

# Mid Sussex PPG17 Assessment

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- G Analysis of provision
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- District-wide maps
- Burgess Hills Maps
- East Grinstead Maps
- Haywards Heath Maps

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# 1: The Need for This Assessment

## Introduction

When people step outside their home, or place of work, they enter the public realm – the streets, squares and greenspaces that are an essential component of our villages, towns and cities. If well designed and maintained, they contribute hugely to making somewhere an attractive place in which to live. This is something which the Georgians, in particular, understood well, with their squares and crescents, all facing networks of attractive greenspaces.

Greenspace planning, however, has been much neglected since Georgian times, with a few exceptions including the great Victorian parks, the Garden City movement and of course the New Towns. Management and maintenance also suffered as a result of Compulsory Competitive Tendering for grounds maintenance in the 1980s and 1990s. The effect has been sharply to reduce the cost of looking after parks and greenspaces and too many are now maintained by operatives using machines rather than gardeners using knowledge and skill.

At the same time, there has been an increase in vandalism and anti-social behaviour. One result has been a significant decline in the quality of the public realm in just twenty or thirty years. But in the past 4-5 years, a new greenspace movement has emerged in the UK which champions the value of networks of high quality greenspaces and sport and recreation facilities. Reversing the trend of three decades will take some time, but the Government has recognised the problem and, with the publication of Planning Policy Guidance PPG17, *Open Space, Sport and Recreation*, requires planning authorities to undertake assessment of needs and opportunities in their area. It has also introduced an innovative “Liveability” scheme which has given both capital and follow-on revenue funding to 27 councils across England and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has adopted a mantra of “Cleaner, Safer, Greener” for its work on sustainable communities.

The simple fact is that high quality, accessible greenspaces help to make somewhere an attractive place in which to live and work. There is ample (and growing) evidence that they help to boost land values for properties in their

vicinity and this in turn helps to attract development and economic activity from which everyone can benefit.

This is a great opportunity to reassert the importance not only of providing high quality greenspaces but ensuring that they remain of high quality by managing them properly. Effective provision and good management and maintenance are different sides of the same coin and one without the other is likely to be a waste of time and resources. The net cost of managing and maintaining the open spaces and public sports facilities in the District is met from taxation. As there are many other competing priorities for resources, there is an obvious need to ensure value for money.

It is also important to make the best use of land. If there is an unnecessarily large amount of open space or sport and recreation provision, the District's towns and villages may be larger than they need to be, resulting in unnecessary travel. Conversely, if there is not enough, spaces and facilities may be over-used and their quality will suffer.

This is the background to this Assessment. It can be summed up as relating to:

- The need to comply with Government planning guidance and make the best use of land within the District
- The need to ensure that the District is an attractive place in which to live, work and play or to visit and deliver the aims set out in the Council's Community Strategy and Corporate Strategy (see below)
- The need to match aspirations with resources

## **The Context for the Plan**

Not all strategies and plans are of equal importance. The most important are international plans and targets, such as Local Agenda 21 and Kyoto Treaty, followed by UK Government, regional and then local ones. For obvious reasons, aims and objectives of higher level plans and strategies should "cascade" down to lower ones and set the context for them. If they do not, planning for the future is disjointed and no-one can be quite sure what their priorities should be.

This Assessment is very much a local one, of specific relevance to Mid Sussex. The local context for it is set primarily by the Community Strategy, the Council's Corporate Strategy and the Local Plan, with the Community Strategy being the key framework document.

The Council's Corporate Strategy sits beneath the Community Strategy in the "planning cascade". High quality, well located greenspaces can contribute positively to its work in relation to two of the main themes of the strategy - better environment and better lives.

Finally, the role of the Local Plan (soon to be superseded by the Local Development Framework) is to be a delivery mechanism for the land use elements of the Community Strategy. Its policies have an important role in protecting those greenspaces and sports facilities that meet local needs and ensuring that development and community infrastructure, such as greenspaces, are in an appropriate balance.

## **The Scope of the Assessment**

In the planning cascade, this assessment provides evidence in support of policies to be included in the Local Development Framework. It:

- Reviews the amount, distribution and quality of existing provision
- Identifies where there is a need for more or better provision and the types of enhancements which will benefit existing facilities and spaces most
- Suggests appropriate provision standards for the District Council to use as part of the planning process
- Suggests how to tackle the key issues relating to open space, sport and recreation provision facing the District Council and its partners

## **What is “Open Space”?**

The Assessment uses the definition of “open space” given in PPG17:

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

## **Acknowledgements**

Consultants undertaking an assignment such as this have necessarily to depend on assistance from a wide range of people for information, guidance and support. We wish particularly to thank Judith Hewitt and Edward Lancaster of the Council’s Planning Service and Jenny Dadd, the Council’s former Community Leisure Officer, but most especially the representatives of local organisations who gave up their time to help by answering our questions and supplying information.





## 2: Methodology

### Introduction

This chapter provides a brief overview of the methodology we have used for the assessment.

### Typology of Provision

PPG17 sets out a typology of provision which planning authorities can either adopt or adapt. The typology we have used for this assessment is:

- Allotments
- Artificial Turf Pitches
- Athletics tracks
- Bowling greens
- Multi-functional greenspaces, encompassing Cemeteries and churchyards; Amenity greenspaces (essentially informal recreation spaces, mainly in and around housing areas); Natural greenspaces (including woodland and all land with a nature conservation value or designation; and Parks and gardens
- Playing fields and grass pitches, including recreation grounds
- Play areas and playgrounds: equipped play areas intended for children up to the age of about 12
- Tennis and multi-sport courts: these facilities are broadly similar, but multi-sport courts are hard surfaced outdoor areas, preferably floodlit, designed for a range of sports including tennis, netball and 5-a-side football
- Teenage facilities – BMX/skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops and other informal areas intended primarily for teenagers
- Indoor sports facilities – bowls halls, tennis halls, sports halls and swimming pools

PPG17 also suggests including ice rinks within indoor sports provision, but as the District's population is too low to support a rink we have not included them.

### The Policy Context

As a preliminary to the main part of the assessment, and in order to set it within a broad policy framework, we reviewed a number of existing regional, county and District-wide plans and strategies. We set out the results

in Chapter 4.

## **Assessing Local Needs**

The assessing needs part of the work, which we summarise in Chapter 5, took three main forms:

- A review of surveys of local residents undertaken at various times by the District Council
- A series of telephone or face to face interviews with stakeholders and representatives of local interest groups
- A survey of parish and town councils across the District and round the periphery of it

## **Assessing Supply**

In order to assess supply, we undertook an audit of local provision throughout the District, using a suite of standard audit forms designed to evaluate the quality and value of different forms of provision. In all we evaluated just over 600 sites or facilities. We were then able to classify the spaces and facilities we had audited as being of above average (high) or below average (low) quality and value. We give a copy of the audit forms, and the detailed results, in the Appendices to this report and an overview of the results in Chapter 6. The results constitute a detailed database of local provision with information on factors such as the size and location of different spaces or facilities, quality - and therefore the possible need for enhancement - and value to local people and wildlife.

## **Quality Standards**

We derived quality standards for the future use of the District Council from a variety of sources, including the Green Flag scheme and good practice advice from agencies such as Sport England, the governing bodies of sport and English Nature. The resulting standards are given in Chapter 7.

## **Distance Thresholds**

In order to be able to undertake the accessibility analysis, we first derived distance thresholds from a range of sources, including user surveys of which we had knowledge in other areas of the country. We summarise the process and from it recommend a series of policy aspirations relating to accessibility in Chapter 8. Chapter 10 then summarises the conclusions of applying these distance thresholds to existing provision across the District and in the three main settlements.

## **Quantitative Analysis**

For the quantity analysis, we first analysed the audit results to identify the total quantity of existing provision in each of the main areas of the District, for each element of the typology, expressed as sq m/person.

We then compared local views on the adequacy of existing provision with the quantity of it across the District to establish the level of provision that local interests generally found adequate. Details of this analysis, and the resulting quantity standards, are in Chapter 9. Finally, we compared the level of provision in each area with the amount

required by the application of the quantity provision standard to assess the broad level of need for additional provision across the District.

## **Issues, Options and Policy**

From this work we were able to identify a number of issues on which we believe the Council needs to set out a clear policy direction as part of its Local Development Framework (LDF), which we set out in Chapter 10. We also summarise the approach we recommend the Council to take to these issues in Chapter 12 on Planning Policy and the accompanying draft Supplementary Planning Document.

Related to this, in Chapter 13 we review the open space, sport and recreation allocations the Council has made in its Local Plan. We also comment on the implication of the housing allocations in the plan from the perspective of open space, sport and recreation provision.



## 3: Summary

### Introduction

This chapter provides a brief summary of the results of the assessment.

### Chapter 4: Review of Existing Plans and Strategies

There are four key messages from our review of existing plans and strategies:

- The state of local environments is seen as increasingly important by the Government. It is requiring local authorities to take effective action to deliver what these days is known as “liveability”. Moreover, it is beginning to measure the performance of local authorities in terms of the quality of environment they deliver for their area’s residents and visitors.
- Both the Community Strategy and the Council’s Corporate Strategy contain a number of “hooks” on which to hang this assessment, and policies and proposals arising from it, including enhancing the local environment and local lifestyles and the promotion of healthy eating and exercise.
- The main open space or sport and recreation needs already identified by the Council relate to the pitch sports - more grass pitches and more floodlit pitches for midweek training and matches - and facilities for teenagers.
- The Mid Sussex countryside is a major asset. At present countryside recreation is dependent to a significant extent on the network of rights of way and other paths and bridleways, complemented by paths and rights of way within settlements. However, there is growing pressure for more infrastructure in the form of car parks and picnic sites.

Our document review has also highlighted a number of issues which the Council’s planning and management policies for open space, sport and recreation will have to tackle. They include:

- Using development to deliver enhancements to existing spaces and facilities. This will help drive up the proportion of spaces of Green Flag Award standard and should also help to make development more acceptable to existing residents. In broad terms, across much of the District, enhancement is likely to be a higher priority

than additional provision.

- Providing the Council with a tool it can use to monitor the proportion of green spaces which meet Green Flag Award standard
- Promoting access to and recreational use of the countryside
- Planning policy and guidance for open space sport and recreation in the Council's Local Development Framework, including a specific Supplementary Planning Document, in order to provide adequate protection to existing spaces and facilities, where necessary; and help the Council and its partners deliver both the enhancement of existing spaces and facilities and new provision where it is needed
- Resolving the possible need for more pitches in an area with very high land values
- Assessing the extent to which there is sufficient demand to make it possible for a significant level of community use to help school sports facilities achieve their financial target of at least breaking even
- Evaluating and if appropriate finding ways of meeting the local needs identified by the various community fora
- Facilitating greater access to and use of the countryside without changing its character in any unacceptable ways

## **Chapter 5: Local Needs**

We have identified local needs in three main ways:

- Through a survey of Parish and Town Councils
- By reviewing the results of community consultations undertaken by the Council as part of the preparation of the Community Strategy
- Through a survey of local stakeholders, supplemented by telephone interviews

### **Community Forum Views**

The priorities identified through the District Council's community consultations included:

#### *District-wide Priorities*

- More youth provision, such as skateboard areas
- Better accessibility to facilities
- More sports provision, including swimming pools, athletics tracks, all weather playing surfaces, ice-skating rinks
- More challenging and exciting play equipment for slightly older children (12-16 yrs)
- More play space for young children
- More youth provision and youth clubs
- More cycle ways and horse riding facilities
- More shared use of school facilities and land

#### *North Area Forum Priorities*

- More pitches and courts
- More provision in the villages

#### *South Area Forum Priorities*

- More open spaces in towns, especially public parks
- More affordable pitches use with easier access
- More youth provision – especially kickabout spaces for 8 – 16 year olds
- More shared use of facilities – for example with schools
- More facilities in new developments

#### *Central Area Forum Priorities*

- More informal meadows rather than golf courses; open space is being too “squeezed”
- More safe countryside cycle tracks

#### **MSDC Residents’ Consultations, 2002**

A questionnaire survey undertaken by the District Council in 2002 found that local parks are valued community assets with 43% of respondents using them regularly and 61% classing their local park as good or very good and only 9% thinking it is poor. However, this consultation also found that residents would like to see a number of improvements to parks, including:

- Better security eg lighting/supervision
- Measures to reduce vandalism
- More seating
- More youth provision
- Better toilets
- More gardens/shrubs/wild areas
- Less litter/broken glass

#### **Parish and Town Council Views**

- Most of the rural Parish Councils are generally of the view that the quantity or amount of most forms of provision in their areas is “about right”. The forms of provision that parishes are most critical of are green spaces in housing areas, village greens, play areas for 8-12 years olds, supervised adventure play areas, grass sports pitches and teenage facilities.
- East Grinstead Town Council believes that the amount of several forms of provision is slightly inadequate, notably green spaces in housing areas, recreation grounds, parks and gardens, play areas for 8-12 year old children, adventure play areas and teenage facilities. It also believes there is a significant deficit in terms of grass pitches and youth centres. Ashurst Wood Parish

Council has identified shortfalls in allotments, bowling greens and teenage facilities.

- Haywards Heath Town Council sees a need for more trees, adventure play areas, teenage facilities and youth centres, but regards the level of other forms of provision as about right. Lindfield Parish Council is of the view the amount of most forms of provision is about right, but would like to see more play provision for 8-12 year olds, teenage facilities and youth centres.
- Burgess Hill Town Council is of the view that there is a significant shortfall in most forms of provision in the town, but only a slight shortfall in allotment provision.

The District-wide priorities we have identified through our survey of town and parish councils are:

- A floodlit third generation artificial turf pitch in or close to each of the main towns. These pitches will substitute for more grass pitches and (to a lesser extent, given their multi-functional nature) recreation grounds – which are of course land intensive but can accommodate only low levels of pitch sport use. These ATPs will be able to accommodate high levels of use for football and rugby training and min-soccer and adult football matches.
- Teenage provision at appropriate locations more or less throughout the District. This should consist of areas where teenagers can “hang out” without causing annoyance to others, coupled with skateboard/BMX facilities and possibly floodlit ball courts.
- Developing a new approach to children’s play
- Improving access to the countryside and the improvement of bridleways and off-road cycleways.
- Opening up access to school tennis courts in Burgess Hill and Worth. Given that the Burgess Hill School for Girls is planning to build an 8-court sports hall, partly for netball, it would seem to be a good location for community tennis in Burgess Hill.
- Improving the quality of greenspaces in housing areas, especially in Burgess Hill and East Grinstead as it is not normally practicable to increase the quantity of provision in established housing areas.
- Managing appropriate existing greenspaces in such a way as to promote nature conservation better

### **Sports Bodies**

The pitch sport clubs and leagues from whom we have obtained information believe that the level of grass pitch provision across the District is about right, but with three important caveats:

- There is a need for additional capacity during the “shoulder” seasons. At the end of the football season, cricket clubs are sometimes unable to get pitches because grounds are still being used for football; and at



the end of the cricket season, football clubs cannot book pitches because grounds are still being used for cricket. The answer to at least the second part of this problem is for the football clubs to be able to access artificial turf pitches as it would be unrealistic to provide a number of new grass pitches primarily for pre-season friendly matches and training.

- There is a need for a ground suitable for “show games” such as cup finals. While spectator interest varies, it gives teams a fillip to play finals and other show games on a “special” ground. The most recent Sussex Sunday League final was played at Redhill as this was the nearest affordable ground with suitable spectator provision. There should be an opportunity to negotiate a planning agreement which will allow a limited number of such games to be played at affordable cost if East Grinstead Hill Football Club re-locates to another site.
- If teams are successful and win their leagues, they are naturally keen to gain promotion to a higher league and better competition. However, promotion can also have its drawbacks, as governing bodies require clubs to have a minimum range and standard of facilities at different competitive levels. This leads to clubs wanting to develop spectator accommodation, floodlights and other facilities which can bring them into conflict with nearby residents and, in some parts of the District, planning policy relating to floodlighting. There is no easy answer to this problem, although the number of clubs requiring “higher league” facilities will always be limited as the best players gravitate towards the best clubs. One solution may be for the District Council to take the lead in finding one or more locations where these facilities will be acceptable, seeking Football Foundation money to develop them, and then leasing them, on a year to year basis, to appropriate clubs for as long as they are in a league that requires them. If a club using one of these higher level grounds is demoted it can then “swap grounds” with a team that is promoted.

Other sports needs include:

- At least one additional pitch for rugby for the Haywards Heath Rugby Club
- Artificial cricket wickets, probably mainly for juniors
- Floodlighting for tennis courts

## **Chapter 6: Qualitative Assessment**

The results of our audit of existing provision result in the following strategic conclusions:

- The quality of provision in Mid Sussex compares favourably with provision in the other areas, broadly similar in nature to Mid Sussex, where we have undertaken other audits using the same basic audit forms and methodology.
- The value of Mid Sussex’s greenspaces – to the local

community and in relation to wider issues such as wildlife and biodiversity - is also generally good, but there are many sites where it will be desirable to enhance value if at all possible.

- Possibly the one area in which the various Town and Parish Councils in the District most need to rethink their present approach is in relation to children's play. With an average value score of only 52%, the play value of many sites is quite limited - especially in the context of the often high maintenance costs of play areas.
- It will also be desirable to work with allotments associations to identify the improvements that plot holders would most like to see to sites. On the basis of the audit, there could be merit in seeking to develop a shared approach to composting and rubbish collection, while it may be desirable to provide toilets on at least the larger sites.

## Chapter 7: Quality Standards

The purpose of quality standards is to set out the quality of provision the Council wishes to see in its area. Such standards have two main uses:

- They provide a benchmark for the Council to assess and compare the quality of different facilities of the same type within its area as an aid when determining priorities for improvement or changes to management regimes. Given that it will not always be possible to achieve all aspects of the quality standards - for example because of a lack of resources - in relation to existing provision quality standards are an aspiration. As such they should be challenging, but broadly achievable, and the Council should aim to achieve them wherever it is practicable to do so.
- They set out the Council's requirements as a guide for developers on the quality of provision the Council will expect them either to provide or fund. In this context, quality standards are a requirement, although they must obviously be applied in a way which is reasonable given the specific circumstances of a proposed development.

We have prepared draft quality standards:

Greenspaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessible natural greenspace</li> <li>Allotments</li> <li>Amenity greenspaces</li> <li>Green corridors</li> <li>Equipped play areas</li> <li>Sports pitches</li> <li>Athletics training facilities</li> <li>Bowling greens</li> <li>Tennis courts</li> <li>Urban parks and recreation grounds</li> <li>Teenage Facilities</li> </ul>
Indoor provision	Community centres and halls

Indoor Bowls facilities  
Indoor sports halls and swimming  
pools

Each of the quality standards is derived from examples of best practice, such as the Green Flag Award criteria for parks, or published guidance, for example from English Nature or Sport England, and links directly to the KCA audit forms.

## Chapter 8: Distance Thresholds

Selecting the most appropriate distance thresholds for Mid Sussex is a process of using the available information to determine an appropriate policy aspiration. Unnecessarily short distance thresholds will result in an uneconomic level of provision, with low levels of use; unnecessarily high ones in a pattern of provision which may either cause some residents not to bother travelling or result in high use of cars for visiting spaces and facilities.

While it would be desirable that every resident of the District should be within walking distance of "local" provision such as allotments, bowling greens and tennis courts, this is unrealistic for Mid Sussex with its three main settlements and network of fairly small villages. This means it is necessary to have both walking and driving distance thresholds for most forms of local provision plus, of course, driving thresholds for "strategic" provision such as indoor sports facilities. In addition, because of the desirability of promoting cycling as a sustainable form of travel it is desirable also to have a set of cycling thresholds.

Accordingly we suggest three broad policy aspirations:

- At least 90% of dwellings in the three main towns should be within the walking distance threshold of local provision meeting the quality standard in all respects
- At least 90% of dwellings throughout the District should be within the cycling distance threshold of local provision meeting the quality standard in all respects
- At least 90% of dwellings throughout the District should be within the driving distance threshold of strategic provision meeting the quality standard in all respects

In order to establish straight line distance thresholds, we recommend the following parameters:

- Average walking speed 80 metres/minute
- Average cycling speed 200 m/minute
- Average driving speed 500 m/minute (30 km per hour)
- Straight line distance 75% actual distance

### *Notes*

- 80 m/minute is a typical walking speed

- 200m/minute is a realistic cycling speed for a reasonably flat area
- 30 km/hour driving speed allows for slow travel through villages or towns and time spent parking

The distance thresholds we recommend are:

#### *Local Provision – Walking and Cycling Distance Thresholds*

	Minutes	Walking (m)	Cycling (m)
Multi-functional greenspaces	5	300	N/a
Play areas – young children	5	300	N/a
Natural Greenspaces	10	600	1500
Play areas – older children	10	600	N/a
Teenage areas	10	600	1500
Allotments	15	900	2250
Parks and Gardens	15	900	2250
Bowling greens	15	900	2250
Grass pitches	15	900	2250
Tennis/multi courts	15	900	2250
Artificial turf pitches	20	1200	3000
Athletics facilities	20	1200	3000
Indoor bowls halls	20	1200	3000
Indoor tennis courts	20	1200	3000
Sports halls	20	1200	3000
Swimming pools	20	1200	3000

#### **Notes**

1: The walking thresholds relate only to the three main towns and not the rural areas of the District

2: Multi-functional greenspaces (MFGS) are amenity greenspaces, parks and gardens, playing fields and recreation grounds. All of these spaces serve an amenity purpose for local communities. For the purposes of assessing accessibility, we have included all of them within a single category of MFGS. As everyone should be able to access at least one such space on foot, and at least one children's play area, there is no need for cycling or driving thresholds.

#### *Driving thresholds*

	Minutes	Driving (m)
Allotments	15	5,625
Bowling greens	15	5,625
Grass pitches	15	5,625
Tennis/multi courts	15	5,625
Artificial turf pitches	20	7,500
Athletics facilities	20	7,500
Indoor bowls centres	20	7,500
Indoor sports hall	20	7,500
Indoor swimming pool	20	7,500
Indoor tennis courts	20	7,500

Note: there is no need for a driving distance threshold for teenage facilities as teenagers will generally access them on foot or by bicycle

## **Chapter 9: Quantitative Assessment**

We have reviewed the existing level of provision in the light of identified local needs and our quality and accessibility assessments and as a result recommend the following

## Assessment

quantity standards:

Allotments	1.75 sq m/person
Artificial turf pitches	0.50 sq m/person
Bowling greens	0.17 sq m/person
Equipped play areas	0.65 sq m/person
Grass Pitches	12.25 sq m/person
Parks and gardens	2.00 sq m/person
Teenage areas	0.30 sq m/person
Tennis courts	0.44 sq m/person

### Application of the Quantity Standards

By applying these standards across the District, and comparing the results with the existing level of provision, we have identified a need for a limited amount of additional provision. The main elements of this are:

- Allotments in Burgess Hill, Ardingly, Turners Hill, Haywards Heath, Balcombe, Cuckfield Rural, Bolney and Hassocks
- An additional artificial turf pitch in each of the main towns
- Bowling greens in North Mid Sussex, Central Mid Sussex and Burgess Hill
- Artificial cricket wickets, mainly on school sites
- A need to open up school pitches for greater community use
- More rugby pitches in Haywards Heath/Cuckfield
- A pitch sports centre at the St Paul's Catholic College
- More teenage provision across the District
- More floodlit tennis courts

## Chapter 10: Accessibility Assessment

Our analysis of the accessibility of existing provision results in the following conclusions:

- Overall, the accessibility of provision across the District, and particularly in the three main towns where most residents live, is reasonably good. This said, there are some areas where accessibility is poor, and this tends to fit into a pattern with these areas being poorly served by several forms of provision rather than just one or two.
- The District-wide priority for enhancing greenspaces must be Burgess Hill. Overall, provision there has the lowest quality and value amongst the three towns.
- District residents lack ready access to indoor tennis facilities and are likely to be deprived of their only indoor bowls facility before the end of 2006. The nearest provision that they can use is well outside the District; the same goes for full scale athletics facilities.
- Looking to the future, there is likely to be a need for more artificial turf pitches, especially "third generation" ones designed for football. The most appropriate location for these pitches will be on school or community college sites.

- In the three main towns, increased community use of indoor sports facilities may result in lower levels of use of District Council facilities, especially if the schools set lower charges than the District. The District Council should therefore monitor demand levels closely and seek a sensible agreement with schools over the programming and promotion of community use of school facilities.
- In East Grinstead, the priorities are for better provision in the western and north-eastern areas. The western area lacks good quality natural greenspaces, play areas and teenage facilities, while the north-east Stonequarry area of deprivation requires teenage facilities and better play provision.
- In Haywards Heath, the north-western sector is generally the least well served by existing provision. However, the main priority should generally be to enhance existing provision
- In Burgess Hill, the south-eastern sector to the east of the railway line is generally the least well served by current provision. There is also a lack of good quality greenspace in the Leylands area. However, as in other parts of the District, enhancing the quality of existing greenspaces should have a higher priority than making more provision.

## Chapter 11: Issues and Opportunities

The main issues and opportunities facing the District Council and its partners are:

- Quality versus quantity
- Countryside Provision
- Indoor sports and leisure provision
- Provision for Bowls
- Play provision for Children
- Provision for Tennis
- Provision for Teenagers
- Provision for the Pitch Sports
- Public Parks
- Wasted Spaces

### Quality vs Quantity

Broadly speaking, there is sufficient of most forms of provision across the District for the present population, although there are specific shortfalls in some areas. In terms of quality and value, provision is generally of reasonable quality and slightly better than in other areas where we have undertaken similar assessments. However, it will still be desirable to enhance many spaces in order to improve "liveability" and enhance biodiversity.

### *Recommendations*

- In established settlements and developed areas, the Council should generally protect existing provision and therefore require compensatory provision if it decides to

allow existing spaces or facilities to be redeveloped for some other purpose.

- The Council should draw up a greenspace strategy designed to deliver quality and value enhancements to priority sites, but especially urban parks, using our audit results as a guide.
- The Council should require developers of infill or windfall sites to fund the enhancement of existing spaces or facilities within the relevant distance thresholds in preference to requiring on-site provision
- The Council should ensure that any new on-site provision by developers in new housing areas complies with the quality standards suggested in this assessment in all respects.
- For major new developments, the Council should generally require developers to make on-site provision in accordance with the quantity and quality standards set out above. However, it should require contributions to off-site provision:
  - \* When it will be more in the public interest to require developers to contribute to the enhancement of existing poor quality or value spaces or facilities within the distance threshold of their development
  - \* For artificial turf pitches or parks and gardens

### **Countryside Provision**

Mid Sussex contains very attractive countryside and so it is not surprising that residents and visitors enjoy visiting it. A number of the District's town and Parish councils have identified a need for additional or (particularly) higher quality paths and cycleways.

#### *Recommendations*

The Council should concentrate primarily on four main policy objectives for countryside provision:

- To make it possible for residents to commute between the main towns in the District, and to and from the commuter villages within a few km of them, by bicycle. The obvious priority is to link Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath as they are only a relatively short distance apart.
- To link the main settlements to popular visitor attractions in the countryside such as Ardingly reservoir, the scheduled ancient monuments, the National Trust properties at Wakehurst Place and Nymans Garden and the South Downs National Park.
- To link the main settlements in the District to the long distance paths passing through it
- To make it possible for as many school children as possible to cycle or walk to school, but particularly the secondary schools.

## **Indoor Sports and Leisure Provision**

The Triangle and Dolphin Leisure Centres are well used and provide a good service to local residents. Some of the facilities provided by the independent schools are also well used, usually without any formal community use agreement. The King's Leisure Centre, however, is past its "sell-by date". In addition, the District is facing a significant increase in school sports hall provision likely to be made available for community use.

### *Recommendations*

- The District Council should work closely with schools and the County Council to develop a realistic strategy for community use of school sports facilities
- The District Council should investigate the options for upgrading or replacing the King's Centre, taking full account of any planned new sports hall provision on school sites
- The District, Town and Parish Councils should engage more with the independent schools to ensure a high quality service for the residents of the District's rural areas

## **Provision for Bowls**

There is an identified need for additional outdoor bowling greens, based on our accessibility analysis and the views of Town and Parish Councils. In addition, the proportion of older people in the District's population is rising so the demand for bowling greens is likely to increase over time.

### *Recommendations*

- The Council should seek to allocate sites for new bowling greens in North Mid Sussex (including one in East Grinstead/Ashurst Wood); Central Mid Sussex (including at least one in Haywards Heath); and Burgess Hill (possibly two greens).

## **Provision for Tennis**

Mid Sussex has a significant number of outdoor tennis courts but no indoor ones, nor are there any around the periphery of the District. Given the socio-economic nature of the District's population, indoor tennis is likely to be a popular activity although it probably does not have enough population to attract one of the major commercial indoor tennis clubs.

### *Recommendations*

- The Council should work with Crawley Borough Council to try to attract one of the commercial leisure club operators to the Crawley/East Grinstead area



- The Council should promote the floodlighting of good quality tennis courts wherever possible

### **Play Provision for Children**

To date the Council has followed the recommendations of the National Playing Fields Association in relation to play areas for children and used it as the basis for “playing space” provision standards in its Local Plan. This leads to a very high level of provision of small sites, with limited play value and low levels of use by young children; high maintenance costs as a result of abuse and vandalism; and fairly characterless amenity and other greenspaces in housing areas.

#### *Recommendations*

The District Council should adopt a new approach to children’s play provision based on:

- Designing local greenspaces in such a way as to maximise their play value for children of different ages with opportunities to hide, climb, run around, see nature at work, handle sticks and stones and get dirty or wet
- Fewer but larger play facilities as part of new developments, coupled with requiring developers to design greenspaces in housing areas in such a way that they provide stimulating play environments for children
- Rationalising existing play provision as and when major repairs or refurbishments are needed and “retro-fitting” this new approach to those existing housing areas with an unnecessarily high level of provision, including the upgrading of local greenspaces to make them more stimulating for play
- Requiring developers to design housing environments in which children and other pedestrians have priority over vehicles
- Planning traffic calming schemes with the objective of making streets child-friendly rather than simply slowing down traffic

### **Provision for Teenagers**

Making better provision for teenagers is one of the significant provision issues facing the District Council. The need for it is widely supported by the Community Strategy, the local community and Town and Parish Councils.

#### *Recommendations*

- Mid Sussex should have a network of teenage areas with at least two major facilities in each of the three main towns, supported by “second tier” provision in the rural settlements.
- The Council, in partnership with the town and parish

councils, should identify sites for additional teenage provision on the basis primarily of the distance thresholds recommended earlier in this report.

- The Council, in partnership with the town and parish councils, should engage and work with local teenagers to ensure that provision meets their needs

### **Provision for the Pitch Sports**

The nature of pitch provision in the District is failing to keep up with trends in the pitch sports. The main elements of this are:

- A shortage of floodlit artificial or grass pitches suitable for football and rugby training that can be used mid-week.
- A need to upgrade the facilities that successful teams will need if they are to be able to accept promotion to higher leagues.
- A lack of at least one ground for "show games" such as cup finals.
- A need for more junior and mini-soccer pitches
- A need for better ancillary or changing accommodation
- A need for more rugby pitches and changing suitable for mixed sex use.

### *Recommendations*

- The Council should continue the allocation of land at Bolnore Village for grass pitches for the period covered by its first Local Development Framework, but review the need to develop it for grass pitches once it has experience of the use of the proposed new artificial turf pitches.
- The Council and Cuckfield Parish Council, together with the club, should investigate the potential for providing an additional pitch for the Haywards Heath Rugby Club
- The Council should take a positive and constructive approach to planning applications by clubs which have the potential significantly to expand
- The Council should support the upgrading of a limited number of football and other pitch sport sites in order to allow local teams to accept promotion to higher leagues
- The District Council should identify and allocate sites for at least three floodlit artificial turf pitches across the District
- All new ATPs should be complemented by good quality social and changing accommodation designed for community use and large enough to allow the development of multi-team mixed sex clubs.
- New ATPs should be planned from the start as "central venues" for mini-soccer coaching and matches and the Council should also seek to develop mid-week floodlit football leagues
- The Council should investigate the potential for

developing the artificial pitch at St Paul's Catholic College into a venue for show games and work with the College to secure funding for this from the Football Foundation

- The Council should seek contributions from developers towards the implementation of a District-wide strategy for floodlit ATPs in preference to requiring either on-site grass pitch provision or contributions to off-site grass pitches
- The District Council should encourage and work with each of the major clubs in the District (for example, the three rugby clubs, East Grinstead Sports and Social Club, East Grinstead Football Club, Haywards Heath Football Club, Burgess Hill Football Club and possibly the Boys Club based at Fairfield Recreation Ground in Burgess Hill) to formulate facilities and development plans and support their implementation as much as possible.

### **Public Parks**

Although there are spaces in the main towns which the local community regards as parks, such as Victoria Park and Beech Hurst in Haywards Heath, East Court and Mount Noddy Recreation Ground in East Grinstead, and St John's Park in Burgess Hill, only Beech Hurst is not dominated by sports facilities. Beech Hurst is also the only space with significant colour and horticultural interest. Local communities would clearly like to see better parks in the three main towns.

### *Recommendations*

- The Council should designate at least one site in each of the three main towns as an urban park. These sites should be accessible on foot by as many people as possible within a 10 to 15 minute walk.
- The Council, in partnership with the town councils and local communities, should ensure that each of the designated parks offers a range of facilities or features which will appeal to people of all ages. Ideally they should incorporate areas of water, colour, horticultural interest, play and teenage facilities, tennis courts and/or a bowling green, clumps of large trees, shrubs, toilets and seating areas. The Council should also manage and maintain each of the designated parks at least to the equivalent of Green Flag Standard. The Council has already achieved Green Flags for Beech Hurst in Haywards Heath and the Bedelands Farm Nature Reserve in Burgess Hill but is a park. As part of this process, it should continue to work with user groups and seek to foster the creation of a Friends Group for each park.

## **Wasted Spaces**

The District's Town and Parish Councils have identified a number of "wasted spaces", defined as spaces which in their present form are unused or underused and do not benefit the local communities close to them. The ownership of some of these spaces is unclear.

### *Recommendations*

- The District Council should review the future of each of the "wasted spaces" identified by the Town and Parish Councils

## **Planning Policy**

In broad terms, we recommend that the Council's policy approach to open space, sport and recreation provision should be:

- Protect those sites we have identified in this assessment as being of high quality/high value
- Protect and seek to enhance the quality of those sites we have identified as low quality/high value, seeking contributions from developments on infill and windfall sites for this purpose
- Review the acceptability of using those sites we have identified as being of low quality/low value or high quality/low value for some other purpose and if this is not going to be acceptable seek ways of enhancing their value to the local community in their vicinity or wildlife and nature conservation

## **Local Plan Allocations**

It will be sensible to retain most of the allocations in the existing Local Plan, with the following exceptions:

- Those which have been taken up and implemented
- Burgess Hill: recreation allocation north east of Sheddingdean and Leylands Park (note: this allocation is actually to the west of Leylands Park)
- East Grinstead: children's play area allocation on the Estcotts Estate, off Court Crescent
- Haywards Heath: children's play allocation in Colwell Gardens

In addition, the Council should reconsider the informal open space allocation at Southlands/Dunnings Mill and the leisure/recreation allocation of those parts of the adjacent Dunning's Mill Site currently occupied by the Indoor Bowls Club and the Snooker and Social Club. Together these make up a potentially useful development site for which housing or open space are probably the only realistic uses. There seems to be little need for the former land to be informal open space and access to it as a development site will be limited. However, it should be possible to achieve a significantly better access and better development if the Southlands/Dunning's Mill, Indoor Bowls Club and Snooker

and Social Club sites can be developed in an integrated way to a sensible masterplan. The site has some disadvantages which a comprehensive development should be able to resolve, including the need to culvert one or more of the water courses.



## 4: Context Review

### Introduction

The first step in preparing an assessment such as this is to identify the policy context within which it is set. For obvious reasons, the more that different plans and strategies work to the same broad long term aims the better. This helps to ensure that resources are used as effectively as possible to deliver agreed outcomes. Accordingly we have reviewed a number of national, regional, County and District-wide plans and strategies and this chapter highlights the most significant points. For the most part, we merely summarise what is in the various documents and for the sake of concision, much of it is in the form of bullet points. However, at the end we comment on the specific relevance of these plans and strategies to the PPG17 assessment.

### National Plans and Strategies

The national policy agenda underpinning PPG17 and the ODPM's "Cleaner, Safer, Greener" strap line for sustainable communities has come a long way in a very short time. The next few paragraphs give a brief overview of some of the key national policy and other documents to set the assessment in a national context.

#### Town and Country Parks, the Best and ...

*Published 27 October 1999 as the twentieth report of Session 1998-99 of the Environment, Transport, and Regions Committee of the House of Commons (HC 477-I, ISBN 0-10-556459-1)*

This hard-hitting report, necessarily based on largely anecdotal evidence, was critically important in highlighting the decline of Britain's parks. For example: "We are shocked at the weight of evidence, far beyond our expectations, about the extent of the problems parks have faced in the last 30 years. It is clear that if nothing is done many of them will become albatrosses around the necks of local authorities. Un-used, derelict havens for crime and vandalism, it would be better to close them and re-use the land than to leave them to decay further."

The Committee's identification of the lack of current factual information about parks (which it described as a "statistical vacuum") led directly to the Public Parks

Assessment (see below).

### **Towards an Urban Renaissance (Report of the Urban Taskforce) 2000**

*Published June 1999 by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions and distributed by E&FN Spon, ISBN 1-851121-65-X*

This important report led to the creation of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and the growing recognition of the need for greater urban design input to planning in order to promote "place-making". Its weakness was that it took the view that design can solve almost any problem and largely ignored social issues.

### **Our Towns and Cities: the Future**

*Published by the Stationery Office on behalf of the DETR in November 2000*

The Urban White Paper can be summed up as aiming to make towns and cities places where people with choices will choose to live. It therefore builds on *Towards an Urban Renaissance*. It calls for denser, more compact towns and cities and more development on brownfield land and provided the rationale for much of PPG3 on Housing. One less desirable has been creeping densification as householders with large gardens take the opportunity to sell up to developers who then replace their former houses with flats or town houses, so changing the character of the "leafy suburbs".

### **Rethinking Open Space**

*Kit Campbell Associates (March 2001) for Scottish Executive Planning Services, published by Scottish Executive Central Research Unit*

*Rethinking* described the approach of most planning authorities to open space as "fundamentally flawed" and achieved wide circulation throughout the UK after being described in *Planning* as "excellent research and recommendations". It was the first report to identify the cross-cutting importance of open space to the emerging urban agenda, together with how the planning system should give much greater priority to the enhancement of existing open spaces than requiring developers to provide new ones. It set out a typology of open spaces which the Government's Urban Green Spaces Task Force and PPG17 have since adopted in very slightly modified form, based on the concept of "primary purpose".



## Public Park Assessment

*Urban Parks Forum (2001) and published by the Heritage Lottery Fund ([www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk))*

This important report sought to fill the "statistical vacuum" identified in *Town and Country Parks* (see above). It has attracted considerable media interest with its evaluation of the condition of parks and whether they are improving or failing. Key points from the report include:

- The UK's 27,000 parks cover around 143,000 ha and receive around 1.5 billion visits a year by all sectors of the community. They currently cost local authorities the equivalent of around 42p per visit. The aggregate cut in parks revenue expenditure over the past 20 years is around £1.3 billion.
- Parks are polarising, with good parks getting better and poor parks getting worse; the rate of decline is highest in deprived areas.
- Around 13% of local authorities consider their parks to be in poor condition and the condition of around 40% of parks and open spaces is declining.
- Many parks have lost features such as cafes, toilets, bowling greens and tennis courts.
- There is a clear correlation between good condition and the existence of parks strategies

While the report is generally regarded as clear evidence of serious decline, its value is easily over-stated. Many of the questions asked were extremely vague while key terms such as "poor condition" were not defined. It is also the case that the original need for some traditional elements of parks has disappeared: for example, the development of radio and recording reduced the need for bandstands dramatically. Before them all music had necessarily to be "live". Just because expenditure is lower now than some years ago does not necessarily imply that resources are inadequate, although looking at almost any park supports the findings of the research. What is certain is that CCT, in particular, has resulted in the de-skilling of park staff: "on-site gardeners" have become travelling maintenance contractors. In turn, this has led to the simplification of parks and other open spaces to make them more suitable for machine maintenance. Increasingly there is a view that parks and open spaces are designed for maintenance machines rather than people and it is time to reverse this.

## **Public Spaces: The Role of PPG17 in the Urban Renaissance**

*Third report of session 2001-02 of the Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee of the House of Commons (HC238-I, published 20 February 2002, ISBN 0 215 00190 7)*

This report relates to the Select Committee Inquiry into the draft revision of PPG17 (published by the Government in March 2001) in autumn 2001. It identifies the central importance of green space quality to the urban renaissance and makes a number of recommendations which have since been reflected in PPG17. Again, the Memoranda submitted to the Committee and its minutes of evidence provide a wealth of information. They can be downloaded from the same website as the main report.

## **Green Spaces, Better Places**

*Published by the DTLR in May 2002 as the final report of the Urban Green Spaces Task Force (UGSTF) with six accompanying Working Group reports and a major research report by the University of Sheffield entitled Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Green Spaces.*

The Urban White Paper called for a "vision for the future of our parks, play areas and green spaces". The job of the UGSTF, chaired by a Minister, was to develop that vision. Its final report identifies the importance of green spaces to urban life and outlines current concerns about parks and other green spaces, together with proposals for overcoming them. It argues for a strategic policy framework and additional resources for planning, design and management and that green spaces are fundamental to liveable, sustainable towns and cities.

Related Sheffield University research examined how parks and open spaces are used and by whom, what users want from them, what they currently provide and their wider benefits to urban environments.

## **PPG17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation**

*Published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 24 July 2002.*

This new guidance represents a considerable policy shift from the original 1991 version and is a huge step forward which relates strongly to the whole of the Government's "liveability" and urban renaissance agendas. The key changes include:

- Putting open space at the heart of the document. In the 1991 version, Sport and Recreation, open space was

fairly peripheral, while many took the view that open space had been shoe-horned into the March 2001 draft revision, almost on an opportunistic basis.

- Promotion of a clear typology of open spaces
- A clear statement that planning authorities should undertake local assessments and audits, with both qualitative and quantitative components, to set local standards and not continue to rely on national standards.
- A welcome emphasis on quality and accessibility - interestingly, including charges, which is not a land use issue
- Clear recognition of the importance of enhancing existing open spaces and facilities and clear guidance that planning obligations can be used to remedy both qualitative and quantitative deficiencies in provision
- Recognition of the importance of linking the "planning system" to the "management system", with local assessments providing the starting point for open space strategies
- A clear policy statement that before an open space can be redeveloped for some other purpose, it must be "surplus to requirements" in terms of the full open space typology and not just its existing use
- Making clear that planning authorities can require commercial and industrial developers to provide or contribute to open space or sport and recreation facilities; this opens up the possibility, for example, of requiring office and retail developers to contribute to parks which might be used by their workers or shoppers. The only problem with this is finding a defensible way of calculating the required contributions.
- Planning authorities are expected to seek to enhance the rights of way network - hitherto this has usually been seen as primarily a highways matter
- A greater role for local communities

### **Living Places**

*ODPM and other Government Departments, October 2002*

*Living Places* should be seen in the context of the Government's stated desire to enhance the "liveability" of urban areas and promote an urban renaissance. It includes an interesting definition of public spaces: "everywhere between the places we live and work", and includes "internal public places such as libraries and town halls".

The main theoretical underpinning for *Living Places* is that "liveability" depends on a sustainable high quality public realm which is clean and green and in which individuals feel safe. It has two main thrusts:

- Reducing some forms of anti-social behaviour and improving the public sector's response to the most obvious consequences of it: for example, litter, graffiti,

fly-tipping, joy-riding, abandoned cars and dog fouling and chewing gum – a big issue for everyone who has noticed that most pavements are so covered in discarded gum that they seem to have measles. The Prime Minister's recent championing of "Respect" is obviously a continuation of this agenda.

- Promoting better "joined up thinking", and more importantly joined up action, amongst the various public agencies responsible for the design and maintenance of the public realm.

*Living Places* therefore builds on themes first set out in the Urban White Paper and developed (albeit to an agenda limited to greenspace) through the work of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce. When taken together with other policy statements, such as PPG17, it is clear there has been a revolution in Government thinking, with a determination to promote enhanced community involvement in issues affecting local environments and to push quality of life issues up the agenda.

*Living Places* acknowledges that there have been too many attempts in the past at "short-term fixes", often little more than cosmetic, and the real need is for long term mainstream resourcing. However, it fails to recognise that the Government-created framework of endless initiatives and the "bid culture" is partly to blame for this.

#### **Local Development Framework Monitoring**

*(ODPM March 2005, with updated guidance on Core Output Indicators in October 2005)*

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Planning Policy Statement 12 and various regulations require local planning authorities to submit an annual monitoring report to the ODPM on progress with implementing their local development schemes and the extent to which policies in Local Development Documents are being implemented successfully. Part of this report is to provide details on a number of core indicators specified by the Government. One of them is the amount and percentage of total open space managed to Green Flag Award Standards (indicator 4c). Councils are expected to include details of spaces managed to this standard, but not necessarily in receipt of a Green Flag award. The spaces to be included are all those without any undue restrictions on access and no charge and can be publicly or privately owned.

#### **Circular 5/2005, Planning Obligations**

*(ODPM, July 2005)*

The Government intended Circular 5 to clarify the earlier Circular 1/97 on Planning Obligations and put in place some relatively minor reforms to the planning obligations system that do not require primary legislation. It is doubtful whether it has achieved the first of these

objectives (the new circular is much longer than the one it replaces). In terms of reform, the new circular:

- Reinforces the policy tests in Circular 1/97 for the reasonableness of planning obligations - but then undermines them by stating that planning obligations “should not be used solely to resolve existing deficiencies in infrastructure provision” (paragraph B9). The application of the tests indicates clearly that obligations should be used only to mitigate the impacts of proposed developments.
- Indicates that where councils “do not have existing high level policies specifically relating to planning obligations in their adopted local plan ... they should set out the implications for planning obligations of the relevant topic-based Development Plan Document policies (eg transport or open space) in a Supplementary Planning Document, based on the policies in this Circular” (paragraph B27). In the past, Supplementary Planning Guidance had to be related directly to one or more development plan policies rather than rely wholly on Government circulars.
- Makes clear that obligations can be used to prescribe the nature of a development in order to achieve planning objectives; mitigate the impact of a development; or compensate for loss or damage caused by development.
- Makes clear that planning authorities can require developers to make arrangements for the maintenance of provision secured through an obligation “in perpetuity” (an obviously misleading phrase), provided it is primarily for the benefit of the users of the associated development.

It is possible that the Government will introduce a Planning Gain Supplement to replace at least part of the planning obligations system within the next couple of years, thereby creating the uncertainty for developers that it claims to want to avoid.

## **Regional Plans and Strategies**

### **Regional Planning Guidance for the South-East (RPG9)**

RPG9 pays scant regard to open space or sport and recreation except for a few passing references, such as in Policy Q2:

*The quality of life in urban areas, including suburban areas, should be raised through significant improvement to the urban environment, making urban areas more attractive places in which to live, work, shop, spend leisure time and invest, thus helping to counter trends to more dispersed patterns of residence and travel. Development plans should ... maximise the positive contribution which trees, other planting and open spaces can make to urban areas in terms of their*

*recreational, nature conservation and wider environmental and social benefits.*

### **Mission Possible - The Strategy for Sport in the South-east**

Sports planning in England is driven by the Government's strategy, *Game Plan*, which has two main aims: increasing and widening participation and achieving more international success. In relation to the former, *Game Plan* calls for a 1% increase in participation in every year to 2020. Given that participation in many sports is at best static, and others are in decline, this is a hugely ambitious and probably unrealistic target, whatever it actually means. The way it is expressed is at best ambiguous. For example, a rise in participation for a particular activity from 10% to 11% is often described as a 1% increase, but is actually a 10% increase.

*Game Plan* is complemented by Sport England's jargon-ridden national framework for sport. English regions are expected, if not required, to base their regional sports strategies on it. The South-east regional strategy, *Mission Possible*, has six strategic priorities:

- Building the delivery system
- Building capacity
- Marketing sport
- Building infrastructure
- Improving performance
- Strategic planning

It has no fewer twenty priorities, also jargon-ridden:

- Building the delivery system
- Building capacity
- Creating active workplaces
- Improving performance
- Measurement
- Programme management
- Developing multi-sport environments
- Whole sport plans and building the delivery system
- National centre performance improvement
- Active Places
- Planning contributions
- Spatial planning
- Regional partners
- Communications programme
- Integrated campaigning strategy
- Local partners
- Performance management
- Sweating the assets
- London 2012

One significant aspect of this strategy for planning

authorities is that Sport England has latched on to the potential to generate developer contributions towards the provision of new or enhanced sports facilities. There are two ways in which this is sensible. First, planning authorities should always be ensuring that community infrastructure keeps pace with housing development; and second, the more that those areas with development pressures – such as Mid Sussex – benefit from developer contributions, the more that Sport England and Sports Lottery Funding can be used in areas of housing market failure. In these areas, the potential to generate developer contributions is at best very limited. However, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is at least partly a means of providing the Lottery Sports Fund with a rationale for discriminating against the “better” areas of the country, where participation in sport tends to be highest.

## County Council Strategies

### School to Community Sport Strategy

West Sussex County Council has prepared a draft framework for extending and linking school sport to and with the wider community. At present its status is simply that of a discussion document and set of uncosted aspirations.

#### *Objectives*

The strategy's objectives include:

- To develop a partnership between school and community that increases participation and leads to better health, well being and overall quality of life of the school and wider community
- To improve the quality of sporting opportunities in terms of the range and type of facilities available and the coaching and support for sports
- To be fully inclusive; restating the ethos of “sport for all”
- To ensure maximisation of facilities by both school and community

The strategy covers the period from 2005-2015 and aims to make significant progress in the period to 2010. In particular, it states that:

- All secondary schools should have a four badminton court sports hall by 2015
- 50% of secondary schools should have a 3 or 4 court multi-use games area (floodlit where possible) by 2010 and all should have one by 2015
- 75% of secondary schools should have an artificial turf pitch, floodlit where possible, by 2010 and all should have one by 2015

The County Council intends that all of these facilities will be available for community use. It accepts that there will

be a range of possible management approaches, but envisages that all of them will share some common objectives, including:

- Achieving break even on operating costs, and possibly an operating surplus
- Securing funding for re-investment and asset maintenance
- Providing a balanced programme that responds to both school and community needs
- Avoiding duplication with other providers
- Ensuring subsidised use for specific target groups

#### *The Sports College Network*

In Mid Sussex, there is one sports college – St Paul's Catholic College on the edge of Burgess Hill, a stone's throw from the Triangle Leisure Centre with its indoor facilities, floodlit ATP and multi-courts. The County Council envisages that St Paul's, like other sports colleges across the county, will become the hub of a sports partnership – that is, a family of local schools that come together to provide sports opportunities for both school pupils and the wider community. A typical partnership comprises the sports college, eight secondary schools and around 45 primaries.

#### *Comments*

The strategy is based on attracting significant external funding and envisages that avoiding duplication will be achieved through the creation of liaison partnerships between schools, district councils and the further/higher education sector. It remains to be seen whether the required funding will materialise. Assuming it does, however, the District will see a significant increase in high capacity sports provision. It is therefore unfortunate that the strategy does not address the potentially very difficult issue of whether there will be sufficient demand to allow a significantly increased number of community use facilities on school sites to achieve the financial objective of at least breaking even.

## **District Plans and Strategies**

### **Community Strategy, 2004-2014**

The Community Strategy was produced by the Mid Sussex Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and is based on six broad themes:

- The environment
- Community safety
- Housing and Inclusion
- Lifestyle
- Health and social care
- The economy



The Strategy seeks “to improve social, economic and environmental well-being and to improve the quality of life for everyone.” It emphasises the importance of partnership working in order to address the needs of local communities and splits the District into three areas based on one of the main towns – North, Central and South Mid Sussex – each with an Area Community Forum.

At a District-wide level, actions the LSP partners aim to progress which relate in some way to this assessment include (with the broad theme in brackets):

- Ensure that villages continue to support mixed communities with access to a wide range of services (Environment)
- Protect and enhance the local rural and urban environments (Environment)
- Maintain and enhance the landscape (Environment)
- Provide and promote a range of facilities for young people (Lifestyle)
- Provide informal facilities for young people eg skateparks and multi-use areas (Lifestyle)
- Provide specific youth facilities in parks and open spaces eg youth shelters (Lifestyle)
- Carry out local environmental enhancement projects with voluntary and statutory organisations (Lifestyle)
- Improve the health of the community through health promotion and by taking measures to reduce pollution of air, land and water (Health and Social Care)
- Promote the benefits of healthy eating and exercise to all parts of the community
- Set up a “Green Gym” within the District so GPs can refer patients to conservation work under the guidance of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (Health and Social Care)

In the three areas of the District, the strategy highlights a need:

- To improve the leisure opportunities available to those in rural areas (Northern area)
- To seek appropriate levels of contributions towards new and improved leisure facilities from developers of new housing sites (Central area)
- To continue to develop opportunities for leisure activities and facilities for use by all sectors of the population (Southern area)

#### **MSDC Corporate Plan, 2004-2007**

The Council’s Corporate Plan is based on three key themes – Better Environment, Better Lives and Better Services – and partnership working for the benefit of the community. The “Better Lives” section contains most of the guidance on open space, sport leisure and recreation and includes:

- Providing and promoting targeted leisure services which encourage greater participation in exercise for all parts of the community
- Managing and improving the District's parks and open spaces for the benefit and health of the community
- Implementing arts and sports action plans to achieve the objectives of the Cultural Strategy

### **Our Green Heritage – A Landscape and Biodiversity Strategy for Mid Sussex, 2001**

*“Countryside recreation is one of the most popular recreational activities. A sustainable and attractive countryside with a rich wildlife is fundamental to this asset”.*

This Strategy notes that the two major threats to biodiversity in the District come from development and changing land management practices. It therefore seeks to:

- Enhance and maintain the existing landscapes and biodiversity
- Increase biodiversity by sympathetically maintaining the landscape and enhancing and creating habitats
- Promote the District's varied landscapes and habitats, with the wildlife they support, to both residents and visitors

Sussex is the second most wooded county in Britain and there are significant areas of woodland, grassland, hedgerows, rivers/inland wetland and agriculturally cultivated land. Rare habitats such as heathland and unimproved lowland meadow are also noteworthy.

The strategy reviews the District's characteristics and biodiversity for the three landscape areas of:

- The South Downs Natural Area
- The Low Weald Natural Area
- The High Weald Natural Area

In the High Weald area there are:

- 36 designated SNCIs
- Six woods designated as SSSIs
- Eight sites included in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens
- Three main parklands: High Beeches, Nymans Gardens, Wakehurst Place, all having high conservation value
- Areas of valuable woodland, grassland, heathland, wetlands and other habitats to be protected and managed appropriately.

In the Low Weald area there are:

- Four sites designated as SNCIs, of which one is also an LNR
- A number of historic parks and gardens but most are unregistered, so have little protection
- Areas of valuable woodlands, wetlands, pasture/farmland and hedgerows to protect and manage

In the South Downs area there are:

- Ten sites designated as SSSIs
- 13 Scheduled Ancient Monuments and many other sites are of archaeological interest
- Areas of valuable chalk grasslands/heath, cultivated land, wetlands and historic sites to manage carefully.

### *Trees and Woodlands*

Whilst seeking to reduce the number of new conifer plantations and reverse the degradation of sandrock outcrops and ghyll woods, the Strategy seeks to safeguard and improve:

- Hedgerows
- The landscape form
- Woodlands
- Coppice woodland
- Trees and biodiversity in parklands

### *Towns and Villages*

*“Pocket parks and other areas are important sites which hold significant conservation value with the towns and villages and are extremely valued as a local nature resource. These include pocket parks, public parks, public open spaces, cemeteries, allotments, hospital grounds, town squares and communal gardens of residential developments”.*

In or close to the District’s towns and villages there are:

- 11 designated SNCIs within the three main towns
- Over 300 small areas of habitat value, within or close to towns and village where local people can enjoy the countryside. These areas are important as they increase people’s understanding of biodiversity and encourage local involvement and action within their surrounding landscape.
- Important areas of green corridors, public open spaces, LNRs and SNCIs and other small areas to manage responsibly and for the benefit of habitats and species.

The Strategy’s Action Plan objectives include safeguarding and improving existing green corridors and developing green corridors around major settlements – for example through the Scrase Valley.

Haywards Heath benefits from:

- Large residential gardens with mature trees
- Blunt's Wood LNR
- Scrase Valley LNR

Burgess Hill benefits from:

- Bedelands Farm LNR
- 2 cemeteries designated as SNCIs

### **Cultural Strategy, 2002-2007**

The Strategy has a broad remit, covering diverse activities relating to sports, the arts, tourism, libraries, museums, leisure and recreation and aims to "maximise the opportunities that can result from developing cultural opportunities in Mid Sussex".

Under this umbrella strategy, more specific strategies exist for the arts, sports, landscape and biodiversity, and tourism (now expired).

There are no specific tasks and targets set against the Cultural Strategy, with it being a broad "overarching framework". However, its objectives are to:

- Improve access to cultural activities
- Develop effective partnerships and communication
- Maximise available resources
- Increase and broaden participation in cultural activities
- Develop a network of facilities to accommodate cultural activity
- Protect and enhance our natural and built heritage
- Encourage the development of cultural events and festivals
- Develop cultural activity to support personal, community and economic development
- Promote and publicise culture in Mid Sussex
- Demonstrate the value of cultural development in Mid Sussex

### **Sports Strategy, 2004 - 2008**

The goals of the Sports Strategy mirror those of the Cultural Strategy and there is an overall aim of increasing the effective use of existing and future resources and optimising opportunities from developing sports. More specifically, the Strategy aims:

- To improve access to sports facilities
- To develop effective partnerships and communication
- To optimise available resources
- To increase and broaden participation in sports

activities

- To develop a network of facilities to accommodate sports activity
- To protect and enhance the natural and built heritage
- To encourage the development of sports events and festivals
- To develop sports activity to support personal, community and economic development
- To promote and publicise sport in Mid Sussex
- To demonstrate the value of sport provision in Mid Sussex

### **Playing Pitch Strategy, 1997 – 2007**

The Pitch strategy has been in place for some eight years and is based on action in a number of key areas:

- Protecting existing pitches
- The provision of new pitches
- Dual use of school pitches
- Partnership working with local sports clubs
- Increasing pitch capacity
- The development of artificial pitches
- Meeting league requirements
- Grant schemes and funding
- Ancillary facilities
- Floodlighting

Some elements of the strategy have been overtaken by events and are no longer completely valid. Nonetheless, we summarise its content below.

#### *Protection of Existing Pitches*

The strategy notes that the development pressures on pitch sites are increasing, but seeks strongly to resist development which would result in the loss or significant reduction of the number of pitches. It also notes that developers consider that there is potential for housing on Haywards Heath Football Club (owned) site and East Grinstead FC (leased) site. The Council will support such developments only if any move to a new site by one or both of the clubs will result in them gaining access to at least comparable replacement facilities.

#### *Provision of New Pitches*

The strategy seeks to provide new pitches where there is a deficiency and identifies a need for 35 more grass pitches and two ATPs. Recent developments and proposals that partially addresses this shortfall include:

- Recent developments: St Paul's College in Burgess Hill (eventually to include 7 adult or junior grass football pitches); the full size ATP at The Triangle Leisure Centre; and the water-based floodlit ATP at East

## Grinstead Sports Club

- Proposals: additional ATPs with community use planned at Downlands School in Hassocks and St Paul's College in Burgess Hill (awaiting funding decisions); Haywards Heath Rugby Club (2 additional grass pitches and a floodlit training area); provision of a junior pitch and kickabout area on the site of the former St Paul's School in Haywards Heath; and 13 acres of land to be made available for sports pitches and facilities in the Bolnore Village development close to Haywards Heath

### *Community Use of School Sports Facilities*

Increasing the stock of pitches is hindered by the very high land values in Mid Sussex. This makes the community use of school facilities critically important.

The Council's Capital Grant scheme has supported funding for improvements including:

- Imberhorne School, East Grinstead – grass pitches
- Downlands School – grass pitches, artificial wicket

Other school facilities to be available for public use include grass pitches at Blackwell School in East Grinstead. In addition, many of the independent schools in the District have a policy of making their pitches available to the local community, although this is sometimes easier in school holidays than during term.

### *Partnership working with sports clubs*

The Strategy encourages local voluntary clubs to make their facilities available for community use 25% of the time, in return for discretionary rate relief. Six football, six cricket, three rugby and one mixed pitch sports club are involved with the scheme. Such schemes can be difficult to police and can lead to ineffective use of facilities. In future, local clubs may prefer to gain rates relief by registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs.

### *Pitch Capacity and Drainage*

The strategy states that the Council will:

- Progress and review the pitch drainage programme
- Promote the use of pitches at off-peak times and reduce concentrations of play
- Encourage off-pitch training
- Offer advice on grounds maintenance and management techniques
- Investigate other ways in which the capacity of local pitches can be increased

All of the 39 MSDC managed sites have had drainage

works carried out since 1997, as have nine other sites that are not Council managed. These works have resulted in greater carrying capacities with fewer cancelled games.

In spite of this, most MSDC managed pitches were used to capacity at the time the Council prepared the strategy and so it encouraged off peak play through devolved management. Awareness of the Council's pitch availability has been heightened through newsletters and an on-line information service – for example, indicating whether pitches are playable.

The increased number of ATPs has reduced pressure on pitches for training as has investment in all weather training areas and kickabout areas.

### *Artificial Pitches*

The following issues are likely to affect ATP provision in the future:

- Most senior schools, the three town-based football clubs and Hassocks FC aspire to having an ATP. Haywards Heath Rugby Club is planning a floodlit training facility, if it manages to secure more land.
- Planning permission has been granted for floodlighting the new site at Bolnore Village but a decision has yet to be made about providing an ATP at this location.
- The ATP at the Triangle Leisure Centre and the sand-filled ATP at the East Grinstead Sports and Social Club will both need new carpets before 2010.

### *League Requirements*

Sports leagues often specify the range of facilities that clubs must have in order to play in higher divisions. Where these facilities are not available, teams sometimes have to refuse promotion and then lose players. Accordingly the strategy states that the Council will

- Support clubs seeking to develop improved facilities where appropriate
- Investigate options for supporting clubs to enable higher standards of competition play, in conjunction with leagues, clubs, pitch providers and governing bodies
- Support the conversion of existing sports pitches from one sport to another where there is evidence to justify such a change

Football has benefited from the withdrawal of hockey clubs from grass pitches, particularly at Hickman's Lane, Lindfield and Whitemans Green, Cuckfield. In Haywards Heath, some adult pitches have been converted into small sided and junior football pitches.

Women's and girl's football, rugby and cricket are gaining in popularity. In future, the strategy suggests that there could be insufficient grass pitches and training facilities to support women's and girl's teams.

### *Grant schemes and funding*

A recent review of the Council's grant schemes may make it harder for it to support club facilities in future. Financial restraints on the Council's repair and maintenance budgets could also mean a decline in the quality of facilities available; currently there is no scope for new facilities.

### *Ancillary Facilities*

The Council supports appropriate projects to develop and improve ancillary facilities where these will enable pitches to be fully utilised, enable local clubs to develop and provide community facilities for which a need has been identified. The estimated cost of making existing ancillary sports facilities DDA compliant, however, is over £350,000 and the Council does not have the resources to fund these works.

### *Floodlighting*

In principle, the strategy supports floodlights for sports pitches to enable mid week play and off pitch training. It notes that League requirements also mean that there is pressure on football clubs to provide floodlighting. However, the AONB status of much of the District, together often with opposition from residents, means that securing planning permission for floodlighting can be very difficult.

### **Youth Strategy**

The Youth Strategy 2003-8 identifies eight key issues for young people, relating to their need for:

- Somewhere warm and safe to meet
- Information and advice
- Leisure activities and specifically opportunities to have fun or do something exciting and the lack of major leisure facilities such as multi-screen cinemas or ten pin bowling centres
- Transport
- Personal safety
- Advice on drugs and alcohol
- Power
- Respect

The strategy notes that there are around 12,500 young people aged 11-18 in the District and that approximately 4,250 (34%) are in the rural area; 3,500 (28%) in Burgess Hill; 2,625 (21%) in East Grinstead; and 2,125 (17%) in Haywards Heath. Accordingly almost exactly two thirds of



the District's young people live in one of the three main towns.

### **Outdoor Playing Space Survey, 2002-2006**

During the Local Plan Inquiry, while recognising that PPG17 had been published too late to influence Local Plan policy, the Inspector recommended that a local needs assessment be carried out and its findings incorporated into Supplementary Planning Guidance. This study provided the basis for taking the recommended provision standards forward and assessed the current level of provision against the NPFA standard for six areas of the District:

- East Grinstead
- Haywards Heath
- Burgess Hill
- North Area
- Central Area
- South Area

The survey found that for sports playing fields, pitches, greens and courts, the quantity of provision in relation to population is highest in the South and the Central areas and lowest in Burgess Hill, while for children's play areas, provision is highest in East Grinstead and Burgess Hill, but low in the Central Area, Haywards Heath and the North Area.

### **Mid Sussex Local Plan, 2004**

#### *Policy Aims*

The Local Plan's recreation policy aims are:

- To support appropriate and adequate sport/recreation provision for all age groups throughout the District
- To safeguard sports and recreational facilities
- To ensure adequate provision within or near new development
- To support appropriate informal recreational use of the countryside
- To encourage private and voluntary initiatives in sports and recreation provision

#### *District-wide policies*

The plan contains a number of District-wide policies, supplemented by area-specific proposals and allocations which are relevant to this assessment:

- Policy R1 states that proposals for new sporting and recreational developments will be permitted where they will enhance the range and quality of facilities within the District, subject to safeguards such as that they will not be detrimental to the area or amenity of nearby

residents, suitably located and accessible by a choice of means of transport

- Policy R2, *Protection of existing recreational space*, permits the loss of formal or informal open space of value only where:
  - \* A replacement site has been identified that will be developed to provide facilities of an equivalent or improved standard.
  - \* The replacement site is fully operational before commencing development on the original site
- Policy R3, *Off Site Provision*, states that new residential development will not be permitted unless it incorporates appropriate outdoor playing space in accordance with the NPFA Six Acre standard. This is complemented by Policy R4, which requires that where on-site provision of outdoor playing space is not possible or appropriate, the developer should enter into a planning obligation with the Council to secure appropriate financial contributions towards the provision of outdoor playing space required elsewhere.
- Policy R5, *ATPs and Floodlighting*, supports proposals for ATPs provided there is no unacceptable impact on the amenity of neighbouring residents.
- Policy R6, *Informal Open Space*, states that the Council will require the provision of informal open space within or adjacent to new housing developments in addition to the outdoor playing space requirements set out in Policy R3.
- Policy R11, *Noisy Sports*, states that proposals for noisy sports will be permitted only where a number of pre-conditions are met
- Policy R14, *Bluebell Railway*, safeguards the proposed line of the Bluebell Railway to East Grinstead but states that the Council will not support proposals which might have a significant adverse impact on the environment.
- Policy CS2, *Dual Use*, requires that new educational facilities and extensions should be designed to enable dual use for community purposes.
- Policy CS3, *Reuse of Educational Land and Facilities*, supports the appropriate development or change of use of land and/or buildings used by educational institutions to community or recreational uses.
- Policy CS10, *Allotments*, states that the Council will not permit proposals which would result in the loss of existing allotments.

### *The Importance of the Mid Sussex countryside*

The Local Plan notes that:

- Local people rate good access to the countryside as very important for their leisure and recreation. Cycle paths, footpaths and bridleways are particularly important.
- The high quality and attractive Mid Sussex countryside provides an attractive setting for local towns and villages and prevents coalescence between settlements.
- The countryside around settlements provides a valuable resource for supporting nature conservation – with particular species and habitats protected in many areas

It also highlights some threats to these positive aspects of the countryside, including:

- Development pressures in the towns and villages
- Pressure to accommodate a wide range of activities, in particular for tourism and informal recreation

### *The Countryside Network*

The Mid Sussex countryside network consists of important sites for leisure and recreation, attractive landscapes and designated sites for wildlife conservation, as well as a network of rights of way and paths. It contains a rich variety of attractive landscapes, with over half the area being included within Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Both High Weald and Sussex Downs are examples of important AONB sites.

### *Rights of Way Network*

The Countryside Agency's view is that the rights of way network is "the single most important means by which the public can enjoy the countryside". This network includes:

- Footpaths
- Bridleways
- RUPPs (Roads Used as Public Paths)
- BOATs (Byways Open to All Traffic)

These routes provide the opportunity for walkers, riders and off-road cyclists to explore the countryside and reduce potential conflict with motorists on the road network.

Rights of Way within towns and villages provide important links both within and between settlements and rural countryside network. Using the rights of way network also provides local people with informal recreation in the countryside. Important examples that pass through Mid-Sussex include:

- Long distance bridleways such as the South Downs Way

- Long distance footpaths such as the Sussex Border Path
- Paths on disused railway tracks such as the Forest Way and the Worth Way

### *Recreation in the Countryside*

Rural recreation is currently limited mainly to the network of footpaths and bridleways. There is a need to manage the growing pressure for new and improved facilities such as car parks, picnic sites and overnight accommodation, which could damage the qualities that attract people to the countryside in the first place.

Countryside recreation management ranges from wardens and rangers patrolling heavily used sites to “way marking” information boards, leaflets and maps. Management is visible mainly through defined and maintained paths, styles and gates, local nature reserves and pocket parks.

Public access to countryside recreation sites is also provided by:

- Forest Enterprise at Gravetye Woods
- Southern Water at Ardingly Reservoir
- National Trust/Royal Botanic Gardens, for example, at Wakehurst Place

### *Provision for Cyclists*

Cycling is a very popular leisure pursuit in the District and often used as a means of gaining access to the countryside. There are three well established circular cycle routes within the District:

- The High Weald Route (around East Grinstead)
- The Central Mid Sussex Route (around Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill)
- The Downs View Route (south of Burgess Hill)

Recently, three other important routes have also been developed for cyclists:

- Burgess Hill: a main footpath/cyclepath at the Southway in Burgess Hill
- Between Crawley and East Grinstead, a new cycle way along Worth Way will become part of the National Cycle Network
- Between Burgess Hill and Hassocks, a cycle path alongside the A273

The Local Plan also supports a further possible route between Hassocks and Hurstpierpoint, to provide a safe route for children travelling to school, and a cycleway between Haywards Heath and Cuckfield.

### *Equestrian Recreation*

Equestrian activities have become increasingly popular in recent years. The Council supports sensitive and appropriate developments for “horseculture” but the Local Plan notes that there have been problems of over-use and consequential erosion on bridleways where there are particular concentrations of stables and riding schools.

### **Countryside, Leisure and Recreation Policies**

Separate Local Plan chapters contain policies that seek to protect the countryside from inappropriate development and guide appropriate countryside leisure and recreation developments. More specific Local Plan policies aim to:

- Protect the countryside from inappropriate development and conserve its appearance and character
- Support a countryside of varied and productive economic and social activity ... and ensure that development takes place in a sustainable manner
- Define the built-up areas of towns and villages and retain the strategic and local gaps between them to protect their individual identity and amenity and prevent coalescence
- Protect the best and most versatile agricultural land
- Protect wildlife, their habitats and the special features of areas designated as being of ecological importance.

In terms of Countryside Recreation and Tourism, the plan seeks to:

- Support appropriate and adequate sport/recreation provision for all age groups throughout the District
- Safeguard sports and recreational facilities
- Ensure adequate provision within or near new development
- Support appropriate informal recreational use of the countryside
- Encourage private and voluntary initiatives in sports and recreation provision

### **Access to Countryside**

#### *Burgess Hill*

Burgess Hill is separated from neighbouring towns by two vulnerable strategic gaps of countryside. Its residents have access to a large swathe of countryside around the town, although parts of it suffer from traffic noise. A strategic gap known as the “Green Crescent”, which the Council has designated as informal public open space, circles over half the circumference of the west side of the town. It is in a mixture of public and private ownership.

The Crescent extends from Batchelors Farm in the south east to the Bedelands Farm LNR in the north east and the Council is creating formal paths along its length. In addition, it is improving access points and their signage. The Crescent provides good links to existing paths and a variety of locations with public access including the entrance opposite Tesco, the Malthouse Lane graveyard and the Triangle Leisure Centre.

The Crescent is an important strategic resource for the town and surrounding population for informal recreation, education and conservation activities. The general landscape of the Crescent is a pleasant mix of open fields generally enclosed by small pockets of woodland, some of which contain small ponds and streams. It provides good access with a network of paths leading into the countryside around the town. However, crossing the busy road from the town into the Green Crescent can be difficult.

### *East Grinstead*

East Grinstead also sits in very attractive countryside which extends to the edge of the built up area and includes part of the High Weald AONB. There is a good network of paths and open spaces in the town, making it possible to walk from King George's Field in the town centre to the open countryside beyond Ashplats Wood using an almost unbroken chain of open spaces. The Local Plan aims to safeguard and add to this important characteristic of the town by linking spaces with paths and the town with countryside where possible.

The disused railway cuttings of St Margaret's Loop to the west of the town centre are potentially attractive but overgrown, although a number of the many mature trees have a TPO designation. They represent an opportunity to provide public access to informal open space in the heart of the town. The Plan supports the possibility of a public linear walk and cycle way at this site.

Both the long distance bridleways of Worth Way and Forest Way lead from the town into the surrounding countryside, following the tracks of disused railway lines. They are valued highly and well used. The Local Plan supports linking these routes physically or at least signing their links better.

### *Haywards Heath*

Haywards Heath is also set within an attractive area of countryside, with a rich variety of landscape available in every direction. It is bounded by narrow and vulnerable strategic gaps to the south, east and west and by High Weald to the north. *Cycling in Haywards Heath* (1992), highlighted a lack of facilities for cyclists and set out a strategy for improving provision. Despite providing recent

cycle paths through planning applications, for example links to Rocky Lane, Ashenground Road and Tylers Green, overall provision is still poor. The Haywards Heath Urban Transport Plan will seek to secure an integrated network of cycle routes within the area.

Local Policy HH14 supports the provision of cycleways on the following routes:

- Heath Road to the Heath Recreation Ground from Perrymount Road
- Perrymount Road to Oathall Road
- Blunts Wood Crescent to Hathgate Lane
- Hanbury Lane to Appledore Gardens
- Turvey Wood to Scrase Valley
- Burrell Road to Market Place
- Haywards Heath to Cuckfield

The linear open space running north of the Lewes Road (A272) through the Turvey Wood, Franklands Wood, the America Lane allotments and onto the Scrase Valley and Lindfield is an important area for informal recreation and value by local residents very highly. The cycleway outlined above will improve the quality and accessibility of this popular area.

Important sites for informal open spaces around Haywards Heath which would require linkage paths are:

- Turvey Wood/Franklands Wood (including provision for the linear walkway outlined above)
- Ashenground Wood
- Land by Rocky Lane
- Hurst Farm

#### *Keymer/Hassocks*

Butchers Wood and Lag Wood are allocated in the Local Plan as informal public open spaces. They total some 16 ha and lie within the Sussex Downs AONB. Public access is limited and should be improved to provide local residents with access to quiet, informal recreation. A footpath link is also proposed between Parklands Road, Keymer/Hassocks and Whitelands Reservoir.

#### *Other Relevant Proposals in the Local Plan*

The plan supports appropriate proposals for additional sports facilities at East Grinstead Sports Club and East Grinstead Rugby Club although their location would appear not to satisfy the accessibility test in Policy R1. There may also be a need to remove mature trees, although it should be possible to plant replacement ones if necessary.

## **The Provision of Service Infrastructure Related to New Development**

This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) relates to cases where existing infrastructure is inadequate to meet the needs of new development. In such cases, the costs of providing new or improved infrastructure directly related to those needs are a development cost and should be met by the developer.

This SPG sets out the Council's policies relating to off-site open space and recreation provision. Any financial contributions not spent within a reasonable time period up to 10 years after the completion of the development, will be returned to the developers with interest. It is worth noting, however, that Circular 5 on Planning Obligations restates and reinforces the five year limit previously set in DoE Circular 1/97.

### *Community Buildings/Facilities*

Large-scale housing development (more than 200 houses) can generate the need for new community buildings and/or facilities.

Smaller developments may not generate the need for new community facilities. However if they are located in an area where the use of existing facilities is at capacity and the need to extend the existing facilities is generated by the development, it will be a requirement for that development to finance the extension.

On smaller residential development sites (less than 200 dwellings) where the need for community facilities would not require full provision on-site, but where a requirement for new or improved facilities in the area has been identified in the Local Plan, a financial contribution may be required to allow for the enhancement or extension of existing local facilities.

Development sites with a capacity of 5 or fewer dwellings will be exempt.

### *Allotments*

In areas where a requirement for additional allotment land has been identified in the Local Plan, land and/or contributions may be sought from developers. Where more than 200 units are proposed, there may be a requirement for the developer to provide land.

### *Leisure and Recreation Facilities*

For outdoor playing space, the NPFA standards provide the minimum standards for provision. Detailed guidance on



laying out and equipping these area is given in “Standards for Play Space Provision on New Housing Developments”.

It is not always possible to provide all categories of outdoor playing space within every development. Thresholds for the provision of LAPs and LEAPs on-site are set out in the Local Plan.

#### *Contributions to off-site play space*

Contributions will be sought only if the Council intends to spend them on providing new facilities or improving existing facilities which are within a reasonable distance of the proposed development. This could include:

- Acquisition of land for play spaces
- New playground equipment or reconfiguration of existing
- Safety surfacing
- Pitch drainage
- New pavilions or improvements to existing ones
- Car parking and access roads
- Grants to town/parish councils and voluntary organisations

The guidance also sets out:

- Occupancy levels for residential developments
- The costs of providing new play space facilities
- Calculation of play space contributions

### **Summary of Key Points**

There are four key messages from this review of existing plans and strategies:

- The state of local environments is seen as increasingly important by the Government. It is requiring local authorities to take effective action to deliver what these days is known as “liveability”. Moreover, it is beginning to measure the performance of local authorities in terms of the quality of environment they deliver for their area’s residents and visitors. For example, Mid Sussex will have to report annually to the Government on the proportion of greenspace in its area managed to Green Flag Award standards. The Green Flag scheme, originally developed purely as a way of recognising high quality parks, is now being widened to encompass all forms of greenspace. Mid Sussex residents are very lucky in that they live in a predominantly rural area, with a high quality landscape and attractive towns and villages. That is one reason why the District faces significant development pressures. However, the Council cannot afford to rest on its laurels. The Government view is very clearly that any council which does not deliver demonstrable “continuous improvement” in indicators such as the area of Green Flag standard space is failing.

- Both the Community Strategy and the Council's Corporate Strategy contain a number of "hooks" on which to hang this assessment, and policies and proposals arising from it, including enhancing the local environment and local lifestyles and the promotion of healthy eating and exercise. Taking positive action to improve the District's open space, sport and recreation provision should therefore be seen as an important component of delivering the Local Strategic Partnership's aim of improving social, economic and environmental wellbeing and improving the quality of life for everyone.
- The main open space or sport and recreation needs already identified by the Council relate to the pitch sports - more grass pitches and more floodlit pitches for midweek training and matches - and facilities for teenagers.
- The Mid Sussex countryside is a major asset. At present countryside recreation is dependent to a significant extent on the network of rights of way and other paths and bridleways, complemented by paths and rights of way within settlements. However, there is growing pressure or more infrastructure in the form of car parks and picnic sites. Nonetheless, paths and routes provide a potentially valuable set of sustainable transport routes between the main settlements. There is also an opportunity to develop greater use of the network of both long distance routes and the evolving routes around the main settlements, but at the same time a need to protect the character and appearance of the countryside from inappropriate development.

Our document review has highlighted a number of issues which the Council's planning and management policies for open space, sport and recreation will have to tackle. They include:

- Using development to deliver enhancements to existing spaces and facilities. This will help drive up the proportion of spaces of Green Flag Award standard and should also help to make development more acceptable to existing residents. In broad terms, across much of the District, enhancement is likely to be a higher priority than additional provision.
- Providing the Council with a tool it can use to monitor the proportion of green spaces which meet Green Flag Award standard
- Promoting access to and recreational use of the countryside
- Planning policy and guidance for open space sport and

recreation in the Council's Local Development Framework, including a specific Supplementary Planning Document, in order to provide adequate protection to existing spaces and facilities, where necessary; and help the Council and its partners deliver both the enhancement of existing spaces and facilities and new provision where it is needed

- Resolving the possible need for more pitches in an area with very high land values
- Assessing the extent to which there is sufficient demand to make it possible for a significant level of community use to help school sports facilities achieve their financial target of at least breaking even
- Evaluating and if appropriate finding ways of meeting the local needs identified by the various community fora
- Facilitating greater access to and use of the countryside without changing its character in any unacceptable ways



## 5: Local Needs

### Introduction

This chapter summarises our findings in relation to local needs. We have structured the results into six broad geographical areas as shown on the map on the next page:

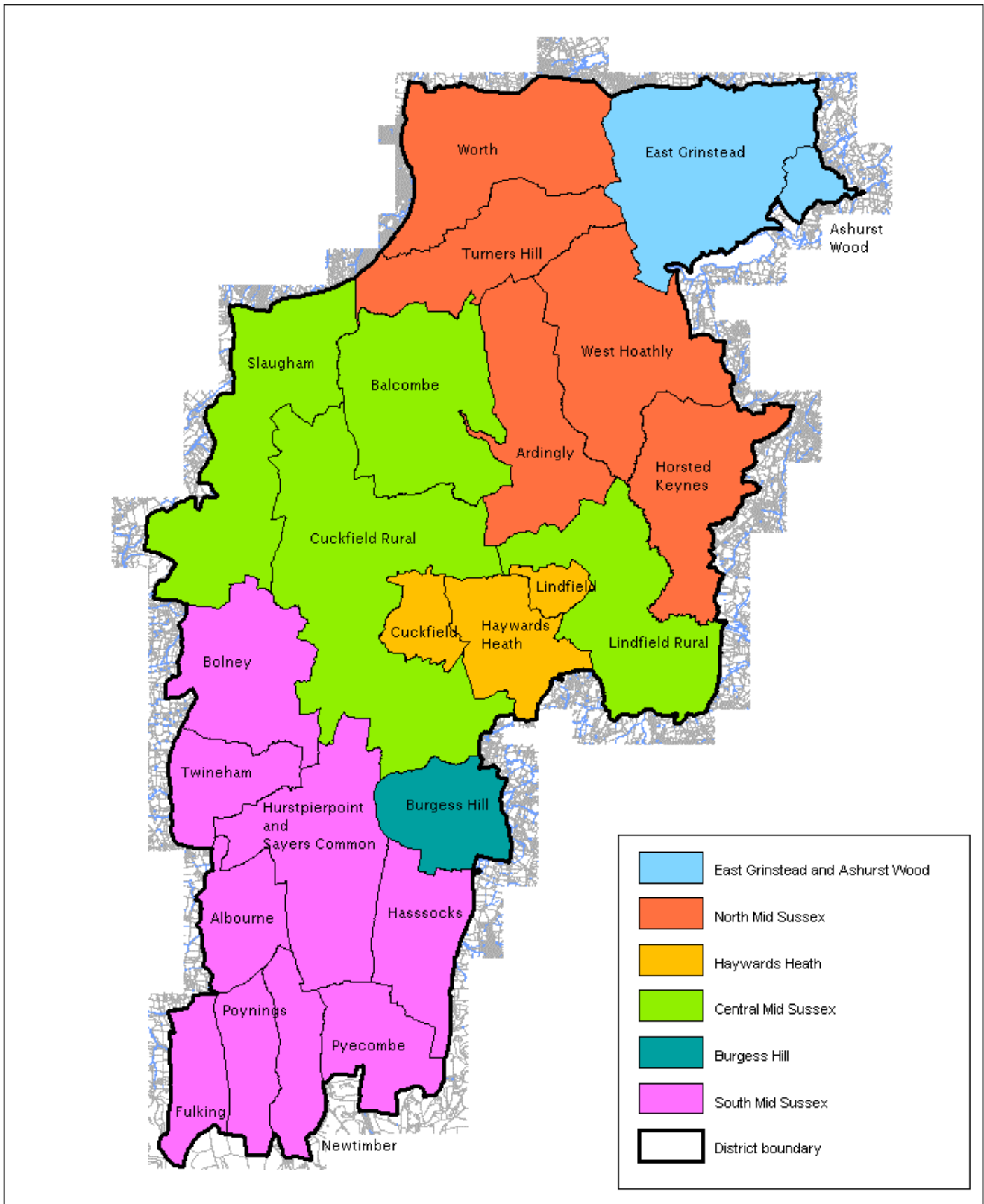
- East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood Parish
- North Mid Sussex, consisting of Ardingly, Horsted Keynes, Turners Hill, West Hoathly and Worth parishes
- Haywards Heath, consisting of the Haywards Heath wards plus Cuckfield and Lindfield Parishes
- Central Mid Sussex, consisting of Balcombe, Cuckfield Rural, Lindfield Rural and Slaugham Parishes
- Burgess Hill, consisting of the Burgess Hill wards
- South Mid Sussex, consisting of Albourne, Bolney, Fulking, Hassocks, Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common, Poyning, Pyecombe and Twineham parishes

### The Views of the District's Community Area Fora

As part of the Community Strategy preparation, the District Council set up community area fora to cover the District. Subsequently, in the middle of 2004, they reviewed the leisure and recreation needs of their areas. All of them identified a desire for:

- More youth provision, such as skateboard areas
- More flexibility in facility use – changing in response to needs or having multi-uses
- Better accessibility to facilities
- More sustainability in accessibility – either by public transport or by provision near housing
- More regular consultation with local communities to understand their needs
- More facilities in new developments
- More sports provision, including swimming pools, athletics tracks, all weather playing surfaces, ice-skating rinks
- Cinemas and bowling allies





**Mid Sussex PG17 Assessment**

**Parishes/Towns and Planning Areas**

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In addition to these general needs, the North Area Forum identified a need for:

- More pitches and courts and more instructors
- More provision in the villages
- Better management and the encouragement of responsible behaviour
- Clear standards on how much recreational land should be provided with new developments
- Better balance between housing and recreational demands

The Forum also took the view that:

- Good accessibility to facilities is key
- There should be no development on existing recreational land and recreational facilities should be protected
- The District Council should set minimum standards for recreational facilities/open spaces for the community and provide the resources for this to be implemented.

In addition to the general requirements noted above, the South Area Forum identified a need for:

- More open spaces in towns, especially public parks – the villages are well provided
- More affordable pitches use with easier access
- More youth provision – especially kickabout spaces for 8 – 16 year olds
- More engagement with young people to gauge their needs
- More flexibility and multi-use of existing facilities
- More shared use of facilities – for example with schools
- More facilities in new developments
- More sustainability – either better public transport or provision near to housing
- More regular consultation with local communities to understand their needs
- Better management and care of existing facilities

The Forum also concluded that:

- Being the “green lungs” for communities, open space is vital and must be accessible.
- Informal recreation is as important as formal
- Youth provision and “vogue” sports (eg skateboarding) are important
- All green space should be protected – land owned by the Council should be kept as open space.

The Central Area Forum identified the following needs in its area in addition to the general needs noted above:

- Better access to facilities for non-members (eg it is difficult to “turn up and swim” at the Dolphin Leisure Centre)

- More youth consultation to support suitable provision
- More consultation on disabled access
- Better public transport to facilities/open spaces
- More flexibility of uses at existing facilities
- More informal meadows rather than golf courses; open space is being too "squeezed"
- More safe countryside cycle tracks

A further daytime forum identified the following needs, in addition to the general ones:

- More facilities for low income groups
- More challenging and exciting play equipment for slightly older children (12-16 yrs)
- More play space for young children
- More youth provision and youth clubs
- More cycle ways and horse riding facilities
- Better accessibility and public transport
- More flexibility in facility use – changing in response to needs
- Better management of spaces and encouragement of users to be more responsible
- More shared use of school facilities and land
- More development and encouragement for youth and young people's sports.
- More support and encouragement for volunteers looking after open spaces
- More car parking provision at some facilities

#### **MSDC Residents' Consultations, 2002**

A questionnaire survey undertaken by the District Council in 2002 found that:

- Local parks are valued community assets with 43% of respondents using them regularly and 61% classing their local park as good or very good and only 9% thinking it is poor
- 7% of respondents would be prepared to become more actively involved in their local parks – either as a volunteer leisure ranger or by taking part in Parks Friends meeting groups
- There is a high level of satisfaction with children's play areas but a significant minority are dissatisfied with the facilities for supervising adults to use and the cleanliness of equipment and surfacing
- There is significant demand for extra activities and services within the local parks and recreation areas, such as music in the park, improved toilet facilities, better car parking, car boot sales and crazy golf

Suggested improvements to local parks included:

- Better security eg lighting/supervision (45% of respondents)
- Measures to reduce vandalism (40% of respondents)
- More seating (38% of respondents)
- More youth provision (33% of respondents)

- Better toilets (32% of respondents)
- More gardens/shrubs/wild areas (23% of respondents)
- Less litter/broken glass (22% of respondents)

### **East Grinstead Sports Development and Facilities Plan**

East Grinstead Town Council has prepared its own sports plan for the town. The plan identifies a need for a number of new or enhanced sports facilities, including:

- More grass pitches, particularly for youth football
- Better facilities for East Grinstead Town FC in order to meet league requirements, through improvements to the present site or a relocation to a new site
- Better swimming facilities, ideally through replacement of the Kings Centre
- Further development of the East Grinstead Sports Club
- Development of further joint use facilities at Imberhorne School, possibly including netball courts, a full size athletics track and a new sports hall

### **Parish and Town Council Views**

We sought to identify the views of the Town and Parish Councils in the District by means of a questionnaire survey which also sought their opinions on a number of other issues such as the quality of provision in their areas.

23 of the District's 25 Parish or Town Councils took the opportunity to give their views on the adequacy of the quantity and quality of local provision in their areas. Those which did not were Bolney and Slaugham, while Cuckfield Rural Parish Council concluded that it could not give a single set of responses for its area as a whole so responded separately for the Staplefield and Ansty Wards. In addition, three Parish Councils around the periphery of the District – Fletching, Forest Row and Shermanbury – also provided information. We asked them about the following forms of provision:

- **Countryside facilities:** bridleways/off-road cycleways, country parks and commons, nature conservation areas, rural footpaths and woodland areas
- **Public spaces:** green spaces in housing areas, local recreation grounds, parks and public gardens, street trees/planted verges and village greens
- **Activity spaces:** allotments, bowling greens, children's play (<8 years), children's play (8 - 12 years), grass sports pitches, supervised adventure play areas, teenage facilities, tennis courts and water sports areas
- **Indoor facilities:** village halls/community centres and youth centres

We summarise their views below, giving separate summaries for, firstly, most forms of open space, sport and recreation provision and, secondly, countryside provision. Appendix A gives their survey responses.

### **Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision**

- Most of the rural Parish Councils are generally of the

view that the quantity or amount of most forms of provision in their areas is "about right", although Albourne and Ardingly believe they have a significant deficit in several forms of provision. In terms of quality, the forms of provision that parishes are most critical of are green spaces in housing areas, village greens, play areas for 8-12 years olds, supervised adventure play areas, grass sports pitches and teenage facilities.

- East Grinstead Town Council believes that the amount of several forms of provision is slightly inadequate, notably green spaces in housing areas, recreation grounds, parks and gardens, play areas for 8-12 year old children, adventure play areas and teenage facilities. It also believes there is a significant deficit in terms of grass pitches and youth centres. Ashurst Wood Parish Council has identified shortfalls in allotments, bowling greens and teenage facilities.
- Haywards Heath Town Council sees a need for more trees, adventure play areas, teenage facilities and youth centres, but regards the level of other forms of provision as about right. Lindfield Parish Council is of the view the amount of most forms of provision is about right, but would like to see more play provision for 8-12 year olds, teenage facilities and youth centres.
- Burgess Hill Town Council is of the view that there is a significant shortfall in most forms of provision in the town, but only a slight shortfall in allotment provision.

Based on the views of the various councils, the main needs for more provision in the rural areas are:

#### *North Mid Sussex*

- Greenspaces in housing areas in Ardingly and East Grinstead
- Recreation grounds in East Grinstead and Turners Hill
- Parks and public gardens in Ardingly and East Grinstead
- Allotments in Ardingly and Ashurst Wood
- Bowling greens in Ardingly, Turners Hill and Ashurst Wood
- Play areas for children under 8 in Turners Hill and Ardingly
- Play areas for 8-12 years olds in Ardingly, Turners Hill and East Grinstead
- Grass sports pitches in Ardingly, East Grinstead, Turners Hill and Worth
- Adventure play areas in Ardingly and East Grinstead
- Teenage areas in Ardingly, Ashurst Wood, Balcombe, East Grinstead and Worth
- Tennis courts in Worth
- Indoor youth centres in East Grinstead

#### *Central Mid Sussex:*

- Bridleways, recreation grounds, play areas for 8-12 years olds, grass sports pitches and teenage areas in Cuckfield Rural Parish

### *South Mid Sussex*

- Greenspaces in housing areas and local recreation grounds in Burgess Hill
- Parks and public gardens in Albourne and Burgess Hill
- More street trees and planted verges in Albourne, Burgess Hill and Hassocks
- Village greens in Albourne and Hassocks
- Allotments in Burgess Hill
- Bowling greens in Albourne and Burgess Hill
- Equipped play areas for children under 8 in Burgess Hill and children aged 8-12 in Albourne and Burgess Hill
- Grass sports pitches in Burgess Hill
- Adventure play areas in Albourne and Burgess Hill
- Teenage areas in all parishes and Burgess Hill
- Tennis courts in Albourne and Burgess Hill
- Water sports areas to serve Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common
- Indoor youth centres in Albourne, Burgess Hill and Hassocks
- Village halls or community centres in Albourne and Burgess Hill

### *Comments*

This is a long shopping list, but not as long as at first appears - especially when considered in the context of the accessibility assessment (see Chapter 9). In it, for example, we suggest that one of the recreation grounds in East Grinstead should be upgraded to a park and this appears to be a suggestion that the Town Council would support. It is also necessary to temper the range of facilities that, in an ideal world, some of the Parish Councils would like with the reality of their limited populations. Albourne, for example, has a population of only around 600 people so many of the facilities for which the Parish Council believes there is a need would be hopelessly uneconomic and therefore not sustainable. We suggest that the District-wide priorities should be:

- A floodlit third generation artificial turf pitch in or close to each of the main towns. These pitches will substitute for more grass pitches and (to a lesser extent, given their multi-functional nature) recreation grounds - which are of course land intensive but can accommodate only low levels of pitch sport use. These ATPs will be able to accommodate high levels of use for football and rugby training and min-soccer and adult football matches.
- Teenage provision at appropriate locations more or less throughout the District. This should consist of areas where teenagers can "hang out" without causing annoyance to others, coupled with skateboard/BMX facilities and possibly floodlit ball courts.
- Developing a new approach to children's play
- Improving access to the countryside

- Opening up access to school tennis courts in Burgess Hill and Worth. Given that the Burgess Hill School for Girls is planning to build an 8-court sports hall, partly for netball, it would seem to be a good location for community tennis in Burgess Hill.
- Improving the quality of greenspaces in housing areas, especially in Burgess Hill and East Grinstead as it is not normally practicable to increase the quantity of provision in established housing areas.
- Managing appropriate existing greenspaces in such a way as to promote nature conservation better

## **Countryside Provision**

### *Bridleways and Off-road Cycleways*

The parish and town councils which regard the amount of provision in their areas as inadequate are:

#### *There is slightly less than needed*

- East Grinstead

#### *There is much less than needed*

- Cuckfield
- Haywards Heath
- Burgess Hill
- Albourne
- Hassocks
- Twineham
- West Hoathly

#### *There is none but provision is needed*

- Turners Hill
- Cuckfield Rural (Staplefield)

The following parish and town councils classed the quality of bridleways and off-road cycleways in their areas as poor or very poor:

- Ardingly
- Cuckfield
- Haywards Heath
- Cuckfield Rural (Staplefield)
- Burgess Hill
- Albourne
- Hassocks
- Newtimber
- Twineham

This suggests that the priority areas for either more provision of the enhancement of those bridleways and off-road cycleways that already exist should be:

- Burgess Hill
- Cuckfield

- Cuckfield Rural (Staplefield)
- Hassocks
- Haywards Heath
- Twineham

Of these areas, however, Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath are two of the main towns in the District so it is unlikely that there will be many bridleways within them. Much of Cuckfield is also fairly urban. This suggests that the priority in these three areas should be to create more cycleways.

### *Country Parks and Commons*

With the implementation of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 country parks and commons are much less important forms of provision than previously, as individuals now have a right of access to almost all open countryside. In spite of this, the parish and town councils which regard the amount of provision in their areas as inadequate are:

#### *There is slightly less than needed*

- Albourne
- East Grinstead
- Hassocks
- Haywards Heath
- Lindfield Rural

#### *There is none but provision is needed*

- Burgess Hill

In terms of quality, only Albourne and Ardingly Parish Councils class existing provision in their area as either poor or very poor.

### *Nature Conservation Areas*

Countryside Map 1 below shows the location of designated Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) across the District. The number of LNRs is actually more than appears on the map because some SNCIs or SSSIs also have an LNR designation. The parish and town councils which regard the amount of provision in their areas as inadequate are:

#### *There is much less than needed*

- Burgess Hill
- Hassocks

#### *There is none but provision is needed*

- Ardingly
- Albourne

It is surprising that Ardingly Parish Council believes there are no nature conservation areas within its area: as the map shows, the Parish is particularly well endowed with designated sites even though much of the reservoir is

actually in Balcombe Parish. In terms of quality, only Ardingly regards existing provision in its area as poor.

#### *Rural Footpaths and Rights of Way*

The parish and town councils which regard the amount of provision in their areas as inadequate are:

##### *There is slightly less than needed*

- Hassocks
- Twineham

##### *There is much less than needed*

- Albourne

Countryside Map 2 below shows the extent of the rights of way network in the District. The parishes which stand out as having the most limited networks are Balcombe, Cuckfield Rural, Hassocks, Slaugham (especially the northern area) and Twineham. Accordingly this supports the Hassocks Parish Council view that provision in its parish is limited. This is important as a significant number of Hassocks residents commute to Burgess Hill. Albourne, by comparison, is reasonably well served by both east-west and north-south routes and has a population of only about 600 - less than one tenth that of Hassocks. In terms of quality, only Burgess Hill, Albourne and Twineham regard existing provision in their areas as poor.

A noticeable feature of the rights of way network - as in most other areas - is its fragmented nature. Many rights of way end abruptly at roads in the countryside, where there is often no pavement. Pedestrians using the roads at these points may be in danger from passing traffic.

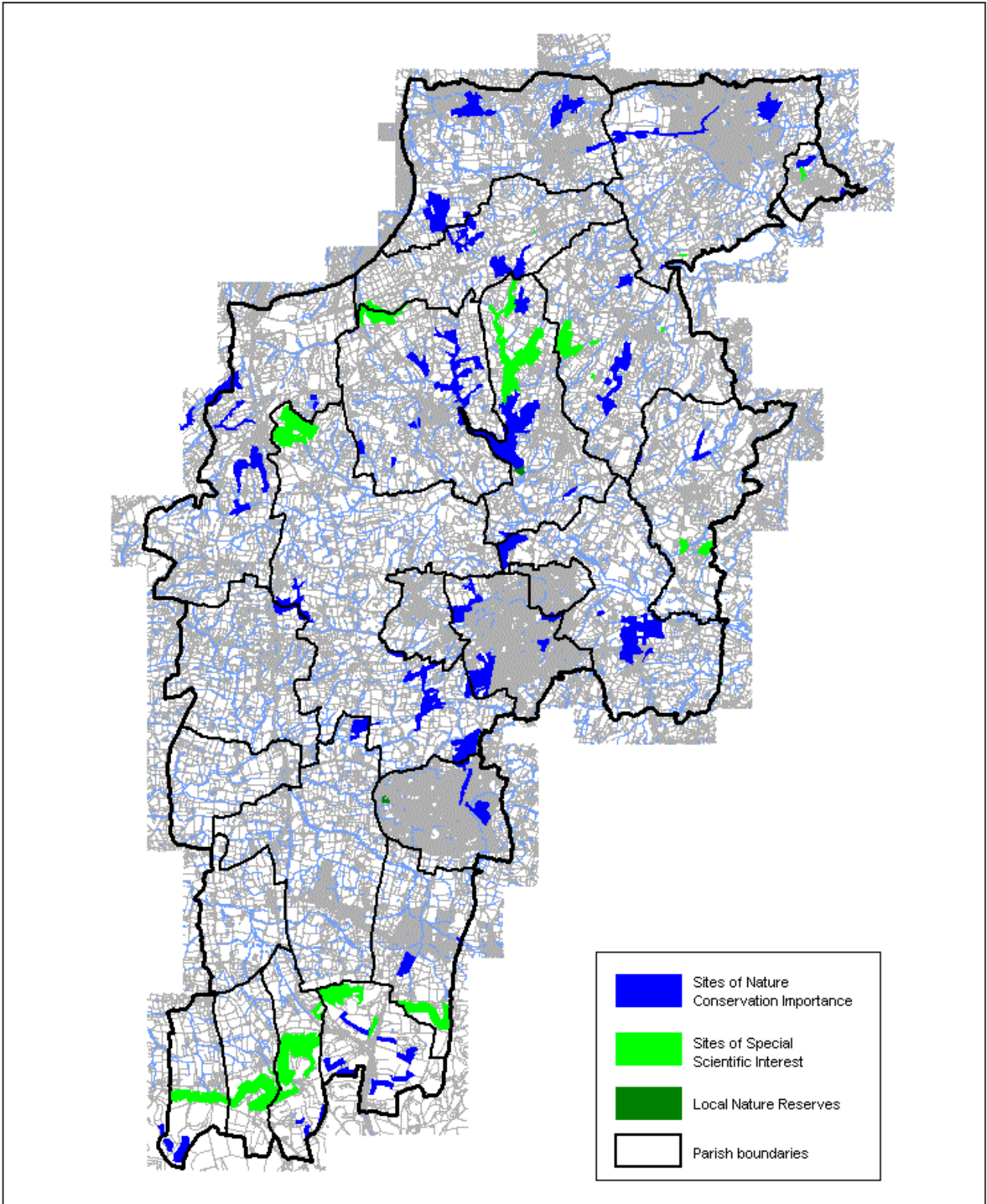
#### *Woodland areas*

Countryside Map 3 shows the extent of remnants of ancient woodland across the District. There are also significant areas of secondary woodland. Only Burgess Hill amongst the town and parish councils sees a need for more woodland; it also sees a need for more street trees - although it classes the quality of existing woodland as very good - so it may be desirable to develop more urban forestry in the town. All the other parish and town councils also regard the quality of existing woodlands in their areas as at least good.

#### *Comments*

The clear priority, based on the views of the various Councils, should therefore clearly be the improvement of bridleways and off-road cycleways. A number of councils would also like there to be a country park in the District, although there are already some sites which are not hugely different from one, not least the South Downs National Park and Ardingly Reservoir.





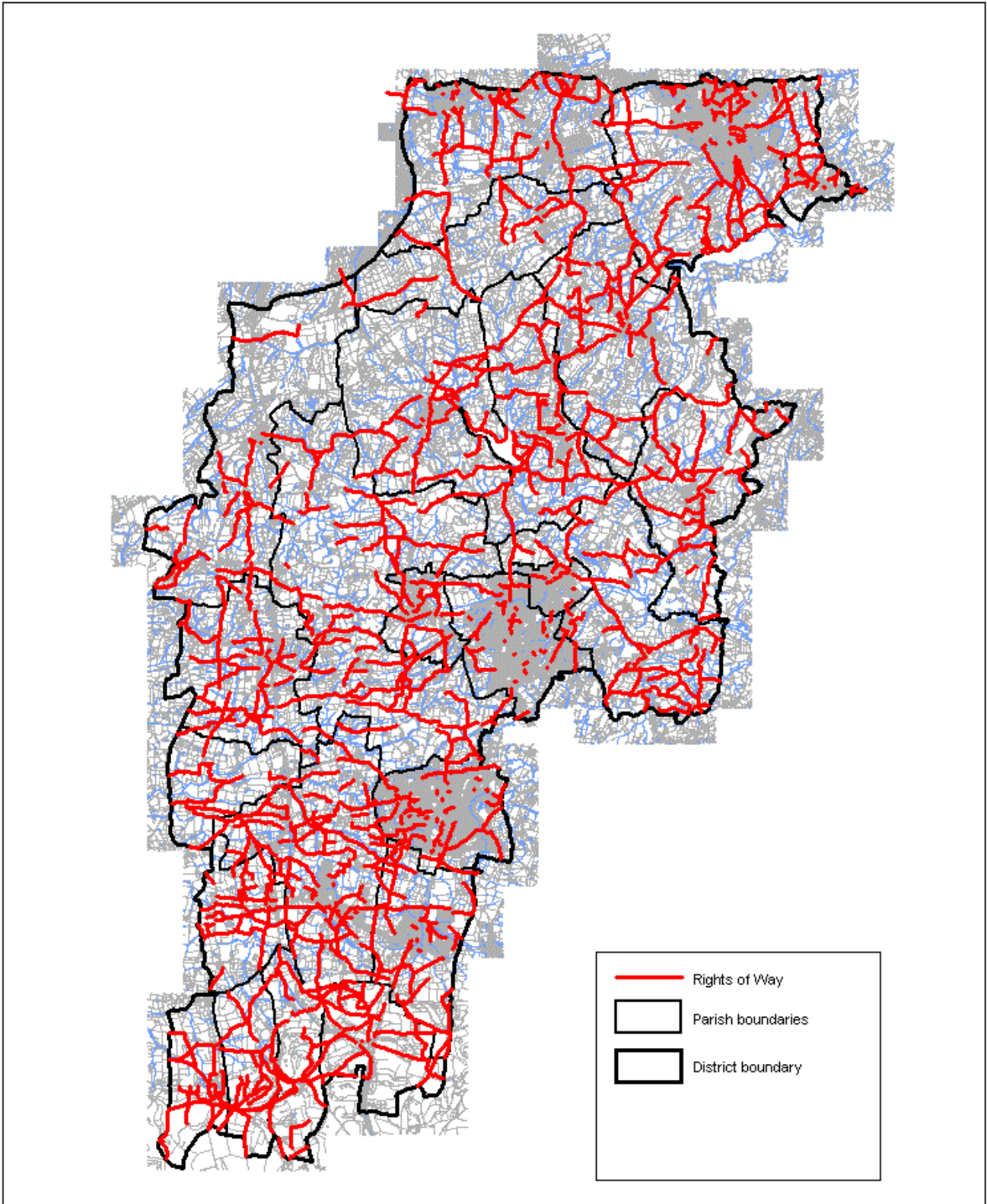
**Mid Sussex PPG17 Assessment**

**Countryside Provision:  
Map 1: Designated  
Nature Conservation Sites**

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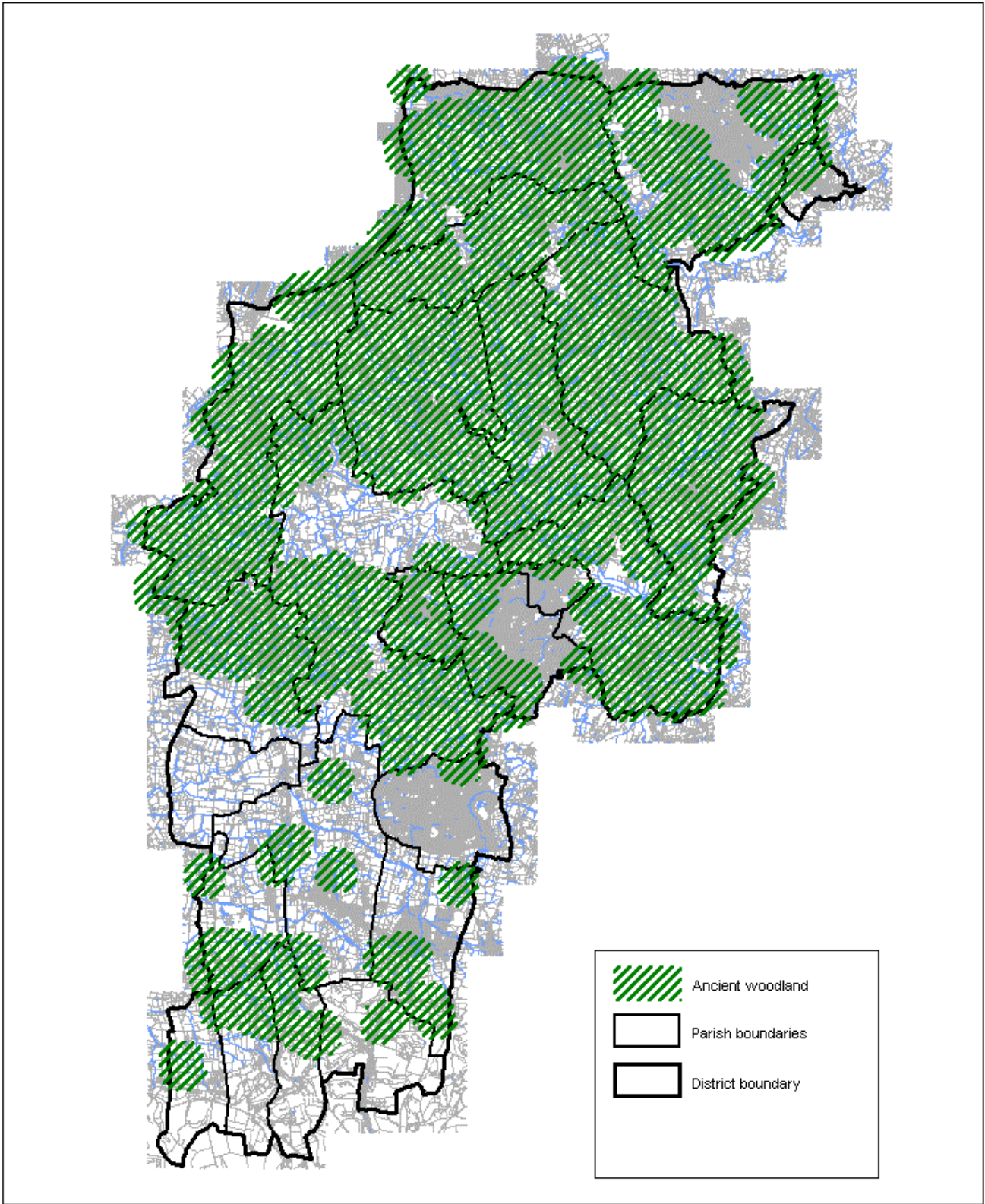


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**Countryside Provision:  
Map 2: Designated Rights of Way**

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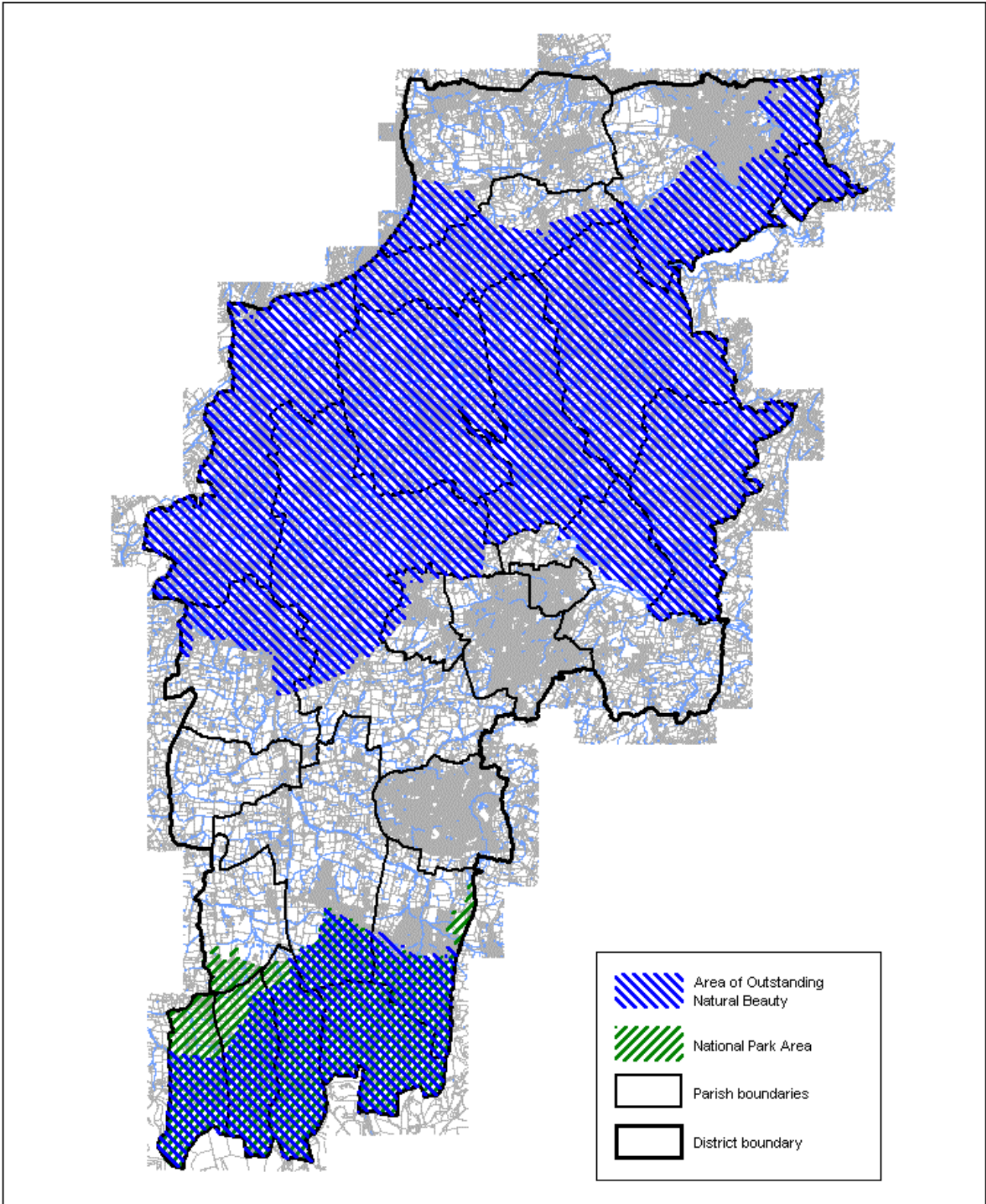




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**Countryside Provision:  
Map 3: Ancient Woodland Areas**

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**Countryside Provision:  
Map 4: Countryside Designations**

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## Needs for Additional Provision

We also asked the Parish and Town Councils to identify any need in their areas for additional provision, in priority order. This "open-ended" question gave them the opportunity to be more specific in relation to their local needs, to identify any additional needs there may be in their areas and to highlight their priorities. The results were:

### *North Mid Sussex*

Ardingly	More space for play areas for all ages New village hall - old one 128 years old More gardens but volunteers hard to come by and costly
Ashurst Wood	Allotments
East Grinstead	Grass sports pitches Teenage facilities, including youth shelters Youth wings at each secondary school Relocation of East Grinstead Town Football Club
Horsted Keynes	No suggestions
Turners Hill	No suggestions
West Hoathly	Updating of children's play areas Teenage facilities
Worth	More sports provision

### *Central Mid Sussex*

Balcombe	No suggestions
Cuckfield	Skateboard Park Play areas in Chapelfields Development
Cuckfield Rural (Ansty)	No suggestions
Cuckfield Rural (Staplefield)	No suggestions
Haywards Heath	Cinema Bowling alley

	Ice rink All weather sports pitch Athletics track/facilities
Lindfield	No suggestions
Lindfield Rural	Teenage facilities and youth centre More grass sports areas Supervised/unsupervised children's play areas Bridleways and off road cycleways Water sports area
<i>South Mid Sussex</i>	
Albourne	Bowling green Tennis courts Netball Teenage facilities Youth centre
Burgess Hill	Playing space on eastern side of the town Community facilities throughout the town Youth facilities throughout the town More multi-use areas are required Open space in/adjacent to 70's housing estates
Hassocks	Village green New sports pavilion in Adastra Park Youth facility in north east of village Basketball/netball facility
Hurstpierpoint/ Sayers Common	Skateboard facility at Sayers Common Fishing facilities
Newtimber	No suggestions
Pyecombe	No suggestions
Twineham	Better access to farmland for walkers and horse riders
Poynings	No suggestions

### **Around the Perimeter of the District**

Fletching	No suggestions
Forest Row	Adequate provision of sports facilities for the elderly. Sufficient funding needed to maintain lawn bowling greens.
Shermanbury	Locate suitable area and build village hall More bridleways to avoid horses being on busy A281 for any length of time

Finally, we invited the Town and Parish Councils to identify any “wasted spaces” (defined as spaces with no particular use or value to the local community which should either be upgraded or changed or some other use) in their area. The responses were:

#### *East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood*

Ashurst Wood	No suggestions
East Grinstead	St Margaret’s Loop: Restore to public use. Part owned by EGTC, part owned by Sustrans. Possible cycle/pedestrian route. Requires enabling development for funding.

#### *North Mid Sussex*

Ardingly	Corner Gowers Pit (overgrown): put into play area Gowers Pit: possible skateboard area
Horsted Keynes	No suggestions
Turners Hill	No suggestions
West Hoathly	No suggestions
Worth	No suggestions

#### *Haywards Heath Area*

Cuckfield	Land at the end of Courtmead Road owned by MSDC – recreational use
Haywards Heath	Blunts and Paiges Meadows – use for horse riding and cross



	country running Fields owned by MSDC off Hurstwood Lane – use for youth facilities Vale Road open space – use for a children’s play area
Lindfield	No suggestions
<i>Central Mid Sussex</i>	
Balcombe	No suggestions
Cuckfield Rural (Ansty)	No suggestions
Cuckfield (Staplefield)	No suggestions
Lindfield Rural	No suggestions
<i>Burgess Hill</i>	
Burgess Hill	We have a severe shortage of open space rather than wasted areas School site next to Tesco: use as public open space until its future is sorted
<i>South Mid Sussex</i>	
Albourne	Barley Croft, The Street, Albourne: shrub planting, seats and rail fencing Village Hall, The Street, Albourne: tarmac over grass areas to provide additional car parking spaces for the village
Hassocks	North east of Belmont Close adjoining Golf Club: teenage recreation area South end of Keymer Burial Ground, Keymer Road: Nature reserve Land to the east of South Downs Garden Centre, Brighton Road: junior football pitch
Hurstpierpoint/ Sayers Common	Old telephone exchange land: pocket park
Newtimber	No suggestions
Poynings	No suggestions
Pyecombe	Lands acquired by the highways



agency  
 Twineham No suggestions

*Around the Perimeter of the District*

Fletching No suggestions

Forest Row Waterside adjacent to Forest Way. River Medway in Forest Row Village. East of Station Clearing of undergrowth. Board walk. Seating facilities for leisure and picnics. A water garden.

Shermanbury No suggestions

**Local Views**

We have also obtained the views of a number of specific groups on provision in the District. They include:

- Access groups
- Allotment Societies
- Sports clubs
- Community groups

**Access Groups**

For the access groups, and in the light of our audit information on the District's indoor sports facilities, we concentrated on access to the countryside. Appendix B summarises the views of the Mid Sussex South and East Grinstead Access Groups. The former regards the quantity of all forms of accessible countryside provision as much less than needed, while the East Grinstead Group is critical only of the range of horse-riding opportunities, tranquil and moving water areas and visitor facilities in the countryside.

**Allotment Societies and Other Allotment Managers**

Allotments in the District are managed variously by Allotment Societies, Parish or Town Councils and the District Council. There is also one site managed by a church. Appendix C summarises the views of the owners or managers of specific sites. Most sites originally had 10 rod (roughly 230 sq m) plots although some have been split into 5 or 2.5 rod plots. At the Summerhill Lane site in Haywards Heath – where plots were originally 8 rods – some have even been subdivided into 2 rod plots.

Overall, the sites for which we have details from their owners or managers indicate that about 8% of plots across the District are currently vacant, with the aggregate waiting list for plots a little lower than the number of vacant plots. Only four of 17 site managers have indicated a need for more plots. Broadly speaking, many of the 10 rod plots seem to have been tenanted by the same person for some

time while more recent converts to allotment gardening tenant the 5 rod ones, resulting in this often being the size in greatest demand. The most popular sizes in Handcross and Warninglid, however, are ten rods. However, a number of managers have seen a local reflection of the national trend towards 2.5 rod plots, especially amongst newer and younger allotment gardeners. This means that existing sites have an in-built capacity for sub-division to accommodate more plot-holders.

As in other areas, the vacant plots tend to be in poor condition and require significant work before they can be made productive. As such they are unattractive to people on the waiting list for a plot. This means that the priority should be to bring these plots back into use – which may require some work by their owners – rather than the allocation of more land for allotments. Accordingly the provision standard for allotments should reflect the current level of provision.

Most of those responsible for managing allotments believe there is no need for more provision in their area because of either low demand or the potential for subdivision, the exceptions being the Vale Road Association in Haywards Heath and the District Council which see a need for a few more plots in Cuckfield (also the Haywards Heath area); Cuckfield Parish Council, on the other hand, does not. However, it also comments that the demand for allotments “seems to come and go. For many years we had vacant plots. We would like to see the land at the end of Courtmead Road transferred to the Parish Council to enable this area to be used for allotments when the current burial ground is full - the current allotments could be used for burials”. While this will result in a short term increase in the number of plots, it does not necessarily imply any long term increase if the present allotments are converted to a burial ground.

## **Sports Clubs and Leagues**

We also sought information from clubs and other sports bodies throughout the District. Appendix D gives their views. We received a response only from:

- Athletics: Haywards Heath Harriers
- Cricket: Sussex Invitation Cricket League and Ardingly and St Andrews Cricket Clubs
- Football: the Robert Gray and Co Football League, the Sussex Sunday League and the Crawley Down and Marle Place Wanderers Football Clubs
- Rugby: Haywards Heath Rugby Club
- Shooting: Burgess Hill Target Shooting Club
- Swimming: Haywards Heath Swimming Club
- Tennis: Haywards Heath and Lindfield Tennis Clubs
- Stoolball: East Grinstead Stoolball Club

## **Athletics**

There are three athletics clubs in Mid Sussex but no track. Haywards Heath Harriers has therefore indicated a need for one or, at the very least, a decent training area. The Club currently uses a grass track, available only from April to September, and a school hall in winter. It states that there are no facilities in the District for pole vault, steeplechase and throws training.

This is not quite correct. The athletics training area at Imberhorne Upper School in East Grinstead offers high quality training opportunities for the 100 m sprint, 110 m hurdles, high jump, long jump, pole vault, discus, hammer, javelin and shot. There is also a full scale athletics competition track and field facility under construction in Crawley at the K2 centre on the eastern edge of Crawley and both an outdoor track and indoor training facility in the Horsham District at Broadbridge Heath. Accordingly we do not see any need for additional investment in athletics training facilities in Mid Sussex.

## **Cricket**

The two cricket clubs disagree in relation to the adequacy of current pitch provision across the District. Ardingly thinks it is about right and St Andrews there is much less than needed. The Sussex Invitation League supports the former view. Neither club currently needs another pitch although St Andrews would like access to an artificial wicket. In the past five years, both clubs have seen a decline in the number of adult male members, although St Andrews has seen an increase in junior members - which no doubt lies behind its need for an artificial wicket. Both clubs expect their membership to increase slightly over the next five years.

Ardingly has excellent playing facilities and at least acceptable ancillary ones, but St Andrews - which rents its pitches from the District Council - has access to only poor changing accommodation. Neither club has sufficient security of tenure to allow it to seek external funding for facility improvements

## **Football**

Both the Robert Gray and Co League and the Sussex Sunday League think the level of grass pitch provision across the District is about right and this view is shared by the Crawley Down FC. Marle Place Wanderers FC, however, identifies a need for slightly more mini-soccer and junior pitches and a need for significantly more adult pitches. It also identifies a need for more pitches for its own teams. Both clubs see a clear need for more floodlit grass pitches and more artificial turf pitches. The Robert Gray League is

also critical of the way in which the Council manages the artificial turf pitch at the Triangle Leisure Centre and believes that it could achieve higher levels of use by allowing football clubs regular bookings.

The Robert Gray League has seen a slight increase in the number of teams in the past few years, while the Sussex Sunday League reports a slow decline with a reduction from 19 to 17 teams in the past season. Both leagues anticipate that the number of teams will remain more or less static in the future, although the Sunday League also advises that teams are finding it increasingly difficult to attract new players. This means that a team can easily disband following the retirement or loss of only one or two players.

Both leagues regard the standard of pitches and changing accommodation in Mid Sussex as at least acceptable and are grateful for the investment the Council has made in recent years in upgrading drainage.

Both clubs have seen a slight increase in adult male members in the past five years and the two clubs a significant increase in junior male members. Over the next five years they expect a slight increase in both male and female adult and junior members.

Both clubs rent their match pitches from the District Council. Crawley Down regards its home pitch as of acceptable quality, but Marle Place Wanderers regard them as poor. This club also criticises the changing facilities available to it as poor while Crawley Down regards them as acceptable.

Crawley Down faces a particular problem from the start of season 2007-8 in that its present ground will not meet Football Association ground grading criteria for its present league status. If the club cannot stay in its present league it believes that it will lose many of its best players.

## **Rugby**

Haywards Heath RFC believes that the level of rugby pitch and floodlit artificial turf pitch provision in the District is much less than needed. It also needs more pitches itself - ideally four more mini pitches and an additional adult pitch and supports the provision of more third generation ATPs, especially as the Rugby Football Union has endorsed their use for training. Over the past five years the club's adult male and junior female membership has stayed the same but its male junior membership has increased significantly. Over the next five years it anticipates a slight increase in all membership categories.

The club rents its pitches from the District Council. It has not stated its view on the quality of the pitches it uses but

regards the ancillary facilities available to it as very poor. It also highlights a need for female changing.

### **Pitch Sport Needs**

We have identified four specific requirements from our contact with pitch sport clubs and schools:

- Additional capacity during the “shoulder” seasons. At the end of the football season, cricket clubs are sometimes unable to get pitches because grounds are still being used for football; and at the end of the cricket season, football clubs cannot book pitches because grounds are still being used for cricket. The answer to at least the second part of this problem is for the football clubs to be able to access artificial turf pitches as it would be unrealistic to provide a number of new grass pitches primarily for pre-season friendly matches and training.
- A need for a ground suitable for “show games” such as cup finals. While spectator interest varies, it gives teams a fillip to play finals and other show games on a “special” ground. The most recent Sussex Sunday League final was played at Redhill as this was the nearest affordable ground. There should be an opportunity to negotiate a planning agreement which will allow a limited number of such games to be played at affordable cost if East Grinstead Hill Football Club re-locates to another site.
- If teams are successful and win their leagues, they are naturally keen to gain promotion to a higher league and better competition. However, promotion can also have its drawbacks, as governing bodies require clubs to have a minimum range and standard of facilities at different competitive levels. This leads to clubs wanting to develop spectator accommodation, floodlights and other facilities which can bring them into conflict with nearby residents and, in some parts of the District, planning policy relating to floodlighting. There is no easy answer to this problem, although the number of clubs requiring “higher league” facilities will always be limited as the best players gravitate towards the best clubs. One solution may be for the District Council to take the lead in finding one or more locations where these facilities will be acceptable, seeking Football Foundation money to develop them, and then leasing them, on a year to year basis, to appropriate clubs for as long as they are in a league that requires them. If a club using one of these higher level grounds is demoted it can then “swap grounds” with a team that is promoted.
- At least one additional pitch for rugby for the Haywards Heath Rugby Club

## **Shooting**

The Burgess Hill Target Shooting Club uses the indoor range at the Cuckfield Rifle Club, together with the Cuckfield and two other clubs, although it is not large enough for their collective needs. The club moved to this venue after the closure of its former Sydney West range and this has had a detrimental impact on the club, which used to have about 75 members and was the largest shooting club in West Sussex. It identifies a clear need for:

- An indoor range with a 25-metre cartridge range and separate 10 m air weapons range, complete with armoury, club room and toilets
- A 100m outdoor small-bore range with ancillary facilities

These facilities are already available within the District at the East Grinstead Target Shooting Club, which has:

- 1 x 6 yards air weapons range
- 30 x 10 m air weapons range
- 7 x 25 yards indoor cartridge range
- 9 x 50 m outdoor cartridge range
- 9 x 100 yards cartridge range

The East Grinstead club has advised us that it has the capacity to accommodate more members and therefore it will be more sensible for the Burgess Hill shooters to join the East Grinstead club than to seek to provide a range of their own.

## **Swimming**

The Haywards Heath Swimming Club has around 300 members and trains at the Dolphin and Triangle Leisure Centres and Ardingly College for the equivalent of just under 150 lane-hours per week, which it would like to increase by about a quarter. As with most serious swimming clubs, it would like to be able to use a 50m pool and therefore is likely to use the new K2 pool in Crawley when it opens. This is also likely to provide access to deep water short course (25m) training, another of the club's needs.

## **Tennis**

Both of the tennis clubs believe that the overall level of court provision across the District is about right, although there is a need for more courts to be floodlit. Given the recent mild winters there is no real reason why tennis should not be a year-round outdoor sport. Over the past five years the Hayward Heath club's membership has increased - especially juniors - and it anticipates further growth in the next few years, but Lindfield's has remained

more or less static. However, it anticipates some growth over the next few years, in all membership groups other than girls.

The Haywards Heath Club comments that the present arrangements for booking its courts - owned by the District Council - are unsatisfactory and it would like to take over the management of them. While this will obviously require a policy decision by the Council, the present arrangement of keeping the courts "open" also makes them susceptible to vandalism. Giving the club adequate security of tenure will allow it both to lock the courts when not in use and apply for external funding to improve either them or the changing facilities. Both clubs are also critical of the quality of changing facilities rented to them by the District Council.

### **Stoolball**

East Grinstead Stoolball Club has not given any details of its playing facilities other than that they are poor and have poor ancillary facilities. Its membership has decreased slightly in recent years but it anticipates a slight increase in the next few.

## **Community Organisations**

We have obtained the views of the Ansty Residents' Association, the Ashenground Community Project, Ashurst Wood Community Association and the Slaugham Amenity Society, plus the Friends of Easter Road Pocket Park and the Lindfield and Dormansland Community Centre.

These organisations have identified a need for more of the following forms of provision in their areas:

- **Ansty:** country parks and commons, nature conservation areas
- **Ashurst Wood:** bridleways and off-road cycleways, nature conservation areas, rural footpaths, green spaces in housing areas, allotments, bowling greens, children's play areas for 8-12 year olds, grass pitches, teenage facilities, tennis courts, village halls and youth centres
- **Slaugham:** nature conservation areas, teenage facilities, village halls and youth centres

These views contrast to some extent to those expressed by the Parish Councils for Ansty and Ashurst Wood. However, there is clear agreement over the need for allotments, bowling greens, and teenage facilities in Ashurst Wood. The Ashenground Community Project also suggests a need for a number of large safe play areas for ball games for young people and an athletics track.

## **Summary of Key Points**

### **Sports Clubs - Summary**

From this fairly limited sample, the priority needs in the District appear to be:

- Artificial cricket wickets, probably mainly for juniors
- A limited number of floodlit grass football pitches and enhancements to some pitch sites in order to meet league requirements
- More floodlit artificial turf pitch provision
- Better changing and other ancillary provision for pitches
- More rugby pitches
- Floodlighting for tennis courts



## 6: Qualitative Assessment

### Introduction

This chapter summarises the audit process and results. It covers:

- The Purposes of the Audit
- Audit forms
- The scoring system
- Reference information
- Updating the audit results
- The audit results

### Purposes of the Audit

The audit:

- Identifies what provision exists where and ascribes a particular typology to each greenspace
- Identifies the quality and value of different greenspaces or forms of sport and recreation provision as an essential first step in identifying the most appropriate initial policy approach to each space or facility
- Identifies the features or characteristics of spaces most in need of enhancement
- Helps to determine priorities for capital expenditure by identifying the worst and best spaces or facilities in an area
- Helps to identify the current quantity of each form of provision as an essential step in identifying quantitative provision standards

We have also prepared maps showing the results of the audit. The audit provides a “snapshot” of the provision at a particular moment. This means it cannot be used:

- To provide detailed information for use in planning appeals or call-in inquiries affecting greenspace provision; instead, it is necessary for witnesses giving evidence at them to make their own judgement of the quality or value of spaces or facilities close to the time of the appeal or inquiry
- To provide detailed information for future management and maintenance or enhancement, although the audit results can offer a *guide* as to the changes needed to enhance a site’s quality or value

## Quality and Value

The definition of “quality” and value” is:

- **Quality** relates to the range of features or facilities on the site (eg trees, shrubs or seats), their basic characteristics (eg appropriate to the site or not), and their condition (eg on a spectrum from very good to very poor)
- **Value** is nothing to do with monetary value but refers to the value of a site to people and bio-diversity; to its cultural and heritage value; and to its strategic value - for example, by providing a sense of open-ness in a densely developed area.

Quality and value are therefore entirely independent of each other. For example, if a particular greenspace is the only one in which young people can take part in a kickabout in an area, it is of high value, even if it is of poor quality. Conversely, a space or facility of superb quality may be of little value if it is inaccessible or no-one knows it is there.

## The Audit Scores

While the audit results appear as a set of detailed scores, they are not “absolute scores” but represent the opinion of the on-site surveyor at the time of the audit and therefore are no more than a broad guide. A different surveyor would almost certainly score some aspects of a site differently, as might the same surveyor at a different time of year.

We convert the overall summary scores for each space or facility into a “high/low” classification for both quality and value as this provides a simple way of identifying an initial view on the most appropriate policy approach to any particular space or facility. In order to do this we have set the cut-off point between high and low at the average scores, although the Council could set it to reflect any policy aspiration it sees fit. For obvious reasons, the Council should normally seek to protect all those spaces or facilities which are of real value; it should also seek to ensure that they meet the relevant quality standard. If they do not there is an obvious need to enhance them, although this is not always affordable. The diagram below summarises the basic policy approach:

High value	These spaces should be protected, because they are of high value, and enhanced in order to improve their quality and move them into the high value/high quality category	These spaces or facilities should be protected through the planning system as they are both high value and high quality.
Low value	These spaces may be important if they are the only ones in an area, but unless it is possible to improve both their quality and value it may be better to use them for some other purpose. PPG17 requires that using the space to remove or reduce a local deficiency in some other form of greenspace should be the first policy option; but if this is not necessary, or impractical, it may be acceptable to develop the land for some other purpose.	These spaces are of high quality but not particularly valuable in terms of meeting people's needs or bio-diversity and have little cultural or heritage value. Therefore the priority is to find ways of improving their value, while retaining their high quality. If this is not possible, it may be acceptable to use them for some other purpose. PPG17 requires that using the space to remove or reduce a local deficiency in some other form of greenspace should be the first policy option; but if this is not necessary, or impractical, it may be acceptable to develop the land for some other purpose.
	Low quality	High quality

However, we stress that this is only an **initial** policy conclusion because it ignores the context in which each site is set.

## Audit Forms

Ideally, audits should be as objective as possible and therefore our *Companion Guide to PPG17* suggests the use of standardised forms to ensure that those undertaking them review the same characteristics or factors on each site. We give the audit forms we used in Appendix E to this report.

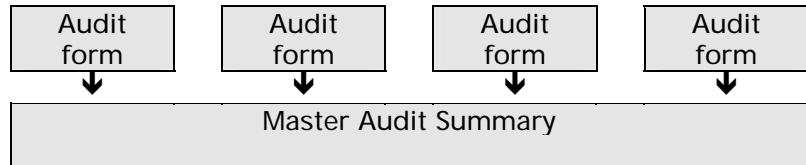
The audit forms are:

- Allotments
- Bowling greens
- Equipped play areas, covering children's equipped play areas and teenage facilities
- Multi-functional greenspaces, covering amenity greenspaces, parks and gardens, churchyards and cemeteries and natural greenspaces
- Pitches and courts, covering sports pitches and tennis and multi-sport courts (also known as multi-use games areas or, inelegantly, as MUGAs)

During the audit process, our on-site surveyors assessed a wide range of features or characteristics of each of the sites they visited and awarded a score to them. This resulted in a large number of scores which would be too many to allow simple analysis. Accordingly the forms group the various features and characteristics into a limited number of categories.

Finally we have linked the individual audit sheets to a Master Audit Summary which presents all the audit information for each typology in a single sheet. This master sheet also calculates further average figures for all the sites in East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood, Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, North Mid Sussex, Central Mid Sussex and South Mid Sussex.

We summarise the relationship between the forms in the following diagram:



### Site Photographs

Our surveyors also took digital photographs of many of the greenspaces and outdoor sports facilities in the District during the audit process. We have not included these on the audit forms because this would make the file size enormous and possibly unmanageable on PCs with limited random access memory. Instead we will provide them on a separate CD.

## The Scoring System

### On-site Scores

We use a simple scoring system to record the audit results:

- 4 = Excellent
- 3 = Good
- 2 = Poor
- 1 = Very Poor
- 0 = Not present, but required
- x = Not present and not required

The reason for not having a middle score is to avoid the temptation to mark most features as "average". Using "x" for features not present and not required, rather than a numerical score, avoids distorting the summary scores.

### Summary Scores

Rather than provide a score for each and every feature or characteristic, the forms automatically calculate a number of summary scores for groups of features or characteristics. This is the average score for all of the components or characteristics in the group. The scores are relative and not absolute. Accordingly, a score of 100% against any set of features or characteristics does not mean a site cannot be improved, but simply that its design, construction, management and maintenance accord with

current good practice, as set out in the draft quality standards, and it is fit for purpose.

## Updating the Audit Results

Greenspaces do not remain the same for a long period and so it is also important to update the audit information from time to time. We **recommend** that the Council do this review on a more or less continuous basis with a target of repeating around 20% of the audit each year. This will give complete coverage roughly every five years. Ideally the updating of the audit should be done by individuals who are visiting the District's greenspaces or sport and recreation facilities in the normal course of their daily work as this will avoid the need to incur any expense.

When the Council re-audits a specific space or facility, it should enter the results onto the appropriate audit form. The scores will then link automatically into the master spreadsheets which will automatically recalculate all the average scores. Monitoring the results of these calculations will provide a simple way for the Council to identify whether the overall quality and value of greenspaces in its area is slowly improving, declining or remaining static.

It is also possible to add additional greenspaces or facilities into the workbooks as necessary. The process for doing this is:

- Right click on the tab at the bottom of the last audit sheet, then on "move or copy", then "create a copy" and "(move to end)". Excel will copy the audit sheet, complete with scores. Delete all of the audit scores to create a blank audit form and double click on the tab at the bottom and rename the sheet to the next number serially.
- Enter the appropriate scores or other information
- Go to the Summary worksheet and scroll down to the rows containing scores for the area of Mid Sussex in which the new site is located. Copy one of the rows with audit information for this area and then click on one of the rows containing audit information for that area. Click on Insert-Copied Cells. Excel will insert the copy in a new row. Do not insert the copied cells as a new "bottom row" or the calculation of summary scores will not take account of the additional audit results.
- Note the name of the sheet to which the cells in the copied row refer. Suppose it is Row 57 and the new audit form is sheet 95.
- Highlight the new row (row 57)
- Click on Edit-Replace. In the "Find what" box, enter the name of the copied sheet, eg Sheet57. In the "Replace with" box, enter the name of the new worksheet eg Sheet95.
- Click on Replace all

This will link the new audit sheet to the summary

worksheet and also result in the recalculation of all average scores.

## The Audit Results

In all, we audited the following spaces or facilities:

• Allotment sites*	30
• Bowling Greens	11
• Equipped Play and Teenage Areas	124
• Multi-functional greenspaces	275
• Pitches*	84
• Tennis and multi-sport courts	19
• Teenage facilities	38
• Indoor sports facilities	20
• Total	606

One of the allotment sites and one of the pitch sites were just outside the District on the periphery of Copthorne

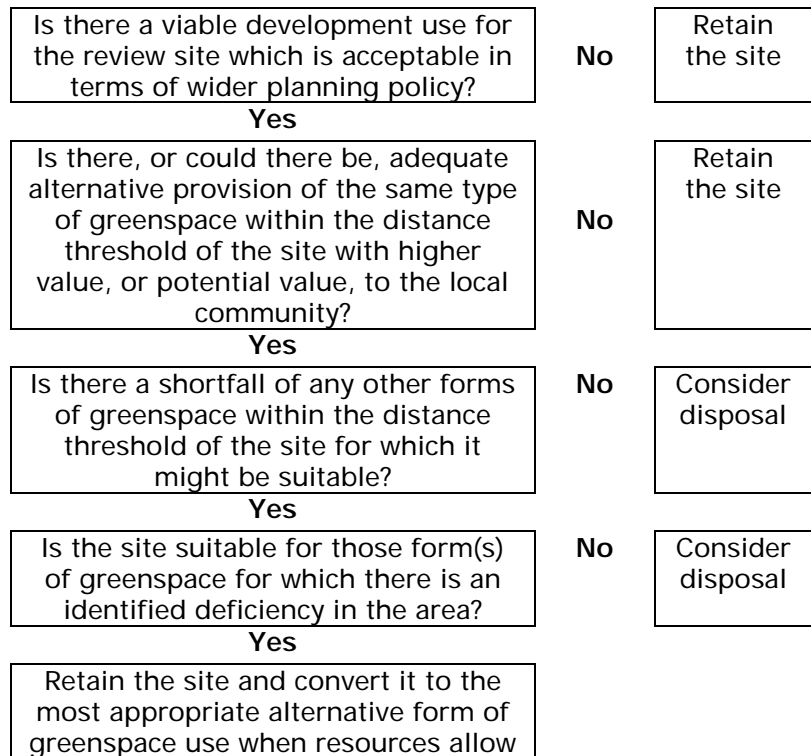
We give the full results of the audit in Appendix F. For each individual space, these appendices give an assessment of their value to the local community, bio-diversity and cultural heritage, plus summary quality scores for each of the main sets of characteristics and an overall quality score and an outline policy conclusion. We will also provide the more detailed scores to the Council on CD.

Linking the value and quality assessments from the audit together serves two main purposes: it provides a first identification of those spaces which the Council should protect through the planning system and it identifies those spaces, and indeed settlements, which should be a priority for greenspace enhancements. In order to do this, the appendices classify each space into one of four groups:

- **Protect:** those spaces of high value and above average quality
- **Protect and enhance quality:** those spaces of high value but lower than average quality. It should always be possible to improve quality.
- **Seek to enhance value if possible:** those spaces of low value but lower than average quality. This may, but will not always, require a change to some other form of greenspace which will be more valuable to local people and help to deliver the Council's objectives more effectively than the present space. If it is not possible to enhance value, the Council should review the space.
- **Review:** those spaces of low value and lower than average quality. These spaces may require enhancement of both quality and value; alternatively, they may offer opportunities for development in order to generate funds for the enhancement of other spaces of greater value to local communities.

The review process should take account of the wider

planning context, the accessibility, quality and value of alternative provision in the area and the resources available to the Council. The diagram below summarises the process:



## Allotments

The 30 allotments sites are located as follows:

- Burgess Hill 5
- East Grinstead 2
- Haywards Heath 9
- North Mid Sussex 5
- Central Mid Sussex 3
- South Mid Sussex 5
- Tandridge (Burstow) 1
- Total 30

The detailed audit results give quality scores for the 30 sites against a total of eighteen different criteria, grouped under four main headings:

- **General characteristics** such as screen planting or fencing, signage, privacy of the occupants of adjacent properties and clear separation between adjacent allotments
- **Accessibility** such as linkages to path systems, parking, distance to the nearest bus stop, accessibility for people with disabilities
- **Facilities** such as the availability of water and toilets
- **Planting and bio-diversity** such as hedgerows and habitat features

The overall quality and value scores are:

**Quality**

- Minimum score 25%
- Average score 47%
- Maximum score 75%

**Value**

- Minimum score 40%
- Average score 58%
- Maximum score 94%

Accordingly the sites vary more widely in terms of quality than value. Combining the quality and value scores, and setting the cut-off point between high and low quality or value at the average scores, leads to the following initial policy conclusions:

- Protect 12
- Protect and enhance quality 3
- Seek to enhance value 3
- Review the need for the site 12
- Total 30

Across the District as a whole, those features or characteristics of sites which scored best and worst were:

**Best**

- Privacy for the occupants of adjoining properties
- Value as a noise buffer

**Worst**

- Signage: few sites have details of ownership or who to contact in order to find out about renting a plot
- Paths suitable for wheelchairs: while the number of people in wheelchairs who currently rent an allotment is low, as the average age of plot holders is high many of their partners may be disabled. Accordingly it is desirable that paths within sites should be wheelchair accessible. This also helps plot holders when using wheelbarrows.
- General accessibility for people with disabilities: see the previous point
- Water supplies: all allotments sites should have a fresh water supply so that plot holders can wash their hands and facilities for collecting and storing rain water so they can water their plants and dilute any liquid fertilisers they may use
- Arrangements for composting: composting should be "normal" on allotment sites and is best done on a shared basis.
- Arrangements for rubbish collection: it is desirable that sites should have a central point at which plot holders can deposit rubbish for collection



- Toilets: as allotment holders are generally of above average age, their need for toilet provision is also higher than average. In addition, an increasing proportion of allotment holders are women so there is a growing need for toilet provision rather than the more informal arrangements which may be acceptable on "men-only" sites.

There is relatively little difference in the average quality scores across most of the District. However, sites in South Mid Sussex, Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath had the lowest average scores and sites in East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood the highest. In terms of value, the highest average scores were in North Mid Sussex and the lowest in South Mid Sussex.

Across the District, the features or characteristics requiring enhancement are generally similar to those noted above. The main differences are:

- The East Grinstead and North Mid Sussex sites have significantly better signage than those in other areas
- The Burgess Hill sites have good arrangements for composting

## Bowling Greens

The eleven bowling greens are located in:

- |                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| • Burgess Hill        | 1  |
| • East Grinstead      | 3  |
| • Haywards Heath      | 2  |
| • Central Mid Sussex  | 2  |
| • Northern Mid Sussex | 1  |
| • Southern Mid Sussex | 2  |
| • Total               | 11 |

The detailed audit results give quality scores for the 11 sites against a total of eighteen different criteria, grouped under four main headings:

- **General characteristics** such as well defined boundaries, shelter planting and freedom from overshadowing
- **Key playing characteristics**, such as the size of the green, the conformity of ditches and banks to governing body rules and surface drainage
- **Management and maintenance**, such as the evenness of the bowling surface, freedom from weeds, the availability of an automatic watering system and the condition of seats around the green
- **Pavilion facilities**, including changing, toilets and social areas

The overall quality and value scores are:

### Quality

- Minimum score 75%

- Average score 88%
- Maximum score 100%

**Value**

- Minimum score 75%
- Average score 83%
- Maximum score 100%

Note: a score of 100% does not indicate that a site cannot be improved but merely that it accords with good practice and is fit for purpose in its present form.

It is perfectly normal for bowling greens, and their related ancillary facilities, to score highly in an audit. Bowlers demand high standards and, as most greens are owned by the members of the clubs which use them, treat their facilities with respect. Accordingly the Council should use planning policy to protect all of the greens.

Across the District as a whole, the only aspect of greens we believe it worth highlighting is the lack of an automatic watering system at some sites.

There is relatively little variation in the quality or value of greens in different parts of the District.

**Equipped Play Areas**

The equipped play areas we have audited are located in:

- Burgess Hill 42
- East Grinstead 20
- Haywards Heath 22
- Central Mid Sussex 9
- North Mid Sussex 9
- South Mid Sussex 22
- Total 124

We have assessed the quality of the various facilities against a range of criteria including:

- **General characteristics:** segregation of areas for different ages, distance to nearest dwelling window, Signage and freedom from over-shadowing and/or leaf drop
- **Pedestrian Accessibility:** entrances linked to well used pedestrian routes, hard surfaced path to entrance to play area, well drained internal surfaces accessibility for buggies and people in wheelchairs
- **Safety and Security:** types and condition of surfacing, fencing, passive surveillance from neighbouring dwellings and street or other lighting
- **Equipment items (young children's play):** the condition of different equipment items
- **Teenage facilities:** the condition of different equipment items
- **Other Facilities:** seats for carers and parents, cycle racks and litter bin provision

- **Management and Maintenance:** freedom from litter, vandalism, graffiti, dog fouling, broken glass/other dangerous material, condition of various items of street furniture

The overall quality and value scores are:

**Quality**

- Minimum score 46%
- Average score 70%
- Maximum score 93%

**Value**

- Minimum score 31%
- Average score 62%
- Maximum score 95%

An average value score of 62% is not particularly good, indicating that many sites are of only limited play value. Combining the quality and value scores, and setting the cut-off point between high and low quality or value at the average scores, confirms this and leads to the following initial policy conclusions:

- Protect 38
- Protect and enhance quality 20
- Seek to enhance value 32
- Review the need for the site 34
- Total 124

Accordingly there is a need significantly to improve the play value of many of the District’s play facilities. The aspects of them that generally resulted in low overall scores were:

- Poor signage – signs at the entrance to play areas should indicate who is responsible for maintenance so that users can report problems which need urgent attention; the age range the area is intended for; and that dogs should not be allowed within it
- Other surfacing: many sites are grassed except beneath items of play equipment. This is attractive most of the time but can become very muddy in wet weather.
- Lighting - most play areas do not need lighting as most young children will not use them when it is dark, but as many play areas are “colonised” by teenagers at night it is desirable that there should be some basic lighting
- The limited range of play equipment on many sites

Conversely, those characteristics which scored most highly were:

- The type and condition of safety surfacing
- Management and maintenance

## Multi-Functional Greenspaces

"Multi-functional greenspaces" covers four different types of space: amenity greenspaces, natural greenspaces, parks and gardens and churchyards and cemeteries. However, each of the audit forms ascribes one of these primary purposes to each space. We have audited the following spaces:



We have assessed the quality of these spaces against a range of criteria including:

- **General characteristics:** first impressions, usefulness, signage appropriate to nature of the space, privacy for the occupants of adjacent properties
- **External accessibility:** clear entrances, accessible from neighbouring streets/parking by wheelchair, parking
- **Internal accessibility:** internal paths, well-drained, surfaced internal paths suitable for wheelchairs, general accessibility for people with disabilities
- **Safety and security:** apparent safety of site, informal surveillance from neighbouring properties, safety measures adjacent to areas of water), lighting for paths, condition of boundary fencing/hedging/walls
- **Planting and bio-diversity:** appropriate tree types, range of plants or shrubs, horticultural interest
- **Facilities:** litter and "pooper" bins, toilets, street furniture
- **Management and maintenance,** including freedom from litter, vandalism, graffiti and dog fouling, condition of different areas, condition of street furniture and lighting

The overall quality and value scores are:

### Quality



### Value



Some sites can be affected by negative features such as unsightly overhead wires, smells, overshadowing, noise and exposure to wind. If these negative features can be removed sites should be much more attractive to local

people. In Mid Sussex, however, taking them into account makes only a relatively minor difference to the overall quality scores, except to some of the lowest quality sites:

- Minimum score 30%
- Average score 69%
- Maximum score 98%

This means that there is no general need across the District to tackle the negative features which can make sites unattractive.

This said, there is a considerable variation in both the quality and value scores with the best spaces being really very good and the worst quite poor. Combining the quality and values scores leads to the following initial policy conclusions:

- Protect 79
- Protect and enhance quality 56
- Seek to enhance value 49
- Review the need for the site 91
- Total 275

There is remarkably little variation from one part of the District to another in the average quality and value scores, taking account of negative factors:

	Average quality scores	Average value scores
Burgess Hill	71%	70%
Central Mid Sussex	71%	58%
East Grinstead	70%	65%
Haywards Heath	66%	63%
North Mid Sussex	61%	60%
South Mid Sussex	72%	62%

This means that in broad policy terms there is no need to give priority to enhancing spaces in any of these areas within the District. In general terms, the best features or characteristics of the multi-functional greenspaces we have audited were:

- Safety and security
- The condition of boundary fencing and walls
- Planting and bio-diversity
- The condition of natural greenspaces
- Management and maintenance

Conversely, those features or characteristics which scored worst across the District as a whole were:

- Signage
- Bicycle parking
- Safety measures adjacent to areas of water
- Lighting for paths

- Interpretation in natural greenspaces

These generalisations are broadly valid for each of the various sub-areas of the District, with the following exceptions:

- Burgess Hill: cycle parking is generally better than average
- East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood: safety features adjacent to areas of water tend to be better than average and the condition of lighting worse
- South Mid Sussex: signage and safety features adjacent to areas of water tend to be better than in other areas

## **Artificial Turf Pitches**

There are currently five artificial turf pitches (ATPs) in the District – 2 at independent schools, two at the East Grinstead Sports and Social Club and one at the Triangle Leisure Centre in Burgess Hill – and a sixth one planned at St Paul’s Catholic College on the edge of Burgess Hill. All of the existing pitches are floodlit except for the one at Ardingly College. All scored highly in the audit.

ATPs are becoming increasingly sophisticated and sport-specific, but at present the District has only one such pitch – the water-based one at East Grinstead Sports and Social Club. All the others are sand-filled – a general purpose “compromise” surface that is not particularly good for any sport. The proposed St Paul’s pitch will have a “third generation” surface, however, and therefore be ideal for football and rugby training, but it will be the only one in the District. Because of this the District Council should continue to support the College in its attempt to get Football Foundation funding.

Some of the existing ATPs will require a new carpet in the next few years. When this is necessary the District Council should encourage pitch owners to substitute a third generation (“3G”) surface for their present sand-filled ones so as to be able to provide high quality facilities for football.

## **Club and Public Grass Pitches**

We have audited a total of 84 pitch sport sites across the District (16 of them school sites with at least some community use), containing the following grass pitches:

- 61 cricket pitches (27 of them on school sites)
- 66 adult football pitches (17 of them on school sites)
- 40 junior football pitches (31 of them on school sites)
- 36 mini-soccer pitches (16 of them on school sites)
- 7 grass hockey pitches (all of them on school sites)
- 33 rugby pitches (26 of them on school sites)

These pitch sites are located in:

- Burgess Hill 12
- Central Mid Sussex 9

- East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood 16
- Haywards Heath 15
- North Mid Sussex 16
- South Mid Sussex 16
- Total 84

We have assessed the quality and value of the various pitches against a range of criteria, including:

- **Signage**
- **General characteristics** including safety of the site entrance/egress, attractiveness, shelter planting, passive surveillance, accessibility
- **Degree of unofficial use**, such as the amount of dog fouling, glass and litter
- **Relationship to surroundings**, including quality of landscaping and proximity to nearest house
- **Compliance** with governing body specifications
- **Management and maintenance**, including effectiveness of surface repairs, line markings and grass length
- **Changing accommodation**, including size, durability and range of facilities
- **Value**: value for men's, women's and junior sport

The resulting overall quality and value scores are:

	Club/LA sites	School sites
<b>Quality – playing facilities</b>		
• Minimum score	42%	51%
• Average score	70%	67%
• Maximum score	86%	100%
<b>Quality – changing pavilions</b>		
• Minimum score	0%	51%
• Average score	63%	67%
• Maximum score	100%	100%
<b>Quality – overall</b>		
• Minimum score	43%	51%
• Average score	68%	67%
• Maximum score	83%	100%
<b>Value – playing facilities</b>		
• Minimum score	25%	58%
• Average score	67%	75%
• Maximum score	100%	100%

Accordingly, there is surprisingly little difference between the school and “public” sites.

Of the 84 sites, only 14 did not have changing accommodation. However, one does not require changing and a changing pavilion was under construction at the time of the audit on another site. This means that in Mid

Sussex an unusually high proportion of pitch sites have changing.

Combining the quality and values scores leads to the following initial policy conclusions:

- |                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| • Protect                      | 34 |
| • Protect and enhance quality  | 21 |
| • Seek to enhance value        | 13 |
| • Review the need for the site | 16 |
| • Total                        | 84 |

We reiterate that we have set the cut-off point between high and low quality and value at the average scores across the District. As the average scores are higher than in many other areas (see below) these initial policy conclusions overstate the overall need for enhancements or to review sites.

There is relatively little variation from one part of the District to another in the average quality and value scores, indicating that provision across the District is generally of fairly consistent quality and value:

	Average quality scores	Average value scores
• Burgess Hill	72%	65%
• Central Mid Sussex	72%	65%
• East Grinstead	68%	76%
• Haywards Heath	70%	69%
• North Mid Sussex	59%	63%
• South Mid Sussex	73%	64%

The sites with quality scores below 60% for changing facilities (excluding schools) are:

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| • Brook House Cricket Ground, West Hoathly       | 25% |
| • Horsted Keynes Cricket Club                    | 31% |
| • Twineham Recreation Ground                     | 33% |
| • Imberhorne Lane Recreation Ground, E Grinstead | 40% |
| • St Francis Playing Fields, Haywards Heath      | 43% |
| • Felbridge Recreation Ground                    | 45% |
| • Poynings Cricket Club                          | 45% |
| • Crawley Down Cricket Club                      | 53% |
| • Scaynes Hill Cricket Pitch                     | 53% |
| • East Court, East Grinstead                     | 55% |
| • North Lane Recreation Ground, West Hoathly     | 56% |
| • Balcombe Tennis Club                           | 58% |
| • Turners Hill Cricket Club                      | 58% |
| • Victoria Park, Haywards Heath                  | 58% |
| • Warninglid Recreation Ground                   | 58% |
| • Hassocks Football Club                         | 59% |

On the basis of these scores, the enhancement of changing pavilions (or on four sites, the initial provision of changing)



should be a higher priority than pitch or court enhancements. However, the overall priority should be those sites which require enhancement of both playing and changing facilities:

- Felbridge Recreation Ground
- Brook House Cricket Ground, West Hoathly
- Turners Hill Cricket Club
- Poynings Cricket Club

The features or characteristics of sites which generally scored best in the audit were:

- Access by public transport
- Freedom from detrimental use (eg dog fouling, joy-riding)
- The size of cricket grounds and the even-ness of outfield
- The size and general condition of rugby and football pitches
- The condition of multi-courts
- Management and maintenance

The features or characteristics which scored most poorly were:

- Signage
- External lighting
- Hard surfaced paths between changing and artificial turf pitches (ATPs); this is needed so that mud is not carried on to ATPs on players' footwear

Across the District there was very little variation in average scores from one area to another, the exceptions being:

- East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood: the safety margins around rugby pitches tend to be a little small
- North Mid Sussex: artificial cricket wickets are generally in below average condition

For pitches and courts, but not for other forms of greenspace, we have compared the level of parking provision with the likely maximum summer or winter need for parking to serve the facilities on each site. In order to do this, we have assumed that the parking need for different pitches and courts is:

	Cars	Coaches	Mini-buses
Artificial turf pitches	45		2
Cricket pitches	20		
Adult football pitches	15		
Junior football pitches	10		
Mini-soccer pitches	10		
Hockey pitches	15		
Rugby pitches	20	1	1
Tennis courts	2		

Note: the formulae underpinning the audit forms assume that each of these facilities is either a winter or summer one, depending on the normal playing season, except for artificial turf pitches which are used year-round.

This analysis shows that most pitch and court sport sites in Mid Sussex have adequate car parking, but may lack designated spaces for either coaches or mini-buses. However, as many sites have more than enough car parking spaces this is unlikely to be a serious problem.

## Cricket Pitches

The overall audit scores for cricket pitches were:

	Quality	Value
• Minimum score	43%	25%
• Average score	69%	71%
• Maximum score	93%	100%

There are only seven sites with quality scores of below 60% for their playing facilities, indicating that most cricket grounds in the District are of reasonable quality. The seven are:

- Brook House Cricket Ground, West Hoathly
- Imberhorne Lower School, East Grinstead
- Oathall Community College, Haywards Heath
- Poynings Cricket Club
- Sackville Community College, East Grinstead
- Turners Hill Cricket Club
- Warden Park School, Haywards Heath

The sites with the worst changing are:

- Brook House Cricket Ground, West Hoathly
- Horsted Keynes Cricket Club
- Poynings Cricket Club
- St Francis Playing Fields, Haywards Heath
- Twineham Recreation Ground

## Adult Football Pitches

The overall audit scores for adult football pitch sites were:

	Quality	Value
• Minimum score	48%	0%
• Average score	72%	66%
• Maximum score	100%	100%

Note: the 0% for sporting value is the Hamsland Recreation Ground in Horsted Keynes, which was not marked for any sports at the time of the audit

Overall, the scores for football pitches are noticeably higher than for pitches in other areas where we have undertaken similar audits, no doubt as a result of the Council's programme of pitch improvements over the past decade. The worst playing facilities are at:

- Felbridge Recreation Ground, East Grinstead
- Franklands Village Hardy Memorial, Haywards Heath
- Imberhorne School Upper, East Grinstead
- St Francis Playing Fields, Haywards Heath
- Warden Park School, Cuckfield

Four of the non-school sites lack changing pavilions:

- Fairfield Road Recreation ground, Burgess Hill
- Hamsland Recreation Ground, Horsted Keynes
- King George V Playing Field, Crawley Down
- Franklands Village Hardy Memorial, Haywards Heath

## Junior Football Pitches

The overall audit scores for junior football pitch sites were:

	Quality	Value
• Minimum score	29%	33%
• Average score	75%	70%
• Maximum score	100%	100%

The only really poor pitch is at Sackville Community College in East Grinstead; all other pitches achieved a quality score of at least 50%. There is however a need for changing accommodation at:

- Oathall Community College, Haywards Heath
- Sackville Community College, East Grinstead
- Stafford House Playing Field, Hassocks

## Mini-soccer Pitches

The overall audit scores for mini-soccer pitch sites were:

	Quality	Value
• Minimum score	54%	50%
• Average score	73%	75%
• Maximum score	100%	100%

54% is an impressive minimum quality score and in fact only one other site had a quality score below 75%. Two sites lack changing, however:

- Beech Hurst, Haywards Heath
- Marle Place, Burgess Hill

## Rugby Pitches

The overall audit scores for rugby pitch sites were:

	Quality	Value
• Minimum score	61%	58%
• Average score	81%	75%
• Maximum score	96%	100%

22 of the 33 rugby pitches are on independent school sites and only a handful on club or "public" sites:

- Southway Recreation Ground, Burgess Hill (2 pitches -

- Burgess Hill Rugby Club)
- East Grinstead Rugby Club (2 pitches)
- Whiteman's Green Recreation Ground (3 pitches - Haywards Heath Rugby Club)

Most of the sites have at least reasonable changing.

## Tennis and Multi-sport Courts

### Tennis Courts

We have audited 19 sites with 78 tennis courts in total, of which 14 of the courts are on three school sites. The overall audit scores are:

	Quality	Value
• Minimum score	46%	50%
• Average score	83%	71%
• Maximum score	100%	100%

Only two of the "community" sites have a poor quality score, Felbridge Recreation Ground in East Grinstead (54%) and St Francis Playing Fields in Haywards Heath (46%). Conversely three of the four main club-owned sites have 100% quality scores: Balcombe LTC, Hurstpierpoint LTC, Weald LTC and Hassocks. The fourth club site, East Grinstead LT and SRC, has a quality score of only 71% and is let down by the nature and condition of the courts playing surface.

### Multi-sport Courts

We have audited a total of 22 sites with 76 multi-sport courts, of which 47 of the courts are on school sites. The overall audit scores are:

	Quality	Value
• Minimum score	38%	33%
• Average score	67%	68%
• Maximum score	100%	100%

There is a wide variation in the quality and value of these multi-courts. The worst of the "public" courts are at Leylands Park and Marle Place in Burgess Hill. The sporting value of the courts also varies considerably, with those of the highest value generally being on school or Community College sites.

## Teenage Facilities

We have audited a total of 38 sites with the following teenage facilities:

- 15 ball courts
- 39 basketball goals
- 3 shelters
- 7 skateboard areas
- 5 BMX facilities
- 5 aerial runways

This suggests a real lack of teenage shelters but that the District Council and its partners have seen outdoor basketball goals as the key form of teenage provision, no doubt as a result of the availability of grant aid for them from Sport England. These goals are often poorly used, however, and it will be sensible to consult teenagers more before making provision for them.

The overall audit scores are:

	Quality	Value
• Minimum score	53%	4%
• Average score	70%	57%
• Maximum score	82%	100%

Many of the facilities are of fairly poor value and this suggests a need to take a new approach to provision for teenagers.

## Indoor Sports Facilities

We have audited the following indoor facilities:

### *Club and Public Facilities*

- Clair Hall
- Dolphin Centre in Haywards Heath
- East Grinstead Sports and Country Club
- King's Centre in East Grinstead
- Spooner's Indoor Bowls Centre
- Triangle Centre in Burgess Hill

### *State School Facilities*

- Imberhorne School (Lower and Upper), East Grinstead
- Oakmeeds Community College, Burgess Hill
- Oathall Community College, Haywards Heath
- Sackville Community College, East Grinstead\*
- St Paul's Catholic College, Burgess Hill
- St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School, Burgess Hill
- Warden Park School, Cuckfield

### *Independent School Facilities*

- Ardingly College
- Brambletye School, Ashurst Wood
- Burgess Hill School for Girls, Burgess Hill
- Copthorne Preparatory School, Copthorne
- Great Walstead School, Haywards Heath
- Hurstpierpoint College
- Worth Abbey School

The number of pools (of at least 200 sq m) and sports halls (with at least 4 badminton courts) in these different sectors is:

	Pools (> 200 sq m)	Sports Halls (> 3 courts)
Clubs	0	1
Public centres	3	3
State Schools	0	4
Independent schools	2	6

This emphasises the importance of independent schools to sports provision across the District.

The overall quality scores are:

- Minimum (Oathall Community College) 26%
- Average 60%
- Maximum (Triangle Leisure Centre) 89%

As might be expected, the District Council's public facilities generally scored higher than the school facilities. Of the Council's three main facilities, the King's Centre has the lowest quality score (69%). It is looking "tired" and in need of refurbishment, if not replacement; it is also something of a rabbit warren with convoluted circulation. Two of the education facilities – St Paul's Catholic College and Copthorne Preparatory School, achieved a higher overall quality score.

### Village Halls

Although we have not audited village halls, we have identified from the Parish Councils that there are the following halls in the District which contain a badminton court:

#### *North Mid Sussex*

- Ardingly: Victorian hall which is not suitable for badminton
- Ashurst Wood: one hall with a badminton court and a badminton club, but height is limited
- Horsted Keynes:
- Turners Hill: hall with one badminton court
- West Hoathly: no village halls
- Worth: one hall but it is too small for badminton

#### *Central Mid Sussex*

- Balcombe: one badminton court in the Victory Hall
- Cuckfield Rural: two halls, but only one is used for badminton as the other is too small
- Cuckfield: no halls suitable for badminton
- Lindfield Rural: one hall which can be used for badminton
- Lindfield: two halls, of which one could be used for badminton
- Slaugham: no response

### *South Mid Sussex*

- Albourne: one hall with no badminton provision
- Bolney: two halls in one building, but both are too small for badminton. However, the Parish Council has received planning permission for a new hall which will contain a court.
- Fulking: no village halls
- Hassocks: the village hall is too small for badminton
- Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common: one hall but it is too small for badminton
- Newtimber: no village halls
- Poynings: the village hall is too small for badminton
- Pyecombe: no village halls
- Twineham: : no village halls

### **Indoor Bowls**

There is only one indoor bowls hall in the District, the Spooner's Club in East Grinstead. While it is in good condition it is to close in summer 2006 and so audit scores are irrelevant.

## **Benchmarking**

Because we have undertaken similar greenspace audits in other areas, we are able to benchmark provision in Mid Sussex against the provision in other council areas. The comparators we have used for this, all in the south of England, are:

- West Wiltshire District: a large rural district with five main towns
- Havant Borough, Hampshire: next door to Portsmouth, Havant is a mainly urban Borough but one with large areas of greenspace
- Hart District, Hampshire: a largely rural district, with four main towns, to the south-east of Basingstoke

The table below provides summary scores for each of these areas and Mid Sussex.

		Mid Sussex	Hart	Havant	West Wilts	Mid Sussex scores as % of averages for other areas
Allotments	Minimum quality scores	25%	47%	43%	33%	61%
	Average quality scores	47%	47%	57%	43%	96%
	Maximum quality scores	75%	47%	82%	52%	124%
	Minimum value scores	40%	50%	43%	41%	90%
	Average value scores	58%	50%	62%	60%	101%
	Maximum value scores	94%	50%	73%	73%	144%
Bowling greens	Minimum quality scores	75%	78%	94%	79%	90%
	Average quality scores	88%	83%	97%	89%	98%
	Maximum quality scores	100%	93%	100%	96%	104%
	Minimum value scores	75%	75%	88%	63%	100%
	Average value scores	83%	80%	97%	89%	94%
	Maximum value scores	100%	83%	100%	100%	106%
Equipped Play Areas	Minimum quality scores	46%	47%	43%	44%	103%
	Average quality scores	70%	70%	72%	68%	100%
	Maximum quality scores	93%	91%	97%	89%	101%
	Minimum value scores	31%	45%	23%	25%	100%
	Average value scores	62%	61%	68%	49%	104%
	Maximum value scores	95%	82%	100%	75%	111%
MFGS	Minimum quality scores	40%	35%	36%	30%	119%
	Average quality scores	70%	66%	61%	56%	115%
	Maximum quality scores	98%	83%	92%	90%	111%
	Minimum value scores	21%	30%	41%	21%	68%
	Average value scores	65%	59%	74%	64%	99%
	Maximum value scores	100%	86%	97%	96%	108%

Note: MFGS = Multi-functional greenspaces

In this table, if the figure in the final column is above 100%, the average score for Mid Sussex is higher than the average score for the other three council areas; and vice versa. On this basis, Mid Sussex compares well with these other areas. Six of the twelve average scores are below the average scores for other areas, but by not more than 12%. On the other hand, the other six average scores are above those for other areas, and in the case of the value of pitches and courts by 21%.

## Summary of Key Points

The results of the audit lead to a number of strategic conclusions:

- The quality of provision in Mid Sussex compares favourably with provision in the other areas, broadly similar in nature to Mid Sussex, where we have undertaken other audits using the same basic audit forms and methodology. In addition, there is relatively little variation in the audit scores from one part of the District to another, indicating that the District, Parish and Town Councils can take pride in their consistent approach to management and maintenance. This said, there is a need to pay more attention to dog fouling, the



condition of street furniture and provision for cyclists. There are also a number of sites where it will be desirable to enhance quality, the most important of which are playing fields and in particular cricket grounds.

- The value of Mid Sussex's greenspaces – to the local community and in relation to wider issues such as wildlife and biodiversity – is also generally good, but there are many sites where it will be desirable to enhance value if at all possible. This will require a number of site-specific responses which range from general environmental improvements to better opportunities for formal and informal recreation use, managing sites in a way which will be of greater benefit to wildlife, improving paths and encouraging greater use.
- Possibly the one area in which the various Town and Parish Councils in the District most need to rethink their present approach is in relation to children's play. With an average value score of only 52%, the play value of many sites is quite limited – especially in the context of the often high maintenance costs of play areas. However, play provision also has to be highly accessible on foot and this inevitably implies a need for a fairly closely spaced network of play spaces. This is an issue we discuss further in the accessibility assessment.
- It will also be desirable to work with allotments associations to identify the improvements that plot holders would most like to see to sites. On the basis of the audit, there could be merit in seeking to develop a shared approach to composting and rubbish collection, while it may be desirable to provide toilets on at least the larger sites.



## 7: Quality Standards

### Introduction

The purpose of quality standards is to set out the quality of provision the Council wishes to see in its area. Such standards have two main uses:

- They provide a benchmark for the Council to assess and compare the quality of different facilities of the same type within its area as an aid when determining priorities for improvement or changes to management regimes. Given that it will not always be possible to achieve all aspects of the quality standards - for example because of a lack of resources - in relation to existing provision quality standards are an aspiration. As such they should be challenging, but broadly achievable, and the Council should aim to achieve them wherever it is practicable to do so.
- They set out the Council's requirements as a guide for developers on the quality of provision the Council will expect them either to provide or fund. In this context, quality standards are a requirement, although they must obviously be applied in a way which is reasonable given the specific circumstances of a proposed development.

This chapter sets out draft quality standards for:

Greenspaces	Accessible natural greenspace Allotments Amenity greenspaces Green corridors Equipped play areas Sports pitches Athletics training facilities Bowling greens Tennis courts Urban parks and recreation grounds Teenage Facilities
Indoor provision	Community centres and halls Indoor Bowls facilities Indoor sports halls and swimming pools

Each of the quality standards is derived from examples of

## General Requirements

best practice, such as the Green Flag Award criteria for parks, or published guidance, for example from English Nature or Sport England, and links directly to the KCA audit forms.

The following requirements for design quality, accessibility and management and maintenance are common to all spaces and are therefore set out at the start of the standards rather than repeated for each different form of provision. There are also some additional requirements under these headings for specific types of space which are set out in the appropriate sections below.

### Design Quality

Design quality is fundamental to ensuring that spaces are fit for purpose, attractive to potential users and easy to maintain. As a general principle, all greenspaces should be designed by experienced landscape architects working to the following design objectives:

- **Character:** each space should have its own specific identity which responds to the character of the area in which it is set
- **Continuity and enclosure:** there should be a clear distinction between public and private spaces
- **Quality of the public realm:** spaces should be attractive, safe, uncluttered and designed in such a way as to be attractive and usable by everyone
- **Ease of movement:** it should be easy to get to and move through spaces and individual public spaces should be connected with one another as much as possible. In residential areas, people should generally have priority over vehicles.
- **Legibility and clear routes:** the routes through spaces should be clear, with landmarks or directional signs at appropriate locations
- **Adaptability:** spaces should be able to change over time to meet evolving local needs
- **Diversity:** spaces should offer variety and choice to potential users

### Accessibility

Accessibility has two key components: making it easy for potential users to get to spaces and making it easy to use them. Accordingly it is concerned with all potential users and not just those who are disabled in some way.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and PPG17 both promote the design of inclusive public spaces and environments that everyone can use. Since October 2004 service providers have been required to take reasonable steps to ensure that people with disabilities are able to use premises and spaces without unnecessary constraints. There is no clear definition of "reasonable" in this context,

but it seems that there is no requirement to make all spaces accessible to all people with disabilities all of the time. We suggest a “reasonable” policy is that greenspaces should be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

In greenspaces, the key requirements are:

- Spaces should be linked to local pedestrian and cycle path systems
- Publicly accessible buildings should be fully accessible to people with disabilities
- Adequate car parking (if required) should be either on site or close to the entrances
- Spaces should be traversed by a network of hard surfaced paths, where appropriate, which are hard surfaced, well drained and suitable for wheelchairs and baby buggies; maximum slope not more than 1:12 and then only for short distances; otherwise not more than 1:24. Paths must also be wide enough for two wheelchairs to pass and broadly follow desire lines to link the entrances to the space with points of interest either within the space or close to it (note: on some sites, such as playing fields and sports pitches, it will be necessary not to compromise the main use of the site). In some locations, it may be necessary to provide tactile clues to alert people with limited vision to trip hazards or changes in level.
- Clear and uncomplicated written information, signage and way-marking, with good colour contrast and simple sans serif lettering
- Easy to use latches and gates

Wherever possible, greenspace designers should consult local disabled groups over the design of spaces and facilities.

### **Management and Maintenance**

A superbly designed but badly managed or maintained space is probably of less value to a local community than a poorly designed but superbly managed and maintained one. The key management and maintenance requirements are that:

- Boundary fencing, gates, posts and signage (where needed) should be fit for purpose and well maintained
- Surfaces should be fit for purpose (inclusive of markings) and well maintained
- Litter should be seen clearly to be under control with litter bins emptied regularly and no dangerous litter such as broken glass
- There should be at most only limited evidence of vandalism or graffiti coupled with rapid and effective removal

- There should be very little or no evidence of dog fouling, with “pooper bins” available at various points, plus notices relating to the avoidance of dog fouling. Pooper bins must also be clearly identifiable and separate from litter bins – for example, a different colour and clearly marked.
- There should be no or very little evidence of flytipping and rapid, effective removal of tipped material
- All paths should be kept clear of debris and chewing gum; with surfaces in good condition and repaired or marked as necessary
- All facilities should be in clean, safe and usable condition
- Path or other lighting should be adequately maintained and working
- Grounds maintenance standards should be consistently high and demonstrate clearly that spaces are well maintained
- Grassed areas should have a low preponderance of broad leaved weeds; they must be cut to an even length and if clippings are left in place after cutting they must be short so as not to have a detrimental impact on the appearance of the area
- Horticultural areas and flower/shrub beds should be weed free and ideally mulched
- Flowering plants dead headed and pruned as necessary
- Woodland areas should be maintained and thinned to provide easy access

### *Green Flag Standard*

The Green Flag Award Scheme has been adopted by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as setting the standard to which local authorities should be maintaining their local greenspaces. Councils do not necessarily have to have applied for and achieved any Green Flag awards, but have to report to the ODPM annually on the area and proportion of spaces which meet the approximate equivalent of this standard. Accordingly, Mid Sussex should aim to achieve this standard for at least the main spaces in its area and build on its successful Green Flag applications for Beech Hurst and Bedelands Farm.

## **Accessible Natural Greenspace**

### **Definition**

Land, water and geological features which have been naturally colonised by plants and animals and can be visited by people. This definition includes:

- Sites awaiting redevelopment that have been colonised by spontaneous assemblages of plants and animals
- Land alongside waterways, transport and service corridors which, although perhaps once deliberately landscaped or planted are now mixtures of planted and spontaneous assemblages

- Tracts of “encapsulated countryside” such as woodlands, scrub, heathlands, meadows and marshes which, through appropriate management, continue to support essentially wild plant and animal assemblages. Often these natural areas exist within the framework of formally designed public open space
- Ponds, ditches, rivers, lakes and reservoirs
- The less intensively managed parts of parks, school grounds, sports pitches, golf courses, churchyards and cemeteries
- Incidental pocket-sized plots along residential and commercial roads, pathways, car parks and property boundaries, including walls and built structures which are often spontaneously colonised by plants and animals
- Allotments, orchards and gardens

#### **Minimum Size**

- 2,000 sq m (0.2 ha)

#### **General Characteristics**

- Open naturalistic appearance which blends into the surrounding countryside
- Only limited internal areas of poor visibility
- Distinct identity
- Good use of views out of or across the site
- Good use of topography, space and planting

#### **Accessibility**

- Entrances or access points linked to rights of way, bridlepaths, quiet lanes and cycling routes and water courses to create wildlife corridors and a network of greenspaces
- Accessible from the adjacent road or car park area by walking or in a wheelchair where appropriate
- Good network of internal paths, linking to rights of way, bridle paths, quiet lanes and cycling routes in the vicinity

#### **Planting and Biodiversity**

- Good mix of native species and habitats, depending on site characteristics
- Dense, bushy hedgerows
- Wildlife protection areas
- Clearings or gaps in tree crowns to allow light penetration to woodland floor, where appropriate
- Well developed shrub, field and ground layers and wide, species rich edge, where appropriate

## Allotments and Community Gardens

### Facilities and Features

- Built heritage structures and natural features conserved
- Interpretation of flora and fauna as appropriate
- Litter bins and seats at key points
- Signs requiring dogs to be kept under control and fouling disposed of to "pooper" bins
- Adequate safety measures adjacent to areas of water (will depend on size, depth and current, if any)
- "Way marked" routes, where appropriate

### Management and Maintenance

- Managed primarily for wildlife and nature conservation
- See "General Requirements" above

### Definition

- Both statutory and all other allotment sites.

### Minimum Size

- 20 plots of at least 5 rods each

### General Characteristics

- Screen planting to provide some privacy
- Clear separation between adjacent allotments
- Signage at site entrances giving details of ownership and how to apply for an allotment; also emergency telephone numbers
- Securely fenced with lockable gates

### Accessibility

- Linked to pedestrian and cycle path systems
- Adequate parking close to entrance to the site (but not necessarily on-site)
- Site entrance not more than 400 m from nearest bus stop and preferably not more than 250 m
- Adequate paths, suitable for people with disabilities

### Planting and Biodiversity

- Good mix of species in planting around and within the site
- Dense, bushy hedgerows (where present)

### Facilities and features

- Water point serving each group of allotments



## **Amenity Greenspaces**

### **Management and Maintenance**

- See "General Requirements" above

### **Definition**

- Informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens.

### **Minimum Size**

- 1,000 sq m (0.1 hectare)

### **General Characteristics**

- Part of a network of greenspaces providing traffic segregated routes through residential or other areas which link to major walking and cycling routes and bus stops
- Located away from sources of potential danger to unaccompanied children such as roads and areas of water
- Designed to create a sense of place and provide a setting for adjoining buildings, with "sun traps"
- "Cared for" general appearance
- Views out of or across the space, ideally to local landmarks
- Designed and constructed in such a way as to ensure that the space cannot become waterlogged after heavy rain; this may require field drains or field drains plus soil amelioration

### **Accessibility**

- Traversed by hard surfaced paths, where appropriate, which are suitable for wheelchairs, wide enough for two wheelchairs to pass and broadly following desire lines (but avoiding straight lines wherever possible)

### **Planting and biodiversity**

- Good balance of mown grassed areas, in varying widths or sizes (large enough for informal recreation such as kickabouts or mini-soccer where appropriate) and mixed indigenous and ornamental species and ages of trees or shrubs, but with a predominantly open character
- Range of habitat types eg woodland, ponds, grasslands, hedgerows
- Buffer or shelter planting as necessary

### **Facilities and Features**

- May incorporate provision for children or teenagers but such facilities should not be central to or the main

- focus of the spaces
- Adequate litter bins
- Signs indicating that dog fouling should be picked up and disposed of responsibly
- May incorporate public art or heritage features (eg statues)
- Seats, in both sunny and shaded areas
- Adequate safety measures adjacent to potentially dangerous areas of water (eg rivers, canals)
- Path lighting where appropriate
- Passive surveillance from nearby properties, but in a way which respects the privacy of occupants

#### **Management and Maintenance**

- See "General Requirements" above

## **Green Corridors**

#### **Definition**

- Pedestrian and cycling routes through urban areas, including river and canal banks and cycleways, which are separated from motor traffic and link residential areas to town or village centres and community facilities such as schools, play areas, community centres and sports facilities.

#### **Minimum Size**

- There is no minimum size, but corridors should generally be not less than 500 m (0.5 km) long

#### **General Characteristics**

- Clear signposted accesses to the network
- Welcoming and apparently safe with no signs of possible danger such as litter, graffiti or damaged vegetation
- Surfaced paths at least 2 m wide, suitable for wheelchairs
- Adequate litter bin and "pooper" bin provision, with bins located at points where they can easily be accessed for emptying from the road system
- Freedom from flooding so that paths are not susceptible to water damage or become icy in winter

#### **Accessibility**

- Appropriate safety features adjacent to areas of water (eg life buoys, warning notices)
- Appropriate safety measures adjacent to or at crossings of rail lines or busy roads
- Good sightlines along the route so that users can see potential danger well ahead

#### **Planting and Biodiversity**

- Good balance and variety of plants and shrubs, including flowering and non-flowering species
- Range of tree species and ages
- Range of habitat types
- Paths free from overhanging branches within reach of users
- Good range of habitats

#### **Facilities and Features**

- Internal signposting to places of interest or destinations (eg shops, leisure facilities, schools)
- Adequate street lighting

#### **Management and Maintenance**

- See "General Requirements" above
- All paths kept clear of debris and overhanging branches which might be as hazardous to cyclists or other users

## **Play Provision**

#### **Definition**

- Green and hard surfaced spaces offering informal play opportunities for children aged between about 2-3 and 16 years. Younger children will normally be accompanied by an adult or older child while older children will probably use the facilities on their own. Much play provision will probably be used by children of different ages at different times of the day.

#### **Minimum Size**

- There is no minimum size requirement as informal play provision should be an integral rather than a separate part of the greenspace network in residential areas.

#### **General Characteristics**

- New housing development should follow "home zone" principles in that they should be designed as predominantly pedestrian environments into which vehicles can be admitted. This requires much more than simple traffic calming measures such as sleeping policemen.
- The whole of the outdoor environment should be safe but visually stimulating for both children and adults and offer opportunities for children to play in imaginative ways, both close to home and in any wooded or other greenspaces close to it which can be accessed without crossing a major road. The green network and related play provision must not be allocated to "left-over areas" or parts of sites unsuitable for building but designed in

from the start and link to likely pedestrian desire lines.

- Areas in which children are likely to play should be unique and designed to offer a varied, interesting and physically challenging environment, accessible to everyone, which offers opportunities for running, jumping, climbing, balancing, building or creating, social interaction and sitting quietly.
- The design of play provision should derive from and reinforce the character and levels of the site and incorporate any natural features there may be on it such as rock outcrops or water courses. This will also help to encourage and facilitate use by children of all ages.
- Play provision should be designed generally to encourage children to explore their home environment and so incorporate hiding and “secret” places and links to nearby parts of the green network, especially woodland and other natural areas.
- There is still a place for some traditional fenced equipped play areas with slides, swings and the like but they should be the exception rather than the norm and at key strategic locations such as formal parks and similar greenspaces. Such facilities will generally be significantly larger than traditional Local or Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play.
- Play provision should stimulate the senses of sight, sound, touch and smell and offer opportunities for children to manipulate materials. Accordingly they should incorporate variations in level and a range of materials of different kinds, textures and colours, such as timber, sand, rocks, dead trees and other natural materials and incorporate trees, shrubs and grass. Examples of other materials or forms that can be used include old car tyres (eg for swings or tunnels); logs (eg for climbing and balancing); ropes (for ladders, swings and bridges); tunnels and mounds or hollows (for various forms of play); tarmac areas (for ball games or other games such as hopscotch); grass surfaces (for ball games and sitting); low walls (for skateboard manoeuvres, sitting on, balancing or jumping off); sand (for digging, building and sifting); shrubbery (for dens, places to hide or look for small animals and insects); rocks (for hiding and climbing); trees with low branches (for climbing or swinging); and bollards (for leapfrogging).
- Passive surveillance from the windows of nearby buildings is desirable
- Greenspaces that children are likely to use for play must either be located in such a position that their use will not create disturbance for the occupants of nearby dwellings or be separated from them by a buffer zone of not less than 10 metres from the nearest dwelling boundary

### **Planting and Biodiversity**

- Good mix of “child-friendly” (ie not sharp, spiky or poisonous) plant and tree species in the vicinity
- Generous use of planting to enhance amenity, create a sense of enclosure and different “rooms” within large greenspaces and support bio-diversity

### **Facilities and Features**

- Play provision can include:
  - \* Adventure playgrounds
  - \* Bike tracks and jumps (see Teenage Areas below)
  - \* Hangout or youth shelters (see Teenage Areas below)
  - \* Multi-use games areas (see Teenage Areas below)
  - \* Nature trails and activity courses
  - \* Sandpits
  - \* Seats and benches (sized for both adults and children)
  - \* Skateparks and BMX facilities (see Teenage Areas below)
  - \* Traditional equipped play areas
  - \* Clearings in wooded areas
- Parking for bicycles
- Grass areas must be equipped with field drains and constructed with free draining soil
- Any formal equipped play area (eg along the lines of an NPFA LEAP or NEAP) must be equipped with dog-proof fencing, at least 1 m high, fitted with at least two outward-opening, self-closing gates; seats for parents or carers; litter bin(s); signage to indicate that the area is intended for children and dogs should be excluded; the name and telephone number of the agency responsible for maintaining the play provision; suitable safety surfacing beneath and around play equipment; and suitable safety surfacing beneath and around any fixed play equipment. In addition, all play equipment must comply with the appropriate European or British Standards.

### **Management and Maintenance**

- See General Requirements above
- Safety surfacing, where present, in good condition
- Play equipment (including natural “equipment” such as fallen trees) in safe and usable condition
- Dog-proof fencing, where required, safe and effective at excluding dogs
- Seats for children or parents/carers in safe and usable condition

## Sports Pitches (grass and artificial turf)

### Definition

- Pitches for football (all codes), cricket, hockey, rugby (all codes)

### Minimum Size

- 2 pitches with changing accommodation and parking

The quantity standard is based only on the actual playing area, plus the necessary safety margins at the sides and ends of pitches. When providing new pitches or changing pavilions the following design features should be included:

- Space to move the pitches laterally (ie across the width) by 50% in order to be able to reduce wear in goalmouths and other high use areas. For example, an adult football pitch is 60 m wide plus 6 m wide safety margins on each side, giving a total playing area width of 72 m. In order to meet the 50% requirement for lateral movement, the area of land constructed to pitch specification is a minimum of  $72 \times 1.5 = 108$  m wide.
- A changing pavilion providing not less than two team changing rooms per pitch plus a match officials' changing room, a first aid room, male and female toilets and a ground store. Team changing rooms must be large enough for 15 players, plus bags, for cricket and football and 20 for rugby. Cricket pavilions will also require a kitchen and tea area. In order to allow simultaneous male and female use, each team changing room should include its own shower and drying area together with a WC and wash hand basin. Where there is more than one pitch on a site there should be two match officials team changing rooms in order to allow space for both male and female officials.
- The amount of parking provision required will be whichever is the higher of the winter or summer requirement, worked out as follows:

	Cars	Mini-buses	Coaches
<i>Summer requirements, per pitch</i>			
Artificial turf pitches	45	2	0
Cricket pitches	20	0	0
Adult football pitches	0	0	0
Junior football pitches	0	0	0
Mini-soccer pitches	0	0	0
Rugby pitches	0	0	0

### *Winter requirements, per pitch*

Artificial turf pitches	45	2	0
Cricket pitches	0	0	0
Adult football pitches	15	0	1
Junior football pitches	10	2	0
Mini-soccer pitches	10	2	0
Rugby pitches	25	1	1

Where there are formal spectator facilities there is to be one car parking space for every three seats in addition to the above requirements.

### **General Characteristics**

- External lighting in car parking areas
- External lighting on pavilions with PIR detectors
- Signs indicating that dogs must be kept on a lead and any fouling picked up and disposed of responsibly
- Rows of more than eight parking spaces to be separated by soft landscaping
- Adequately separated from adjoining residential properties
- Adequate measures in place to control light spill from floodlighting to adjoining properties and related land

### **Accessibility**

- Accessible by public transport: nearest bus stop within 400 m of entrance/access points, but preferably 250 m
- Convenient car parking
- Good connections to paths and cycling routes in the vicinity of the site
- Wide access routes with clear sight lines at site entrance/egress
- Hard surfaced paths following desire lines from parking to pavilions
- Paths and buildings fully accessible by wheelchair where appropriate
- Path system appropriate to the circulation needs of players within the site, with wide, hard surfaces in heavily trafficked areas (to avoid constant muddy areas) and from changing pavilions to artificial surfaces
- Path system approximating to desire lines for those crossing the site, but avoiding straight lines wherever possible (note that this can have implications for pitch layout)

### **Planting and Biodiversity**

- Strong structure planting around the perimeter of the site using native species (designed as buffer planting to reduce wind on pitches and noise or light spill as appropriate to the site and adjoining properties or roads and also to promote biodiversity)

- Internal structure planting where appropriate
- Amenity or naturalistic landscaping in the vicinity of buildings and car parking

## **Facilities and Features**

### *Changing pavilions*

- No rooflights in flat roofs on single storey buildings
- Adequate secure maintenance equipment storage
- Lockable security shutters on all pavilion doors and windows
- Passive surveillance from nearby properties

### *Pitches, practice areas and other facilities*

- Correct orientation (pitches generally between 35 degrees west and 20 degrees east of N-S; athletics tracks generally oriented so the finishing straight is not in line with the prevailing south-westerly wind)
- Playing facilities meeting relevant governing body requirements in terms of length, width, even-ness of surface, boundary distances (cricket) and side clearances or safety margins
- Artificial surfaces in good overall condition, free from tears and uneven areas
- Floodlighting to relevant governing body requirements for the standard of play
- No end to end slope on pitches greater than 1:40 (1:80 preferable); no side to side slope greater than 1:40 (1:60 preferable)
- No pitch more than 200 m from nearest changing pavilion
- Well drained pitch surfaces
- Winter sports grass pitches to have pipe drains plus sand slits where necessary (note: sand slits to be renewed every 10 years)
- Artificial surfaces to comply with relevant governing body requirements and BS 7044: Artificial Sports Surfaces
- All artificial surfaces (and any safety surround areas) to be fully enclosed within lockable chain link fence at least 3.0 m high

### *Floodlighting (where provided)*

- Minimum maintained illumination of 200 lux with a uniformity ratio of 0.7, on grass pitches
- Minimum maintained illumination of 300 lux, with a uniformity ratio of 0.7, on artificial turf pitches

## **Management and Maintenance**

- See General Requirements above
- Grass lengths appropriate to sport with full grass cover



on grass pitches

- Posts and goals safe and free from rust or sharp edges, with hooks for nets where appropriate
- Line markings straight and easily seen
- Surface repairs carried out quickly and effectively
- Surround netting and entrance gates to artificially surfaced areas in good condition
- Floodlights in full working order
- Information on site ownership and the facilities available at the site entrance
- Contact details for emergencies at any pavilion

## **Outdoor Sports Facilities: Athletics Training Areas**

### **Definition**

- Facilities for track and field athletics training

### **Minimum range of facilities**

- Synthetic surfaced training areas for at least the following disciplines:
  - \* 110 m hurdles
  - \* 100 m sprint
  - \* High jump
  - \* Pole vault
  - \* Long jump
  - \* Triple jump
  - \* Javelin
  - \* Shot putt
  - \* Hammer
  - \* Discus
- Adequate changing accommodation including male and female changing, with showers and toilets, first aid room, meeting room and equipment storage

### **General Characteristics**

- Facilities which comply with appropriate governing body standards
- Oriented so neither the straight nor the direction of the javelin is in line with the prevailing (south-westerly) wind
- Floodlighting to provide at least 100 lux

### **Accessibility**

- On-site car parking with sufficient spaces for athletes
- Good connections to paths and cycling routes in the vicinity of the site
- Wide access routes with clear sight lines at site entrance/egress
- Paths and buildings fully accessible by wheelchair where appropriate

- Track and adjoining areas fenced to prevent unauthorised access and use

### **Planting and Biodiversity**

- Shelter planting as appropriate

### **Facilities and Features**

- As required by the appropriate governing body standards

### **Management and Maintenance**

- See General Requirements above
- Grassed landing area for throwing disciplines
- All equipment, including safety equipment, fit for purpose
- Track and field events markings easily seen
- Surface repairs carried out quickly and effectively
- Floodlights in full working order
- Information on site ownership and the facilities available at the site entrance
- Contact details for emergencies at any pavilion

## **Bowling Greens**

### **Definition**

- Lawn bowls greens meeting appropriate governing body standards

### **Minimum Size**

- 6 rinks

The quantity standard is based on the size of the playing area, ie the actual green. There are also to be banks and ditches all round the green which comply with governing body requirements, a pathway at least 2 m wide all round the green and a pavilion. The pavilion is to contain at least male and female changing rooms, each with a wash hand basin, a kitchen and a social area. This requires a site of not less than approximately 41 x 47 m, ie approximately 2,000 sq m (0.2 hectare).

### **General Characteristics**

- No broad-leaved trees overhanging the green

### **Accessibility**

- Accessible by public transport: nearest bus stop within 400 m of entrance/access points, but preferably 250 m
- Convenient car parking
- Linked to local footpath network

- Hard surfaced path all round the green
- Site and pavilion to be fully accessible to people with disabilities

#### **Planting and Biodiversity**

- Shelter planting/screening to provide summer time shelter from wind, privacy for bowlers and support biodiversity

#### **Facilities and Features**

- The green must be between 36.58 and 40.23 m square, surrounded by a ditch and beyond that a bank. The ditch must be 203-381 mm wide and between 51 and 203 mm below the level of the bowling surface. The banks must be at least 230 mm above the level of the bowling surface with either a vertical face adjacent to the ditch or at an angle of not more than 35% to vertical. The ditch and bank must be lined with a material which will not damage bowls.

#### **Management and Maintenance**

- See General Requirements above
- Greens, bank sand ditches maintained to an appropriate standard for bowls

## **Tennis Courts**

#### **Definition**

- Tennis courts and multi-use games areas, usually with a hard or synthetic surface, and used for tennis, 5-a-side football, netball, outdoor basketball and roller/in-line skating.

#### **Minimum size**

- Three courts, each at least 36.5 x 18.25 m (court plus run-back areas at the end and safety margins at the sides)

#### **General Characteristics**

- Reasonably sheltered from the wind
- A free-draining or impervious surface laid to appropriate falls to shed water
- Surrounded by netting which prevents balls escaping from the court(s) area
- Oriented within 30 degrees of north-south

#### **Accessibility**

- Accessible by public transport: nearest bus stop within 400 m of entrance/access points, but preferably 250 m
- Convenient car parking

- Linked to local footpath network
- Site and pavilion to be fully accessible to people with disabilities

#### **Planting and Biodiversity**

- Amenity planting composed mainly of native species to improve appearance, provide shelter, reduce noise transfer and promote biodiversity

#### **Facilities and Features**

- Posts and tennis nets in good condition, without large holes through which the ball can pass
- Clearly marked courts with adequate safety surrounds
- Floodlighting (if present) to provide 500 lux over the whole of the playing area

#### **Management and Maintenance**

- See General Requirements above
- Court(s) surface in good condition

## **Urban Parks**

#### **Definition**

- Urban and country parks and formal gardens

#### **Minimum Size**

- 0.25 hectare

#### **General Characteristics**

- Well defined boundaries or perimeter, preferably enclosed with railings or walls
- A welcoming appearance at the entrance and therefore well maintained, free from litter and graffiti, with good views over an attractive parkland landscape with clear points of interest to draw visitors in
- Range of natural and man-made structures of heritage features such as ponds, statues, buildings and ornamental railings
- Good use of topography so that slopes are gentle, views across and out of the park are attractive and visitors can get a sense of scale
- Reasonable privacy for the residents of nearby dwellings; ideally, houses should not back on to the park, but be on the other side of the road

#### **Accessibility**

- Clearly visible entrances, ideally signed on nearby roads and pedestrian or cycling routes
- Park entrances linked to safe pedestrian and designated cycling routes (where they exist)

- Secure bicycle storage at the main entrance to the park, at least, and ideally secondary entrances as well
- Adequate parking adjacent to at least the main entrance (can be on-street) and ideally secondary entrances as well
- Main entrance, and ideally secondary entrances, within 400 m, at most, of the nearest bus stop, but preferably 250 m
- Internal path system which links up with adjoining roads and pedestrian or cycling routes; preferably at the junctions of streets, rather than in the middle of them, and provides a number of "short cuts" across or through the park
- All paths hard surfaced, well drained and suitable for wheelchairs and baby buggies; maximum slope not more than 1:12 and then only for short distances; otherwise not more than 1:24
- Path network linking points of interest within the park
- No areas within the park accessible only by ascending or descending steps; where there are steps there should also be an easily found ramp

### **Planting and Biodiversity**

- Diverse species of flowering and non-flowering trees, of various ages, including native species; also shrubs and plants providing a wide range of habitats
- Hedgerows, where present, reasonably dense, thick and bushy so as to provide habitats
- Some areas of dense planting, difficult for people to penetrate and in areas where they will not provide hiding places, but providing habitats for small animals and birds
- Woodland areas to have clearings or gaps in crowns to allow light penetration to the woodland floor and development of undergrowth

### **Facilities and Features**

- Equipped play areas for young children (under 10), where present – see separate quality standard
- Provision for teenagers, where present – see separate quality standards
- Sports facilities, where present – see separate quality standards
- Adequate litter bins – well designed, located adjacent to the path system, bird/squirrel/rat proof and cleared regularly
- Examples of public art, linked to the path system
- Bandstands, if present, well maintained
- Ornamental fountains, if present, in good working order and well maintained
- Café facilities in larger parks
- Good views through and across the park so that each visitor is providing a form of informal surveillance of

other users

- Adequate safety measures adjacent to areas of water which might be dangerous (eg notices regarding depths, life buoys)
- Adequate lighting for appropriate paths
- Informative interpretation signs or other material relating to natural features (eg geology, land form); heritage features (eg statues, historic/listed buildings, bandstands); wildlife (eg details of the main birds and animals to be seen in the park); landscaping (eg information on trees and other planting and especially horticulture areas)
- Adequate signage giving directions both within the park and to nearby streets or features of interest outside it

### **Management and Maintenance**

- See General Requirements above

## **Teenage Areas**

### **Definition**

- Provision for teenagers intended for young people approximately 13-18 years old and designed to allow them to “hang out” and practise various sports or movement skills. The area must include a ball court (see below), a skateboard area and at least two teenage shelters (broadly similar to bus shelters, but with no sides)

### **Minimum Size**

- 1,500 sq m (0.15 hectare) excluding buffer zone

### **General Characteristics**

- Located close, but not immediately adjacent, to a well used pedestrian route but not less than 50 m from the nearest dwelling
- Surrounded by a buffer zone, possibly with appropriate planting, of at least 30 metres on all sides between the facility and nearest dwelling boundary.
- Accessible to children or adults with disabilities
- Effective drainage of all surfaces

### **Accessibility**

- Accessible by public transport: nearest bus stop within 400 m of entrance/access points, but preferably 250 m
- Linked to local footpath and cycle path network
- Fully accessible to people with disabilities

### **Planting and Biodiversity**

- Tough, but not prickly, landscaping in the immediate vicinity of the area

### **Facilities and Features**

- Adequate provision of large litter bins

#### *Ball Court*

- Broadly similar to a tennis court (see above) with a minimum size 36 x 18 m with a tarmac or rubberised surface, surrounded by fencing at least 2 m high, and equipped with floodlights providing at least 150 lux. The floodlights can be equipped with automatic switching or a push-button control which allows use only within pre-set times – typically 1700-2100 in the winter months. Ideally there should be fixed basketball and 5-a-side soccer goals.

#### *Skateboard Area*

- Skateboard facilities designed by specialist company to include ramps, edges, half pipes, a slalom area and possibly a bowl on major sites

#### *Teenage Shelters*

- Brightly coloured sideless but roofed shelters with seats but the minimum of flat areas

### **Management and Maintenance**

- See General Requirements above

## **Indoor Bowls Facilities**

### **Definition**

- Purpose-designed, permanent facilities for indoor bowls

### **Minimum Size**

- 6 rinks, each 36.58 m long, with the inner rinks 4.57 m wide and the outer ones 5.18 m wide. This gives a playing surface of  $36.58 \times (4.57 \times 4 + 5.18 \times 2) = 36.58 \times 28.64$  m

### **General Characteristics**

- Green surrounded by walkway at least 2 m wide on all sides
- Impossible for direct sunlight to strike the green
- No rooflighting over the green or windows at the ends of the green
- Good range of social facilities plus male and female

changing

### **Accessibility**

- Fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act
- A minimum of eight car park spaces per rink
- Accessible by public transport: nearest bus stop within 250 m of entrance/access points

### **Planting and bio-diversity**

- Attractive landscaping to the site and building, incorporating native species where possible

### **Facilities and Features**

#### *Internal Support Areas*

- Reception desk immediately inside main entrance and clearly visible
- Disabled toilets
- General accessibility for people with disabilities
- Décor and finishes in good condition
- 100 shoe/bowls lockers per rink

#### *Changing Areas*

- Separate male and female changing
- Adequate shower and toilet provision
- Décor and finishes in good condition

### **Management and Maintenance**

- Managed by a professional leisure management organisation or club members

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

### **Definition**

- Large scale indoor sports facilities operated by the public, commercial or voluntary sectors

### **Minimum Size**

- Sports halls: 4 badminton court hall plus changing
- Pools: 25 m x 4 lanes (8.5 m total width) plus changing

### **General Characteristics**

- External lighting, with movement or passive infra-red (PIR) detectors
- Entrance clearly identifiable from the car park
- No landscaping in which potential attackers could hide



## **Accessibility**

- Linked to the local footpath and cycle path network
- Accessible by public transport: nearest bus stop within 250 m of entrance/access points
- Adequate parking for the range of facilities available, with a tarmac surface in good repair and at least two designated disabled spaces close to the main entrance
- Site and building fully accessible to people with disabilities
- Cycle parking

## **Planting and Biodiversity**

- Attractive landscaping to the site and building, incorporating native species where possible

## **Facilities and Features**

### *Internal Support Areas*

- Reception desk immediately inside main entrance and clearly visible
- Disabled toilets
- Baby changing facility in male and female changing areas or toilets
- General accessibility for people with disabilities – see separate checklist
- Décor and finishes in good condition
- Clear route from reception to changing and activity areas

### *Activity Areas*

- Meeting appropriate governing body or Sport England standards
- Adequate storage, accessed from activity areas
- Mat storage, where required, physically separate and vented to outside air
- Décor and finishes in good condition

### *Changing Areas*

- Separate male and female changing (although mixed sex villages desirable for pools)
- Adequate locker provision
- Adequate shower and toilet provision
- Décor and finishes in good condition

## **Management and Maintenance**

- Professionally managed

## References

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## 8: Distance Thresholds

### Introduction

In this chapter we propose a range of walking, cycling and driving distance thresholds for the following forms of community infrastructure:

- Allotments
- Amenity greenspaces
- Bowling greens
- Artificial turf pitches
- Equipped children's play areas
- Natural greenspaces
- Playing fields and sports pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis and multi-sport courts
- Parks and gardens
- Sports halls
- Swimming pools

### Access and Accessibility

There are two key concepts which underpin distance thresholds:

- **Access:** the right to enter or use a space, which, within urban areas, is normally determined by the attitude of land owners but in the countryside can also be determined by legislation, such as the Countryside and Rights of Way Act; and
- **Accessibility:** the extent to which it is possible for individuals to exercise their rights of access. Within urban areas, accessibility depends primarily on two things which can constrain access: physical factors, such as distance, railway lines and features which some people cannot use, such as steps; and social and cultural factors, such as a fear of crime

This chapter is concerned only with the first of these and therefore physical accessibility, as expressed by distance thresholds. Removing social and cultural constraints is primarily a matter for management.

### The Nature of Distance Thresholds

Distance thresholds are not hard facts, but a broad and flexible guide to the distance which people in general will be willing to travel in order to use or visit a facility or space. We make this point in paragraph 5.9 of our

*Companion Guide to PPG17.* They are affected by many factors. For example:

- Most older or very young people will be unwilling or unable to walk as far or as fast as teenagers and young adults; therefore distance thresholds vary with age
- Most people will be willing to walk further to something on a warm, sunny day than on a very cold or very hot one; therefore distance thresholds ebb and flow with the weather
- Most people will be willing to walk further to something if the route is level than if it is uphill; therefore distance thresholds vary with topography
- Most people will be willing to walk further to something if the route offers “fresh air” than if it is heavily polluted with traffic fumes; therefore distance thresholds vary with traffic levels
- Most women and older people on their own will be willing to walk further in daylight than at night; therefore distance thresholds vary by the time of day
- Most people will be willing to travel further to something of high quality than low quality
- Not all people of the same, gender, age and state of health are willing or able to travel the same distance to something as a result of factors such as health, disability and access to a car or bicycle; therefore distance thresholds vary according to personal circumstances
- Most people living in villages necessarily have to travel further than almost all urban dwellers to facilities such as supermarkets, cinemas or leisure centres, while most urban dwellers have to travel significantly further if they wish to visit the countryside; therefore distance thresholds vary according to where people live

There are two other key points:

- The distance that people in any particular area travel to spaces or facilities is a function of the distribution of provision, coupled with the range of factors summarised above. In an area with little provision, empirically established distance thresholds will be much higher than in another area with a high level of well distributed provision.
- There is a clear difference between people’s *need* to travel and *willingness* to do so. In parts of the country, for example, people need to travel 50-60 miles to visit an NHS dentist but may not be willing to travel a few hundred metres to their local park if they perceive it as not worth visiting or the route as potentially dangerous. A football player may not be *willing* to travel more than a mile, say, to their local club, but the distance he or she will *need* to travel to take part in matches depends primarily on the geographical area covered by the league in which their team plays. The higher the player’s standard of skill, the wider this area will be.

This means that distance thresholds can only ever be seen as a very general guide, but nonetheless a useful tool for planning purposes. It would be an obvious nonsense to use either the maximum distance travelled by users or an average of all users. The maximum distance travelled by an individual user could easily be an aberration; for example, a survey of park users might pick up a visiting business person who had travelled hundreds of miles and was early for a meeting or waiting for a train home while everyone else had travelled only a short distance. Similarly, the average distance could also be affected by some users who had travelled a very long or very short distance.

For this reason, recreation planning normally uses the concept of the "effective catchment". The *Companion Guide to PPG17* notes that this is usually defined as the distance from around 75% of users have travelled.

## Distance thresholds for Mid Sussex

At present we have no local market research information for Mid Sussex on which to base distance thresholds. Accordingly we have used a mixture of sources, including published Government and national agency guidance, research with which we have been involved elsewhere and our interviews with local organisations.

## Government Guidance

### Regional Planning Guidance

Several of the Government's Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) documents - but not, for some reason, RGP9 for the south-east - give some cautious advice on distance thresholds. This advice takes the form of desirable target and maximum "as the crow flies" walking distances for residential development. Those most relevant to the PPG17 Assessment are:

	Target	Maximum
• Food shop/primary school	300 m	600 m
• Other non-residential facilities	600 m	1,000 m
• Bus stop	200 m	400 m

This suggests a 300 m target/600 m maximum distance threshold will be suitable for most local facilities accessed on foot which residents, and especially children, can expect to have within their neighbourhood. As far as the PPG17 assessment is concerned, this category will include:

- Children's play areas
- Local greenspaces
- Local parks

The higher threshold, of 600 m target/1,000 m maximum, is suitable for facilities used mainly by adults, who can obviously walk further than young children, such as:

- Allotments
- Bowling greens
- Community centres
- Local pitches
- Tennis courts and similar facilities
- Youth facilities

**PPG13: Transport – A Guide to Better Practice (DoE and DoT, 1995)**

*The Guide to Better Practice* linked to PPG13 suggests a maximum distance from residential areas to shops, schools and workplaces of 1.6 km for walkers and 8 km for cyclists. It also indicates – somewhat optimistically – that motorised modes of travel are “rarely used for trips of around half a mile (0.8 km) or less”. These distances are significantly higher than those suggested in many other sources.

**National Agency Guidance**

**The NPFA Six Acre Standard**

According to an unpublished survey undertaken by the National Playing Fields Association following the publication of the July 2002 version of PPG17, its Six Acre Standard for playing space, or a local variation of it, has been used by around 90% of local planning authorities across the UK, including Mid Sussex.

The most recent version of the Standard (2001) recommends three types of children’s play provision:

- **Local Areas for Play (LAPs)**, located within 1 minute walk (or 60 m “as the crow flies”) of all dwellings. The NPFA defines a LAP as “a small area of open space specifically designed and laid out for young children to play close to where they live. Located within a walking time of 1 minute from home, the LAP provides essential play opportunities for toddlers and young children in locations that are overseen by parents, carers and the local community”.
- **Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs)**, located within 5 minutes walk (or 240 m “as the crow flies”) of all dwellings. The NFA defines a LEAP as “a piece of open space that is designated and equipped for children of early school age. Such areas need to be located within a walking time of 5 minutes from home”.
- **Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs)**, located within 15 minutes walk (or 600 m “as the crow flies”) of all dwellings. The NPFA defines a NEAP as “a site that is designated and equipped mainly for older children, but with opportunities for younger children too. Located within a walking time of 15 minutes from home, the NEAP is largest of the three types of play space and is able to address specific needs that cannot be met within a LAP or LEAP”.

The Association based these distance thresholds on research by Holme and Massie (1970), who established that the majority of children travelled less than 400 m to play. It used this evidence to suggest a 400m maximum distance threshold for equipped play areas and initially this was regarded by many taken as a straight line distance – indeed, it still is by many councils. However, since 1970 the NPFA has become increasingly aware of the importance of barriers such as main roads and so from 1992 has concentrated on walking time rather than distance. It also conducted walking trials with children to find the average distance they can walk in 1, 5 and 15 minutes. It has never published the full results of these trials, but the current version of the Standard gives a table converting walking times into actual and straight line distances as follows:

Time	Actual Distance	Straight line Equivalent
1 minute	100 m	60 m
5 minutes	400 m	240 m
15 minutes	1,000 m	600 m

Accordingly, the NPFA research found that “as the crow flies” distances tend to be around 60% of “on the ground” distances and walking speeds range from about 40-60 metres per minute.

The NPFA also recommends a straight line distance threshold of 1,000 m for sports pitches but does not give this recommendation the same prominence as its recommendations for play provision.

#### **By Design: Better Places to Live (CABE, 2001)**

*By Design* suggests that a comfortable walking distance from residential areas to local facilities should be not more than a 10 minute walk or 800 m – a walking speed of 80 m per minute.

#### **Urban Design Compendium (English Heritage)**

*The Urban Design Compendium* promotes the concept of “walkable neighbourhoods” in which people should be able to walk to a local post box or telephone box within 2-3 minutes (250 m); a newsagent’s within 5 minutes (400 m); and a primary school within 10 minutes (800 m). This also equates to a speed of 80 m per minute.

#### **English Nature Research Report 153**

English Nature (EN) Research Report 153, *Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities: A review of appropriate size and distance criteria* (1995) is an academic, but nonetheless interesting, literature review focusing on two key topics: whether accessible natural

greenspaces need to be of a certain minimum size to be valuable for nature conservation, and the distance that people have been found to walk to different forms of provision. In relation to the latter, it summarises the findings from a range of empirical studies, including:

- A comprehensive survey of park use in London – a survey which resulted in London authorities, and others in their wake, adopting a quarter mile distance threshold for local parks
- The NPFA Six Acre Standard (see above)
- Research by the London Planning Advisory Committee (LPAC)

The LPAC study and NPFA Standard (see above) are by far the most widely quoted sources on distance thresholds and their recommended thresholds are very widely used by planning authorities throughout the UK. The LPAC recommended open space hierarchy is very much London-based and inapplicable in areas such as Mid Sussex and indeed most of the rest of the country. In spite of this the then DoE quoted it as an example of an open space provision standard (together with the Six Acre Standard) in the 1991 version of PPG17. It suggests a hierarchy of park and greenspace provision as follows:

- Regional parks of 400 ha with 3.2-3.8 km of home
- Metropolitan parks of 60 ha with 3.2 km of home
- District parks of 20 ha within 1.2 km of home
- Local parks of 2 ha with in 1.2 km of home
- Small local parks and other open spaces of up to 2 ha 400 m from home

Liverpool City Council uses the following variation of the LPAC hierarchy:

- City parks, greater than 50 ha within 3.2 km of home
- District parks of 5-50 ha within 1.2 km of home
- Neighbourhood parks of 1-5 ha within 400 m of home
- Small local parks of less than 1 ha within 400 m of home

While the NPFA has concluded that straight line distances are about 60% of on the ground ones, EN Research Report 153 noted that the LPAC identified a multiplier of 70%. Accordingly it recommended that 400 m on the ground equated to 280 m on an as the crow flies basis. As a result EN Research Report 153 recommended the use of a 280 m straight line distance threshold for “all local and district parks and local wildlife sites” to allow for the fact that pedestrians are not crows and therefore rarely go from point A to point B in a straight line.

The EN report also reviewed relevant information on the distances that parents allow their children to “range” (ie walk unaccompanied) from home for play and other



purposes. This suggested that ranging distances have steadily shortened as parents have become more and more concerned for the safety of unaccompanied children. It notes that:

*“... the standard distances employed in the NPFA recommendations for children’s play areas overestimate the distances over which young girls in particular are likely to range. They also suggest that the recommended 1000 m distance to a neighbourhood play area designed for 8-14 years olds is well beyond the permitted range of 11 year old girls and beyond the permitted range of many boys of that age. Even the recommended distance of 400 m to a Locally Equipped Play Area is not within the permitted and accompanied ranges of some 8 year old girls.”*

### **English Nature’s ANGSt**

Based largely on Research Report 153, other research and a nod towards the LPAC recommendations, English Nature’s Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) recommends that:

- No-one should live more than 300 m from their nearest area of natural greenspace (note: this 300 m threshold is simply the 280 m one from Research Report 153, rounded up to the nearest 100 m)
- There should be at least one accessible 20 ha site with 2 km of home
- There should be one accessible site of at least 100 ha within 5 km
- There should be at least one accessible site of at least 500 ha within 10 km

Somewhat to the chagrin of English Nature (EN), ANGSt has not been widely used by planning authorities on the reasonable grounds that it is unrealistic and unachievable in most areas. As a result, EN commissioned the Centre for Urban and Regional Ecology of the University of Manchester to produce *Providing Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities: A Practical Guide to Assessing the Resource and Implementing Local Standards for Provision*, which it published in 2003. This takes ANGSt as its starting point and suggests a methodology for progressing “towards an aspiration to meet its requirements as fully as possible”. Translated into plain English, this amounts to an acceptance that ANGSt is unlikely to be achieved in many areas but a pious hope that planning authorities will do their best. Certainly most councils have taken as little notice of the *Toolkit* as they did of ANGSt, although it actually proposes a fairly sensible if somewhat academic approach.

The *Toolkit* simply adopts the ANGSt straight-line distance

thresholds (300 m, 2 km, 5 km and 10 km), but seeks also to define a number of different levels of accessibility, from "full" to "conditional", "proximate" and "remote" with a final category of "no access".

### **Sport England Survey of Sports Halls and Swimming Pools in England**

In 1997 Sport England commissioned a major survey of the use of 155 sports and leisure centres throughout England as part of the process of determining appropriate parameters for its Facilities Planning Model. One of the issues the survey explored was the effective catchment of these facilities. The survey found that:

- Around 80% of visits to both sports halls and swimming pools originated from within a catchment of five miles (eight kilometres)
- The majority of visits involved journeys of 10 minutes or less (60% of visits to halls and 58% of visits to pools)
- Around 80% of visits came from within a catchment of 20 minutes
- The average journey time was about 12 minutes
- For those who walked, 74% of hall visits and 64% of pool visits came from within 10 minutes
- The average walking time to halls and pools was about 9 and 11 minutes respectively

Earlier research for the Sports Council (which now prefers to be known as Sport England), however, identified that leisure pools have a wider catchment than "conventional (ie rectangular) pools. There are several reasons why such pools usually have a larger effective catchment, including the fact that they tend to be seen as "special treat destinations" and attract a significant proportion of users from a fairly wide area, especially at weekends. The Council has evidence that the Triangle Leisure Centre on the western edge of Burgess Hill regularly attracts users who travel for 30 minutes or more.

### **Artificial Turf Pitch Research**

We researched the use of 31 artificial turf pitches for the Scottish Sports Council in the early nineties, which published the results in 1993. We found that the average distance travelled to an artificial turf pitch by hockey players was eight miles or 13 kilometres, although the effective catchment was a drive time of up to 40 minutes. Footballers generally travelled a shorter distance so that the average distance travelled by all players (hockey and football) was a little over 5 miles or 8 kilometres. The shorter average distance travelled by footballers reflected the fact that all the artificial turf pitches in the survey could be and were used for football, but some were much better for hockey than others.

Inevitably, therefore, the results were influenced by the nature of provision in the areas in which we undertook the user interviews. There has also been more artificial turf pitch provision since 1993, with the result that the effective catchment of these pitches will have reduced slightly. However, the effective catchment of around a 25 minutes drive time is similar to the 20 minutes drive time used by Sport England for the Facilities Planning Model. As more and more artificial turf pitches are provided, however, the drive time threshold will obviously reduce steadily, assuming a fairly even distribution of provision. Accordingly we recommend a 20-minute drive time. This is also consistent with the drive time threshold for sports centres and swimming pools.

Sport England has published a number of Planning Bulletins relating to different aspects of planning for sport. Bulletin 14, *Intensive Use Sports Facilities Revisited (2003)* has this to say on the future of artificial turf pitches:

*Half of the Euro 2008 and World Cup matches in 2010 will be played on synthetic turf and it is almost inevitable that club matches will eventually be played on such surfaces ... Looking further into the future, the availability of better quality synthetic turf pitches which will be used for competitive games at all levels, from park sides to international level, may encourage providers to concentrate more on synthetic turf and less on natural grass. The implications of this are immense: if local authorities can cater for the sporting needs of their communities by providing fewer grass pitches and more high quality synthetic pitches, the potentially redundant pitches can be converted into other formal sporting uses, or informal recreational use or used for built development to fund the remaining sports facilities"*

## Local Authority Research

### Wakefield Greenspace Strategy

Wakefield MBC commissioned a major market research study in Spring 2003 as part of the preparation of its Greenspace Strategy. In all the survey generated 606 completed questionnaires. Key findings included:

- The straight-line walk-in distance threshold for equipped play areas was found to be around 400 m
- The straight-line distance thresholds for parks and gardens were found to be around 1,000 m (walk-in) and 6 km (drive-in)
- The straight-line walk-in distance threshold for small amenity greenspaces was found to be around 120 m
- The straight-line distance thresholds for sports pitches were found to be around 600 m (walk-in) and 5 km (drive-in)

## Liverpool Market Research

Liverpool City Council undertook a Parks User Survey as part of the preparation of its Parks Strategy which generated 4,900 interviews over the period from November 2001 to December 2003. Key findings from this survey were that:

- 45% of respondents – 98% of whom were 16 or older – travelled less than a mile (1.6 km) to a park and a further 45% between 1 and 5 miles (1.6 and 8 km)
- 42% of respondents had walked – almost all of them less than a mile (1600 m)- and 46% had travelled by car
- The effective catchment of Liverpool’s parks was between two and three miles, leading to the conclusion that many respondents by-passed their nearest park in order to get to a better one

## Horsham District Market Research

As part of a household survey we undertook for Horsham District Council in West Sussex in connection with the preparation of a swimming strategy, we found that three quarters of pool users would not travel for more than about 20 minutes to a pool either on foot or by car. This confirms the Sport England finding.

## Other PPG17 Assessments

### Hastings Citizens’ Panel

The results of a Citizens’ Panel survey in Hastings in March 2005 provide a broad guide as to a suitable basic distance threshold for parks and “typical” greenspaces. In summary, the two key results were:

#### Length of time taken to travel to the park closest to home:

	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
▪ Less than 5 minutes	28.9%	100.0%
▪ Between 5 and 10 minutes	33.4%	71.2%
▪ Between 10 and 15 minutes	23.2%	37.8%
▪ More than 15 minutes	14.6%	14.6%

Note: we have calculated the cumulative percentage “in reverse” to identify the percentage of people will to travel at least for each time period. For example, anyone willing to travel for 15 minutes is obviously willing to travel for a lesser time, so the cumulative calculation shows that in this instance 80% of people are willing to travel for at least something between 5 and 10 minutes to the park closest to home.

**Length of time taken to travel to the greenspace visited most frequently:**

	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
▪ Less than 5 minutes	20.5%	100.0%
▪ Between 5 and 10 minutes	25.7%	79.5%
▪ Between 10 and 15 minutes	28.6%	53.8%
▪ More than 15 minutes	25.2%	25.2%

There is obviously a lot of similarity between these results. They suggest that the effective catchment of parks and the greenspaces respondents visit most frequently is between about 5 and 10 minutes and therefore a maximum of 10 minutes travel. However, and very interestingly, there is also some suggestion that the greenspace which at least some respondents visit more frequently is further away from home than their nearest park. There are several possible reasons why they may have a specific reason for visiting a greenspace further way from home than their nearest park on a regular basis – pitch sport club members, for example, will probably visit their sports club more often than any other form of greenspace.

**Liverpool**

Liverpool's *Open Space and Sports Assessment* (Atkins, 2003) recommends reducing the 400m distance threshold in the City's parks hierarchy (see above) to 280 m and retaining the other distance thresholds. It also recommends a 280 m straight line distance threshold for allotments on the basis of the parks hierarchy and that most are small open spaces of under 2 ha.

The assessment converts these into straight line distance thresholds using a walking speed of 80 m per minute, giving distance thresholds 800 m, 1200 m and 1600 m. These thresholds therefore make no allowance for the fact that people are rarely able to take a straight line route.

**The Geography of Mid Sussex**

Mid Sussex has three main settlements – East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill. Each of them has an indoor leisure centre and large enough to have a full range of open space and sport and recreation provision. In order to minimise unnecessary car travel to different facilities between them, therefore, the maximum driving distance threshold should be half of the distance between the centres of these settlements. These straight-line distances are approximately:

- East Grinstead to Haywards Heath 15 km
- Haywards Heath to Burgess Hill 5 km

This suggests a maximum straight-line driving distance threshold of around 7.5 km.

## Proposed Distance Thresholds

Selecting the most appropriate distance thresholds for Mid Sussex is a process of using the available information to determine an appropriate policy aspiration. Unnecessarily short distance thresholds will result in an uneconomic level of provision, with low levels of use; unnecessarily high ones in a pattern of provision which may either cause some residents not to bother travelling or result in high use of cars for visiting spaces and facilities.

While it would be desirable that every resident of the District should be within walking distance of "local" provision such as allotments, bowling greens and tennis courts, this is unrealistic for Mid Sussex with its three main settlements and network of fairly small villages. This means it is necessary to have both walking and driving distance thresholds for most forms of local provision plus, of course, driving thresholds for "strategic" provision such as indoor sports facilities. In addition, because of the desirability of promoting cycling as a sustainable form of travel it is desirable also to have a set of cycling thresholds.

Accordingly we suggest three broad policy aspirations:

- At least 90% of dwellings in the three main towns should be within the walking distance threshold of local provision meeting the quality standard in all respects
- At least 90% of dwellings throughout the District should be within the cycling distance threshold of local provision meeting the quality standard in all respects
- At least 90% of dwellings throughout the District should be within the driving distance threshold of strategic provision meeting the quality standard in all respects

In order to establish straight line distance thresholds, we recommend the following parameters:

- Average walking speed 80 metres/minute
- Average cycling speed 200 m/minute
- Average driving speed 500 m/minute (30 km per hour)
- Straight line distance 75% actual distance

### Notes

80 m/minute is a typical walking speed  
200m/minute is a realistic cycling speed for a reasonably flat area  
30 km/hour driving speed allows for slow travel through villages or towns and time spent parking

The distance thresholds we recommend are:

### Local Provision – Walking and Cycling Distance Thresholds

	Minutes	Walking (m)	Cycling (m)
Multi-functional greenspaces	5	300	N/a
Play areas – young children	5	300	N/a
Natural Greenspaces	10	600	1500
Play areas – older children	10	600	N/a
Teenage areas	10	600	1500
Allotments	15	900	2250
Parks and Gardens	15	900	2250
Bowling greens	15	900	2250
Grass pitches	15	900	2250
Tennis/multi courts	15	900	2250
Artificial turf pitches	20	1200	3000
Athletics facilities	20	1200	3000
Indoor bowls halls	20	1200	3000
Indoor tennis courts	20	1200	3000
Sports halls	20	1200	3000
Swimming pools	20	1200	3000

1: The walking thresholds relate only to the three main towns and not the rural areas of the District

2: Multi-functional greenspaces (MFGS) are amenity greenspaces, parks and gardens, playing fields and recreation grounds. All of these spaces serve an amenity purpose for local communities. For the purposes of assessing accessibility, we have included all of them within a single category of MFGS. As everyone should be able to access at least one such space on foot, and at least one children's play area, there is no need for cycling or driving thresholds.

### Driving thresholds

	Minutes	Driving (m)
Allotments	15	5,625
Bowling greens	15	5,625
Grass pitches	15	5,625
Tennis/multi courts	15	5,625
Artificial turf pitches	20	7,500
Athletics facilities	20	7,500
Indoor bowls centres	20	7,500
Indoor sports hall	20	7,500
Indoor swimming pool	20	7,500
Indoor tennis courts	20	7,500

Note: there is no need for a driving distance threshold for teenage facilities as teenagers will generally access them on foot or by bicycle

## References

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## 9: Quantitative Assessment

### Introduction

This chapter reviews the quantity of provision across the District and suggests suitable quantity standards for the future. In summary, the standards we recommend are:

Allotments	1.75 sq m/person
Artificial turf pitches	0.50 sq m/person
Bowling greens	0.17 sq m/person
Equipped play areas	0.65 sq m/person
Grass Pitches	12.25 sq m/person
Parks and gardens	2.00 sq m/person
Teenage areas	0.30 sq m/person
Tennis courts	0.44 sq m/person

We have derived a measure of the quantity of existing provision from our audit, in some cases using our Geographical Information System to calculate the area of existing greenspace sites. For some forms of provision we have used aggregate site area, but for others more sensible units such as the number of bowling greens or pitches of different kinds. The rationale for this is simple; it is not the area of land used for sports facilities that matters, for example, but the number of pitches, greens or courts. The number of them that any given site can accommodate is a function not only of its size but also its shape and topography, which is one reason why the pitches component of the NPFA Six Acre Standard is of such limited value.

It is always important to be clear exactly what quantity standards cover so that they can be applied correctly. This can be especially difficult with sports facilities: for example, should the quantity standard include space to allow pitches to be moved laterally to minimise goalmouth wear, or land required for changing or parking? In order to try to provide clarity we have therefore worked out the quantity standards for sports facilities in terms of actual playing area – typically the pitch and essential safety margins, the green or the court. We will then include the other elements required in the quality standards. For bowling greens, for example, the quality standard will require not just the playing surface (ie the green) but also banks and ditches meeting the appropriate governing body standards, a walkway all round the green, a clubhouse and a certain amount of parking.

We set out our analysis of the quantity of existing provision by Parish or Town Council area in Appendix G.

## Allotments

Because there are various sizes of allotment plots, and a national trend towards smaller plot sizes, it makes sense to measure provision in terms of land area as well as the number of plots, not least because the number of plots is constantly changing as plots are sub-divided. Our audit encompassed 29 sites occupying some 224,000 sq m of land. Taking the population of the District as 127,000, this equates to around 1.76 sq m per person or one 10-rod (250 sq m) plot to some 148 people, assuming that about 10% of each site is not used for actual plots.

The only comprehensive national data on allotments is the *English Allotments Survey 1997*, carried out by the National Association of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners and Anglia Polytechnic University. It found that the average level of provision at that time was 15 plots per 1,000 people or one plot to 65 households. In Mid Sussex, 65 households is equivalent to around 160 people, giving a level of provision of about 1.6 sq m per person.

Appendix G shows that the average level of provision per person across Mid Sussex varies from 1 sq m per person (in Albourne) to a little over 7 sq m per person (in Cuckfield). In those towns or parishes with at least one site, however, the average level of provision is 2.68 sq m per person.

Most parish or town councils and allotments associations see no need for more provision. Those that do are:

- Burgess Hill: average 1.29 sq m per person
- Haywards Heath TC: average 1.78 sq m per person
- Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common PC: average 2.08 sq m per person

Conversely, the two Allotment Associations in East Grinstead and the Parish Council in Hassocks, where the average levels of provision are 1.14 and 1.490 sq m per person respectively, do not see any need for more plots. This may in part be a function of the size of gardens in these areas; if residents have sufficiently large gardens to grow produce, they are less likely to require allotments.

The number of unlet plots across the District (45) is roughly half of the number of people on waiting lists for a plot (88). However, the waiting lists could be just about cleared if the vacant plots – which tend mainly to be overgrown and not wanted by prospective plotters as a result – were subdivided and brought back into use. Accordingly it seems sensible to maintain the current level of provision and therefore the District Council should protect all existing sites or require compensatory provision

if any of them is developed.

In terms of new developments, we recommend a provision standard equivalent to the present average level of provision, ie say **1.75 sq m per person**. However, this standard need not be used for developments in which dwellings have sufficiently large gardens in which to grow produce. This will require gardens of at least 150 sq m.

### **Artificial Turf Pitches**

There are currently five artificial turf pitches in the District, of which one is owned by the District Council, two by a sports club and two by independent schools. This is equivalent to one ATP to roughly 25,500 people. However, they are not all available for community use at the times when there may be a demand; for example, one of the school pitches is not floodlit and the other is available only to 2000 hours, so the effective level of provision is lower than this. Taking the two school pitches as equivalent to a single community pitch, this is roughly one ATP to 31,850 people. We have already identified a need for an additional third generation pitch close to each of the main towns, giving a total of eight pitches, of which one - at St Paul's College on the western side of Burgess Hill - is currently "in the pipeline", assuming the College is able to generate the necessary capital funding. This gives a provision standard of one pitch to approximately 15,875 people, which will give some spare capacity to accommodate housing development and population growth in the District.

The standard carpet size of an ATP for football is 106 x 70 m, or an area of 7,420 sq m. There should also a further safety margin inside the ball-stop and security fencing fence, but it is simplest to work out a provision standard on carpet size and allow for the extra space required when assessing developers' contributions. Accordingly a sensible quantity standard for Mid Sussex is 7,420 divided by 15,875 ie approximately **0.5 sq m of ATP carpet per person**.

### **Athletics Tracks**

UK Athletics recommends that there should be one synthetic outdoor track where there are 250,000 people living within a 20 minute drive time in urban areas and up to 45 minutes in rural ones. On this basis, most of the District is probably within an acceptable travel time of the Broadbridge Heath athletics centre, with its outdoor track and indoor training area, and therefore there is no real case for a track in the District. Certainly Sport England is likely to take this view if the District Council or a local club were to apply for funding for a track. Certainly, if the District Council wishes to support athletics, it will be more cost effective to subsidise athletes' travel to Broadbridge Heath or another venue than to provide and manage run a track.

The Imberhorne School training facility is of high quality

and we understand that the school has an aspiration to develop a full size track. This will be a more sensible approach than for the District Council to promote a track at some other location and therefore there is no real need for a quantity standard for athletics.

## **Bowling Greens - Outdoor**

There are currently eleven bowling greens in the District, equivalent to one green to approximately 11,580 people. Greens can vary in size, but are normally 6 or 7 rinks. A typical six rink green – the commonest size – should be between 36.58 and 40.23 m square (1,338-1,618 sq m, or an average of 1,475 sq m), excluding the banks, ditches and green surround. As with ATPs, it is easiest to work out developers' contributions in relation to the actual bowling surface and allow for these extra areas as part of the calculation. Using the average size, the current level of provision in the District can also be expressed as around 0.13 sq m of bowling surface per person.

In those parishes or towns with at least one green, the existing level of provision varies from 0.05 sq m of bowling surface per person (Burgess Hill) to 0.36 sq m per person (Central Mid Sussex), with an average of 0.12 sq m per person.

The views of Parish and Town Councils on the adequacy of current provision in those areas with at least one green, is:

	<b>Provision (sq m/person)</b>	<b>Parish/Town Council view</b>
Burgess Hill	0.05	Much less than needed
Haywards Heath	0.13	About right
East Grinstead	0.19	About right
Hassocks	0.22	About right
Hurst'point and SC	0.24	About right

Accordingly a sensible provision standard is likely to be between 0.13 and 0.24 sq m of green surface per person. Among these areas, Burgess Hill and Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common have an above average household size, broadly indicating a relatively young population, and the other four areas below average, broadly indicating an older population. However, this seems to have little impact on the level of provision required. Accordingly we recommend a quantity standard based on the average value across the District, excluding Burgess Hill. This is **0.17 sq m of green surface per person.**

## **Equipped Play Areas**

The audit database contains details of a total of some 124 children's equipped play areas which in aggregate probably occupy a land area of around 81,000 sq m or 8.1 ha. Across the District as a whole, this equates to around 0.65 sq m per person. In order to calculate this total we have assumed that the District and its Parish and Town Councils have provided play areas predominantly on the NPFA model of LEAPs (Local Equipped Play Areas), with at least five pieces of equipment in a space of at least 400 sq

m. The average size of the play areas listed in the District Council's 2004 assessment of the *Provision of Outdoor Playing Space* against the NPFA Standard was some 670 sq m, although it can be difficult to be specific about the size of play areas and the Council's area calculations may have included some buffer area.

The Council also worked out the amount of play areas plus casual play areas in each of the main areas of the District and compared it with the 0.6-0.8 ha/1000 people NPFA Standard for "children's playing space". Using the mid-point of the standard (0.7 ha/1000) the results were:

	Area (ha)	% of standard
East Grinstead area	16.04	93%
North Mid Sussex	4.14	34%
Haywards Heath area	6.83	31%
Central Mid Sussex	1.05	18%
Burgess Hill	12.32	61%
South Mid Sussex	6.54	58%
District-wide	46.92	53%

Accordingly to meet the NPFA Standard for equipped play areas would require significantly more provision. The basic message from this analysis is therefore that the NPFA Standard is unrealistically high, and by a significant margin.

It is also interesting to compare the amount of provision currently available with the views of the town and parish councils on play provision in their areas. Only Ardingly and Turners Hill class provision in their areas as slightly inadequate and only Burgess Hill sees it as significantly inadequate – although it has the second highest level of overall provision in the above table. For slightly older children aged 8-12 years, the same councils plus East Grinstead and Cuckfield Rural (Ansty) class the level of provision as inadequate.

It is not the *amount* of play provision that matters, however, but its *accessibility* and *play value*. Accessibility is critical because young children, even accompanied by a parent or carer, cannot walk far and will often not be allowed to do so unaccompanied – when slightly older. It is not until children reach about ten or twelve that most are allowed to "range" a significant distance from home.

Because play areas do not have a fixed capacity to accommodate use, it is not possible to adopt a supply and demand approach to determine an appropriate quantity standard. Accordingly we have developed a standard from first principles based on a conceptual model and the key requirements of the recommended quality standards and distance thresholds. It is in two parts: children below 8 years, and those aged about 8-12 years.

### *Young Children (Below 8 Years)*

The basic parameters for play areas for young children are:

- **Minimum size:** 400 m (equivalent to an NPFA LEAP, and suitable for children aged up to about 8 years)
- **Distance threshold:** 5 minutes walk or 300 m (taken from recommended distance thresholds)
- **Assumed housing density:** 30 dwellings/hectare (taken from PPG3)
- **Average dwelling occupancy:** 2.45 people (taken from the 2001 census for Mid Sussex)

The basic conceptual model consists of a circular residential area with a radius of 300 m – the area that one play area can serve. It has an area of approximately 28 ha. At 30 dwellings/ha, this area will contain roughly 850 dwellings and just over 2,000 people. Assuming that this area requires a minimum of one play area, this gives a quantity standard of 400 sq m to 2,000 people, or 0.2 sq m per person.

### *Older Children (8 to 12 years)*

The basic parameters for older children are:

- **Minimum size:** 1,000 sq m (equivalent to an NPFA NEAP)
- **Distance threshold:** 600 m (taken from the recommended distance thresholds)

A circular area with a radius of 600 m has an area of around 113 ha. At 30 dwellings/ha it will contain around 3,400 dwellings and some 8,300 people. This gives a minimum standard of 1,000 sq m to 8,300 people or 0.12 sq m per person.

These two calculations assume that the residents of the conceptual model residential area will require only one 400 sq m play area for young children and one 1,000 sq m area for older ones, giving a composite quantity standard of 0.32 sq m per person. However, older children should have a choice of play areas and there will be few areas where the model will apply on the ground. For example, it is undesirable for children to have to cross main roads to get to play areas. Accordingly we recommend doubling the above theoretical requirement to allow for these factors, giving a (rounded) quantity standard of **0.65 sq m per person**. Coincidentally this is almost exactly the average level of equipped play area provision currently available in the District.

## **Sports Pitches**

The Council's Playing Pitch Strategy (1997, reviewed 2004) identified a shortfall of some 35 pitches across the District, with the main deficiencies in the three main towns. However, this figure seems to have been based primarily

on the pitches component of the NPFA (1.2 ha of pitches per 1000 people) rather than a team-based assessment. Both approaches have their weaknesses; the NPFA because it has no empirical basis and concentrates only on land area, and the Sport England team-based approach because it tends to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. If there is inadequate provision in area this constrains the number of teams to more or less the capacity of available pitches, which then appears to be adequate, give or take a handful of pitches.

The cost of land in Mid Sussex is such as severely to constrain the ability of the District, Town and Parish Councils, and local clubs, to provide more pitches. Accordingly the Council has concentrated on increasing the carrying capacity of its own pitches by undertaking drainage works. It has funded the upgrading of some 39 pitches in the period from 1997-2004, in some cases through planning agreements. There are nonetheless the following proposals "in the pipeline" for additional pitches, over and above those in our audit of provision:

- St Paul's School in Burgess Hill: 7 grass pitches with at least some community use. The school is also hoping to provide a floodlit ATP.
- Downlands School in Hassocks: proposed floodlit ATP
- Haywards Heath Rugby Club: additional two pitches
- Extension to Fairfield Recreation Ground in Hurstpierpoint
- Bolnore Village in Haywards Heath: 13 acres of land for pitches and associated facilities

Important issues that the Playing Pitch Strategy highlights include:

- Development pressures on some pitch sites
- The unacceptability of floodlighting in large parts of the District because of AONB status and possibly opposition from nearby residents
- The need for clubs to be able to upgrade grounds to meet league requirements
- The gap that can exist between schools' aspirations for community use and their ability to promote and manage it
- The growth of girls' and women's participation in football and rugby
- Maximising community use of the often good pitches owned by the District's independent schools
- Enhancing the drainage of off-pitch areas in order to create land for training or allow pitches to be moved laterally to reduce goalmouth wear
- Many Council pitches are used at or close to their carrying capacity
- Concerns that the priority given by external funding agencies to projects in areas of deprivation will reduce the ability of Mid Sussex to attract grant aid towards

- new or upgraded provision
- The development of mini-soccer
- Vandalism of changing pavilions

Given these issues, and the high cost of land, it makes sense for the Council to continue to concentrate on four broad policy approaches:

- Protecting existing pitch sites, if necessary requiring compensatory provision if it is acceptable in terms of other planning policies for any pitch sites to be developed for another use
- Upgrading existing pitches to increase their carrying capacity
- Supporting the provision of artificial turf pitches, especially third generation ones intended for football
- Working with both state and independent schools to promote and manage community use

Against this background, we do not believe that it will be realistic for the Council to adopt a quantity standard for pitches which will suggest a need for a significantly higher level of provision than already exists as it will not be possible to deliver the new facilities required to eradicate major shortfalls. Instead, the aim must be to maximise the carrying capacity of all grass pitches in the District and rely on ATPs for further increases in capacity.

The audit database contains details of the following pitches and training areas:

	Club or Public Pitches	School pitches with Community use	Totals
Cricket	34	27	61
Adult football	49	17	66
Junior football	9	31	40
Mini-soccer	20	16	36
Rugby	7	26	33

Note: there are also some grass hockey pitches on school sites but as all community hockey is played on artificial turf pitches they are irrelevant to this assessment

The level of community use of school facilities is generally fairly low and certainly most are not used to anything like the same extent as club and public pitches. Accordingly we have ignored school pitches when assessing suitable quantity standards below, but taken account of them when applying them later in this chapter.

### Cricket

On a parish or town basis, the level of club and public cricket provision ranges from one pitch to 1,150 people in North Mid Sussex to 7,200 people in Burgess Hill with an average of one pitch to 2,088 people, although there are



also a number of parishes or towns with no cricket provision. As the cricket clubs that have responded to our questionnaire are divided on whether there is a need for more provision, a sensible quantity standard is likely to be marginally higher than the present average level of provision. Accordingly we suggest a provision standard of one pitch to 2,000 people. A cricket ground with 9 wickets on a square (to allow rotation and even out wear) requires a playing area of around 125 x 120 m (15,000 sq m or 1.5 ha). There will also be a need for at least a 5 m safety margin all round the boundary, giving overall dimensions of at least 135 x 130 m and an overall area of 17,550 sq m (1.755 ha). Accordingly the basic quantity standard, excluding the safety margins around the boundary will be 17,550 divided by 2,000, or approximately **8.9 sq m per person**.

### **Adult Football**

The level of adult football pitch provision ranges from one pitch to 1,075 people in North Mid Sussex to 3,600 people in Burgess Hill, with an average of one pitch to 1,930 people. Given the proposals earlier in this report for high capacity artificial turf pitch provision designed for football, and the views of the local football league and at least from the football clubs that the current level of provision is adequate, it seems sensible to use the present average level of provision as a quantity standard. This will suggest the provision of additional pitches in those areas with the lowest level of current provision. Accordingly we recommend a quantity standard of 1 adult pitch to around 2,000 people. As the basic playing area of an adult pitch is 100 x 60 m plus 9 m end margins and 6 m side margins, the overall dimensions of the playing areas and margins are 118 x 72 m and the area 8,500 sq m. Accordingly this gives a quantity standard of 8,500 sq m divided by 2,000 people or **4.25 sq m per person**.

### **Junior Football**

The clubs and leagues are united in believing that there is an unmet need for more junior pitches. The demand for such pitches is likely to increase as current mini-soccer players move up to 11-a-side play. Accordingly there is a need for a higher level of provision than currently exists, which ranges from 1 pitch to roughly 1,000 people in North Mid Sussex to 8,000 people in South Mid Sussex with an average of 1 pitch to 2,900 people. Accordingly we recommend a quantity standard of 1 pitch to around 2,500 people. Junior pitches come in various sizes, but about 80 x 50 m is a typical size, plus 9 m and 6 m safety margins at the ends and sides respectively. This gives a playing area of some 98 x 62 m or 6,100 sq m. Accordingly an appropriate quantity standard will be 6,700 sq m divided by 2,500 people or approximately **2.7 sq m per person**.

## Mini-Soccer

Mini-soccer is one of the few ways in which the demand for pitch sports is growing – for all other pitch sports other than women’s football and rugby, it has been at best static for some years. Mini-soccer is best organised on a “central venue” basis as this maximises the playing opportunities for players and makes the best use of both land and the adults who manage mini-soccer teams and leagues. As a result we suggest that the Council should seek to persuade schools to allow their pitches to be used for this form of the game and also promote mini-soccer on artificial turf pitches as much as possible. This could have a very beneficial long term impact on the level of pitch provision needed in the District. If young players develop their skills on artificial surfaces, they will probably wish to continue playing on them as they grow older and move up to the 11-a-side game.

Mini-soccer can also be played on adult pitches, or other reasonably level grassed areas, with the playing area delineated by small cones. This, coupled with the potential to use artificial surfaces, means that there is no need for a specific quantity standard.

## Rugby

The audit database contains details of three sites with a total of seven club and public rugby pitches, although Haywards Heath Rugby Club is seeking to provide an additional two pitches. Accordingly the required level of provision is nine pitches for a population of 127,378 or one pitch to 14,150 people. The size of rugby pitches can vary, but the maximum is 144 x 69 m, plus 3 m side and 5 m end safety margins, giving an overall size of 150 x 79 m or 11,850 sq m. Accordingly the basic quantity standard, related only to the playing areas, is 11,850 sq m divided by 14,150 people or **0.85 sq m per person**.

## Grass Pitches – Summary

There is no real sense in having a quantity standard for each pitch sport and it is better to have a composite standard for grass pitches which the Council can then interpret in the light of local circumstances. In summary the quantity standards derived above are:

Cricket	8.9 sq m/person
Adult football	4.25 sq m/person
Junior football	2.7 sq m/person
Mini-soccer	0 sq m/person
Rugby	0.85 sq m/person

It is not sensible simply to aggregate these standards as

football and even rugby can be played on cricket outfield. The aggregate of the winter sports is 7.8 sq m per person and adding approximately 50% of the cricket requirement comes to a total of 12 sq m per person which we recommend as the overall grass pitch quantity standard.

## Multi-functional Greenspaces

Most greenspaces are multi-functional – that is, they are used in various ways and serve more than one basic purpose. Playing fields, for example, nearly always serve an amenity purpose, but hopefully no-one would dream of providing large, featureless and flat areas of short mown grass simply in order to enhance the amenity of an area. There are also some forms of greenspace which are provided, or more often protected by the planning system, for reasons other than because there is a need for them for some specific human use. For example, local nature reserves and other natural greenspaces are important for their flora and fauna and it is the characteristics of the space, rather than any specific needs, which justifies their protection. Similarly there is no “need”, as such, for closed churchyards, comparable say with sports pitches or allotments, but they certainly add an historic dimension to the sense of place in some localities.

This makes it difficult to identify a defensible quantity standard for multi-functional spaces in housing areas in a way which avoids the double counting of sites. Instead, a better approach is to specify a distance threshold, or thresholds, plus the minimum sizes of space that people should be able to access within these thresholds. This is the approach espoused by English Nature in its Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) with its wide-ranging definition of “natural greenspace”. It includes

- Sites awaiting redevelopment that have been colonised by spontaneous assemblages of plants and animals
- Land alongside waterways, transport and service corridors which, although perhaps once deliberately landscaped or planted are now mixtures of planted and spontaneous assemblages
- Tracts of “encapsulated countryside” such as woodlands, scrub, heathlands, meadows and marshes which, through appropriate management, continue to support essentially wild plant and animal assemblages. Often these natural areas exist within the framework of formally designed public open space
- Ponds, ditches, rivers, lakes and reservoirs
- The less intensively managed parts of parks, school grounds, sports pitches, golf courses, churchyards and cemeteries
- Incidental pocket-sized plots along residential and commercial roads, pathways, car parks and property boundaries, including walls and built structures which are often spontaneously colonised by plants and animals
- Allotments, orchards and gardens

ANGSt sets the following aspirations:

- No-one should live more than 300 m from their nearest area of natural greenspace
- There should be at least one accessible site of 20 ha or more within 2 km from every home
- There should be one accessible site of at least 100 ha within 5 km of home
- There should be one accessible site of at least 500 ha within 10 km of home

ANGSt is very much based on thinking appropriate to sizeable cities. In areas such as Mid Sussex, where the distance from the centre of each of the three main towns to the urban fringe is less than 2 km, only the bottom tier of the Standard is appropriate – provided there is good access to the adjoining open countryside so that local people can visit it.

Accordingly we do not suggest a specific quantity standard for multi-functional greenspaces. Instead, we recommend that the Council should simply apply the distance thresholds and quality standards set out in other chapters. However, as a very rough guide, the current District-wide level of multi-functional greenspace provision is:

Amenity greenspaces	8 sq m/person
Natural greenspaces	19 sq m/person
Total	27 sq m/person

## Parks and Gardens

Parks and Gardens, however, are a specific form of multi-functional greenspace and it is desirable to have a provision standard for them, especially as urban park provision in the District is so limited. We suggest that each of the three towns should have a park of at least 5 ha. As they are of broadly similar size (around say 25,000 people) this equates to a standard of around **2 sq m per person**.

## Teenage Facilities

### Teenage Facilities

The audit database contains details of 38 sites with provision for teenagers, although most of them have very limited equipment. Most also include play equipment for younger children so we have already taken account of them in the derivation of a standard for equipped play areas for young children. There is a clear need for more provision for teenagers: of the Parish and Town Councils from whom we have a response at this stage, only Turners Hill indicated that the level of provision in its area is “about right” although Cuckfield Rural Parish Council is of the view that there is no need for any provision in its Ansty Ward.

Accordingly we have used the same approach as for children’s equipped play areas to determine an appropriate

quantity standard, with the following parameters:

- Minimum size: 1,600 sq m, based on a multi-court with an area of around 700 sq m (and therefore large enough for 5-a-side soccer or basketball), a skateboard/BMX area of around the same size and a “hanging about” area.
- Distance threshold: 10 minutes walk/600 m (taken from the recommended distance thresholds)
- Housing density: 30 dwellings/hectare
- Occupancy: 2.45 people per dwelling (taken from the 2001 census for Mid Sussex)

The conceptual model residential area extends to some 113 ha and contains around 3,400 dwellings and 8,300 people. This gives a theoretical provision standard of 1,600 sq m divided by 8,300 people, or around 0.19 sq m per person. However, this assumes that the conceptual model areas requires only a single youth facility and ignores both the need to give teenagers a choice of facility and the possible issue of territorialism. The latter can be particularly significant. Accordingly we recommend increasing this by around 50% to **0.3 sq m per person**. This is based on the fact that a doubling would be desirable, in order to give teenagers a choice of at least two areas in each conceptual model area, but reducing this by half to allow for existing provision.

## Tennis Courts

The view of the tennis clubs and Town and Parish Councils is that the current level of tennis court provision is about right, with the main local need being for more floodlit or indoor courts. Accordingly it makes sense to adopt something similar to the current level of provision as the quantity standard.

In those areas in which the Parish or Town Council has classed the level of tennis court provision as “about right”, the level of tennis court provision ranges from 1 court to 359 people (in Hassocks) to 2,088 people (Hurstpierpoint and Sayers Common). Hassocks is something of a special case because of the very large Weald Lawn Tennis club, with 12 courts. Ignoring these two areas, the average level of provision in the other areas where the level of provision is about right is 1 tennis court to 1,045 people, with a range from 883-1,496. The District average is 1 court to around 2,000 people. Accordingly a sensible provision standard for tennis courts is around 1 court to 1,500 people. As a court is 36.5 x 18.25 m, or 666 sq m, this equates to **0.44 sq m of tennis court per person**.

It is less easy to analyse the position with regard to multi-courts because they vary in size and there are a number of factors which can affect their attractiveness to potential users. Many are unsupervised and left open for casual use, so they tend to attract litter and can sometimes be poorly maintained. In many ways, multi-courts are largely

teenage facilities and therefore we have included them in this context above.

## Indoor Sports Facilities

### The Sport England Facilities Calculator

The Sport England Facilities Calculator (SFC) is a spreadsheet, downloadable from the Sport England website, which calculates the total quantity of sports hall, pool and indoor bowls hall provision required for any local authority area in England. It uses standard Facilities Planning Model parameters and makes the implicit assumption that all provision is accessible to all potential users. Because it is a spreadsheet, it also works all figures out to an apparently high, but misleading, level of accuracy. In round figures, the calculator assesses Mid Sussex's peak period needs as equivalent to:

- 1,275 sq m of indoor pool water area (equivalent to about 4 pools each 25 m x 6 lanes)
- 35 badminton courts (equivalent to just under nine 4-court halls)
- 8 indoor bowls rinks (equivalent to one indoor bowls centre)

The normal peak periods for the Facilities Planning Model are midweek evenings and weekends, when those school facilities in Mid Sussex with community use will be available. On the basis of our audit results, the District currently has the following provision:

#### *Indoor Pools (sq m of indoor water area)*

Dolphin Leisure Centre	361 sq m
Kings Centre	499 sq m
Triangle Leisure Centre	479 sq m
School pools with community use	764 sq m
Total	2,103 sq m

#### *Sports Halls (badminton courts)*

Dolphin Leisure Centre	8 courts
King's Centre	5 courts
Triangle Leisure Centre	12 courts
School halls with community use	32 courts
Total	57 courts

Accordingly the District already has significantly more indoor pool and sports hall provision than the SFC prescribes for the District's population. Moreover, the amount of hall provision will rise shortly by four courts with the opening of the Sackville Community College hall and by another eight courts in a few years with the construction of the proposed Burgess Hill School for Girls hall.

The SFC takes no account of local circumstances other than

population. In particular, it assumes that all facilities are equally accessible to all potential users. There is therefore enough provision, provided it is accessible to potential users. Our accessibility assessment has identified that the proportion of properties in the District within the various distance thresholds of at least one sports hall with public use and a pool with public use are:

<i>Sports halls</i>	Pay 'n' Play	Group Use
1200 m walking	40%	52%
3000 m cycling	70%	79%
7500 m driving	100%	100%
 <i>25 m Swimming pools</i>		
1200 m walking	19%	42%
3000 m cycling	68%	75%
7500 m driving	100%	100%

This means that existing halls have considerable capacity to accommodate the use that will arise from new housing developments and population growth in the District. For the Mid Sussex population structure, the SFC works out at 325 sq m of pool water area (ie a 25 m x 6 lane pool) to roughly 33,400 people and 1 court in a sports hall to roughly 3,600 people. This means that the existing pools and halls can theoretically serve a population of up to about 216,000 and 205,000 respectively before more provision will be needed. Accordingly there is no need for a provision standard for either.

### **Indoor Bowls**

An 8-rink indoor bowling green, as suggested by the Sport England Sports Facilities Calculator, will have a green with dimensions of 37.8 m wide x 36.6 m long, or an area of just over 1,382 sq m. However, given the recent closure of the Spooner's Club at Dunnings Mill on the southern edge of East Grinstead, a rink of half the size recommended by Sport England should be more than adequate. We understand that at the time of closure the Spooner's Club had fewer than 250 members, about a quarter of the number that an 8-rink green can accommodate and well under half the number generally regarded as necessary for financial viability.

In theory, it would be possible for the Spooner's members to buy the Club and run it on a voluntary basis as this would obviously reduce some operating costs. However, it will still need significantly more than 250 members and we understand that the Grattons (Crawley) Indoor Bowls Club and the Wealden Indoor Bowls Club have both written inviting Spooner's members to join them and offering special terms to those who do. The new K2 centre on the eastern edge of Crawley also includes some indoor bowls

provision, albeit only two rinks, and the Horsham District Indoor Bowls Club is also operating well below capacity. This suggests that indoor bowls is far from buoyant in Mid Sussex and the area around it and a need to consolidate the market into fewer clubs. Accordingly, we see no need for an indoor bowls quantity standard for the immediate future but suggest that the District Council review this in a few years in the light of demographic change.

## **Application of the Quantity Standards**

Appendix G also applies the various provision standards derived above to the 2001 census population of each parish or town in the District to identify surpluses or deficiencies in provision against the above quantity standards.

Quantity standards are not an exact science, however, but a best estimate of the demand for different forms of provision. There will always be areas where they understate or over-estimate local needs, especially if applied to small populations – such as some of the parishes in Mid Sussex. Accordingly in principle it is better to apply them to areas with significant populations. As a result the conclusions of applying the standards set out below should be taken as a broad guide. The only alternative is to try to derive standards for specific areas, which of course leads to possible confusion when applying them.

Given this, we recommend that the District Council should generally seek to place developers' contributions into six area-wide funds, and use them within each area in ways which respond as closely as possible to local community needs. The six areas are the obvious ones of:

- East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood
- The rest of North Mid Sussex
- The Haywards Heath area
- The rest of Central Mid Sussex
- Burgess Hill
- The rest of South Mid Sussex

### **Allotments**

Applying the proposed quantity standard of 1.75 sq m per person results in an apparent need for a significant number of allotments in East Grinstead and Burgess Hill and a small number in Ardingly, Turners Hill, Haywards Heath, Balcombe, Cuckfield Rural, Bolney and Hassocks.

This contradicts the views of East Grinstead Town Council and the allotment associations in the town. However, the level of allotment provision is much lower in East Grinstead than in the other two main towns in the District, suggesting that it may be desirable to try to promote allotment gardening more actively.



On an area basis, the current level of provision in relation to the proposed standard is:

- East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood: surplus of around 15 plots
- The rest of North Mid Sussex: deficit of around 30 plots
- The Haywards Heath area: deficit of around 17 plots
- The rest of Central Mid Sussex: surplus of around 17 plots
- Burgess Hill: deficit of around 115 plots
- The rest of South Mid Sussex: deficit of around 45 plots

### Artificial Turf Pitches

Applying the quantity standard of 0.5 sq m per person to the current population of the District identifies the following deficiencies in current provision:

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	0.73 pitches
North Mid Sussex	0.16 pitches
Haywards Heath	2.12 pitches
Central Mid Sussex	0.55 pitches
Burgess Hill	0.94 pitches
South Mid Sussex	0.08 pitches
Summary	4.58 pitches

On the basis of these results, and taking account of the location of both existing ATPs and the distribution of the District's population, we recommend that the District Council seek to provide additional ATPs as follows:

- Western side of East Grinstead 1 pitch
- Haywards Heath 2 pitches
- Burgess Hill 1 pitch

As noted earlier, each of these pitches should be a floodlit third generation pitch designed for football and ideally on a secondary school or leisure centre site. Suitable sites for these ATPs might therefore be:

- East Grinstead: Imberhorne Upper School or the King's Leisure Centre (depending on the future of this facility)
- Haywards Heath: Oathall Community College
- Burgess Hill: St Paul's Catholic College (already committed)

### Bowling Greens

Applying the quantity standard of 0.17 sq m of bowling surface per person to the current population of the District identifies a possible need for greens in:

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	0.96 greens
North Mid Sussex	0.98 greens
Haywards Heath	1.62 greens
Central Mid Sussex	1.06 greens

Burgess Hill	2.31 greens
South Mid Sussex	0.16 surplus
Overall	4.65 greens

Accordingly we recommend that the District Council support the provision of greens as follows:

- North Mid Sussex: 2 greens, including one in East Grinstead/Ashurst Wood
- Central Mid Sussex: 3 greens, including 2 in Haywards Heath
- Burgess Hill: 2 greens

In the rural areas of the District, at least, it will be sensible to site these greens on established recreation grounds if at all possible.

### Equipped Play Areas

Applying the quantity standard of 0.65 sq m per person to the population of the District identifies the following surpluses and shortfalls in provision:

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	8.3 LEAPs
North Mid Sussex	7.8 LEAPs
Haywards Heath	7.8 LEAPs
Central Mid Sussex	-0.1 LEAPs
Burgess Hill	-13.6 LEAPs
South Mid Sussex	-4.7 LEAPs

Note: LEAP – Local Equipped Area for Play; a negative number indicates a deficiency and a positive one a surplus.

We suggest that the District Council should consider carefully whether it wishes to continue to provide fairly small play areas with fairly limited equipment on the LEAP model. The long term revenue consequences are high; their play value is limited; developers will probably provide as little as possible; and those residents of new developments buying houses close to proposed play areas will probably oppose them.

We suggest that a better approach will be:

- To require developers to make all new developments “child-friendly” along the lines of home zones so that children can play safely in the street outside their homes
- To provide a relatively small number of large and imaginatively designed play areas at carefully chosen locations where they will be accessible on foot or by bicycle from a wide area
- To require that all greenspaces in housing areas are designed in such a way as to be stimulating for children (and adults, for that matter), with areas of planting that will attract wildlife

The aim should be to provide children and adults with a significantly better residential environment than traditional housing estates through the use of design coding and quality standards, coupled with distance thresholds (or accessibility standards) and to move away from over-reliance on quantity standards. However, the Council can use developers' contributions, based on the quantity standard, to fund the larger play areas suggested above and in the quality standards.

### **Multi-functional Greenspaces**

For multi-functional greenspaces, accessibility and quality are more important than quantity. Accordingly the accessibility assessment effectively covers the need for multi-functional spaces.

As noted above, however, many greenspaces are protected by the planning system not because they have a specific human use, but in order to support nature conservation in the wider interests of mankind and sustainability. We therefore strongly endorse Local Plan policies G1 to G3.

### **Pitches: cricket**

Applying the quantity standard for adult football pitches results in the following conclusions:

#### *Ignoring school pitches with community use*

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	- 7.9 pitches
North Mid Sussex	+ 1.4 pitches
Haywards Heath	- 8.7 pitches
Central Mid Sussex	+0.9 pitches
Burgess Hill	- 11.4 pitches
South Mid Sussex	+ 2.0 pitches
District-wide	- 26.3 pitches

Note: minus indicates a deficiency; a positive number indicates a surplus

#### *Taking account of school pitches with community use*

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	- 0.9 pitches
North Mid Sussex	+ 10.4 pitches
Haywards Heath	- 3.7 pitches
Central Mid Sussex	+ 0.9 pitches
Burgess Hill	- 10.4 pitches
South Mid Sussex	+ 7.0 pitches
District-wide	+ 3.3 pitches

From this it is clear that there are a significant number of school pitches which could be used to address the deficiencies in East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood and Haywards Heath. One way to open up more school pitches for community use will be to provide artificial wickets on school sites and therefore we suggest that the District

Council seeks partner schools in these areas.

The chances of providing several more cricket grounds in Burgess Hill must be very limited and so the District Council should seek to encourage the use of pitches in other parts of South Mid Sussex, especially those close to Burgess Hill. It also needs to protect all club and public cricket pitches in the District.

### **Pitches: adult football**

Applying the quantity standard for adult football pitches results in the following conclusions:

#### *Ignoring school pitches with community use*

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	- 6.9 pitches
North Mid Sussex	+ 1.4 pitches
Haywards Heath	- 3.7 pitches
Central Mid Sussex	+ 1.9 pitches
Burgess Hill	- 9.4 pitches
South Mid Sussex	+ 2.0 pitches
District-wide	- 15.3 pitches

Note: minus indicates a deficiency; a positive number indicates a surplus

#### *Taking account of school pitches with community use*

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	- 4.9 pitches
North Mid Sussex	+ 7.4 pitches
Haywards Heath	- 0.7 pitches
Central Mid Sussex	+ 1.9 pitches
Burgess Hill	- 6.4 pitches
South Mid Sussex	+ 5.0 pitches
District-wide	+2.3 pitches

As a result the strategic conclusions are that:

- School pitches are an important component of pitch provision in the District, but especially in East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood
- There is a need to find ways of “opening up” school pitches in Burgess Hill for community use
- The Council needs to protect all existing club and public adult pitches in the District

The higher shortfall in East Grinstead and Burgess Hill indicates that they should be the Council’s first priorities for third generation artificial turf pitches.

### **Pitches: junior football**

Applying the quantity standard for junior football pitches results in the following conclusions:

*Ignoring school pitches with community use*

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	- 8.3 pitches
North Mid Sussex	- 5.9 pitches
Haywards Heath	- 8.6 pitches
Central Mid Sussex	- 1.3 pitches
Burgess Hill	- 9.5 pitches
South Mid Sussex	- 4.4 pitches
District-wide	- 38.0 pitches

Note: minus indicates a deficiency; a positive number indicates a surplus

*Taking account of school pitches with community use*

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	- 0.3 pitches
North Mid Sussex	+ 10.1 pitches
Haywards Heath	- 4.6 pitches
Central Mid Sussex	- 1.3 pitches
Burgess Hill	- 6.5 pitches
South Mid Sussex	- 4.4 pitches
District-wide	- 7.0 pitches

Note: minus indicates a deficiency; a positive number indicates a surplus

Again, therefore, there is a need to find ways of opening up school pitches for greater community use, for example, by funding drainage schemes or even pitch reconstruction. The provision of third generation ATPs should significantly reduce the need for more grass pitches.

**Pitches: Rugby**

Applying the quantity standard for rugby pitches results in the following conclusions:

*Ignoring school pitches with community use*

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	+0.2 pitches
North Mid Sussex	- 1.2 pitches
Haywards Heath	+ 0.8 pitches
Central Mid Sussex	- 0.6 pitches
Burgess Hill	0.0 pitches
South Mid Sussex	- 1.1 pitches
District-wide	- 2.0 pitches

*Taking account of school pitches with community use*

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	+ 5.2 pitches
North Mid Sussex	+ 10.8 pitches
Haywards Heath	+ 3.8 pitches
Central Mid Sussex	- 0.6 pitches
Burgess Hill	+ 1.0 pitches
South Mid Sussex	+ 3.9 pitches
District-wide	+ 24.0 pitches

Note: minus indicates a deficiency; a positive number indicates a surplus

Rugby clubs tend to be fairly large and serve a wide area. Accordingly the District-wide deficiency amounts in effect to the two pitches proposed by Haywards Heath Rugby Club.

### **A New Pitch Sports Centre?**

This analysis suggests that ideally the Council should seek to provide a new multi-pitch centre in the Burgess Hill area, with facilities for cricket and football. Notwithstanding the comments above about where an ATP might be located in the Burgess Hill area, if it proves possible to identify a suitable site it may also be sensible to consider incorporating an ATP into this facility.

This is a facility that the Council could create using developer contributions from most of South Mid Sussex. The obvious location is St Paul's Catholic College as working with the school and County Council to develop this site will have minimal revenue consequences for the District Council and maximise its potential as the District's sports college.

### **Teenage areas**

Applying the quantity standard for teenage areas identifies a significant shortfall in provision throughout the District:

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	- 3,700 sq m
North Mid Sussex	- 1,150 sq m
Haywards Heath area	- 5,400 sq m
Central Mid Sussex	- 450 sq m
Burgess Hill	- 1,900 sq m
South Mid Sussex	- 800 sq m
District-wide	- 13,400 sq m

Note: these totals are rounded to the nearest 100 sq m

We recommend that the District Council work with the Parish and Town Councils to identify suitable sites for additional teenage provision, concentrating in the first instance on recreation grounds.

### **Tennis courts**

Applying the quantity standard for tennis courts results in the following conclusions:

East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood	+ 2 courts
North Mid Sussex	+ 5 courts
Haywards Heath area	- 14 courts
Central Mid Sussex	- 5 courts
Burgess Hill	- 16 courts
South Mid Sussex	+ 9 courts
District-wide	- 19 courts

This suggests a significant District-wide shortfall, especially in Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill. In view of the difficulty of finding sites for this number of courts, we recommend that the District Council should seek to provide floodlights on existing courts wherever possible, so as to increase their carrying capacity, and open up selected school sites for community use. One obvious site to open up is the Burgess Hill School for Girls, especially once its proposed new sports hall is open for use. The School will be using it for netball and therefore it should be possible to develop the school as a central venue for netball for the District and also make the outdoor courts available for community use for tennis.

## **Parks and Gardens**

We suggest that the Council should regard the District as generally lacking in urban parks and gardens and therefore there is a need for a park of around 5 ha in each of the three main towns.

## **The Impact of Population Growth**

Each of the above quantity standards relates to the population of the District, as established by the 2001 census. As there is to be significant housing development in the District, the population is likely to rise. If the overall demographic structure of the District stays the same as in 2001, it will be possible simply to apply the above standards to new development.

By comparison with the population of the south east region, Mid Sussex currently has a lower proportion of people in the 20-29 age group and a higher proportion in the 45-59 age band. This means that over the next 10-20 years, there may be a need slightly to increase the quantity standard for bowls and reduce it for active sports, especially the pitch sports. On the other hand, the likelihood is that housing developments which bring new residents into Mid Sussex will result in an overall population structure closer to that of the region. If so, it will be necessary slightly:

- To increase the quantity standard for active sports, but especially the pitch sports
- To increase the quantity standards for children's play and teenage provision

Combining these two changes, there should be no need to change the provision standard for the pitch sports but possibly a need to increase it slightly for bowls and forms of provision that can be enjoyed by older and less active people such as multi-functional greenspaces.

## **Summary of Key Points**

### **Quantity Standards**

We recommend the following quantity standards:

- Allotments 1.75 sq m/person

• Artificial turf pitches	0.50 sq m/person
• Bowling greens	0.17 sq m/person
• Equipped play areas	0.65 sq m/person
• Grass Pitches	12.25 sq m/person
• Parks and gardens	2.00 sq m/person
• Teenage areas	0.30 sq m/person
• Tennis courts	0.44 sq m/person

### **Application of the Quantity Standards**

By applying these standards across the District, and comparing the results with the existing level of provision, we have identified a need for a limited amount of additional provision. The main elements of this are:

- Allotments in Burgess Hill, Ardingly, Turners Hill, Haywards Heath, Balcombe, Cuckfield Rural, Bolney and Hassocks
- An additional artificial turf pitch in each of the main towns
- Bowling greens in North Mid Sussex, Central Mid Sussex and Burgess Hill
- Artificial cricket wickets, mainly on school sites
- A need to open up school pitches for greater community use
- More rugby pitches in Haywards Heath/Cuckfield
- A pitch sports centre at the St Paul's Catholic College
- More teenage provision across the District
- More floodlit tennis courts



## 10: Accessibility Assessment

### Introduction

This chapter summarises the results of the accessibility assessment using the straight line distance thresholds set out in Chapter 8.

The driving thresholds apply primarily to the three main towns of the District and allow for a mix of urban and rural travel and equate to an average speed of around 30 km per hour. It will obviously be possible to travel faster than this in the rural parts of the District. However, two of the District's main facilities – the Dolphin Leisure Centre and King's Leisure Centre – are located reasonably close to the centre of Haywards Heath and East Grinstead respectively and so users from the landward area will require a mix of rural and urban travel.

### Methodology

We have reviewed accessibility in two main ways:

- By plotting the above distance thresholds on maps. There are two series of maps. The first provides a District-wide overview and therefore identifies areas of the District with and without ready access to different forms of provision. For obvious reasons, the cycling and driving distance thresholds are more significant than the walking ones on these maps. The second series relate to the three main town in the District and show both the quality and value of different sites as identified through the audit together with distance thresholds. On these maps the walking and cycling distance thresholds are more significant than the driving ones.
- By calculating the number of properties (using the property grid references supplied by the Council) within the distance thresholds of different forms of provision. This is a proxy measure for the proportion of the District's residents able to access provision within the distance thresholds. For this analysis, we were unable to separate residential from other properties and so the accessibility statistics relate to all properties in the District and not just dwellings. This is not a particularly significant problem: while most users of spaces and facilities will travel to or from home, others will travel from work.

## District-wide Overview

Appendix H summarises the results of the assessment in terms of the proportion of properties in the District within the different distance thresholds of at least one example of each form of provision. We have analysed the number of properties within the relevant distance thresholds of all sites for each form of provision and also for only those sites we have classed as high quality and high value as a result of the audit. For each form of provision, "high" quality/value means that a site has an above average score and "low" quality/value that it has a below average one. The advantage of showing the high/low classifications on maps is that it helps to highlight areas in which there is a concentration of provision which is of below average quality or value. These should then be priority areas for greenspace enhancements.

For major sports facilities – athletics tracks, sports halls and swimming pools, indoor bowls and tennis halls and artificial turf pitches – we have taken account of provision around the periphery of the District.

In the main we have concentrated on club and local authority provision, except for artificial turf pitches, sports halls and swimming pools where we have included those facilities schools make available for community use. In addition, we have included Parish and Town Council facilities under the general heading of local authority provision.

### Allotments

District-wide Map 1 shows the distribution of allotment sites. Across the District, 60% of properties are within the 900 m walking distance threshold of at least one site, 96% within the 2,250 m cycling threshold and 100% within the 5,625 m driving threshold. Accordingly there is no real case for more allotments on purely accessibility grounds.

### Athletics Tracks

There are several athletics tracks in adjoining Council areas, but none in Mid Sussex, all some distance away from the three main towns. They are shown on District-wide Map 2, together with the synthetic training facility at Imberhorne School in East Grinstead and the grass track at Hurstpierpoint College. Overall, some 13% of properties in the District are with the 7500 m driving threshold of a synthetic track. All of the District is within the 45 minutes drive time (roughly 17.5 km) of a synthetic track recommended by UK Athletics. Accordingly tracks in adjoining areas are capable of serving Mid Sussex athletes and Sport England will be unlikely to support any funding application for a full size track in the District.

## **Artificial Turf Pitches**

District-wide Map 3 shows that the main settlements of the District are all within the distance threshold of at least one artificial turf pitch (ATP). Approximately 9% of the District's properties are within a 20-minute walk of an ATP, 45% within a 20-minute cycle and 96% within a 20-minute drive-time. However, Haywards Heath residents have to drive to either Ardingly College or The Triangle Leisure Centre in Burgess Hill. Accordingly it will be desirable to develop one in the town, possibly in partnership with the Oathall Community College.

The only ATPs in the East Grinstead area are at the Sports Club well beyond walking distance of most East Grinstead area residents. As neither of them is particularly suitable for football, it will be desirable to provide a "third generation" (3G) ATP, designed for football, within the town. The best location will be at the Sackville Community College or Imberhorne Upper School as this will maximise daytime usage.

The Burgess Hill area currently has one artificial turf pitch – the Triangle Leisure Centre – with another planned for the St Paul's Catholic College. Those living in the eastern half of the town are almost required to drive to the Triangle site, while the Hurstpierpoint College pitch is also really only accessible by car. This position will not change significantly if and when St Paul's College is able to develop its proposed pitch. As this is to be a "third generation" pitch, designed primarily for football, it should complement rather than compete with the Triangle one.

The only ATP outside the District likely to attract significant use by Mid Sussex residents is in Crawley. However, Horsham District Council is keen to provide an ATP linked to the Steyning Leisure Centre and Steyning Grammar School and this is likely to attract some users from the south-western part of Mid Sussex.

## **Bowling Greens**

District-wide Map 4 shows the distribution of bowling greens across the District. 37% of properties in the District lie within a 15-minute walk of at least one bowling green, 84% within a 15-minute cycle ride and 99% within a 15-minute drive time. The only accessibility deficiencies are in sparsely populated areas of the District, although Ardingly and Horsted Keynes stand out as significant settlements without a green. There is also an obvious disparity between Haywards Heath, with three greens, and the other two main towns with only one on each.

### **Cricket Pitches**

Map 4 shows the distribution of club and public cricket pitches across the District. Overall, some 71% of properties lie within a 15-minute walking threshold, 98% within a 15 minute cycling one and 100% within a 15 minute drive time. The proportion of dwellings within these travel times of at least one high quality, high value site is 40%, 84% and 100% respectively. Accordingly there is no case for further cricket provision purely on accessibility grounds.

### **Football Pitches**

Map 5A shows a similar picture to cricket for club and public football pitches. The only areas of deficiency relate to the walking and cycling thresholds and are in small areas in the western and south-western parts of the District. Map 5B draws a distinction between club or local authority pitches and school ones and demonstrates that there are very few areas in which local cricketers are dependent on school pitches.

### **Equipped Play Areas**

Map 6 shows the distribution of equipped play areas for children. Across the District, 85% of properties lie within a 300 m walk of at least one play area and 62% one we classed as both high quality and value. The one thing which stands out from this map is the high level of provision in Burgess Hill – something we comment on further below.

### **Adult Football Pitches**

Map 7A shows the distribution of adult football pitches. Across the District, 73% of properties lie within the 900m walking distance threshold of at least one pitch, 98% within the 2250 m cycling threshold and 100% within the driving threshold. The proportion of properties within the distance threshold of at least one high quality, high value site is 44%, 87% and 93% respectively. There are really no areas of the District in which additional pitches are needed on accessibility grounds.

Map 7B shows pitch adult football ownership. The only areas in which school pitch provision is highly significant are Burgess Hill and East Grinstead. The desirability of developing the St Paul's College site for community use, and retaining community use of the Imberhorne School site in East Grinstead, is therefore clear.

### **Junior Football Facilities**

Map 8A shows the distribution of junior football pitches

and Map 8B their ownership. Map 8A makes clear that relatively few junior pitches are of high quality and value and therefore there is a need to enhance sites wherever possible. Map 8B indicates the importance of ensuring continued access to school provision for junior football.

### **Mini-Soccer Pitches**

Map 9A shows the distribution of mini-soccer pitches and forms an interesting contrast to Map 7A, bearing in mind that the total number of mini-soccer players is probably not that different from the number of adult players. There are large areas of the District which are well outside the walking or cycling threshold of a mini-soccer pitch, including parts of the three main towns. Given that mini-soccer players are young, and it is desirable that they should be able to walk to a pitch for training and or coaching, this indicates a possible need for more pitches across the District. Against this, mini-soccer is best organised on a "central venue" basis where groups of teams come together to play matches.

Map 9B shows the ownership of the District's mini-soccer pitches, from which it is clear that while school pitches are important in some parts of the District, in the main mini-soccer pitches are owned by clubs or the District Council.

### **Golf Courses**

Map 10 shows the distribution of golf courses. As it is not possible to determine the full extent of the land occupied by sources without a detailed survey, we have shown the locations of clubhouses as the points where players start and finish their rounds. It is noticeable that there are a number of courses around the periphery of the District to complement the eleven within it:

- Birchgrove Estate, Horsted Keynes (private use only)
- Burgess Hill Golf Centre
- Copthorne Golf Club
- Cuckfield Golf Club
- Dyke Golf Club
- Hassocks Golf Club
- Haywards Heath Golf Club
- Paxhill Park, Lindfield
- Pease Pottage Golf Club
- Pyecombe Golf Club
- Singing Hills, Albourne

The whole of the District is well within the 7.5 km driving threshold of at least one course – driving being the main way in which players travel to courses because of the need to transport a heavy bag of clubs. Accordingly the accessibility of golf courses is extremely good.

### **Indoor Bowls**

There is one indoor bowls hall in the District, at the Spooner's Club at Dunnings Mill on the southern edge of East Grinstead. It has an eight rink green but closed in the latter part of 2006 as a result of lack of members. A club such as Spooner's can sustain up to about around 1200 members but needs a membership of at least half to two thirds this level to be viable as a members' owned club and three quarters as a proprietary (commercially run) one. We understand that when it closed it had fewer than 250.

Map 11 shows the distribution of indoor bowls halls. Ignoring the Spooner's Club, all but the north-western and extreme southern edges of the District will be without ready access to an indoor green.

### **Indoor Tennis**

There is only one indoor tennis centre within the District, the two courts at the Wickwoods Country Club in the south west of Albourne Parish. The additional facilities outside the District - shown on District-wide Map 12 - are sufficiently far enough away that they will attract few regular users from the District, apart from those willing to make a lengthy car journey on a regular basis.

Given the popularity of tennis in the District, evidenced by the large clubs like the Weald Club, there is likely to be a case for an indoor tennis centre. Against this, with milder winters, in areas like Mid Sussex tennis is now almost a year-round outdoor game.

### **Multi-Functional Greenspaces**

District-wide Map 13 shows the distribution of multi-functional greenspaces across the District. Overall, 60% of properties are within the 300 m walking distance threshold of at least one greenspace and 33% within this distance of one we have classed as being of high quality and value. This suggests a need for additional spaces, most particularly in the District's villages. However, in the villages, many residents will have reasonably sized gardens and ready access to the countryside so this need is not as great as might at first appear.

### **Multi-sport courts**

District-wide Maps 14A and 14B shows that the level of multi-sport court provision is fairly poor, with no "public" courts at all in Haywards Heath. As many multi-courts are used primarily by teenagers it is obviously desirable that they should be within an acceptable walking or cycling distance of potential users. However, only 46% of properties are within the walking distance threshold of at least one court and 86% within the cycling threshold. For

high quality, high value courts these proportions are 41% and 55% respectively. For high quality, high value courts owned by the District Council or clubs they are 41% and 42%. This suggests a need first, to upgrade the poorer courts and second to provide additional courts. The priority areas for more courts should be Haywards Heath, the larger villages such as Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks and the Staplefield or Balcombe area.

### **Rugby Pitches**

The District has only three club or public rugby grounds, but they are spaced well apart and located in or close to the three main towns, as shown on District-wide Map 6. As a result only some 20% of properties in the District lie within a 15-minute walk of a club or local authority pitch, 27% within the cycling threshold and 65% within the driving threshold.

Rugby is very different from football in that it tends to be played in large multi-team and multi-age clubs which cater for both sexes. Many football "clubs", by comparison, are simply a squad of players just about large enough to turn out a team each week. Accordingly the relatively poor accessibility of rugby grounds is not really an issue.

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

District-wide Maps 16 and 17 show the distribution of public access sports halls, with at least 4 badminton courts, and swimming pools at least 25 m long inside and around the District. Overall, 52% of properties – predominantly in the three main towns – are within the 1200 m walk-in distance threshold of at least one sports hall, but only 40% within this distance of a "pay and play" hall. 79% of properties, however, are within the cycling threshold (70% for "pay and play" halls) and 100% within the driving threshold. For swimming pools, 42% of properties are within the walking threshold (19% for casual use pools), 75% within the cycling threshold (68% for pay and play pools) and 100% within the driving threshold. Provision around the periphery of the District is relevant mainly in terms of driving. Facilities in the independent schools are particularly important for residents of the rural areas of the District. However, there is no case for additional public provision as the residents of villages cannot realistically expect to have a sports hall or pool on their doorstep.

The King's Centre and (to a lesser extent) the facilities at Brambletye School are within walking distance of most parts of East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood. As with several other forms of provision, however, the western part of East Grinstead is poorly served. There is some community use of the indoor dry sports facilities at Imberhorne Upper

School, but they are very limited and do not include either a pool or proper sports hall. If and when the school improves its facilities, it will be very desirable to ensure they are designed for community use.

The Council is also likely to face the need to review the future of the King's Centre in the not too distant future. It will probably be sensible to concentrate sports hall provision at Imberhorne and Sackville Community College as this will then give good accessibility to a hall for most parts of the area. The future of pool provision is more difficult.

The Haywards Heath area has only a single public swimming pool – at the Dolphin Leisure Centre – but three sports halls with community use. As the Dolphin Leisure Centre is in the western part of the town, the eastern area is outwith the walk-in distance threshold. However, there is no realistic way that the Council can be expected to provide a second pool for the town.

In terms of sports halls, only the fringes of Haywards Heath and Whiteman's Green are outwith the 20 minutes/1200 m walk-in distance threshold for a sports hall. Again, there is no case to be made for additional provision.

Burgess Hill is well served by the sports halls at the Triangle Leisure Centre (12 courts), St Paul's Catholic College (4 courts) and Oakmeeds Community College. Looking to the future, there may be even better hall provision in the town if the High School for Girls is able to implement its recent planning consent for an 8-court hall.

### **Teenage Facilities**

District-wide Map 18 shows the distribution of teenage facilities across the District. Overall, 75% of properties lie within the 600 m walking threshold of at least one site, although this drops to only 20% for sites we have classed as high quality and value in the audit. For cycling, 88% of properties lie within the 1500 m threshold, but only 48% within this distance of a high quality, high value site. Accordingly the first priority in terms of teenage provision should be to enhance quality and/or value and the second priority to seek additional provision in areas where there is none such as Cuckfield Rural, Twineham and Albourne Parishes.

### **Tennis Courts**

District-wide Map 19 shows there is a good distribution of public and club tennis courts across the eastern half of the District but not on the west side. Overall, 36% of properties in the District are within a 15 minute walk of at least one court, 86% within a 15 minute cycle ride and 100% within a 15 minute drive time. The proportion of



properties within at least one high quality, high value public or club site is 8%, 35% and 73% respectively. From this analysis, it will be desirable either to make additional provision or open up school courts for public use in the western part of the District, especially in Cuckfield Rural, Turners Hill, Bolney and Twineham Parishes.

## **The Three Main Towns**

We now review the accessibility of provision in the three main towns. Once again, we have shown the relevant walking, cycling and driving distance thresholds for each form of provision, although on a settlement basis driving is not particularly significant. There are the following maps for each of the three main towns:

- 1 Allotments
- 2 Bowling greens
- 3 Cricket pitches
- 4 Equipped play areas
- 5 Adult football pitches
- 6 Junior football pitches
- 7 Mini-soccer pitches
- 8A Multi-functional greenspaces
- 8B Multi-functional greenspaces, excluding primarily pitch sites
- 9 Multi-sport courts
- 10 Rugby pitches
- 11A Teenage facilities
- 11B Teenage Ball courts and kickabout areas
- 11C Outdoor Basketball goals
- 11D BMX facilities
- 11E Skateboard facilities

## **The East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood Area**

### **Allotments**

The two allotment sites in East Grinstead – Imberhorne and Mount Noddy – are within walking distance of almost all of the northern part of the town, although the railway is something of a barrier for those to the west of it. If there is surplus demand for allotments, there may be a need for additional allotments in the southern area on the grounds of accessibility.

### **Bowling Greens**

The Mont Noddy and Felbridge bowling greens – especially the former – are well located in terms of accessibility. Most of East Grinstead is within walking distance of the Mount Noddy green, although the railway is something of a barrier to the west.

### **Sports Pitches**

The various pitch maps show that almost all of East Grinstead and Felbridge are within the 900 m distance threshold, indicating that players should find it relatively easy to access a playing field. There is surprisingly little

provision on the periphery of the settlement, other than the Felbridge sites. Given the good playing fields in and around the centre of the town, there may be a case for enhancing Mount Noddy to create something akin to a town centre park. East Court has some of the characteristics of a park and is regarded as one by the local community but it is peripheral to much of the town.

### **Equipped Play Areas**

The distribution of equipped play areas in East Grinstead and Ashurst Wood is fairly even, with very little of the built-up area more than 600 m from at least one site – although in aggregate only about half of it is within the 300 m distance threshold more appropriate to young children and their parents or carers. Of greater concern, however, is that the map shows most sites are of low quality and/or value: only three had audit scores which are above average for the District as a whole. Accordingly there is a need to review play provision East Grinstead. In particular, there should be no need for sites in such close proximity as The Close, Copyhold Estate and Brooklands Park or The Dakins and Pavilion Way. There is an obvious opportunity, if not a need, to rationalise and improve provision in these areas.

### **Multi-functional Greenspaces**

Although most greenspaces serve a specific primary purpose, and should be designed and managed for that purpose, they are also multi-functional. A playing field, for example, also serves a strategic amenity function, by providing open-ness, and is also likely to be used casually by people walking, jogging or (unfortunately) taking dogs for a walk.

Very little of the built up area of either East Grinstead or Ashurst Wood is outwith the 300 m walk-in distance threshold of at least one multi-functional greenspace. However, most of these spaces tend to be separate so they do not necessarily form an identifiable network through which local residents can pass to get from one area to another. However, there is a reasonable network of paths and cycling routes through the town and we note the desirability of connecting greenspaces with paths as much as possible.

The quality and value of spaces in East Grinstead, as in many other towns, is something of a mixed bag. However, there is a clear concentration of small, low quality/low value spaces in the southern third of the town and therefore it will be desirable to try to identify ways of enhancing a number of these spaces. The Council and/or Town Council will achieve the greatest impact by concentrating on the largest of them, such as Brooklands Park, Herons Ghyll and Heron Place, all in the southern part

of the town, and Ashurst Wood in the east.

### **Tennis and Multi-courts**

The present distribution of tennis and multi-courts serves most of the East Grinstead/Ashurst Wood area, except for the western part of East Grinstead.

### **Teenage Facilities**

The accessibility of teenager provision is quite poor, with all of the western and northern part of the area bereft of provision. There is a clear need for additional teenage facilities to the west of the railway, for example at the Imberhorne Lane Recreation Ground, and in the northern area, for example at the Lingfield Road Recreation Ground. It will also be desirable to make some teenage provision in the south-western part of the town. The maps of different forms of teenage provision suggest a need for more of each of the various forms of provision, not least because teenagers should have a choice of facilities to visit as there is often an element of territorialism in the use of this form of provision.

## **Haywards Heath**

### **Allotments**

Only an area to the west of the railway in Haywards Heath is outwith the walking distance threshold of at least one allotment site. However, three of the six allotment sites are of below average quality and value. The District and Town Councils should therefore seek to work with the allotments associations for these sites – and the nearby sites in Cuckfield and Whiteman's Green – to enhance them.

### **Bowling Greens**

The distribution of bowling greens in Haywards Heath is such that most of the town is within the 15 minutes/900 m walking distance threshold of a green, apart from a band running north-west to south-east across the centre. Accordingly there is no real case to be made for an additional green on accessibility grounds. There may be a need for a green in the Cuckfield area, however.

### **Sports Pitches**

Practically all of the developed area of Haywards Heath is within the 900 m distance threshold for sports pitches. Accordingly there is good accessibility to pitches. However, only three of the nine sites in the town are above average quality and value. Accordingly the Council's priority in Haywards Heath should be to continue its programme of enhancing existing pitches.

### **Equipped Play Areas**

Haywards Heath also has a good distribution of play across the developed area, although there are significant areas where there is no site within 300 m. This is most noticeable in the north-western segment of Haywards Heath and the southern area. It will therefore be desirable to try to find sites in these areas, although there are no obvious sites available. It will be desirable to seek to enhance the poorer sites and there should be an opportunity to rationalise provision in the Barn Cottage area in order to enhance its quality.

### **Multi-functional Greenspaces**

Most of the developed area of Haywards Heath is also within the 5 minutes/300 m walking distance threshold of at least one greenspace, apart from the north-western area. The Multifunctional Greenspace map also shows that the smaller spaces tend to be of below average quality or value, or both. It will obviously be desirable to try to enhance many of these spaces.

### **Tennis and Multi-courts**

The distribution of tennis courts in Haywards Heath is broadly similar to that of bowling greens, except that there is little provision in Cuckfield. There is relatively little to be gained in terms of accessibility by seeking to open up school courts for community use. However, the level of provision of multi-sport courts is poor and clearly it will be desirable to provide one or more such courts, ideally linked to teenage facilities.

### **Teenage Facilities**

About half of the developed area of Haywards Heath is within the distance threshold of at least one teenage area, apart from the northern fringe of the town and the southern part of Cuckfield. The latter deficiency could be removed by suitable provision at the Worsley Recreation Ground. Again, it may be possible to rationalise and improve the quality of provision in the Barn Cottage area.

## **Burgess Hill**

### **Allotments**

The distribution of allotments ensures good accessibility, both in Burgess Hill itself and the nearby villages. However, the village sites scored noticeably poorer for quality and value than those in the town.

### **Bowling Greens**

The bowling greens in Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks are centrally located and most parts of both settlements are

well within walking distance of them. In Burgess Hill however, the eastern half of the town is poorly served, not least because it is partly cut off by the north-south railway line.

### **Sports Pitches**

Most parts of Burgess Hill (and indeed the nearby villages) are within the 15 minutes/900 m walking distance threshold of at least one pitch site, apart from the south-east corner of the town.

### **Equipped Play Areas**

Burgess Hill's rapid expansion is particularly manifest in the number and fairly close distribution of poor value play areas. These must now be a considerable revenue burden on the District or Town Council and the time is ripe for reviewing the level of provision and trying to find a way of providing fewer but better facilities. Only a handful of facilities scored well in the audit.

The area in which there is the greatest opportunity to rationalise provision is mainly on the western edge. It will be sensible to follow the Bolnore Village model and have fewer but larger and much more stimulating play facilities on key sites. It may be possible to fund some of this rationalisation by disposing of the sites of some existing play areas for development.

This said, there are still some areas of the town with no provision – particularly the area to the south of Wivelsfield Station.

The nearby villages also have a high level of provision and therefore good accessibility, but around half of it is also of low value.

### **Multi-functional Greenspaces**

All of Burgess Hill is within 5 minutes/300 m walk of at least one multi-functional greenspace, apart from a small area on the eastern side. This is no doubt a legacy of the rapid expansion of the town, which also explains the fact that many spaces have a low quality and/or value score. Accordingly the audit has identified that Burgess Hill has the worst greenspaces of the three main towns in the District. There are only a handful of spaces within the town which scored well in the audit, and one of them – Leylands Wood – is on the northern periphery and therefore of only limited relevance to most residents. Other spaces on the periphery of the town, outside Jane Murray Way, all scored poorly in the audit. As they form part of the Green Crescent, it will be desirable to try to enhance them and provide linking paths where they do not exist.

The quality/value position is not much better in the nearby villages, although most residents are well within the 5 minutes/300m distance threshold of at least one greenspace. A number of spaces in the villages also require enhancement, especially in Hassocks.

Accordingly it seems clear that enhancing the quality of greenspaces in the southern part of the District should be a clear strategic priority for the District Council, obviously in partnership with the Burgess Hill Town Council and local Parish Councils.

### **Tennis and Multi-sport courts**

The eastern and western parts of Burgess Hill and the nearby villages are well served by tennis and multi-courts, but again the south-east part of the town has no public provision. It will be desirable to seek to open up the courts at Burgess Hill High School for Girls for greater community use, especially for netball, as part of the development of its proposed sports hall.

The eastern side of the town is poorly served by multi-sport courts as are the villages to the south of it.

### **Teenage Areas**

The position is rather better with regard to teenagers in both Burgess Hill itself and the nearby villages. Almost all of the town, apart from a swathe on either side of the north-south rail line, is within a 10 minute/600 m walk of at least one facility and the same holds true for the villages. Moreover, the overall quality and value of teenage provision is noticeably better than the provision for younger children.

## **Summary of Key Points**

This analysis leads to a number of strategic conclusions:

- Overall, the accessibility of provision across the District, and particularly in the three main towns where most residents live, is reasonably good. This said, there are some areas where accessibility is poor, and this tends to fit into a pattern with these areas being poorly served by several forms of provision rather than just one or two.
- The District-wide priority for enhancing greenspaces must be Burgess Hill. Overall, provision there has the lowest quality and value amongst the three towns.
- District residents lack ready access to indoor tennis facilities and are shortly to be deprived of their only indoor bowls facility. The nearest provision that they can use is well outside the District; the same goes for full scale athletics facilities.

- Looking to the future, there is likely to be a need for more artificial turf pitches, especially “third generation” ones designed for football. The most appropriate location for these pitches will be on school or community college sites. There is likely to be a case for at least one such pitch in each of the main towns and as there is already a pitch of this kind planned for St Paul’s College, the District Council should focus on Haywards Heath and East Grinstead. Ideally, it should work with schools and the County Council to maximise community use of ATPs on school sites as the latter is already thinking that there should be one at all secondary schools.
- In the three main towns, increased community use of indoor sports facilities may result in lower levels of use of District Council facilities, especially if the schools set lower charges than the District. The District Council should therefore monitor demand levels closely and seek a sensible agreement with schools over the programming and promotion of community use of school facilities.
- In East Grinstead, the priorities are for better provision in the western and north-eastern areas. The western area lacks good quality natural greenspaces, play areas and teenage facilities, while the north-east Stonequarry area of deprivation requires teenage facilities and better play provision.
- In Haywards Heath, the north-western sector is generally the least well served by existing provision. However, the main priority should generally be to enhance existing provision
- In Burgess Hill, the south-eastern sector to the east of the railway line is generally the least well served by current provision. There is also a lack of good quality greenspace in the Leylands area. However, as in other parts of the District, enhancing the quality of existing greenspaces should have a higher priority than making more provision.





# 11: Issues and Opportunities

## Introduction

This chapter reviews the main issues and opportunities facing the District Council and its partners and makes recommendations on how they tackle them. They are:

- Quality versus quantity
- Countryside Provision
- Indoor sports and leisure provision
- Provision for Bowls
- Play provision for Children
- Provision for Tennis
- Provision for Teenagers
- Provision for the Pitch Sports
- Public Parks
- Wasted Spaces

## Quality vs Quantity

### Issues and Opportunities

Broadly speaking, there is sufficient of most forms of provision across the District for the present population, although there are specific shortfalls in some areas. In terms of quality and value, provision is generally of reasonable quality and slightly better than in other areas where we have undertaken similar assessments. However, it will still be desirable to enhance many spaces in order to improve "liveability and enhance biodiversity.

At the same time, the District faces significant housing growth, especially around East Grinstead. On new sites, the Council will obviously be able to require that developers make appropriate on-site provision as part of their developments. However, this will do little to tackle the quality and value of most existing sites across the District, but especially those we have identified through the audit as being of poor quality and value. It will also be unrealistic to set out to enhance all of the low quality or value spaces within a limited time period.

### Recommendations

- In established settlements and developed areas, the Council should generally protect existing provision and therefore require compensatory provision if it decides to

allow existing spaces or facilities to be redeveloped for some other purpose. However, at the same time it should review the future use of those sites we have identified as being of low quality and low value, using the approach we set out in Chapter 5.

- The Council should draw up a greenspace strategy designed to deliver quality and value enhancements to priority sites, but especially urban parks, using our audit results as a guide. In the first instance, it should base the strategy on developing a network of spaces, accessible on foot from all dwellings in each of the towns within a 15-minute walk, of Green Flag Standard. Having delivered this, the Council should revise the strategy on the basis of developing further spaces of Green Flag Standard within the walking thresholds set out in this assessment.
- The Council should require developers of infill or windfall sites to fund the enhancement of existing spaces or facilities within the relevant distance thresholds in preference to requiring on-site provision
- The Council should ensure that any new on-site provision by developers in new housing areas complies with the quality standards suggested in this assessment in all respects.
- For major new developments, the Council should generally require developers to make on-site provision in accordance with the quantity and quality standards set out above. However, it should require contributions to off-site provision:
  - \* When it will be more in the public interest to require developers to contribute to the enhancement of existing poor quality or value spaces or facilities within the distance threshold of their development
  - \* For artificial turf pitches or parks and gardens

## **Countryside Provision**

### **Issues and Opportunities**

Mid Sussex contains very attractive countryside and so it is not surprising that residents and visitors enjoy visiting it. A number of the District's town and Parish councils have identified a need for additional or (particularly) higher quality paths and cycleways.

There is also a need to promote greater access to the countryside by sustainable forms of transport and to link the District's main towns to the countryside around them better.

### **Recommendations**

The main thrust of countryside policy – as it is in the current Local Plan – should be on protecting the character of the countryside and widening access to it. It would be unrealistic, however, to suggest that the Council should aim to enhance the entire rights of way network

throughout the District. Accordingly, we recommend that it should concentrate primarily on four main policy objectives for countryside provision:

- To make it possible for residents to commute between the main towns in the District, and to and from the commuter villages within a few km of them, by bicycle. This should also reduce congestion and pollution. The obvious priority is to link Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath as they are only a relatively short distance apart. One simple but practical way in which the Council can encourage cycling is to require all non-residential development to incorporate secure bicycle parking.
- To link the main settlements to popular visitor attractions in the countryside such as Ardingly reservoir, the scheduled ancient monuments, the National Trust properties at Wakehurst Place and Nymans Garden and the South Downs National Park. This should encourage greater use of sustainable transport for leisure purposes and lead in turn to more residents commuting by bicycle. Geographically, the Council's priorities should be the national park and designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, as they will be the main areas that people will wish to visit. They are shown on Countryside Map 4.
- To link the main settlements in the District to the long distance paths passing through it
- To make it possible for as many school children as possible to cycle or walk to school, but particularly the secondary schools. This should reduce the congestion and pollution caused by the "school run" and also help to make children more active. As most of the secondary schools also make their sports facilities available to the local community this should also help to reduce car travel relating to participation in sport. This will be particularly important in the three main towns.

## **Indoor Sports and Leisure Provision**

### **Issues and Opportunities**

The Triangle and Dolphin Leisure Centres are well used and provide a good service to local residents. Some of the facilities provided by the independent schools are also well used, usually without any formal community use agreement. The King's Leisure Centre, however, is past its "sell-by date".

The District is facing a significant increase in school sports hall provision likely to be made available for community use. For example, St Paul's College recently opened its new sports hall for community use; the Sackville Community College hall will open shortly; the Burgess Hill High School for Girls is planning an 8-court hall; and West Sussex County Council has set an aspiration that all secondary schools should have at least a four court hall by 2015.

The County Council anticipates that the community use of school sports facilities will at least break even. Assuming that they target organised groups, rather than casual or “pay and play” use, schools will have relatively low staffing costs and most user groups will be able to benefit from the VAT exemption on lets of longer than 10 weeks. As a result their charges may well be lower than those at District Council facilities and existing users of them may transfer to the newer halls, resulting in a loss of income to District Council facilities.

This issue is therefore primarily a management and financial one rather than a planning and land use one, although it has land use implications for East Grinstead because of the need either to refurbish or replace the King’s Centre.

The District already has significantly more sports hall provision than the Sport England Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC) suggests is needed. The planned new provision will result in the District having roughly double the level of provision recommended by the SFC so the likelihood must be that the various halls will have to compete for users and few will be used to capacity.

The options facing the District Council are:

- To take no action and simply accept any loss of users and income and resulting increase in the subsidy required at the Council’s facilities
- To work closely with schools and the County Council to develop a realistic strategy for community use of school sports facilities and related sports development initiatives in order to try to drive up demand
- To reduce the charges at its own sports halls in order to retain existing users and possibly increase other prices to maintain income levels

### **Recommendations**

We recommend that the Council adopt the second of these possible courses of action, but monitor carefully the impact of the opening of new facilities on existing ones. It should also:

- The District Council should work closely with the County Council to plan the community use of any new joint use school sports facilities. Ideally it should seek to ensure that any new sports halls are developed as “District-wide” facilities for specific sports rather than general purpose halls. The Burgess Hill High School for Girls hall is already planned primarily as a netball facility and the Triangle Centre is suitable for use as a specialist badminton or trampolining hall.
- The District Council should investigate the options for

upgrading or replacing the King's Centre, taking full account of any planned new sports hall provision on school sites.

- The District, Town and Parish Councils should engage more with the independent schools to ensure a high quality service for the residents of the District's rural areas.

## **Provision for Bowls**

### **Issues and Opportunities**

There is an identified need for additional outdoor bowling greens, based on our accessibility analysis and the views of Town and Parish Councils. In addition, the proportion of older people in the District's population is rising so the demand for bowling greens is likely to increase over time.

### **Recommendations**

- The Council should seek to allocate sites for new bowling greens in North Mid Sussex (including one in East Grinstead/Ashurst Wood); Central Mid Sussex (including at least one in Haywards Heath); and Burgess Hill (possibly two greens). Wherever possible, it will be desirable to provide them at established recreation grounds, but to foster clubs to manage them.

## **Provision for Tennis**

### **Issues and Opportunities**

Mid Sussex has a significant number of outdoor tennis courts but no indoor ones, nor are there any around the periphery of the District. Given the socio-economic nature of the District's population, indoor tennis is likely to be a popular activity although it probably does not have enough population to attract one of the major commercial indoor tennis clubs. Clubs we have contacted have indicated a need for more floodlit courts.

The options and opportunities facing the District Council are:

- Take no action – the market will provide
- Work with Crawley Borough Council to try to attract a commercial leisure club incorporating indoor tennis to a suitable location to the east of Crawley and west of East Grinstead
- Plan to develop a Council-run indoor tennis centre

### **Recommendations**

- The Council should work with Crawley Borough Council to try to attract one of the commercial leisure club operators to the Crawley/East Grinstead area
- The Council should promote the floodlighting of good quality tennis courts wherever possible

## Play Provision for Children

### Issue and Opportunities

To date the Council has followed the recommendations of the National Playing Fields Association in relation to play areas for children and used it as the basis for “playing space” provision standards in its Local Plan. This leads – as has happened in Burgess Hill, for example – to two things:

- A very high level of provision of small sites, many of them simply shoehorned into housing developments, with very limited play value and low levels of use by young children, coupled with high maintenance costs as a result of abuse and vandalism
- Fairly characterless amenity and other greenspaces in housing areas designed for cheapness and ease of maintenance rather than as attractive play environments for children

The recent play provision at Bolnore Village, however, is significantly more stimulating for children of a wide range of ages. This particular development is also characterised by access to wooded areas and a good network of paths off which the play areas are located. It also makes a positive feature of a sustainable urban drainage system and should be taken as setting the standard for the District.

The options facing the District Council and Town and Parish Councils partners are:

- Continue with the present approach
- Continue with the present approach but undertake limited rationalisation of provision where possible
- Adopt a new approach to play provision for new development, based on fewer but larger and better play areas, coupled with requiring developers to design greenspaces in housing areas in such a way as to offer stimulating play environments for children; and make a policy decision to “retro-fit” this approach in existing housing areas when existing low quality or low value play areas require refurbishment

### Recommendations

The District Council should adopt a new approach to children’s play provision based on:

- Designing local greenspaces in such a way as to maximise their play value for children of different ages with opportunities to hide, climb, run around, see nature at work, handle sticks and stones and get dirty or wet
- Fewer but larger play facilities as part of new developments (using the large area in Bolnore Village as

its exemplar), coupled with requiring developers to design greenspaces in housing areas in such a way that they provide stimulating play environments for children

- Rationalising existing play provision as and when major repairs or refurbishments are needed and “retro-fitting” this new approach to those existing housing areas with an unnecessarily high level of provision (eg the west side of Burgess Hill), including the upgrading of local greenspaces to make them more stimulating for play
- Requiring developers to design housing environments in which children and other pedestrians have priority over vehicles
- Planning traffic calming schemes with the objective of making streets child-friendly rather than simply slowing down traffic

Note: this recommendation has implications for West Sussex County Council Highways requirements in new developments, but accords with emerging thinking on home zones and children’s play.

## Provision for Teenagers

### Issues and Opportunities

Making better provision for teenagers is one of the significant provision issues facing the District Council. The need for it is widely supported by the Community Strategy, the local community and Town and Parish Councils. Many local people will be more than aware of the teenagers’ common complaint that they have “nothing to do”, while others see young people hanging around as potentially threatening – perceptions fuelled by media coverage of the “yob culture”. The fact that this is nearly always an incorrect assumption is beside the point. They also dislike the litter that young people tend to leave behind where they congregate.

We have found in other areas a lack of consensus amongst teenagers as to their preferred forms of provision. Roughly equal proportions give their first choice as ball courts, skateboard/BMX areas and space for ball games.

The issues for the Council to tackle are:

- **What provision is most appropriate for teenagers?** Mid Sussex, like many other areas, has a significant number of basketball goals. These goals are the legacy of a hopelessly over-ambitious attempt by the English Basketball Association, aided and abetted by the Sports Council, to make basketball the nation’s number one youth sport. Most of the goals are relatively little used. A better approach is to provide ball (or multi-purpose) courts and skateboard areas, although their drawback is that they appeal almost entirely to boys. No-one really seems to have found out what might appeal to teenage girls, apart from teenage boys. Accordingly there is a need to consult young people specifically on the forms of provision that will appeal most to them, and this consultation and involvement must include girls.

- **Where should it be located?** While many local residents will support the Council if it decides to make additional provision for teenagers, this is likely to be on the basis of “but not near me, thank you”. Finding suitable sites for teenage provision is not easy; facilities must be readily accessible but not encourage territoriality and of reasonably high profile, while not located where other people may feel threatened by groups of young people. Accordingly we suggest that the Council should seek to make additional teenage provision a major part of its parks (in the three main towns – see below) and local recreation grounds (in the rural areas).
- **How should it be managed?** Teenage provision needs as light a touch as possible. Locating teenage facilities in parks or recreation grounds will provide a degree of informal surveillance which should be more than adequate.

### Recommendations

- Mid Sussex should have a network of teenage areas with at least two major facilities in each of the three main towns, supported by “second tier” provision in the rural settlements.
- The Council, in partnership with the town and parish councils, should identify sites for additional teenage provision on the basis primarily of the distance thresholds recommended earlier in this report. Where possible they should be on local recreation grounds as this will provide an element of informal supervision and should avoid potential nuisance to local residents.
- The Council, in partnership with the town and parish councils, should engage and work with local teenagers to ensure that provision meets their needs

## Provision for the Pitch Sports

### Issues and Opportunities

The nature of pitch provision in the District is failing to keep up with trends in the pitch sports. The main elements of this are:

- First, while the District Council has done a lot of good work to upgrade its stock of grass pitches, it has concentrated on match facilities. As a result there is a shortage of floodlit artificial or grass pitches suitable for football and rugby training that can be used mid-week.
- Second, the standard of football play in the District is rising, no doubt partly as a positive consequence of the investment by the Council in its pitches. This brings with it a need for further upgrading to create the facilities that successful teams will need if they are to be able to accept promotion to higher leagues. At the same time, the overall level of participation in adult football, as in other areas of the country, is slowly



declining. As a result some clubs are finding it increasingly difficult to find enough players to maintain their team(s), with a particular shortage of younger players. This will obviously have an impact on the need for grass pitches; at present, both clubs and leagues believe that demand and supply are roughly in balance.

- Third, football leagues lack access to suitable grounds for “show games” such as cup finals. The spectator needs of these games are fairly modest – 2-300 will be ample for many of them – but there must be good changing and a good pitch.
- Fourth, there is also a need for more junior and mini-soccer pitches and it is desirable that there should be a “central venue” for mini-soccer in each of the three main towns.
- Fifth, the quality of ancillary or changing accommodation sometimes leaves a lot to be desired and as some clubs lack security of tenure they are unable to apply for external funding.
- Finally, the successful development of mini, midi and women’s rugby has resulted in a need for more rugby pitches and changing suitable for mixed sex use.

#### *Discussion*

Some growth in grass football pitch provision is already “in the pipeline” at two key locations: St Paul’s College has plans for additional grass pitches which it is likely to make available for at least some community use and the Bolnore Village development includes land allocated for pitches. These pitches will be capable of accommodating any additional demand that may arise for grass football, with the main need probably being for junior and mini-soccer pitches. St Paul’s has the potential to be a hugely valuable “central venue” for mini-soccer.

These new developments, like existing pitches, will be suitable mainly for match play during daylight hours. However, they will not do much to meet the significant unmet need for floodlit training and practice facilities. The best way of meeting this need in a cost effective way will be for the Council to invest in third generation artificial turf pitches, ideally in partnership with the County Council and appropriate secondary schools or community colleges. These surfaces have been approved by both FIFA and UEFA, the world and European governing bodies for football, and Sport England anticipates that around half the matches in the 2010 World Cup will be played on them.

Floodlit artificial turf football pitches create the following opportunities:

- Development of enhanced PE programmes in schools and after-school football in winter
- Development of mid-week floodlit leagues (possibly on a "30 minutes each way" basis in order to maximise usage and income), designed to retain older players in the game for longer and make it easier for younger players to fit matches into their lives
- Development of coaching programmes for mini-soccer
- Development of girls' and women's football
- Development of multi-age and multi-team football clubs (on the rugby club model), offering a development pathway for players

There are also signs that rugby may be willing to accept third generation ATPs for some matches, especially for juniors and teams in lower leagues which often have to make do with badly over-played pitches. In the longer term we believe that successful rugby clubs, such as Haywards Heath, may want an ATP of their own.

Unlike grass pitches, it is possible to meet costs from user charges for ATPs because they can be used every day of the week (in theory for 24 hours a day) and maintenance charges are relatively low, apart from the need to replace the carpet at roughly ten-year intervals. Indeed, some research we did for the Scottish Sports Council in the early nineties came to a totally counter-intuitive conclusion: in order to cater for anything over about twenty games a week, it would be cheaper for local authorities to provide ATPs and make them available free than to provide grass pitches and charge for their use. This calculation related only to maintenance costs, and ignored the extra land needed for grass pitches and the additional changing pavilions required to service them.

If the District Council refocuses its efforts from grass to artificial turf pitches, it will probably face comparable overall capital costs to making further grass pitch provision, but require much less land and fewer changing pavilions. It will therefore be much better value for money. Furthermore, it may have two additional financial benefits:

- It may result in the County Council becoming a funding partner whether on existing school sites or new PPP ones
- The District Council may be able to fund at least part of its share of the capital costs from the sale of one or two pitch sites, subject of course to the acceptability of this in terms of wider planning policy. An alternative and possibly better approach will be to convert one or more existing football pitches to rugby or cricket.

## Recommendations

### *Grass Pitches*

- The Council should continue the allocation of land at Bolnore Village for grass pitches for the period covered by its first Local Development Framework, but review the need to develop it for grass pitches once it has experience of the use of the proposed new artificial turf pitches.
- The Council and Cuckfield Parish Council, together with the club, should investigate the potential for providing an additional pitch for the Haywards Heath Rugby Club
- The Council should take a positive and constructive approach to planning applications by clubs which have the potential significantly to expand, especially if this will be likely to lead to the consolidation of pitch sport teams into a smaller number of larger clubs than at present.
- The Council should support the upgrading of a limited number of football and other pitch sport sites in order to allow local teams to accept promotion to higher leagues

### *Artificial Turf Pitches*

- The District Council should identify and allocate sites for at least three floodlit artificial turf pitches across the District. They should be in East Grinstead (ideally on the western side); Haywards Heath and Burgess Hill. Because of the opportunity to combine school and community use, and develop effective sports development pathways from school to community participation, in principle the best location for these pitches will be on secondary school sites. Suitable locations are therefore Imberhorne Upper School in East Grinstead (or if this is not possible, as part of a new or refurbished King's Centre); Oathall Community College in the Haywards Heath area and St Paul's Catholic College on the western edge of Burgess Hill – where a suitable pitch is already planned as a result of its sports college status.
- All new ATPs should be complemented by good quality social and changing accommodation designed for community use and large enough to allow the development of multi-team mixed sex clubs. The Council should aim to use each of the new ATPs as the hub around which to foster the development of a large community club, broadly similar to the East Grinstead Sports and Social Club. Such clubs should have active junior development programmes and aim to develop a range of teams for young people, men and women in a range of sports.
- New ATPs should be planned from the start as “central venues” for mini-soccer coaching and matches and the

Council should also seek to develop mid-week floodlit football leagues

- The Council should investigate the potential for developing the artificial pitch at St Paul's Catholic College into a venue for show games and work with the College to secure funding for this from the Football Foundation
- The Council should seek contributions from developers towards the implementation of a District-wide strategy for floodlit ATPs in preference to requiring either on-site grass pitch provision or contributions to off-site grass pitches

#### *Major Clubs*

- The District Council should encourage and work with each of the major clubs in the District (for example, the three rugby clubs, East Grinstead Sports and Social Club, East Grinstead Football Club, Haywards Heath Football Club, Burgess Hill Football Club and the Boys Club based at Fairfield Recreation Ground in Burgess Hill) to formulate facilities and development plans and support their implementation as much as possible.

## **Public Parks**

### **Issues and Opportunities**

Although there are spaces in the main towns which the local community regards as parks, such as Victoria Park and Beech Hurst in Haywards Heath, East Court and Mount Noddy Recreation Ground in East Grinstead, and St John's Park in Burgess Hill, only Beech Hurst is not dominated by sports facilities. Beech Hurst is also the only space with significant colour and horticultural interest. Local communities would clearly like to see better parks in the three main towns.

### **Recommendations**

- The Council should designate at least one site in each of the three main towns as an urban park. These sites should be accessible on foot by as many people as possible within a 10 to 15 minute walk.
- The Council, in partnership with the town councils and local communities, should ensure that each of the designated parks offers a range of facilities or features which will appeal to people of all ages. Ideally they should incorporate areas of water, colour, horticultural interest, play and teenage facilities, tennis courts and/or a bowling green, clumps of large trees, shrubs, toilets and seating areas. The Council should also manage and maintain each of the designated parks at least to the equivalent of Green Flag Standard. The Council has already achieved Green Flags for Beech Hurst in Haywards Heath and the Bedelands Farm Nature Reserve in Burgess Hill but only the former is a park. As part of this process, it should continue to work

with user groups and seek to foster the creation of a Friends Group for each park.

## **Wasted Spaces**

### **Issues and Opportunities**

The District's Town and Parish Councils have identified a number of "wasted spaces", defined as spaces which in their present form are unused or underused and do not benefit the local communities close to them. The ownership of some of these spaces is unclear.

### **Recommendations**

- The District Council should review the future of each of the "wasted spaces" identified by the Town and Parish Councils using the approach recommended in Chapter 5.



## 12: Planning Policy

### Introduction

The District Council is currently preparing its Core Strategy, which will include a policy relating to open space, sport and recreation. This chapter suggests the basic principles on which we suggest the Council should base its policy.

### Broad Principle

#### Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision

In broad terms, we recommend that the Council's approach to open space, sport and recreation provision should be:

- Protect those sites we have identified in this assessment as being of high quality/high value
- Protect and seek to enhance the quality of those sites we have identified as low quality/high value, seeking contributions from developments on infill and windfall sites for this purpose
- Review the acceptability of using those sites we have identified as being of low quality/low value or high quality/low value for some other purpose and if this is not going to be acceptable seek ways of enhancing their value to the local community in their vicinity or wildlife and nature conservation

### Supplementary Planning Document

The Council should complement its core policy for open space, sport and recreation with a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to set out the standards suggested in this assessment and how it will apply them. This should replace the chapter on Leisure and Recreation Facilities in the Council's adopted Development and Infrastructure SPD (February 2006).





## 13: Local Plan Allocations

### Introduction

The District-wide Local Plan makes a number of allocations for open space, sport and recreation provision which we review below in the light of the assessment.

### Allocations in Burgess Hill

#### Children's Play Areas

- Land to the north of St Wilfrid's Road: this location is for a play area which will serve an currently more than 300 m from the nearest alternative play area. However, the site is beside a railway line, but does have the advantage of being accessible from the residential areas on both sides of the railway. Given the size of the site, we suggest it should be developed as a "play landscape" or pocket park rather than as a play area with fixed equipment.

#### Recreation

- East of Kingsway: this relatively small site may be of some use as a kickabout area but there is probably no need to retain the allocation, although it should not be used for development as it is outside the town envelope.
- North east of Sheddingdean and Leylands Park (note: this allocation is actually to the west of Leylands Park): If the District Council is able to develop the artificial turf pitches recommended in this report it is likely that this allocation will not be needed. If there is a need for more grass pitches at some point in the future, it will be more sensible to extend Leylands Park and provide new changing accommodation to serve it than to create a separate pitch site only 200 m or so away. The present Leylands Park changing is in very poor condition.
- To the south of Southway: this allocation will be suitable for an extension to the Southway Recreation Ground, although large enough only for mini-soccer, and the Council should retain it.
- West End Farm: this allocation has been partially implemented with the development of St Paul's Catholic College. The Council should continue the

allocation of the whole site for school/recreation.

### **Informal Public Open Space**

- Batchelors Farm/adjointing Jane Murray Way, York Road and Sussex Way/north of Sheddingdean and Leylands Park, including Bedeslands Farm: all of the sites making up the Green Crescent are strategically important and the Council should retain the allocations.
- Hurst Farm: this site also forms part of the Green Crescent around the west side of Burgess Hill and is therefore of strategic importance.
- Land south of Nightingale Lane: Stonequarry Wood comprises a large part of this piece of land and therefore this is an important site in the local landscape and the Council should retain the allocation.

### **Cycleways**

- Hassocks to Burgess Hill: this allocation has been taken up and so there is no need to retain it

## **Allocations in East Grinstead**

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

- Estcotts Estate, off Court Crescent, and Estcotts Estate, off Estcotts Drive: one of these play areas is desirable as it will serve an area that is currently more than 300m from existing play areas. However, as they are only about 200 m apart there is no case for both of them to be equipped. The site off Estcotts Drive should have the higher priority as it is the larger of the two and the size of some 4,000 sq m should allow for an imaginative design. The site at Courts Crescent is also closer to dwellings and should remain as a good quality informal greenspace. The site off Estcotts Drive, on the other hand requires enhancement.
- Sackville Gardens: this proposed site is about 600 m from the nearest existing play area and will serve an area of fairly poor housing. However, the site – effectively a traffic island which scored poorly in the audit – is quite small and there is only very limited opportunity for imaginative design. Against this, the only other possible site in the area is similar.

### **Sports Facilities**

- Imberhorne School: this land has already been developed for sports facilities
- Dunnings Mill: this land has already been developed for sports and leisure use with a squash and fitness club, an indoor bowls club (now closed), a Snooker and Social Club and pub/restaurant. The Snooker and Social Club

also claims not to be financially viable, although the squash and fitness club appears to be. The owners of the Snooker and Social Club have applied for planning consent to demolish the facility and erect a number of dwellings and the recent closure of the indoor bowls club may also lead to the owners seeking planning consent for some other use. It is unlikely another operator will buy the club to continue the indoor bowls use. There may be a flooding problem as a result of the confluence of two streams which could make housing undesirable unless the streams are culverted and appropriate arrangements made for accommodating any flooding.

- Saint Hill Road: the northern part of this allocation, at the East Grinstead Sports and Social Club, has already been taken up with the development of the Club. The southern part of the allocation has also been taken up with the development of the East Grinstead Rugby Club. Accordingly there is no need to retain either area as an allocation.

#### **Informal Public Open Space**

- Ashplats Wood: this is an important feature in the landscape and the Council should retain the allocation
- Between Southlands and Dunnings Mill: this allocation is on the south-western edge of the town to the rear of houses grouped around two culs-de-sac. There is little public open space in the immediate area, apart from Hurst Farm Pond, but nearby dwellings have sizeable gardens so local residents are unlikely to make much use of the site as open space. It offers the opportunity to develop a riverside walk around the western part of the town from Dunnings Mill northwards to Turners Hill Road/West Hill, accessed through Dunnings Mill, but this is unlikely to be a particularly useful route for local people. There is already an unmade path providing this route along the western edge of the site which does not appear to be well used. The site is bisected by a river that it may be necessary to divert or culvert in order to create a viable development site. Overall, there seems to be little point in retaining this as an open space allocation and its future should be bound up with the future of the Spooner's Indoor Bowls Club at Dunnings Mill. Its possible closure will create the opportunity for a better road access to the site than if access is taken from Southlands close to Mill Way, although this will still not be particularly good as it will pass through the car park for the leisure facilities.
- Holtye Road and Blackwell Farm Road junction: this small area of land adjoins Brooklands Park, a large area of low quality, low value open space. However, it is the only sizeable piece of open space in the area and so the

## **Allocations in Haywards Heath**

Council should retain the allocation and also seek to enhance the whole of Brooklands Park, including the allocation.

- Between St Leonard's Park and Brooklands Park: this land appears likely to be susceptible to flooding and therefore informal open space is a sensible use
- Spring Copse: this area of open space is currently of low quality and value but it is difficult to see that it can sensibly be used for anything other than open space. It may be suitable for an extension to Mount Noddy Cemetery if and when additional lairs are needed.

### **Linear Open Spaces**

- Worth Way: the District Council should retain this allocation and develop it as a cyclepath
- Forest Way: the District Council should retain this allocation and develop it as a cyclepath

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

- Colwell Gardens: this site is more than 300 m from the nearest equipped play area, but only just. It is not particularly well located as it is hidden away down a cul-de-sac and surrounded by dwellings on three sides. Any play area on this site will serve around 50 dwellings and so is likely to have a very low level of use. As a result it is not worth retaining this allocation.

### **Public Outdoor Playing Space**

- Land to the west of Beech Hurst: this land provides the opportunity to extend the Beech Hurst Recreation Ground and also provides an open setting for Downlands College and Park. Together with the land on the opposite side of Butler's Green Road it forms part of the important strategic gap between Haywards Heath and Cuckfield. Accordingly the District Council should retain the allocation.
- Land (4.8 Ha) to the south-west of the town: this land is allocated for pitches. If the District Council is able to develop the artificial turf pitches recommended in this report it is likely that this allocation will not be needed. However, we recommend that the Council retain it for the next five years or so and then review the need for more grass pitches.

### **Informal Public Open Space**

- Turvey/Franklands/Ashenground Wood: this land includes an important cycleway allocation and the District Council should therefore retain it.

- Land between the Haywards Heath Relief Road and Rocky Lane: this land forms the southern end of a proposed cycleway and in order to provide a good setting for it the Council should retain the allocation.
- Railway land at Wivesfield Station: we assessed the part of this land to the east of Hurstwood Lane as low quality but high value in the audit and therefore the Council should retain the allocation and seek to enhance the space. The area to the west of Hurstwood Grange links to Anscombe Wood and contains a disused reservoir so is almost certainly unsuitable for building. Accordingly the District Council should retain the allocation.
- Land at Hemsley Nursery: this site on the edge of Haywards Heath, is likely to be of limited value to local residents. However, as it is outside the town envelope, and adjacent to a railway line, it is not particularly suitable for most forms of development.

#### **Cycleways**

- Various: the Council should retain all of the cycleway allocations as a means of promoting sustainable transport

#### **Landscape**

- South-eastern sector (Anscombe Wood): these parcels of land are effectively part of Anscombe Wood and therefore the Council should retain the allocation.

### **Allocations in Hurstpierpoint**

#### **Recreation**

- Extension to Fairfield Recreation Ground: this site is unsuitable for development but could form a useful extension to the recreation ground. Accordingly the District Council should retain the allocation.

### **Allocations in Keymer and Hassocks**

#### **Sports Facilities/Recreation**

- Extension to Hassocks FC: this will allow the club to train without using its main pitch or to develop additional teams. Accordingly the District Council should retain the allocation.
- Land west of Mackie Avenue: If the District Council is able to develop the artificial turf pitches recommended in this report it is likely that this allocation will not be needed. We understand that the Council has now put forward this site as an extension to the adjacent housing allocation.

### **Informal Open Space**

- Butchers Wood and Lag Wood: this site is unsuitable for development and the District Council should retain the allocation.
- Land west of Mackie Avenue: this land is unsuitable for development and the District Council should retain the allocation, but review its northern boundary.

### **Cycleways/Footpaths**

- Footpath link proposed to Whitelands Reservoir and cycle track/bridleway/footpath between Hassocks and Burgess Hill: the District Council should retain these allocations as a means of promoting sustainable transport

### **Allocations in Cuckfield**

Extension to Whiteman's Green Recreation Ground: this will allow Haywards Heath Rugby Club to develop an additional pitch or mini-pitches and is highly desirable. The District Council should therefore retain the allocation.

### **Allocations in Pease Pottage**

#### **Sport/Recreation**

- Extension to Finches Field: this allocation has already been taken up

#### **Informal Open Space**

- South of Horsham Road (western part of the Hemsleys Nursery allocation). Given the adjacent Finches Field Recreation Ground this allocation is unnecessary, although the site is not suitable for development as there is no vehicular access.

### **Allocations in Poynings**

#### **Recreation**

- Poynings Recreation Ground allocated as open space: this is a high quality, high value recreation ground which should be retained in sports use.

### **Allocations in Turners Hill**

#### **Play**

- Withypits East: there is already a high quality, high value equipped play area in Turners Hill, but on the north side of Church Road, the fairly busy main road through the village. As a result Withypits East is a good site for an additional play facility and the Council should retain the allocation. However, it will be sensible to design this as a play landscape rather than an equipped play area so that it will also appeal to teenagers and adults.

### Sport/Recreation

- East Street, extension to playing field: this allocation is well outside the village envelope so would not be suitable for development. Accordingly the District Council should retain it.

### Allocations in Other Villages

#### Sport/Recreation

- **Ansty**, extension to recreation ground: this should be a useful addition to an attractive recreation ground, but one of low value at present, and the District Council should therefore retain the allocation
- **Bolney**, extension to Batchelor's Field Recreation Ground: this should be a useful addition to an attractive recreation ground and the District Council should therefore retain the allocation

#### Kickabouts

- **Pyecombe**, kickabout between Church Lane and A273: this allocation will provide a useful facility for teenagers and the District Council should retain it. It will also be sensible to consider relocating the small play and teenage area at the northern end of the village to this site, although adjoining residents will be likely to object.

### Summary of Key Points

It will be sensible to retain most of the allocations in the existing Local Plan, with the following exceptions:

- Those which have been taken up and implemented
- Burgess Hill: recreation allocation north east of Sheddingdean and Leylands Park (note: this allocation is actually to the west of Leylands Park)
- East Grinstead: children's play area allocation on the Estcotts Estate, off Court Crescent
- Haywards Heath: children's play allocation in Colwell Gardens

In addition, the Council should reconsider the informal open space allocation at Southlands/Dunnings Mill and the leisure/recreation allocation of those parts of the adjacent Dunning's Mill Site currently occupied by the Indoor Bowls Club and the Snooker and Social Club. Together these make up a potentially useful development site for which housing or open space are probably the only realistic uses. There seems to be little need for the former land to be informal open space and access to it as a development site will be limited. However, it should be possible to achieve a significantly better access and better development if the Southlands/Dunning's Mill, Indoor Bowls Club and Snooker and Social Club sites can be developed in an integrated way to a sensible masterplan. The site has some

disadvantages which a comprehensive development should be able to resolve, including the need to culvert one or more of the water courses.