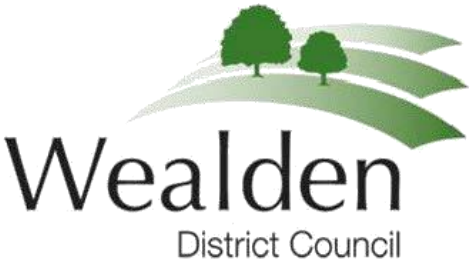
Wealden
Open Space Study



2016 – 2028

(Part 1 of 2)

FINAL VERSION

Report produced on behalf of Wealden District Council by Ethos Environmental Planning

ethos
Environmental Planning

Wealden Open Space Study

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Glossary of Terms

Term		Meaning
ANGst		Accessible Natural Green Space Standard
CIL		Community Infrastructure Levy
DPD		Development Plan Document
FIT		Fields In Trust (originally known as the 'National Playing Fields Association')
GIST		Green Infrastructure Strategy
GIS		Geographic Information Systems
LAP		Local Area for Play
LEAP		Local Equipped Area for Play
MUGA		Multi Use Games Area
NEAP		Neighbourhood Equipped Play Area
NEWP		Natural Environment White Paper
NGB		National Governing Body
NPPF		National Planning Policy Framework
PPG17		Planning Policy Guidance Note 17
SPD		Supplementary Planning Document
PPS		Planning Policy Statement
SADPD		Site Allocations Development Plan Document

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This Open Space Study is one of four reports provided within the overall Wealden District Council Open Space, Sports and Recreation Assessment 2016-2028. The four reports comprise:

1. Wealden Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report (Local Needs Assessment);
2. Wealden Open Space Study (this report - comprising a main report (part 1), 13 area profiles and parish analysis areas (part 2a), in addition to a report on parishes not included within area profiles (part 2b));
3. Wealden Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment, Strategy and Action Plan;
4. Wealden Indoor/Built Sports Facility Sport Needs Assessment.

In addition to the above, the study also included a specific assessment related to a proposed Sports Park within the District.

This report is the **main report** (part 1 of 2) of the Open Space Study. There are also 13 area profiles (including analysis by parish for those parishes that are not included within an area profile) which provide further analysis at a localised level (part 2 of 2). The study has been undertaken by Ethos Environmental Planning to inform the Council's decision making process up to 2028. It will replace the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Assessment published by the Council in 2008 (amended in 2010).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. It requires local planning authorities to set out policies to help enable communities to access high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation. These policies must be based on a thorough understanding of the local needs for such facilities and opportunities available for new provision.

The study has been carried out in-line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (*Para 73 and 74*). Since the adoption of the NPPF, there have been major changes to national planning policy. Open space assessment has primarily been affected by the omission of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG 17) from the new national policy framework. Whilst the government has not published anything specifically to replace this document (it does signpost the Sport England guidance for sports facilities assessments[1]), there is however, still a clear reference made in the new guidance to the principles and ideology established within PPG17. As such the underlying principles of this study have been informed by the former guidance provided in '*Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation'*, and its Companion Guide '*Assessing Needs and Opportunities*', which is a tried and tested methodology and takes a consistent approach with many other local authorities.

[1] http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities

1.2 Scope of Study and Objectives

Overall Aim of the Study

The aims of the study are to provide a robust assessment of needs and deficiencies in open spaces in order to establish local provision standards and create an up-to-date evidence base which can be maintained to aid implementation of the policies and the provision of open spaces during the new Local Plan period.

Scope of Study and Objectives

The Open Space Study covers all forms of public open space (with the exception of outdoor sports which are covered in the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment and Strategy and Action Plan) as referred to in Annex A of the PPG17 Companion Guide. Indoor sports facilities are covered within the Indoor/Built Sports Facility Sport Needs Assessment. A separate Sports Park Assessment has also been completed.

In order to achieve the above aim, the work will need to deliver the following objectives:-

- Define an appropriate methodology for undertaking the assessment of the District's open space, sport and recreation provision;
- Identify in association with Wealden District Council assessment areas for the study;
- Review existing national and local relevant documents, policy guidance and strategies including those relevant to cross boundary working;
- Devise a consultation methodology including questionnaires;
- Evaluate the quantity, quality and accessibility of existing facilities;
- Identify open space, sport and recreation needs and quantitative/qualitative deficits or surpluses;
- Identify open space, sport and recreation needs and quantitative/qualitative deficits or surpluses taking into account the amount and location of future growth in the district;
- Collate, analyse, map and interpret data/information to provide a baseline of open space, sports and recreation provision;
- Identify open space, sports and recreation provision standards;
- Identify additional requirements, opportunities and recommend priorities including those to support future growth in the District;
- Provide an up to date and robust evidence base and recommendations /advice to assist in:
    - Informing Wealden Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies;
    - Making planning decisions;
    - The justification for the collection of developer contributions; and
    - Making decisions with regards to Community Infrastructure Levy funding.
- Provide maps and GIS files to support the objectives of the assessment including:
    - Identify the location of each type of existing open space, sports and recreation provision at the agreed assessment scales (District, rural areas and five main towns);

- Identify the location of current provision to be shown with accessibility buffers as per the recommended standards; and
- Identify the existing quality of facilities.

1.3 Structure of the report

The open space study is presented in two key parts.

Part 1: Main Report follows the five key stages as summarised below:

- Step 1 – Identifying Local Needs
- Step 2 – Audit of Existing Open Space Assets
- Step 3 – Setting Local Standards
- Step 4 – Applying Local Standards
- Step 5 – Drafting Policy Recommendations

Part 2: Area Profiles (part 2a) have been developed for 13 areas. These are based on Parishes as discussed and agreed by the project Steering Group (see section 1.4.4).

Within each of the area profiles, there will be the following information:

- A description of the area;
- Maps showing the provision of green space;
- Quantitative analysis of current provision of open space'
- Analysis of access to open space;
- Summary of quality issues and opportunities;
- Analysis of future need for open space; and
- Priorities for the area.

The area profiles are intended to be a starting point to inform other strategies and plans, including neighbourhood plans, planning policies, development control policies, parks and open spaces service and action plans.

The area profiles will be presented as part 2 of the overall open space study. Part 1 will form an overview of open space at a more strategic level, and set out details of the wider open space strategy. However, it is intended that parts 1 and 2 of the report would be considered together in decision making.

In addition to the area profiles, quantity tables and provision and access maps are also provided for each of the parishes that are not included within an area profile (part 2b).

1.4 The Study Area

1.4.1 Overview of Wealden

Settlements and communities

Wealden is a large rural district with a dispersed and varied settlement pattern comprising small market towns, villages and hamlets. Each settlement has its own unique characteristics and functions, depending on its location and historical influences.

Historically, five main towns are identified within Wealden, namely Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield, Polegate and Uckfield. However, because of location, environmental attributes, infrastructure and the close proximity of larger towns/ cities including Brighton and Hove, Eastbourne, Tunbridge Wells and Crawley/ Gatwick Wealden's towns have not grown to be significant centres in the South East. The larger settlements outside the District exert a significant influence in terms of providing for jobs, health care, leisure, further education and shopping. This helps to provide a wider range of facilities for Wealden residents.

Unlike other Districts, Wealden is not dominated by any one of its towns and overall it is a District of numerous centres. The towns generally serve the local population, with interactions between smaller settlements and towns and between the towns themselves.

Wealden does attract a small workforce from outside of the District, with some settlements and areas attracting visitors due to the environmental and historical qualities of the area. In such a large rural district it is recognised that the rural areas contribute to the general economy by underpinning tourism, which in turn provides opportunities for creating jobs, attracting investment and bringing in wealth.

Half of the District's population of around 146,000 live outside the towns, at locations in the rural parts of the District. This dispersed settlement pattern creates particular challenges for local service provision, and makes an efficient and viable public transport system more difficult to provide. The lack of access to a frequent public/ sustainable transport system in a number of the rural settlements has lead to a reliance upon the private motor vehicle. In addition to this, existing networks of main roads and railways tend to focus on routes to London and large towns outside the District, rather than between the towns themselves. This has restricted investment in the local economy, and impacted upon access to employment and leisure opportunities for residents within the District. The impact of the dispersed settlement pattern and the resulting reliance of the private motor vehicle including decreasing social mobility, local traffic issues, environmental impact and high carbon emissions are all matters that need to be weighed and addressed in developing our spatial strategy.

The environment

One of Wealden's principal assets is the high quality of its environment. This is reflected in the high proportion of the District which is protected for its landscape and biodiversity importance. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the South Downs

National Park together cover some 60% of the District, in formal recognition of its landscape quality. The internationally important areas of conservation at Ashdown Forest and the Pevensey Levels are also situated within the District. The location and scale of future development will be restricted by its potential impact on all these designated areas, although opportunities exist to enhance the quality of the District's biodiversity and geodiversity overall.

The countryside is also a recreational resource for residents and visitors, with attractions including the South Downs National Park, Ashdown Forest, High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Pevensey Levels. In this way Wealden helps make a unique contribution to the quality of life of those who live outside the District, in more built up areas of the region, as well as to its own residents.

Further information regarding population, age structure, affluence and deprivation (and information regarding levels of participation in sport and active recreation) can be found in section 3.

1.4.2 Administrative Boundaries

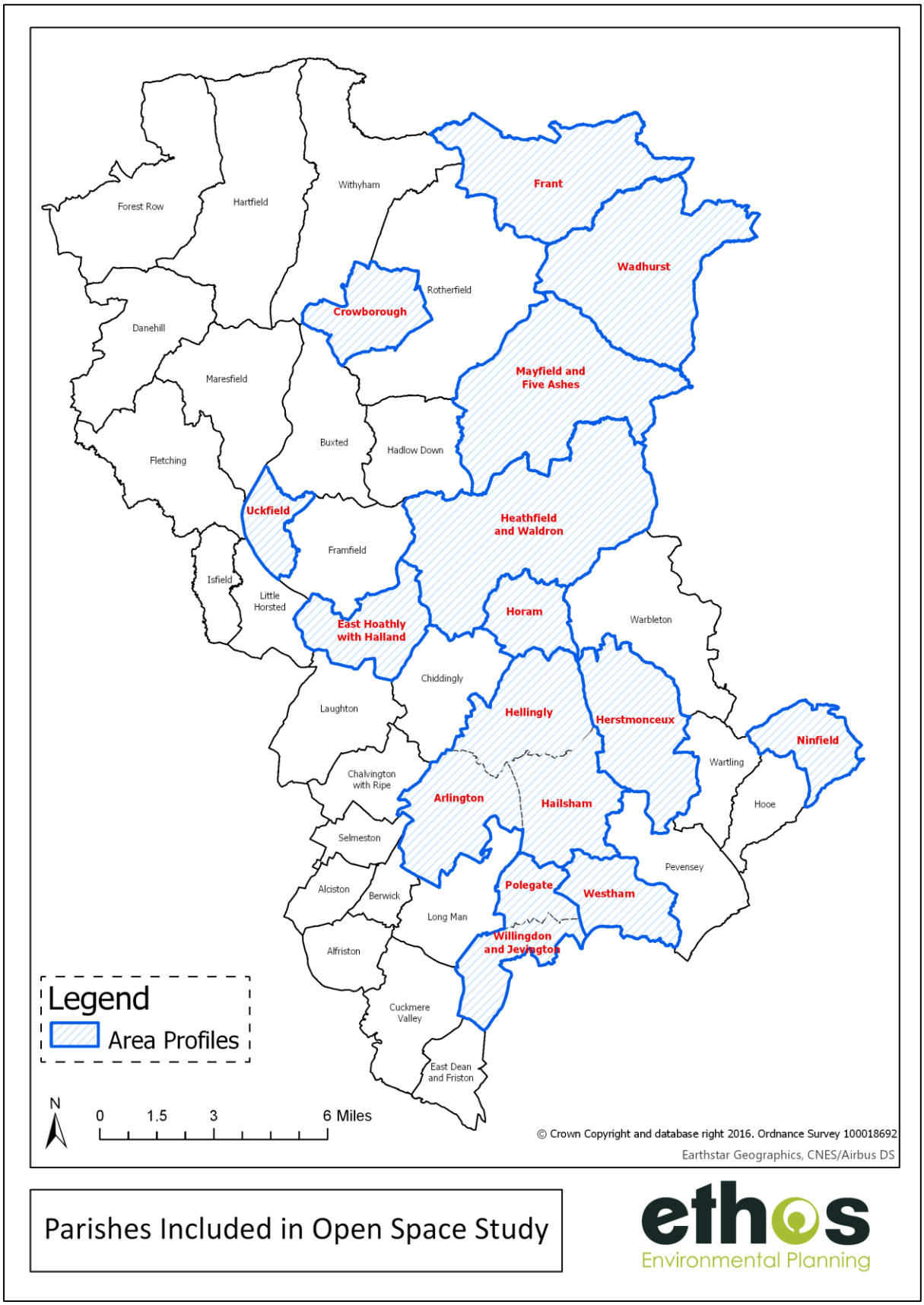
Wealden is split into Parishes as shown in figure 1. These boundaries are the basis for collating census data across the council area. Of particular relevance to this study are population statistics (Census, 2011), which have been used as the basis for the current and future assessment of need for open space. March 2016 population estimates[2] have been used for the area profiles, as this provides a more accurate population figure when assessing the supply of open space.

Figure 1 also shows the parishes where detailed area profiles (part 2a of this study) have been developed. Basic information is also included for each of the parishes not included within the area profiles in the form of open space provision maps, access maps and quantity/supply tables (part 2b).

Wealden District Council shares borders with 6 local authority areas – Eastbourne Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Hastings District Council and Mid Sussex District Council. Cross border issues are considered within the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report (Appendix 1). It has been identified that there is significant cross boundary use of open space across a number of boundaries, most notably Tunbridge Wells and Eastbourne.

[2] The March 2016 population estimates Include completions from 1 April 2011 to end March 2016 i.e. population from Census 2011 plus (completions x 2.3).

Figure 1 Parish Boundaries (and area profiles)



1.4.3 Population Statistics

The total population of Wealden (based on the 2011 Census) is 149,061. Table 1 below shows the breakdown by Parish. This total population figure has been used for analysis at the district level (see table 6).

March 2016 estimates were also provided by the council for analysis for the area profiles. These figures are shown in table 2, and have been used for the analysis by parish/area profile in tables 8 and 15. For the individual parishes that do not fall within an area profile, the 2011 Census population figures have been used. This approach was agreed by the Council as the most effective way of analysing provision.

Table 1 Parish population statistics (2011 Census)

Parish	Population (2011)
Alciston	146
Alfriston	829
Arlington	770
Berwick	380
Buxted	3343
Chalvington with Ripe	953
Chiddingly	1021
Crowborough	20951
Cuckmere Valley	191
Danehill	1957
East Dean and Friston	1620
East Hoathly with Halland	1600
Fletching	1064
Forest Row	4954
Framfield	1983
Frant	1645
Hadlow Down	857
Hailsham	20436
Hartfield	2179
Heathfield and Waldron	11913
Hellingly	1820
Herstmonceux	2613
Hooe	445
Horam	2642
Isfield	574
Laughton	599
Little Horsted	233
Long Man	447
Maresfield	3636
Mayfield and Five Ashes	3718
Ninfield	1562
Pevensey	3153
Polegate	7655
Rotherfield	3208
Selmeston	159

Parish	Population (2011)
Uckfield	14493
Wadhurst	4883
Warbleton	1375
Wartling	446
Westham	6314
Willingdon and Jevington	7440
Withyham	2854

Table 2 March 2016 population estimates by area profile (see footnote 2 on page 7)

Area Profile	Population Estimate (End March 2016)
Crowborough	21558
East Hoathly with Halland	1605
Frant	1668
Hellingly, Arlington and Hailsham	25901
Heathfield and Waldron	12297
Herstmonceux	2677
Horam	2688
Mayfield	3826
Ninfield	1583
Polegate, Willingdon and Jevington	16137
Uckfield	15008
Wadhurst	4964
Westham	6523

1.4.4 Defining geographical areas and anticipated housing growth

Parishes have been used in order to analyse the current provision and future requirements for open space across Wealden. The following table shows the anticipated housing growth for each parish, for the period up to 2028.

Table 3 Anticipated housing growth (excludes completions 2013-16)

Parish	Commitments, allocations and WLP total
Alciston	1
Alfriston	8
Berwick	44
Buxted	88
Chalvington with Ripe	45
Chiddingly	25
Crowborough	362
Cuckmere Valley	0
Danehill	8
East Dean & Friston	0
East Hoathly with Halland	12
Fletching	8
Forest Row	18

Parish	Commitments, allocations and WLP total
Framfield	54
Frant	89
Hadlow Down	6
Hellingly, Arlington and Hailsham	4108
Hartfield	13
Heathfield and Waldron	499
Herstmonceux	171
Hooe	2
Horam	608
Isfield	57
Laughton	16
Little Horsted	0
Long Man	5
Maresfield	118
Mayfield and Five Ashes	69
Ninfield	165
Pevensey	12
Rotherfield	38
Selmeston	6
Uckfield	1268
Wadhurst	167
Warbleton	18
Wartling	14
Westham	1516
Willingdon and Jevington and Polegate	701
Withyham	15
TOTAL	**10354**

1.5 Monitoring and Review

The analysis of open space within this report is based on information gathered in 2016. The council recognises that over the longer term timetable for this study (up to 2028) that there will be change in the baseline used for the assessment (e.g. new open spaces will be created).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

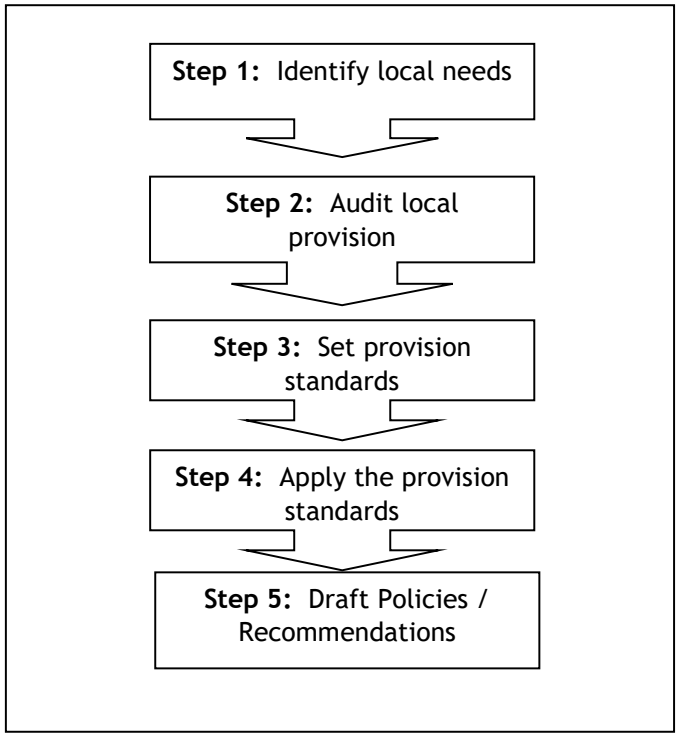
2.1 General

The starting point for this study has been the guidance in Section 8 of the NPPF, which adheres to but has superseded PPG17. The new policy gives clear recommendations for the protection of and appropriate provision for open space, however it does not provide any detailed guidance on how to conduct an open space assessment. It is therefore both logical and acceptable to reference the guidance for assessment provided in the former PPG17 and its Companion Guide. PPG17 placed a requirement on local authorities to undertake assessments and audits of open space, sports and recreational facilities in order to:

- identify the needs of the population;
- identify the potential for increased use;
- establish an effective strategy for open space/sports/recreational facilities at the local level.

The Companion Guide to PPG17 recommended an overall approach to this kind of study as summarised in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2 Summary of methodology



Within this overall approach the Companion Guide suggests a range of methods and techniques that might be adopted in helping the assessment process. Where appropriate, these methods and techniques have been employed within this study and are explained at the relevant point in the report. In addition, they are summarised in the paragraphs below.

2.2 Identifying Local Need (Step 1)

The report examines identified local need for various types of open space, sports and recreational opportunities. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques as well as a detailed review of existing consultation data and other relevant documentation. The report details the community consultation and research process that has been undertaken as part of the study as well as the main findings. The findings of this assessment are summarised in this document and the full Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report is provided at appendix 1.

2.3 Audit of Existing Open Space Assets (Step 2)

2.3.1 Defining the scope of the audit

In order to build up an accurate picture of the current open space and play provision in Wealden, an audit of assets was carried out, this included:

- analysis of existing GIS data held by Wealden District Council;
- desktop mapping of open space from aerial photography;
- questionnaires to town and parish councils;
- liaison with council officers;
- discussions with local user groups and clubs.

Site visits were undertaken by Ethos at 201 open spaces and 113 play spaces to assess the existing and potential quality issues with sites. The quality audit drew on criteria set out in the 'Green Flag Award[3]', and sites were given an 'existing', 'potential' and 'gap' quality score. The audits were undertaken using a standardised methodology and consistent approach. However, audits of this nature can only ever be a snap-shot in time and their main purpose is to provide a consistent and objective assessment of a sites existing and potential quality rather than a full asset audit. Clearly, local communities may have aspirations which are not identified in the quality audit, but it is hoped that these can be explored further through site management plans and neighbourhood/parish plans as appropriate.

2.3.2 Approach to mapping

As part of the audit process, sites were mapped into their different functions using a multi-functional approach to mapping. The advantage of the multi-functional approach is that it gives a much more accurate picture of the provision of open space. This is more advantageous than the primary typology approach which tends to result in an over assessment of provision, and which can significantly impact decisions on quantity standards. The differences in approach are demonstrated in figures 3 and 4 below.

[3] http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/judges/judging-criteria

Figure 3 Primary approach to open space mapping

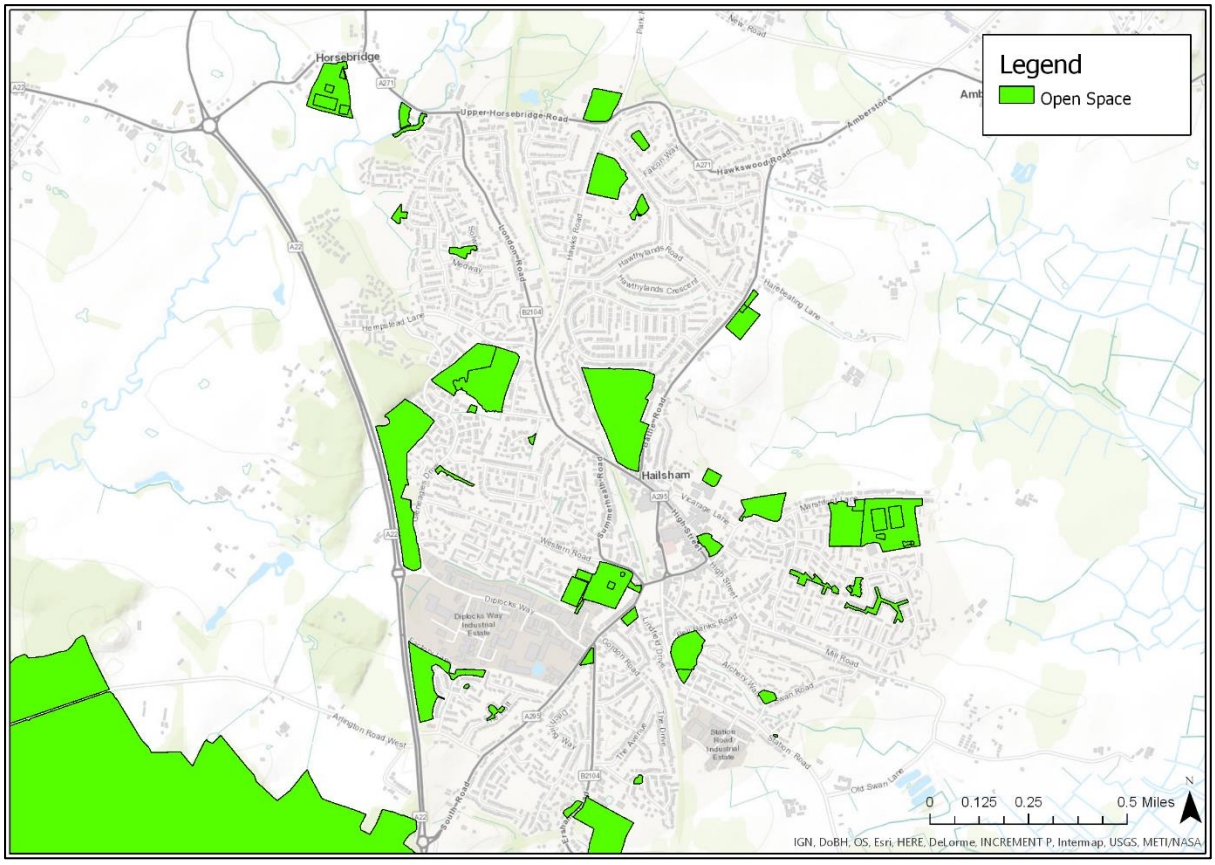
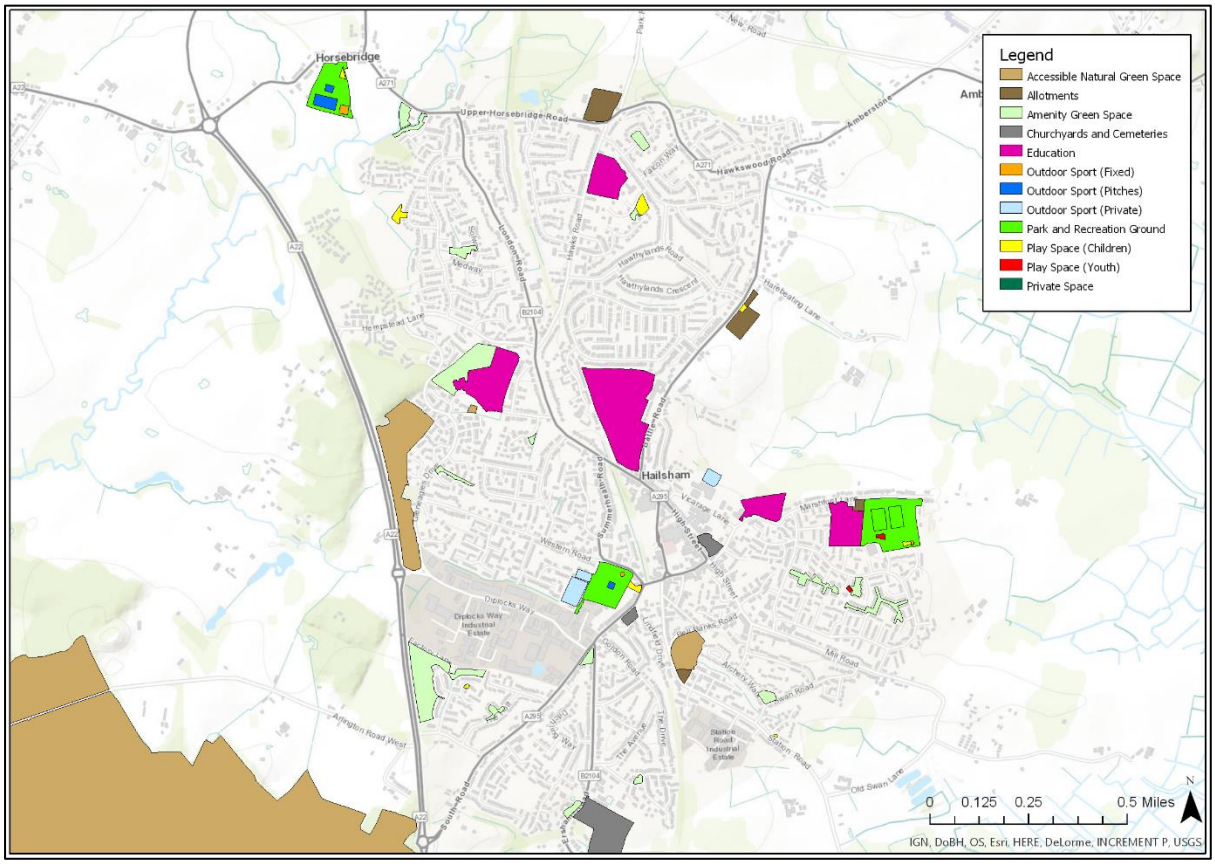


Figure 4 Multi-functional mapping of open space



2.4 Set and Apply Provision Standards (Steps 3 and 4)

Local provision standards have been set, with three components, embracing:

- quantity;
- accessibility;
- quality.

Quantity

The GIS database and mapping has been used to assess the existing provision of open space across the study area. The existing levels of provision are considered alongside findings of previous studies[4], the local needs assessment and consideration of existing and national standards or benchmarks. The key to developing robust local quantity standards is that they are locally derived, based on evidence and most importantly achievable. Typically, standards are expressed as hectares per 1000 people. The recommended standards are then used to assess the supply of each type of open space across the study area.

Access

Evidence from previous studies, the needs assessment and consideration of national benchmarks are used to develop access standards for open space. Typically, standards are expressed as straight line walk times. A series of maps assessing access for different typologies are presented in the report.

Quality

Quality standards have been developed drawing on previous studies, national benchmarks and good practice, evidence from the needs assessment and the findings of the quality audits. The quality standards also include recommended policies to guide the provision of new open space through development in the future.

2.5 Drafting Policy Recommendations (Step 5)

This section outlines higher level strategic options which may be applicable at town, ward/parish and study area wide level. The strategic options address five key areas:

1. Existing provision to be protected;
2. Existing provision to be enhanced;
3. Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
4. Identification of areas for new provision;
5. Facilities that may be surplus to requirement.

[4] Namely the Wealden PPG17 Assessment (December 2008 with April 2010 Amendments)

3.0 CONTEXT

3.1 Introduction

This section includes important contextual information about Wealden Local Authority relevant to the analysis contained in this report. It considers:

- Strategic context - A brief review of the policies and priorities of the local authority, as well as other key stakeholders and that have relevance to planning for open space, sport and recreation within the local authority.
- The current demographic character of the local authority, and how it is likely to change in the coming years, up to 2028.
- A review of the particular characteristics of the adult population in respect of how this influences people's inclination to take part in active recreation and sport.
- Key issues that have been identified, taking into account the above.

The strategic context/policy overview is set out within each of the reports associated with the overall Wealden Open Space, Sports and Recreational Facilities Study (outlined in section 1.1), with the exception of the Local Needs Assessment. A number of the strategies and polices are relevant to each of the studies and are therefore included within each separate report, and in addition, each study also includes strategies and policies that are only relevant to that study.

Policies and strategies are subject to regular change, therefore the summary provided in this section was correct at the time of writing. Wealden District Council reserve the right to change and update this section as policies change.

The policy overview includes analysis of the councils' existing strategies and policies. It also includes a review of other strategies of relevance at national and local levels and assesses their implications for the provision of open space, sport and recreation opportunities. In addition, an assessment of the relationship between the proposed study and other relevant council strategies and initiatives is included.

The PPG17 companion guide identified the importance of understanding the implications of existing strategies on the study. Specifically, before initiating local consultation, there should be a review of existing national, regional and local plans and strategies, and an assessment of the implementation and effectiveness of existing planning policies and provision standards.

3.2 Strategic Context

3.2.1 National Strategic Context

3.2.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The NPPF must be adhered to in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. The NPPF contains the following references that relate to green infrastructure and open spaces:

- **Para 17 - Achieving Sustainable Development - Core Planning Principles:** Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking.
- **Para 58 -** Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. **Para 73 -** Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.
- **Para 74** – Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:
    - An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
    - The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
    - The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.
- **Para 75 -** Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.
- **Para 99 -** Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape.
- **Para 109 -** The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

3.2.1.2 Green Infrastructure

The concept of green infrastructure (GI) is now firmly embedded in national policy with the NPPF requiring local planning authorities to set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks

of biodiversity and green infrastructure. It defines green infrastructure as '*a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities'*.

The District has a wide range of existing green infrastructure assets such as open spaces, parks and gardens, allotments, woodlands, street trees, green roofs, fields, hedges, lakes, ponds, meadows and grassland playing fields, as well as footpaths, cycleways and waterways. However, the concept of GI looks beyond existing designations, seeking opportunities to increase function and connectivity of assets to maximise the benefits for the community.

The Council are currently producing a Green Infrastructure Study for the District, which has included the open spaces identified within this open space study which form an important part of the GI network.

3.2.1.3 The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (2011)

The white paper[5] recognised that a healthy natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It sets out how the value of nature can be mainstreamed across our society by facilitating local action; strengthening the connections between people and nature; creating a green economy and showing leadership in the EU and internationally.

3.2.1.4 Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services

This biodiversity strategy for England builds on the Natural Environment White Paper and sets out the strategic direction for national biodiversity policy to implement international and EU commitments.

The vision for England is: 'By 2050 our land and seas will be rich in wildlife, our biodiversity will be valued, conserved, restored, managed sustainably and be more resilient and able to adapt to climate change, providing essential services and delivering benefits for everyone'.

The mission of this strategy is to 'halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people'. The Strategy contains four outcomes to be achieved by the end of 2020. These are:

Habitats and ecosystems on land (including freshwater environments)

By 2020 we will have put in place measures so that biodiversity is maintained and enhanced, further degradation has been halted and where possible, restoration is underway, helping deliver more resilient and coherent ecological networks, healthy and well-functioning ecosystems, which deliver multiple benefits for wildlife and people

Marine habitats, ecosystems and fisheries

[5] http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm80/8082/8082.pdf

By 2020 we will have put in place measures so that biodiversity is maintained, further degradation has been halted and where possible, restoration is underway, helping deliver good environmental status and our vision of clean, healthy, safe productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas.

Species

By 2020, we will see an overall improvement in the status of our wildlife and will have prevented further human-induced extinctions of known threatened species.

People

By 2020, significantly more people will be engaged in biodiversity issues, aware of its value and taking positive action.

3.2.1.5 Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation

This cross-government strategy seeks to address flat-lining levels of sport participation and high levels of inactivity in this country. Through this strategy, government is redefining what success in sport means, with a new focus on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development. In future, funding decisions will be made on the basis of the outcomes that sport and physical activity can deliver.

It is government's ambition that all relevant departments work closer together to create a more physically active nation, where children and young people enjoy the best sporting opportunities available and people of all ages and backgrounds can enjoy the many benefits that sport and physical activity bring, at every stage in their lives.

Government is reaffirming its commitment to Olympic and Paralympic success but also extending that ambition to non-Olympic sports where it will support success through grassroots investment in those sports, and by sharing UK Sport's knowledge and expertise. The strategy outlines what is expected of the sector to deliver this vision, and how the government will support it in getting there.

Public investment into community sport is to reach children as young as five as part of a ground-breaking new this new strategy. The move will see Sport England's remit changed from investing in sport for those aged 14 and over to supporting people from five years old right through to pensioners, in a bid to create a more active nation.

Investment will be targeted at sport projects that have a meaningful, measurable impact on how they are improving people's lives – from helping young people gain skills to get into work, to tackling social inclusion and improving physical and mental health.

Funding will also be targeted at groups who have low participation rates to encourage those who do not take part in sport and physical activity to get involved. This includes supporting women, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people. Sport

England will set up a new fund in 2016 to get inactive people physically active and will support and measure participation in sport and wider physical activity going forward.

3.2.1.6 Sport England Strategy – 2012-2017 (under review)

This is Sport England's existing strategy, but it will be reviewed and changed to provide consistency with the Government's revised strategy (above). At the time of finalising this report Sport England were seeking views on how it is to achieve the goals outlined in the government's new Sporting Future strategy. Particular importance is to be placed on promoting sport to people from all backgrounds – be it through taking part in activity, watching live events or volunteering. Sport England is also being asked to further engage those groups who aren't doing sport as regularly as others – such as women, disabled people, those from poorer backgrounds and older people.

3.2.1.7 National Governing Body (NGB) 2013-17 funding

NGB 2013-17 funding is the centrepiece of Sport England's strategy with over £450 million to be invested in work with NGBs. Young people (14-25 years old) will benefit from 60% of this investment. Programmes will include helping young people move from school sport into club sport and working with universities and colleges to create more sporting opportunities for students. Additional funding will be available to governing bodies that are successfully increasing participation.

3.2.2 Local Context

3.2.2.1 Wealden District of Opportunity – Corporate Plan 2015-2019

The Council's Corporate Plan sets out its direction and priorities for the next four years.

<u>Vision</u>

Wealden will Continue to work with our partners to support:

- Sustainable economic growth and sound financial management
- Engaged, resilient, active communities
- Access to suitable housing, local jobs, services, facilities and leisure opportunities

We will:

- Protect and enhance Wealden's unique rural character and distinctive, high quality, natural and historic environment
- Promote the countryside as a sustainable resource for recreation, tourism and other rural enterprise
- Work with partners to regenerate our diverse market towns, creating jobs, attracting investment and bringing in wealth
- Support our local businesses and entrepreneurs
- Generate sustainable sources of income to reinvest in local priorities ‹ Manage growth to meet future needs

- Provide more homes that local people can afford, maintaining a balance between our rural settlements and market towns
- Help improve connectivity and access to services for all our communities

Key Priorities are set out under three themes as follows:

Communities
We want…
people in Wealden's communities to have the opportunity to enjoy a good quality of life through:

- Access to services
- Healthy lifestyles
- Access to good health care
- Affordable housing
- Skills and employability
- Increasing connectivity
- Effective community leadership and representation
- Keeping communities safe

Environment
We want...
Everyone in Wealden to enjoy the attractive natural environment and have access to housing and local employment opportunities through:

- Planned growth that respects our environment
- Sensitive improvements to essential infrastructure
- Protection for our outstanding landscape and our heritage
- Maintaining a great place to live, work and play

Local Economy
We want...
Wealden communities, residents and businesses to prosper and flourish in the District. We are committed to promoting and planning opportunities for growth through:

- Vibrant high streets and villages
- Business innovation in a green environment
- Fast broadband for Wealden enterprise
- Wealden growing as a tourist destination
- Working with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership
- Working with local businesses through the Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses
- Encouraging funding into the District
- Improved mobile phone coverage

3.2.2.2 The emerging new Local Plan and evidence base

The Council is now preparing its new Local Plan called the Wealden Local Plan (WLP or The Plan). The Wealden Local Plan will identify policy for housing, the economy, the environment and infrastructure including green infrastructure, open space, sports and recreation provision.

The Plan covers the area of Wealden District, excluding that part within the South Downs National Park Authority area, and will include land use allocations and policies to guide development. The focus of the majority of housing will be within the south of the District, around Hailsham and Polegate. However, a number of other settlements within the District will also be allocated growth. Brownfield sites shall continue to be utilised where possible, but the significant growth proposed will most likely result in developing greenfield sites. The policies set out in the Local Plan will, alongside national policy, provide a basis for decision making when determining planning applications.

The new Wealden Local Plan will review all the policies within the Core Strategy which was adopted in 2013. When the Wealden Local Plan is adopted, the Core Strategy policies will no longer exist. In addition to this the Wealden Local Plan will take the place of the Wealden Local Plan adopted in 1998.

3.2.2.3 Core Strategy Local Plan

Adopted in February 2013, the Core Strategy Local Plan is the overarching planning policy document for the District and comprises a long-term spatial vision, strategic objectives and key planning policies for the Wealden District area (incorporating part of the South Downs National Park) for the period 2013 to 2027. It seeks to provide sufficient growth to sustain the local economy while protecting Wealden's high quality rural environment, much of it protected by the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the South Downs National Park.

It has been prepared and adopted by both Wealden District Council and the South Downs National Park Authority which is the Local Planning Authority for part of south Wealden. In due course the South Downs National Park Authority will produce its own, Park-wide Core Strategy, which will supersede this Core Strategy as it applies to the area of the National Park within Wealden District.

The **vision** is that:

By 2027 Wealden will have successfully accommodated growth to meet future needs whilst protecting and enhancing its essential rural character and high quality environment and promoting the countryside as a resource for recreation and tourism. Its market towns will have been regenerated providing opportunities for residents to access suitable housing, local jobs, services, facilities and recreational opportunities and a number of its villages and rural settlements will have enhanced their sustainability through successful growth including provision of affordable housing.

A number of spatial planning objectives are set out in order to achieve this vision, and following this, spatial planning policies identify what will be delivered on a strategic scale, and when e.g. **WCS1 Provision of Homes and Jobs 2006-2027**

3.2.2.4 Wealden PPG17 Assessment (December 2008 with April 2010 Amendments)

The PPG17 assessment produced by Kit Campbell Associates in 2008 (updated 2010) provides the key evidence base to the Wealden Core Strategy Local Plan (adopted in February 2013). This study provided an assessment of a range of open space; children's play provision and formal sports provision across the District.

The NPPF suggests that evidence to support Local Plans should not be more than 5 years old. The PPG17 assessment work is therefore now out of date for the purpose of plan making. This assessment suggested possible provision standards for open space as set out in the table below. These standards have been considered when developing new standards (section 6 of this report).

Table 4 Standards for open space, sport and recreation (Wealden PPG17 study, 2008)

Provision	Travel time (minutes)	Walking distance (metres)	Quantity per person (sq m)
Allotments	10	600	1.5
Amenity greenspace	10	600	Included as part of multi-functional greenspace
Artificial turf pitches	15	900	0.23
Bowling greens	15	900	0.2
Equipped Play Areas	10	600	0.325
Grass pitches	15	900	14.0
Multi-sport courts	10	600	0.13
Teenage Facilities	10	600	0.15
Recreation Grounds	15	900	Included as part of multi-functional greenspace
Natural Greenspace	10	600	Included as part of multi-functional greenspace
Urban Parks	15	900	Included as part of multi-functional greenspace
Tennis courts	15	900	0.475
Multi-functional greenspace	5	300	15.0

The assessment made district-wide open space recommendations and looked at the overall provision of facilities in relation to the five key settlements of Wealden (Crowborough, Uckfield, Hailsham, Polegate and Heathfield), drawing conclusions on the surpluses, deficits and requirements in relation to each town. More detail is provided in the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report (appendix 1).

3.2.2.5 Pride of Place – An Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy for East Sussex 2008-2026

The Sustainable Community Strategy demonstrates how local organisations and agencies will work together to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area whilst safeguarding the prospects of future generations. It focuses on the issues and priorities that local people are most concerned about, like crime, housing, education, jobs and the environment. It also sets out the key things that must be tackled to achieve the vision.

Vision and objectives

We want to raise the quality of life for all our residents by securing their future prosperity and well-being and improving the places where they live, work and spend their leisure time. Our vision therefore is:

to create places where everyone can prosper, be safe and healthy, and live in a high quality environment.

To achieve this vision, our main objectives are to create and sustain:

- A vibrant, diverse and sustainable economy
- Great places to live in, visit and enjoy, and
- Safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

Strategic Priorities

A number of issues affect the quality of life for people in East Sussex, and tackling these issues have become strategic priorities, each of which contributes to the vision and objectives:

- Developing our economy, creating jobs and increasing prosperity
- Providing high quality education, learning & skills opportunities
- Improving travel choices and access to services
- Providing high quality affordable housing
- Protecting our natural and built environments and adapting and responding to climate change
- Improving health and well-being
- Ensuring people and communities are safe and secure
- Creating strong communities and community leadership
- Enabling people to enjoy culture, sports and leisure.

Each District and Borough has its own chapter, setting out each Local Strategic Partnerships priorities. The vision for Wealden is outlined below.

Chapter 8: Wealden

The Wealden vision:

- a healthy, rich and diverse environment based on sustainable principles for everybody in Wealden
- reduce health inequalities, provide appropriate information and advice and access to health and social care services in order to maximise the potential for good health and well-being
- enough decent, affordable homes to meet the needs of everyone who lives in or needs to live in the District
- access to lifelong learning, education and skills training to allow Wealden residents to fulfil their potential
- a broad range of opportunities to improve quality of life, health and well-being, including sport, leisure, recreation and the arts
- a prosperous and sustainable local economy that is dynamic, flexible and maintains the environmental qualities of the area
- residents and visitors to Wealden are confident of their safety and free from the fear of crime
- improved accessibility for all and reduce the impact of traffic on people and places

3.2.2.6 Environment Strategy for East Sussex (2011)

This 15 year Environment Strategy for East Sussex was developed for the East Sussex Strategic Partnership by the Environment Strategy Group, a network of organisations and individuals, who have decided to work together to help deliver the environmental vision for the county set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy (Pride of Place) which is to protect and enhance our natural and built environment for current and future generations, and enable individuals and organisations to tackle and adapt to climate change.

Vision: By 2026 East Sussex will be a place where:

- there is a better quality environment which has made people healthier
- people are more aware of how important the environment is to our prosperity and where there are more 'low carbon' and environmental jobs
- we are more self-sufficient and use energy and resources better
- the landscape and built and historic environment has been conserved and enhanced so that it retains its unique character
- areas of high nature conservation quality have been conserved and the loss of plant and animal species has been reversed

- we are firmly on track to becoming a 'low carbon' county and are more adaptive to climate change
- people have become 'greener' in the way they live their lives
- the environment lies at the heart of other strategies and plans for the county and where we have worked together better to implement them

To realise this vision by 2026, this Environment Strategy for East Sussex establishes 10 environmental principles and identifies three key short/medium term actions, showing how the strategy will be implemented.

3.2.2.7 East Sussex GI Study (June 2014)

East Sussex as a county supports a wide range of GI assets, many of which provide more than one function or are truly multifunctional, and which underpin a number of social, economic and environmental benefits. There are also opportunities across these assets to enhance their multifunctional benefits. These assets can be drawn upon to provide opportunities for mitigating and compensating for new development and loss of Greenfield sites. The GI assets are essential to buffer the natural environment against new development and growing populations and protect the ecosystem services which this supports. The wide range of GI assets should also help to ensure that key priority functions can be protected and enhanced where it may not be desirable for an area to provide for all functions. For example, sensitive wildlife sites where public access would not be desirable.

The study has helped to identify that the GI priorities for East Sussex are to:
(a) Consider opportunities for enhancing the condition of GI assets at a landscape scale which works across statutory boundaries (e.g. Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and County Landscape Character areas);
(b) Conserve and enhance the character of the East Sussex landscape and reinforce a sense of place and opportunities for greater appreciation of valued landscapes and cultural heritage;
(c) Identify opportunities for enhanced sustainable transport building on existing GI assets for example:

- Green Lanes and historic routeways
- River corridors
- The extensive rights of way network
- Disused railway corridors
- Existing cycle routes;

(d) Facilitate the districts and boroughs to build up an evidence base to ensure that the required multifunctional GI can be provided in relation to new development.

Case Study: Wealden District Council and Planning for Green Infrastructure (Appendix 4)
The case study describes the process of GI planning for Wealden District Council at the different GI scales identified within the study – district wide and strategic site or settlement scale.

It sets out examples of Local Plan policies as adopted by Wealden District Council for the protection and enhancement of GI assets (WCS13 Green Infrastructure and WCS12 Biodiversity). The Strategic Site case study demonstrates how this can be achieved at the development site scale.

WCS13 Green Infrastructure

The District's existing network of green infrastructure will be protected, improved and enhanced by the implementation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy, ensuring a multifunctional, accessible network which maintains and improves biodiversity and landscape character, increases opportunities for healthy living and contributes to healthy ecosystems and climate change objectives.

Development proposals will not be permitted which would result in the loss of existing open space or harm to Wealden's network of green spaces unless measures are incorporated within the development that will either mitigate the effects of development or alternative and suitable provision is made that is accessible, of good quality and value to its users, in an appropriate location, at an appropriate scale and nature and would positively contribute to the overall network of green space.

All new residential development will be required to contribute to the green infrastructure network and where appropriate to make provision for new or enhancement of existing open space. Where the scale of development would be too small to make on-site provision, the Council will seek developer contributions either towards the improvement of existing open spaces or towards the provision of open space elsewhere.

WCS12 Biodiversity

In order to contribute to the biodiversity targets provided in the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan the Council will prevent a net loss of biodiversity, ensure a comprehensive network of habitats, and work with partners to maximise opportunities to ensure habitats, biodiversity features and ecological networks are maintained, restored, enhanced and where possible created to achieve a net gain in biodiversity and sustain wildlife in both rural and urban areas. This will be achieved through the development and implementation of an integrated green network strategy.

In accordance with Planning Policy Statement 9, please see page 49 'Working with the South Downs National Park Authority' and the reference to publication of the NPPF and cancellation of a number of Planning Policy Statements and Guidance Notes, there may be exceptional

circumstances when compensatory measures for a net loss of biodiversity is required. Appropriate compensatory measures will be required to contribute to Wealden's overall biodiversity resource, and may include enhancement of Wealden's Biodiversity Opportunity Areas and other relevant Biodiversity Action Plan habitats, so that there is, overall, no net loss of biodiversity.

Wealden District Council are currently procuring consultants to undertake a Green Infrastructure Assessment, and this open space study will feed into this.

3.2.2.8 Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan

Sussex Biodiversity Partnership contains representatives from a range of organisations including conservation bodies, statutory agencies and local government. The Partnership was set up in 1996 to work together to conserve and enhance the special habitats and species of Sussex. This work is guided by the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan.

Sussex has a wide range of habitats including flower-rich meadows, ancient wooded valleys, coastal sand dunes and shingle. Many of these habitats have declined in area and quality over the past 100 years, leading to the writing of the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan. The plan reflects UK targets for habitats of conservation concern, and translates them to a local level. Priority habitats in Sussex with action plan targets are categorised into different groups of habitats as follows:

- Lowland Farmland (includes arable field margins, hedgerows, lowland calcareous grassland, lowland dry acid grassland, lowland heathland, lowland meadows, purple moor grass and rush pastures, and traditional orchards).
- Wetlands (Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, eutrophic standing water, lowland fens, ponds and reedbeds).
- Coastal (includes coastal saltmarsh, coastal sand dunes, coastal vegetated shingle, intertidal mudflats, maritime cliff and slope and saline lagoons).
- Woodland (Wood pasture and parkland and woodland)
- Marine (Blue mussel beds on sediment, intertidal chalk, intertidal underboulder communities, mud habitats in deep water, peat and clay exposures, Ross worm reefs, seagrass beds, subtidal chalk and subtidal sands and gravels).
- Urban (networks of green spaces).

In line with the England Biodiversity Strategy and the South East Biodiversity Strategy, the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan aims to integrate the needs of species and habitats within landscape-scale delivery.

The Partnership's work on habitats will incorporate actions for associated priority species. Species not covered by this integration are being identified regionally along with the work necessary to support them and the Partnership will work with the relevant bodies to deliver the actions required in Sussex.

3.2.2.9 European Designated Sites (Natura 2000 sites) within Wealden District

Ashdown Forest SAC and SPA (and SSSI)

Ashdown Forest is classified as a Special Protection Area (SPA) due to the presence of breeding nightjars and Dartford warblers and is designated as a Special Area for Conservation (SAC) due to the heathland habitats present. Its location is shown on figure 5 below. The European designations cover around 3000ha (the SPA is slightly larger than the SAC), and the site is different from some of the other internationally important heathland sites in southern England (such as Dorset and the Thames Basin Heaths) in that the protected area forms a relatively contiguous block of habitat rather than a number of small fragments. The site has historically been a very wooded heath and contains large tracts of ancient woodland.

As part of the Councils adopted Core Strategy Local Plan the Council are committed to investigating the impacts of nitrogen upon the Ashdown Forest SAC so that its effects upon development in the longer term can be more fully understood and mitigated if appropriate. In April 2014, Wealden District Council awarded a contract to consultants, to determine the effects of atmospheric pollution on the Ashdown Forest SAC. The consultants have now implemented a monitoring, modelling and assessment programme which will run for a number of years.

On 9th July 2015 in response to a Court of Appeal decision, the Council has made changes to its Core Strategy Policy WCS 12 relating to Ashdown Forest. Prior to the Court of Appeal Judgement Policy WCS12 provided that any net increase in residential development between 400m and 7km would be required to mitigate its recreational impact through the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) and on-site visitor management measures. The reference to the 7km zone of influence and the specific mitigation identified in this policy has now been removed. However, all planning applications will continue to be subject to the Habitat Regulations which protect the Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC.

The Council is continuing to actively work on developing a strategy to mitigate the impact of recreational pressure at Ashdown Forest SPA with regards to residential and tourism related development. This includes work to identify Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS) together with working with partner authorities and organisations to identify and implement a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS).

Pevensey Levels Ramsar Site

Pevensey Levels is one of the largest and least-fragmented lowland wet grassland systems in southeast England. The low-lying grazing meadows are intersected by a complex system of ditches which support a variety of important wetland communities, including nationally rare and scarce aquatic plants and invertebrates. The site also supports a notable assemblage of breeding and wintering wildfowl. A small area of shingle and intertidal muds and sands is included within the site.

3.2.2.10 Proposed SANGs

Two Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGs) are currently being progressed by WDC in order to mitigate the recreational impacts of new development on the Ashdown Forest SPA. The council has developed SANGs Guidelines which provides evidence regarding the design, access and marketing of these spaces. The two proposed SANGs are shown on figure 5 below.

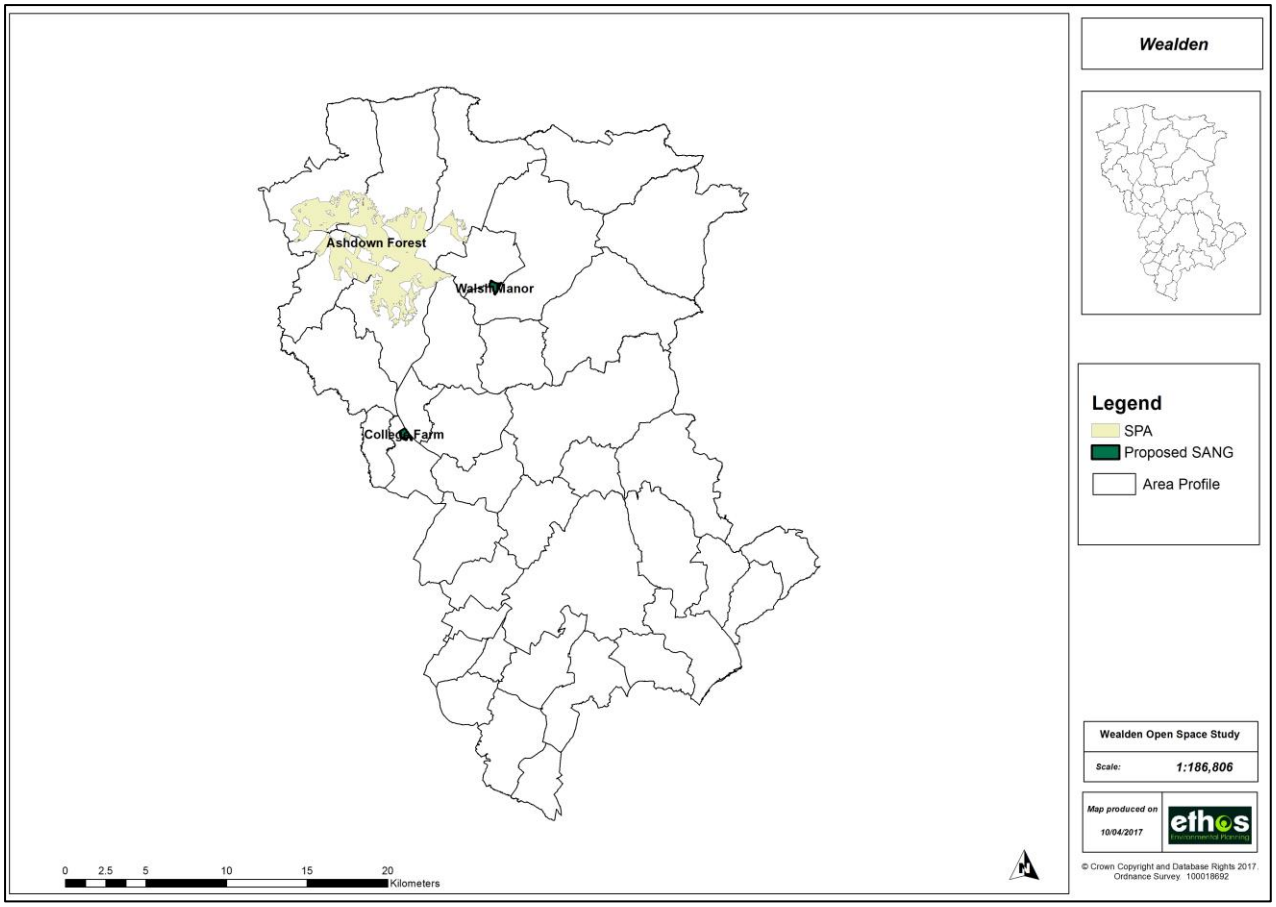
Walsh Manor

This is a 27ha green open space with a car park to the South of Crowborough, near the new Walsh Manor Farm development. Works were undertaken to make the site safe, and the site was opened in Spring 2017.

College Farm

This proposed SANG is 28.9ha in size, located to the south of Uckfield. It relates to a planning application for 1000 residential dwellings at Land West of Uckfield.

Figure 5 Proposed SANGS and Ashdown Forest SPA



3.3 Demographic Character and how it is likely to change up to 2028

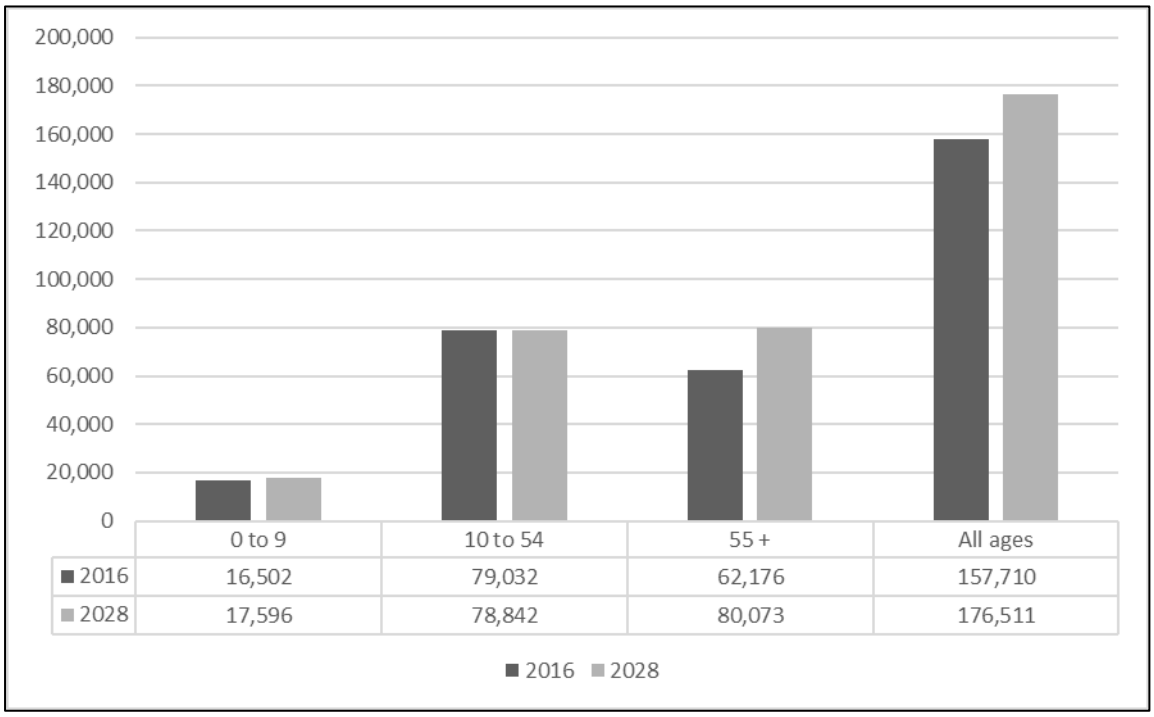
Population

As at 2016 Wealden District area was estimated to have a population of 157,700. This figure is based upon population projections provided by the ONS[6]commissioned by East Sussex County Council. The same projections calculate that by the year 2028 the population will have increased to 176,511. This figure is itself only based upon previous trends, and does not necessarily take into account the impact of planned new residential growth yet to be determined.

This growth will affect the local demography in different ways. Figure 6 shows the impact it is likely to have on general age cohorts within the population.

[6] Office of National Statistics Population projections by single year age groups.

Figure 6: Changing local population and age structure[7]



The most noteworthy feature of the above changes is that whilst there is an overall growth in the population generally, the biggest numerical increases are in the oldest age groups and especially within those in the post retirement age groups.

Generally speaking, it is the younger adult age groups between 16 and 45 years of age that have the greatest propensity to participate in sports and active recreation. Whilst these age groups will continue to grow within the local authority it is clear that the greater percentage of the overall population growth will come from within the older age groups, and this will have implications for the way in which sport and recreation facilities are planned.

Much of the anticipated population change through allocated housing up to the year 2028 will be centred on the south part of the local authority, and around Hailsham/Polegate. Trend based population growth will also be focused on the key urban areas within the District.

Figure 7 below shows the overall distribution of population within the local authority (and is based on population data available from the Census Output Area level from the 2011 census).

[7] Office of National Statistics Population projections by single year age groups.

Affluence and deprivation

Also shown on Figure 7 is a traffic light colour scheme reflecting the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)[8] scores for the locality. All of the approximately 34,500 Census Super Output Areas (SOAs) within England and Wales have been categorised into one of four quartiles based on their ranking in the most recent available government IMD at the time of this study. The red light represents SOAs in the highest ranked (most deprived) quartile whilst, the dark green light represents those in the lowest ranked (most affluent) quartile.

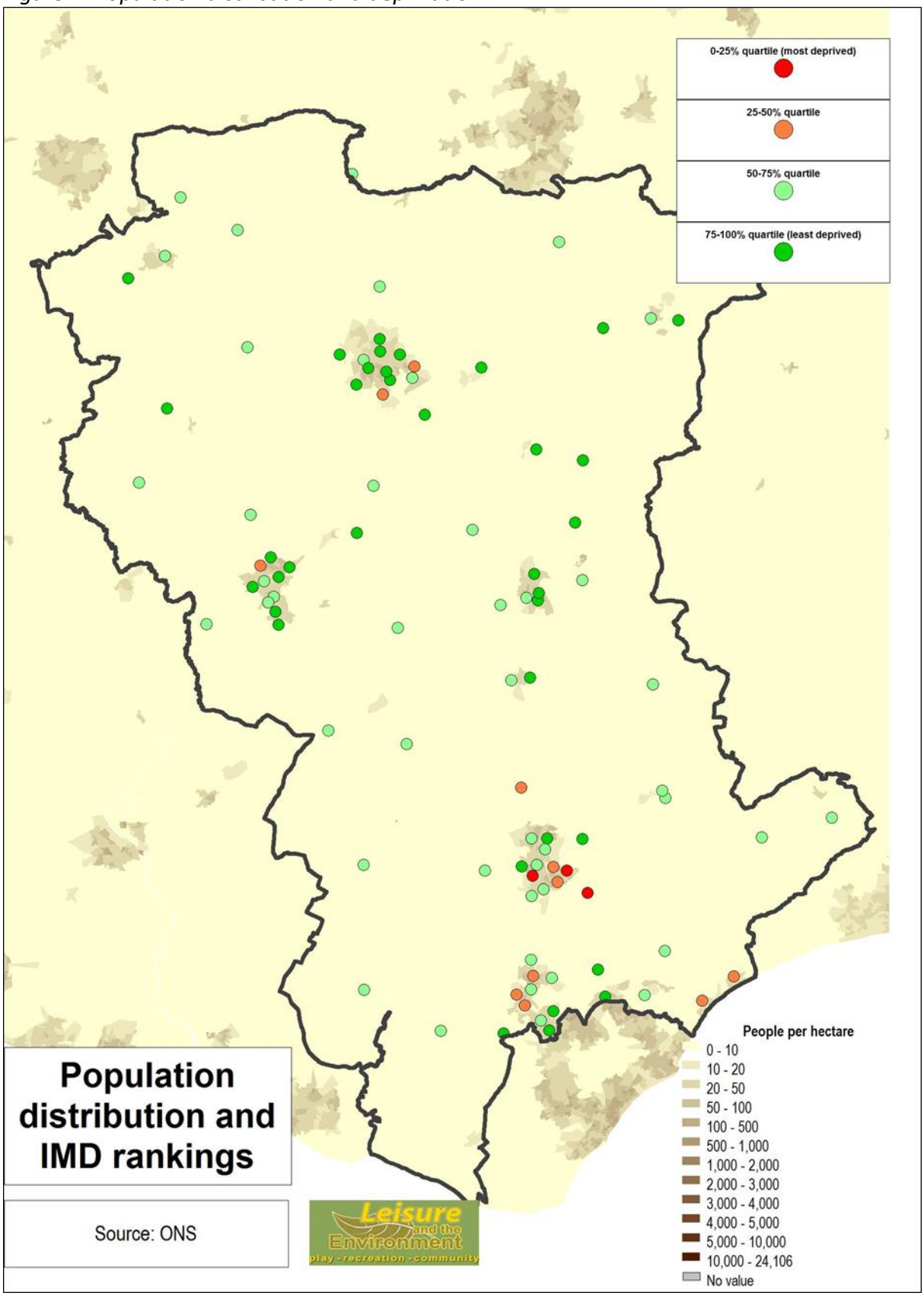
Much of the local authority area might be considered quite well off compared with most other parts of the country. There are, however, parts of the urban areas (and especially in the south of the District) that fall within the two least affluent quartiles.

Research has shown that there is a high correlation between levels of deprivation, and participation levels in sport and recreation i.e. the more deprived an area, the lower the tendency for residents in those areas to participate, and vice versa.

[8] The Indices of Deprivation 2015 provide a set of relative measures of deprivation for small areas (Lower-layer Super Output Areas) across England, based on seven different domains of deprivation:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation

Figure 7: Population distribution and deprivation

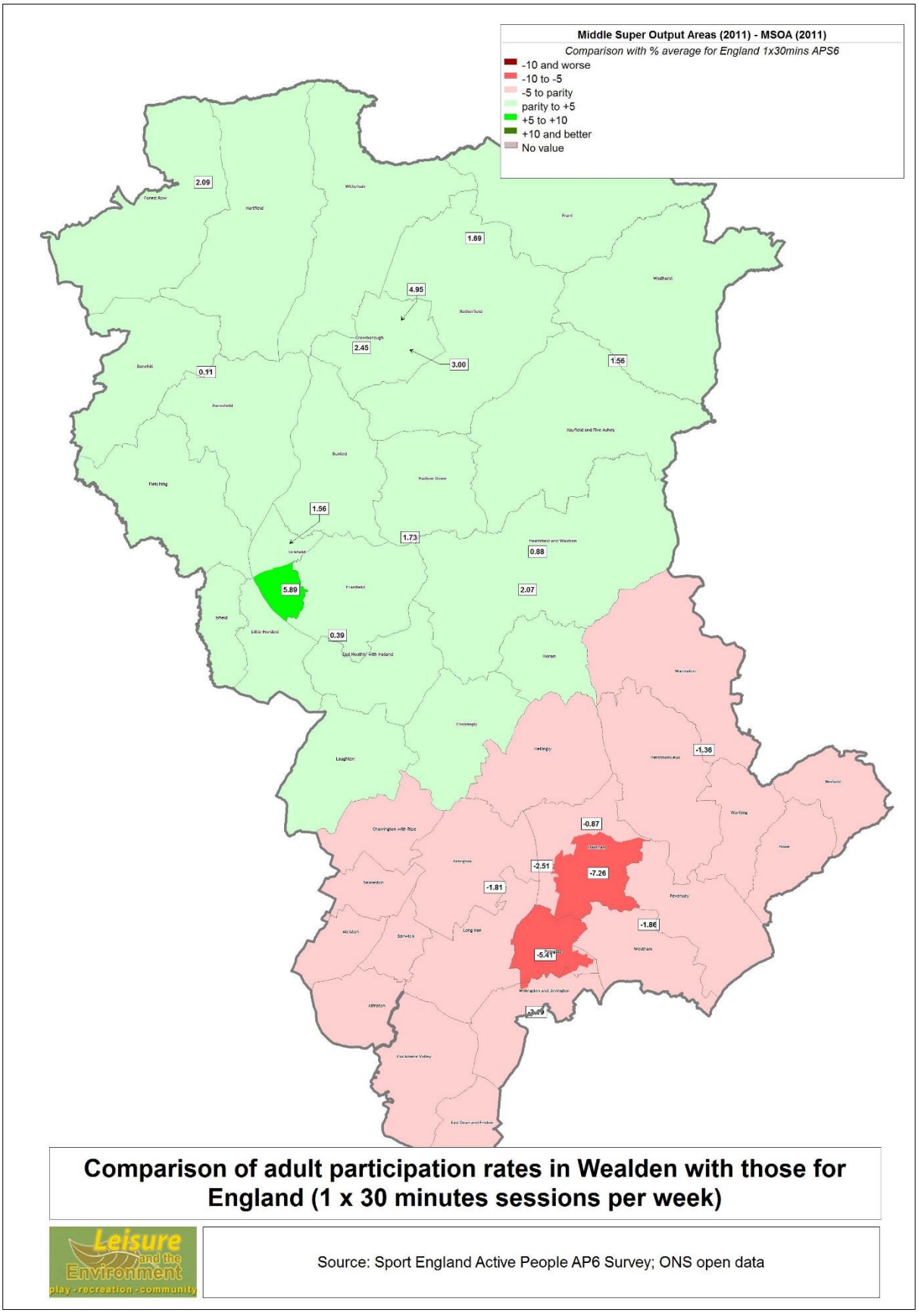


3.4 Review of characteristics of adult population

Local participation levels in sport and active recreation

The Sport England Active People surveys have now been running for several years. Further details of the Active People Surveys (APS) are contained in Appendix 1 of the Wealden Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Needs Assessment. Essentially, the analysis is based on a regular sample survey of participation by the adult public aged 16 years and over. The sequence of surveys has now reached Active People year eight (AP8). Data have been released by Sport England allowing for mapping of participation rates to a local Census Middle Super Output Area. The results of this mapping are shown on the following Figure 8.

Figure 8: Participation in sport and active recreation by the adult population (at least 1 x 30 minutes/week)



Consistent with the relatively high levels of affluence enjoyed by local residents, rates of regular participation in sport and active recreation are generally higher, and often significantly higher, than the national averages for England. To reinforce the point made earlier about the correlation between deprivation and participation, a geographical area where participation rates appear significantly lower than those for England as a whole is that where, (as shown on Figure 7), levels of measured deprivation are highest (the urbanised south of the District). It is to be noted that much of the remainder of the southern part of the District also exhibits low participation levels relative to national patterns.

3.5 Key Issues

The character of the local authority's population continues to change and this has a profound effect on the types of sport, play and leisure activity appealing to local people.

Many 'conventional' sports and facilities are seeing a decline in popularity- and in some cases participation and use is unlikely to return up to former levels. Other activities (sometimes derivatives of traditional sports) are becoming increasingly popular. In a modern, fast-moving world income, time, and social media also help dictate what people can and do with their free-time.

The Council is working in a financially challenging environment- this brings challenges, but it also presents a clear opportunity for reviewing the Council's leisure service and facilities it operates.

Similarly, many agencies, groups and organisations have shared aspirations in respect of the 'health agenda' and great potential exists for collaboration between public and voluntary sectors, as well as social and commercial enterprises to realise these aspirations

The various factors considered above suggest that the following will be the major determinants in the demand for sports and active recreation into the foreseeable future within the local authority:

- A growing population, which may be further accentuated by planned new residential growth that has not yet been allocated.
- The strong representation within the local population of adult age groups with characteristics that make them more likely to take part in sport and active recreation;
- High existing levels of regular participation compared with the national averages, which suggest that any further growth in participation levels will develop an already strong base.
- The relative affluence of the population facilitates relatively high levels of participation within the local population. However, there are geographical pockets within urban areas that exhibit quite high levels of economic and social deprivation, and where the levels of participation in sport and active recreation are depressed as a consequence. Improving prospects for participating should be a priority for the local authority and its partners in these areas, with the consequent health and economic benefits.

4.0 LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

4.1 Overview

The Community and Stakeholder Needs Assessment (Appendix 1) is a supporting document to the main Wealden District Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment.

The full needs assessment report is made up of 5 main sections:

- General community consultation
- Neighbouring local authorities; and town and parish councils
- Parks, natural green space and rights of way
- Play and youth facilities
- Outdoor non-pitch sports

The consultation and research programme was undertaken from June to August 2016. The extent of the research reflects the breadth and diversity of the study and a consequent need to engage with as wide a cross section of the community and stakeholders as possible[9].

In summary, questionnaire surveys were undertaken as below:

- A general postal household survey
- A survey of town and parish councils
- Local groups and organisations' survey
- Survey of non-pitch outdoor sports national governing bodies (NGBs) and local sports clubs
- An online survey

In addition to the above a number of one to one stakeholder interviews was undertaken.

The result of this consultation and other analyses will help amongst other things to inform the content of the recommended local standards as appropriate.

4.2 General Community Consultation

This section provides consultation findings that cover all aspects of open space and (non-pitch) outdoor sports/recreation provision. It provides a useful overview across all these aspects rather than simply from groups and organisations with specific interests in just one aspect of open space and active recreation[10].

[9] It should be noted that this report provides consultation evidence in the form of the observations and views/opinions sourced from many different organisations, individuals and studies. On occasion the views and observations expressed by individuals and groups may not be consistent with each other, nor are such individual contributions necessarily accurate or up to date.

[10] Additional consultation was undertaken in relation to pitch sports and indoor facilities as advised in Sport England guidance. These additional findings can be found in *the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports report* and the *Indoor Facilities Report*.

4.2.1 Quantity

- In the main a majority of households thought that overall there were enough open spaces and outdoor facilities.
- A clear majority responded that overall there are enough outdoor bowling greens (85%) and grass playing fields (74%). Smaller majorities (over 60%) think that in general there are enough tennis/netball courts and MUGAs; water recreation facilities; and allotments (62%).
- However, there are three open space typologies where a majority of respondents suggest there is a general need for more. 53% suggest a shortfall of facilities for teenagers; 55% for natural green space - wildlife areas/nature reserves; and 52% for informal open spaces - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc.

4.2.2 Quality

For all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they were of average or better quality (though the most common rating tended to be only "average"). However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality as noted below.

- 36% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor. The quality of Multi-Use Games Areas - and artificial turf pitches - was rated as poor or worse by about 30% of respondents.
- In contrast some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated highly by a majority in terms of quality. These include: country parks (60%); natural green space - wildlife areas/nature reserves (59%); footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (53%); and parks and recreation grounds (52%).

4.2.3 Access (geographical)

There is great variance in respondent households willingness to spend time travelling to different types of facility and open space.

- At least 50% of households are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to visit country parks (64%); natural green space - wildlife areas/nature reserves (56%); outdoor bowling greens (55%); artificial turf pitches (53%); and water recreation facilities (52%).
- In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, allotments, and informal open space areas - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc).
- Respondents are more likely than not to drive to many open spaces and outdoor facilities, most notably outdoor bowling greens (75%); artificial turf pitches (71%) and tennis/netball courts (68%). Other facilities where driving is the norm for at least 60% of households are MUGAs, country parks and water recreation sites.
- Walking is the norm for many, most notably for facilities such as play areas (74%); informal open spaces - for dog walking, picnics etc (64%); teen facilities (60%);

footpaths/bridleways and cycle paths (60%); parks and recreation grounds (58%); and allotments (57%).

- It is also notable that cycle access is significant for some households in relation to some typologies such as footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (10%) MUGAs (7%) and youth facilities (5%).
- 78% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved and 82% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.

4.2.4 Other issues and observations

- The Council's *Active Leisure and Wellbeing Strategy* expired in 2014 and a new "Active Strategy" is currently being developed. Promoting Health and Wellbeing is a key issue for the District in relation to sports, leisure and physical activity.
- Some sectors of the community face particular barriers to access such as disabled people; children and young people; households in the more isolated rural areas and those in the more deprived urban wards of the study area.

4.3 Neighbouring authorities, locality areas and town/parish councils

This section provided information and feedback from neighbouring local authorities and local parish and town councils. It is important to consult with neighbouring local authorities under the "duty to co-operate" requirement.

4.3.1 Neighbouring Local Authorities

Forward planning officers were contacted from all six neighbouring authorities to check if they had identified any cross border issues that they thought should be taken into account in relation to the study.

The variety of documents and strategies in place (and their relevance to current planning policy) is considerable, embracing green infrastructure studies, open space strategies, and sport, recreation and play strategies. The approach adopted by each authority is very much locally derived. It is notable that many authorities are currently involved with commissioning new open space related studies or updating previous strategies that are out of date.

There is scope for neighbouring local authorities to work together to make the most of accessible natural green space resources and to develop some common themes and agendas.

4.3.2 Town/Parish Councils

Within Wealden District there are 42 parishes. 40 have town/parish councils and two hold an annual parish meeting as part of their governance. Surveys were sent to all parish councils together with two reminders to chase responses as needed. In total, 33 parish councils responded.

The survey covered issues relating to the quantity, quality and accessibility of various types of open space, sport and recreation facilities. There was also an opportunity for the local councils to highlight any priorities they might have for new or improved provision.

General Overview

- The individual town/parishes are very different in relation to size, demographics, geography, needs and demand/aspirations. It is important that the study takes this variation into account.
- 29 of the 33 town/parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and facilities.
- 24 of the 33 local councils who responded noted that that there was a need for additional or improved open space, sport, play and recreation facilities within their town or parish.
- 12 of the parishes did not think there was scope for greater community use of outdoor sport and recreation spaces at local schools; and nine were not sure. However, 12 of the parishes highlighted potential for community use or noted a need for improvements.
- The sector of the community most commonly identified as being poorly served in relation to their needs were young people/teenagers.

Common areas of concern

For the parish councils, the areas of most common concern are:

- Not enough areas for teenagers e.g. skateparks, shelters etc. and the quality of existing play areas.
- Improvements and new provision of village and community halls
- The need for additional Multi-use games areas/tennis courts in some parishes (primarily MUGAs).
- The need for additional pitches (football mainly) and improvements e.g.drainage.
- Improvements to footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths.

Quality considerations

The quality factors most commonly deemed to be of a high priority as regards recreational public open spaces are that:

- They should be safe and secure for those using them.
- They should be easy to get to (and get around) for all members of the community.
- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained. They should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.
- They should have good car parking facilities.

It is also thought important by many parish councils that there should be good footpath and cycleway links to and between public open spaces; that they should be multi-functional

providing for all sectors of the community; and that there should be control of noise and unsocial behaviour.

Detailed responses on open space typologies

Many of the parish councils provided detailed responses relating to aspects of quantity and quality of the various elements of open spaces surveyed. These responses can be found in an associated excel spreadsheet.

4.4 Parks, natural green spaces and rights of way

Consultation undertaken for this section included key stakeholder surveys, and a survey of relevant (non-sports) groups and organisations.

- Natural England stress the need to take into account the ANGst standard as a starting point for developing a standard for natural and semi natural green space. Variations from this standard should be justified.
- The Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard (WASt - endorsed by Natural England) provides guidance on access to Woodland, which should be taken into consideration.
- Work on England's Coastal Path National Trail will begin shortly in the Wealden area.
- WDC are keeping a close eye on ESCCs consultation regarding the future management of public rights of way and countryside sites. The results of this consultation will influence how WDC manage their countryside sites going forward.
- Two Suitable Alternative Natural Green Spaces (SANGS) - one in Crowborough and one in Uckfield - will provide 70 acres (each) of publicly accessible open space to help alleviate recreational impacts on the Ashdown Forest. This is in addition to a Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS).
- The importance of partnership working, including volunteer engagement, in delivering funding and management of open space was highlighted.
- The importance of biodiversity, ecological networks/connectivity and the health and wellbeing benefits associated with access to good quality open space were key issues highlighted throughout the consultation.

This section also includes specific feedback on the following typologies: Parks, gardens and recreation grounds; Allotments; Natural green space – e.g. wildlife areas, nature reserves and woodlands; Water recreation and Footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths

4.5 Children and young people

This section considers information and views provided by various stakeholders including Wealden District Council, East Sussex County Council, Play England and play and youth organisations across the district.

4.5.1 Overview

- In Wealden District it is the town and parish councils that are the key providers of play and youth facilities.

- Stakeholders highlight the importance of ensuring that when new play spaces and youth facilities are developed, or investment made into improvements, it is essential to ensure that ongoing budgetary provision is sufficient for maintenance.
- The most commonly highly prioritised category for play and youth organisations is improvements to the provision of Multi-Use Games Area with 53% choosing it as one of their top three priorities. Following this are challenging teen play areas (47%), youth shelters/hang out areas (41%) and outdoor gyms (30%).
- Many stakeholders highlight the importance of involving children and young people in all aspects of play and youth facility provision e.g. location, the kind of provision most needed, design, access issues etc.
- Children and teenagers play and hang out regularly "on the street", on amenity and natural green space, near local shops, etc. as well as on spaces specifically planned for play and youth facilities. The study should therefore highlight planning related issues aimed at making the wider open space and residential environment more child-friendly.
- Play England provide excellent guidance on play and spatial planning; play space design; a Quality Assessment Tool for play spaces; and managing risk in play. Some of these could be adopted as guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents.

4.5.2 Quantity

- Youth play provision is considered underprovided for across the District with a majority (53%) of the household survey answering that there were not enough facilities for older children and teenagers.
- Play and youth organisations also highlight a shortage of teenage provision. A shortage of MUGAs
  and teen facilities such as skate parks are particularly notable with 60% of respondents stating there were not enough of such facilities. 55% note an overall shortfall of teen hang out spaces/youth shelters.

4.5.3 Quality

- 36% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor. The quality of Multi-Use Games Areas was rated as poor or worse by 30% of respondents.
- This was reflected in the views of play and youth organisations - overall the quality of most play and youth facility categories was not highly rated with youth specific facilities fairing particularly poorly e.g. more challenging teen play areas, outdoor gyms, and wheeled sports facilities were all rated as either poor or very poor by more than 80%.
- Wealden's equipped play areas for under 13s scored the highest satisfaction levels with local play and youth groups, with just short of 32% rating quality as either good, or very good). 74% rated then as at least adequate (including the good and very good ratings).

4.5.4 Access

- Organisational respondents noted the difficulty with access to local provision in some more rural areas – citing poor public transport, long walks or general inaccessibility as barriers to access.
- Groups and stakeholders have identified a range of disability access needs, which should be taken into consideration as part of any new playground design and installation; along with guidance recommended by Play England.

4.6 Sports - Outdoor (non-pitch)

This section provides an overview of consultee responses on outdoor (non-pitch) sports. It does not report on additional consultation undertaken in relation to the associated Playing Pitch Study and Indoor Sports Facilities Study[11]. The section contains feedback from Council Officers from Wealden District Council, local sports associations and relevant National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport. It also incorporates findings from surveys of outdoor non-pitch sports clubs.

4.6.1 General points and observations

Range of sports and recreation activities making use of open space

In general, the amount of activity detailed demonstrates the range of outdoor sport and recreation taking place in the Wealden District and the value of the open space facilities and resources which are used. All the trends suggest that use of outdoor space for health and fitness activities is growing – and there is tremendous scope for the greater linking and development of outdoor resources to serve this market.

Growing importance of linkages between health and fitness and sport

With changes in public health management and revenue streams, linking fitness, sport and health can access new areas of funding; moreover the advantages to community health in increasing fitness levels is now receiving political support. Many initiatives and opportunities are possible: e.g. the idea of linking sports sites with trim trails, outdoor fitness equipment etc (using sports facilities as a base and green infrastructure and open space as resources). Associated with this, there is rapidly growing activity and demand for 'individual fitness activities' - walking, running and cycling, using existing facilities and open space resources.

Schools and Colleges

Many of the Secondary Schools and Colleges have a range of outdoor sports facilities but the degree of community use is varied with differing management arrangements and degrees of

[11] The playing pitch study provides a detailed analysis of the supply of and demand for the pitch sports facilities - football, cricket, rugby and hockey; conducted in line with the Sport England methodology. Similarly for the Indoor Sports Facilities Study.

commitment to ongoing use. Securing greater and more reliable/consistent access to those facilities would be of significant value to local clubs and the wider community.

Maintaining a rural network of facilities

Recreation Grounds, tennis courts, multi-use games areas and bowling greens are important sports facilities in rural areas. Maintaining these facilities with quality surfaces and ancillary facilities can be difficult; financial support is often required. Comments from clubs emphasise the ongoing issues of sourcing finance for upgrades to changing facilities and maintaining good quality grounds.

4.6.2 Local Sports Partnerships

Hailsham Active **-** Hailsham Active highlights a general shortage of facilities and are pursuing the development of a Sports Park for Hailsham and the local area that caters for multi-sports, and particularly has an Astroturf element. They note that such a development could also include a health centre/GP surgery, thereby "creating a one stop shop for medical and public health provision".

Heathfield Partnership **-** The Heathfield Partnership note that "as the only Wealden town without any provision for an indoor swimming pool" the Partnership through its Sport and Leisure Committee have a long term aspiration to deliver such a facility for the town".

Uckfield Active - Active Uckfield is a local sports association (previous name Uckfield Sports Partnership). As well as supporting projects for improved facilities alongside the Town Council, Active Uckfield helps organise development and "have a go" sessions to encourage greater participation in sport and active recreation. This includes an annual *Sports For All* day.

This section also provides specific feedback on the following individual outdoor non-pitch sports: Tennis. Athletics. Bowls, Netball, Canoeing, Cycle Speedway, Stoolball and rifle/pistol shooting.

4.7 Concluding remarks

The survey work, stakeholder consultation, desk-based research and group sessions have highlighted a wide range of issues of value to the Open Space, Sports and Recreation Assessment. There is a strong degree of consistency across the various sources on key areas of local need and aspiration from which we can be confident that the findings are robust and reliable, providing a strong evidence base to be combined with the detailed facilities audit.

The information and findings from the Community and Stakeholder Consultation report will be taken forward primarily in the Open Space Assessment report and the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Assessment (in relation to the findings in relation to non-pitch sports).

5.0 AUDIT OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE ASSETS

5.1 General approach

This section sets out the proposed typologies which will have standards developed or have been included within the quantitative or access analysis. The typologies of open space have drawn on guidance provided within the former PPG17, and through discussions with the project Steering Group[12]. The agreed list of typologies are seen to be locally derived and appropriate for the type and range of open spaces that exist within Wealden. The following typologies are proposed:

Table 5 Wealden typologies

Typologies with standards	**Typologies mapped but no standards[13]**
Formal provision: • Allotments • Amenity Green Space • Park and Recreation Grounds (Public and Private Combined): - Park and Recreation Grounds - Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches) - Outdoor Sports Space (Private) • Play Space (Children) • Play Space (Youth) • Natural Green Space	• Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed) • Education Sites • Churchyards and Cemeteries • Golf Courses and Fishing Lakes • Private Space e.g. paid access sites

Allotments





Allotments provide areas for people to grow their own produce and plants. It is important to be clear about what is meant by the term 'Allotment'. The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 obliged local authorities to provide sufficient allotments and to let them to persons living in their areas where they considered there was a demand.

[12] Ethos and officers from Wealden District Council

[13] An explanation for not developing standards for these typologies is outlined in the following sections

The Allotment Act of 1922 defines the term 'allotment garden' as:

"an allotment not exceeding 40 poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family"

(N.B. 40 Poles equals 1,210 square yards or 1,012 square metres. A Pole can also be known as a Rod or Perch.)

The Allotments Act of 1925 gives protection to land acquired specifically for use as allotments, so called Statutory Allotment Sites, by the requirement for the need for the approval of Secretary of State in event of sale or disposal. Some allotment sites may not specifically have been acquired for this purpose. Such allotment sites are known as "temporary" (even if they have been in use for decades) and are not protected by the 1925 legislation.

Amenity Green Space





Amenity Green Space is considered to include those spaces open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out nor managed for a specific function such as a park, public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat. These areas of open space will be of varied size, but are likely to share the following characteristics:

- Unlikely to be physically demarcated by walls or fences.
- Predominantly lain down to (mown) grass.
- Unlikely to have identifiable entrance points (unlike parks).
- They may have shrub and tree planting, and occasionally formal planted flower beds.
- They may occasionally have other recreational facilities and fixtures (such as play equipment or ball courts).

Examples might include both small and larger informal grassed areas in housing estates and general recreation spaces. They can serve a variety of functions dependent on their size, shape, location and topography. Some may be used for informal recreation activities, whilst others by themselves, or else collectively, contribute to the overall visual amenity of an area.

Parks and Recreation Grounds





This typology brings together the function of Parks and Recreation Grounds and Outdoor Sports Space as identified in the former PPG17 typology. The distinction between the two typologies in the study area is blurred, with very few formal gardens and many parks and/or outdoor sports space having multi-functions used for both informal and formal recreation. The consultation undertaken indicated that people refer to their local park or rec, and communities do not make a distinction between outdoor sports space and parks and recreation grounds. Therefore, for the study an overarching typology for Parks and Recreation Grounds has been used comprising two elements:

- **Park and Recreation Ground**. This comprises the general open space surrounding play areas, sports facilities etc. used for general recreation.
- **Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches).** This comprises publicly accessible sports pitches (including football and rugby).

Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed), which comprises non pitch based provision e.g. bowling greens and tennis courts have been mapped, but not included as part of the quantity analysis and standard for this typology, as access and management varies on a case-by-case basis.

Parks and Recreation Grounds take on many forms, and may embrace a wide range of functions including:

- Play space of many kinds
- Provision for a range of formal pitch and fixed sports
- Provision of outdoor gyms and fitness trails
- Informal recreation and sport
- Providing attractive walks and cycle routes to work
- Offering landscape and amenity features
- Areas of formal planting
- Providing areas for ‘events’
- Providing habitats for wildlife
- Dog walking

The multi-functional approach to mapping has provided detail to the range of functions that exist within parks and recreation grounds, with all outdoor sport and play facilities being mapped (see section 2.3.2). This has meant that more accurate assessment of these facilities can be undertaken.

The recommended standards for this typology (set out in Section 6 below) are intended to provide sufficient space. The Playing Pitch Strategy deals with some of the detail i.e. supply of pitches and how they will be laid out.

Outdoor Sport (Private)

Outdoor sports space with varying public access (e.g. private sports grounds), have also been recorded and mapped where known. Private sport space makes up an important part of outdoor sports provision across the District Council area, and forms an important part of the community facilities. Private sports spaces e.g. cricket clubs have been mapped separately to publicly accessible parks and recreation grounds, to determine exact provision of the different types of provision. A combined standard for public parks and recreation grounds and private provision is proposed, reflecting the importance (and need to protect) existing private provision.

Golf courses and fishing lakes have also been identified and mapped where known, but are not included within the provision analysis for Outdoor Sport (Private), as more often than not, public access is restricted.

Play Space (Children and Youth)





It is important to establish the scope of the study in terms of this kind of space. Children and young people will play/'hang out' in almost all publicly accessible "space" ranging from the street, town centres and squares, parks, playing fields, "amenity" grassed areas etc. as well as the more recognisable play and youth facility areas such as equipped playgrounds, youth shelters, BMX and skateboard parks, Multi-use Games Areas etc. Clearly many of the other types of open space covered by this study will therefore provide informal play opportunities.

To a child, the whole world is a potential playground: where an adult sees a low wall, a railing, kerb or street bench, a child might see a mini adventure playground or a challenging

skateboard obstacle. Play should not be restricted to designated 'reservations' and planning and urban design principles should reflect these considerations.

The study has recorded the following:

- Children's Play Space
- Youth Play Space

The former comprises equipped areas of play that cater for the needs of children up to and around 12 years. The latter comprises informal recreation opportunities for, broadly, the 13 to 16/17 age group, and which might include facilities like skateboard parks, basketball courts and 'free access' Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). In practice, there will always be some blurring around the edges in terms of younger children using equipment aimed for youths and vice versa.

Play space (Children)

Play Areas are an essential way of creating safe but adventurous places for children of varying ages to play and learn. The emphasis in play area management is shifting away from straightforward and formal equipment such as slides and swings towards creating areas where imagination and natural learning can flourish through the use of landscaping and natural building materials and the creation of areas that need exploring.

Play Space (Youth)

This category includes skate parks/BMX tracks and Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA) for ease, as most of these are predominantly used by young people and have been installed with this key client group in mind.

Teenagers should not be ignored, it is important to create areas for 'hanging out' such as shelters and providing them with things to do such as bike ramps. Currently recognisable provision for teenagers is few and far between.

Natural Green Space





For the purpose of this study, natural and semi-natural green space covers a variety of spaces including meadows, woodland, copses, river valleys and lakes all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and biodiversity value, and are also partly or wholly accessible for informal recreation.

Research elsewhere (Natural England) and the local consultation for this study have identified the value attached to such space for recreation and emotional well-being. A sense of 'closeness to nature' with its attendant benefits for people is something that is all too easily lost in urban areas. Natural Green spaces can make important contributions towards local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and can also raise awareness of biodiversity values and issues. Some sites will have statutory rights or permissive codes allowing the public to wander in these sites. Others may have defined Rights of Way or permissive routes running through them. For the remainder of sites there may be some access on a managed basis.

Natural Green Spaces can form important 'green corridors' for both wildlife and people, especially when linked with the public rights of way network, cycle paths and rivers etc. These spaces form an important part of the Green Infrastructure of an area, and can be important in delivering ecosystem services and attracting visitors across administrative boundaries.

Many natural spaces may not be 'accessible' in the sense that they cannot be entered and used by the general community, but they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity, green infrastructure and biodiversity. Although such spaces are not the subject of standards developed by this study, their value is recognised. Whilst every effort was made to exclude these spaces from the assessment, in certain sites access was not always clear.

Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed)

This typology comprises all other non-pitch based provision including publicly accessible tennis courts and bowling greens. They can be standalone facilities, but are generally found within parks and recreation grounds. They have been mapped but not included within the quantity analysis for parks and recreation grounds, as access and management varies on a case-by-case basis.

Education

Many schools and colleges have open space and sports facilities within their grounds. This may range from a small playground to large playing fields with several sports pitches. More often than not, public access to these spaces is restricted and in many cases forbidden. Nevertheless, many of the sports facilities are used by local people on both an informal and formal basis.

Sports clubs may have local informal arrangements with a school to use their pitches, and in some cases more formal 'dual-use' agreements may be in place. School grounds can also contribute towards the green infrastructure and biodiversity of an area.

Quantity and access standards have not been proposed for education sites. This is because they are not openly accessible to the public and whilst important to the local community, there is less opportunity for the District Council to influence their provision and management. However, their existence is still an important factor of local provision, and as such they will be subject to the same policy considerations as publicly accessible space.

Churchyards and Cemeteries

The District has many churches and cemeteries and these provide significant aesthetic value and space for informal recreation such as walking and relaxing. Many are also important in terms of biodiversity, particularly closed churchyards. Their importance for informal recreation, aesthetic value and contribution towards biodiversity must be acknowledged, and as such, investment in their upkeep, maintenance and quality is an important factor. Churchyards and Cemeteries have been identified and mapped where known, however, no quantity or access standard for provision have been set, as it is outside the scope of this study to make recommendations related to requirements for new provision.

However, the quality of churchyards can be influenced by this study, particularly closed churchyards which have become the responsibility of the Local Authority. This reflects the priorities established through consultation, which identifies the need to provide and improve open spaces. Churchyards can provide important open space, particularly closed churchyards, where the ownership is often transferred to the local authority to manage and maintain.

Private Space e.g. paid access sites

During the audit of open space, a number of sites were identified which were in private ownership, largely these sites were not openly accessible to the public and required payment or membership to access them. This typology does not include private sports facilities (e.g. golf courses, private sports grounds – which are covered elsewhere), but those open spaces which contribute to green infrastructure and the overall open space asset. Private Space has been identified and mapped where known, but is not included within the provision analysis as it is outside the scope of this study to make recommendations related to requirements for new provision.

5.2 Existing provision of open space

The GIS mapping of open space has been used to assess the existing quantity of open space across the District and within each Parish. A summary of existing provision of each individual typology (including those without standards) is shown in tables 6 –8.

The figures for ‘Park and Recreation Ground (Public Combined)’ comprise the sum of ‘Park and Recreation Ground’ and Outdoor Sport (Pitches). Outdoor Sport (Fixed) has not been included within this figure, as explained in section 5.1.

Table 6 Existing provision across the whole study area (using census 2011)

Typology	Existing Provision (Ha)	Existing Provision (Ha/1000)
Allotments	24.94	0.17
Amenity Green Space	47.21	0.32
Park and Recreation Ground (Public Combined)	132.03	0.88
Park and Recreation Ground	*112.42*	*0.75*
Outdoor Sport (Pitches)	*19.61*	*0.13*
Outdoor Sport (Private)	67.09	0.45
Play Space (Children)	5.22	0.03
Play Space (Youth)	1.69	0.01
Accessible Natural Green Space	3136.62	21.04
Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	2.02	0.01
Education	213.82	1.43
Churchyards and Cemeteries	47.56	0.32

Table 7 Existing provision of open space (hectares) in parishes

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (public combined)	*Park and Recreation Ground*	*Outdoor Sport (Pitches)*	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Education	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Alciston	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.26
Alfriston	0.89	0.51	2.18	*2.18*	*0*	0.29	0.09	0	0	0	0.32	0.62
Berwick	0	0	1.11	*0.55*	*0.56*	0	0.01	0	96.97	0	0	0.34
Buxted	0.68	1.36	4.16	*3.06*	*1.1*	6.44	0.07	0.01	178.85	0	11.72	2.01
Chalvington with Ripe	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	1.89	0	0	0	0	0	0.52
Chiddingly	0	2.24	0	*0*	*0*	1.83	0.03	0	4.54	0	2.22	0.59
Crowborough	0.84	7.39	15.51	*15.3*	*0.21*	17.4	0.55	0.28	50.39	0.15	30.18	3.66
Cuckmere Valley	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	1300.65	0	0	0.3
Danehill	0	0.37	3.27	*2.7*	*0.57*	1.18	0.09	0.12	535.73	0	22.77	0
East Dean and Friston	0	1.87	1.55	*1.49*	*0.06*	0	0.09	0	1237.64	0.05	0	0.62
East Hoathly with Halland	1.61	0	4.1	*3.62*	*0.48*	0	0.12	0.01	0	0.18	0.19	0.55
Fletching	0	0	1.77	*1.12*	*0.65*	0	0.14	0	0	0	0.54	1.09
Forest Row	1.19	1.54	3.47	*2.76*	*0.71*	0.97	0.04	0.01	694.16	0.18	35.5	1.83
Framfield	2.66	0.34	4	*3.93*	*0.07*	0	0.2	0	177.47	0	0.77	1.15
Frant	0.37	2.29	0	*0*	*0*	3.34	0.16	0	0	0	1.94	1.31
Hadlow Down	0	0	1.87	*1.81*	*0.06*	0	0.05	0.02	25.25	0	0.22	0.4
Hartfield	0	0	1.91	*1.22*	*0.69*	0	0.04	0	530.61	0.12	0.06	1.18
Heathfield and Waldron	0.91	0.52	10.41	*5.94*	*4.47*	7.75	0.37	0.15	27.19	0	11.12	2.49
Hellingly Arlington and Hailsham	3.28	10.15	12.01	*10.4*	*1.61*	3.27	1.13	0.13	554.28	0.24	40.29	7.46
Herstmonceux	0	0.35	2.35	*2.26*	*0.09*	1.58	0.03	0.11	0	0.06	0	0.72
Hooe	0.75	2.61	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	9.24	0	0	0.4
Horam	0.59	0.4	5.67	*5.67*	*0*	0	0.09	0.05	3.18	0.29	2.77	0.1
Isfield	0	0	2.2	*2.12*	*0.08*	0	0.04	0	0	0	0	0.32
Laughton	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	1.42	0	0	0	0	1.24	0.56
Little Horsted	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	0	0	1.45	0.29
LongMan	0	2.8	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	435.51	0	0	0.6
Maresfield	0	0.38	5.44	*2.1*	*3.34*	1.6	0.3	0.08	58.17	0	2.31	1.28
Mayfield and Five Ashes	0.67	0.17	10.9	*10.12*	*0.78*	2.28	0.07	0.1	0	0	15.25	2.79
Ninfield	0.28	0	2.09	*2.03*	*0.06*	0.14	0.21	0.04	0	0	0.27	0.67
Pevensey	1.1	0	2.76	*2.7*	*0.06*	0	0.18	0.12	8.33	0.02	0	1.14
Rotherfield	2.83	3.42	2.89	*2.84*	*0.05*	10.87	0.12	0	0	0.15	1.38	0.63
Selmeston	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	1.43	0	0	0	0	0	0.29
Uckfield	4.59	6.2	12.38	*9.36*	*3.02*	8.46	0.57	0.15	47.17	0.19	9.48	3.94
Wadhurst	1.4	0	5.28	*4.58*	*0.7*	1.7	0.08	0.06	69.02	0.41	8.68	1.28
Warbleton	0	0.79	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wartling	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.78
Westham	0.33	0.54	3.91	*3.91*	*0*	0	0.11	0.12	12.83	0	3.4	1.05
Willingdon and Jevington and Polegate	1.7	0.34	7.73	*7.54*	*0.19*	1.59	0.19	0.12	8.18	0	8.67	3.65
Withyham	0	1.99	1.08	*1.08*	*0*	2.28	0.05	0	58.37	0	2.05	1.43

Table 8 Existing provision of open space (ha/1000 population) in parishes[14]

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (Public Combined)	*Park and Recreation Ground*	*Outdoor Sport (Pitches)*	Outdoor Sport (Private)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Accessible Natural Green Space	Outdoor Sport (Fixed)	Education	Churchyards and Cemeteries
Alciston	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.78
Alfriston	1.07	0.62	2.63	*2.63*	*0*	0.35	0.11	0	0	0	0.39	0.75
Berwick	0	0	2.92	*1.45*	*1.47*	0	0.03	0	255.18	0	0	0.89
Buxted	0.2	0.41	1.25	*0.92*	*0.33*	1.93	0.02	0	53.5	0	3.51	0.6
Chalvington with Ripe	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	1.98	0	0	0	0	0	0.55
Chiddingly	0	2.19	0	*0*	*0*	1.79	0.03	0	4.45	0	2.17	0.58
Crowborough	0.04	0.34	0.72	*0.71*	*0.01*	0.81	0.03	0.01	2.34	0.01	1.4	0.17
Cuckmere Valley	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	6809.69	0	0	1.57
Danehill	0	0.19	1.67	*1.38*	*0.29*	0.6	0.05	0.06	273.75	0	11.64	0
East Dean and Friston	0	1.15	0.96	*0.92*	*0.04*	0	0.06	0	763.98	0.03	0	0.38
East Hoathly with Halland	1	0	2.56	*2.26*	*0.3*	0	0.07	0.01	0	0.11	0.12	0.34
Fletching	0	0	1.66	*1.05*	*0.61*	0	0.13	0	0	0	0.51	1.02
Forest Row	0.24	0.31	0.7	*0.56*	*0.14*	0.2	0.01	0	140.12	0.04	7.17	0.37
Framfield	1.34	0.17	2.02	*1.98*	*0.04*	0	0.1	0	89.5	0	0.39	0.58
Frant	0.22	1.37	0	*0*	*0*	2	0.1	0	0	0	1.16	0.79
Hadlow Down	0	0	2.18	*2.11*	*0.07*	0	0.06	0.02	29.46	0	0.26	0.47
Hartfield	0	0	0.88	*0.56*	*0.32*	0	0.02	0	243.51	0.06	0.03	0.54
Heathfield and Waldron	0.07	0.04	0.84	*0.48*	*0.36*	0.63	0.03	0.01	2.21	0	0.9	0.2
Hellingly, Arlington and Hailsham	0.13	0.39	0.46	*0.4*	*0.06*	0.13	0.04	0.01	21.4	0.01	1.56	0.29
Herstmonceux	0	0.13	0.87	*0.84*	*0.03*	0.59	0.01	0.04	0	0.02	0	0.27
Hooe	1.69	5.87	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	20.76	0	0	0.9
Horam	0.22	0.15	2.11	*2.11*	*0*	0	0.03	0.02	1.18	0.11	1.03	0.04
Isfield	0	0	3.83	*3.69*	*0.14*	0	0.07	0	0	0	0	0.56
Laughton	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	2.37	0	0	0	0	2.07	0.93
Little Horsted	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	0	0	6.22	1.24
Long Man	0	6.26	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	974.3	0	0	1.34
Maresfield	0	0.1	1.5	*0.58*	*0.92*	0.44	0.08	0.02	16	0	0.64	0.35
Mayfield and Five Ashes	0.18	0.04	2.85	*2.65*	*0.2*	0.6	0.02	0.03	0	0	3.99	0.73
Ninfield	0.18	0	1.32	*1.28*	*0.04*	0.09	0.13	0.03	0	0	0.17	0.42
Pevensey	0.35	0	0.88	*0.86*	*0.02*	0	0.06	0.04	2.64	0.01	0	0.36
Rotherfield	0.88	1.07	0.91	*0.89*	*0.02*	3.39	0.04	0	0	0.05	0.43	0.2
Selmeston	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	8.99	0	0	0	0	0	1.82
Uckfield	0.31	0.41	0.82	*0.62*	*0.2*	0.56	0.04	0.01	3.14	0.01	0.63	0.26
Wadhurst	0.28	0	1.06	*0.92*	*0.14*	0.34	0.02	0.01	13.9	0.08	1.75	0.26
Warbleton	0	0.57	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wartling	0	0	0	*0*	*0*	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.75
Westham	0.05	0.08	0.6	*0.6*	*0*	0	0.02	0.02	1.97	0	0.52	0.16
Willingdon and Jevington and Polegate	0.11	0.02	0.48	*0.47*	*0.01*	0.1	0.01	0.01	0.51	0	0.54	0.23
Withyham	0	0.7	0.38	*0.38*	*0*	0.8	0.02	0	20.45	0	0.72	0.5

5.2.2 Mapping of open space

For each of the area profiles (part 2) and parishes not included within the area profiles (see section 1.4.2 and figure 1), a map of open space has been provided.

[14] These figures are based on 2011 census figures, apart from those parishes which fall within an area profile, where March 2016 population estimates have been used (see table 2). The same applies to the supply figures in table 15.

6.0 THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARDS

6.1 Introduction

Following the completion of the assessment of local needs and the audit of provision (the first two steps of this study), new standards of provision for open space are proposed below. This section explains how the standards for Wealden District have been developed, and provides specific information and justification for each of the typologies where standards have been proposed.

The standards for open space have been developed in-line with the NPPF. Standards comprise the following components:

- **Quantity standards:** These are determined by the analysis of existing quantity, consideration of existing local and national standards and benchmarks and evidence gathered from the local needs assessment. It is important that quantity standards are locally derived and are realistic and achievable. The recommended standards need to be robust, evidence based and deliverable through new development and future mechanisms of contributions through on site provision and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and other developer contribution mechanisms such as Section 106 contributions.

- **Accessibility standards:** These reflect the needs of all potential users including those with physical or sensory disabilities, young and older people alike. Spaces likely to be used on a frequent and regular basis need to be within easy walking distance and to have safe access. Other facilities where visits are longer but perhaps less frequent, for example country parks, can be further away. Consideration is also given to existing local or national standards and benchmarks.

- **Quality standards:** The standards for each form of provision are derived from the quality audit, existing good practice and from the views of the community and those that use the spaces. Again, quality standards should be achievable and reflect the priorities that emerge through consultation.

The standards that have been proposed are for minimum guidance levels of provision. So, just because geographical areas may enjoy levels of provision exceeding minimum standards does not mean there is a surplus, as all such provision may be well used.

6.2 Allotments

Table 9 Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.15 ha per 1000 population	600m (12-13 minutes straight line walk time)

6.2.1 Existing national or local standards

National standards for allotments and other such open spaces are difficult to find. The closest thing to such standards appears to be those set out by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). These are as follows:

- Standard Plot Size = 330 sq yards (250sqm)
- Paths = 1.4m wide for disabled access
- Haulage ways = 3m wide
- Plotholders shed = 12sqm
- Greenhouse = 15sqm
- Polytunnel = 30sqm

The previous standard for allotments within the Wealden PPG17 Study was 1.5 sqm per person (i.e. 0.15 ha/1000).

6.2.2 Quantity standard for allotments

- 87% of all respondents from the household survey 'never' use allotments, meaning this is the least used type of open space;
- The existing average level of provision across the study area is 0.17 ha/1000;
- The household survey identified 40% of people felt there should be more allotments, however, 53% felt there are enough;
- Other consultation identified several areas where there are long waiting lists and an unmet demand for allotments;
- Discussions with Council Officers highlight the need to ensure new development provides allotments;
- A minimum standard of 0.15 ha/1000 is proposed for analysing existing provision and for new provision.

6.2.3 Access standard for allotments

- Responses received in relation to acceptable travel times to allotments from the household survey identified a mix in responses, with 20% wanting allotments within 5 minutes, 42% within 10 minutes, 12% in 15 minutes, and the rest beyond this;
- This suggests that people do not want to travel too far to reach their allotment and the majority of people are prepared to travel no more than 10 to 15 minutes' walk time;

- It is considered that the availability of allotments is more important than having them very close to home, nevertheless there is demand for facilities relatively nearby. Therefore, a standard of no more than 12-13 minutes' walk time (600 metres straight line walk) is proposed.

6.2.4 Quality standards for allotments

Few comments were received in relation to the quality of allotments, furthermore the information gathered in relation to allotments is more difficult to assess in comparison to other types of open space. The reason for this is twofold: Firstly, the number of people who actually use allotments is very low compared to the numbers who use other types of open space and, therefore specific comments related to the quality of allotments are less frequent; Secondly, the majority of allotments sites are locked, and the quality audit only allows for assessment against key criteria such as the level of cultivation and general maintenance, which is less comprehensive than the assessments of other open space.

For allotments, a number of general recommendations are made in relation to quality, which should include the following:

- Well-drained soil which is capable of cultivation to a reasonable standard;
- A sunny, open aspect preferably on a southern facing slope;
- Limited overhang from trees and buildings either bounding or within the site;
- Adequate lockable storage facilities, and a good water supply within easy walking distance of individual plots;
- Provision for composting facilities;
- Secure boundary fencing;
- Good access within the site both for pedestrians and vehicles;
- Good vehicular access into the site and adequate parking and manoeuvring space;
- Disabled access;
- Toilets;
- Notice boards.

6.3 Amenity Green Space

Table 10 Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	**Access Standard**
0.40 ha per 1000 population (for sites greater than 0.15ha) for analysing existing provision 1.0 ha per 1000 population (combined with natural green space) for analysing requirements from new development	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time

6.3.1 Existing national or local standards

The Fields in Trust (Previously known as the National Play Fields Association) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play report 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' proposes a benchmark guideline of 0.6ha/1000 population of amenity green space, and a walking distance guideline of 480m. FIT recommend that the quantity guidelines are adjusted to take account of local circumstances.

There are no current local standards for amenity green space.

6.3.2 Quantity standard for Amenity green space

- Existing average level of provision in the study area is 0.32 ha/1000 population (for sites greater than 0.15 ha in size);
- The household survey identified that 57% of people felt there was a need for more informal open space areas, whilst 41% felt there were enough;
- Provision varies greatly with some areas having no provision or falling well below the average, and others far exceeding it;
- The consultation did identify some need to increase current levels of provision, therefore a standard of 0.40 ha/1000 is recommended;
- It is recommended that a combined standard with natural green space of 1.0 ha/1000 is used for assessing requirements for new provision, this is to provide new spaces that maximise opportunities for wildlife and are biodiverse, in accordance with the NPPF (paragraph 109) and local policy. A standard of 1.0 ha/1000 for new provision is assessed as being deliverable and achievable (rather than having a separate standard for natural green space);
- The minimum size of a space that will be considered acceptable and count towards open space provision is recommended to be 0.15 ha in size (about the size of a mini football pitch). This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity spaces which have no real recreation function. Any spaces below this size will be acceptable in terms of their visual amenity, but would not count towards the required level of provision.

6.3.4 Access standard for amenity green space

- Consultation identified people want spaces relatively close to home (18% less than 5 minutes', 31% less than 10 minutes and a further 21% less than 15 minutes), and that they access these spaces by foot (64%);
- Therefore, a standard of 600 metres (12-13 minutes' walk time) is recommended.

6.3.5 Quality standards for amenity green space

The audit of provision as well as the consultation has identified the importance attached by local people to open space close to home. The value of 'amenity green space' must be recognised especially within housing areas, where it can provide important local opportunities for play, exercise and visual amenity that are almost immediately accessible. On the other hand, open space can be expensive to maintain and it is very important to strike the correct balance between having sufficient space to meet the needs of the community for

accessible and attractive space, and having too much which would be impossible to manage properly and therefore a potential liability and source of nuisance. It is important that amenity green space should be capable of use for at least some forms of public recreation activity.

It is therefore recommended that in addition to the minimum size threshold identified above, that all amenity green space should be subject to landscape design, ensuring the following quality principles:

- Capable of supporting informal recreation such as a kickabout, space for dog walking or space to sit and relax;
- Include high quality planting of trees and/or shrubs to create landscape structure and biodiversity value;
- Include paths along main desire lines (lit where appropriate);
- Be designed to ensure easy maintenance.

6.4 Parks and Recreation Grounds

Table 11 Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	**Access Standard**
1.4 ha per 1000 population for public and private provision	600 metres (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time)

6.4.1 Existing national and local policies

The Fields in Trust (FIT) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play report 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' proposes a benchmark guideline of 0.80ha/1000 population for parks and gardens, with a walking distance guideline of 710m. In addition to this they also recommend the following standards:

- Playing pitches: 1.20ha/1000 population with a walking distance of 1,200m
- All outdoor sports: 1.6ha/1000 population with a walking distance of 1,200m

The previous PPG17 assessment recommended a quantity standard of 14.0 sqm per person for grass pitches and 15.0 sqm per person for multi-functional open spaces.

6.4.2 Quantity of parks and recreation grounds

- Existing average level of provision in the study area is 0.88 ha/1000 for publicly available facilities (public parks and recreation grounds including grass pitches);
- There is an additional 0.45 ha/1000 of private sports space which includes a variety of uses (excluding Golf Clubs), giving a combined total for public and private provision of 1.33 ha/1000;
- The household survey identified the following in relation to this typology:

- *Parks and Recreation Grounds:* 45% of people felt there was a need for more, 54% felt there was enough;
- *Playing Fields:* 31% felt there was a need for more, 67% felt there was enough;
- *Tennis/Netball:* 40% felt there was a need for more, 57% felt there was enough;
- *Bowling Greens:* 17% felt there was a need for more, 79% felt there was enough;

- A proposed standard of 1.40 ha/1000 population is proposed for public and private parks and recreation grounds, this is set just above the existing average level of provision and largely reflects that people are generally happy with existing levels of provision, whilst retaining the current standard for grass pitches (1.4 ha/1000).
- It should be reiterated that this standard is intended to provide sufficient space. The Playing Pitch Strategy deals with some of the detail i.e. supply of pitches and how they will be laid out.

6.4.3 Access standard for parks and recreation grounds

- 21% of people want facilities within 5 minutes, with 25% stating 10 minutes and a further 27% within 15 minutes;
- 58% of people walk to these facilities;
- A standard of 600 metres (12-13 minutes' walk time) is recommended.

6.4.4 Quality standards for parks and recreation grounds

This type of provision was identified as the highest priority for improvement within the household survey (63% of households – see section 2.1.7 of Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report). National guidance relevant to this typology is provided in the 'Green Flag' quality standard for parks which sets out benchmark criteria for quality open spaces. For outdoor sports space, Sport England have produced a wealth of useful documents outlining the quality standards for facilities such as playing pitches, changing rooms, MUGAS and tennis courts plus associated ancillary facilities. The Rugby Football Union have provided guidance on the quality and standard of provision of facilities for rugby, and the England and Wales Cricket Board have provided guidance for cricket facilities. It is recommended that the guidance provided in these documents is adopted by the District Council, and that all new and improved provision seeks to meet these guidelines.

6.5 Play Space (children and youth)

Table 12 Summary of quantity and access standards

Typology	**Quantity Standard**	**Access Standard**
Play Space (Children)	0.03 ha per 1000 population	• 480m (10 minutes' straight line walk time)
Play Space (Youth)	0.02 ha per 1000 population	• Youth Provision – 600m (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time)

6.5.1 Existing National and Local Policies

The FIT guidance 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' recommends provision of 0.25ha/1000 population of equipped/designated play areas, with a walking distance of 100m for Local Areas for Play (LAPs), 400m for Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and 1000m for Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs). The guidance does not specifically cover the needs of most teenagers.

The previous FIT guidance (The Six Acre Standard) recommended provision of 0.8 hectares per 1000 people for children's play of which around 0.3 hectares should be equipped provision. These standards had been criticised because they are often seen as undeliverable, and can result in a proliferation of play areas that can be difficult to maintain, as well as setting unrealistic aspirations in urban areas where insufficient land is available to provide facilities, especially higher density development on brownfield sites. The level recommended within the new guidance (0.25 ha/1000 population), although lower than previously, is still considered to be high.

These are deemed to be out of date and the quantity standards appear to be based on the old FIT standards. There are concerns about the deliverability and sustainability around these quantity standards. The standards recommended within this study are based on more up-to-date information.

Wealden's previous PPG17 assessment recommended a standard of 0.325 sqm per person for children's play areas and 0.15 sqm per person for teenage facilities.

6.5.2 Quantity standards for play

- Current average levels of provision of children's play space is 0.03 ha/1000 population, and for youth space this is 0.01 ha/1000 population;
- The household survey identified that 48% of people felt there was a need for more children's play space and 50% felt there was enough, whilst 61% of people felt there was a need for more youth facilities, compared to 36% who felt there was enough;
- It is therefore recommended that there is no significant increase in children's play facilities, with a standard of 0.03 ha/1000, and an increase in facilities for young people with a standard of 0.02 ha/1000.
- It should be reiterated that these are minimum standards for equipped provision and do not include the need for surrounding playable space as recommended by Play England[15] i.e. this surrounding playable space will need to be provided in addition to the equipped provision.

[15] Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces

6.5.3 Access standards for play

- The household survey identified that for children's play space around 66% of people want facilities within 10 minutes. For teenage facilities, this figure was less with just over 45% of people stating 10 minutes, with a further 34% willing to travel up to 15 minutes;
- 74% of people walk to children's facilities, the figure for teenage facilities is less with 60% walking, the rest using other modes (car, bus, bike).

In light of these findings, the following access standards are recommended:

- Children's provision – 480m (10 minutes' straight line walk time), and
- Youth Provision – 600m (12-13 minutes' straight line walk time).

6.5.4 Quality standards for play

Play England are keen to see a range of play spaces in all urban environments:

A Door-step spaces close to home
B Local play spaces – larger areas within easy walking distance
C Neighbourhood spaces for play – larger spaces within walking distance
D Destination/family sites – accessible by bicycle, public transport and with car parking.

Moving forward, Play England would like their new Design Guide; '*Design for Play'* to be referenced and added as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in standard configuration. Play England have also developed a '*Quality Assessment Tool*' which can be used to judge the quality of individual play spaces. It has been recommended that the Council consider adopting this as a means of assessing the quality of play spaces in the District Council area. Play England also highlight a potential need for standards for smaller settlements and rural areas where the doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination hierarchy is unlikely to be appropriate.

Disability access is also an important issue for Play England and they would like local authorities to adopt the KIDS[16] publication; '*Inclusion by Design'* as an SPD. Their most recent guidance document, '*Better Places to Play through Planning*' gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space and is considered as a background context for the standards suggested in this study.

6.6 Natural Green Space

For Natural Green Space, there are a number of national standards recommended by Natural England, which are summarised below.

[16] KIDS, is a charity which in its 40 years, has pioneered a number of approaches and programmes for disabled children and young people. KIDS was established in 1970 and in 2003, KIDS merged with KIDSACTIVE, previously known as the Handicapped Adventure Play Association.

6.6.1 Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt)

- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home.

6.6.2 Local standards

For this purpose of this study, it is recommended that the analysis should focus on the Natural England ANGSt to identify current levels of provision and gaps.

It is also recommended that local standards are adopted for providing new levels of provision through new development. It is recommended that this provision is considered in tandem with provision of amenity green space in new development, in order to ensure deliverability (existing levels of provision of natural green space across Wealden District are 21.04 ha/1000, and it would not be viable to adopt this as a standard for new provision) and to provide biodiverse spaces, as explained under section 6.3.2. The aim would be to provide guidance for development to provide amenity/natural green spaces which have **both** a recreational value and biodiversity value. The provision of SUDs alone which have no recreational value would not be accepted as contributing to the open space requirements. There should be a move away from providing numerous small amenity grass areas, to providing fewer, larger amenity/natural spaces in new development. This is reflected in the natural green spaces standards below:

Table 13 ***Summary of natural provision standards***

Typology	**Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)**		**Access standard**
	For assessing current provision	**Requirement from new development**	
Natural Green Space	Natural England ANGSt	1.0 to include natural and amenity green space	Natural England ANGSt

6.6.3 Quality of natural and semi-natural green space

Satisfaction levels with the quality of natural green space are above average, with over 60% of people in the household sample survey rating their quality as good or very good. Consultation results also highlight the value attached to certain attributes of open space, in particular:

- Good maintenance and cleanliness
- Ease of access
- Lack of antisocial behaviour, noise etc.

This suggests that the provision of new or improved open space cannot be considered in isolation from the means of maintaining such space, perceptions of antisocial behaviour, and ease of access from within the surrounding environment.

The shape and size of space provided should allow for meaningful and safe recreation. Provision might be expected to include (as appropriate) elements of woodland, wetland, heathland and meadow, and could also be made for informal public access through recreation corridors. For larger areas, where car borne visits might be anticipated, some parking provision will be required. The larger the area the more valuable sites will tend to be in terms of their potential for enhancing local conservation interest and biodiversity. Wherever possible these sites should be linked to help improve wildlife value as part of a network.

Other possible approaches in addition to traditional natural green space provision could, for example, include:

- Changing the management of marginal space on playing fields and parks to enhance biodiversity.
- Encouraging living green roofs as part of new development/ redevelopment.
- Encouraging the creation of mixed species hedgerows.
- Additional use of long grass management regimes.
- Improvements to watercourses and water bodies.
- Innovative use of new drainage schemes / Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- Use of native trees and plants with biodiversity value in high quality soft landscaping of new developments.

The above should in any event be principles to be pursued and encouraged at all times. Further guidance in this regard should be included in appropriate SPDs.

6.7 Summary of open space standards

Table 14 Summary of open space standards

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)	Access standard
Allotments	0.15	600 metres or 12 - 13 minutes' walk time
Amenity Green Space	0.40 for assessing existing provision only. 1.0 to include amenity and natural green space for new provision.	600 metres or 12 - 13 minutes' walk time
Parks and Recreation Grounds	1.4 for public and private facilities combined	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Children)	0.03	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Youth)	0.02	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Natural Green Space	1.0 to include natural and amenity green space for new provision. ANGSt should be used for assessing existing provision.	ANGSt
Churchyards and Cemeteries	None, but sites mapped and quantity analysed	None
Education	None, but sites mapped and quantity analysed	None

7.0 APPLYING LOCAL STANDARDS

7.1 Introduction

This part of the report uses the recommended standards to analyse provision across the study area. This section provides an overview of provision across each of the Parishes, with further detail being provided in the Green Space Area Profiles in part 2 of the report. This section includes:

Quantity analysis

The quantity of provision is assessed using the recommended quantity standards for each of the typologies where a quantity standard has been developed. Recommended standards are expressed as hectares of open space per 1000 people.

The quantity assessment looks at the existing levels of provision, then uses the recommended standard to assess the required level of provision. From this a calculation is made of the supply, which will either be sufficient or insufficient. Within this section, levels of provision are provided by parish.

Access analysis

This section of the report provides analysis of the recommended access standards for each typology across the study area. The maps and analysis in this section are intended to be indicative, providing an overall picture of provision and highlighting any key issues across the study area.

However, the key to access analysis, is understanding the picture at a more localised level, therefore, maps showing local access provision are provided within the area profiles (part 2a of the report) and for each parish not included within the area profiles (part 2b of the report).

Quality analysis

This section of the report makes analysis of each typology across the study area – it highlights any common themes or issues that have arisen from the quality audit. Local recommendations are highlighted within the area profiles (part 2a of the report).

7.2 Application of quantity standards

Current supply against the Wealden standards

Table 15 shows the existing supply of open space in hectares for each typology for each of the Parishes. The figures for 'Park and Recreation Grounds (Public and Private Combined)' includes a combination of the following three typologies:

- Park and Recreation Ground;
- Outdoor Sport (Pitches); and
- Outdoor Sport (Private).

Table 15 Existing provision of open space against the Wealden Standards (Hectares)[17]

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (Public and Private Combined)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Alciston	-0.02	-0.06	-0.2	0	0
Alfriston	0.77	0.18	1.31	0.07	-0.02
Berwick	-0.06	-0.15	0.58	0	-0.01
Buxted	0.18	0.02	5.92	-0.03	-0.06
Chalvington with Ripe	-0.14	-0.38	0.56	-0.03	-0.02
Chiddingly	-0.15	1.83	0.4	0	-0.02
Crowborough	-2.39	-1.23	2.73	-0.1	-0.15
Cuckmere Valley	-0.03	-0.08	-0.27	-0.01	0
Danehill	-0.29	-0.41	1.71	0.03	0.08
East Dean and Friston	-0.24	1.22	-0.72	0.04	-0.03
East Hoathly with Halland	1.37	-0.64	1.85	0.07	-0.02
Fletching	-0.16	-0.43	0.28	0.11	-0.02
Forest Row	0.45	-0.44	-2.5	-0.11	-0.09
Framfield	2.36	-0.45	1.22	0.14	-0.04
Frant	0.12	1.62	1	0.11	-0.03
Hadlow Down	-0.13	-0.34	0.67	0.02	0
Hartfield	-0.33	-0.87	-1.14	-0.03	-0.04
Heathfield and Waldron	-0.93	-4.4	0.94	0	-0.1
Hellingly Arlington and Hailsham	-0.61	-0.21	-20.98	0.35	-0.39
Herstmonceux	-0.4	-0.72	0.18	-0.05	0.06
Hooe	0.68	2.43	-0.62	-0.01	-0.01

[17] It should be noted that there are a number of parishes where parks and recreation ground provision is either wholly or largely private and therefore there may not be a deficit when looking at the combined figure for public and private, however, there is a lack of freely accessible provision. Those parishes where the provision is solely private are Chalvington with Ripe, Chiddingly, Frant, Laughton and Selmeston (see area profiles (part 2) for more detail).

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Green Space	Park and Recreation Ground (Public and Private Combined)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Horam	0.19	-0.68	1.91	0.01	0
Isfield	-0.09	-0.23	1.4	0.02	-0.01
Laughton	-0.09	-0.24	0.58	-0.02	-0.01
Little Horsted	-0.03	-0.09	-0.33	-0.01	0
Long Man	-0.07	2.62	-0.63	-0.01	-0.01
Maresfield	-0.55	-1.07	1.95	0.19	0.01
Mayfield and Five Ashes	0.1	-1.36	7.82	-0.04	0.02
Ninfield	0.04	-0.63	0.01	0.16	0.01
Pevensey	0.63	-1.26	-1.65	0.09	0.06
Rotherfield	2.35	2.14	9.27	0.02	-0.06
Selmeston	-0.02	-0.06	1.21	0	0
Uckfield	2.34	0.2	-0.17	0.12	-0.15
Wadhurst	0.66	-1.99	0.03	-0.07	-0.04
Warbleton	-0.21	0.24	-1.92	-0.04	-0.03
Wartling	-0.07	-0.18	-0.62	-0.01	-0.01
Westham	-0.65	-2.07	-5.22	-0.09	-0.01
Willingdon and Jevington and Polegate	-0.72	-6.11	-13.27	-0.29	-0.2
Withyham	-0.43	0.85	-0.64	-0.04	-0.06

Table 15 shows that provision varies across parishes and typologies, with some meeting the standards and some falling below. There are shortfalls in at least one open space typology in each parish and there are shortfalls in youth play space amenity green space and allotments across the majority of parishes, with youth play space being deficient across the highest number of parishes.

These figures will be important when considering the need for new provision of open space on site as part of new development, along with the access analysis (covered in the section below and in more detail within part 2). Even in cases where there is no shortfall in supply of a particular typology, there may be a need for new provision due to accessibility issues (see figure 19, Section 8.1).

7.3 Application of access standards

This section provides an overview of access to different types of open space typologies across the whole study area. The maps are intended to provide an overview and are for illustrative purposes only. More detailed maps are provided within the green space area profiles in part 2a of this report (and for individual parishes that are not included within the area profiles, within part 2b of this report).

The access standards for each open space typology are expressed as straight line walking distances, derived from table 16 below. The straight line walking distances do not take into

account roads and other barriers, so the actual route walked (the pedestrian route) is generally further i.e. straight line distances are around 60% of actual distances.

Due to the rural nature of the district, it may be acceptable to drive to some facilities.

Further detailed maps and commentary in relation to access to open spaces is made within 13 area profiles (part 2a of this report). Maps are also provided for those parishes not included within an area profile (part 2b of this report).

Table 16 Standard walk times and distances

walk time (minutes)	Pedestrian Route (metres)	Straight line (metres)
1	100	60
2	160	96
3	240	144
4	320	192
5	400	240
6	480	288
7	560	336
8	640	384
9	720	432
10	800	480
11	880	528
12	960	576
13	1040	624
14	1120	672
15	1200	720
16	1280	768
17	1360	816
18	1440	864
19	1520	912
20	1600	960

Figure 9 Access to allotments (600m buffer)

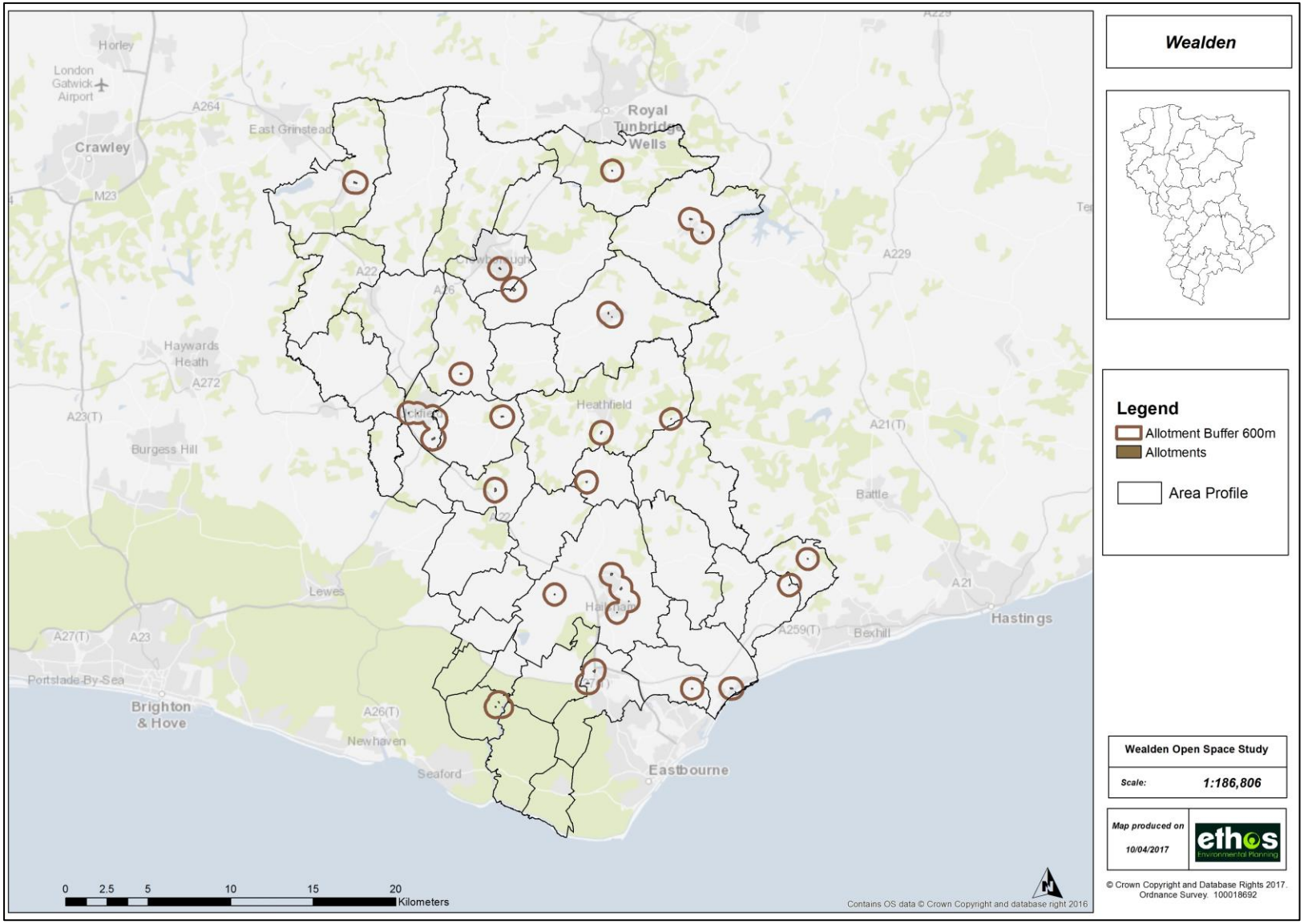


Figure 10 Access to amenity green space (600m buffer)

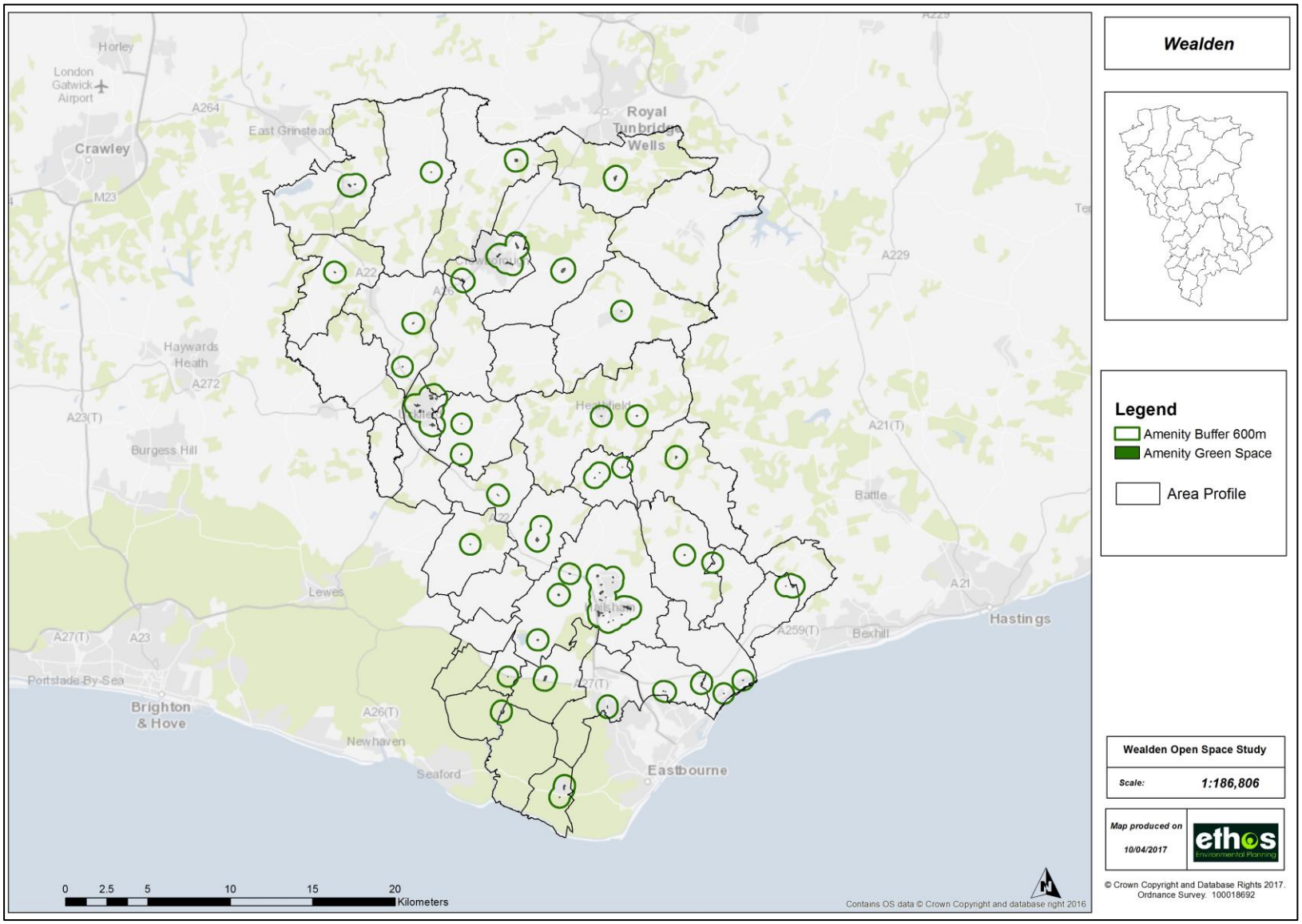


Figure 11 Access to parks and recreation grounds (600m buffer)

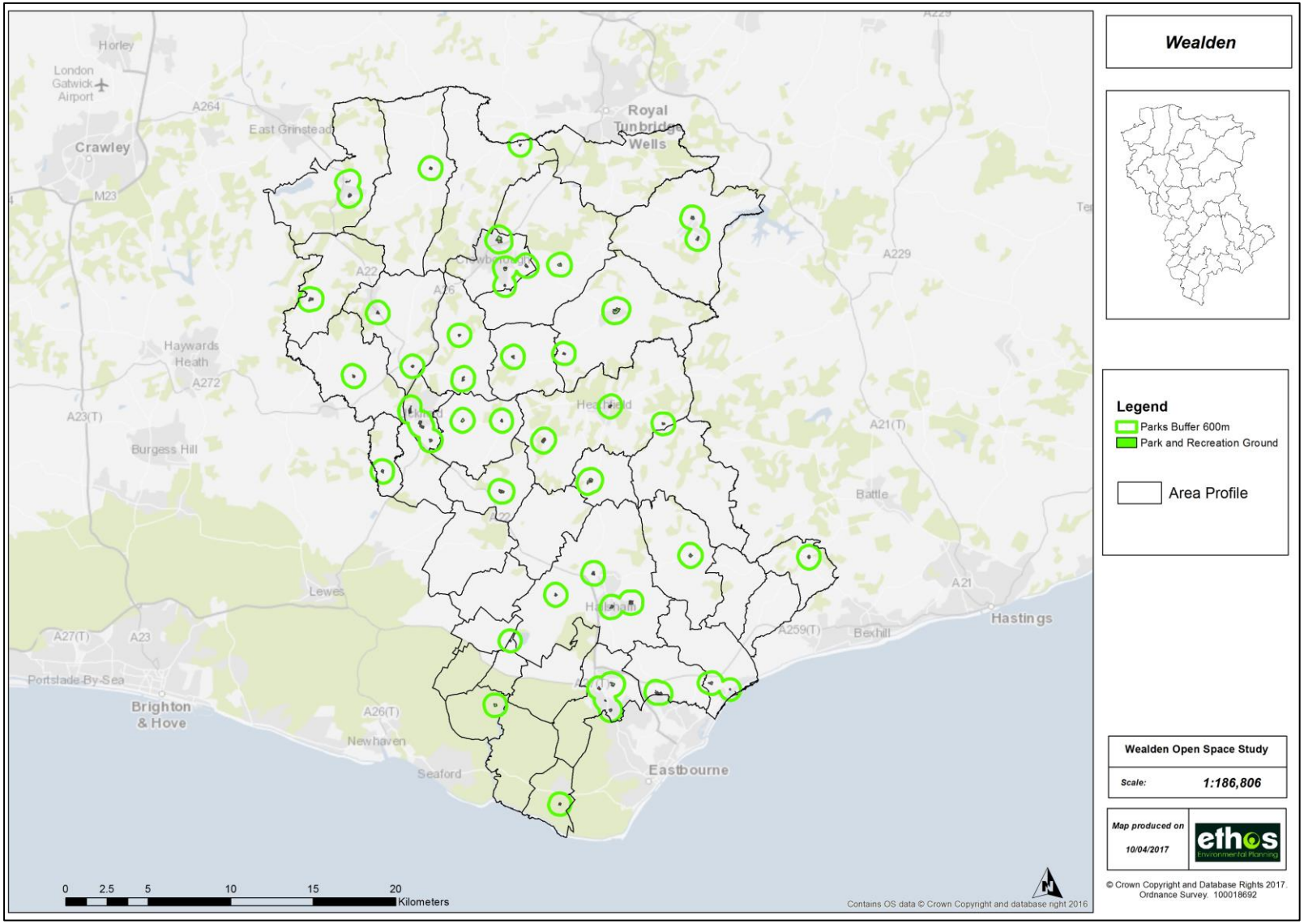


Figure 12 Access to children's play space

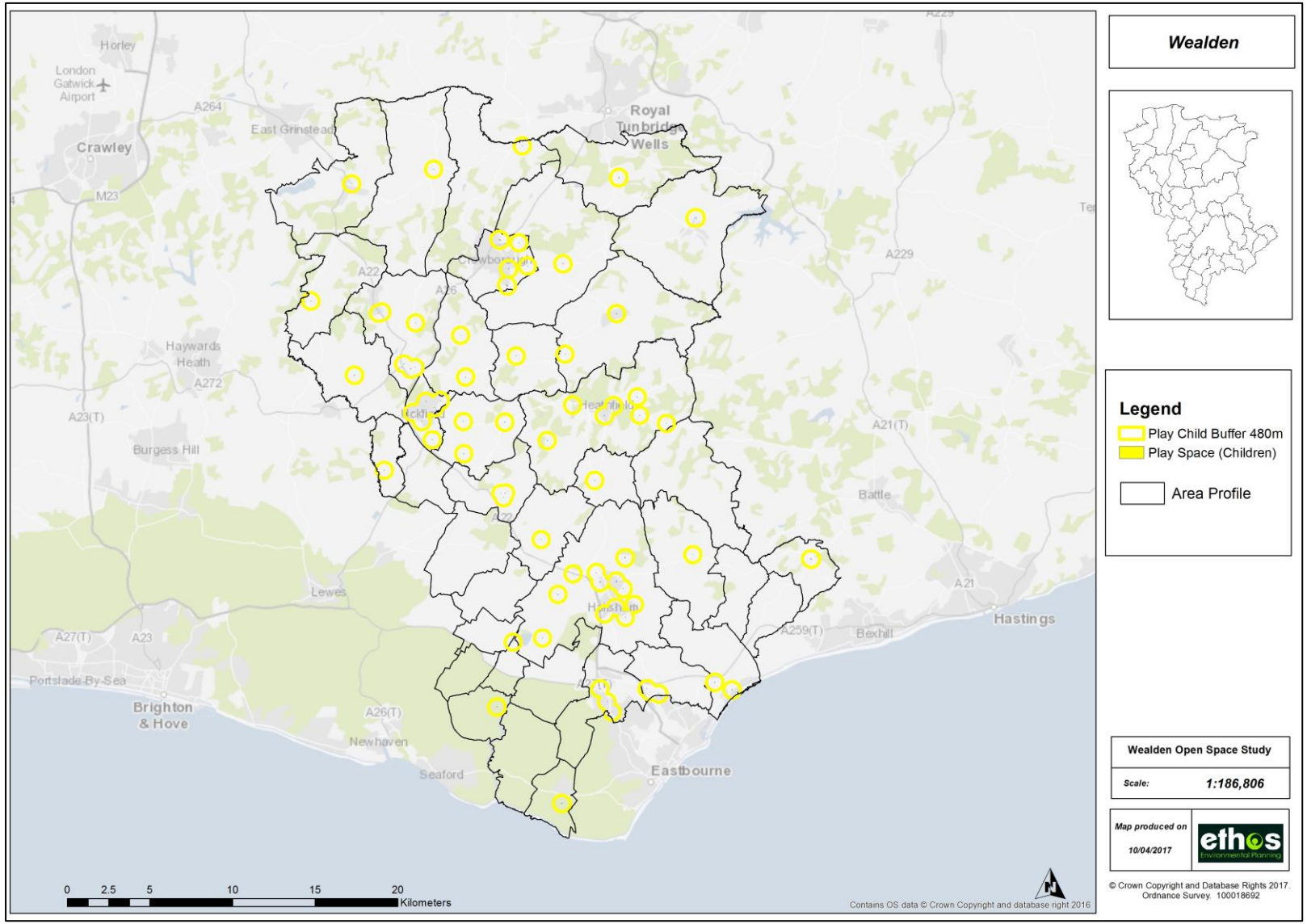
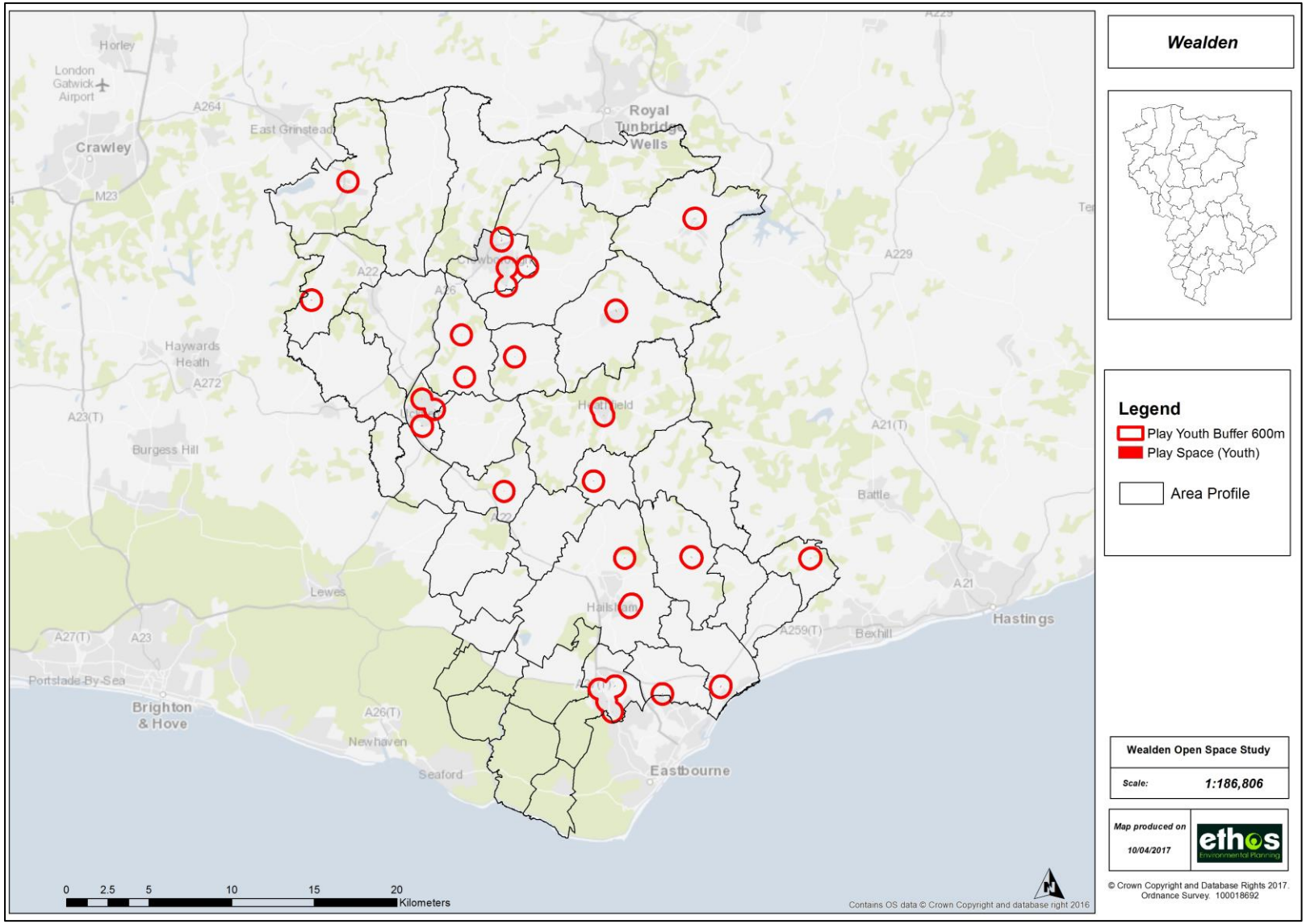


Figure 13 Access to youth play space



Application of standards for natural green space

This section looks at the application of standards for natural green space. The Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt) are:

- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometre of home;
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home.

Figure 14 Access to 20 ha site within 2km

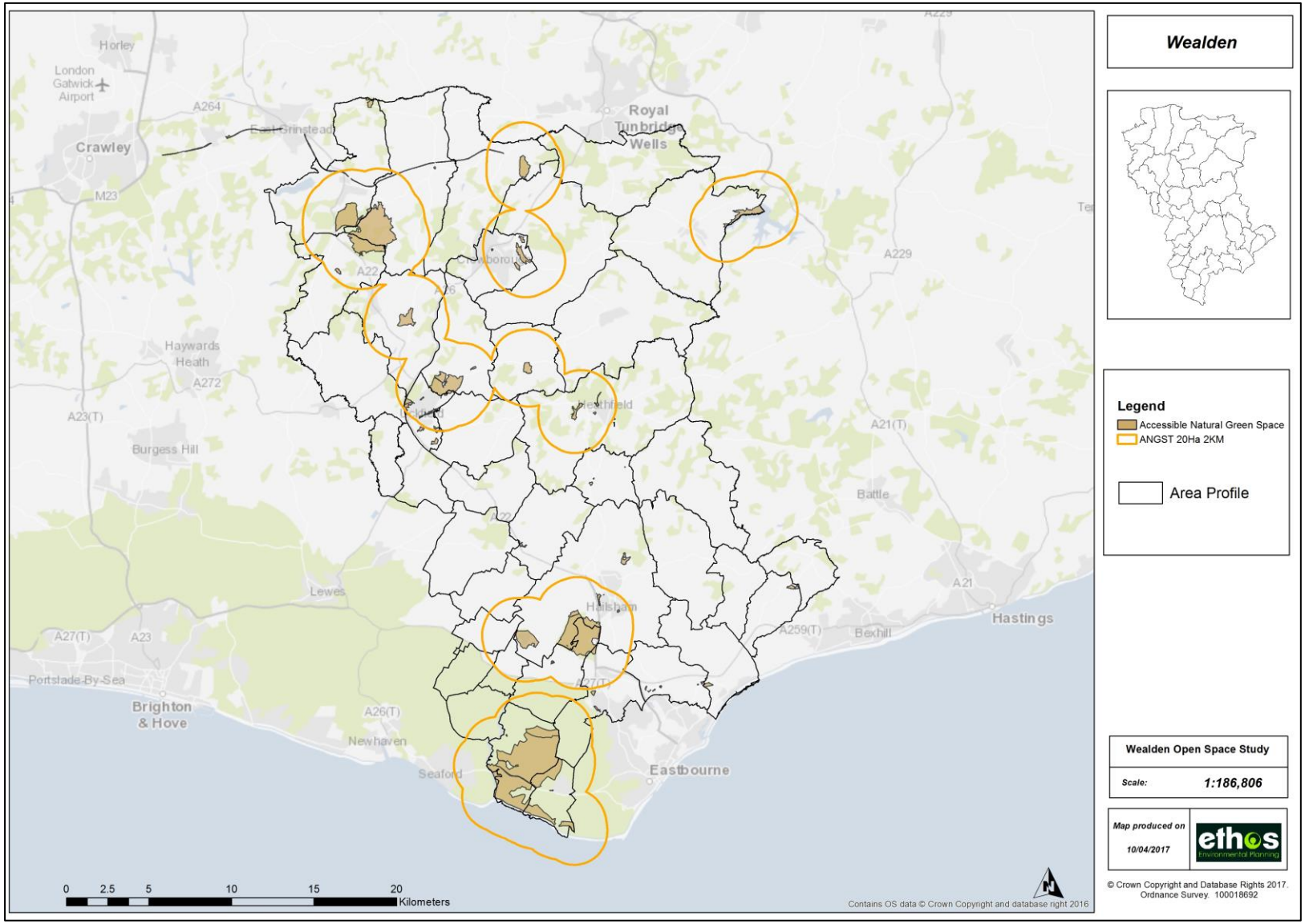


Figure 15 Access to 100 ha site within 5 km

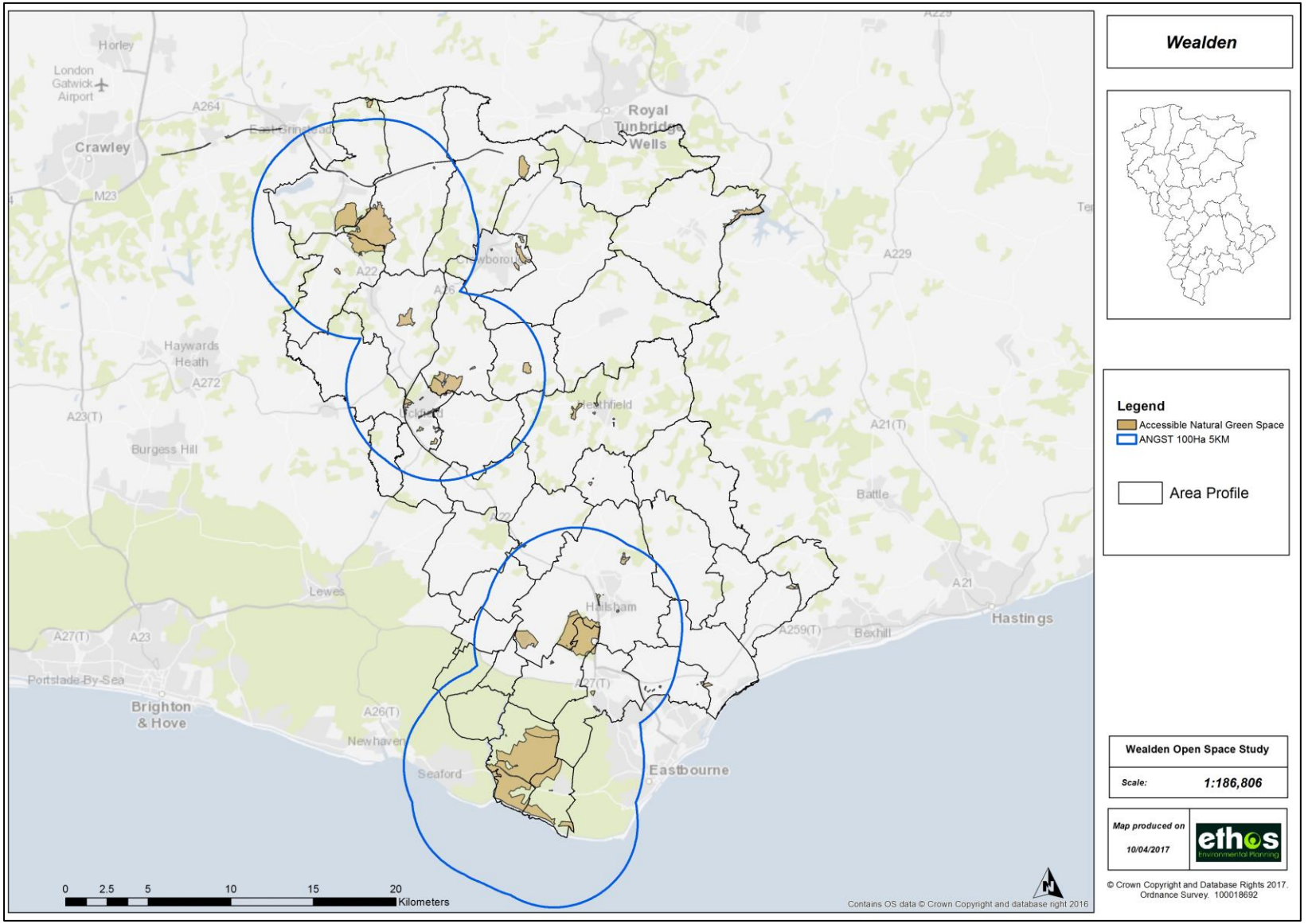


Figure 16 Access to 500 ha site within 10 km

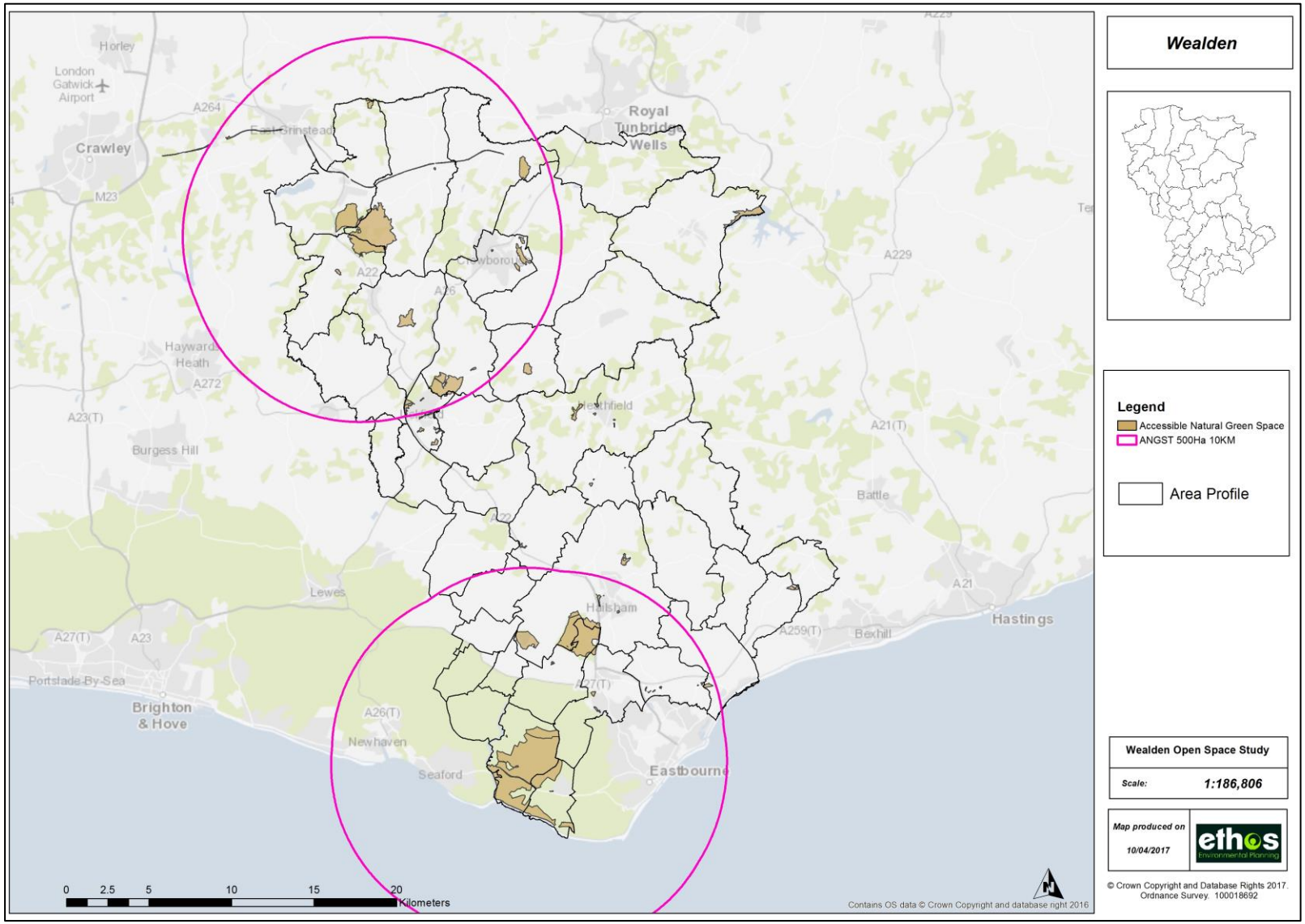
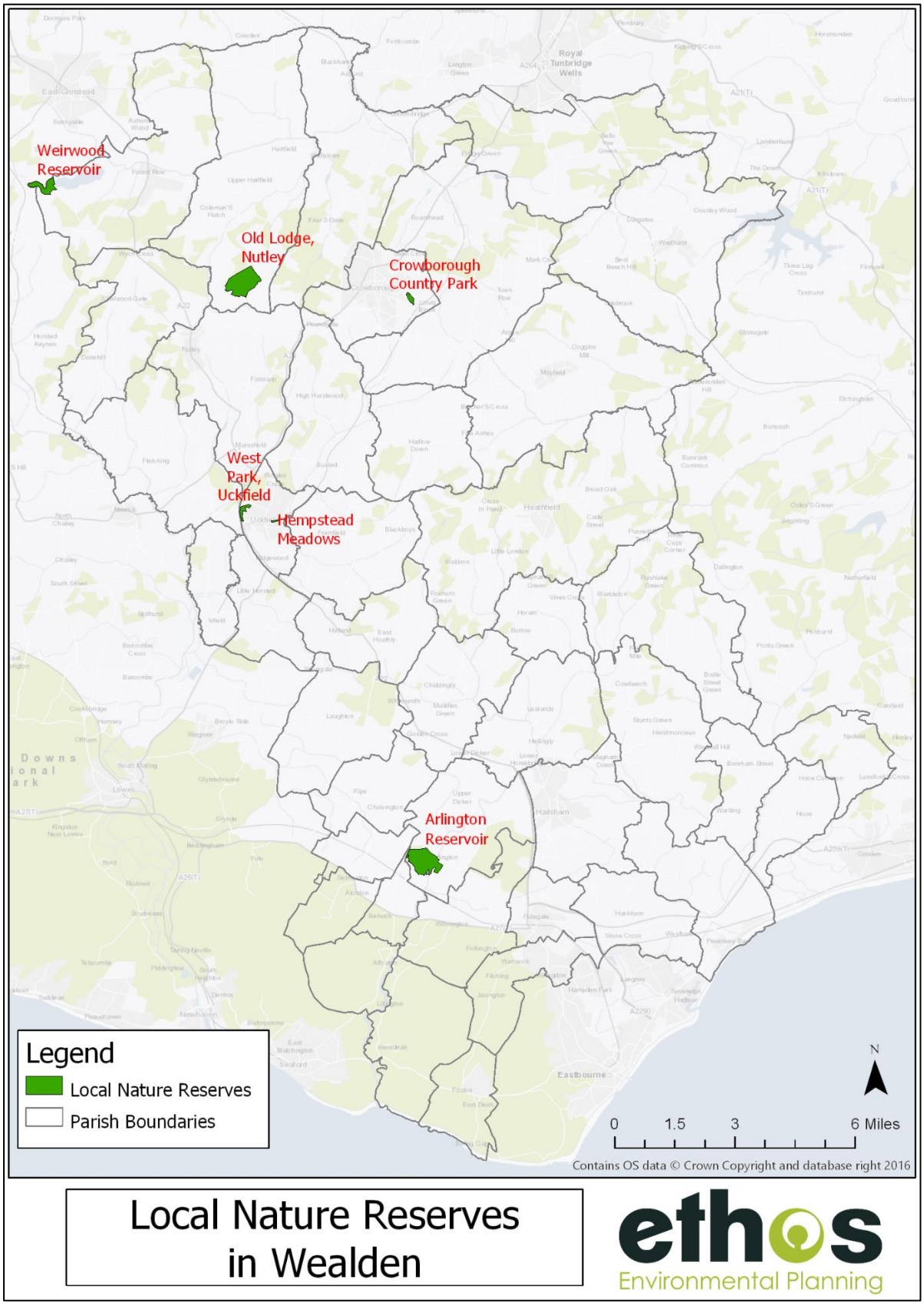


Figure 17 Local Nature Reserves

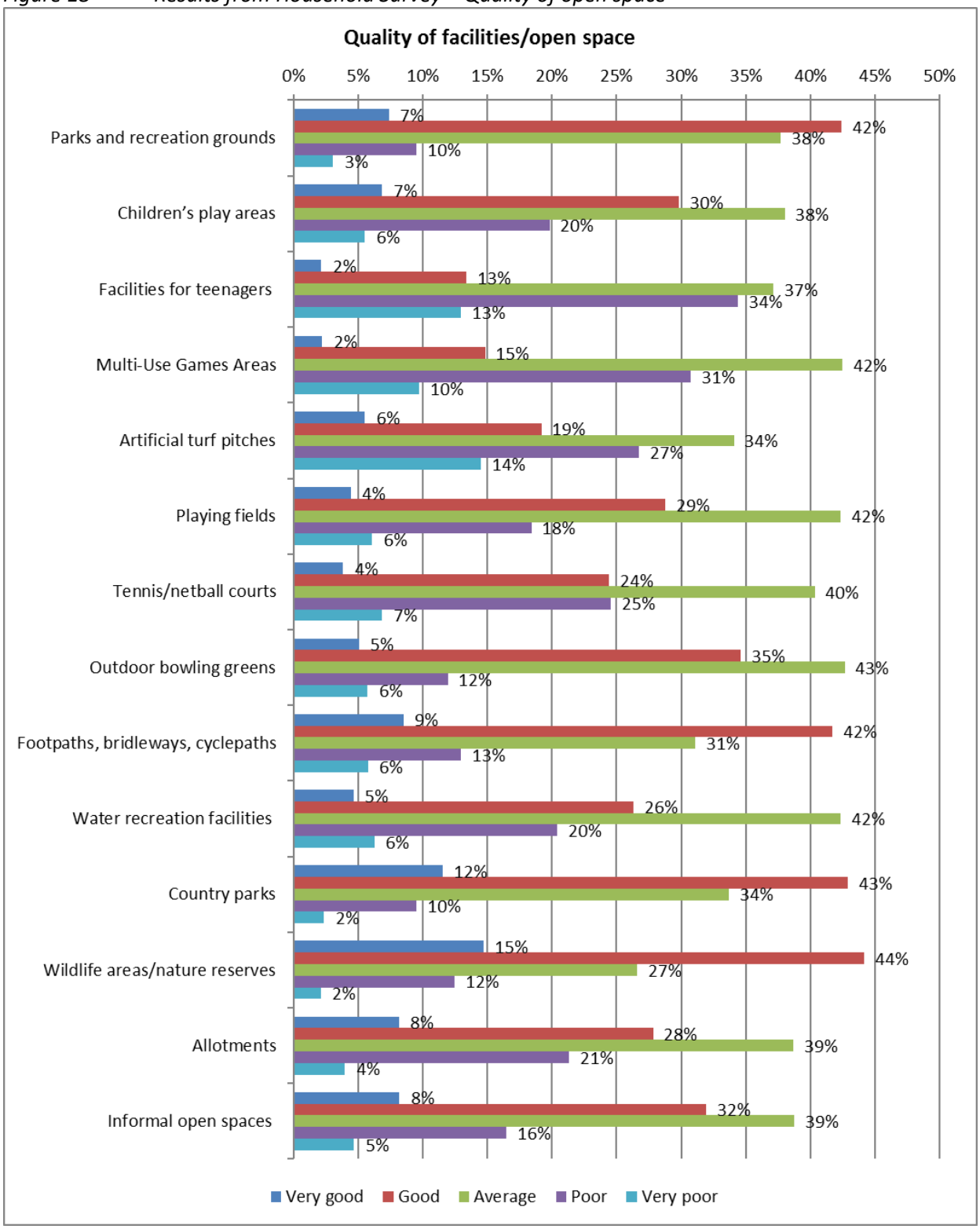


7.4 Application of quality standards

Quality of open space – consultation key findings

Respondents from the Household Survey (within the Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report) were asked how they rated various types of facilities in the study area in terms of quality. The responses of those expressing an opinion on specific categories of facility are illustrated in Figure 18 below.

Figure 18 Results from Household Survey - Quality of open space



For all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they were of average or better quality (though the most common rating tended to be only "average"). However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality as noted below.

47% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor. The quality of Multi-Use Games Areas - and artificial turf pitches - was rated as poor or worse by 41% of respondents.

In contrast, some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated highly by a majority in terms of quality. These include: natural green space - wildlife areas/nature reserves (59%); country parks (55%); and footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (51%). In addition, 40% or more of respondents also rated a number of other facilities as being good or very good: parks and recreation grounds (49%); bowling greens (40%); and informal open spaces (40%).

Quality of open space – audit findings

The quality audit was undertaken at 201 main sites which comprised a total of 314 assessments (e.g. play areas within a main site). The details on the sites audited are provided in a quality audit database which has been provided as an electronic document as part of this study. The key findings and sites with most potential for improvements are highlighted in the 13 area profiles (part 2a of this report) and in the parishes not included within green space area profiles document (part 2b of this report).

8.0 STRATEGIC OPTIONS, POLICY & MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

This section sets out strategic options and policy recommendations for open space within Wealden. It draws on all the previous steps of the study to bring together informed recommendations, and addresses a number of specific requirements of the study brief.

The policy recommendations provide draft policy wording/model policy which the Local Authority can amend as required.

8.1 Strategic Options

Introduction

This section outlines higher level strategic options which may be applicable at town, parish and study area wide level. The strategic options address six key areas:

1) Existing provision to be protected;
2) Existing provision to be enhanced;
3) Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
4) Identification of areas for new provision;
5) Facilities that may be surplus to requirement.

Delivering Strategic Options

Since the adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012, the planning environment is still in a state of change and flux.

The abolition of regional spatial strategies, and the move towards localism, puts more focus on local authorities to work with local communities to make decisions and deliver services, rather than relying on national or regional guidance. This will clearly impact how some of the recommendations in this study will be delivered.

Whilst the Local Authority will have an important role in delivering open space, sport and recreation facilities, their role may move from that of 'deliverer' to 'facilitator'. The aim will be to work with community organisations to make local decisions about how facilities and services will be provided. Organisations such as resident's groups, voluntary organisations, sports clubs and societies will all have a key role in this.

One of the emerging priorities from localism is for there to be much more local decision making with regards to planning, and for local communities to develop neighbourhood plans. Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities within neighbourhood plans, the information provided within the area profiles in this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision of open space.

The following sections, consider the key issues for open space in the study area, and the recommendations that emerge need to be taken in context with the Localism Act and consider how they can fit into local decision making. With this agenda still relatively new, the

following sections serve to highlight issues, but do not necessarily resolve how they may be delivered.

Existing provision to be protected

The Council's open space Local Plan policies should seek to ensure that open space should be afforded protection unless material considerations demonstrate otherwise.

Existing open space or sport and recreation facilities which should be given the highest level of protection by the planning system are those which are either:

- Critically important in avoiding deficiencies in accessibility, quality or quantity and scored highly in the value assessment; **or**
- Of particular nature conservation, historical or cultural value.

The area profiles (part 2a) of this study provide more detailed results as to the above considerations. The following draws on this and makes some more general observations and recommendations.

Open Space Policy Recommendations (protecting open space):

OS1	The distribution of open space varies across the study area, however, there are identified shortages of at least 1 typology of open space in every area. It is therefore recommended that priority is placed on protecting those open spaces where there is an existing shortfall of supply as highlighted in the area profiles.
OS2	Sites which are critical to avoiding deficiencies, or making existing deficiencies worse, in quality, quantity or access should be protected unless suitable alternative provision can be provided which would compensate for any deficiencies caused.
OS3	Sites which have significant nature conservation, historical or cultural value should be afforded protection, even if there is an identified surplus in quality, quantity or access in that local area.
OS4	The importance of privately managed spaces (e.g. sports grounds) as a community facility has been highlighted in this study. Therefore, it is recommended the above policies apply to both public and private open space protection.

Existing provision to be enhanced

In areas where there is a quantitative deficiency of provision but no accessibility issues then increasing the capacity of existing provision may be considered. Alternatively, in areas where facilities or spaces do not meet the relevant quality standards, qualitative enhancements will be required.

This includes those spaces or facilities which:

- Are critically important in avoiding deficiencies in diversity, accessibility or quantity, **but**
- Scored poorly in the quality or value assessment.

Those sites which require enhancement are identified within the quality audit that was undertaken. Some of the key observations related to site enhancement include:

1. The importance of providing high quality provision and maintenance of formal facilities such as Parks and Recreation Grounds and Play Space.
2. The role of private sports spaces to some local communities and the need to provide opportunity for investment.
3. The need to ensure high quality open spaces are designed and provided through new development where feasible.
4. The importance of rights of way and natural green space within the study area, and the need to maintain and enhance provision for biodiversity.
5. The role of open space in contributing to wider initiatives and strategies.
6. Extending and enhancing the network of green infrastructure including the connectivity between sites and improved accessibility to existing sites.

Open Space Policy Recommendations (enhancing open space):	
OS5	Future LDPD's and Neighbourhood Plans should consider the opportunities for creating and enhancing a network of both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike in both urban and rural areas. Creative application of the amenity green space/natural green space components of the proposed overall standard in respect of new development should be explored.
OS6	The study makes recommendations for improving the quality of open space across the study area (detailed in part of this report). However, a long term strategy for achieving improvements would assist which could be delivered through the new Local Plan, Green Space Strategy or neighbourhood plans and be considered within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
OS7	Priorities for improvement are formal facilities including parks and recreation grounds, children's and youth facilities.
OS8	Management plans should be developed for the main parks and recreation grounds. Where sites fall outside of the Council's ownership these priorities could be considered in neighbourhood plans and by the local community.

Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space

In some areas it may be possible to make better use of land by relocating an open space or sport and recreation facility, especially if this will enhance its quality or accessibility for existing users, or use land which is not suitable for another purpose. This needs to be determined at a local level, considering the quality, quantity and access to facilities at neighbourhood level and in some cases across the study area.

The information provided within the area profiles in this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision or replacement of open space, sport and recreation facilities. Some settlements may seek a consolidation of facilities on a single site, such as a new sports hub.

These decisions could include the spatial and investment plans for green space, and set the foundations for green space provision (e.g. for the next 20 years). They should outline where different types of facilities and space - such as children's playgrounds, sports pitches, young people's facilities etc. are to be located. It will also identify if any green space is no longer needed and its disposal or re-use can be used to fund improvements to other spaces.

The new Local Plan, and any neighbourhood plans, should be guided by the standards and policies set out in this study and ensure that the significant investment anticipated for green spaces is prioritised with the help of stakeholders and communities. The standards set out in this study seek to determine a minimum level of quality and quantity of green space provision and the maximum distance people should have to travel to access different types of green space.

The area profiles provided with this study provide information on the existing supply of different types of open space, an analysis of access and identify local issues related to quality. Section 7.2 of the area profiles sets out broad opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space where there is sufficient supply, in order to reduce shortfalls in other open space typologies. They will act as a good starting point for feeding into the New Local Plan and any neighbourhood plans in consultation with the local community.

Open Space Policy Recommendations (relocating open space):

OS9	The findings of the assessment will be a material consideration in planning for local provision of facilities and will be incorporated into relevant local plans and strategies e.g. neighbourhood plans and parish plans

Identification of areas for new provision

New provision will be required where there is a new development and a planned increase in population, and/or an existing deficiency in supply or access to facilities exists. The area profiles outline the existing situation with regards to supply and access to green infrastructure. The new Local Plan will form a good mechanism to determine exactly where new provision is required, however, this study can be used as the basis for decision making, as follows:

Quantity

Within the study report, for each typology, there is an identified 'sufficient supply' or 'under supply' for each of the Parishes. If an area has an existing under supply of any typology, there may be need for additional provision. This could be delivered through developing a new site

(for example as part of a housing development), acquiring land to extend the site or changing the typology of an existing space (which may be over supplied in an area).

The supply statistics should be used as part of the decision making process in development management to determine if a new development should provide facilities on-site or enhance existing provision through developer contributions.

The use of the quantity statistics should not be used in isolation, but considered alongside the access standards.

Access

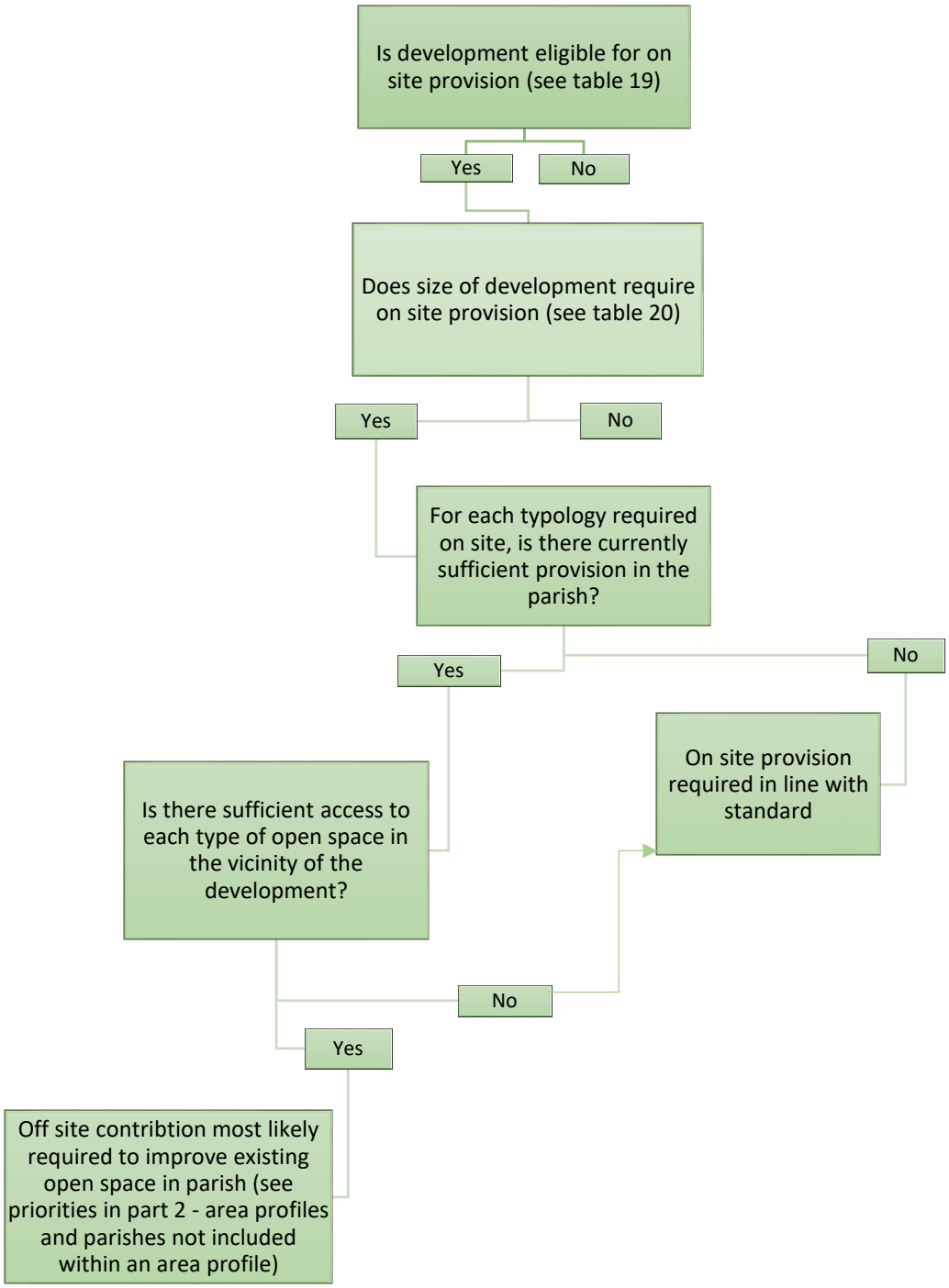
This study considers how access to different types of open space varies across parishes against the proposed standards. The maps show where there are deficiencies and potential over supply of facilities. This information can be used alongside the quantity statistics to determine if new provision or improved accessibility is required in an area. For example, if a new development is proposed, the maps should be consulted to determine if there is an existing gap in provision of a particular typology which could be met by the development.

Therefore, even though the quantity statistics may identify a sufficient supply of a particular typology, there may be gaps in access, and thus a new facility may still be required.

Decision making process for on/off site provision

Figure 19 shows an example flow chart/decision making process to help developers/council officers determine the need for on/off-site provision of open space. This is only a guide and requirements will be determined on a case by case basis using the standards and assessment within this study. This should be determined through pre-application discussions with the council.

Figure 19 Decision making process for on/off site provision of open space



Delivering new provision

There are a number of opportunities for delivering new facilities through new development – developer contributions and to a lesser extent through capital and grant funding.

New development, CIL and developer contributions

Wealden District Council have adopted their charging schedule and policy for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Many community needs and aspirations have a call on this levy. This open space study clearly identifies that there are needs for new and /or enhanced open space provision, particularly where new development is planned.

Outside of CIL, new development will also be required to provide on-site open space in line with the standards outlined in this study. Whilst not all developments will be of a size that will generate the requirement for on-site open space (see table 20), when considering future housing numbers for Wealden, there will be many that will. This study should be used to make local decisions about where and when new on-site provision will be required.

Capital and grant funding

Although the availability of capital and grant funding has diminished in recent years, nevertheless funding does become available for providing facilities for open space, sport and recreation. National and governing bodies for individual sports should be consulted where new infrastructure is required, such as changing rooms and sports pitches. Environmental grants and stewardship schemes are available for managing natural green space. As the new Local Plan and any neighbourhood plans are developed and open space priorities are established within these, funding requirements will be identified and delivery through grant funding could be considered.

Open Space Policy Recommendations (new provision of open space):

OS10	New provision of open space will be required as part of new development in towns or parishes where there are existing deficiencies in quantity or access to open space and/or where the new development will result in deficiencies. Where on-site provision is required, it should be provided in line with the proposed open space standards. Where on-site provision is deemed impractical, or not required e.g. for small sites, consideration will be given to opportunities for off-site provision and/or improvements, including through S106 contributions. Improvements to existing open space will be considered first in the local area, then the parish area and finally adjacent Parishes. Priority sites requiring improvements will be identified using the ranking scores from the quality audit, and also from site management plans and the councils/parish councils own knowledge of sites.

OS11 The priorities for new provision are for teenage facilities.

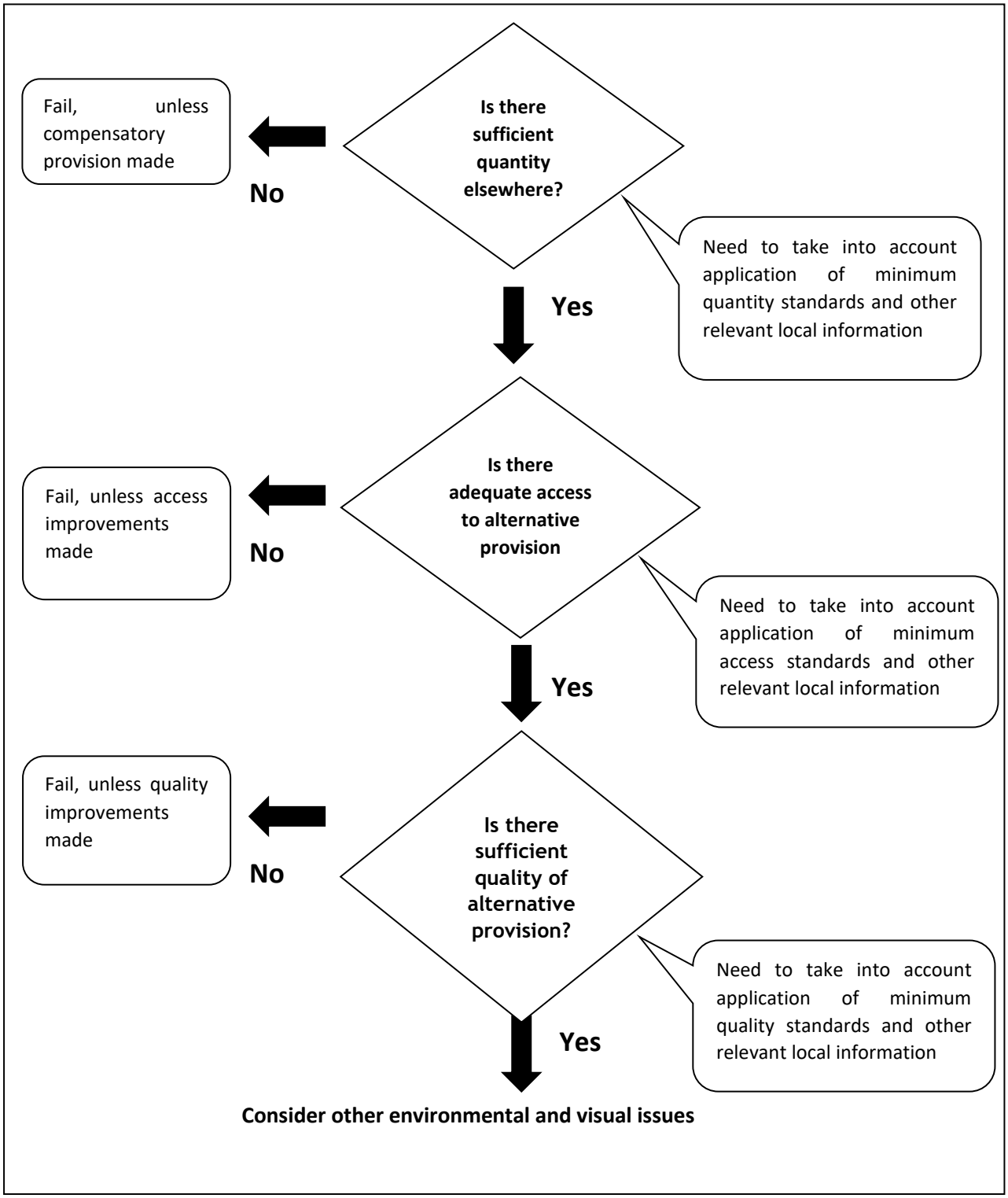
Facilities that are surplus to requirement

In addition to the strategic options outlined above, consideration should also be given to facilities that are surplus to requirement. There are important issues to resolve in terms of getting the correct balance of green infrastructure across the study area before any disposal can be contemplated, and only in exceptional circumstances would alternative use be considered. Whilst there is under provision relative to the minimum standards in several areas, there are other areas where provision compares favourably with the standards. However, it is once again emphasised that the proposed standards are for *minimum* levels of provision. Factors to be taken into account before any decision to release open space for alternative uses can be made include:

- The local value and use of a given open space - as it may be a locally popular resource;
- Whether future local development/population growth might generate additional demands for open space;
- Whether there is a demonstrable need for some other type of open space within the locality that a given space (subject to a change of management regime) would be well placed to meet;
- Other non-recreational reasons that suggest a space should be retained (which might include ecological and visual reasons).

Figure 20 and the associated paragraphs below suggests an outline of the decision process that should be followed before the development of an open space can be seriously contemplated.

Figure 20 Outline decision making process in relation to sanctioning (re)development of open space



Q. Is there sufficient quantity?

A. If the minimum quantitative standard for amenity green space is exceeded in a defined geographical area, the relative provision of other forms of open space must then be considered. (Amenity green space can in principle be converted into other forms of open space where the need arises). If a) provision meets the minimum quantitative standard; b) there is no significant local information suggesting a need to retain the site; and, c) there is not a perceived lack of other forms of open space. Only if a), b) and c) can all be met should the next question be addressed, unless compensatory provision can be made.

Q. Is there adequate access to alternative provision?

A. Within the defined geographical area there may be good overall provision of amenity green space relative to the quantity standard, but is it in the right place and can it be easily reached? Applying the accessibility component of the minimum standards will help to answer this question. If other similar open space cannot be easily reached, the site's disposal for other uses may be unacceptable.

Q. Are other accessible and similar opportunities elsewhere of sufficient quality?

A. If it can be demonstrated that alternative opportunities are sufficient both in quantity and accessibility, there may still exist issues with the quality of these alternative provisions. The quality component of the proposed standards may indicate that certain improvements to alternative opportunities must be made which should be funded and secured before development is sanctioned.

Even if these three tests are passed there may be other reasons for the site to remain as open space. For example, it may have value as a natural habitat or be visually important. Such considerations are important, but beyond the scope of this report.

8.2 Developer Contributions

This section draws on the policy recommendations in the previous section and outlines a process for calculating developer contributions for on-site provision and recommendations for management and maintenance procedures and costs. The focus for the council will be on-site provision as open space requirements are not included in the CIL 123 list. However, the pooling of S106 contributions could also provide an important means of delivering new provision.

Developer contributions

This section sets out higher level strategic recommendations and recommends an approach to developer contributions which can be used to inform policy for on-site contributions and to inform the feasibility for any off site investment proposed (through local planning obligations pooling[18]).

1) Capital cost of providing open space (on and off site)

In order to calculate developer contributions for facilities, a methodology has been adopted which calculates how much it would cost the Local Authority to provide them. These costs have been estimated by Ethos Environmental Planning from a number of capital projects in Bristol, and have also been benchmarked against other Local Authorities costs for providing facilities. A summary of the costs are outlined in table 17 below.

Contributions towards the provision or improvement of open space are calculated using the capital cost of provision. The same charges apply to both provision of new facilities and the upgrading/improvement of existing facilities, which more often than not includes new provision. Contribution per person is therefore taken to be a reasonable measure of that impact, irrespective of whether new provision or improvement of existing facilities is required. The calculated costs have drawn on the standards of provision for Wealden.

Table 17 Capital costs for providing open space

Typology	Standard (m²) per person	Cost of provision	
		Cost / m²	Contribution per person
Allotments	1.5	£30.00	£45.00
Parks and Recreation grounds	14	£72.00	£1,008.00
Play Space (Children)	0.3	£170.00	£51.00
Play Space (Youth)	0.2	£170.00	£34.00
Amenity/Natural green space	10	£15.00	£150.00
Total	**26**		**£1,288**

This shows that it costs £1,288 per person (in 2016) to provide new open space to meet the Wealden standard for open space. These calculations are to be used to calculate developer

[18] The CIL Regulations in general restrict the pooling of Section 106 contributions to no more than five obligations towards the provision of new infrastructure.

contributions for on-site provision and where feasible any off site projects. A 2% inflation raise should be applied per annum.

To calculate the population increase generated from new development, the number of dwellings should be multiplied by 2.3 (this is the average household size, based on the 2011 census). For example, a development of 250 dwellings would result in an expected population increase of 575 people. This figure should be updated in accordance with further censuses.

2) Maintenance Contributions for on-site provision

If a development is required to provide open space on-site, the developer would be expected to maintain the open space for a minimum period of 1 year. Developers will then be required to offer to transfer the open space to the relevant Parish or Town Council to maintain along with a commuted sum. If the Parish or Town Council doesn't accept the offer then the open space is transferred to a management company which has been set up by the developer for the purpose of maintaining the open space. In the case of the open space being transferred to the management company, owners of individual dwellings would be required to make an annual contribution to the management company to ensure there are funds to maintain the space. The usual planning mechanism used would be through a Section 106 agreement. The amount payable for the commuted sum will be calculated using the figures in table 18.

Table 18 Maintenance sums payable for open space

Typology	**Cost/m² per annum**
Play Space (Children's and Youth Provision)	£4.59
Parks & Recreation Grounds	£4.59
Amenity and Natural Green Space	£0.62
Allotments	£0.13

The figures in table 18 show how much it costs to maintain open space per metre squared. The costs have been provided from maintenance costs estimated by Ethos Environmental Planning. A 2% inflation raise should be applied per annum.

3) Eligible types of development for on-site provision

Table 19 outlines the type of housing that will be considered eligible for making contributions towards open space to meet the needs of future occupants.

Table 19 Eligible types of residential development

Category	**Open Market Housing / Flats**	**Affordable Housing ***	**Housing for the active elderly**	**Permanent mobile homes**
Play Space	✓	✓	×	✓
Outdoor Sports Space	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parks and Recreation Grounds	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amenity Open Space	✓	✓	✓	✓

Natural Green Space	✓	✓	✓	✓
Allotments	✓	✓	✓	✓

[* Should recognise that affordable housing generates a need for new green infrastructure, but it is a policy decision as to whether GI contributions should be provided]. Includes agricultural workers' dwellings. Excludes extensions (for administrative reasons). Excludes replacement dwellings and nursing houses types.

4) Thresholds for on-site provision

The focus for the council is for on-site provision (as open space requirements are not included in the 123 list in CIL), but it is recognised that it will not always be feasible to provide open space on site e.g. due to the size of a development.

Where facilities are provided on-site, the Council will expect the developer to provide the land for the facility and design and build the provision to the satisfaction of the Council.

Table 20 provides a recommended guide to assess which scales of housing generate a need for facilities in the categories listed to be provided on-site. This table is a general guide only and each proposed development will need to be considered on a site specific basis such that the proximity/accessibility of existing provision is taken into account as well as its potential for improvement. For developments 20 – 63 dwellings the minimum size of amenity green space/natural green space is 0.15Ha.

Table 20 Requirement for open space, sport and recreation facilities

Type of Provision	**1-19 dwellings**	**20-49 dwellings**	**50-99 dwellings**	**100+ dwellings**	**250+ dwellings**
Allotments	X	X	X	X	✓
Amenity/Natural Green Space	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parks Sports and Recreation Grounds	X	X	X	X	✓
Play Space (children)	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Play Space (Youth)	X	X	X	✓	✓

KEY: ✓ on-site provision normally sought
X Improvements to the quality of existing open space normally required

9.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

9.1 General

The open space assessment sets out the existing and future needs for open space within Wealden District. The local needs assessment forms the basis for developing standards for open space provision for quantity, access and quality. These standards have been used to identify existing provision of different types of open spaces, and highlights areas where provision is sufficient or deficient. Even in areas where the quantity of provision is shown as being sufficient, there may be accessibility issues meaning that provision is inadequate and this is also indicated within the study.

The main report of the open space study (part 1) then sets a framework for delivering new provision through recommended policy and priorities. Specific requirements in areas of key housing growth are then identified within the 13 green space area profiles (part 2a) and more basic information is provided within the report 'Parishes not included within open space area profiles' (part 2b).

The reports provide a clear picture of current and future requirements for open space in the District, which form an important part of delivering national and local strategic priorities (summarised in section 3), and further discussed in the following section.

9.2 Links to Strategic Context

Section 3 sets out the context of the study in relation to national and local policy and priorities. This section reflects back on this and considers how the open space assessment and recommendations contribute to the delivery of key elements.

National Planning Policy Framework

The assessment is driven by Para 73 of the NPPF – *'Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required*'.

The open space assessment, along with the playing pitch/outdoor sport and built facilities/indoor sport assessments underpin the Council's assessment of open space, sport and recreation facilities, fully meeting the requirements of the NPPF. The assessments provide a robust evidence base for understanding local need and set a clear framework for determining what provision is required during the local plan period.

Green Infrastructure

National Policy set out in the NPPF and regional policy within the East Sussex GI Study, along with the local Wealden GI Study acknowledge the contribution and value that local open space provides to the GI network. The mapping and assessment of open space provided within this study has been incorporated within the Wealden GI Study, and the policies and recommendations, particularly in relation to new provision of open space resulting from development will form an important part of the approach to delivering GI.

Biodiversity

The NPPF, Natural Environment White Paper and Biodiversity 2020 all set out the national priorities for delivering biodiversity. Whilst biodiversity is not the focus of the open space assessment, it is clear from the local needs assessment and quality audits that open spaces, in particular natural green spaces are a valuable resource for biodiversity. It is recommended that any future local biodiversity strategies acknowledge the value these spaces provide to biodiversity, and this is considered in future plans for open space (as recommended in policy OS 3).

Sport

Open space is central to delivering the priorities set out in '*Sporting Future'* and the relevant Sport England and National Governing Bodies strategies and guidance. The open space assessment identifies where outdoor sports facilities are located, which is supported in detail by the playing pitch and outdoor sport facilities study.

Corporate Plan

The Wealden Corporate Plan sets out key priorities identified by the District Council in delivering its services to the community. The open space assessment contributes to a number of these priorities as follows:

Communities
Open space plays an important role in providing opportunities for *Healthy lifestyles*, and can impact positively on the health of local populations in many ways. They can:

- provide opportunities for physical activity, which contribute to the prevention of many health problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, stroke, some cancers and osteoporosis;
- improve mental health and well-being by enhancing concentration, worker productivity, and self-esteem. They can alleviate anxiety and depression, and boost immunity
- promote healing and recovery after an accident or illness - provide opportunities for education, social inclusion and cohesion by supplying space for social mixing, creating networks and relationships. Playing in parks and gardens helps children to develop intellectually and learn about social interaction.

- help mitigate the impact of climate change by reducing flood risk, sequestering carbon dioxide in trees and plants and reducing atmospheric pollution. The urban tree canopy also helps to reduce the risks from ultraviolet radiation exposure and the heat island effect

Environment
The provision of open space contributes towards the priorities, in particular *'protection for our outstanding landscape and our* heritage' and *'maintaining a great place to live, work and play'*. The policies and recommendations set out in the open space assessment seek to ensure that important open space is protected and maintained, and where required new open space is provided to accommodate future population growth.

Local Economy
Open space plays an important role in the aesthetics of the environment and contribute significantly to creating '*vibrant high streets and villages'*.

Local Plan

The Proposed Submission Wealden Local Plan identifies that 'by 2028 Wealden District will remain a rural and attractive part of the South East with new housing and employment growth around the existing urban areas of South Wealden.' The Plan includes objectives in relation to protecting and enhancing the natural environment and improving health and wellbeing. The open space assessment plays an important role in achieving these objectives, in particular contributing to providing a high quality environment and providing a resource for recreation. The local needs assessment highlighted the importance open spaces plays in providing both formal and informal recreation opportunities.

Regional Strategies

The open space assessment contributes positively to key strategies including:

- *Pride of Place – An Integrated Sustainable Community Strategy for East Sussex 2008 - 2026;* in particular helping deliver:
    - Protecting our natural and built environments and adapting and responding to climate change;
    - Improving health and well-being;
    - Enabling people to enjoy culture, sports and leisure.
- Environment Strategy for East Sussex (2011);
- Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan.

9.3 Moving Forward

The role and value of open space in helping deliver national, regional and local priorities and targets is clear from this assessment. It is important that the policies and recommendations included within this assessment are enshrined in the local plan, and acknowledged in relevant

strategies, as and when they are reviewed. Council Officers and members play a pivotal role in adopting and promoting the recommendations within the assessment, and ensuring that key stakeholders such as parish council's, developers and community groups are engaged in open space provision in the future.