shaped by over a thousand years of grazing by commoners' livestock. It is an area of great landscape and tranquility that includes the largest continuous area of heath, valley mire and pasture woodland in lowlands Europe, making it an area of international importance for landscape and nature conservation.
- 1.15 The Study has not audited the open forest as whole, but areas of open space, play and sports facilities within settlements inside the Park boundary have been included. The proximity of the Forest profoundly influences local residents' patterns of recreational behaviour: all of the Study Area's main towns and villages are close to, or in, the New Forest National Park and have a continuing affinity with it. There can be absolutely no doubt that the interwoven threads of open space and the Forest contribute to something of iconic value for the area. Indeed, the local consultation (see Section 4) clearly identifies the importance attached by residents to this resource.
- 1.16 Outside the Open Forest, the area covered by the Study includes a range of different countryside and landscapes which are enjoyed both by local people and by visitors to the area.

### ***Green Belt***

- 1.17 The countryside adjoining the New Forest National Park to the south and west is the only part of Hampshire designated as Green Belt.

### ***Coastlines***

- 1.18 There is approximately 60km of coast stretching from Christchurch at the Dorset border in the west to Calshot and Southampton Water in the east, including both important areas for wildlife as well as recreational beaches. The variety of coastlines here include various nature designations which influence public access.
- Along Southampton Water, much of the shoreline is influenced by urban and industrial development, although there are valuable remnants of a wooded farmland (Forest fringe) landscape and nature conservation designations.

- The New Forest National Park meets the sea along the north west Solent shores between Calshot along to Hurst Castle and provides some of the most untouched coastal landscape in south east England, with public access largely confined to Calshot Spit, Lepe Country Park and Hurst Castle itself. Much of the land here is also covered by nature conservation designations.
- The coastline approaching Barton-on-Sea farther west is more accessible to the public; much of the coast here is also designated as SSSIs and other designations.

### ***The Avon Valley***

1.19 In the west of the district, the Avon Valley separates the New Forest from the Dorset heathlands. The Avon Valley is very popular for walking and other outdoor recreation. Much of this area is high grade agricultural land, with sand and gravel workings to the north of Ringwood – a popular leisure destination now they are being transformed into lakes, and of national importance to wildlife.

### ***Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB***

1.20 The north west corner of the Study Area forms part of the open chalk downlands of the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB. It provides a network of access land and rights of way which extends across the county boundary into Wiltshire, but is relatively remote from the rest of the New Forest Area.

1.21 In addition to these specially designated and distinct natural environments, the towns and villages of the New Forest Area have between them a range of parks and gardens, outdoor sports facilities, play areas, areas of amenity and informal open space, community halls and facilities which constitute valuable resources for the local population.

### ***Sites and Facilities outside the New Forest Area***

1.22 Although this study concentrates on the open space in the New Forest Area, it recognises that local residents will also use spaces outside the District. The community survey clearly highlights the importance in this regard of recreation opportunities in Southampton and East Dorset/Christchurch areas, particularly as regards indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

<b>Format of the Report</b>
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1.23 The following sections within this report:

- provide further information on the demography and settlement pattern of the Study Area (Section 2)
- describe the methodology used to undertake the assessment (Section 2)
- summarise national and local policy of relevance to this assessment, and identifies some of the implications (Section 3)

- review the results of relevant surveys and consultation into local needs (Section 4)
- examine the quantity, distribution and (wherever possible) quality of existing recreation and open space opportunities (Section 5)
- give suggestions for further consideration and action, including standards of provision designed to reflect the needs of both existing residents, as well as the likely demands resulting from development (Sections 5 and 6)

1.24 **Parish Profiles have been prepared for all 42 parishes in the New Forest Area.** They are an important component of the Report: they summarise existing provision, consultation and findings, identify deficiencies and propose points for further consideration by the Town and Parish Councils, the Authorities and their various partners. They are produced separately, with Parish summary reports, databases, maps and photos of all assessed sites.

1.25 The various Appendices should be considered in conjunction with this Report.

### **Steering Group**

1.26 Throughout the Study process, the project has been managed by a Steering Group comprising officers from New Forest District Council, the New Forest National Park Authority, Hampshire County Council and a representative of Town and Parish Councils in the New Forest Area. The members of the Steering Group are:

<b>Claire Burnett</b>	Planner/Urban Designer, Estates, Hampshire County Council
<b>Jill Colclough</b>	Open Space Co-Ordinator, Landscape and Open Space Team, New Forest District Council
<b>Tony Davison</b> Group,	Group Manager, Development and Projects Estates Practice, Hampshire County Council
<b>Martin Devine</b>	Assistant Leisure Services Officer, New Forest District Council
<b>Edward Gerry</b> Council	Planning Policy Officer, New Forest District (from June 2006)
<b>David Illsley</b>	Planning Policy Officer, New Forest National Park Authority
<b>Ian Lawson</b>	Strategic Planning Officer (Planning and Sites), Hampshire County Council

<b>Julia Norman</b>	Project Leader (Policy and Plans), New Forest District Council (from June 2006)
<b>David Shimpe</b>	Clerk, Hythe and Dibden Parish Council
<b>Simon Trueick</b> Council	Planning Policy Officer, New Forest District Council (to June 2006)
<b>Neil Williamson</b>	Environmental Design Manager, Landscape and Open Space Team, New Forest District Council

- 1.27 The New Forest National Park came into being in March 2005 and with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006, the National Park Authority has had the responsibility for planning control that was previously vested in the New Forest District Council for the majority of the National Park, and Salisbury District and Test Valley Borough in the northern parts of the National Park.
- 1.28 The purposes of National Park designation (as set out in the Environment Act 1995) are:
- to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park
  - to promote understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities.
- Section 62(2) of the Environment Act requires all relevant authorities to have regard to this in undertaking their work. Therefore, open space, sport and recreational facilities close to the Park have an important role to play in protecting the Park, and potentially relieving some of the recreation pressures on it.
- 1.29 In recognition that this report will therefore be considered and adopted by both the New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority, the area covered by this study will be referred to throughout this report as '**The New Forest Area**'. Jointly, the Council and the Authority are sometimes referred to as 'the Authorities'.

## 2 THE STUDY AREA AND METHODOLOGY

### Demography of the Study Area

#### ***New Forest District***

- 2.1 The 2001 census data stated that the total population within the New Forest District was 169,331; it has the second highest population among non-metropolitan districts in England. The 1999-based Small Area Population Forecasts show an increase in the district population of just 1.6% between 2001 and 2006.
- 2.2 The population is very concentrated in towns to the west, south and east. Around 40% live in the Totton and Waterside parishes of Totton and Eling, Marchwood, Hythe and Dibden and Fawley and two thirds of the population (just under 120,000 people) live in the six largest parishes of Totton and Eling, New Milton, Hythe and Dibden, Lymington and Pennington, Fawley and Ringwood. The remaining 31 parishes range in size from just under 6,000 (Marchwood) down to 171 (Exbury and Lepe).

#### ***New Forest National Park***

- 2.3 Although in terms of area it is the smallest of the National Parks, more than 34,000 people live within the New Forest National Park, making it the most densely-populated national park in England. They tend to be concentrated in the larger Forest villages of Ashurst, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst and Sway. Around 31,000 (91.5%) of the people living in the New Forest National Park live within the New Forest District Council. The remainder live either within the Salisbury District (Wiltshire) part of the New Forest National Park (2498 people within part of the parishes of Redlynch, Whiteparish and Landford) or the Test Valley Borough (Hampshire) part of the New Forest National Park (413 people within part of the parishes of Melchet Park & Plaitford and Wellow).
- 2.4 Of the 37 parishes in the New Forest District, 14 lie wholly within the New Forest National Park, 18 lie partly within the Park and 5 lie totally outside the Park.
- 2.5 The New Forest Area is readily accessible by road from the main urban centres of Southampton, Portsmouth and Bournemouth and has a long history of attracting day visitors and holidaymakers who come in particular to enjoy the scenery and the special qualities of the Open Forest and the coast. The area is served by mainline from London, ferry services to Southampton and the Isle of Wight and there is network of bus routes around the edge of the New Forest National Park, although areas on the fringe of the Park, in the north west especially, remain relatively isolated. Local people represent the highest number of visits but it is estimated that more than 15m people live within 90 minutes' drive of the Area and this number will increase steadily as a result of further housing development in the south of England over the next

20 years. Tourism thus makes an important contribution to the local economy, but there is an increasingly fine balance to be struck as some parts of the Study Area come under increasing pressure from visitors.

### ***Demographic Characteristics***

(NB: These statistics relate to the New Forest District Council Area only. The small parts of the Study Area in Salisbury District and Test Valley Borough are not included, as no parish here lies completely within the National Park and it is not possible to split the demographic data available on such a localised basis).

2.6 Compared with national and county populations, the New Forest District has a relatively elderly population. Almost 28% are of pensionable age and only 17% are aged under 16 years. There are, however, wide variations within the District:

- Totton North, Totton West, Totton Central, Marchwood and Holbury & North Blackfield in the Totton and Waterside Sub Area, have the highest percentage of people aged under 16 years, between 22% and 26%. Barton, Milford and Lymington Town in the Coastal Sub Area have the lowest percentage, between 10% and 13%.
- Where there are low numbers of children there are typically higher numbers of older people - Milton, Barton, Becton, Milford and Lymington Town have the highest percentage of people aged 65 years and over, between 36% and 43%. Marchwood, Holbury & North Blackfield and most of the Totton wards have the lowest percentage, between 7% and 14%.

2.7 In common with Great Britain as a whole, the population structure of the New Forest District Council area is changing slightly, with 49.4% of the population aged over 44 years, compared with 44.6% in 1991. The average age of the population in the New Forest is 43.2 years compared to an average age for England and Wales of 38.6 years. By 2026 the school-age population is expected to fall by 5000 to 16,500 while the number of residents over 65 will rise by around 14,000 to more than 544,700; it is predicted that 50% of the population will be over 60 in the next 20 years.

2.8 Other statistics:

- Economic activity rates in the New Forest are lower than for Hampshire as a whole with 47% of the population economically active compared with 52% for Hampshire.
- Levels of unemployment in the New Forest District have been consistently low for a considerable period of time. In the previous 5 years the rate has not risen above 1.2%. These figures are below those for the South East region and noticeably lower than figures for England and Wales (between 2-3% for the previous 5 years). Parts of Fawley (e.g. Hardley and

Holbury & North Blackfield) have the highest percentage of working age people who are unemployed, between 2.6% and 3%

- Rates of pay in the New Forest District are lower than those for Hampshire, the South East region and England and Wales. This trend is maintained in both full and part time workers as well as male and female workers.
- The principal commuter destination from the New Forest District is Southampton City with over 11,000 journeys made from District residents. The greatest movement of workers into the District is from Wiltshire with almost 5000 movements. 72% of the workforce is comprised of those who also live in the New Forest District.
- Lyndhurst (within the New Forest National Park) and Totton North have the highest percentage of people who are in a non-white ethnic group, between 2% and 2.4%. However, this is still much lower than the England figure of 9.1%.
- Milton (Coastal Sub Area) has the highest percentage of households whose occupiers do not own a car, between 25% and 30%. All the other wards in the New Forest have a lower percentage than the national average of 26.8%.
- Ringwood South, Fernhill, Lymington Town, Buckland and Holbury & North Blackfield have the highest percentage of lone parent families, between 15% and 18%. This is significantly higher than the 9.4% level for England. Milford, Lymington Town and Milton have a much higher percentage of lone pensioner families than the national average of 14.4% (up to 33.5%).
- Pennington has the highest percentage of households living in social housing, found to be 18.8%. There is much variation across the New Forest District but all wards are below the national average of 19.3%.

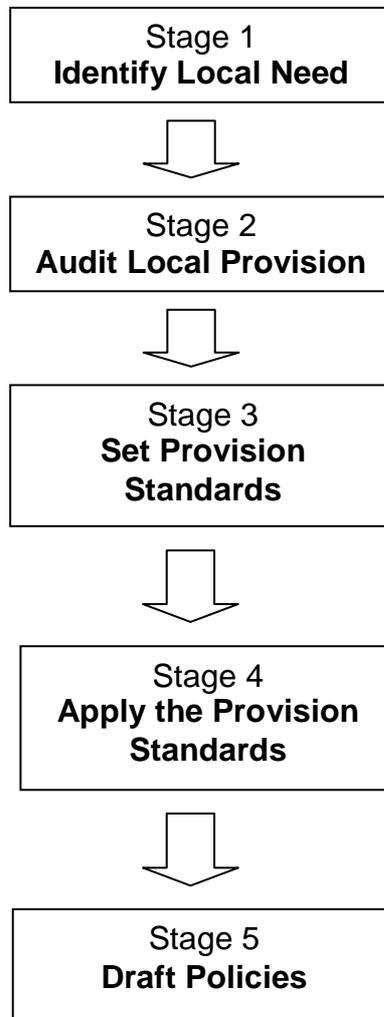
### ***Future population***

2.9 In the New Forest District, nearly all the settlements outside of the New Forest National Park have grown substantially in recent years – the very large population growth since the Second World War has been concentrated in the eastern parishes of the District (Totton and the Waterside) and to the south of the Forest in the coastal towns. The housing and population growth that has taken place in the 1990s and 2000s has been considerably lower. Recent population projections indicated that the area's population numbers will peak in 2006/2007. Although 4000 new homes could be built under proposals in the South East Plan, by 2026 there would be 7500 fewer people living here, although there could be 8,000 more single person households – mostly middle aged and older people.

## Study Process

- 2.10 The starting point for this study has been Planning Policy Guidance Note 17, and its companion guide "Assessing Needs and Opportunities". PPG17 places a requirement on local authorities to undertake assessments and audits of open space/sports/recreational facilities in order to:
- identify the needs of the population;
  - identify the potential for increased use; and,
  - establish an effective strategy for open space/sports/recreational facilities at the local level.

The companion guide to PPG17 recommends an overall approach to this kind of study as summarised below.



- 2.11 Within this overall approach, the Companion Guide to PPG17 suggests a range of methods and techniques that might be adopted in helping the assessment process, and these have been used where considered appropriate to local circumstances and permitted by time and resources. These methods and techniques, where they have been used, are explained at appropriate points in this report. Both the PPG17 and the companion guide place great emphasis on consulting the local community through the assessment process.

## STAGE 1 IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEED

### Explanation of Sub Areas employed in the Study

- 2.12 Many of the open space, sport and recreation opportunities that are covered by this report will serve *local needs* and therefore have *local catchments*. Play areas and neighbourhood parks are obvious examples of such opportunities. On the other hand major 'strategic' facilities such as large leisure pools, athletics stadia, country parks etc will also meet the needs of people dispersed over much larger catchments. In between these two extremes there will be facilities that meet the needs of more than one neighbourhood or small village, but not usually the District as a whole in terms of regular usage. (The obvious example here will be local grass football pitches).
- 2.13 For the study to embrace these varying needs and opportunities it therefore has to consider provision and need in terms of small, medium and large geographical areas. Accordingly, surveys and analyses of provision have been based on the following levels:
- District/Sub Regional.
  - Sub Areas (see below)
  - Village/Parish (for rural areas)
- 2.14 The Sub Areas on which much of the analysis has carried out and as agreed by the Steering Group take into consideration the following:
- sub areas used previously within New Forest District Local Plan documents
  - the areas on which the analysis of the Residents' Survey was undertaken (based on postcodes)
  - local demography, settlement patterns, landscape character and main access routes
- 2.15 Therefore the Sub Areas are principally defined for the New Forest Area are as shown in **Map 1** and as follows:

NEW FOREST AREA PPG17 STUDY – SUB AREAS					
Totton and Waterside	Fordingbridge & North West Parishes	Coastal	Avon Valley	New Forest National Park	
Fawley* Hythe & Dibden* Marchwood* Totton & Eling*	Breamore* Damerham Fordingbridge* Martin Rockbourne Sandleheath Whitsbury	Hordle* Lymington & Pennington* Milford-on-Sea* New Milton*	Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley* Bransgore* Ringwood* Sopley*	Ashurst & Colbury Beaulieu Boldre Bramshaw Brockenhurst Burley Copythorne* Denny Lodge East Boldre	Exbury & Lepe Godshill Hale Hyde* Landford* <sup>(S)</sup> Lyndhurst Melchett Park & Plaitford <sup>*(TV)</sup> Minstead Netley Marsh* Redlynch <sup>(S)</sup> Sway Wellow <sup>*(TV)</sup> Whiteparish* <sup>(S)</sup> Woodgreen

**Notes:**

1. All the parishes listed above lie within the New Forest District Council area apart from:
  - Melchett Park and Plaitford and Wellow parishes are in Test Valley (TV) District Council, Hampshire
  - Landford (part), Redlynch (part), Whiteparish (part) parishes are in Salisbury District Council, Wiltshire
2. The parishes marked with an \* above lie only partly in the New Forest National Park. **Map 2** shows the extent of the National Park.

**Surveys and Consultation**

2.16 A range of methodologies have been used to assess local need for open space, sport and recreation facilities throughout the Study Area; they included:

**Local Residents**

- A ‘Citizen’s Panel’ Survey in August 2005, eliciting responses from over 700 adults and young people from across the New Forest District, which sought detailed information on areas of open space, play and outdoor and indoor sports facilities visited, including: travel times, preferred mode of transport, reasons for visits/use, comments and opinions etc

### ***Children and Young People***

- Citizen's Panel Survey plus Young People's Focus Group held in Ringwood.
- Consultations with local play workers and youth leaders

### ***Playing Pitch Assessment***

- A full Playing Pitch Assessment has been undertaken, using the Methodology as promoted by Sport England, involving: visits and assessments of all grounds; questionnaire surveys and telephone conversations with senior and junior football, rugby, cricket and hockey clubs, league officials and governing body representatives; discussions with facility/site managers and examination of booking records.  
**(Appendix A)**

### ***Sport and Recreation***

- Questionnaire surveys of all known indoor and outdoor sports clubs and groups; governing body personnel; research of strategies and documents
- Focus Group with Managers of the 5 jointly provided (education and NFDC) indoor Health and Leisure Centres in the District (Ringwood, New Milton, Lymington, Applemore (Hythe) and Totton).

### ***Town and Parish Councils***

- Town and Parish Councils in the New Forest Area are largely responsible for the management and maintenance of all open space, play areas and many outdoor sports facilities and their input to this Study has been considerable and invaluable. Extensive consultation with Town and Parish Councils including presentations to the Parish Open Space Liaison Group, questionnaire surveys incorporating mapping, data collection and views and comments on issues and deficiencies from all town and parish councils, preparation of Parish Profiles. Visits were also made to the ten main Town and Parish Councils;
  - Fawley
  - Fordingbridge
  - Hordle
  - Hythe and Dibden
  - Lymington and Pennington
  - Marchwood
  - Milford-on-Sea
  - New Milton
  - Ringwood
  - Totton and Eling

### ***Education Sites***

- Questionnaire survey to all schools to establish facilities on site, levels of sporting activity, extent of community use and issues and deficiencies
- Education Focus Group with headteachers, sports development officers, town and parish councils and Hampshire County Council property and education personnel to discuss issues of relevance to community use of school land and facilities.

- Involvement of Hampshire County Council property and education personnel in the Steering Group

#### **Disability groups**

- Web based questionnaire to disability groups.

#### **Other**

- Consultations with strategic partners and others (including PCT, LEA, Crime and Disorder Groups, Active Sport Partnerships, Children and Young People CAN)
- Environment groups and agencies Focus Group
- Web based 'chatroom'/bulletin board

## **STAGE 2 AUDITING LOCAL PROVISION**

### **Range of open space typologies covered by the Study**

2.17 As mentioned in Section 1, the Study in terms took as its starting point the 'typography' of opportunities recommended Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open, Space Sport and Recreation, namely:

- Parks and Gardens
- Accessible countryside in the urban fringe.
- Routeway/Green corridor
- Outdoor sports facilities
- Informal/Amenity green space
- Provision for children
- Provision for young people
- Allotment and community gardens
- Important indoor sports facilities, village and community halls.
- Water features
- Civic space
- Cemeteries
- Educational land and facilities

2.18 In terms of the above types of open space and recreational opportunity the Study covered all those areas and facilities that are physically accessible by the community for a genuine recreation activity, either on an informal basis without charge - such as parks and natural green space areas or on some sort of managed (fee paying) basis, such as allotments, playing pitches and indoor provision (leisure centres and community halls). The latter category includes commercial facilities such as the David Lloyd Centre in Ringwood, private sports grounds such as the BAT ground in Totton and various holiday parks which have been mapped and included within the calculations of standards of provision where appropriate. Education sites that likewise have sustained community use have been included in the calculations for standards of provision; other education land and facilities have been comprehensively recorded. The database also includes sites which currently

have no current public access but which have recognised potential, such as unimplemented development plan allocations for recreation land.

- 2.19 Even very small sites are potentially large enough to accommodate meaningful recreation activity. For example, a site of 0.1 ha is still sufficiently large to accommodate an equipped play area, tennis court, or pocket park to name but some possible uses. For this reason no size threshold has been used as a basis for including or excluding sites from this Study; all known open space sites and facilities – other than the New Forest National Park itself (see below) – have been included.
- 2.20 In practice it can sometimes be very difficult to differentiate between certain types of open space. For example, a large park may include children's play facilities, sports pitches, natural areas and more. Local people do not necessarily draw distinction between different types of informal recreation space (for example) a 'recreation ground', a park, an area of community woodland and a large area of informal open space - all are capable of meeting local need for informal activity and enjoyment.
- 2.21 In short there can be no hard and fast rules for determining the recreation utility of a site for the community. This has meant that judgements have been made on a site by site basis as to what should be included and excluded for these purposes. In general this has been easy to achieve in a consistent way for the very large majority of sites.
- 2.22 In particular, the Study was required to review the concept and practice of 'Landscape Features' (as currently identified within the Local Plan) to establish:
- the overall continued relevance of this designation;
  - whether individual sites designated continue to meet the criteria identified in the local plan for such designation; or,
  - whether other sites have the potential to be designated as such.

### **Compilation of Database and Audit Process**

- 2.23 At present, open space sites in the New Forest District are shown on the current proposals maps as falling in to one of 4 categories:
- Public open space existing
  - Public open space proposed
  - Private/education authority recreational land
  - Landscape features
- 2.24 The list of sites to be audited and mapped was compiled from various sources:
- An open space study undertaken by the District Council in 2000 which listed all sites appearing on the proposals map

- Lists and hand drawn maps held by the District Council of 'landscape features' as defined on adopted local plan proposals maps.
  - The results of the comprehensive survey to parish and town councils, which were all asked to record and map areas of open space in their areas
  - Other sites which were found in the course of site visits and added to the database
  - Various other sources such as County Council sites, sports governing body handbooks, sports club returns, some private facilities with general public access
  - Local Plan Proposals Map
- 2.25 An audit form was developed in consultation with the Steering Group and the site assessments undertaken as part of this Study represent a basis for much of the analysis and findings. The site assessment form sought the following information:
- Name, parish, location, range of facilities on site (summary of facilities and equipment), ownership, management, maintenance, local plan designation, any other designation (the database records the location of sites falling either partially or completely within RAMSAR, SAC or SPA designations) and key landscape characteristics.
- 2.26 A useful feature of the database is a short description of the site, outlining its salient characteristics and condition. There are around 950 sites on the database.
- 2.27 The second part of the form comprised a qualitative assessment where this was felt to aid understanding of the site and assist in setting priorities for future management, maintenance, protection and development. Initially, where relevant and meaningful, sites were scored from 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent) on a range of indices including accessibility, design, general condition, maintenance, management and value and this information is held on the main database. When an example of particularly good practice in existing provision was witnessed, the 4 is scored in bold type.
- 2.28 This scoring was then used as a guide to assess each site's potential for improvement and sites which have been deemed appropriate for further investigation and/or investment (where, for example, they might benefit from improved maintenance, new equipment, signage etc) have been categorised into 'low', 'medium' or 'high', depending on the level of priority afforded.
- 2.29 These terms have rather specific meaning in the context of this assessment; they are sites where it is felt further consideration of possible improvements would be beneficial and would greatly improve the value, usefulness or appearance of the site. The accompanying text highlights areas for improvement. In general, highlighting a site in this way is more a reflection of the written site description, rather than its scores, as much store has been placed on writing realistic, information and helpful descriptions about each site and the way it can be improved.

- 2.30 A site assessment was completed for the large majority of sites on the database (over two thirds); however some sites appear on the database and have been mapped but have not been assessed, mainly because of difficulties in either obtaining access, assessing the quality of the whole of the site and/or establishing the extent of community use. These include all education sites and allotments and some commercial and private facilities. Where possible, information on quality, accessibility and community use for these sites has been obtained through the survey and consultation process. Golf courses have been included on the database, but in line with normal practice in open space audits have not been assessed or included in any calculations of standards. Water features have also been mapped.
- 2.31 Following the site assessments and collection of data from other sources, all sites were given a Unique Reference Number, mapped and assigned to a specific layer/category of open space, reflecting the emerging typology. A summary database and photograph is linked through GIS to each site.

### **STAGE 3 SET PROVISION STANDARDS**

- 2.32 Identifying local need for open space is not a precise science, although for facilities such as playing pitches and some other sports facilities there are now well defined and recognisable methodologies for matching demand and supply. In summary, the following approaches have been adopted:
- Establish current use of open space, sport and recreation facilities
  - Establish current levels of provision
  - Establish journey times, distances travelled, patterns of use through surveys
  - Through mapping, catchment area analysis, community consultation, identify areas where demand cannot be currently met (and where there is spare capacity)
  - Review local and national trends in usage and participation
  - Review demographic data and trends
  - Recommend new and or improved/different provision to overcome identified deficiencies and meet latent and future demand
  - By comparing existing levels with unmet demand, set revised quantitative provision standards, qualitative standards and approximate accessibility criteria.

### **STAGE 4 APPLY PROVISION STANDARDS**

- 2.33 In practice, within the Report, the setting and application of provision standards (Stages 4 and 5) merge together in Sections 5-10, where standards of provision are developed for each of the main typologies.
- 2.34 New standards are proposed and existing levels of provision are reviewed against these. The Parish Profiles take this process one step further by

reviewing existing provision against suggested standards in detail, leading to points for further consideration.

## **STAGE 5 DRAFT POLICIES**

2.35 Section 13 of the Report considers some general themes and issues arising from the Study, as a basis for consideration in the LDF Core Strategy document, other development plan documents, future open space and green space strategies, parish plans and other local documents.

### **3 POLICY CONTEXT AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

#### **General**

- 3.1 The whole process of this study has been driven by policy: national, regional and local. It is only through being aware of this policy and ensuring that all recommendations and actions within this report in some way link back to the former will this study have relevance to and be accepted by the widest possible range of stakeholders.
- 3.2 A wide ranging review of the various agencies, organisations and interests involved in open space, sport and recreation within the New Forest Area has been carried out. A review has also been undertaken of strategies and policies at local, sub regional, regional, and national levels. The following paragraphs represent the 'headline' conclusions.
- 3.3 This review has been very helpful in the following ways:
- It has demonstrated the very wide range of interests involved in providing, managing, facilitating and using open space, sport and recreation sites and green space opportunities.
  - It has underlined the vital contribution that open space, recreation and green space opportunities can make in addressing a wide range of national, regional and local policy themes and issues; and the need therefore to continually cross refer the findings and conclusions of the this study to relevant policy, so achieving greatest relevance and efficacy.
  - It shows that the policy and stakeholder environment is continually changing in terms of initiatives (especially national government and QuANGO edicts, campaigns, and grant regimes). Other than the constant evolution, there are potentially revolutionary changes, including
    - at long last, the acceptance of healthy exercise as a weapon in the armoury of the 'preventative' wing of the Department of Health/NHS;
    - linkages between children's and youth service delivery and recreational opportunities to children and young people and the hope that greater participation in sport and recreation and making open spaces more welcoming and busy will assist in crime prevention.
  - It therefore demonstrates the potential tie ups between open space, sport and recreation opportunities and the various health, children, youth and green space agendas that figure so prominently in national policy and in the New Forest District Council's lead strategy – The Community Plan (see below).
  - It highlights the need for new, locally relevant and justified planning and management standards to cover all manner of open space, sport and recreation opportunities that might legitimately be funded by developers. It has also highlighted the way in which existing recreational spaces are treated within the local plan, as a starting point for consideration of

whether there is justification for reviewing the development plan designations affecting open spaces to so as to better reflect their distinctive value for recreation.

### **Specific links to the Community Plan**

3.4 The New Forest District Council has had a core involvement in the development of a Community Strategy through supporting the 'Changing Lives Partnership – the Local Strategic Partnerships (LSP) for the New Forest District'. Members of the LSP include:

- Community First
- Forestry Commission
- Department of Health/South East Public Health Group
- Hampshire County Council
- Hampshire Constabulary
- Hampshire Fire and Rescue
- New Forest Association of Local Councils
- New Forest Business Partnership
- New Forest Citizens' Advice Bureau
- New Forest Committee/National Park
- New Forest District Council
- New Forest Primary Care Trust
- New Forest Tourism Association
- Post 16 Education
- Registered Social Landlords
- Youth Forum

3.5 The Community Strategy is the 'lead' strategy by which all their other strategies should be guided. The current community strategy for the District is 'Changing Lives: The Community Strategy for the New Forest District 2004-2007'. The Strategy has its 'Vision for 2025', which is that,

"In 2025 the New Forest will be a place where:

- All people have opportunities to enjoy safe and healthy lifestyles, develop as individuals and shape communities in which they live;
- Businesses thrive within a local economy that harmonises with the special environment and provides everyone with sufficient resources to enjoy plenty of lifestyle choices; and,
- The natural and built environment provides opportunities for diversity of nature, the health, education and enjoyment of everyone whilst making a significant contribution towards the local economy."

3.6 The Strategy then goes on to identify 13 topic areas for which objectives have been set and key issues identified for addressing over the time period of the Strategy, and these cover:

- Improving opportunities and life prospects for Children and Young People

- Contributing to Community Safety
- Developing a successful local Economy
- Enhancing the Built Environment
- Strengthening and protecting the Natural Environment
- Improving the Health of individuals and communities
- Creating attractive Housing
- Improving overall opportunities for positive and wholesome Leisure
- Being a fundamental resource for Lifelong Learning
- Enhancing quality of life for Older People
- Creating opportunities for appropriate Tourism
- Co-coordinating with sustainable forms of Transport to reduce adverse environmental effects.

3.7 Probably the majority of these topic areas will have some relevance to open space and recreation. It therefore makes sense for the output of this study in terms of its recommendations to show consistency with the above Community Strategy Vision, to make it easier to defend at Scrutiny Committees and Planning Inquiry fora, as well as possibly enhancing prospects for attracting external funding through demonstrating clear and coordinated efforts on the part of the Council and its partners in pursuit of shared goals.

## **Links to Local Development Plans**

### **The New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration (adopted 2005)**

3.8 The District Council's Local Plan can give a land use policy based impetus to the planning and realisation of many open space, sport and recreation opportunities and therefore help to pursue the Community Plan Vision through:

- protecting (through designation and or policy reference) existing valued spaces and opportunities.
- ensuring as far as possible an appropriate distribution of spaces and opportunities throughout the Study Area.
- ensuring that future development contributes towards the maintenance and improvement of open space, sport and recreation opportunities as appropriate.
- securing contributions from developers of new (especially residential) property for new or improved existing spaces and facilities reflecting the needs of their residents.

3.9 The recently revised Local Plan amongst other things will guide the location of new housing and other development within the District up until 2011. It is a statutory document. The broad Aim of the Plan can be summarized as:

“Taking an integrated approach to promoting a high quality and sustainable environment which conserves and enhances the District's special

environmental quality, whilst also addressing the needs of the people who live and work in the District.”

3.10 In this regard the Plan has three main elements: development restraint; meeting local needs and conserving and enhancing the environment. In turn, the Local Plan has a series of District wide objectives of which the following are relevant to open space, sport and recreation:

- Objective 1: protect the New Forest
- Objective 3: maintain and improve the environmental quality and character of the coast
- Objective 6: promote biodiversity, conservation and wildlife, and promote public education and understanding of the care and quiet enjoyment of the natural environment
- Objective 8: increase public access to and enjoyment of the countryside and coast, subject to environmental constraints
- Objective 9: encourage high standards of design and development and provide attractive and stimulating places in which to live, work and play.
- Objective 10: ensure that the needs of people with restricted or impaired mobility are met.
- Objective 14: meet overall Structure Plan requirements for new housing provision (5480 dwellings between April 1996 and March 2011), and identify an additional reserve of 500 dwellings)
- Objective 21: balance the development of a prosperous and locally beneficial tourism industry with the need to safeguard environmental features including the New Forest and coastline
- Objective 23: reduce dependence on the car and promote alternative sustainable modes
- Objective 25: improve road safety, especially for cyclists and pedestrians
- Objective 26: protect and enhance existing open space and increase provision in areas of need
- Objective 27: enable and encourage the provision of local community and recreation facilities to meet the needs of communities within the District

3.11 Specific policies within the plan deal with provision, maintenance and management of open space, sport and recreation opportunities:

- Protection of open space and circumstances where development may be acceptable contrary to the normal presumption against such development (Policy DW-R1)
- Protection of private or education authority recreation facilities and circumstances where development may be acceptable contrary to the normal presumption against such development (Policy DW-R2).
- An overall standard of public open space required from new housing and to be set as an aspiration target elsewhere in the District (at 2.8 ha per 1000 people) (Policy DW-R3).

- The retention of recreational buildings and their protection from alternative use/development and circumstances where alternative development/use may be acceptable contrary to the normal presumption against such development (Policy DW-R4)
- Coastal recreation and tourism. Development proposals on the coast should make provision for public access to the coast where this does not conflict with shoreline management and environmental or other interests of acknowledged or overriding importance. (Policy DW-C8)
- Developer obligations in relation to the infrastructure (including open space, community and recreation facilities) required to support new residents and development. (Policy DW-F1)

3.12 The Plan has policies relating to recreation and community facilities applying only to the Forest area, and these include:

- General restriction of recreation activity in the New Forest to countryside related recreation uses which are not detrimental to the environmental character of the Forest and its quiet enjoyment (Policy NF-R1)
- Control of development ancillary to recreation uses in the New Forest including buildings for outdoor recreation (Policies NF-R2), but the promotion of outdoor recreation facilities for local needs in the New Forest (Policy NF-R2).
- General restriction of indoor facilities to meet the recreational needs of local communities to within village/settlement limits (Policy NF-R3)
- General support for proposals to develop, improve or extend community and cultural facilities to meet local needs (Policy NF-P7)

3.13 Similarly the Plan has complementary policies dealing the same topics but for outside the Forest area, including:

- General support for outdoor recreation uses amongst which other things may help relieve pressure on the New Forest and meet local recreational needs, provided they do not involve substantial new buildings or hard development, and that do not create unacceptable noise levels (Policy CO-R1)
- Control of buildings and facilities ancillary to outdoor recreational use, including floodlights. (Policy CO-R2)
- The control of golf courses (Policy CO-R3)
- General encouragement of Country recreation areas (Policy CO-R4)
- Support for outdoor formal or informal recreation facilities to meet the needs of local people (Policy CO-R5)

- General control of indoor facilities for local needs in the countryside (Policy CO-R6)
- 3.14 Beyond these general policies, the Local Plan supports a tier of site and area specific policies and proposals of relevance to this open space, sport and recreation study but too numerous to mention in the overview paper.
- 3.15 With reference to the Local Plan's Open Space standard further explanation of its justification and interpretation is contained in the Appendix G6 of the Local Plan, arising from an Open Space Audit and Playing Pitch Assessment carried out in 1998. More detail is given in Section 5, in the Introduction to Developing Standards of Provision.

<b>Relevance of local plan policies other than in the New Forest District Local Plan</b>
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- 3.16 Although this study focuses very much on the New Forest District, it also covers those parts of the National Park area lying outside the former. The following comments therefore need to be made with regard to other relevant planning policy and the evolving local statutory planning system.
- 3.17 Firstly, the New Forest National Park Authority (NPA), has assumed responsibility for the production of the Local Development Framework covering the National Park area. As a planning authority, the NPA is also required to audit local needs and provision of open space as required by PPG17, hence its involvement in this study.
- 3.18 Secondly, the National Park (outside the New Forest District Council area) covers affects two other local authorities Salisbury District Council and Test Valley. The Salisbury District Local Plan contains a specific section on the New Forest (contained within its own chapter entitled *New Forest policies*), there is a chapter entitled *Sport, Recreation and Leisure policies*. Policy R2 seeks the provision of 2.43 hectares of recreational open space per 1,000 population. Appendix IV of the Local Plan provides additional information on the Local Plan standards for the provision of public open space in association with new residential development.
- 3.19 The Test Valley District Local Plan applies to a small proportion of the National Park (approximately 1% of the Park area). The Local Plan includes guidance on open space within Chapter 6 on *Meeting Economic and Social Needs*. This requires the provision of at least 2.8 hectares per 1,000 population of public open space, and breaks this requirement down into sports grounds/formal recreation; parkland; informal recreation areas and children's play space. Annex 1 of the Local Plan provides some more information on public open space definitions.

## The Stakeholders

- 3.20 There is a huge array of agencies and organisations that in some shape or form have an interest in promoting open space, sport and recreation and all of them can therefore have a bearing on the planning of local open space and recreation opportunities.
- 3.21 Figure 1 'Existing Stakeholders' below identifies the public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders having some direct or indirect interest in open space, sport and recreation opportunities. It cannot be guaranteed that everyone or everything has been identified, but it does illustrate the complexity of potential arrangements between all parties.
- 3.22 It is almost impossible to plot the precise relationship of each stakeholder to others in the figure. However, a few observations can safely be made. The stakeholders can generally be broken down into 'Users', 'Providers', 'Funders', and 'Enablers' of open space, sport and recreation opportunities, where:
- 'Users' are basically the participants in open space, sport and recreation, be they individuals or groups.
  - 'Providers' can be agencies, organisations and (sometimes) individuals in the public, voluntary and private/commercial sectors largely responsible for establishing and maintaining open space, sport and recreation opportunities.
  - 'Funders' are those that provide *financial* support to either create or maintain opportunities, including through grant aid.
  - 'Enablers' help in creating and maintaining opportunities either through policy, general nurture and support including advice on technical issues and sources of funding etc.
- 3.23 Clearly, some of the stakeholders will fall into more than one category. For example, a club will be a 'User', but potentially also a 'Provider'. The District Council may be a 'Provider' in terms of its own facilities, but also a 'Funder', and 'Enabler'. The variety of stakeholders ranges from national/central government level, through regional and sub regional interests, down to local interests.
- 3.24 Recommendations within this study and actions identified in Section 13 have taken into account the legitimate roles of the stakeholders as listed below in **Figure 1**.

**FIGURE 1: EXISTING STAKEHOLDERS**

<b>'Users'</b>	Individuals, groups and clubs
<b>'Providers'</b>	District Council - town and parish councils - schools - education authority - youth and play organisations - local clubs and organisations – landowners - commercial providers - countryside organisations – Hampshire Trust for Conservation Volunteers
<b>'Funders'</b>	Central government - local authorities - The Lottery - governing bodies of sport - charitable trusts and foundations - environmental trusts - Countryside Agency/Natural England – housebuilders – business - Private Finance Initiatives/Private Public Partnerships - voluntary fundraising - other grant sources.
<b>'Enablers'</b>	District Council – National Park Authority - town and parish councils – Sport Hampshire & IOW – Community Action Hampshire - Hampshire County Playing Fields Association - National Governing Bodies of Sport - Regional Sports Board South East - South East England Regional Assembly, SEEDA - Government Office for the South East – Department for Communities and Local Government - Department for Culture - Media and Sport - Department for the Environment - Farming and Agriculture - Home Office - Countryside Agency/Natural England - Forestry Commission/Forestry Enterprise - Environment Agency – Hampshire Partnership Board – Hampshire Biodiversity Forum – Hampshire Countryside Access Forum - Friends of Parks groups -

## **4 SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES AND FINDINGS FROM LOCAL CONSULTATION AND SURVEYS**

### **Introduction**

4.1 This section presents the key findings from surveys of local residents, Town and Parish Councils, young people, agencies concerned with the environment and disability organisations. Results and findings from the surveys of sports clubs and schools are incorporated within Sections 7 (Outdoor Sport), 10 (Sports Halls, Community Halls and Swimming Pools) and 11 (Education Facilities).

4.2 The Key Points arising from the local consultation and survey work are as follows:

### **Local Residents**

- High importance is attached to local spaces and opportunities, particularly within the more urban areas and from people with reduced mobility, young people and parents with younger children.
- Similarly, informal and natural green space areas are highly valued for a variety of reasons, - outdoor open spaces are a key factor in local quality of life (especially for walking, watching nature, relaxing and socialising) and especially informal recreation
- The most visited type of open space is the New Forest National Park, with 75% of respondents visiting it at least monthly. Nevertheless, for the majority of respondents, their 'local area of open space' lies outside the Park. The implication is that people could be encouraged to make greater use of such areas – or visit them more as an alternative to the New Forest – but keys to achieving increased use will be the improvement of facilities in terms of cleanliness, convenience (including transport and car parking), 'feeling safe and secure' and the provision of information about the opportunities available.
- These 'alternative sites' seem to have particular appeal when they are associated with water, and we would suggest that improving access to water (lakes, ponds, children's paddling pools, the coast) could be a significant incentive for encouraging people to visit sites other than in the New Forest.
- Respondents were asked to rate pre given local characteristics of open space within the New Forest Area as either very good, fairly good, average, fairly poor and very poor. The highest scoring characteristics were 'the

- variety of open spaces' 'countryside and woodland areas (excluding the National park itself) and 'local nature reserves and wildlife areas'.
- The number and quality of local parks, areas for sitting out in, the range and quality of outdoor sports facilities, the range and quality of facilities for younger children and allotments were also rated generally as fairly good or good. The poorest rated characteristics were safety and security and cleanliness (notably the two most important things in encouraging use). The range and quality of offerings for young people was also thought lacking by many, as were special events and festivals.
  - Outdoor opportunities are visited and used more than indoor facilities; the latter tend to be used by a smaller percentage of the population on a regular basis. However, although use of indoor facilities is far less frequent, local halls, community centres and leisure centres are important to some.
  - Most residents would like to take part in more indoor sports and leisure activities, reflecting a common perception amongst respondents that they should undertake more exercise. Cheaper fees, more convenient opening times and more information are key factors here. Aside from libraries, most respondents were unaware of the offerings made by local facilities, despite them reporting the use of a variety of information sources for this purpose.
  - Young people especially require more information, as few are aware of current offerings. In particular, use of arts, heritage and educational facilities is low amongst young people at present, with most believing that such places do not cater specifically for their age group.
  - There is need when planning for all types of recreation opportunity to take into account people's preparedness to travel. Encouragingly, respondents still tend to walk to those facilities closest to them. Use of the car (which most have access to) is more common for visiting indoor or specialist facilities and for travelling to sites in the New Forest National Park.
  - Respondents, including parents escorting children, are generally willing to travel up to 15 minutes on average to use facilities, although lesser distances are welcomed (around 10 minutes). These figures have been translated into accessibility standards.
  - Use of public transport to visit open space, sport and recreation sites is very low at present, perhaps reflecting the rural nature of much of the district and the type of services offered.

(see **Figure 2** at end of Section 4 and **Appendix 1**)

## Town and Parish Councils

Consultation at other times with town and parish councils confirms the following as important issues:

- Localised shortages of football and cricket pitches, and some inadequate associated changing facilities – this is being researched further within the Playing Pitch Strategy
- For the larger parishes especially, the ongoing cost of maintaining open space, outdoor sports facilities and play areas
- Managing the risk element of open space and the insurance required
- Shortages of, and a below acceptable quality of some, children's play areas
- A general lack of appropriate opportunities and facilities for teenagers
- Desire for more court space – both public tennis courts and multi use games areas/five a side areas
- Unsocial behaviour and vandalism to facilities by young people
- Access to appropriate recreational open space - apart from the New Forest National Park - in rural areas
- Difficulties in accessing appropriate indoor sports areas – local village and community halls are often not large enough or suitably designed
- Opportunities for enhanced community use of school buildings and playing fields
- Some issues over timing and funding of transfer of open space/play areas on new development sites from developers to town/parish councils via the District Council.
- The cost of preparing land and ongoing maintenance.
- Requirements for allotments
- Town and parish councils regard it as particularly important that open space, play and outdoor sports facilities should be easy to get to for everyone, safe and secure, and contain high quality and well maintained equipment.

(see **Figure 3** at end of Section 4 and **Appendix 2**)

## Young People

- Young respondents (teenagers) most commonly requested an increase in the number of open spaces available to them, with places to meet friends (66%), including youth clubs, shelters and seating (44%) and areas to sit and play ball games (42%) the most popular requests. Requests for other indoor facilities or facilities for specific activities were less frequent.
- Younger people, especially those aged under 25, tended to use sports and facilities for their age group more frequently, but did not make as much use of natural green space as adults.
- Most young people (63%) walked or cycled to such facilities with friends.
- Young people aged under 25 were found to use local open spaces more for sports, informal play, socialising and for relaxing than other age groups.
- Factors relating to improvements in public transport, improved or new facilities and activities, and having someone to go with are most likely to encourage people under 25 years to make more use of open space areas
- Young people should be able to get to sports centres easily under their own steam (public transport is not the panacea). Safe cycling lanes are frequently referred to as a desired improvement.
- Young people rate the following as particularly good within the New Forest Area
  - the natural environment (including the parks)
  - The support of youth services/Connexions
  - In some of the larger settlements at least there are groups and clubs to join (examples cited include teenfit, cadets, acting groups, activities at leisure centres.)
  - Some of the local shops and fast food venues in the larger settlements (examples given include 'Blockbusters', McDonalds, the bakers, takeaways.)
  - Moors Valley Country Park (outside the New Forest Area)
  - Recreation grounds, play equipment, 'Outdoor opportunities' and some of the sports provision (in some areas)
- Young people identified the following as areas where there was 'room for improvement':
  - Poor bus services in many areas (widespread comment)
  - Nothing to do in the villages and difficult to get to anywhere else.
  - Police and older people keep telling young people off
  - 'Pathetic' young people's provision (in some areas at least).
  - Issues with Forestry Commission and confiscation of bikes!
  - Lack of street lighting in some areas.
  - Concerns about feeling safe in some areas

- Cost of using some facilities such as the recreation centres and David Lloyd Centre.
- Few cheap/free places to 'drop in'.
- Drugs and anti social behaviour

### **Other Issues /Environmental Interests and Disability Groups**

- There are concerns over safety and security issues when using natural greenspace
- How to enable and improve access by public transport and cycling using the rights of way network is a recurrent theme - particularly how to link sites and to improve access for young people and older people in rural areas
- Managing existing sports sites within the National Park; there is some pressure for intensification of use, but the managing agencies generally consider the number of sports sites to be 'stable'.
- How to promote sites away from the New Forest itself – need to encourage provision near to where people live and away from sites which may cause disturbance to wildlife.
- Maintaining the distinctive character of areas with nature designations e.g. Cranborne Chase
- The huge potential afforded by the natural greenspace in the New Forest Area
- New Forest 'Access for All' commented on the value of open space in giving people a chance to get away from their everyday commitments and unwind. They felt there should be more information about what one can do and there should be more things that do not cost a fortune for teenagers to take part in (perhaps cheaper admittance fees). The most important things for open spaces are that they should be easy to get to, be safe and secure, with control of dogs and good signposting and information and a range of facilities, including cafes and toilets.
- Facilities in the New Forest Area are spread out and access for people with disabilities can be difficult, particularly for those without a car or who have to get around on their own. In some areas transport could be improved and there could be more advertisement of the recreational opportunities on offer.
- Within the New Forest Area, improvements such as more litter bins at certain sites and accessible toilet facilities near open space and sport and recreation sites would be welcome. Other areas for improvement include: improved footpaths with walking signs displaying distance/type/places of interest; more cycle routes; improvement of wheelchair accessibility to some indoor facilities

notably gyms and some pools; better policing of recreational areas (CSOs) and control of anti social behaviour.

- Examples of good practice include Lymington Sailability (sailing opportunities for disabled people) and the Inclusive Fitness Initiative at Applemore Leisure Centre which is giving main frontline staff adequate training and enabling good access to the gym for people with disabilities.

**Figure 2: CITIZEN'S PANEL QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS - INFORMAL RECREATIONAL VISITS TO LOCAL AREAS OF OPEN SPACE**

Area	AOS incl. Civic	Coast	Country	Cyclepaths	Footpaths	NFNP	Outdoor Sports	Park	Recreation Ground or Playing Field	Space for Children & Young People	Total Other	Total
<b>Avon Valley</b>	8.1%	2.3%	4.7%	3.5%	0.0%	52.3%	0.0%	0.0%	20.9%	2.3%	4.7%	100.0%
<b>Coastal</b>	2.9%	32.4%	8.6%	2.2%	0.7%	33.8%	6.5%	7.9%	3.6%	1.4%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Fordingbridge</b>	0.0%	3.4%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	62.1%	0.0%	0.0%	31.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>New Forest</b>	0.0%	0.0%	5.7%	11.4%	0.0%	74.3%	5.7%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
<b>Totton &amp; Eling</b>	1.4%	11.9%	5.5%	2.7%	0.9%	41.1%	5.5%	4.1%	15.5%	11.0%	0.5%	100.0%
<b>Overall Total</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>14.6%</b>	<b>6.1%</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>44.5%</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>13.2%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Figure 3: TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL RESPONSES: SUMMARY  
(from those responding)**

TOWN OR PARISH COUNCIL	Need more open space? Yes/No	What are the Issues?													Groups not catered for							
		Insufficient football pitches	Insufficient cricket pitches	Insufficient rugby pitches	Poor quality pitches	Insufficient Mugas/tennis courts	Poor quality mugas	Insufficient bowls facilities	Poor changing facilities	Insufficient informal open space	Insufficient play areas	Poor quality play areas	Insufficient areas for teenagers	Insufficient indoor halls for sport	Insufficient footpaths and cycleways	Insufficient areas for wildlife	Other	Children	Teenagers	Elderly	Skateboarders	Pitch Sports
Beaulieu	YES												1									
Bramshaw	NO																1					
Bransgore	YES				1			1	1	1	1	1	1									
Breamore	NO																					
Brockenhurst	YES				1				1			1					1	1				
Burley	YES			1	1		1			1		1	1							1		
Damerham	YES									1												
Denny Lodge	NO																					
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	YES								1					1								
Fawley	YES					1	1	1			1	1										
Fordingbridge	YES	1		1		1																1
Hordle	YES							1			1	1						1	1			
Hythe & Dibden	YES							1														
Lymington & Pennington	YES					1			1								1	1				
Lyndhurst	YES	1				1						1	1				1	1				
Marchwood	NO																					
Martin	NO																					
Milford-on-Sea	YES	1	1		1	1		1	1	1		1	1	1		1						1
Minstead	NO																					
Netley Marsh	YES				1			1	1				1					1				
New Milton	YES		1					1						1								
Ringwood	YES	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1										
Rockbourne	YES							1	1	1												1
Sandleheath	YES	1	1							1							1	1				
Sopley	YES									1		1	1									
Sway	NO																					
Totton & Eling	YES		1		1			1			1	1		1							1	
Whitsbury	NO																					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Yes = 20/28</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>

## 5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS OF PROVISION: INTRODUCTION

### A New Typology for the New Forest Area

5.1 A primary aim of this study and the underlying audit has been to recommend revised development plan allocations and to develop standards of provision which better reflect the different forms of open space provision and their distinctive recreation values. An important outcome of this study, through the qualitative assessment undertaken, is to suggest a more refined classification which can be used in future policy setting and analysis, based around the PPG17 categories.

5.2 The existing standard for the provision of open space, sport and recreation for the New Forest District as set out in the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration (adopted 2005) is effectively based upon the NPFA Six Acre Standard (2.4 ha per 1000 people), plus an additional 0.4 ha per 1000 people for informal amenity space) thus:

Formal open space <sup>(1)</sup>	1.6 ha. per 1000 population
Informal open space <sup>(2)</sup>	1.2 ha. per 1000 population

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**Total open space** **2.8 ha. per 1000 population**

- 1 **Formal open space** comprises the uses described as 'outdoor sport' as advised by the NPFA namely: playing pitches, greens, courts, athletics tracks and miscellaneous sites such as croquet lawns and training areas available for general public use (irrespective of ownership))
- 2 **Informal open space** comprises general amenity use (0.4 ha) as well as the uses described as 'children's playing space' as advised by the NPFA (0.8 ha.), namely: designated areas for children and young people, containing a range of facilities and an environment that has been designed to provide focused opportunities for outdoor play (0.3 ha.) and casual or informal playing space within housing areas (0.5 ha.)

5.3 The new standards which have been developed for the New Forest Area, whilst taking cognisance of the NPFA standards are based soundly on the results of local consultation, are also informed by pragmatic considerations and are intended to be achievable. The relevant Section (6 – 10) sets out in detail how they have been developed.

5.4 The proposed typology for the New Forest Open Space Database reflects much more on use and management than on the PPG17 recommended typology. This typology and categorisation within the database has been specifically developed to reflect the findings from surveys and audit, notably

- the value of recreation grounds and parks within the main towns
- the landscape characteristics of the New Forest Area

- that there are some sites that are actively used for community recreation activities that are not currently identified by a local plan designation of any kind
- current anomalies around the category of 'landscape features' – areas of land which are in the Local Plan because of their visual qualities and have therefore not counted towards the supply of open space in earlier studies. Some of these are actively used for recreation and it is suggested they are reclassified.

5.6 The following typologies have been developed and relate to the primary purpose of each site.

#### **Informal open space**

This is an amalgam of sites which could be known as 'amenity open space' and 'natural greenspace' and 'parks and gardens'. Local provision standard developed.

#### **Outdoor sports facilities**

Where outdoor sport is the predominant and primary purpose, including public, private, commercial and education facilities. Includes synthetic turf pitches, tennis courts, managed all weather sports areas and bowling greens. A separate Playing Pitch Study has been prepared. Local provision standard developed.

#### **Space for children**

Mostly includes equipped children's play areas. Areas used informally for kickabouts etc are generally categorised currently as informal open space. Local provision standard developed (with Space for young people).

#### **Space for young people**

Includes basketball courts, shelters, skateparks, BMX tracks and combinations. Local provision standard developed (with Space for children.)

#### **Allotments**

Local provision standard developed.

#### **Sports halls, community halls and indoor pools.**

Local provision standard (quality and accessibility) developed

#### **All Cemeteries and Burial Grounds**

All churchyards/cemeteries are recorded separately. Some do form an important amenity function in urban areas but because of the constraints on their use and access are not included within calculations for standards of provision.

#### **Educational Sites**

All school sites – state and independent – are categorised on the database as 'Educational'. Where there is an Agreement for Community Use (defined in the appropriate section of the text), they have been included within the calculations for quantitative standards of provision for outdoor sports

facilities. It is a conclusion of this Study that all educational sites should be considered as part of the stock of public open space and measures taken to secure wider community access (see Sections 11 and 13).

### **Landscape Features**

Sites categorised separately. Some reclassification suggested and such sites only have been included within the calculations for standards of provision.

### **Other**

A variety of 'other' types of land use have been recorded, following the site assessments and include: 'car park', 'former outdoor sports ground', 'private gardens', 'reverted to Forestry land' and 'site developed'. These have not been included in the calculations for standards of provision.

### **Proposed Public Open Space**

As proposed within the Local Plan. These have not been included in the calculations for standards of provision.

5.7 These proposed typologies for open space have been assigned to each site under the heading 'primary purpose designation'. A secondary purpose has also been delineated in the main database to aid in the analysis:

- Outdoor Sports Facility (secondary purpose for all education sites)
- Park
- Routeway Green Corridor:
- Space for Children
- Space for Children/Space for Young People
- Water Feature

## **Justification for Standards**

5.8 Demand for access to sport and recreation facilities of different kinds will change over time dependent on a variety of factors. Future demand for sports and recreation facilities will be influenced by, amongst other things, the following factors:

- Changing socio-demographic characteristic of the local population.
- Areas of rapid population growth, arising from major new residential development.
- Changing popularity of different activities as a result of 'fad and fashion'.
- Impact of national and local policies (such as sports development and health improvement initiatives).
- Impact of planned changes in provision.

5.9 Good local standards should reflect these factors in the way that they are drafted and applied. PPG17 suggests that standards of provision should have three basic components covering: quantity (per capita); quality; and, accessibility. They should be informed by both the assessment of the

current quantity, quality, and accessibility of existing open space and recreation provision; and, the established needs and aspirations of the community. Local authority standards covering the provision of all sports and recreation facilities should as a minimum be able to satisfy or to help answer these questions:

- The quantitative component: How much is needed?
- The qualitative component: What quality should it be?
- The accessibility component: How easy should provision be to reach and use for those for whom it is designed?

5.10 It is also clearly essential for adopted standards to embrace:

- 'Best Value' criteria including the requirement to consult with local communities
- specific mandatory standards
- relevant local and national policies, strategies and advice
- robustness in terms of standing up to interrogation at a planning inquiry.

5.11 Standards should also reflect the importance attached to different kinds of open space by the community through the consultation exercise, and if they are adopted for use, the types of open space they cover should be reflected in the revised development plan in terms of the way in which open spaces are treated and designated on the proposals map.

### The Quantitative Component

5.12 Figures 4 and 5 set out existing levels of provision: by typology and parish (**Figure 4**) and as a total (**Figure 5**). These have formed the basis for developing a quantitative standard, by identifying deficiencies and gaps in provision.

5.13 The standards proposed are for minimum levels of provision, and they are being provided as much to guide planning developer contributions from new development in respect of important community facilities. Therefore, just because geographical areas may enjoy levels of provision exceeding minimum standards does not mean there is surplus provision, as all such provision may be well used.

### The Qualitative Component

5.14 A large number of sites have also been assessed on quality, according to the Methodology set out in Section 2. The qualitative standards are outlined within each section, but will require further development within SPD; we would emphasise their need to be further refined at the local level, through community consultation.

## The Accessibility Component

- 5.15 At the outset this report has emphasised that different kinds of open space and recreation facility serve varying needs, and that depending on the nature of the opportunity people may be willing to travel to a lesser or greater degree to take advantage. This principle must (and has) been reflected in the accessibility component of the standards suggested here. Being clear on these access catchments will provide greater clarity in terms of, for example, establishing whether new residential development can be served best through new or improved 'off site' open space and recreation provision rather than entirely new 'on site' provision. The catchments at present are drawn on the maps as circles around the relevant site; major physical barriers such as roads and railways have been taken into account when considering where accessibility is good or poor.
- 5.16 The standards will need to be supplemented by additional guidance to assist in the interpretation of their application, and to also indicate associated capital and maintenance costs (where appropriate).

## Structure of Sections 6 - 13

- 5.17 Sections 6 – 10 presents the following in respect of the typology being considered therein:

**Audit of Existing Provision:**

Discussion of existing provision – quantity, quality and distribution.

**Development of Standards:**

The explanation of the proposed standards for quantity, quality and accessibility and review of existing national and local plan standards covering similar themes with a discussion as to why these may/may not be appropriate to the New Forest Area.

**Application of Standards:**

A brief review, where appropriate, of main deficiencies when existing provision is measured against the suggested standards. Existing levels of provision and proposed standards of provision are also set out within the individual Parish Profiles.

- 5.18 Section 11 presents survey findings in respect of education land, not least because of the potential value of this resource in meeting identified deficiencies. Section 12 considers other matters arising from the audit (including reclassification of landscape features.)
- 5.19 Finally Section 13 summarises the suggested new standards and discusses ways forward for their implementation.

Figure 4: EXISTING LEVELS OF PROVISION BY TYPOLOGY AND PARISH

Sub Area	Parish	Parish pop 2001	Pop density (people per hectare)	ALLOTMENTS			SPACE - CHILDREN			SPACE - YOUNG PEOPLE			OUTDOOR SPORT			INFORMAL OPEN SPACE		
				No. of sites	Total area (m2)	Area (ha) per 1000	No. of sites	Total area (m2)	Area (Ha) per 1000	No. of sites	Total area (m2)	Area (ha) per 1000	No. of sites	Total area (m2)	Area (ha) per 1000	No. of sites	Total area (m2)	Area (ha) per 1000
AV	Bransgore	4331	2.33	0	0	0.00	1	444	0.01	1	513	0.01	2	66928	1.55	0	11584	0.27
AV	Ellingham, Harbridge & Ib.	1164	0.22	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	1	28073	2.41	0	0	0.00
AV	Ringwood	13589	4.63	3	28996	0.21	4	8438	0.06	1	808	0.01	5	54173	0.40	16	104633	0.77
AV	Sopley	774	0.51	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	3	9941	1.28
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19858</b>	<b>7.69</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>28996</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8882</b>	<b>0.04</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1320</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>149174</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>126157</b>	<b>0.64</b>
C	Hordle	5095	4.78	0	0	0.00	3	2061	0.04	0	0	0.00	3	78664	1.54	4	63114	1.24
C	Lymington and Pennington	14329	8.78	1	3841	0.03	7	4810	0.03	1	718	0.01	3	120514	0.84	16	561036	3.92
C	Milford-on-Sea	4703	3.87	0	0	0.00	1	3795	0.08	0	0	0.00	3	26734	0.57	12	417914	8.89
C	New Milton	23753	11.28	5	23431	0.10	3	1748	0.01	1	650	0.003	9	259085	1.09	45	567810	2.39
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47880</b>	<b>28.70</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>27272</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12414</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1368</b>	<b>0.003</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>484996</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>1609873</b>	<b>3.36</b>
FNW	Breamore	365	0.25	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	1	8948	2.45	0	0	0.00
FNW	Damerham	515	0.27	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	1	17492	3.40	0	0	0.00
FNW	Fordingbridge	5682	4.10	1	7988	0.14	3	7725	0.14	2	1626	0.03	2	29568	0.52	7	73478	1.29
FNW	Martin	398	0.19	0	0	0.00	1	6648	1.67	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
FNW	Rockbourne	322	0.21	0	0	0.00	1	534	0.17	0	0	0.00	1	23722	7.37	0	0	0.00
FNW	Sandleheath	665	3.52	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	1	18069	2.72
FNW	Whitsbury	183	0.25	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8130</b>	<b>8.79</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7988</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14906</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1626</b>	<b>0.02</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>79728</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>91546.5</b>	<b>1.13</b>
NFNP	Ashurst and Colbury	2012	7.15	1	7260	0.36	1	488	0.02	0	0	0.00	2	26600	1.32	1	10062	0.50
NFNP	Beaulieu	812	0.22	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	1	11877	1.46	2	7138	0.88
NFNP	Boldre	1931	0.74	0	0	0.00	1	436	0.02	0	0	0.00	2	27693	1.43	0	0	0.00
NFNP	Bramshaw	682	0.24	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	2	20513	3.01	0	0	0.00
NFNP	Brockenhurst	3288	0.67	1	n/a	0.00	1	489	0.01	0	0	0.00	3	23720	0.72	1	593	0.02
NFNP	Burley	1352	0.30	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	1	16304	1.21	0	0	0.00
NFNP	Copythorne	2661	1.15	0	0	0.00	1	100	0.004	0	0	0.00	4	60662	2.28	2	10047	0.38
NFNP	Denny Lodge	316	0.04	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00	0	0	0.00
NFNP	East Boldre	843	0.68	0	0	0.00	1	416	0.05	0	0	0.00	1	7369	0.87	2	17654	2.09

**Figure 5: TOTAL OF EXISTING LEVEL OF PROVISION BY SUB AREA**

Sub Area	Parish	Parish pop	Total area (m2)	Total Area (ha.)	Total Area (ha.) per 1000
AV	Bransgore	4331	79469	7.95	1.83
AV	Ellingham, H & I	1164	28073	2.81	2.41
AV	Ringwood	13589	197047	19.70	1.45
AV	Sopley	774	9941	0.99	1.28
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19858</b>	<b>314528</b>	<b>31.45</b>	<b>1.58</b>
C	Hordle	5095	143838	14.38	2.82
C	Lymington and Pennington	14329	690918	69.09	4.82
C	Milford-on-Sea	4703	448443	44.84	9.54
C	New Milton	23753	852723	85.27	3.59
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47880</b>	<b>2135922</b>	<b>213.59</b>	<b>4.46</b>
FNW	Breamore	365	8948	0.89	2.45
FNW	Damerham	515	17492	1.75	3.40
FNW	Fordingbridge	5682	120384	12.04	2.12
FNW	Martin	398	6648	0.66	1.67
FNW	Rockbourne	322	24255	2.43	7.53
FNW	Sandleheath	665	18069	1.81	2.72
FNW	Whitsbury	183	0	0.00	0.00
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8130</b>	<b>195794</b>	<b>19.58</b>	<b>2.41</b>
NFNP	Ashurst and Colbury CP	2012	44409	4.44	2.21
NFNP	Beaulieu	812	19015	1.90	2.34
NFNP	Boldre	1931	28129	2.81	1.46
NFNP	Bramshaw	682	20513	2.05	3.01
NFNP	Brockenhurst	3288	24802	2.48	0.75
NFNP	Burley	1352	16304	1.63	1.21
NFNP	Copythorne	2661	70809	7.08	2.66
NFNP	Denny Lodge	316	0	0.00	0.00
NFNP	East Boldre	843	25439	2.54	3.02
NFNP	Exbury and Lepe	157	40414	4.04	25.74
NFNP	Godshill	457	15735	1.57	3.44
NFNP	Hale	579	29607	2.96	5.11
NFNP	Hyde	903	21295	2.13	2.36
NFNP	Landford (S)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
NFNP	Lyndhurst	2985	116044	11.60	3.89
NFNP	Melchett Park & Plaitford (TV)	n/a	0	0.00	0.00
NFNP	Minstead	638	10383	1.04	1.63
NFNP	Netley Marsh	2014	33629	3.36	1.67
NFNP	Redlynch (S)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
NFNP	Sway	3314	64978	6.50	1.96
NFNP	Wellow (TV)	n/a	0	0.00	0.00
NFNP	Whiteparish (S)	n/a	0	0.00	0.00
NFNP	Woodgreen	538	9790	0.98	1.82
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25482</b>	<b>591291</b>	<b>59.13</b>	<b>2.32</b>
T&W	Fawley	14334	700511	70.05	4.89
T&W	Hythe and Dibden	19935	698134	71.26	3.57
T&W	Marchwood	5586	147134	14.71	2.63
T&W	Totton and Eling	28000	825368	82.54	2.95
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67855</b>	<b>2371146</b>	<b>238.56</b>	<b>3.52</b>
	<b>NEW FOREST AREA</b>	<b>169205</b>	<b>5608681</b>	<b>562.31</b>	<b>3.31</b>

## **6 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS OF PROVISION: INFORMAL OPEN SPACE**

### **6.1 INFORMAL OPEN SPACE - EXISTING PROVISION**

#### **Definition within the study of 'Informal Open Space'**

- 6.1. The landscape characteristics and patterns of management and use of open space in the New Forest Area means there is much overlap between the categories set out in the embryonic classification within PPG17, particularly between 'amenity open space' and 'natural greenspace', for example wooded or copse-like areas which perform an informal recreation function but are substantially of natural appearance. There are many sites which fall into this category in the east of the district, particularly within Hythe, where remnants of the old woodland habitat survive in pockets of open space. Several sites are designated as European Conservation sites with legal protection and suitable protection within the planning system (SAC, SPA, RAMSAR) and are also subject to local designations (SSSIs and SINCs) which tend to imply special natural characteristics.
- 6.2 The consultation suggests that many local people do not make much differentiation between what could be termed 'amenity open space', and other types of space that might be viewed as important for recreation, play, or visual attraction (which might include parks, natural spaces and other open spaces).
- 6.3 Thus, the category of informal open space used in this New Forest Area Study includes the following:

#### ***'Amenity open space'***

- Spaces open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out and or managed for a specific function such as a public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat (often known as 'amenity open space'.) Examples might include both small and larger informal grassed areas in housing estates, village greens, and general recreation spaces, which serve a variety of functions dependent on their size, shape, location and topography, but will be used for some type of informal recreation activities.
- These areas of open space will be of varied size, but are likely to share the following characteristics:
  - Unlikely to be physically demarcated by walls or fences.
  - Predominantly laid out to mown grass.
  - Unlikely to have identifiable entrance points (unlike parks).
  - Unlikely to have planted flower beds or other formal planted layouts, although they may have shrub and tree planting.

- Generally no other recreational facilities and fixtures (such as play equipment or ball courts), although there may be items such as litter bins and benches.

### ***Natural greenspace***

- Areas of natural greenspace such as country parks, nature reserves, meadows, river plain, lakes/water features, woodland and copses, all of which share a trait of being open to public use and enjoyment. Research elsewhere and the local consultation for this study have identified the value attached to such space for recreation and emotional well-being. A sense of 'closeness to nature' with its attendant benefits for people is something that is all too easily lost in urban areas. Natural spaces should be viewed as important a component of community infrastructure in planning for new development as other forms of open space or 'built' recreation facilities.

### ***Parks and gardens***

- The role of public parks and gardens in terms of enhancing general quality of life and the urban realm has been 'rediscovered' at national level through government supported campaigns and the work of organisations like CABESpace. Public parks and gardens can embrace a wide range of functions, including: informal recreation; play space of many kinds (including for sport and children's play); providing attractive walks to work; offering landscape and amenity features and providing areas for 'events'.
- Parks and gardens are more than simply recreational space - they are a composition of features the combined value of which might be seen as greater than that of the constituent parts. Recreation grounds, often the equivalent type of provision in rural areas, usually contain children's play areas, formal pitch provision and some type of informal open space. The consultation has identified what an important role these can play - they are recognised as playing an important 'strategic' role in serving recreational needs and enhancing the public realm for both residents and visitors.

## **General Levels of Provision and Distribution and Quality**

- 6.4 Overall, there are around 360ha of informal open space across the New Forest Area as a whole, equivalent to around 2.12 ha/000. However, the level varies significantly between parishes and sub areas.
- 6.5 In the Avon Valley, it is 0.64ha/000 across the four parishes (Bransgore, Ellingham, Ringwood and Sopley), with Ringwood - at just 0.77ha/000 - notably low. In the Coastal Sub Area (Hordle, Lymington, Milford-on-Sea and New Milton) it is higher at 3.36ha; much of this is due to the inclusion of large, natural areas such as Pennington Common, Barton Cliff Top and Barton Common, Studland Common, Hordle Cliffs, the Pleasure Grounds and Sturt Pond in Milford on Sea.

- 6.6 Within the Totton and Waterside Sub Area, the level is 2.51ha/000, due again to some large natural areas and the considerable amounts of woodland swathes in Hythe and Dibden. Care has to be taken in analysing this figure, as even though Fawley has a relatively high level overall (2.99ha/000) due to the inclusion of Holbury Manor, Newlands Park and Tom Tiddlers Ground there are built up areas of the parish (Holbury for example) which have hardly any incidental amenity open space.
- 6.7 As might be expected, the Fordingbridge and North West Parishes and the New Forest National Park Sub Areas have low levels of provision of informal open space. These are essentially rural areas, where density of housing is lower and perceived or actual access to nearby countryside has traditionally resulted in lower provision within the settlements. The following parishes have no informal open space recorded on the database (although within some, the traditional recreation ground (classified as 'outdoor sports facility) usually performs this function): Woodgreen, Whitsbury, Rockbourne, Netley Marsh, Martin, Hyde, Hale, Godshill, Exbury and Lepe, Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley, Denny Lodge, Damerham, Burley, Breamore, Bramshaw, Boldre
- 6.8 The quality of informal open space throughout the New Forest Area also varies greatly, as might be expected. The parish profiles offer a better guide to this.

## **6.2 INFORMAL OPEN SPACE – STANDARDS OF PROVISION**

### **General justification for a local standard**

- 6.9 There is no national guidance suggesting a standard expressly for the provision of informal green space. The NPFA's Six Acre Standard has proposed that there should be provision of casual or informal playing space within housing areas as part of the overall standard. The fact that it is difficult sometimes to discern between different forms of open space is understandable given the multifunctional nature of much space. However, the value of informal green space must be recognised especially within housing areas, where it can provide important local opportunities for play, exercise and visual amenity that are almost immediately accessible.
- 6.10 In the absence of an existing local standard it would be appropriate to consider the English Nature ANGSt guidance as a starting point for the development of a local standard. English Nature has proposed a national guidance on and Accessible Green Space Standard (ANGSt) which suggests that provision should be made of at least 2 ha of accessible greenspace per 1000 population according to a system of tiers into which sites of different sizes fit:
- No person should live more than 300 m from their area of natural green space;
  - There should be at one accessible 20 ha site within 2 km from home;

- There should be one accessible 100 ha site within 5 km; and,
- There should be one accessible 500 ha site within 10 km.

6.11 This can only be a guide within the New Forest Area, as the presence of the Forest itself would constitute the larger size sites (certainly 100ha plus). It would also serve the function of the 20ha tier for much of the district; the only other areas meeting this criteria at the moment are Pennington Common and Studland Common.

**Quantitative standard**

6.12 Recognising the importance of multi-functional space and the need to promote this within the New Forest Area, the development of a hierarchy of provision for informal open space is recommended – embracing the whole range as discussed above (similar to that suggested by the ANGSt guidance). A suggested hierarchy is set out in Figure 6 below.

<b>Figure 6: SUGGESTED HIERARCHY OF INFORMAL OPEN SPACE – NEW FOREST AREA</b>		
<b>Country Parks – Drivetime catchment around 15 minutes</b>		Lepe + 1 Other
<b>Natural informal open space sites (district wide) – Drivetime catchment around 15 minutes</b>		Pennington Common, Studland Common, Barton Common, Testwood Lakes, Totton
<b>Natural informal open space sites (local) – Walk/drivetime catchment up to 15 minutes</b>		Holbury Manor Fawley, Hoares Site-Poulner Lake Ringwood & Furzey Holt, Bickerley Common
<b>District Parks – Walk/drivetime catchment up to 10 minutes</b>	Larger than, say 5 hectares, based around informal open space and natural greenspace with mixed uses, including pitches and other outdoor sports, formal areas serving a fairly large catchment area. Often based around water areas.	e.g. Woodside Gardens, Lymington Gang Warily, Fawley, Bartley Park, Totton Forest Front, Hythe
<b>Town Parks/Village Recreation Grounds – Up to 10 minutes’ walking time</b>	For new provision: (in towns) min.1.5 hectares: Formal parks and gardens with planting, seating and often other features such as bandstands and ponds; they may also include children’s play areas, informal open space areas and formal sports pitches and other	Jubilee Gardens, Ringwood Carvers, Ringwood Grove Gardens, Lymington Bath Road Recreation Ground, Lymington War Memorial Recreation Ground, New Milton Fordingbridge Recreation Ground Prospect Place, Hythe

	<p>outdoor sports areas. They generally serve the whole town rather than just the immediate area and should be linked through footpaths and cycleways. Also embraces village recreation grounds, with adjusted min. size to reflect multifunctional nature/</p>	<p>Marchwood Village Park Test Vale Park, Totton</p>
<p><b>Community Parks – Up to 10 minutes’ walking time</b></p>	<p>These could be a minimum of 0.25 hectares and designed and maintained primarily to meet the needs of the local community/neighbourhood. Facilities may include a combination of children's playgrounds, picnic facilities, natural/landscaped areas and multi use open fields, accessed by footpaths and cycleways.</p>	<p>Testbourne Farm, Totton; Dr Little Gardens Ringwood, Lymington Meadows, Whartons Recreation Ground (Ashurst &amp; Colbury)</p>
<p><b>Mini Parks/Other Amenity Open Space areas – up to 5 minutes’ walking time</b></p>	<p>Normally these serve the immediate population with an emphasis on informal recreation for all ages and active play for all children. They would have seating, bins and access paths and may also have equipped play areas, kickabout areas, mini pitches.</p>	
<p><b>Routeways and Green Corridors</b></p>	<p>To link areas of open space and other recreational and play facilities</p>	

6.13 This is a large category of open space, covering many different types of landscape and opportunities for provision, including informal play space for children and there is clearly some interchangeability of function. In order to maintain and develop the above hierarchy and meet identified deficiencies, there is a need for more informal open space in the New Forest Area, in particular:

**Country Park**

Country Park: there is only one country park in the New Forest Area at the moment - Lepe Country Park (**Map 3** shows location and drivetime catchment). The Study findings lead us to suggest that there is a rationale for seeking more country parks in the area in terms of helping to relieve

pressures on the Forest arising from existing population and anticipated increases in nearby sub-regional populations, preferably through joint working arrangements with the neighbouring Hampshire and Dorset authorities (already being explored within the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire). Such parks would need to offer something different to the National Park as a viable alternative to trips to the New Forest. Areas of search for a suitable site include, for example, the whole of Dibden Bay, Tavells Lane, and the area north of Marchwood the north and east of the New Forest area and sites bordering Christchurch/East Dorset in the south west.

***Diversity of provision in support of Informal Open Space Hierarchy***

In order to ensure that there is a range of different sizes and types of informal open space within the New Forest Area – including natural informal open space sites, district and town parks and smaller areas of informal open space as above – and that all residents have an area of accessible open space within 5 minutes' walk of their homes, it is concluded that there should be more:

- Areas of informal, amenity open space of at least 0.25ha in size within the urban areas of the main towns, especially, Ringwood, Hordle, Lymington, Milford-on-Sea, New Milton, Fawley and Totton and Eling and some villages.
- Areas of informal open space to contribute towards additional or improved spaces in parks and recreation grounds, alongside pitches and other more formal provision.

*Calculation of quantitative standards*

**6.14** To calculate additional land area required, the following figures are proposed:

- An estimate of 20ha for a Country Park (the only Country Park in the New Forest at present - Lepe Country Park – is less than 8ha and other similar popular destinations e.g. Testwood Lakes – are around 6.14ha; however, the size threshold suggested by English Nature is adopted.)
- As an approximate, but reasonable, estimate of another 50 informal open space areas of 0.25ha and 10 areas of 0.5ha required in the main towns, especially Ringwood, Hordle, Lymington, Milford-on-Sea, New Milton, Fawley and Totton and Eling and the several villages which have no such areas in size (e.g. Bransgore, Brockenhurst, Burley, Lyndhurst): = 17.5ha

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Added to the existing level of provision (359ha)} = 396.5\text{ha} \\ &\text{Divided by population (169,331)} = 2.34\text{ha}/000 = 2.30\text{ha}/000 \\ &= 395.59\text{ha} = 2.25\text{ha}/000 = (\text{rounded to}) 2.3\text{ha}/000. \end{aligned}$$

**6.15** Thus a minimum level of provision of **2.3 ha per 1000** people is suggested both as a basis for a contribution from new housing, but also as a minimum target for provision across the New Forest Area. However, it is accepted that the more rural parishes within the New Forest National Park itself and

the north west of the New Forest District will struggle to obtain this, in which case **1 ha/000 may be more realistic and capable of delivery.**

#### Qualitative Standard

- 6.16 The surveys highlighted that the most important issues for users of open space are safety and security, and cleanliness and freedom from litter and graffiti. All members of the community should be able to get to them, and move around them easily, the control of anti-social behaviour and dogs, and equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained.
- 6.17 It is thus proposed that the factors to bear in mind when establishing qualitative criteria for informal open space provision are:
- The nature of the space should, as far as possible, be determined to reflect local circumstances. The space provided should be of an appropriate shape and character to allow for meaningful recreational use, and its possible integration with other types of open space opportunity.
  - Provision might be expected to include grassed areas, tree and shrub planting, paths, litter bins and benches.
  - Informal green space can provide an extremely valuable play resource to complement equipped provision. Attention in design of new spaces to planting, topography and safety/security will maximise its potential in this regard.
  - Informal open space provision might also be expected to include (as appropriate) elements of woodland, wetland, meadow. The larger the area the more valuable sites will tend to be in terms of their potential for enhancing local conservation interest and biodiversity.
  - Provision should also be made for informal public access through recreation corridors.
  - For larger areas, where car borne visits might be anticipated, some parking provision will be required.
- 6.18 In summary, the aim should be to create areas of accessible informal open space of at least 0.25 ha and preferably 0.5ha that are well distributed throughout the urban area. There should be parallel commitments to maintain natural green space through appropriate maintenance techniques reflecting the primary purpose of promoting natural habitats and biodiversity that can also be accessed and enjoyed by local people.

#### Accessibility Standard

- 6.19 It is important when planning for all types of recreation opportunity to take into account people's preparedness to travel. Respondents – encouragingly – still tend to walk to those facilities closest to them. Use of the car (which most have access to) is more common for visiting indoor or specialist facilities and for travelling to sites in the New Forest. Use of public transport is very low at

present, perhaps reflecting the rural nature of much of the district and the type of services offered.

- 6.20 In the local consultation studies, the majority of people indicated that they are prepared to walk for up to 10 minutes to access informal open space; however, patterns of behaviour and the current distribution of local open space leads to the proposal that, as a general principle, people should have access to small local areas of open space within 5 minutes' walking time (a distance of around 250 metres), particularly since such spaces should be within easy reach of home for those who are less mobile and for children for informal play and recreation opportunities. 10 minutes' walking time is felt to be appropriate to larger, more diverse areas so that local people can gain convenient access by foot to some form of multifunctional open space.
- 6.21 The survey work has also suggested that many people are prepared to travel further to use certain major parks, large areas of natural informal open space and country parks. It would thus be reasonable to also adopt a larger (drivetime) catchment for the major provision of this kind - of perhaps around 15 minutes. This would be consistent with local people's preparedness to travel to parks as expressed through the community survey. It is possible that vehicular trips may be shared purpose journeys, perhaps combining a visit to the park with shopping and/or other commitments.
- 6.22 Thus the recommended basic minimum quantitative standard is 2.3ha per 1000 people. Quality standard to be established based on guidelines in Sections 6.16 to 6.18 above. Accessibility standard based around hierarchy of provision related to size of sites and range of facilities available. The catchment area maps show an accessibility standard of 240 metres straight line distance (about 5 minutes' walk) to sites of around or above 0.25ha in size and 480 metres straight line distance (about 10 minutes' walk) to larger sites (0.5 ha and above). Minimum size: even very small sites can be of value, but new provision should aim for around 0.25 hectares. New provision should support the hierarchy of provision as set out in Figure 6.

## **INFORMAL OPEN SPACE – APPLICATION OF STANDARDS**

- 6.23 With a standard of 2.3ha/000 to aim for within the more urban parts of the New Forest Area, Ringwood, Hordle, Fordingbridge are relatively underprovided for: However, it is the case that, even within those towns where provision overall is quite good, parts are still deficient, notably Hythe, Fawley, central Ringwood, north east Lymington and Totton and Eling (Parish Profiles provide more detail). Moreover, even with a reduced standard for rural areas of 1 ha/000 to aim for, Ashurst and Colbury and Lyndhurst, for example, are relatively poorly served.
- 6.24 The above paragraphs set out some general issues with regard to quality. Within the Study, the database sets out comments on where improvements might be of value in enhancing particular sites: those considered of higher

priority are set out in **Appendix 10**: Sites with possible potential for improvement.

- 6.25 For informal open space within settlements applying the 240 metres (5 minute walktime) shows that most settlements have some parts which are not covered (e.g. central Ringwood, north east Lymington etc – see Parish Profiles). People should have easy accessibility to at least small areas of open space which can perform a recreational function.

### **The importance of the qualitative component**

- 6.26 The qualitative component is a very important part of the standard for informal open space. Of course, much of the quality of open space is subjective in nature. Arriving at acceptable qualitative standards should be done on a local basis, perhaps by linking community aspirations to questions of quality possibly through the use of parish plans.
- 6.27 There are probably very few true ‘parks’ in the District (Woodside Gardens may be one example, Test Vale Park in Totton another). But there are other sites both within urban areas and in the villages considered to fulfil such a function by local people, including Gang Warily in Fawley, Fordingbridge Recreation Ground, Prospect Place, Hythe; Bath Road Recreation Ground and Grove Gardens, Lymington; War Memorial Recreation Ground, New Milton; Dr Little Gardens, Carvers Recreation Ground and Jubilee Gardens, Ringwood; Hangar Farm and Bartley Park, Totton and the Village Centre park in Marchwood. Most of these are in the Totton and Waterside and Coastal parts of the district; parks and gardens have historically always been considered largely an urban form of open space.
- 6.28 It is important in new provision that sufficient informal open space is provided within the multi-functional setting of a park to ensure that these diverse areas continue to be developed, as they perform what is to many people the purpose of open space – that it should be as inclusive and meet as many needs as possible. In rural settlements the contribution may be put towards the provision of recreation ground space instead, as in the villages these spaces have an overlapping function to those of parks in the urban area.

### **Improving Accessibility**

- 6.29 For areas which lie outside easy access by foot to what has been defined as informal open space in this study, any future green space strategies – perhaps developed individually by parish councils or collectively across the New Forest Area - could consider the potential for pursuing a change of management regime on other sites and other measures, such as:
- appropriate access and good links to existing sites, via cycleways, green corridors, rights of way and public transport.

- linking existing sites with other green spaces and outdoor facilities through a similar network of green and sustainable routeways and transport.
- Enhancing existing sites through developing detailed Management Plans
- changing the management of marginal space on playing fields and parks to enhance biodiversity
- encouraging living green roofs as part of new development/redevelopment
- encouraging the creation of mixed species hedgerows

6.30 The value of informal open space – particularly parks and recreation grounds - clearly depends on how easy it is to get to them. This is especially important in the New Forest Area where there are many other alternatives for informal recreation on the Forest itself. There is little point considering the provision of new or improvement of existing parks and spaces without parallel consideration of the means of access to them, and especially by foot and bike. New standards for informal open space should therefore also include guidance on the improvement of approach routes by foot and bike for which developer contributions should be sought. The Authorities will need to determine:

- the linear distance threshold upon which such contributions should be based;
- the travel times involved and,
- the nature of improvements sought to facilitate and improve upon ease and safety of access which might include clearly defined cycle lanes, safe crossing points etc.

6.31 The category of informal open space also includes land used as routeways and green corridors. Recreation walking and cycling are continually identified by national surveys as major recreation activities in their own right, but are also endemic to everyday 'healthy living' (such as walking or cycling to work, the shops, or school). As activities they should be encouraged as a means of making both recreation and utility trips. Green recreational corridors and routes are defined here as routes used primarily for recreational walking, cycling or horse riding within and between towns and villages. Generally speaking they include:

- The local public Rights of Way network
- Promoted long distance footpaths and cycleways
- Permissive routes

It is also recognised that some of these routes (especially in the urban area) will also serve as utility routes.

6.32 The New Forest Area arguably provides some of the most extensive countryside access to be found in the south of England. Within the New Forest Countryside Access Plan area there are 593km of rights of way, including 450 km of footpaths, 118km of bridleways, 23km of byways and

2km of roads used as public paths; roughly 40% of these routes lie within the National park boundary.

- 6.33 The network is particularly dense towards the west and up into Cranborne Chase, but in the Waterside and on the south coast there are significant gaps in provision. 85% of these paths are considered easy to use by the public (Best Value Performance Indicator). There are also two Hampshire County Council promoted long distance routes within the area, the 34 miles Avon Valley Path from Christchurch to Salisbury and the 60 mile Solent Way from Milford-on-Sea to Emsworth Harbour; the Test Way is a 56 mile walking route from Inkpen Beacon near Newbury, to the Solent coast near Southampton, following the valley of the River Test.
- 6.34 Many linear routeways, which join up to form linkages between open space sites, are recorded as discrete areas of informal open space in the database. There are of course numerous other local recreation routes and paths that have not been plotted on the maps.
- 6.35 It is difficult or impossible to frame qualitative guidance for routeways and green corridors given the nature of this form of recreation opportunity. However, it is possible to identify potential improvements that could be borne in mind for implementation when the opportunity arises (such as when new development occurs or highway improvements are planned and implemented.) The consultation has identified the value attached to the local cycle and walking network (especially in the Totton and Waterside area) by people both for recreation and commuting. The site audits too have identified a number of areas of informal open space which could be linked and, through better signage and information, contribute to an enhanced rights of way network; detail is given in the database.

## 7 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS OF PROVISION: OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

### OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES: EXISTING PROVISION

#### General Levels of Provision, Distribution and Quality

- 7.1 At present, the New Forest Area Database records around 90 sites as 'outdoor sports facilities' embracing the following range of facilities:
- grass playing pitches (football, cricket, rugby, hockey)
  - synthetic turf pitches
  - tennis courts and bowling greens
  - athletics tracks
  - multi use games areas
  - golf courses (these are not included for the purposes of calculating standards).
- 7.2 Wherever possible, the database lists all the facilities available, and where the site area of land involved is significant, the facilities have been separately mapped. **Appendix 3** lists the location of outdoor sports facilities (excluding grass playing pitches and facilities on school sites).
- 7.3 Outdoor sports facilities in the New Forest Area are subject to a variety of ownership and management regimes including the District and town and parish councils, clubs, private companies and schools/local education authorities where there appears to be some degree of community use. Para 2.18 in Section 2 (Methodology) sets out the scope of the facilities included. In particular, schools make a huge contribution to supply of pitches and courts, although it may be unclear how much of the stock is actively used for non-curricular matches on a regular basis, and how 'secure' the long term community access arrangements at many schools: this is considered further in Section 11.
- 7.4 Overall, the existing level of provision of outdoor sports facilities across the New Forest area is 1.01 ha/000. This figure has been calculated by totalling the hectarages of land in outdoor sports use, as mapped (which often include a larger area than the actual pitch/court dimension). The new standards have been developed by totalling the recommended site dimensions for existing and recommended facilities; this is more accurate figure.
- 7.5 **Figure 7: 'Outdoor Sports Facilities by Parish Size'** (at end of Section 7) summarises provision on a parish basis of outdoor sports facilities - pitches, multi use games areas, tennis and bowling greens in particular. It is interesting to view how the provision varies according to parish populations (with the caveat that density of population and size of the parish is also of relevance – Copythorne, for example, has a very dispersed settlement pattern). Of particular note:

- Many settlements are served by a traditional recreation ground, encompassing several sports – frequently football, cricket and tennis. These will result in a high level of provision per thousand, given the site area involved. For example, the small parish of Rockbourne (3.22) has a level of provision of 7.4 ha/000, Hale (579) – 5.1 ha/000 and Damerham (515), 3.4 ha/000.
  - The quantity of cricket pitches – this is not related to size of settlement at all – probably as much to do with historical accident as to any plan for provision of such facilities. The smallest parish – Exbury and Lepe (167) has a cricket pitch by virtue of the presence there of Exbury Club, but Rockbourne, Breamore, Martin, Godshill and Damerham (all parishes with around 500 inhabitants or less) also all have cricket grounds. In fact out of 42 parishes in the New Forest Area only 11 do not have a cricket ground within the area covered by this Study ( Marchwood (the largest without a pitch – 5586 inhabitants), East Boldre, Sopley, Sandleheath, Woodgreen, Denny Lodge, Whitsbury, Wellow, Landford, Melchett Park and Plaitford and Whiteparish.
  - It is slightly larger parishes which have football pitches. Out of 15 parishes with around or less than 800 inhabitants, only 3 have football pitches (compared to 10 which have cricket pitches): Rockbourne (pop. 322), Breamore (pop: 365) and Damerham (pop: 515). All of these are on shared sites (football and cricket).
  - The least populous parish which has tennis courts is Sandleheath, based around the private tennis club here and catering for demand from Fordingbridge. Two other parishes with less than 3000 population with tennis courts have been recorded: East Boldre and Boldre.
  - It is only when populations of around 3000 are reached (Lyndhurst) that a full range of facilities are provided: football and cricket pitches, tennis courts and a bowling green. Even then provision is not consistent; Bransgore for example, having over 4300 population and a range of football and cricket facilities does not have any tennis courts or a bowling green.
  - Even more marked is the distribution of multi use games areas: 8 have been recorded, the smallest parish possessing one being Hordle (5095).
- 7.6 There are some interesting anomalies: New Milton – the second largest parish but just one (newly provided) multi use games area; Lymington, Ringwood and Fordingbridge do not have a multi use games area; Fordingbridge has no tennis courts; neither Hythe or Marchwood has a bowling green (although there 2 in Fawley).
- 7.7 Of course, as pointed out, historical factors, availability of land, the proximity of similar facilities and human endeavour will all have played a part in the distribution of facilities, but some patterns do emerge. Nevertheless, some standard should be agreed. This should also take account of a hierarchy of

provision: some sports will be catered for at a basic level in the smaller parishes, developing into more substantial facilities at larger settlements.

- 7.8 This Section reviews the facilities in turn, looking at existing provision and recommended standards, as follows: Synthetic Surfaces (Tennis courts, Managed All Weather Sports Areas and Synthetic Turf Pitches); Playing Pitches; Other Sports (bowls, athletics)

**SYNTHETIC SURFACES: Tennis courts, MASAs and STPs**

**TENNIS COURTS**

**Figure 8 Location of Tennis Courts and Multi use Games Areas**

Parish	Ground Name and Location	MUGA floodlit	Tennis - grass	Public		Club	
				Tennis - Artificial	Tennis - Artificial & floodlit	Tennis - Artificial	Tennis - Artificial & floodlit
East Boldre	East Boldre School Fields Trust			2			
Fawley	Gang Warily	1					
Fawley	Waterside Sports & Social Club					6	
Hordle	Hordle Recreation Ground	1					
Hythe & Dibden	Clayfields	1					
Hythe & Dibden	Noads Way Recreation Ground			2			
Lymington & Pennington	Lymington Sports Ground (Lymington Tennis Club)					3	1
Lymington & Pennington	Woodside Park					2	
Lyndhurst	Lyndhurst Tennis and Bowling Club						3
Marchwood	Lloyd Recreation Ground	1					
Milford-on-Sea	Milford Squash & Tennis Club					4	3
New Milton	Hale Gardens Lawn Tennis Club					1	5
New Milton	New Milton Recreation Ground			4			
Ringwood	Carvers Recreation Ground (Ringwood Tennis Club)		2		3		
Sandleheath	Sandleheath Tennis Club						2
Sway	Jubilee Field (Sway Tennis Club)				3		
Totton & Eling	Calmore Community Centre	2					
Totton & Eling	Claymeadow Recreation Ground	1					
Totton & Eling	Eling Recreation Ground			1			
Totton & Eling	Hangar Farm				8		
Totton & Eling	BAT Sportsground					2	
Totton & Eling	Testwood Recreation Ground			1			
Totton & Eling	Calmore Community Centre						
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>10</b>

### **Provision of Outdoor Tennis Courts**

- 7.9 The Database records 58 outdoor tennis courts, with a total of 56 hard surface and 2 grass courts. There are a variety of ownerships between private commercial facilities (e.g. David Lloyd in Ringwood – 6 outdoor courts, also 3 indoor), public recreation ground courts and clubs (e.g. Lyndhurst Tennis and Bowls Clubs). Sway Tennis Club, Hale Gardens LTC (New Milton), Lymington LTC, Lyndhurst Tennis Club, Milford Squash and Tennis Club, Ringwood Tennis Club, Sandleheath LTC and Waterside Tennis Club are affiliated to Hampshire LTA:
- 7.10 32 courts are used by clubs on a restricted basis and there are 26 public courts scattered on recreation grounds throughout the Area. Given the size of the New Forest Area and its population size, this appears a low level of provision.

<b>Surface/Ownership of courts</b>	<b>Public</b>	<b>Club (Private)</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Grass</b>	2		2
<b>Hard/artificial</b>	10	18	28
<b>Hard/artificial with floodlights</b>	14	14	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	26	32	58

### **Floodlit Courts**

- 7.11 The LTA proposes the following standard for the provision of floodlit courts:

Floodlit courts =  $\frac{\text{population within 30 minutes (preferably 15-20 minutes)}}{x 2\%/60}$

Therefore:  $169,331 \times 2\% = 3386$ ; divided by 60 = 56 floodlit courts.

In the New Forest Area there are around 28 floodlit courts in total, thus the existing level of provision of floodlit courts is 50% of the ideal suggested by the LTA.

- 7.12 The 8 court, floodlit, all weather tennis complex at Hangar Farm, Totton is an exceptional facility for both the town and district. A Totton & Eling Town Council –led initiative, this has 8 floodlit courts, all leased to club professionals, with 260 members. It is very well placed in the centre of the community and has increased participation; the courts are very well used.

### **Recommendations for tennis provision**

- 7.13 There is a hierarchy of tennis court provision, and the following recommendations are made:

#### *Strategic facilities*

The success of the Hangar Farm complex supports consideration for similar facilities elsewhere in the New Forest Area. It is recommended that there should be 3 principal sites – each with a minimum of 8 floodlit courts, with two

courts at each of the 3 sites capable of being covered seasonally (air structures) at :

- Hangar Farm, Totton (existing)
- Lymington (possibly as part of desired redevelopment/relocation of Lymington LTC).
- Ringwood (possibly on site of existing courts at Carvers Recreation Ground)

#### *Community Facilities*

Below this level there is a need for tennis courts to meet casual demand from the community and for the establishment of clubs. It is recommended that this basic community level of provision of tennis facilities is to be provided via existing clubs and schools:

- There are a considerable number of courts in schools and it would be very welcome if these could be developed more for community use. Noadswood School in particular wants to improve tennis courts for public courts
- To try to secure greater community use of courts currently with restricted access e.g. Milford Squash and Tennis Clubs courts; Hale LTC in New Milton and Lyndhurst Tennis and Bowls Clubs courts
- There are certain sites where better use for tennis could be made e.g. Clayfields, Hythe.

#### *Floodlit courts*

All courts within the Area would have to be floodlit to meet the LTA's standard for floodlit courts. In particular to work towards installing floodlighting, starting at sites where currently two or more courts which are not floodlit e.g. New Milton War Memorial Recreation Ground

### **MANAGED ALL WEATHER SPORTS AREAS (MASAs)**

- 7.14 Floodlit managed all-weather sports areas have an important role to perform for formal sport (particularly training), and when planned as part of an overall strategy can fulfil an invaluable developmental function. They do however require positive management and promotion, and ongoing maintenance to deter and prevent vandalism, and should be placed in locations where there is a management presence and, in effect, a booked programme of activities. . The role of the local sports development officer can often be crucial in ensuring their proper use. They can then be suitable for a range of sports including tennis, basketball, netball and five-a-side football.
- 7.15 MASAs offer a floodlit hard surface area, and can accommodate five-a-side football, netball, basketball, tennis and training in rugby, hockey and football. Soccer areas can vary in size to cater for junior and adult teams of from 4 a-side up to 11 a-side. The preferred size for such facilities within the New Forest Area is 60m x 40m floodlit.
- 7.16 It is an objective of the Football Association's National Facilities Strategy to develop a network of floodlit, intensive, all weather sports areas, particularly

for children and where there is limited access to adequate grass playing fields). The English Hockey Association (EHA) will support the development of MASAs as a support facility where they meet certain requirements including minimum dimensions for 6-a-side hockey and floodlights.

- 7.17 There are currently 8 floodlit and 1 non-floodlit all weather sports areas within the New Forest Area, 2 of which are dedicated to 5-1-side (at Gang Warily). Not all of these are currently managed actively as sports facilities.

### ***Recommendations for Managed All Weather Sports Areas***

- 7.18 There is a need for additional managed all weather sports areas in the New Forest Area, located so as to be able to develop sports development outreach work from the existing (and once provided, new) STPs. These should ideally be of size 60m x 40m synthetic turf, and to be located in:

- New Milton - linked to existing STP at Lymington (or new 3G STP if it transpires – see below)
- Hythe & Dibden – linked to existing 3G STP at Totton Sports College
- Ringwood - linked to existing STP at BurgateSchool/Fordingbridge
- At Fordingbridge, the need for all weather sports areas to be achieved through greater access to STP at Burgate School, Fordingbridge

Netball should be based on use of macadam MASAs to fit with the siting of current netball provision – i.e. the aim is to maintain what is there currently as the level of provision.

## **SYNTHETIC TURF PITCHES**

- 7.19 There are three STPs in the district, at Burgate School, Priestlands School (joint provision – Lymington Health and Leisure) and Testwood Sports College (3G provision). Testwood Sports College is very busy with football (usually at least 3 teams a night and on Saturday mornings); there is understood to be some spare capacity at The Burgate School (although football accommodated most nights and Fordingbridge Hockey Club on Saturday mornings) and certain available slots at Lymington Health and Leisure.

- 7.20 Fordingbridge Hockey Club is based at The Burgate School and New Milton Hockey Club ((2 Men's, 2 Ladies, 4 juniors/minis) at Lymington Health and Leisure. The latter club is fast growing and very happy with the pitch but would welcome dug outs and a storage shed which it feels is a basic necessity for a club of its status. Waterside Women's Hockey Club used to play on grass in Waterside Sports Club but now plays at Southampton Sports Centre. There are other large clubs at Bournemouth, Salisbury and Southampton.

### ***Recommendations for Synthetic Turf Pitches***

- 7.21 The current ratio of provision is about 1-full size synthetic pitch for every 56,000 people which is a low level of provision. Research conducted by Sport England suggests that users of these surfaces tend to be prepared to travel up to 15/20 minutes (by car) to use these facilities on a regular basis (see **Map 4: Synthetic Turf Pitch Drivetime**) However, these times were established when STPs were predominantly for hockey; now the situation is changing with the introduction of Third Generation (3G) pitches.
- 7.22 It is recommended that the New Forest Area would benefit from the provision of at least one more STP in the coastal sub area to serve the high level of football activity, centring on New Milton especially. We therefore recommend the provision of another 3G pitch in this part of the district.
- 7.23 This would give a standard of 4 floodlit STPs for the population, equivalent to around 1 pitch per 42250 population, still not an overgenerous standard.

## **SUMMARY OF PLAYING PITCH ASSESSMENT**

- 7.24 Background material to the Playing Pitch Assessment is contained within **Appendix A**. This section highlights key points to emerge.

### **Football**

#### *Demand*

- Junior football is the largest participation sport in the SE region and is very buoyant in the New Forest Area; girls' football is also growing (there is a good local girls league). This is having a large impact on pitch provision and raises issues for changing facilities, as separate accommodation is required for ladies/girls: boys/men. Fawcetts Field, New Milton and Clayfields, Hythe and Dibden are centres for the Girls' Football 'Return to Sport' programme
- There are a number of very active junior football clubs, notably Hythe Strikers and New Forest Rangers (which are accredited); also Fawley Falcons, New Milton Eagles, Everton Youth, Hordle Spurs Youth. Very high levels of youth activity in New Milton, Fawley and Hythe & Dibden. All youth football clubs are using at least two sites, if not more, to accommodate their fixtures (schools are a key part of the stock).
- All of the youth football clubs want to run more teams, paying particular attention to girls' teams. The main restricting factors are pitch shortages and not enough members and personnel to run the teams
- There is a growing level of Sunday football in the Waterside area through the Southampton Sunday leagues. 5 a side activity is also particularly strong in the Waterside area.
- The new 3G STP at Testwood Sports College is becoming a focus for football development.

### *Ancillary Facilities*

- There is a growing requirement for more changing rooms in rural areas to support grass roots football.
- Wessex league clubs – Fawley, Blackfield and Langley and Hythe & Dibden – have specific requirements to meet League criteria. This can cause problems in upgrading of their grounds, particularly if they are shared with other sports (i.e. Ewart Recreation Ground for Hythe & Dibden FC).
- Gang Warily and QE2 pitches are good quality and extremely important as home grounds for many clubs but also as a back up facility for many other clubs in the Totton & Waterside area whose grounds may be out of play or because of fixture congestion.
- Provision of changing facilities at QE2 ground in Fawley parish is urgently required, to enable the ground to cater for Saturday league teams.

### *Protection of existing provision*

- No grounds identified as surplus to provision.
- The loss of the BAT ground in Totton will have a serious impact on both football and cricket, both in facility and sports development terms. The analysis indicates a shortage of pitches in Totton & Eling – although we know that these pitches do cater for some teams from Southampton (exacerbated by continuing loss of grounds in Southampton)

### *Quality of Provision*

- Overall the quality of pitches in the New Forest Area is fairly good, although there are localised problems with drainage.
- Football pitches enjoying a particularly high level of pitch maintenance and often incorporating ancillary social and spectator facilities, were noted at Lymington Sports Ground, Bashley Village Hall Football Pitch, Fawcett's Field, Brokenhurst FC, Jubilee Fields, Sway, BAT Sports Ground and AFC Totton. Football pitches at East Boldre, Newlands Park, Fawley and Carver's Recreation Ground, Ringwood deserve mention for their well maintained playing surfaces.

### *Deficiencies in provision*

- The biggest fixture congestion is on Sunday mornings, with busy Sunday men's activity especially in Totton/Fawley, and burgeoning youth activity (now playing at 10.00am, 12.00am and 2.00pm)
- There are shortages of pitches in certain areas: Ringwood, Hythe and Dibden, Totton & Eling, New Milton, Milford on Sea in particular
- Generally, clubs experience difficulties in finding training facilities with floodlights.

## **Cricket**

### *Adequacy of Provision*

- A number of clubs play on two grounds, demonstrating the high level of activity.

- For Hampshire Cricket Board 'focus clubs' in particular (see below), two grounds are essential for the maintenance of the youth development programme and feeding through youngsters into 3<sup>rd</sup> XIs. It is very difficult for some clubs in Totton & Waterside to secure access to two grounds e.g. Calmore Sports CC relies on King George V in Totton (which is very unsuitable for youth play); BAT CC uses Abbotswood School pitch (again not very suitable). Several grounds have more than one square/pitch: Fernhill (New Milton CC), Bashley Rydal
- There is a shortage of cricket facilities in Totton & Eling, emphasising the importance of the BAT cricket ground in Totton which has a high level of ground accreditation in the Hampshire league
- There is pressure on facilities at shared grounds such as at Lymington and Milford-on-Sea
- Ringwood and Burley cricket clubs have difficulties with training because of lack of provision.

#### *Ground quality*

- There are issues around the quality of outfield and intensification of use on Forestry Commission land within the National Park. Of the 24 sites that just provide for cricket, 16 of these are within the National Park; demonstrating both the reliance on the National Park for cricket provision, and the feature of cricket as an important element in the Park itself (there are also a small number of football pitches in the Park and one rugby pitch). Pitch provision within the National Park always requires some degree of protection from animals, and is often coupled with undulating playing surfaces and sandy topsoil. Thus wicket and pitch preparation of these sites can be time consuming and costly. Many of the cricket pitches are located in habitats of European importance and therefore enhancements to the grounds are not always viable.
- Generally, the quality of pitches on public recreation grounds, unless maintained by clubs, are not of very high quality.
- A number of clubs have difficulties accommodating their home matches or are unable to expand their activities. For example, Lymington and Bashley CCs do not have enough wickets, Hyde and Burley CCs have poor outfield and Ringwood CC's pitch lacks regular maintenance. Hyde and Godshill CCs feel the restrictions on their facilities would impede their promotion.
- Good quality wickets and playing surfaces for cricket were particularly noted at Lymington Sports Ground, Fernhill Sports Ground, Bashley Rydal CC, Langley Manor CC, Paultons CC, Calmore Sports Club and BAT Sports Ground.

#### *Trends in play*

- There is declining interest in Sunday 'friendlies'. The 'Cross Solent Sunday league' folded a couple of years ago. It is becoming harder to sustain adult play on both Saturdays and Sundays, due to players having other commitments; However, Saturday competitive play is very buoyant.
- Instead, the demand for Sunday play is increasingly coming from Colts' sides; the leagues are currently considering playing Sunday pm as well as Sunday am.

- Hampshire Cricket Board has 6 ‘focus clubs’ in the New Forest District – all of which have thriving youth sides. 4 of these are in the Totton and Waterside area: BAT CC, Calmore Sports CC (Netley Marsh), Langley Manor CC and Paultons CC (Copythorne).
- Community coaches are working closely with some clubs – girls cricket, for example, has started at Langley Manor, with links to Testwood Sports College
- Most Saturday sides field on Sundays and play mid week games too. There is a midweek league for about 8 clubs including Langley Manor. However, as a trend there is growth in touring sides but less midweek play.
- Clubs are reporting growth in junior cricket
- There is a waiting list to join the main leagues.

## RUGBY

- Pressure on pitch facilities in Fordingbridge, Ringwood (Ellingham) and New Milton due to strength of mini sides in particular.

### Summary of Recommendations for Playing Pitch Provision

#### Quantity

- There should be provision for a ‘Mini Centre’ to host a core/single location league. Our preference would be for one centre providing 8 grass pitches 60x40, based at Brockenhurst College. If this could not be achieved, two centres of 4 pitches each to serve either side of the District (Milford on Sea is one possible site).
- The Playing Pitch Strategy concludes that further pitch provision is required to accommodate existing and latent demand.

TOTAL	Football			Rugby		Cricket
	S	J	M	S	J	
Fawley		2				
Fordingbridge					2	
Hordle	1	2				
Hythe & Dibden	1	2				
Marchwood	1	1				
Milford on Sea	1	2				
New Milton	2	4		1	2	
Ringwood	2	2	2	1	2	1
Totton & Eling	2	4		1	2	1
Mini soccer centre			8			
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>

### Quality

- Various recommendations relating to the quality of individual grounds are contained within Appendix A and the individual parish profiles. Much improvement could be obtained by more investment in the current infrastructure.
- The provision of one sole pitch is not viable. The minimum size for new pitch provision - the most viable and efficient form, able to support the necessary ancillary facilities such as changing and parking - is a minimum of two pitches on a site of at least 2 ha. Wherever possible new provision should be designed and laid out to provide the potential for shared use on a seasonal basis by both cricket and winter pitch sports. The minimum ideal provision is for 2 winter and 1 cricket pitch to be accommodated on a site of at least 3 ha. Residual grass should be used for training and/or mini-soccer, together with floodlighting to enable midweek training during the winter.
- A hierarchy of provision also exists for playing pitches, with more senior clubs such as Hythe and Dibden FC, Fawley FC and Blackfield and Langley FC needing to meet the facility requirements of the senior leagues. The quality of grounds varies greatly and those such as the BAT Sports ground in Totton which are of a very high standard cannot easily be replaced or replicated. Over time, a hierarchy of provision for playing pitches should be established to ensure that the full range of facilities is accessible and available within the New Forest Area and to guide any further investment in the improvement of pitches. This could recognise the role of both public and private pitches, as well as the need to provide facilities enabling progression through various standards of competitive play. The existence of a strategy may encourage funding from other external grant sources.
- Such a strategy might reflect the following categorisation of and relationship between pitches.
  - the casual (or '*foundation level*') level of the hierarchy (casual matches/play) would include kick-about areas, 5-a-side pitches, and 'rough' pitches for casual use which cannot be used for competitive matches but nevertheless serve to encourage initial participation;
  - the local league (or '*participation level*') offers facilities for those clubs on the lowest rungs of regular competitive play, where there will normally be a requirement for changing accommodation and a preference for well-drained, 'true' playing surfaces;
  - the district/county (or '*performance level*') offers facilities for those teams which have reached a fairly high standard of play and are playing regular league matches where there may be requirements in respect of playing surface, changing facilities etc.; and,
  - the regional/national (or '*excellence level*') represents the peak of the hierarchy and might cater for clubs in regional and national leagues at an amateur, professional and semi-professional level. Once again, facility requirements will be commensurate with the standard of play and might include spectator facilities, floodlighting etc.

- This hierarchy can be developed for facilities for both juniors and seniors, and might recognise the value of pitches not in community use. It could be further developed for individual sports in conjunction with the Sport England and the relevant governing bodies. It is similar to the approach now adopted by the Football Association, Rugby Football Union, England and Wales Cricket Board and the English Hockey Association in their National Facilities Strategies.

*Accessibility*

- A distance of no more than three miles to playing pitches is desirable from the catchment population, although it should be less where provision is aimed at young people. Further guidance should be provided in SPD.

For derivation of a standard of provision for playing pitches, please see Section 7.37 below.

**OTHER OUTDOOR SPORTS**

**Bowling Greens**

7.25 Clubs based in the New Forest Area are set out below:

<b>Club Name</b>	<b>Venue</b>
Ringwood Bowling Club,	Carvers Recreation Ground
Lyndhurst Bowling Club	Lyndhurst Bowls Club
Fordingbridge Bowling Club,	Fordingbridge Bowls Club
Waterside Bowling Club	Waterside Sports & Social Club (x2)
Brockenhurst Bowls Club	Brockenhurst Bowls Club
New Milton Bowling Club	New Milton Recreation Ground (x2)
Lymington Bowls Club	Lymington Sports Ground
Milford on Sea	Hurst Road Bowling Club Milford on Sea
Totton & Eling	Hangar Farm, Totton & Eling
	Fawcetts Field, New Milton

7.26 Greens sited apart from other outdoor sports facilities are at Brockenhurst, Fordingbridge and Milford-on-Sea. The quality of the greens, with the exception of the emerging facility at Fawcett's Field, is as high as one would expect for these facilities. The War Memorial Recreation Ground, New Milton and Waterside Sports and Social Club, Fawley both have two greens. The pavilion at Lymington Sports Ground is particularly attractive.; the green may need relaying, although there are no plans at present. There is one all-weather surface in the district at Totton and Eling which enables year round play.

### ***Development of Standard/Bowling Greens***

- 7.27 Adoption of an old Sports Council standard of 10 greens per 60,000 population ('Planning for Sport' 1970) would give a requirement of (pop: 169,331) 28 greens in the New Forest. There are 12 greens which equates to 1 green per 14,110 which is not a particularly good level of provision. However, given the demographic profile, there are probably sufficient greens to meet current and expected demand within the New Forest Area.
- 7.28 It is important to emphasise however that there are only 3 greens to serve 67,855 people in Totton and Waterside (2 in Fawley at waterside Sports and Social Club and 1 all weather in Totton and Eling); a ratio of 1 green per 22,618 people. It is thus essential that existing greens, notably that at the Waterside Sports and Social Club, are retained. The emphasis within bowls should be on improving investment in quality.

### **Athletics Tracks**

- 7.29 Athletics has a number of disciplines, which are then split into different events requiring lots of coaching specialisms and a large area. Ideally a facility would have a synthetic 400m track, high jump and pole vault beds, long and triple jump pits, a throwing cage for discus and hammer, a circle for shot putt and a run up for javelin. If the whole site is synthetic it is very expensive. This also makes the sport quite expensive to run so there are few facilities up and down the country, which also creates fewer clubs than in any other sport. Running clubs, on the other hand, will outnumber track and field as they will run mainly on the road so it is easy and cheap to organise and run. Sportshall athletics requires specialist equipment, which is not readily available in schools but can be accommodated in any leisure centre main hall.
- 7.30 There is a grass track at Fawcetts Field, New Milton. During the Study, requests for a all weather running track have been made by the New Forest Runners Club, the New Forest Junior Athletics Club and Hardley Running Club.
- 7.31 There is a complete track and field facility at Kings Park, Bournemouth, home to Bournemouth AC is the biggest club in Dorset. There is also an all weather track at Southampton Sports Centre.

### ***Recommendations for Athletics Tracks***

- 7.32 There is sufficient provision for full size track facilities within reach of the New Forest Area. The following is required:
- For harriers / road runners – two floodlit endurance training routes (possible route share with off road bikes) – site in SE – perhaps around



district (one for every 42250 people: This would mean a level of provision of 1.00/42250, equivalent to 0.024ha. for every 1000 people.

**Standard of provision for STPs**

**0.02ha/000**

## **PLAYING PITCHES**

7.37 In the Playing Pitch Assessment, pitches at the following schools are regularly used by outside clubs (community use, with or without an agreement): Manor Infants School, Fawley\* (junior pitch), Arnewood School\* (youth/4minis), Poulner Junior + Infant School\* (junior football, rugby and cricket), Abbotswood Junior School\* (cricket), Testwood Sports College\* (adult football), Tottonians RFC at Totton College\* (2 rugby), Fawley School Field\* (junior) and Burgate School\* (junior pitches).

7.38 The existing provision of playing pitches within the New Forest Area is around 154ha (including all public sites, private sites such as BAT Sports Ground and around 10ha of land in community use at schools as detailed in above paragraph). This is equivalent to 0.91ha/000 which, compared to other studies and NPFA recommended levels, is a low level of provision.

7.39 The fact that the district is underprovided for in the urban areas for pitch provision (particular junior football which depends heavily on school pitches) should be balanced by the fact that we are starting from a low base and that the target should not be overambitious.

7.40 The existing provision of playing pitches within the New Forest Area is around 154ha (including all public sites, private sites such as BAE Sports Ground and around 10ha of land in community use at schools as detailed in above paraGRAPH). This is equivalent to 0.91ha/000 which, compared to other studies and NPFA recommended levels, is a low level of provision.

7.41 The recommendations for new playing pitch provision throughout the New Forest Area are for: 10 full size football pitches, 19 junior football pitches, 10 mini soccer pitches, 3 full size rugby pitches, 8 junior rugby pitches and 2 cricket pitches.

This is equivalent to around 36 hectares of land. Added to existing provision of around 154 hectares. this equates to 190ha. equivalent to 1.12ha./000.

Thus, standard of provision for playing pitches (pitch) 1.12ha/000

7.42 It is estimated that around 0.04 ha/000 land would be required to service this playing pitch provision, including changing rooms/pavilions and car parking and access:

- Changing rooms pavilion (provision of around 200m – 0.02 ha) would provide sufficient space for a small multi functional pavilion with four

changing rooms, match officials space, showers, toilets, circulation space and a small kitchen.

- Other service requirements would be parking and access (0.025 ha would provide sufficient for a parking area of 10m x 25m.)

<b>Standard of provision for playing pitches total</b>	1.12ha/000 +
	0.04ha/000
<b>=</b>	<b>1.16ha/000</b>

#### OTHER SPORTS

7.43 Around 3.00ha of land is currently in use for athletics, archery etc. and 1.77ha for bowls (0.147ha (38.4m x 38.4m) x 12)

Recommended additional provision of 1.00ha for athletics facility.

This equates to a total of 5.00ha of land, equivalent to 0.034ha/000

<b>Standard of provision for other outdoor sport</b>	<b>0.03ha/000</b>
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#### TOTAL QUANTATITIVE STANDARD

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.25ha/000</b>
Standard of provision for MASAs	0.04ha/000
Standard of provision for STPs	0.02ha/000
Standard of provision for playing pitches total	1.16ha/000
Standard of provision for other outdoor sports	0.03ha/000

#### QUALITY STANDARD

7.44 This will vary according to the sport in question, as set out above. Further guidance should be provided in an SPD, but provision should include changing accommodation, car parking, appropriate drainage and adherence to guidance provided by the governing bodies, Sport England or other established sources of such advice. For example, for rugby, a standard based around all the current clubs meeting the RFU Module 2 standard as a minimum requirement. SPD should also provide guidance in relation to the site design, shared and dual use, and the acceptability or otherwise of contributions to improvements to existing facilities in lieu of new provision.

#### ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD

7.45 This will vary according to the sport in question, as set out in the above section.

### ***Village Recreation Grounds***

7.46 At the village level, it is more applicable to have a minimum standard which is hectare based, to enable the village recreation ground to continue into the future. Following an analysis of existing need and facilities within the New Forest Area, and review of other areas and studies, it is suggested that – as a benchmark to aim for – the sporting component of a village recreation ground to serve a population of 1000 people or more should comprise:

- At least 2 full size football pitches (with options for junior/mini pitches within this area), with requisite changing facilities
- A cricket pitch
- Multi use games area
- Play area/teenage provision

This can be accommodated on a site size of around 3.5 hectares.

**Figure 7: OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES BY PARISH SIZE**

Parish	Pop. 2001	Football pitches adult	Football junior	Football mini	Cricket	Rugby	MUGA - Floodlit	MUGA - Not floodlit	Kickabout only	Athletics	Netball	Croquet	Tennis - grass	Tennis - hard/artificial	Tennis - hard/artificial - floodlit	5 a side	Basketball	Petanque/boule	Bowling Green
Totton and Eling	28000	5	1		2		2	1	2	0	4	0	0	4	8	2	3	0	1
New Milton	23753	4			2		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	0	1	1	3
Hythe and Dibden	19935	5	1	0	1		1	0	3	0	2	0	0	2		1	1	0	0
Fawley	14334	7	4	4	1	2	3	0	0	0	1	0	0	6	0		2	0	2
Lymington and Pennington	14329	8	1	4	3		0	0	1	0	0	2	0	5	1	0	0	0	1
Ringwood	13589	3	1	4	1		0	0	0	0	0	0	2		3				1
Fordingbridge	5682	1	1	2	1	2											1		1
Marchwood	5586	1					1				2					2	2		
Hordle	5095	1	4		1		1		1		1							1	
Milford-on-Sea	4703	1		2	1				1					4	3				1
Bransgore	4331	2	1	2	1														
Sway	3314	1	1	1	1										3				
Brockenhurst	3288	1			1														1
Lyndhurst	2985	1	2	1	2										3		1		1
Copythorne	2661				2														
Netley Marsh	2014	1	1		1														
Ashurst and Colbury	2012				1														
Redlynch	c2000	2	1		1										1				
Boldre	1931	2			1												1		
Burley	1352	1			1														
Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley	1164				1	1													
Hyde	903				1														
East Boldre	843	1												2			1		
Beaulieu	812				1														
Sopley	774																		
Landford	c700	1			1														
Bramshaw	682				2														
Sandleheath	665														2				
Minstead	638				1														
Hale	579				1														
Woodgreen	538																		
Damerham	515	1			1														
Godshill	457				1														
Martin	398				1														
Breamore	365	1			1														
Rockbourne	322	1			1														
Denny Lodge	316																		
Whitsbury	183																		
Exbury and Lepe	157				1													1	
<b>(New Forest District Pop)</b>	<b>169205</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>



## **8 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS OF PROVISION: SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **A FOCUS ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

- 8.1 The New Forest District has the highest number of young people of all the districts in Hampshire and so there is great scope to provide opportunities. The survey and consultation work for the study has highlighted the priority and importance afforded to facilities for children and young people. For example, Town and Parish Councils were asked if they were aware of any particular groups in their community whose needs were not being met. The most often mentioned group was young people and teenagers (highlighted by Burley, Hordle, Hythe & Dibden, Lymington & Pennington, Sandleheath, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst, Netley Marsh and Totton & Eling). Improvements to facilities for children were particularly identified as being required by Burley, Sopley, Fawley and Lyndhurst and facilities for teenagers, by Lyndhurst, Fawley and Netley Marsh.
- 8.2 However, Town and Parish Councils also often highlighted the difficulties of managing and supervising such provision and there are problems throughout the New Forest Area arising from unsocial behaviour and some damage to facilities by young people.
- 8.3 From other survey work:
- Young respondents most commonly requested an increase in the number of simple open spaces available to them, with places to meet friends (66%), including youth clubs, shelters and seating (44%) and areas to sit and play ball games (42%) the most prevalent.
  - Requests for other indoor facilities or facilities for specific activities were less frequent.
  - It was found that younger people, especially those aged under 25, tended to use sports and facilities for their age group more frequently, but did not make as much use of natural facilities as adults.
  - Most young people (63%) walked or cycled to such facilities with friends,
  - Young people aged under 25 were found to use local open spaces more for sports, informal play, socialising and for relaxing than other age groups.
  - Young respondents aged under 25 years reported that factors relating to public transport, improved or new facilities and activities, and having someone to go with would have more of an effect on them than other age groups.
  - Young people should be able to get to sports centres easily on their own steam (public transport is not the panacea). Safe cycling lanes is a preferred option. There is also a desire for youth club type facilities

- 8.4 Young people themselves were quite articulate about the range of facilities available to them and what they most like and do not like. In common with older residents, they do value the natural environment within the area and parks and country parks which give a range of more adventure-style facilities.
- 8.5 Problems for them are the lack of public transport, cost of getting to places and the lack of things to do in rural settlements in particular. Many also referred to conflicts which can arise between themselves and other users of open space; this may not be so easy to resolve.

### **SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - EXISTING PROVISION**

- 8.6 Children and young people will play/hang out in almost all publicly accessible “space” ranging from the street, town centres and squares, parks, playing fields, “amenity” grassed areas etc as well as the more recognisable play and youth facility areas such as equipped playgrounds, youth shelters, BMX and skateboard parks, multi-use games areas etc. Clearly many of the other types of open space covered by this study will therefore provide informal play opportunities.
- 8.7 To a child, the whole world is a potential playground: where an adult sees a low wall, a railing, kerb or street bench a children might see a mini adventure playground or a challenging skateboard obstacle. Play should not be restricted to designated ‘reservations’ and planning and urban design principles should reflect this principle.
- 8.8 **Figure 9** (at end of Section 8) records on a parish basis the occurrence of all equipped children’s space (for 12 years old and under) and all provision for teenagers within the New Forest Area. The former comprises equipped areas of play that cater for the needs of some or all ages of children up to and around 12 years. The latter comprises informal recreation opportunities for, broadly, the 13 to 16/17 age group, and which might include facilities like skateboard parks, basketball courts and ‘free access’ multi use games areas (MUGAs) (i.e. more than just a basketball hoop). In practice there will always be some blurring around the edges in terms of younger children using equipment aimed for older persons and vice versa.
- 8.9 In terms of definition, these sites are easy to identify and categorise. The only area where there is likely to be some overlap is where ‘recreation grounds’ may include kickabout areas which are obviously heavily used by children (but not exclusively – which is why such areas are usually categorised as ‘amenity open space’)

## ***Distribution of Provision, Accessibility and Quality***

### ***Children's Play Areas***

- 8.10 Around 80 separate children's play areas are recorded on the database. The spread by sub region varies: 5 in the Avon Valley, 14 in the Coastal parishes, 5 in Fordingbridge and the North West parishes, 9 in the New Forest National Park, 4 in Salisbury and Test Valley parishes within the NFNP and 43 in Totton and Waterside.
- 8.11 The largest concentration in the Totton and Waterside Sub Area is within Totton & Eling where there are 19 play areas; Hythe & Dibden have 12 play areas and Fawley, 10.
- 8.12 The size of these areas varies tremendously – the larger ones tend to be those which do not have defined, enclosed areas such as Martin (0.66 ha) or the largest recorded at Fordingbridge (0.67ha – which is an open area of grass with items of equipment dotted around as well as an enclosed area for younger children and paddling pools.) One of the smallest play areas recorded was also in Fordingbridge (Queen Garden's Play Area).
- 8.13 The quality overall is difficult to ascertain. There is an enormous variation, but overall, Totton and Eling is singled out as an area with very well maintained play areas. Individual good examples are as follows:

#### *Carrington Lane Play Park in Milford on Sea*

The space is well employed with a large number of pieces of varied equipment, incorporating two merged play areas – one for older children which is open with wooden obstacle courses with tyres, ropes, chains and logs, web netting, two x two swings, ball game hoop, 3 benches, 4 picnic benches and 2 small goal posts. Smaller enclosed play area for younger children with a banked slide, with wooden walkway, one x two swing gantry and 2 spring toys. Good access from nearby residential area and only play area in Milford on Sea.

#### *Carvers Recreation Ground in Ringwood*

Enclosed landscaped play area for under 12s, with a lot of varied equipment including banked slide, and climbing web, plenty of benches and picnic tables. Well maintained

#### *Testbourne Farm Play Area in Totton*

Very attractive large children's play area integrated with shrubs, trees and flowerbeds. Internal lighting along a path for children and a mini fitness trail are unusual and exceptional features. Linked to footpath network.

#### *Hangar Farm in Totton*

Lovely new enclosed children's play area, with banked slide and seven pieces of equipment. Within site is new paddling pool complex installed with toilet/changing block. Picnic tables and benches. Footpath linkage.

*Bath Road Recreation Ground Play Area in Lymington*

Smart new enclosed children's play area with four small swings, trampoline, climbing wall and frame. On River Lymington near the marina.

*Hazel Farm N Play Area in Totton*

Brand new enclosed children's play area with artificial grass surface containing slide, one x two swings, whirly gig, two post webbing, benches and noticeboards. Built as part of new housing development.

*East Boldre School Field Trust Play Area:*

This is a good example of a village play area: Children's adventure play area with barked chippings includes two x two swings, zip wire, two spring frames and obstacle course, picnic tables and benches. Adjacent to tennis courts. Really busy at time of visit, so no photo!

8.14 There are few examples of natural play areas in the New Forest Area which given the landscape and resources available is perhaps surprising.

8.15 Play areas are sited in a wide variety of locations:

- Recreation Ground with pitches 20
- Standalone next school 3
- Standalone (on a residential estate) 23
- On a routeway 8
- Next to community centre/hall 2
- In a park without pitches 7
- In a park with pitches 2
- Proximity to school important 5
- Recreation ground without pitches (generally tennis courts/muga) 7
- Within informal open space (incl. Pennington Common) 7

***Space for Young People***

8.16 Overall, there are 13 spaces for young people. Marchwood scores best with 3 – BMX, cycle at Corkfield, muga at recreation ground and wooden play area with seats around (not for smaller children). There are 2 in Totton are Hangar Farm and Bartley Park and two at Fordingbridge at skateboard and basketball court and shelter. Ringwood, Fawley, Hythe and Dibden, Lymington and Pennington, New Milton and Ringwood have one apiece.

8.17 A number of outdoor basketball posts have been erected as part of the English Basketball Association's Outdoor Basketball Initiative and there are other freestanding facilities elsewhere, including at QEII, Hangar Farm, Testwood Recreation Ground and East Boldre School Sports Field.

8.18 The aims of the OBBI programme were to provide a network of outdoor facilities for casual and organised play, which encourages young people to develop a healthy lifestyle, awareness and self-promotion, and an alternative to anti-social behaviour. The original target was for 10,000 posts by 2000, ultimately enabling 50% of the population to gain access to a facility within

one mile, and ensure the use of goals formed part of an overall sustainable basketball development programme.

### ***Existing levels of provision***

- 8.19 The existing level of provision works out at around 0.05ha/000 of children's play space and 0.01ha/000 of space for young people or 0.06 ha/000 overall.
- 8.20 The areas of land involved are very small. The largest 'Space for Children and Young People' recorded is Cork Field in Marchwood (three quarters of a hectare) The largest children's play area on the database is only 0.6ha (Fordingbridge Recreation Ground) and only 9 are greater than one fifth of a hectare in size. 55 are less than one tenth of a hectare – demonstrating the value that even a small area of open space can have. Most skateparks are on areas of less than 0.05ha. Even the wonderful youth facility at Bartley Park in Totton - with 3 separate, enclosed, tarmaced areas (one for basketball and football; one with overhead zip wires and one with a skatepark with all the various ramps and rails) which is linked with a central shelter and also has a toilet block and a raised grass bank used for BMX trials on site - is all on about a third of a hectare.
- 8.21 The most well provided for parish is Martin – coming in at 1.67 ha/000 because it has one large play area serving a population of only 398 people. Totton and Eling, which appears well provide for, has 0.08 ha/000 overall; Hythe has 0.03 ha/000.
- 8.22 Another way to analyse is numbers of sites for children and young people per population. On this basis, of the 10 largest parishes: Ringwood, Milford on Sea, New Milton and Hordle (although registering 3 play areas these are not of good quality)are least well served. Marchwood, Fawley, Totton and Eling and Hythe and Dibden are best served.

## **SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE: STANDARDS OF PROVISION**

### ***Existing National Policies***

- 8.23 The NPFA's 'Six-Acre' Standard is widely used throughout the country and proposes an overall figure of 0.8 ha per 1000 people of children's play space. This global figure includes:
- 'Designated' areas for children and young people containing a range of facilities and an environment that has been designed to provide focused opportunities for outdoor play; and,
  - Casual or informal playing space within housing areas.
- 8.24 The NPFA 'Six-Acre' Standard is essentially designed for application in new large residential developments and requires modification to suit existing

urban settlements and rural areas. The three 'designated' categories of equipped play area identified in the Six Acre Standard are LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs and the standard provides guidance on desirable walking distance to these areas. These differ reflecting the varying ages and abilities of the children at which each area is aimed

- 8.25 The NPFA guidance has been adopted by many local authorities over the years and its use continues to be widespread. The NPFA standards for equipped children's play provision have been criticised in recent years because they can result in a proliferation of play areas that can be difficult to maintain, as well as setting unrealistic aspirations in urban areas where insufficient land is available to provide facilities. An additional problem is that the current NPFA guidance does not cover the needs of most teenagers specifically within the standard, and it is felt that this is a significant problem in the New Forest Area in the main towns (confirmed by many of the comments and findings of the community consultation).
- 8.26 Another fundamental problem with the NPFA standard for children's play is how to interpret it in terms of what type of provision is required per head of population. Whilst the standard suggests an overall level of children's play provision of 0.8 ha per 1000 people it does not specify what should be the ratio between informal and equipped provision within this overall area.
- 8.27 Although the 2001 version of the Six Acre Standard does provide some guidance upon appropriate thresholds of development for which different levels of the hierarchy should be introduced this is certainly not intended for inclusion in a general standard covering children's play provision. For example, the Six Acre Standard suggests that for communities with 1000 people or more there should be full provision of LAPs, LEAPs, and NEAPs. Whilst this may be appropriate for ensuring that all communities of a reasonable size at least have access to a range of facilities for all age groups, it will not be an appropriate basis for an overall standard as in many settlements of 1000 people or more it would lead to a huge legacy of maintenance. An alternative approach would be to work out a level of per capita provision based on the recommended catchments for LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs, although this would also result in an unfeasibly large and unsustainable level of provision.
- 8.28 The Children's Play Council has recently published a Consultation Report on new Play Indicators, promoting a much more inclusive approach which looks at a range of play settings and resources, recognising that **all** open spaces have the potential to provide play resources for children:
- 8.29 The **Play Place Grid** gives examples of the types of facility and space that can offer children and young people the best opportunities for play and informal recreation and which should form the basis of provision for children to be able to play freely and free of charge in their own neighbourhoods.

**Play Place Grid:**

<b>Places for play and informal recreation</b>	<b>Supervised and semi-supervised (examples)</b>	<b>No formal supervision (examples)</b>
Dedicated places for play and informal recreation	Adventure playgrounds Open-access play centres Play ranger and out-reach play projects Mobile play facilities School playgrounds (out of school hours)	Playgrounds/play areas Bike, skate and skateboard facilities Ball courts Multi-use games areas Hangout/youth shelters
Non-dedicated places for play and informal recreation	Parks with rangers and gardeners Streets with wardens	Residential streets Neighbourhood open spaces Parks and green spaces Beaches, rivers and lakes Woodlands and natural open spaces Safe routes to school and play areas Playing fields and recreation grounds

**General justification for a new standard**

8.30 The suggested new standard in this Report seeks to achieve a more balanced approach to the needs of children of all ages. It also seeks to be realistic in terms of acknowledging the cost of both providing and maintaining equipped playspace. In overall terms it takes account of:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requirements that in some ways conflict with the NPFA Six-Acre Standard
- Recent changes to the social behaviour of children / youths & their parents / carers.
- Recent trends for parents to be reluctant to allow very young children to play outdoors close to home unaccompanied.
- Recent trends for parents to accompany children to school taking 'toddlers' with them and 'stopping off' at a Play Area near to the school or local shopping centre on the way.
- Recognition that older children often take their younger brothers and sisters to a Play Area.
- The desire to reflect the need of children of all ages in providing play opportunities.
- Cost of provision and maintenance
- The need to provide clear guidance for developers and communities alike as to what should be the target levels of provision

- 8.31 The purpose of the following standard is not to create 'play reservations' and proscribe play elsewhere within the public realm. Obviously children and young people will make use of parks, and natural and informal space. Dedicated play provision can also be located within such spaces. Consideration of outdoor play opportunities should also include use of shared spaces in residential areas and town centres, which raises urban design issues beyond the scope of this report.

### ***Recommendations for Space for Children and Young People***

- 8.32 It is very difficult to recommend how many additional areas for children and young people are needed throughout the New Forest Area, as much can be done to improve existing areas by: refurbishment or adding more modern equipment; providing relatively low cost, imaginative, natural play features (rounded banks, logs for walking along, gentle slopes and pits) on existing areas of open space for example, and improving kickabout areas. However, there is a need for new provision in many towns and villages; **Figure 11** (at end of Section 13) presents some indication of particular settlements.
- 8.33 Work has been done elsewhere on modifying the old style LEAPs, LAPs and NEAPs (see under 'Quality below): this proposes small areas for toddlers (around 0.01ha in size), slightly larger areas (with more equipment on land of around 0.04ha) for 6-12 year olds (juniors) and youth outdoor play space on a site of at least 0.1ha. For example, 1 toddler area and 1 junior play area could be provided in all settlements of 100 people and over and thereon after 1 per 500 people; youth outdoor playspace could be provided for 1 per 1000 people.
- 8.34 Even this is a generous standard and could not be practically implemented; there would have to be a cut off point as settlements became larger. However, it is a good guide to the land involved and can be adapted for the New Forest area; what would not be required in terms of fixed equipment sites could be allocated to more informal areas and the range of play spaces and opportunities as detailed by the Children's Play Council.
- 8.35 Multi use games areas (MUGA) are regarded as an open access facility for young people and thus form part of the standards of provision for young people. The minimum recommended size for multi-use games areas is 20m x 40m which can be accommodated on a site of 0.15 hectares. There is a need for additional multi use games area in the New Forest Area as youth facilities. The need for more multi use games areas emerged as a theme through the parish council survey.
- 8.36 Reviewing current distribution and other areas outside New Forest, it is recommended that all settlements of around 1000 plus should have a multi use games area which can meet demand for informal provision for youth (basketball, five-a-side) etc . The settlements where MUGAs as youth provision are particularly recommended are:

- Lymington
- Ringwood
- Milford on Sea
- Fordingbridge
- Lyndhurst or Brockenhurst
- Hythe and Dibden
- Boldre
- Ashurst and Colbury
- Bransgore
- Burley

### ***Quantitative Standard***

- 8.37 There is at present around 10ha of land for children and young people's space in the New Forest Area – a level of provision of 0.06ha/000. This does not allow for informal use of open space, for example kickabout areas, which would undoubtedly increase the level of provision. However, the level is still a great way short of the recommended standard of 0.8ha/000 recommended by the NPFA.
- 8.38 Application of the above recommendations set out in 8.32 – 8.35 (an extra 20ha to meet the standards plus 2ha for youth multi use games areas) would result in the need for around 32ha of land – a level of provision of 0.19ha/000 (a few parishes do approach this – Rockbourne, Exbury & Lepe and Fordingbridge).
- 8.39 Setting a district wide standard of 0.2ha/000 will allow for a realistic programme of development of new play areas – encompassing a range of sites sizes, equipped and natural areas and for a range of age groups. It is achievable and would give enough land for flexibility in interpreting individual local aspirations and circumstances.
- 8.40 A minimum level of provision of 0.2ha of activity space (i.e. excluding any buffer zone space) per 1000 people is therefore suggested both as a basis for a contribution from new housing, but also as a minimum target for provision. Provision should be divided between the needs of the under 13s and young people, and the nature of the space and equipment required will therefore vary. Detailed guidance should be provided in a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

### ***Qualitative Standard***

- 8.41 Space can comprise a variety of equipped and unequipped play opportunities, and further guidance should be provided in an SPD. However, provision could include the following:

- **For young preschool children:** Small low key games area preferably with play features & 3 items of 'small scale' items of play equipment. Seating for accompanying adults.
- **For other children up to teenage years:** About 5 items of play equipment and a small flat ball games area with kick walls and 'low level' hoops and 'very low key wheel play facility (undulating riding surface with features). Seating for accompanying adults.
- **For young people:** About 5 types of play equipment, ball play and wheeled play opportunities, and covered seating for teenagers to use as a meeting place.
- **Multi use games areas**

8.42 All **new** Children's' Outdoor Playing Spaces, the equipment and ancillary facilities to conform to all aspects of EN 1176 & 1177. Items not covered by either standard or exceptions to the standards must be justified and made explicit.

*Combined provision*

8.43 It may often be appropriate to provide for all three age groups at the same location separated only by a short distance or by enclosing the separate areas. This might be most appropriate in the case of sites of a more strategic nature, such as in parks and leisure centre grounds in the larger towns and villages. The benefits are:

- Savings on land take (buffer zone)
- Parents / carers can accompany Toddlers and Juniors to the same Play Area
- Youths and / or Juniors can accompany younger brothers and sisters
- Reduction in the risk of young children playing on items designed for older children as they have their own play equipment at the same Play Area.

8.44 Other ideal locations for provision could be at local shopping centres, near primary schools and a village greens:

- Facilitates 'stopping off' for parents / carers when accompanying older children to and from school, or whilst shopping.
- Facilities on known / familiar routes for children is a safety advantage.
- The more 'busy' the play area the more 'fun' and 'safe it is.
- Informal surveillance (overlooking) normally quite good.

<b><i>Accessibility Standard</i></b>
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8.45 A distance of 480 metres (straightline), or about 10 minutes (often accompanied) walking time is felt to be appropriate for provision aimed at the pre teen age group. A straightline distance of 600 metres (around 15 minutes walking time) should be largely acceptable for older children and their parents.

- 8.46 The catchment maps show a catchment of 10 minutes' walk time for children's play areas and this is intended to relate to larger areas and/or with specialist equipment or a specialised function as a children's playspace. However, all children should have access to an informal open space where they can play within 5 minutes' walk of their homes, in line with the new emerging agenda on children's play.
- 8.47 The suggested standards are intended only to indicate a desirable minimum level of provision. Where provision compares favourably with the standards this does not mean that there is surplus provision, as much will depend on local circumstances and activity levels.

### **Other Considerations**

#### *Achieving the standard in small settlements*

- 8.48 The intention should be that these play standards are applied flexibly and with imagination. Many settlements will not be of the size to justify full provision in accordance with the above. However, even a relatively small developer contribution can be invested imaginatively in improving local play opportunities. Public consultation may also show a desire and willingness to consider innovative community based solutions to provision. 'Self help' schemes perhaps involving young people in design and creation, can often prove much cheaper and reflective of true local needs than off-the-shelf installations.

#### *Facilities for young people in rural locations*

- 8.49 This has been identified as an issue throughout the New Forest, but it is difficult to provide for the needs of youth in rural locations where it will not generally be feasible to provide facilities on the scale that might be envisaged in the larger settlements. In many ways this is an intractable problem, but in others it may not be so difficult to resolve. Fundamentally, all young people are asking for is somewhere to meet, play around, and feel independent. Bespoke play equipment and sites may be one way of providing for these needs.
- 8.50 However, there may be other much cheaper solutions involving for example inexpensive but intelligent landscaping on the edges of village recreation grounds; encouraging young people to become involved in the design and development of home spun facilities, such as cut and fill BMX tracks; planting trees with low branches to encourage climbing etc, and the creation of dens. All these are 'low tech' solutions, but could be of immense local benefit to youngsters. A prerequisite to such initiative is perhaps a change of mindset (on the part of facility managers) in some circumstances and greater tolerance to such projects and activity.
- 8.51 Applying the suggested standards within the New Forest Area shows a varying level of provision. Individual recommendations against these standards are made within the Parish Profiles. In summary:

- 15 parishes have no provision at all – some of these are less than 500 population (Breamore, Whitsbury, Godshill, Damerham and Denny Lodge) but others would be expected to have some type of provision for children and recommendations are based around this (e.g. Burley, Sopley, Hale, Sandeheath, Woodgreen, Hyde, Bramshaw, Beaulieu and Minstead).
- A flagship ‘youth facility’ such as at Bartley Park in Totton to be considered for the other larger settlements.
- Better opportunities for children and young people within areas such as Fawley and Hythe and Dibden for example would play their part in improving the quality of life for an important section of the community in these areas, as well as encouraging healthy physical activity.
- For older children and teenagers, a range of innovative facilities can be achieved, and in towns such as Ringwood where there is just one installation, another facility or resource should be provided. The success of Bartley Park and Hangar Farm facilities in Totton demonstrate the value of investing in the right sort of provision for young people. There is often no clear consensus of what teenagers want beyond places to meet (preferably warm) and have fun or do something exciting in the company of their peers. The challenge is for Parish and Town Councils throughout the New Forest Area to identify and deliver the provision required, in partnership with young people and youth service and other professionals.

**Figure 9: SPACE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE BY PARISH SIZE**

Sub Area	Parish	Parish pop	No of play areas	Youth provision	Basketballs	MUGA	Total area (m2)	Area (Ha) per 1000
T&W	Totton and Eling	28000	19	2	3	3	18651	0.07
C	New Milton	23753	3	1	1	0	1748	0.01
T&W	Hythe and Dibden	19935	11	1	1	1	5883	0.03
T&W	Fawley	14334	10	1	2	3	12692	0.09
C	Lymington and Pennington	14329	7	1			4810	0.03
AV	Ringwood	13589	4	1			8438	0.06
FNW	Fordingbridge	5682	3	2	1		7725	0.14
T&W	Marchwood	5586	2	3	2	1	1533	0.03
C	Hordle	5095	3			1	2061	0.04
C	Milford-on-Sea	4703	1				3795	0.08
AV	Bransgore	4331	1				444	0.01
NFNP	Sway	3314	1				582	0.02
NFNP	Brockenhurst	3288	1				489	0.01
NFNP	Lyndhurst	2985	1		1		321	0.01
NFNP	Copythorne	2661	1				100	0.00
NFNP	Netley Marsh	2014	1				943	0.05
NFNP	Ashurst and Colbury CP	2012	1				488	0.02
NFNP	Boldre	1931	1		1		436	0.02
NFNP	Burley	1352	0				0	0.00
AV	Ellingham, H & I	1164	0				0	0.00
NFNP	Hyde	903	0				0	0.00
NFNP	East Boldre	843	1		1		416	0.05
NFNP	Beaulieu	812	0				0	0.00
AV	Sopley	774	0				0	0.00
NFNP	Bramshaw	682	0				0	0.00
FNW	Sandleheath	665	0				0	0.00
NFNP	Minstead	638	0				0	0.00
NFNP	Hale	579	0				0	0.00
NFNP	Woodgreen	538	0				0	0.00
FNW	Damerham	515	0				0	0.00
NFNP	Godshill	457	0				0	0.00
FNW	Martin	398	1				6648	1.67
FNW	Breamore	365	0				0	0.00
FNW	Rockbourne	322	1				534	0.17
NFNP	Denny Lodge	316	0				0	0.00
FNW	Whitsbury	183	0				0	0.00
NFNP	Exbury and Lepe	157	1				304	0.19
	<b>NEW FOREST DISTRICT</b>						<b>79036</b>	<b>0.05</b>



## **9 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS OF PROVISION: ALLOTMENTS**

### **Statutory Background**

- 9.1. Allotments provide areas for people to grow their own produce and plants. It is important to be clear about what is meant by the term 'allotment'. The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 obliged local authorities to provide sufficient allotments and to let them to persons living in their areas where they considered there was a demand for allotments.
- 9.2 The Allotment Act of 1922 defines the term 'allotment garden' as:  
"an allotment not exceeding 40 poles<sup>1</sup> in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family"
- (40 poles is equivalent to 1,210 square yards or 1,012 square metres. A 'pole' can also be known as a 'rod' or 'perch'.) In spite of metrication, allotments are still measured in rods (1 rod = 30.25 sq yards or 0.84 sq m) and allotment plots are normally either 5 rods (roughly 126 sq m) or 10 rods (roughly 253 sq m).
- 9.3 The Allotments Act of 1925 gives protection to land acquired specifically for use as allotments, so called Statutory Allotment Sites, by the requirement for the need for the approval of Secretary of State in event of sale or disposal. Some allotment sites may not specifically have been acquired for this purpose. Such allotment sites are known as "temporary" (even if they have been in use for decades) and are not protected by the 1925 legislation.
- 9.4 The number of allotment plots peaked in the 1940s, when it stood at 1.5m. That figure dropped to 500,000 by the 1970s and now stands at 250,000. The south-east has the greatest number of allotments with a total of 1,063 hectares. Greater London comes in second with 907 hectares, followed by the East Midlands with 807 hectares. Wales has the smallest amount of allotment space with 206 hectares.
- 9.5 A plot of 250 square metres can produce enough cabbages, potatoes and root vegetables to supply a family for most of the year.

### **Provision in the New Forest Area**

- 9.6 The database lists over 20 allotment sites in the following settlements: Ringwood, Lymington, Sway, New Milton, Fordingbridge, Totton and Eling, Hythe and Dibden, Fawley, Lyndhurst and Brockenhurst.

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<sup>1</sup> 40 poles is equivalent to 1,210 square yards or 1,012 square metre. A 'pole' can also be know as a 'rod' or 'perch'

- 9.7 In total, around 22has of land are used for allotments (land area double that for children's play and youth provision!!) – around 1ha. on average per site, although they do vary considerably from 0.2ha to 1.98ha in size (depending on number of plots).
- 9.8 The largest populated settlements where no allotments have been identified are Marchwood, Hordle, Milford-on-Sea and Bransgore.

### **Standards of Provision**

- 9.9 Overall, provision across the New Forest area is 0.13ha/000. Sopley has one site which pushes its level of provision to over 0.5 ha/000. Compared to other areas of the country, this is a low level of provision. Allotments within the urban area in particular appear to be well used and there are waiting lists for many sites in most areas.
- 9.10 There is currently an interest in reducing food miles, organic growing, slow food, composting and recycling green waste. A recent article in The Guardian newspaper highlighted the fact that more people are using allotments to grow their own fruit and vegetables, despite reducing numbers of allotments. England has a growing active older population and people of all ages are being encouraged to increase their levels of physical activity for health reasons. Plus, there is an increase in the number of (smaller) households and pressures on housing space which meaning that many urban dwellers do not have access to gardens. The National Society for Allotment and Leisure Gardeners states that it is seeing an increase in enquiries from people interested in getting an allotment.
- 9.11 There are currently around 21.3ha of land in use as allotments within the New Forest District: if on average there are 40 plots to a hectare, this means that there are around 851 plots in the New Forest District. This is equivalent to 1.12% of households in the New Forest District having an allotment.
- 9.12 There appear to be no figures available as to what a 'reasonable' level of allotment holding should be. Many other studies have arrived at a figure of around 0.3ha.

### **Quantitative Standard**

- 9.13 Given the general growth in demand for allotments, it is not unreasonable to double provision in the short term; it is also recommended that all main towns in the New Forest Area should have allotments.
- 9.14 This would suggest a level of provision of 0.3 ha per 1000 people both as a basis for a contribution from new housing, but also a minimum target for provision across the Area.

### ***Qualitative Standard***

- 9.15 Further guidance should be provided in an SPD, but provision should include the following:
- Well-drained soil which is capable of cultivation to a reasonable standard
  - A sunny, open aspect preferably on a southern facing slope
  - Limited overhang from trees and buildings either bounding or within the site
  - Adequate lockable storage facilities, and a good water supply within the easy walking distance of individual plots
  - Provision for composting facilities
  - Secure boundary fencing
  - Good access within the site both for pedestrians and vehicles
  - Good vehicular access into the site and adequate parking and manoeuvring space
  - Disabled access
  - Toilets.
  - Notice boards.
- 9.16 There is no need for any minimum number of plots on an allotments site; this can be decided by the relevant Council.

### ***Accessibility Standards***

- 9.17 A straightline distance of 600m (15 minutes walktime) should be largely acceptable, where walking is the chosen mode of transport.



## **10 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS OF PROVISION: SPORTS HALLS, SWIMMING POOLS AND COMMUNITY HALLS**

### **EXISTING PROVISION**

#### **Sports Halls and Swimming Pools**

- 10.1 For the purpose of this study 'built facilities' include indoor covered venues that exist to a major or significant extent to accommodate sports and recreational activities for the community. Sports halls host a variety of formal sport and active recreational activities. National research indicates that although they tend to attract use by a quite limited section of the population use by such people tends to be regular. Swimming pools attract both casual and competitive activity, and swimming continues to be one of the most popular leisure pursuits. PPG17 advises that for the purposes of assessments of needs and audits of existing built facilities for sport and recreation, local authorities should use a typology which includes swimming pools, indoor sports halls and leisure centres, indoor bowls centres, indoor tennis centres, ice rinks, community centres and village halls
- 10.2 The survey and consultation work for the Study has shown that indoor sports facilities tend to be used by a smaller percentage of the population on a regular basis than outdoor sports facilities and open space. However, although use of indoor facilities is far less frequent, local halls, community centres and leisure centres are very important to some.
- 10.3 Around half of residents surveyed said they would like to take part in more indoor sports and leisure activities, reflecting a common perception amongst respondents that they should undertake more exercise. Cheaper fees, more convenient opening times and more information are key factors here. Young people especially require more information, as few appear to be aware of current offerings.
- 10.4 The indoor facilities within the New Forest Area which the study has identified are listed in **Appendix 4, 5 and 6**. A hierarchy of provision exists. New Forest District Council manages 5 Health and Leisure Centres across the New Forest in the main populated areas of Ringwood, Lymington, New Milton, Totton and Hythe. All these Centres have swimming pools, health and fitness suites, and large sports halls and offer a full programme of activities for all ages and levels of abilities. In addition, there is Gang Warily Recreation Centre in Fawley, run by the Parish Council, which offers a range of indoor dry facilities.
- 10.5 The next tier of provision encompasses facilities such as the West Totton Centre which has a sports hall (3 badminton court) and Calshot Activities

Centre ( 2 badminton court) and changing facilities. Beneath this, there is a raft of smaller community halls, some of which have halls suitable for badminton (e.g.Calmore Community Centre) but which mostly provided multi purpose activity halls and rooms for dance, aerobics, short mat bowls etc There are also private indoor facilities, e.g. David Lloyd in Ringwood which has a 2 badminton court hall.

- 10.6 The other main provision is at schools and all the main secondary schools and Totton and Brockenhurst Colleges have some form of indoor provision, often large enough for 4 badminton courts and various other smaller activity rooms. The extent of community use of these is explored more in **Section 11**.
- 10.7 The Study findings point to making the most of the raft of second tier smaller community halls and buildings which can accommodate more casual recreational use and bringing school sports halls into the picture, by employing them for activities such as keep fit, martial arts etc which may not require such specific facilities as are found in larger venues.
- 10.8 The District Council's Health and Leisure Centres are operating to near full capacity at peak times, and there is therefore some reliance in addition on facilities at (solely) education sites being made available for community use. Where this provision is taken into account the supply of sports halls and swimming pools in the New Forest Area is good (an estimated 9 halls of at least 4-court size: the five Health and Leisure Centres, Gang Warily Recreation Centre and school halls at Hounslow School, Testwood Sports College and Brockenhurst College), plus the 5 pools with at least 4 lanes at the Health and Leisure Centres.
- 10.9 The fact that the Health and Leisure Centres are on school sites does restrict their availability for the general public. The six Health and Leisure Centres within the New Forest Area are used by schools from 9am to 5pm, 5 days a week. Totton Health and Leisure Centre has a slightly different pattern of use than the other Centres, being on a Sixth Form College site. There is not quite such a high demand here for education use during the school day and more concurrent use of the indoor and swimming facilities than the other Centres (around 10 hours a week). The following points are also noted:
- There is a demand for activities which cannot necessarily be met e.g. children's gym activities.
  - Demand for activities at the Health and Leisure Centres is generally increasing, although various factors, such as overall scale, restricted sites, lack of revenue funding and lack of car parking, mean it can be difficult to meet expectations and expand activities.
  - There is a high demand for indoor five-a-side and football training
- 10.10 The fact that much provision is not available during the day leaves a less satisfactory level of provision relative to the Sport England guidance. (For example, for new development Sport England modeling guidance suggests a provision ration of 1 x 4-lane pool per 20,962 people, and 1 x 4-court hall per 14,249 people.)

## Community Halls

- 10.11 Small halls and community venues (such as village halls and community centres) host a variety of recreation and social/community activities. These venues come in all shapes and sizes, and whilst some may not be suited to hosting any formal sports activity, they can provide important local venues for social contact, meetings, crèches, keep fit and other such activities satisfying important local needs. Many such venues are located in villages where, in the absence of access to larger leisure centres, they provide the only accessible and local covered recreation provision. Respondents to the Residents' Survey Panel indicated how important being able to walk (within 10 minutes) to community facilities is, and greater use of local halls for sport and recreation would greatly increase the range of opportunities available locally.
- 10.12 The New Forest Area is rich in this type of provision, and with spare capacity at a number of venues, such as in Breamore and Damerham. Moreover, with certain schools willing to extend community use providing caretaking, maintenance and management costs can be met, these are avenues to be further explored.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND STANDARDS OF PROVISION

### Sports Halls and Swimming Pools

- 10.13 There are no existing national or local standards or related guidance relating specifically to the provision of sports halls and swimming pools. Research conducted by Sport England suggests that users of sports halls and swimming pools tend to be prepared to travel up to 20 minutes (by car) to use these facilities on a regular basis, although the majority of trips will take significantly less. Within the urban areas it will often be convenient (and perhaps easier) to walk or cycle to the nearest facility. The Citizen's Panel survey within the New Forest Area suggested that the majority of people using sports halls and swimming pools would be prepared to travel between 10 and 20 minutes to use these facilities with trips largely being by car.
- 10.14 Therefore, as a realistic compromise, location and drivetime catchments of 15 minutes for both pools and main indoor sports halls have been mapped; this shows that the large majority of the Area is currently adequately served (see **Maps 5 and 6**). Two particular areas are identified which are more remote from indoor provision:
- the far north west, where residents will travel to Salisbury or Shaftesbury for indoor halls and pools, or to Downton Leisure Centre for indoor provision and health and fitness facilities, and
  - the central part of the Forest from Brockenhurst and Lyndhurst travelling north through Bartley and Cadnam.

10.15 It appears that, although in need of some refurbishment, the indoor facilities at Burgate School, Fordingbridge have some spare capacity. They are well placed to serve the area currently underprovided for and because of this, further consideration should be given to the development of more community use here. In a similar manner, there are extensive indoor sports facilities at Brockenhurst College and the College is keen to encourage greater community use.

10.16 It is concluded that:

- current provision, particularly indoor sports facilities at Burgate School and Brockenhurst College, needs to be fully used before new provision is countenanced.
- A hierarchy of facilities exists and should continue to be developed: the bigger 'flagship' public facilities to be supported by smaller halls, community facilities and education facilities catering for those activities where such specialist provision is not required.
- There should be a review of the smaller indoor facilities where spare capacity has been identified, to establish how to increase their use and their contribution to the overall range of opportunities (e.g. Clayfields in Hythe and Dibden).
- the New Forest Area is currently adequately served by indoor pool provision.

### ***Qualitative Standards***

10.17 Further guidance should be provided in a Supplementary Planning Documents, but should be in accordance with Sport England technical guidance.

### ***Accessibility Standards***

10.18 Recommended accessibility standards are a maximum of around 15 minutes' drive time for both indoor leisure provision and pools, but with encouragement for use of non motorised trips and public transport as much as possible. Within the urban areas consideration might be given to ease of walking distance (perhaps using a walktime of 15 minutes). 'Drivetime' of course does not take into account access for those (perhaps living in rural areas) that do not have easy access to a car and it is thus important to review other ways of improving access to local facilities for this market.

## **COMMUNITY HALLS**

10.19 There are no existing national or local standards or related guidance relating specifically to the provision of community buildings and villages halls. There is no 'one size fits all' solution to providing community venues. Generally speaking the larger the local population the bigger and more accommodative a community facility, as larger settlements will tend to generate a greater and more diverse level of activities compared with

smaller settlements. However, even small villages can sustain simple and attractive venues.

- 10.20 It is recommended that all communities of 500 people plus should have access to a small community venue, ideally within around 10/15 minutes walktime. Most communities desire affordable community facilities and meeting rooms. The Parish Profiles indicate where such provision is thought to be appropriate (e.g. Hordle) and further work should be done to explore ideas through community planning and parish plans.

### ***Qualitative Standards***

- 10.21 These halls should provide for a main hall (for dances, reception, meetings, and sports activities such as carpet bowls and table tennis), a small meeting/committee room, a kitchen, storage and car parking. Overall a total floor space of 300m<sup>2</sup> could be used as a guide.

### ***Accessibility Standards***

- 10.22 1000 metres straightline distance (or about 15 minute walktime), although it is accepted that in rural areas it will be difficult to meet this criterion in some areas.
- 10.23 As stated at the beginning of this section the standards can be applied and interpreted flexibly to best meet local circumstances. The aim should not be (for example) to create a proliferation of small community venues in areas of growth where fewer larger venues would be more appropriate. Contributions arising from this standard could also be used towards the enlargement/improvement of existing venues where appropriate. However, access is the key factor (especially in rural areas).

## **SPECIALIST INDOOR PROVISION**

### ***Indoor Tennis Centre***

- 10.24 The LTA works on the basis of one indoor court for 500 players, although a more ideal situation is one indoor court per 200 players.
- 10.25 This would equate to around 7 indoor courts needed to serve the New Forest population. There is no general public indoor provision within the New Forest (there are 3 courts at David Lloyd Centre in Ringwood and private courts within Hotels). The nearest indoor tennis centres are Downton Indoor Centre in Salisbury, Fleming Park in Eastleigh and the David Lloyd Indoor Tennis Centre Southampton (11 courts). Given the shortfall, we recommend that there should be planning policy which looks favourably on the development of such facilities within the New Forest Area.

***Indoor Bowls Centre***

10.26 There is a 2 rink indoor bowls facility at New Milton Indoor Bowls Centre. Larger facilities are provided at Atherley Indoor Bowls Centre (Southampton) and in Christchurch and East Dorset, all within 12 miles. No deficiency within the New Forest Area is identified.

## **11 THE CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION LAND AND FACILITIES**

### **Background**

- 11.1 PPG17 states that 'open space' should be taken to mean all open space of public value, including 'outdoor sports facilities....including.....school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas...' Audits should include all primary and secondary schools and other educational institutions.
- 11.2 Moreover, local authorities are urged to look at opportunities for new provision from developing community use where none exists at present. The extent of community use is regarded as important in developing standards of provision.
- 11.3 There are many new challenges for education at present: new DES guidance and PPG17 has strengthened the protection of school playing fields and various Government programmes currently in existence are aimed at::
- Renewing school sites (BSF)
  - Upgrading facilities
  - Enhancing sports opportunities – School Sports Partnerships, sports colleges
  - Encouraging dual use outside schools hours – Extended Schools etc
  - Encouraging schools to branch out and expand their role in the community
- 11.4 Because there are so many agendas, there is a need to focus and try to progress common threads together – otherwise opportunities will be missed. For various reasons, therefore, this is a very opportune time to reappraise the role of schools in meeting the wider community's needs for open space, sport, play and recreation facilities.
- 11.5 Among the issues faced by schools in the New Forest Area in meeting their own requirements to deliver the National Curriculum for Sport and Physical Education are:
- Lack of, and poor access to, a synthetic turf pitches and need to go off-site for other specialist facilities such as tennis
  - For rural schools – lack of suitable indoor provision – access for suitable sports halls and facilities at primary level
  - The cost and time of travelling to off site facilities, particularly village schools – and additional staffing needed.
  - New agendas and initiatives such as health and fitness (Every Child Matters) bring their own resourcing issues.
  - Education facilities are still under threat e.g. Lover Primary School sports field, now that the school has closed (it has extensive community use)

### Quantity of Land

- 11.6 A principal finding from the consultation and research around schools/education is the huge contribution to the stock of facilities – both indoor and outdoor – that education sites make. All known education land has been mapped and recorded on the database (around 60 sites at present) and the amount of land available at schools in the New Forest Area has been calculated from this. The total land on school sites is around 114ha (this excludes private schools at which there are at least a further 24ha.) **Appendix 7** gives further details of sports facilities at schools.
- 11.7 About 53 out of 121 (adult and junior) football pitches are on school sites. School sites account for over a third of the stock of adult pitches. Two thirds of junior pitches (although a ‘junior’ pitch on a school site may not be sufficiently large to accommodate league junior play) and half of mini pitches; one fifth of cricket pitches and two thirds of all rugby pitches; moreover all rounders and netball courts and over half of all tennis courts are on school sites. Certainly junior soccer is dependent on using school pitches.

### Extent of Community Use – General

- 11.8 It is only possible to give a general indication of the amount of land which has community use. The definition of ‘Secured Community Use’ is a facility which ‘is available for use by the community and whose future use is secured for the foreseeable future by one or more of the following’:
- A A formal community use agreement
  - B A leasing / management arrangement between the School and LEA requiring the facilities to be available to the community
  - C A policy of community use minuted by the School or LEA, including tariff of charges, etc
  - D Minutes of the Board of School Governors allowing use of facilities by the community; or
  - E Written commitment from the School to the current community users/team(s) using the facilities
- 11.9 In the questionnaire survey, schools were asked: “Do any of the facilities under school management have any community use/dual-use agreements for their use by the wider community?” Of 38 schools responding to our surveys, 21 recorded some form of community use and 16 said they had some form of spare capacity. However, only 7 schools recorded that they had one of the above listed ‘Community Use Agreements’ in force (many did not know). **Appendix 8** gives further details of community use of school facilities.
- 11.10 Schools with a total land area of 28ha indicated that they had some form of community use agreement. Schools covering a further 62ha of land indicated that there was some community use of their facilities (but no formal

agreement) - this includes land in use for courts and non-pitches and for sports halls etc.

11.11 At present, there are two main types of facility where schools make a particular contribution to meeting demand: sports halls and pitches.

### ***Indoor Sports Halls***

11.12 Aside from the 5 Health and Leisure Centres which are on school sites Applemore Health and Leisure (Applemore College), Totton Health and Leisure (Totton College), Lymington Health and Leisure (Priestlands School), New Milton Health and Leisure (Arnewood School) and Ringwood Health and Leisure (Ringwood School), several other school halls make a contribution, notably Hounslow and Testwood Sports College and Brockenhurst College. In particular they help to meet the high demand for five-a-side and keep fit activities.

Several are looking to improve facilities

11.13 Primary Schools are less likely to have provision which is open to the community because of the smaller size of their halls and generally less facilities. However, there are some examples

### ***Community Use of Playing Pitches***

11.14 It is calculated that there are the following pitches, in total, at schools in the New Forest District: 15 adult pitches; 38 junior pitches (varying greatly in size); 18 mini pitches (or land which accommodates this); 10 cricket wickets and 9 adult rugby and 8 junior mini rugby pitches.

11.15 Using dimensions as recommended by the Governing Bodies, but amending them to fit what we know to be local situation, this works out at a land holding in pitches of somewhere around 59ha. Of these 59ha, around 19.5ha of pitches is covered by some type of community use agreement and a further 13.5 ha has some type of community use taking place at the following schools. The Playing Pitch Strategy has included within the calculations for a standard of provision 10.00ha of land, reflecting accurately the amount of land which is actively used by the local community.

11.16 Some education sites are particularly noticeable:

- Totton College for rugby
- Poulner Junior school for cricket, football and rugby
- Ringwood Junior School – partnership scheme for rugby
- Testwood Sports College for football
- Abbotswood School for cricket
- Burgate School for hockey and football

## Opportunities for the Future

11.17 Thus, whilst some schools do have some community use of either their indoor or outdoor facilities and an encouraging number are both happy with this and/or would like to expand the opportunities, there is still a considerable amount of untapped capacity for more community use. Many recognise the limitations of their halls in that they are not full size (Breamore Primary, Hyde Primary)

11.18 There are some schools where potential for greater community use has been identified and could be further explored (notably at The Burgate School). Schemes are being considered at Ringwood (Ringwood Junior School) and at New Milton, where the Town Council is working with Arnewood School for the development of football facilities through the Football Foundation. Noadswood School in particular wants to improve its tennis courts for public use.

11.19 As PPG17 states:

“The main opportunities for new provision are likely to include:

Educational sites, where the school or other educational institution has existing facilities which are not made available for community use or spare land. In some instances, basic facilities may already exist, but require relatively minor alterations before it is acceptable to open them up for public use. For built facilities, these alterations may include a new entrance, separate from the school or other institution, a reception area, staff room, lockers in changing rooms and extra storage. For pitches, it may be necessary to provide additional changing accommodation (if the present changing is within the main school building) or increase their ability to withstand wear. “

11.20 Opportunities and issues in the New Forest Area include:

- creating infrastructure around existing education facilities to enable better use (access and car parking are particular factors here). Investment may be needed to support community usage in order to maintain current standards; many schools have inadequate support facilities (e.g. changing rooms). Pitches may need better drainage to support increased use.
- Many school sports facilities currently do not translate into 21<sup>st</sup> century. There may be a role for some schools in meeting a different market to the Health and Leisure Centres and commercial facilities i.e. for more basic keep fit sessions, training sessions etc. A strategy could be developed around key sports (e.g. rugby at Totton College) – to build on existing good practice and sporting links.
- Giving consideration to developing a broader range of opportunities at schools – climbing, sailing and golf – through utilising the natural resources of the New Forest Area

- Understanding that schools may need to be more flexible about concurrent use by the community during the school day
- Greater co-ordination of stakeholders (education, school governors, local government, town and parish councils health agencies, etc) and strategic planning involving sports colleges and the School Sports Partnership programme (see Section 13)
- Addressing issues and concerns raised by schools around security and liability if facilities are used by the community and possibilities of licensing on school sites – to provide social facilities to raise revenue
- A change in mindset to promote the fact that schools are sports and leisure facilities - giving a more positive stance in the Local Development Framework
- Most critically, considering how developer contributions could be employed to improve provision at schools to meet wider community needs.

#### **Current Possibilities in the New Forest Area**

11.21 There are many opportunities now arising at schools in the New Forest Area, through expansion, rationalisation of facilities or desired new provision, for example:

- Greater use of mini football pitches at primary schools
- Potential for using existing or developing new, play facilities, for use by the community and pupils at primary schools (particularly in rural areas where the school is the only facility available) (e.g Lymington Junior School)
- Jointly developing sports facilities at primary schools ( e.g. Milford-on-Sea Primary School proposed enclosed football & basketball area and fitness trail at New Milton Junior School)
- This Report has highlighted elsewhere opportunities at secondary schools and colleges, notably Brockenhurst College

11.22 Moreover, new guidance on Youth Matters related to the Education and Inspections Bill includes an Order to introduce in January 2007, the idea of a 'Statement of Planned Ambition' which places a duty on Children's Services to produce a statement which covers the provision of sufficient facilities to reflect the identified expectations of young people. This again highlights the potential of the education estate to enhance opportunities available to young people outside, as well as during, school hours. There is a network to develop already set up through the Local Sports Partnership and there are a number of structures through which this role could be devolved.

11.23 In summary, relationships with the education sector are a major key to making realistic progress in the shorter term in meeting identified deficiencies

for open space, sport and recreation. Greater co-operation between the Authorities, Town and Parish Councils, the local education authorities (Hampshire and Wiltshire County Councils), individual state and private schools and School Sports Partnerships to achieve this are strongly recommended by this Report.

## 12 THE DATABASE: OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

### LANDSCAPE FEATURES

- 12.1 234 sites have been listed with a suggested reclassification which differs from the policy designation as listed on the Local Plan maps. Of these 234, 167 were not designated as anything at all and have since been assigned to a category; (this included, for example, cemeteries and churchyards and allotments).
- 12.2 The Authorities will need to consider the other 67 sites to agree their reclassification.
- 12.2 In particular, it is suggested that some 'Landscape Features' are reclassified (see **Appendix 9**). These sites were described in the Local Plan as being 'undeveloped areas and landscape features, such as small amenity spaces, gaps between parts of settlements, woodlands, ponds etc, which are of visual amenity value, and help to create a particular local character and identity. Some also assist in mitigating the visual impact of development. These areas and features may be in public or private ownership. The Local Plan policy sought to protect them from developments which would detract from the contribution they make to the quality and character of the local environment. Where appropriate the local planning authority also sought to encourage management initiatives to maintain and enhance them.
- 12.3 Although the reason for the original designation of such open spaces was in respect of their visual function, the characteristics may now have changed. Some may serve an existing recreation (as well as a wider visual or natural) function. Others whilst not currently being actively used for recreation may have at least the theoretical potential by virtue of their location, size, and character to accommodate use in areas of identified need and deficiency in provision.
- 12.4 The Authorities should develop criteria to:
- justify the protection of those spaces that may add to the character of settlements and/or have an amenity or recreation function – these should have been classified as open space
  - assess whether other existing spaces should fall under this classification; and,
  - guide the character of the provision of any new space in this category, such as in new residential or commercial development.
- 12.5 The methodology and criteria used to select these spaces for protection should be explained in an appropriate development plan document. This will afford full consultation and will lead to the identification of a robust and defensible list of sites.

## **SITES WITH NATURE DESIGNATIONS**

- 12.6 The audit underpinning this study has also recorded the location of designated sites. All the nature conservation designations (local and national) are on the database, with sites falling either partially or completely within RAMSAR, SPA, and SAC designations highlighted. (The set up of the mapping programme means that sites bordering such designations have also been highlighted,) Local nature designations (SSSIs and SINCs) have not been so highlighted.
- 12.7 It is important that all sites with nature designations are taken into account in the provision standard, but also important to acknowledge that the European nature conservation designations are a vital consideration in the future of these sites.
- 12.8 In the event, all existing recognised formal and informal open space sites have been counted towards standards of provision (whether or not they have nature conservation designations) but the open Forest has been excluded from estimates of informal open space provision as per current practice. It remains important to include nature conservation designations in the open space database as these have implications for site management and potential for improvement, notably the outdoor sports sites within the New Forest itself.

## **OTHER CATEGORIES**

### **Cemeteries and Churchyards**

- 12.9 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 open spaces and the important thing is to enhance them and maintain their quality. There will not a provision standard as such.

### **Civic Spaces**

- 12.10 The purpose of civic spaces is manifold, to provide:
- a setting for civic buildings
  - spaces for people
  - contribute to the vitality of towns
  - promote social interaction
  - provide pleasure and fun
  - a focus for civic life (such as war memorials)
  - and opportunities for open air markets, civic events etc.

They are normally provided on an opportunistic and design-led basis, but accessibility will be very important. Important civic spaces have been included within the database, notably paved areas within Hythe and Ringwood, but they have not been counted towards standards of provision.

## 13 KEY EMERGING THEMES AND ACTION POINTS

### The Value of Open Space, Sport and Recreation

- 13.1 Open space, sport and recreation makes a vital contribution to the quality of life. Research shows that access to green space is a powerful weapon in the fight against obesity and ill-health, especially amongst children. Neglected parks and open spaces seem to attract anti-social behaviour and have the potential to undermine regeneration of deprived areas. In growth areas, good quality parks and open spaces are one of the best ways to ensure new communities blend harmoniously with old. Moreover, open spaces have the potential to attract use by a very wide age and cultural cross section of the community.
- 13.2 The New Forest Area is blessed with a great range and diversity of high quality natural landscapes, which are highly prized by its residents and visitors. However, they also have a need for accessible open spaces near to where they live, footpaths, cycleways, local parks, outdoor and indoor sports facilities, play areas and allotments.
- 13.3 The implication from the surveys is that people could be encouraged to make greater use of informal open space areas away from the New Forest National Park itself, but keys to achieving increased use will be the improvement of facilities in terms of cleanliness, convenience (including transport and car parking), 'feeling safe and secure' and the provision of more and better information. It is important to be aware of this in seeking the provision of alternative recreational areas to the sensitive environments within the National Park.
- 13.4 This has been one of the key tenets of the Study – to consider how best to provide for local residents needs and aspirations for open space, sport and recreation away from the open Forest, at accessible, high quality sites closer to their homes (within walking and cycling distance wherever possible).
- 13.5 This final summary Section presents a summary of the proposed standards of provision, under the three main components of standards of provision:
- Quantity
  - Quality
  - Accessibility

and then considers the way forward for implementing some of the key action points.

## Suggested Standards of Provision

### A New Quantity Standard (see also Section 5)

13.6 A PPG17 study is a rigorous exercise which provides the data to identify areas where there may not be enough of one type of facility, whether the quality of sufficient and whether people can get to the open space easily. But care is needed in the interpretation of the findings and too much cannot be pinned on the quantitative standards alone. However, they provide a base from which to establish the required level of provision.

13.7 The existing levels of provision and suggested new quantitative standards are shown below.

<b>Type of open space</b>	<b>Existing levels of provision (ha/000)</b>	<b>Existing standards of provision*</b>	<b>Suggested new standards of provision</b>
Informal Open Space	2.12	0.4	2.30
Space for Children	0.05	0.8	0.20
Space for Young People	0.01		
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.01	1.6	1.25
Allotments	0.13		0.30
<b>Total Open Space</b>	<b>3.30</b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>4.00</b>

\* as set out in the New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration (adopted 2005) – see Section 5

13.8 The recommended new quantitative standard is greater than the combined total provision provided by the existing Local Plan standards, and there are significant differences between the existing and recommended new components. The suggested new typologies and standards:

- are based on need as identified through extensive survey work and analysis of existing and desired provision
- have fully taken into account existing provision and requirements for informal open space
- will provide for a better balance of informal open space, reflecting differing local needs, and support the development of a hierarchy of informal open space provision
- will lead to the provision of new or improved open space, play and sport and recreation facilities of an overall higher specification than likely under the existing standards
- have excluded from the calculations by definition any space that cannot practically serve as functioning and safe.
- will ensure that future development plan designations better reflect the character and value of recreational space. This study has identified

important existing and/or potential functions for many sites currently covered by these designations

- give scope for different standards to be developed for sub areas or groups of parishes, if desired
- will give protection to all existing open space, sport and recreation sites

13.9 Through extensive local surveys and research, the Study concludes that there are deficiencies in the amount of open space, sport, play and recreation facilities within the New Forest Area, in particular:

- *Informal Open Space:* Country Parks; more informal open space in the main towns and some villages
- *Outdoor Sports Facilities:* deficiencies in the amount of playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities including synthetic turf pitches and managed all weather sports areas
- *Children's Play Space:* more children's play areas and facilities for teenagers, including multi use games areas throughout the Area
- *Allotments:* expressed need for more allotments in key settlements
- *Indoor sports space:* better promotion and access to existing facilities in the north west of the New Forest Area to improve level of provision

**Informal Open Space: Summary of New Standards (see also Section 6)**

**Quantity**

13.10 This is a large category of open space, covering many different types of landscape and opportunities for provision. It is an amalgam of sites which could be known as 'amenity open space' and 'natural greenspace' and 'parks and gardens' and also includes land which will be used as informal play space by children.

13.11 A hierarchy of provision of informal open space is also proposed (see following page):

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Accessibility Standard</b>	<b>Description</b>
Country Parks	Drivetime catchment around 15 minutes	Country Park c. Lepe
Natural informal open space sites (district wide)	Drivetime catchment around 15 minutes	Commons, lakeside areas
Natural informal open space sites (local)	Walk/drivetime catchment up to 15 minutes	Natural areas adjacent & within built up areas
District Parks	Walk/drivetime catchment up to 10 minutes	Typically > 5 ha, multifunctional informal & formal uses
Town Parks/Village Recreation Grounds	Up to 10 minutes' walking time	Typically >1.5ha, multifunctional informal & formal uses
Community Parks	Up to 10 minutes' walking time	Typically >0.25ha, to meet local needs – multifunctional
Mini Parks/Other Small Areas of Open Space	Up to 5 minutes' walking time	Informal recreation; typically >0.25ha
Routeways and Green Corridors		To link open space and recreation facilities

13.12 Based on the audit of provision, the current level of provision across the New Forest Area is around is 2.12 ha/000. This Study has identified the need for:

- an additional country park or parks to cater primarily for New Forest Area residents, either within or outside the New Forest Area, preferably through joint working arrangements with the neighbouring Hampshire and Dorset authorities.
- areas of informal, amenity open space of at least 0.25ha in size within urban areas, especially, Ringwood, Hordle, Lymington, Milford-on-Sea, New Milton, Fawley and Totton and Eling and some villages.
- areas of informal open space to contribute towards additional or improved spaces in parks and recreation grounds, alongside pitches and other more formal provision and to support the development of a hierarchy of informal open space opportunities

13.13 The calculations supporting the proposed standard are given in **Section 6.14**; an additional 37.5ha is proposed, to give a total land area of 396.5ha. Thus a minimum standard of provision of **2.3 ha per 1000** people is suggested both as a basis for a contribution from new housing, but also as a minimum target for provision across the New Forest Area. However, it is accepted that the more rural parishes within the New Forest National Park itself and the north west of the New Forest District will struggle to obtain this, in which case 1 ha/000 may be more realistic and capable of delivery. Even very small sites can be of value, but new provision should aim for a minimum size of around 0.25 hectares.

### **Quality**

13.14 The quality of informal open space to be guided by the key considerations arising from the Survey consultation as set out in Section, focusing on:

- Safety and security of sites
- Cleanliness and freedom from litter and graffiti
- Easy accessibility to and around open space sites and facilities for all members of the community
- Control of dogs
- High standard of facility provision and maintenance
- High standard of information provision

### **Accessibility**

13.15 Accessibility standard based around hierarchy of provision related to size of sites and range of facilities available. The catchment area maps show an accessibility standard of 240 metres straight line distance (about 5 minutes' walk) to sites of around or above 0.25ha in size and 480 metres straight line distance (about 10 minutes' walk) to larger sites (0.5 ha and above). It is reasonable to adopt a 15 minute drivetime catchment for major parks, large areas of natural informal open space and country parks.

**Outdoor Sports Facilities: Summary of New Standards (see also Section 7)**

**Quantity**

13.16 A quantitative standard for outdoor sports facilities can be useful in terms of securing an overall level of provision; however the range of sports, sizes of sites and facilities involved means that the qualitative and accessibility components are of equal importance and should be related to site specific recommendations where possible.

13.17 *Summary Calculation of Quantitative Standard for Outdoor Sports Facilities (see Section 7.35):*

Standard of provision for MASAs	0.04ha/000
Standard of provision for STPs	0.02ha/000
Standard of provision for playing pitches total	1.16ha/000
Standard of provision for other outdoor sports	0.03ha/000
TOTAL	1.25ha/000

**Quality**

13.18 Guidance on quality specifications for different sports to be based on that provided by Sport England and National Governing Bodies. As with informal open space, a hierarchy of provision exists within each sport and some provision will be provided on a strategic, district wide basis. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) should also provide guidance in relation to the site design, shared and dual use, and the acceptability or otherwise of contributions to improvements to existing facilities in lieu of new provision.

**Accessibility**

13.19 Over time, a hierarchy of provision for the different types of outdoor sports facilities should be established to ensure that the full range of facilities is accessible and available within the New Forest Area. Accessibility to different facilities will vary; typically courts and community playing pitches may be within 15 minutes' walking distance (less if possible where provision is aimed at young people); more strategic facilities may lie within 15/20 minutes' drivetime. Further guidance should be provided in SPD.

**Space for Children and Young People: Summary of New Standards (see also Section 8)**

**Quantity**

13.20 A range of play areas and spaces for children and young people is suggested, along the lines of:

- **For young preschool children:** Small low key games area preferably with play features and three items of 'small scale' items of play equipment. Seating for accompanying adults.
- **For other children up to teenage years:** About five items of play equipment and a small flat ball games area with kick walls and 'low level' hoops and 'very low key wheel play facility' (undulating riding surface with features). Seating for accompanying adults.

- **For young people:** About five types of play equipment, ball play and wheeled play opportunities, and covered seating for teenagers to use as a meeting place.
- **Multi use games areas**

13.21 *Summary Calculation of Quantitative Standard for Space for Children and Young People* (see **Section 8.32**):

There is at present around 10ha of land for children and young people's space in the New Forest Area – a level of provision of 0.06ha/000. Application of the range of provision proposed would result in an extra 22ha of land required - a level of provision of 0.19ha/000.

13.22 A minimum level of provision of 0.2ha of activity space (i.e. excluding any buffer zone space) per 1000 people is therefore suggested both as a basis for a contribution from new housing, but also as a minimum target for provision. Setting a district wide standard of 0.2ha/000 will allow for a realistic programme of development of new play areas – encompassing a range of sites sizes, equipped and natural areas and for a range of age groups. It is achievable and would give enough land for flexibility in interpreting individual local aspirations and circumstances.

**Quality**

13.23 Provision should be divided between the needs of the under 13s and young people, and the nature of the space and equipment required will therefore vary. Detailed guidance should be provided in SPD. (Section 8 gives further detail on location, design, quality etc)

**Accessibility**

13.24 A distance of 480 metres (straightline), or about 10 minutes' walking time is felt to be appropriate for provision aimed at the pre teen age group (who will often be accompanied). The catchment maps show a catchment of 10 minutes' walk time for children's play areas and this is intended to relate to larger areas and/or with specialist equipment or a specialised function as a children's playspace. However, all children should have access to an informal open space where they can play within 5 minutes' walk of their homes, in line with the new emerging agenda on children's play. A straightline distance of 600 metres (around 15 minutes' walking time) should be largely acceptable for older children and their parents.

<b>Allotments: Summary of New Standards (see also Section 9)</b>
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**Quantity**

13.25 Given the general growth in demand for allotments, it is not unreasonable to double the existing level of provision; it is also recommended that all main towns in the New Forest Area should have allotments.

13.26 This would suggest a level of provision of 0.3 ha per 1000 people both as a basis for a contribution from new housing, but also a minimum target for provision across the Area. **Section 9.9** onwards gives further details.

**Quality**

13.27 Further guidance should be provided in an SPD, but provision should include a range of facilities including well drained soil, a secure site, and adequate lockable storage facilities.

**Accessibility**

13.28 A straightline distance of 600m (15 minutes' walktime) should be largely acceptable, where walking is the chosen mode of transport.

<b>Indoor Sports Provision: Summary of New Standards (see also Section 10)</b>
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**Quantity**

13.29 It is recommended that current provision, particularly indoor sports facilities at education sites such as The Burgate School and Brockenhurst College, needs to be fully used before new provision is countenanced.

**Quality**

13.30 A hierarchy of facilities exists and should continue to be developed: the bigger 'flagship' public facilities to be supported by smaller halls, community facilities and education facilities catering for those activities where such specialist provision is not required. Further guidance should be provided in SPD, but should be in accordance with Sport England technical guidance.

**Accessibility**

13.31 No more than 15 minutes' drivetime to indoor sports facilities and swimming pools, and with encouragement for use of non motorised trips and public transport as much as possible. Within the urban areas consideration might be given to ease of walking distance (perhaps using a walktime of 15 minutes). Ideally all communities of 500 people plus should have access to a small community venue within around 10/15 minutes' walktime; however, it is accepted that in rural areas it will be difficult to meet this criterion in some areas.

**Figure 10: Summary of Suggested Quantitative and Accessibility Standards for the Provision for Open Space for the New Forest Area**

	<b>Accessibility (time/mode)</b>	<b>Accessibility (distance - straightline)</b>	<b>Quantity in hectares/000</b>
<b>Informal open space</b>			<b>2.30</b>
Country parks, large areas natural green space	15 minutes' drivetime	n/a	
District Parks	10 minutes' drivetime	n/a	
Town Parks/Recreation Grounds/Community Parks	10 minutes' walktime	480m	
Mini parks, small areas of informal open space	5 minutes' walktime	240m	
<b>Outdoor Sports Facilities</b>			<b>1.25</b>
Managed all weather sports areas and synthetic turf pitches	Not specified		0.06
Playing Pitches			1.16
Other Outdoor Sport			0.03
<b>Space for Children and Young People</b>			<b>0.20</b>
Equipped space for teenagers, mugas	15 minutes' walktime	600m	
Equipped space for children	10 minutes' walktime	480m	
Access to informal open space	5 minutes' walktime	240m	
<b>Allotments</b>	15 minutes' walktime		<b>0.30</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>4.00</b>
<b>Indoor sports centres and halls</b>	15 minutes' drivetime		
<b>Community and smaller halls</b>	15 minutes' walk		

## **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **The Protection of Existing Sites**

13.32 All existing open space, sport and recreation sites (including those on educational and private land) should be protected through the planning system. The Study does not identify any areas of open space or facilities as being currently surplus to requirements. There are important issues to resolve in terms of achieving a balance of recreational open spaces right across the Area before any disposal can be contemplated.

### **Is the land of the right type? Review of Management of Existing Sites**

- 13.33 A review of how the management of some existing open spaces might be changed to provide additional opportunities for recreation activities where they are currently lacking should be undertaken, perhaps in a Green Spaces Strategy. Possible sites have been identified within the Parish Profiles (for example, use of informal open space for more structured play opportunities).
- 13.34 The suggested revised categories for some open space sites listed within the database (for example, redesignated Landscape Features) need to be checked to ensure they reflect general recreation use of defined sites.

### **Making good the deficiencies**

- 13.35 Finding new areas of land will be a challenge; PPG17 mentions various options, including derelict or brownfield land unsuitable for development, sport and recreation facilities owned by major employers such as health authorities and disused railway lines or road for green corridors. Few of these are likely to prove very fruitful within the New Forest Area.
- 13.36 Other than brownfield sites within the main towns, any potential sites for new provision are likely to lie near or within areas with special nature designations and protected landscapes. In order to further develop provision for sport and recreation, the Study would urge that flexible planning policies are in place which will permit use of land where need has been identified.

### **Making better use of existing resources**

- 13.37 The Authorities should consider fully the potential for using developer contributions to improve and expand the capacity of existing strategic open spaces and leisure facilities before committing to new strategic facilities and spaces.
- 13.38 It is a strong tenet of this report that one of the main opportunities for meeting the new standards of provision is by increasing community use of school facilities where the school or other educational institution either has spare land or existing facilities which are not currently available for community use. This is especially the case with regard to pitch provision, where a significant amount of the existing and predicted shortfall could be met by use of school land. Indoor sports halls too could meet local needs for health and fitness activities and community recreation. The Study has identified many opportunities and it appears that the commitment from many schools is in place. (see 13.65 below)

### **Quality: Making sure it is good enough**

- 13.39 Quality of provision is a very important core issue for the Study. Ensuring that open space, play and sport and recreation sites meet an agreed quality

is part of the standards of provision but the quality of existing and new provision is also an issue in its own right.

- 13.40 Critically, people's aspirations for open space, sport and recreation facilities have changed and developed over the years. Although some parameters and targets for improved quality can be set down, much of this is subjective and community perceptions, aspirations and objectives should be sought at the local level, through community planning, to ensure that local needs are addressed.
- 13.41 In some instances, basic facilities may already exist, but require relatively minor alterations before it is acceptable to open them up for public use. Intensification of use to enable higher standards of play to take place – or to accommodate girls as well as boys through additional changing facilities – may alter the nature of the site and provide challenges for the planning process. The intensification of use of existing facilities, improving their quality and achieving higher maintenance specifications may mean that less additional space is needed. The planning of new, and redesign of existing, spaces should take into account the highest design principles.
- 13.42 It is noteworthy that within a broader aim to enhance 'liveability' – improving the quality and safety of public spaces and local environments and people's enjoyment of them – the Government has set national targets, two of which relate directly to green spaces – improving residents' satisfaction with green spaces, and increasing the number of areas with a green space which have won a Green Flag Award.
- 13.43 It is suggested that there should be an open spaces/green space champion from among the elected members from both the New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority to take this forward.

### **Hierarchies of Provision**

- 13.44 The Report suggests the development of hierarchies of provision for informal open space, sports facilities and space for children and young people. This is where the three components of the standards – quantity, quality and accessibility – come together, to ensure that residents have easy access to a range of facilities, including top quality sporting facilities, throughout the New Forest Area to meet different needs, aspirations and levels of participation. Higher level facilities will be strategically spaced throughout the Area, with wider than local (parish) catchments and include:
- Country parks
  - Major areas of natural green space
  - Major high quality sports facilities e.g. high quality sports pitches, strategic tennis facilities, mini soccer centres, managed all weather sports areas, specialist athletics facilities
  - Youth facilities with a range of provision (multi-use games areas, skate parks and BMX tracks).

13.45 The location of such facilities will be dependent on many factors. Planning policies should not inhibit or prevent the emergence of such facilities if the need has been identified and the timing/location/investment opportunities are suitable, and they should allow for facilities of an appropriate scale, given population characteristics, proximity to Southampton and Bournemouth, environmental constraints etc

13.46 The Parish Profiles also make clear that there are a range of basic facilities and quality that should be met throughout the Area at the local level – including play areas, access to good quality footpaths and cycleways, grass playing pitches, informal open space near to where people live and halls, with all opportunities fully accessible to people with disabilities and poor mobility. Figure 10 sets out a guide to site specific recommendations on a parish basis.

### **Focusing on Parks**

13.47 The research for this Study has shown that the intrinsic value of a site depends on its multifunctionality as well as its special qualities. People will go for rest and relaxation to a park as well as to a site of nature conservation. At least one ‘park’ should be developed within each of the main towns and, within villages, a ‘recreation ground’ which provides a range of experiences and opportunities with integrated informal and formal provision. This is an important component of the informal open space hierarchy.

### **Examples of good practice**

13.48 Certain areas have emerged as being examples of good practice, which should be promoted throughout the New Forest Area for example, the quantity, quality and range of play and teenage provision in Totton and Eling and the quality of playing pitches at Gang Warily and the QE2 ground in Fawley (Fawley Parish Council).

### **Raising quality – suggested improvements**

13.49 The database highlights around around 60 informal open space sites, 12 pitch sport sites, 6 outdoor sports facilities sites and 25 children’s play areas (Appendix 10) where improvements can enhance their value. This does not necessarily imply that the site itself is poor quality – there are some very high quality sites in the list which could, nevertheless, be improved further in order to reach their full potential by, for example:

- Better management and maintenance of more natural areas
- Intensification of sports pitch sites through floodlighting, improvement to changing facilities etc
- Consideration of how facilities such as toilets, refreshment kiosks/park café culture and shelters can all help to further encourage diverse use of open spaces.
- Reviewing larger, underutilised, areas which require a rethink e.g. The Mount, Ringwood:

### **Sites with Nature Conservation Designations**

13.50 Sites with nature conservation designations are often very beautiful and valued for that reason, but this can conflict with their use for other purposes. There can be restrictions in planning terms on what can be allowed and this will militate against intensification of use. The cricket pitches sited on Forestry Commission land within the New Forest are examples of this.

### **Healthy Lifestyles – for individuals and communities**

13.51 Open space, sport and recreation plays a (literally) vital role in the lives of people. There are clear and undisputed links between healthy physical activity and reduction in obesity and coronary disease. It is also increasingly acknowledged that recreation and attractive open spaces can help improve emotional well being. Thus there can be overall benefits in terms of reduced spending on health and social care.

13.52 The Authorities could explore joint initiatives between leisure services, health agencies and town and parish councils to promote a more diverse use of existing spaces for health and fitness. Extension and further promotion of a Healthy Walks programme, the consideration of a Health Cycling programme and encouraging the use of outdoor space for fitness pursuits are some examples.

13.53 There may be opportunities to promote the use of some of the Area's lesser known spaces for community activity. A good starting point could be holiday schemes involving mini sports, den making, mini orienteering, softball etc. Young people in particular need help to rediscover how to use open space.

### **Accessibility:**

#### **Making sure everyone can get to and use the opportunities available**

13.54 The proposed standards of provision generally promote facilities closer to home which are within easy walking and cycling distance.

13.55 There are a number of measures for discussion which can improve accessibility:

- The approach and entrances to open space are an important consideration and should be addressed within the qualitative standards.
- Better, safer crossings on major roads to reach open space areas
- *Green Routeways*: Existing green routeways should be promoted and further extended, particularly within the urban areas and along the waterfronts.
- *Improving accessibility requires improved information*: about what is available; better signage to sites and facilities and more interpretative material for nature sites – notice and information boards etc
- *Promotion of cycling*: a requirement for all appropriate new developments (offices, shops and schools) to include secure bicycle parking racks;

secure cycle racks at Health and Leisure facilities, playing pitches and parks; the establishment of a network of cycle routes for both recreational and leisure purposes.

- *Accessibility for young people:*
- *Accessibility for All:* including those with poor mobility. Within the New Forest Area, facilities are spread out and access for people with disabilities is often difficult, particularly for those without a car. Cheap, plentiful public transport for them is a vital element in improving their ability to access a full range of opportunities.
- *Improved quality improves accessibility:* People need to feel welcomed.
- *Affordability:* People need to be able to afford to use sites and facilities

## **The Way Forward: Making it happen**

### **Introduction**

13.56 The issues raised within this Study bring into consideration how current stakeholders work together in achieving what will often be mutually shared objectives. Given the essentially rural nature of the New Forest Area, there is a need to further examine the roles of town/parish councils and schools/education authorities in delivering the desired outcomes highlighted by this report. There is also clearly a very important role for the various health agencies in this regard.

13.57 The Study has highlighted the importance of differentiating between local and strategic open space, sport and recreation needs; and, planning and providing opportunities on this basis. It is essential that 'delivery structures' are established to allow this to happen.

13.58 Working together is best achieved through an acknowledged medium for sharing ideas and promoting joint initiatives. It is very important in this regard to consider the role of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in securing effective joint action.

13.59 This Study has been largely concerned with planning for open space, sport and recreation for local communities within the New Forest Area, but the wider role of the Forest itself is acknowledged. As well as providing important recreational opportunities for local people, the Forest is also a strategic/national resource attracting visitors from outside the Study Area, whilst at the same time having status as an internationally important natural habitat, requiring protection. If this is properly recognised there will be profound implications for how the New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority works with agencies and organisations outside the Study Area in addressing the conflicting pressures and demands placed upon the Forest.

13.60 Finally, and importantly, working with developers will be essential in ensuring that, through application of the suggested standards, new development is self sustaining in terms of providing for the needs of its residents.

### **Working together (through the Local Strategic Partnership)**

- 13.61 The authors of this report have found engagement with the various stakeholders consulted both stimulating and valuable. There is an untapped wealth of knowledge, ideas, good will, expertise, and resources that can be garnered to achieve desired outcomes. What is perhaps lacking though is an overall framework to ensure the full weight of this potential resource is properly exploited.
- 13.62 Given the pervasive benefits of open space, play, sport and recreation in achieving Community Plan objectives (highlighted elsewhere in this report) the Local Strategic Partnership may be best placed to play the central role in driving changes to achieve desired outcomes.
- 13.63 The Authorities should therefore consider how the New Forest District LSP could embrace this role, which would provide additional legitimacy for and support in achieving the desired outcomes. Whatever form this takes it should reflect the varied range of stakeholders relevant to promoting change. Because of the Area's character, it will be essential for the following to be properly represented and signed up to this initiative:
- Town and parish councils
  - Schools/education authorities
  - Health agencies
  - The New Forest National Park Authority

### **The role of Town and Parish Councils (local councils)**

- 13.64 A key task of this initiative would be to agree and assign clear and properly demarcated responsibilities between the stakeholders. Perhaps central to this will be establishing what should be the proper relationship between the town and parish councils and the Authorities in planning for and providing local facilities. At the time of writing this report important changes were being proposed by the government to give added responsibility to local (town and parish) councils. Although it is currently unclear what will happen to these proposals, it is still be important to grapple with some core questions:
- Given the often varied quality of some of the open space, sport and recreation facilities managed at the local level, would some local councils see benefit in the District Council taking more of a direct role in this regard?
  - How can changing needs at the local level best be monitored for the purpose of planning and modifying opportunities? This Study is very detailed but represents only a 'snapshot'. Needs will change over time, and this change must be acknowledged. Could the information gained through this Study serve as a starting point for a local system of resource planning and management empowering local communities to identify their particular needs and 'make the case' for funding both to their own

community (perhaps through precepts) and also to external funders and developers?

- How best can a clear demarcation of responsibility be reflected in the financial relationship between District and local council level? A concomitant of this is agreement upon ways in which developer contributions will be sought towards new provision and enhancement, including towards those strategic facilities which meet a wider than local catchment.
- Although there is currently little by way of planned new residential development proposed in the Development Plan, this may change in the longer term. In any event the contributions arising from even small scale development can be of significant local benefit. These issues need to be reviewed by the District Council, Park Authority and local councils through the development of appropriate SPD.
- Finally, how can the Authorities best work with local councils in developing an Area-wide open space/green space strategy and how can good practice and other local resources (for example, manpower, equipment etc) be shared?

#### **The role of schools and the education authorities**

13.65 The Study clearly identifies the important existing and potential role of schools/the education sector in providing opportunities of both a strategic and local nature. Where 'joint working' is established it yields hugely important benefits, such as where the District Council manages leisure centres on major school campuses on a dual use basis. Not only do such initiatives help to share costs, but they also enable schools to develop links with their communities and become focal points for local activity.

13.66 However, there are many more opportunities to be exploited. Why are there so many small local schools lying idle on weekday evenings and weekends when local groups and interests point to a lack of local provision? This is a shameful manifestation of poor interagency cooperation.

13.67 There are clearly issues of management, cost, design, fear of litigation etc at play, but there should still be leeway for relevant parties to work together to realize some valuable dual use/joint provision opportunities at the very local level. These could then be promoted as exemplars. There are also opportunities to be exploited through the extended schools building programme.

13.68 An observation of the authors with respect to school focused development initiatives is that there are (potentially) many valuable improvements to the stock of school facilities in the offing, but which could be made to have even wider community benefit if there was greater awareness amongst all key stakeholders of where these changes are likely to arise, and a greater subsequent opportunity to be involved in the design and planning stage.

- 13.69 Appropriate representation of the education sector (through the LSP) will heighten awareness of potential opportunities as they arise and maximize the scope for constructive engagement to ensure that new and refurbished schools become genuine community assets.

#### **Strategic/cross local authority planning**

- 13.70 The importance of planning for a range of strategic and local open space opportunities has already been mentioned. A further very important dimension to this theme involves planning for major opportunities attracting visitors both into and out of the Area. The obvious example is the New Forest itself. It will continue to remain a massive recreation and tourism draw, but this generates unacceptable impacts upon its natural habitat. Planned major new development to both the east and west of the District will lead to additional desire to visit the Park for recreation purposes, unless alternative provision is made to deflect damaging activity and pressure to other planned opportunities. There has been discussion in this report of the scope for providing a new country park, and whilst this would be a valuable resource for local people it could also be a strategic draw from outside the Area.
- 13.71 The Study Area Authorities should consider approaching neighbouring Authorities that are shortly to host major new housing development to establish the scope for cooperating in the planning and provision of new strategic opportunities (such as country parks and other areas of major greenspace) to meet the needs of these increased populations. Of course, this works both ways and such a dialogue might also reveal opportunities for the Authorities to support projects outside the Area that will be of proven benefit to their own residents.

#### **Working with developers**

- 13.72 Within the current planning horizon there is little additional development anticipated in the Area. It is not inconceivable that this will change. Should this be the case it will be essential that such development is self sustaining in terms of providing for the needs of its residents. The proposed standards will be a basis for achieving these ends. However, they do represent a contrast with existing standards that have been applied within the District over the years, as they reflect:
- a need for a far greater variety of spaces and opportunities;
  - a desire for appropriate quality thresholds; and,
  - the importance of ensuring a good level of access commensurate to the opportunity in question.
- 13.73 The implications of adopting these standards need to be recognized by developers, and it should be made clear to them that they have three core tests to satisfy, reflecting:
- Quantity
  - Quality

- Accessibility

13.74 In this way it will no longer be acceptable for additional provision or contribution to be resisted on the basis of adequate quantity alone, as quality of existing provision and ease of access are just as important. In cases where overall quantity is commonly deemed to be sufficient, contributions may instead be sought to upgrade the quality of, and accessibility to existing opportunities to an appropriate standard. Within the National Park, for example, the emphasis may well be on seeking contributions from individual dwellings/small schemes to enhance local open spaces.

13.75 Such matters will require further consideration through the development of Supplementary Planning Documentation. The Authorities, ideally in partnerships across the Study Area, should produce a dedicated recreation and open space Supplementary Planning Document to, inter alia, provide guidance on the interpretation of the suggested new planning standards.



**Figure 11: LOCATION SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS BY PARISH - GUIDE ONLY: see Parish Profiles and Sections 6 - 9**

Sub Area	Parish	INFORMAL OPEN SPACE		OUTDOOR SPORT						CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE			ALLOTMENTS
		Country Park	Other small areas	8 court tennis	MASAs	STPs	Outdoor training - athletics	Playing Pitches	Mini soccer	Play facilities	Teenage facilities	MUGASs	
NFNP	Hyde												
NFNP	Landford (S)												
NFNP	Lyndhurst		X							X		X	
NFNP	Melchett P & Plaitford (TV)												
NFNP	Minstead												
NFNP	Netley Marsh		X							X	X		
NFNP	Redlynch (S)										X		
NFNP	Sway									X	X		
NFNP	Wellow (TV)												
NFNP	Whiteparish (S)												
NFNP	Woodgreen												
T+W	Fawley		X				X	X			X		X
T+W	Hythe and Dibden		X		X			X		X	X	X	X
T+W	Marchwood							X					X
T+W	Totton and Eling		X					X				X	

