

## **Appendix 2**

### **OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION STUDY**

### **SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL**



**A**

**REPORT**

**BY**

**PMP**

**6 SEPTEMBER 2005**



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## **Introduction and background**

### **Introduction and scope**

- 1.1 In October 2004, Spelthorne Borough Council (the Council) appointed PMP to undertake an Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study across the whole of Spelthorne (the Borough). The study, an assessment of local needs and an audit of open space and indoor sport and recreational facilities, will provide the Council with a clear vision, priorities for the future (based on local need) and a direction for the allocation of resources.
- 1.2 The overall aim for this piece of work is to:
- 1.3 ‘provide an assessment of Spelthorne’s open space, sport and recreation facilities in the Borough to establish appropriate local standards, identify areas where there are deficiencies in provision and identify solutions/ sites to meet those deficiencies’.
- 1.4 This report follows on from the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study Factual Report dated December 2004. The Factual Report, which should be read in conjunction with this document, outlines the methodology of the study (in line with the PPG17 process) and details the findings from Step 1 (Identifying Local Needs) and Step 2 (Auditing Local Provision).
- 1.5 This report focuses on Steps 3, 4 and 5 of the PPG17 process.

## **Undertaking the study**

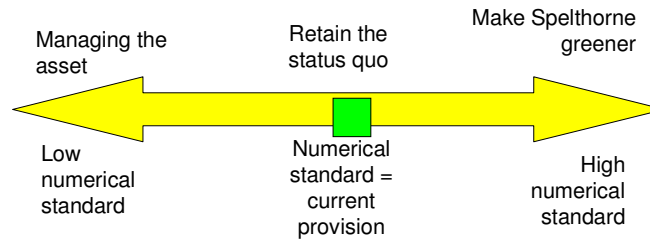
- 2.1 As detailed within Section 2 of the Factual Report, this study was undertaken in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) and its Companion Guide. The PPG17 Companion Guide sets out a 5-step process for undertaking a local assessment of open space. Further details on Steps 3, 4 and 5 are provided below.

### **Steps 3 and 4 - Setting and applying provision standards**

- 2.2 From the analysis of the data collected and site ratings (for quality, quantity, accessibility and value) we are able to:
- determine provision standards for each type of open space
  - apply those standards for each type of open space
  - identify gaps in provision across the different types of open space and therefore the areas of priority.
- 2.3 The analysis has been undertaken by type of open space across the borough. Throughout our analysis we have, however, noted specific examples or issues raised by consultees in order to illustrate specific findings relating to distinct geographical areas or individual sites.
- 2.4 Setting robust local standards, based on assessments of need and audits of existing facilities, will form the basis for redressing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies through the planning process. The data collected has been analysed by catchment, looking at the proportion of the borough's population who are able to access each type of open space. Local standards have been set for quality, quantity and accessibility.
- 2.5 These standards have then been applied, enabling the identification of gaps in provision and areas of priority for each typology. Neighbourhoods or areas that are outside of an accessible catchment area have been identified as having gaps in provision. Open space sites of other typologies and parcels of land within or adjacent to these gaps of provision have been examined for the potential for change of use based on catchment area analysis, local need and physical characteristics.

### **Quantity**

- 2.6 PPG17 advocates that planning policies for open space, including playing fields, should be based upon local standards derived from a robust assessment of local need.
- 2.7 The quantity of provision provided by the audit of open space has assisted in the setting of such local provision standards for the borough. These are included for each type of open space in the separate sections and as recommended by PPG17 is undertaken by population to calculate the quantity of provision per person.
- 2.8 Officers spent some time considering a vision for the future of green spaces. Having considered the key strategic objectives in the local plan, and the objectives in the community plan, officers showed their 'vision' for Spelthorne's green space by placing a marker on the diagram shown below. It was resolved to generally retain the status quo by setting numerical standards in line with current provision. This position was agreed at an Officer meeting.



### **Quantity Standards setting exercise**

2.9 Local quantity standards were derived as follows:

- officers considered standards for each type of open space except for green corridors as per guidance in the PPG17 Companion Guide
- headline descriptive statistics were derived for the whole borough which showed the number of hectares per thousand population (ha/1000 population)
- it was agreed to have a single, borough wide standard for each type of open space
- benchmarking with other authorities was undertaken to see how these descriptive statistics compared
- officers then considered the feedback from the consultation to understand the views of local people in terms of not enough/about right/too much open space of different categories
- officers also considered how they would deliver the vision “to maintain the current level of open space in Spelthorne”
- standards were then applied to the whole district using a spreadsheet, to test the effects of different numerical values of standard
- officers discussed the implications of different standards and came to an agreement on numerical values for each type.

2.10 The quantity analysis has therefore taken into account key issues raised from the consultations with the public, internally within the Council and externally with national, regional and local agencies. This provides a more balanced view rather than relying solely on statistical calculations. A comparison with the community’s view on the existing level of facilities required and the current level of provision was made to establish a reasonable level of provision.

2.11 Standards were then applied to determine whether there is a surplus of provision, the provision was about right or there is a deficiency.

2.12 All standards are based on 2001 census data, and population projections have been calculated to predict the future demand in 2011.

2.13 The overall aim of the quantity assessment is to:

- establish whether the borough has a deficiency of provision within each type of open space
- types where there is a surplus which then could allow changing the type of open space to types that are deficient in that area.

2.14 The standards set for each type of open space in Spelthorne are summarised in Section 12.

### **Quality**

2.15 The Companion Guide to PPG17 says the following about quality standards:

*“Quality standards should not be absolute measures but reasonable aspirations and benchmarks upon which to measure the quality of any existing green space in order to determine the need for enhancement.”*

*“The quality standard should derive from:*

1. *Analysis of quality in the audit in the light of community views*
2. *The agreed vision*
3. *A judgement as to the quality it will be possible to set as an objective and possible to deliver.”*

### **Setting quality standards**

2.16 Local quality standards were derived as follows:

- considering the information from the community plan, local plan, public consultation and vision statement we prepared a sentence or short paragraph describing the quality standard for each type of green space. Each sentence or paragraph addressed the five headings of:
  1. cleanliness and maintenance
  2. security and safety
  3. vegetation
  4. ancillary accommodation
  5. site access.
- key questions to consider were:
  1. what did the public consultation say about quality?
  2. what does the community plan and the local plan say?
  3. how can you help to deliver those aspirations?
  4. what is realistic and achievable?

- the site assessment matrix was used to help with the setting of quality scores.
- 2.17 The overall aim of a quality assessment should be to identify deficiencies in quality and key quality factors that need to be improved within:
- the geographical areas of the borough
  - specific types of open space
  - specific quality factors that ensure a high quality open space.
- 2.18 This enables resources to be concentrated on areas that need to be improved.

### **Accessibility standard**

- 2.19 Accessibility is a key assessment of open space sites. Without accessibility for the public the provision of good quality or good quantity of open space sites would be of very limited value. The overall aim of an accessibility assessment should be to identify:
- how accessible sites are
  - how far people are willing to travel to reach open space
  - areas of the borough deficient in provision
  - areas of the borough suffering in accessibility and therefore of priority importance
  - key accessibility factors that need to be improved.
- 2.20 Accessibility standards for open space are derived from an analysis of the accessibility issues within the audit and in light of community views.
- 2.21 In undertaking various consultations we were able to attain the aspirations of people in terms of travel time and also in terms of issues regarding access to sites. The outcome of this analysis is detailed in each section for each type of open space. We have used this analysis to determine suitable and appropriate accessibility standards.
- 2.22 Distance thresholds (i.e. the maximum distance that users can reasonably be expected to travel to each type of provision using different modes of transport) have been derived to quantify the accessibility standard.
- 2.23 PPG17 advises that any new open space sites or enhancement of existing sites should ensure accessibility by environmentally friendly forms of transport such as walking, cycling and by public transport. Distance thresholds should be realistic as well as encouraging a comprehensive provision of accessible open space across the borough.
- 2.24 The consultations, both through the household questionnaire and neighbourhood 'drop-in' sessions, provide specific information to assist in establishing distance thresholds for each type of open space.

2.25 Each section recommends distance thresholds, based on the time that 75% of people are willing to travel, where appropriate, to each type of open space. The standards set for each type of open space in Spelthorne are summarised in Section 12.

### **Setting accessibility standards**

2.26 It is not entirely straightforward to set specific distance thresholds for each type of open space for all areas as there are many dependencies. These standards, as PPG17 recommends, provide some guidance in order to identify possible gaps in provision and meet the local needs of the residents within Spelthorne.

### **Level of usage and value**

2.27 The value of an open space site is entirely different to quality and relates mainly to three key factors as described in PPG17 companion guide:

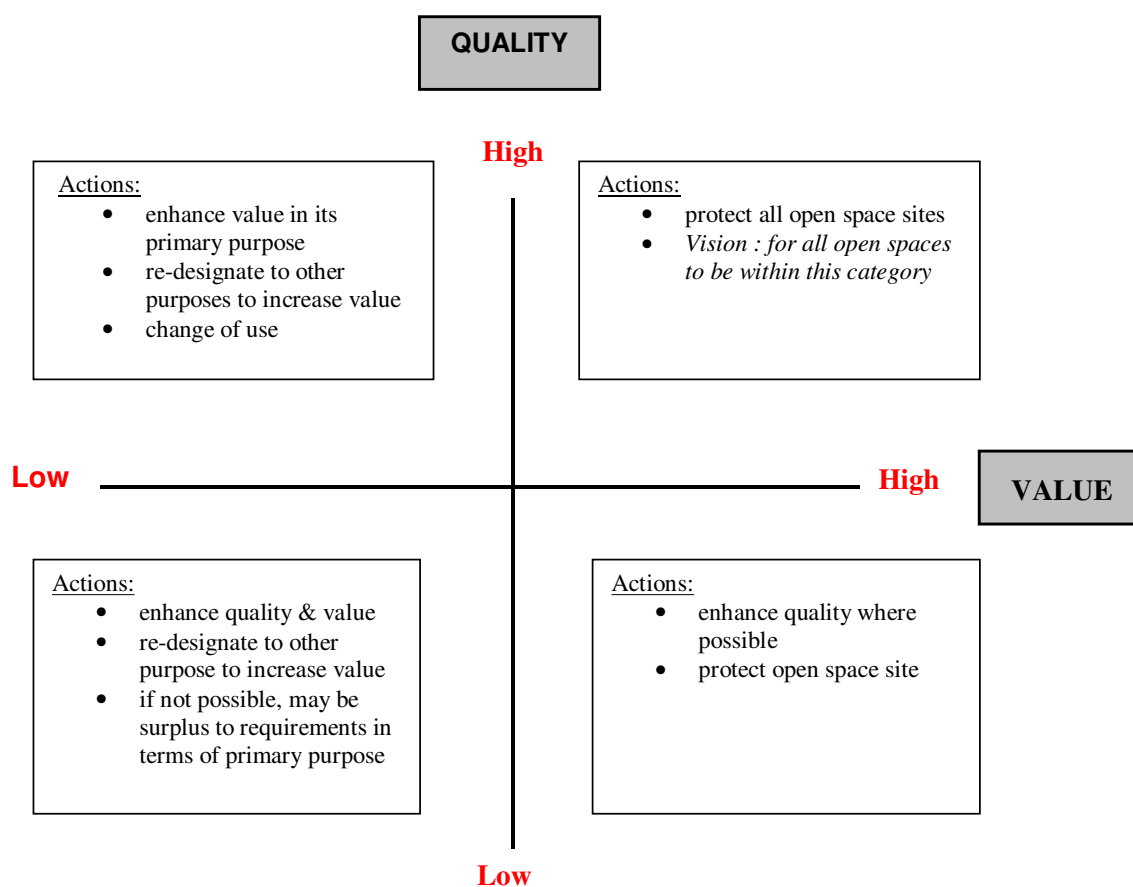
- Context – a site that is inaccessible is irrelevant to potential users and therefore is of little value irrespective of its quality. Also in areas where there are large amounts of high quality open space or more than is actually required, some of it may be of little value. In contrast to this, a site of low quality but in an area of low provision maybe of extremely high value to the public
- Level and Type of Use – poorly used open space sites may be of little value while highly used sites may be of high value
- Wider Benefits – there are many wider benefits of open space sites that should be taken into account when analysing the results of particular sites e.g. visual impact, benefits for biodiversity, educational, cultural, economic etc. These benefits are difficult to assess in a systematic way and would require detailed site visits.

2.28 Evaluating value therefore involves attempting to assess these factors, in particular relating the context of the open space site (quality and accessibility) against the level of use of each site.

2.29 From the assessment of the value of sites we can start to determine policy options in terms of feeding into a specific action plan. This is fundamental to effective planning.

2.30 Figure 2.1 provides a simple means of determining the most appropriate policy approach to each existing open space site.

**Figure 2.1 Policy approach to existing open spaces**



2.31 Quantity, quality and accessibility of types are evaluated within sections 3 –10.

2.32 The provision of sport and recreation facilities has been assessed using demand models which compare the current supply against the estimated demand. Full details of the demand models and the assumptions used can be found in Appendix B.

**Supply and demand analysis**

***Indoor Leisure Assessment***

2.33 In addition to the auditing of open spaces, PPG17 also recommends the assessment of existing indoor sport and recreation provision. PMP was appointed to complete an assessment of the existing supply of, and demand for, indoor leisure facilities in the Borough. A broad review of sport and recreation facilities within Spelthorne has been undertaken to help guide future planning. The main questions that this work sought to answer are:

- what indoor sports facilities does the Borough have?
- where are they located?
- what is the demand?
- where are the gaps in provision?
- what facilities are needed at each site?

- where should resources be targeted?
- 2.34 A comprehensive audit of indoor sport and recreation facilities. This audit data (ie supply) has been compared against demand (ie population and participation rates). Full details of the demand models and the assumptions used can be found in the Appendix.
- 2.35 Two levels of supply (present and future) were compared to an estimated demand for each type of facility. The foundations of all demand assessments are an analysis of the demographic profile of the resident population within the catchment area. As a result of the fast changing nature and high rate of development of indoor sport and recreation facilities and the effect that changing participation rates may have on the local requirement for facilities, future supply is measured only up to 2010.
- 2.36 The population statistics are calculated on a Borough level, and therefore the Borough boundary is used as one catchment area. However, it is important to indicate this has its limitations as it excludes any facilities on the edge of the Borough. With this in mind, a second catchment area including a three kilometre buffer around the Borough boundary is applied to more accurately take into account the impact of facilities on the periphery of the Borough and cross boundary movement.
- 2.37 This buffer therefore takes into account the facilities in close proximity to Spelthorne, which may affect the demand for sites within the Borough. It is however assumed that the number of people travelling out of the Borough will roughly equal those travelling in. This buffer does not suggest that people will not travel from further than 3km, it is used purely as a basis for analysis.
- 2.38 Once the resident population has been profiled, market penetration rates and frequency of participation rates of each sport or leisure activity are used to quantify demand. This ensures that results are specific to the requirements of the population of Spelthorne.
- 2.39 Results from the demand modelling are detailed in Section 11.

#### **Step 5 – Drafting policies - recommendations and strategic priorities**

- 2.40 Policy recommendations and guidelines have been drafted. Recommendations and priorities identified throughout the report are the result of this detailed local assessment of need for the Borough.

### **Parks and gardens**

#### **Definition**

- 3.1 This type of open space includes urban parks and formal gardens that, as their primary use, provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events. Recreation grounds where there is, for example planting, and therefore elements of formal gardens, whilst their role is acknowledged, are not included under this typology.
- 3.2 This typology also has many wider benefits. Parks provide a sense of place for the local community, ecological and education benefits, help to address any social inclusion issues within wider society and also provide structural and landscaping benefits to the surrounding local area.

#### **Strategic context and consultation**

- 3.3 A national survey commissioned by Sport England, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage was undertaken during 2003, looking at the provision of parks within England. The aims of the survey were to establish:
- how many adults in England use parks
  - what activities people take part in when visiting parks
  - the reasons people visit particular parks
  - the levels of satisfaction with the amenities on offer
  - why non-users do not use parks.
- 3.4 The definition of a park used in the survey was very broad and included both formal provision such as town parks, recreation grounds and also less formal provision such as village greens and common land.
- 3.5 The findings of such study were:
- just under two thirds of adults in England had visited a public park during the previous 12 months
  - there is a distinct bias in the use of parks by social groups, with almost three quarters of adults from the higher social group visiting a park compared with only half of those from the lower social group
  - people from black and ethnic minority communities also have relatively low participation as well as adults with a disability
  - more than 8 in 10 adults who had used a park in the previous 12 months did so at least once a month during the spring/ summer with almost two thirds visiting a park at least once a week. Women tended to visit parks more often than men
  - it is estimated that the 24.3 million adults who use parks make approximately 1.2 billion visits to parks during the spring and summer months and 600 million visits during the autumn and winter months – a total of 1.8 million visits a year

- the most popular type of park visited was an urban/ city park.
- 3.6 The household questionnaires, which were returned for this local study, flagged up a number of parks frequently used across the Borough, such as Sunbury Park. However, it is worth noting that local residents also referred to frequently visiting ‘parks’ such as Laleham Park, Church Lammas and Clockhouse Lane. However, none of these sites have been classified as parks or gardens for the purpose of this audit as these sites do not fall under the definition of parks and gardens as described in paragraph 3.1 and classification by typology should be by primary purpose. In addition, residents of the borough also indicated that they use Bedfont Lakes (London Borough of Hounslow).
- 3.7 The Draft Parks Strategy for Spelthorne 2003/08 recognises the importance of parks in the Borough and describes their future as:
- “places which support the community vision of Spelthorne as a place where people are fully engaged and are both respectful and promoting an environment that is healthy, safe, inclusive, prosperous and sustainable”.*
- 3.8 This strategic importance has been substantiated through the consultation and assessment in this study. For example, overall, parks and gardens were rated as the most important type of open space within the Borough and was the typology people use most frequently.

**Setting Provision Standards**

- 3.9 In setting local standards for parks and gardens there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other local authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs.

**Quantity**

- 3.10 The audit of parks and gardens shows there are a total of seven sites, making up 3.28 hectares across the Borough. The current provision of parks and gardens per 1,000 population therefore equates to 0.04 ha.
- 3.11 There are no definitive national or local standards for parks and gardens.
- 3.12 70% of the household survey respondents felt the provision of parks and gardens was ‘about right’ with 28% of respondents indicating they felt the current provision was ‘not enough’.
- 3.13 No standard is proposed but the value attached to planted areas in open spaces needs to be considered in the management of individual sites as appropriate.

**NO LOCAL  
STANDARD SET**

**Quality**

- 3.14 The Green Flag criteria sets out benchmarks linked to a park being a welcoming facility and providing a healthy, safe and secure environment. However, there are no definitive national or local standards for the quality of parks and gardens.
- 3.15 The quality of the majority of parks and gardens across the borough are considered ‘good’ with the Memorial Gardens, Staines being rated ‘very good’ on the site assessment.

## SECTION 3 – PARKS AND GARDENS

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- 3.16 Memorial Gardens, Staines and Sunbury Park were sites specifically mentioned as being examples of good practice but there was a common theme that the parks and gardens within the Borough are well kept and are a nice place to visit. Aside from some isolated cases of anti-social behaviour, there are no perceived major problems with parks in the Borough from a quality perspective.
- 3.17 From the consultation and household questionnaires, the highest-rated aspirations for open space were clean and litter free sites, well-kept grass, flowers, trees and shrubs, seating, clear footpaths, CCTV, litter bins and nature features (eg wildlife).
- 3.18 This supports consultation that was undertaken in developing the Draft Parks Strategy where key issues that the community identified as important included security, dog fouling, toilet provision, anti-social behaviour and lack of facilities for certain ages. As a result, the Draft Parks Strategy identifies *'the need for security in parks'*. In addition, the Best Value Review of Young People commits to *'improving safety and access in parks'*. Security in parks falls under the remit of the Park Community Safety Officers (PSCOs).
- 3.19 The quality standard for parks and gardens should therefore include elements of these aspirations to meet and address the needs of the public, and also reflect national standards.

### **RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD**

***"Urban parks and gardens should be free from dog fouling, vandalism, litter and anti-social behaviour. They should also be clean and tidy, well maintained, inviting, safe and secure with appropriate, high quality facilities and infrastructure".***

- 3.20 This local quality standard provides the vision for any new provision and also a benchmark for existing parks. Both the Memorial Gardens, Staines and Sunbury Walled Garden Park are examples of good practice in achieving this vision.

### **Accessibility**

- 3.21 With regards to accessibility there are also no definitive national or local standards.
- 3.22 The majority of respondents were 'satisfied' regarding the accessibility of parks and gardens across the Borough. This was supported by the site assessments where the majority of the seven parks and gardens in the borough were scored as 'good' or 'average'.
- 3.23 However, of those sites that were assessed for site access, not one site achieved the highest rating of 'very good', which suggests room for improvement. The main concerns are information and signage. Concerns were also raised during consultation regarding opening times and infrastructure.
- 3.24 Action points within the Improvement Plan from the Best Value Review of Young People include implementing a policy of keeping parks open and including cycle paths in parks.

### **RECOMMENDED LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD**

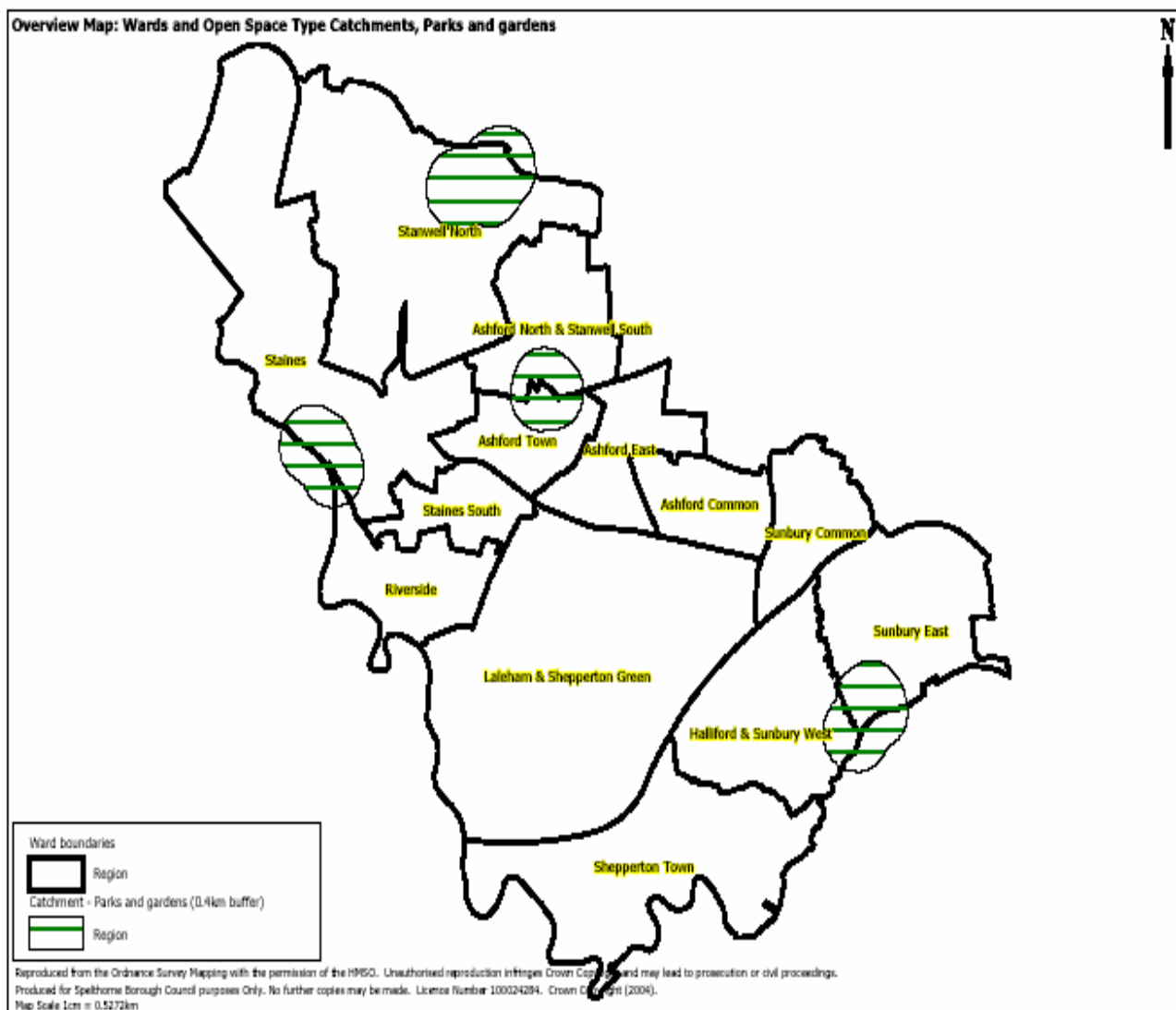
***5 minute walk (0.4km) from residential areas***

- 3.25 In terms of setting an accessibility standard, in the consultation residents were asked how far they are willing to travel to parks and gardens.
- 3.26 The majority of people indicated a walking rather than a drive time with the 75% level being up to five minutes, the equivalent of 0.4km (based on a walking speed of 4.8kph).
- 3.27 This catchment area is relatively small regarding the limited number of parks and garden sites across the Borough, as detailed below.

### **Applying Provision Standards – Identifying Geographical Areas**

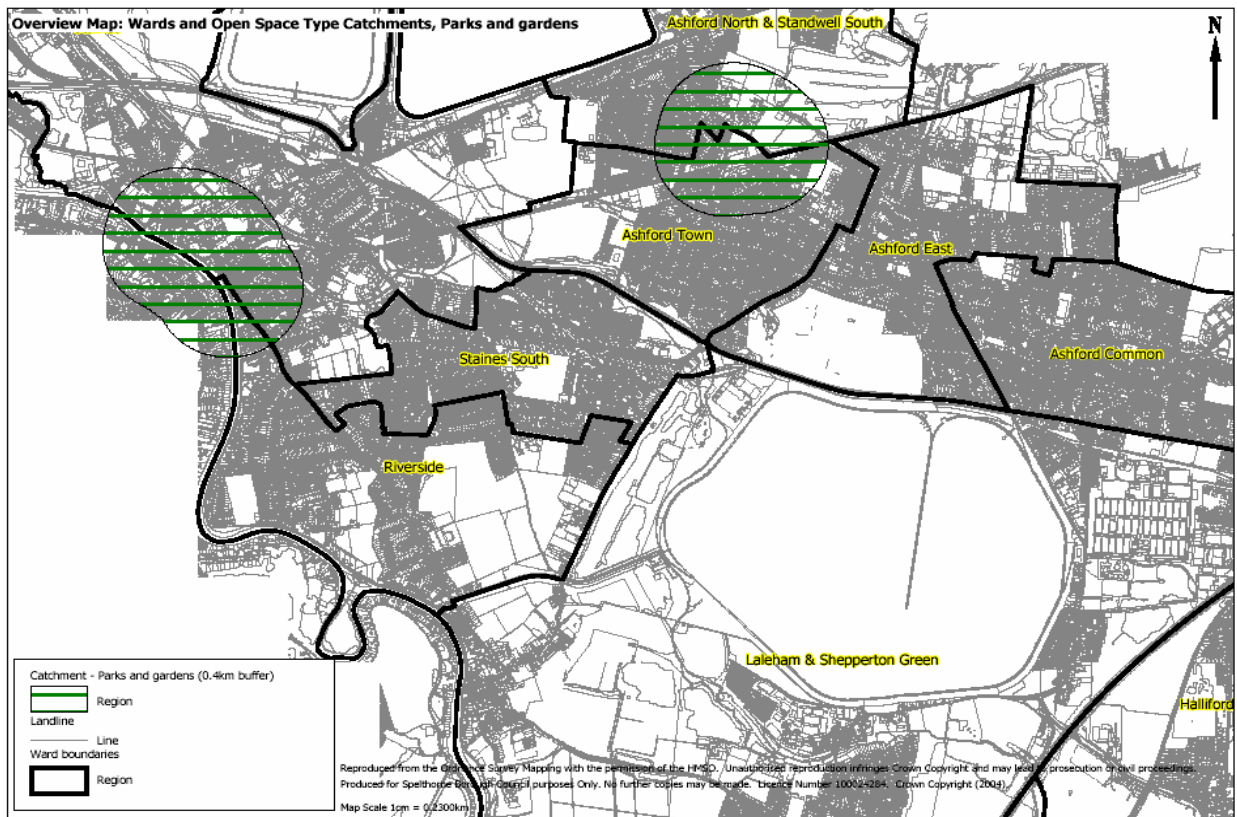
- 3.28 In order to identify geographical areas of importance we have applied the accessibility standard..
- 3.29 When the 400m catchment is applied to each site, this indicates that the majority of the Borough is outside of the accessible catchment area. However, it must be recognised that open space provision of this typology is considered by the Council to be a borough-wide resource.
- 3.30 The seven parks and gardens sites identified in the borough are as listed below:
- Flower Pot Green, Thames Street, Sunbury
  - Selwood Gardens Park, Selwood Gardens, Stanwell
  - Stanwell Recreation Ground, Oaks Road, Stanwell
  - Memorial Gardens, Off Thames Street, Staines
  - Jubilee Gardens, Staines
  - Kings Lawn, Thames Street, Sunbury
  - Sunbury Walled Gardens, Thames Street, Sunbury.
- 3.31 We have highlighted those areas with accessibility deficiencies, particularly within the Ashford wards and also the wards in the south of the borough, such as Shepperton Town and Laleham and Shepperton Green. As illustrated in Figure 3.1: these areas currently have no provision of this open space typology.

**Figure 3.1 – Overview map showing catchment areas of parks and gardens in the Borough**



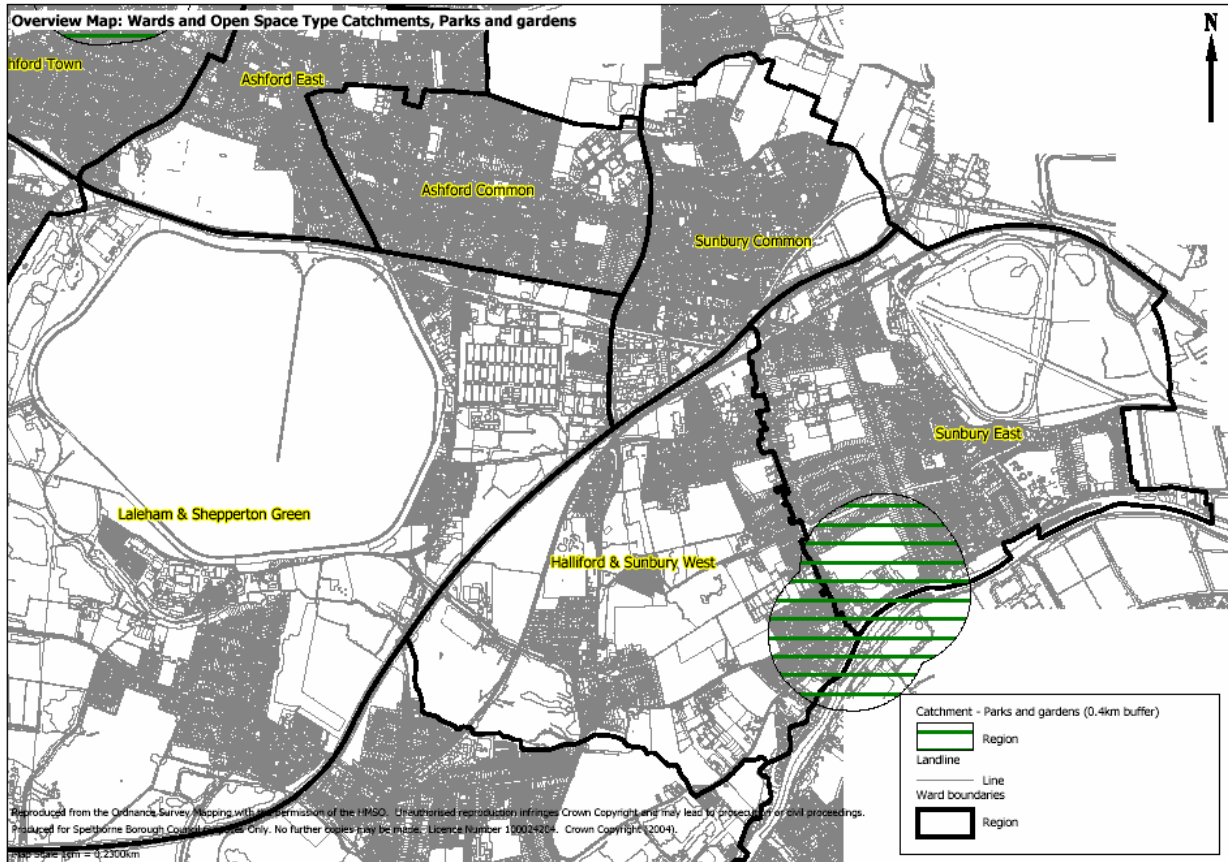
3.32 The majority of sites are within Staines, Stanwell North and Sunbury East. Further analysis of existing park and garden sites reveals that a railway line cuts through the catchment area of one of the sites (as shown in Figure 3.2), thus preventing access by half of that catchment population which further exacerbates the deficiency. A similar scenario is apparent in a further four of the sites, whose catchment areas are bisected by the River Thames (as shown in Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.3), again effectively reducing the accessibility to these sites, albeit from areas outside of the Borough’s administrative area.

**Map 3.2 – map showing catchment areas of parks and gardens in central Spelthorne**

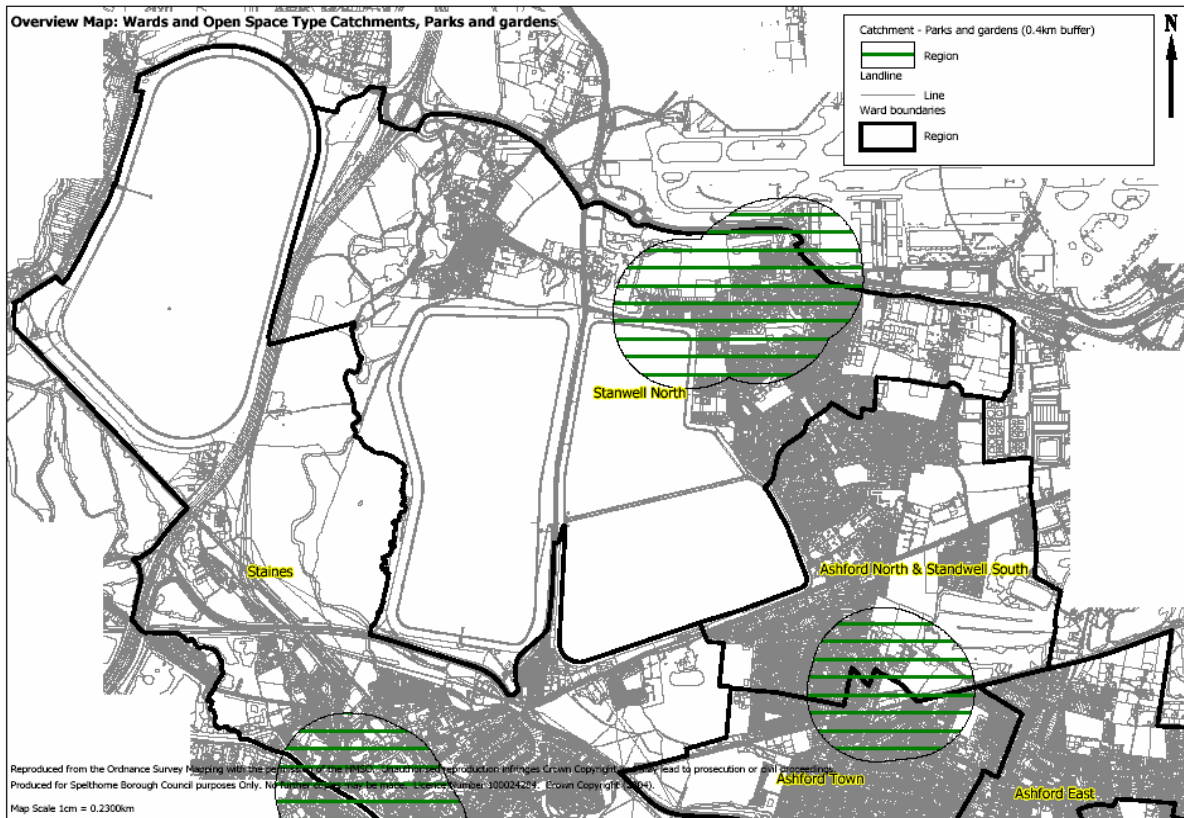


## SECTION 3 – PARKS AND GARDENS

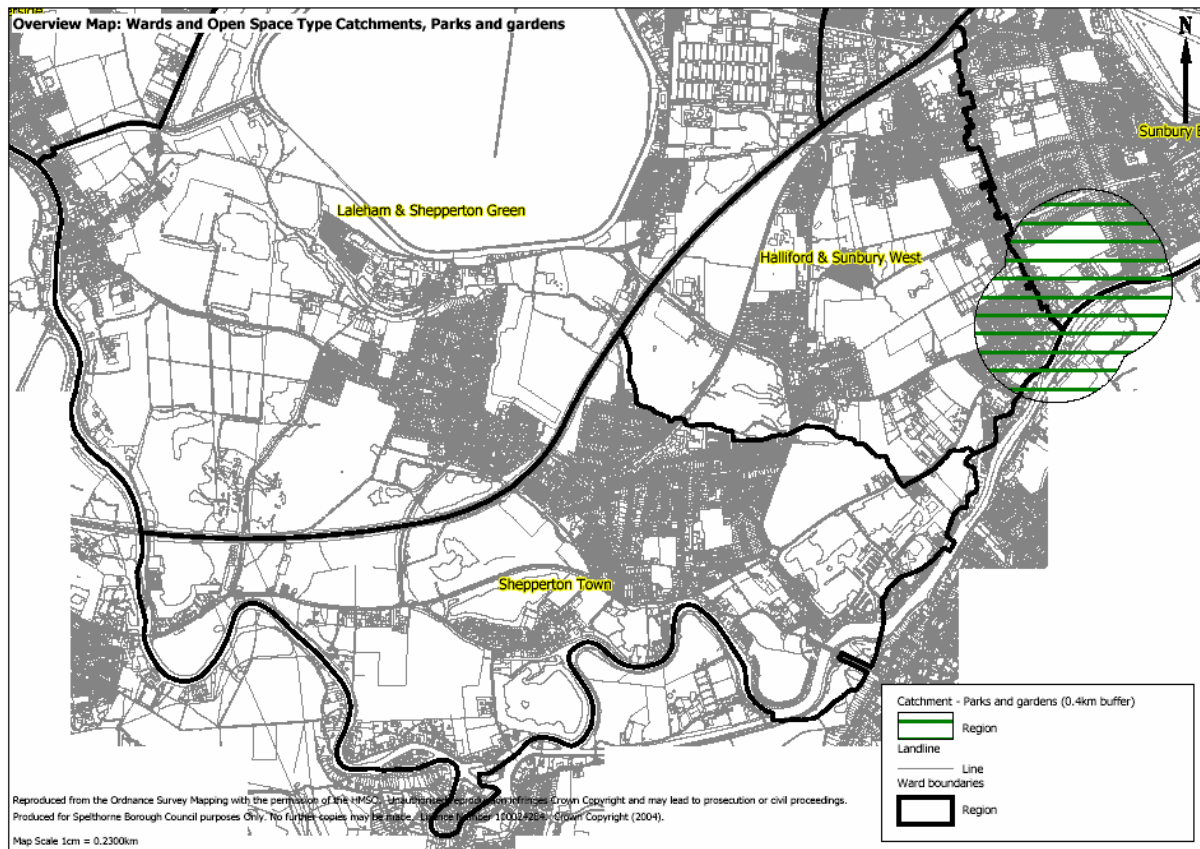
Map 3.3 – map showing catchment areas of parks and gardens in the east of Spelthorne



**Map 3.4 – map to show catchment areas of parks and gardens in the north of the Borough**



**Map 3.5 – map to show catchment areas of parks and gardens in the south of the Borough**



3.33 Figures 3.2 to 3.5 clearly illustrate that there are identified areas, such as Ashford and Shepperton outside of the recommended accessibility catchments. It is important to consider that this typology is of strategic significance in terms of hierarchy within the borough and should therefore be looked at borough-wide. It is also important to consider existing open space provision in areas which are beyond catchment areas as shown: amenity green space sites, natural and semi-natural sites and outdoor sports facilities all provide the opportunity to serve as an informal open space as secondary purpose.

3.34 If however, there remains a perceived need for additional parks and gardens in these areas of the borough, it is recommended that opportunities for re-designation of open space sites (where there is a quantitative surplus) should be further explored. In addition, the potential for developing a greater part of these sites for more formal planted garden areas should be explored.

**Site Visit Value Assessment – Identifying Specific Sites**

3.35 Most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. Most sites with a low level of use would have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked. However there are variations from this, which suggests that these sites would need some further analysis.

- 3.36 Parks and gardens within the borough offer a number of wider benefits, primarily structural and landscape benefits. They define the quality and character of the area and provide a buffer between the higher density urban areas. They also provide a value for recreational amenity.
- 3.37 Of the sites assessed, Memorial Gardens, Staines, has been rated as very good quality, very good accessibility and high usage. This site is an example of good practice and should be protected. Stanwell Recreation Ground, Stanwell has been rated as a good quality, good accessibility and high usage site. Again, this site should be protected as a highly valued open space resource of key significance and worth to the local community.

### **Summary**

A provision standard for parks and gardens has not been set. The provision of parks and gardens should be considered at a borough-wide level as this reflects the strategic significance of this type of open space.

From the consultation it appears that the overall quality, accessibility and usage of parks and gardens in the borough is good. Sites such as Memorial Gardens, Staines and Stanwell Recreation Ground should be protected as sites of high value to residents.

The recommended travel time for people to be able to access a park or garden is a five minute walk, equivalent to 0.4km. This is a catchment area considering the limited number of parks and garden sites within the borough and results in a significant proportion of the population falling outside of a catchment area. Lack of accessibility in areas such as Ashford is further exacerbated by the railway line bisecting the catchment area of four of the sites.

However, it is important to consider that there are sites that by primary purpose have been classified under other PPG 17 typologies in this study, but which have planting and other elements of formal parks and gardens.

### Natural and semi-natural green space

#### Definition

- 4.1 This type of open space includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (eg downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, open and running water, nature reserves and wastelands with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation and bio-diversity.

#### Strategic context and consultation

##### *Conservation importance*

- 4.2 Among the natural and semi-natural areas there are 18 sites including Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), some of the reservoirs and Special Protected Areas (SPA) and some have a local designation as Sites of Nature Conservation Importance – these form an important part of natural open space within the Borough and have a large role to play in encouraging bio-diversity.
- 4.3 Specific sites of importance in the local area include:
- Staines Moor - (SSSI)
  - Laleham Park
  - Church Lammas
  - Sunbury Park
  - Shortwood Common – SSSI
  - Dumsey Meadow (SSSI)
  - Penton Hook (SNCI)
- 4.4 The Spelthorne Local Plan states the intention to protect these sites and further encourage the access to these sites. In addition, a key aim within the Leisure and Cultural Strategy is to *'promote and actively encourage the use of open spaces, countryside areas and the riverside'*.
- 4.5 Specific sites were identified as frequently used by those residents responding to the household survey. These sites included Laleham Park, Church Lammas, Sunbury Park and Shortwood Common.

##### **Setting provision standards**

- 4.6 In setting local standards for natural and semi-natural green space there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other local authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs.

## Quantity

- 4.7 The provision of natural and semi-natural green space amounts to 194.89 hectares in total across the Borough, a local provision of 2.16 ha per 1,000 population. It is worth noting that over half of this provision is at Staines Moor, a SSSI in the northwest of the borough.
- 4.8 Provision is spread mainly across eight wards. 65% of provision is in Staines ward and 15% in Laleham and Shepperton. Five wards have no provision - these wards are primarily urban areas, including Ashford Town and Staines South.
- 4.9 The only definitive national standard for natural and semi-natural areas is the English Nature Accessible Natural Green Space Standard (ANGSt). This suggests that there should be at least 2 ha of accessible natural green space per 1,000 population. It is worth noting that the Council meets the ANGSt national standard if Staines Moor is included within the audit. There is no national or local standard that covers the whole of this typology of open space although English Nature does approve other green space standards set by other organisations.
- 4.10 47% of the household survey respondents felt the provision of natural and semi-natural green space was 'about right'. This is in line with reference to natural and semi-natural sites in the Local Plan, which states that *'there is a good surplus, though over half is common land of which a significant part is within the Staines Moor SSSI where there is low public use'*.
- 4.11 The local standard has therefore been set to reflect the level of current provision, which results in an adequate level of provision across the Borough, despite ten of the 13 wards having provision below the recommended local standard. It is recommended that due to the nature of this type of open space, generally being located outside the urban area that provision is looked at on a borough wide level rather than ward level.

**RECOMMENDED  
LOCAL QUANTITY  
STANDARD**

**2.16 ha per 1,000  
population**

## Quality

- 4.12 There are no definitive national or local quality standards although the Countryside Agency states that land should be managed to conserve or enhance its rich landscape, bio-diversity, heritage and local customs.
- 4.13 From the site visits, the overall quality of natural and semi-natural open across the Borough is considered to be reasonable with all sites considered of good or average quality. The higher quality sites are considered to be Laleham Park, Church Lammas, Shortwood Common and Sunbury Park.
- 4.14 From consultation, sites that have been highlighted as examples of good practice are Laleham Park and Church Lammas. They both provide a varied number of spaces within one geographical area and are considered well managed and well used.
- 4.15 A suggested quality standard for natural and semi-natural green space needs to take into account the aspirations of the public, as well as to incorporate the Council's strategic vision *'to provide and enhance the quality of green spaces in Spelthorne'*. However, where sites have a nature conservation designation the management needs to ensure the protection of the acknowledged scientific interests.

- 4.16 This local quality standard provides the vision for any new provision and also a benchmark for existing natural and semi-natural open space.

**RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD**

***“Natural and semi-natural green spaces should be free from vandalism, litter and anti-social behaviour. The layout design should follow ‘safer by design’ principles with appropriate facilities provided in the least obtrusive manner. Sites should be maintained to protect any nature conservation/interest”.***

**Accessibility**

- 4.17 With regards to accessibility, the definitive national standard has been produced by ANGSt, which recommends 2 ha of accessible natural green space per 1,000 people. There are no existing local standards. The location of natural and semi-natural sites such as woodlands, commons and wetlands are often remote from local communities by their very nature.
- 4.18 Overall, from the site visits, the majority of natural and semi-natural sites were rated as ‘good’ or ‘average’ for accessibility. Sunbury Park, Laleham Park, Donkey Meadow and Dumsey Meadow were all rated as having good access.
- 4.19 Staines Moor is difficult to access but has a wider benefit in terms of visual amenity and SSSI value. In addition, there were a number of sites rated as ‘poor’, for example Shortwood Pond and Shortwood Common. These sites have limited public access and usage, which will be the same for many sites under this typology. Careful consideration needs to be given to balancing public access and conservation of such sites.
- 4.20 Within the household survey, respondents were asked what they consider is an acceptable travel time to reach natural and semi-natural spaces and what their preferred mode of transport to sites under this typology would be. The majority of respondents indicated a drive time, with the 75% level being 10 minutes.

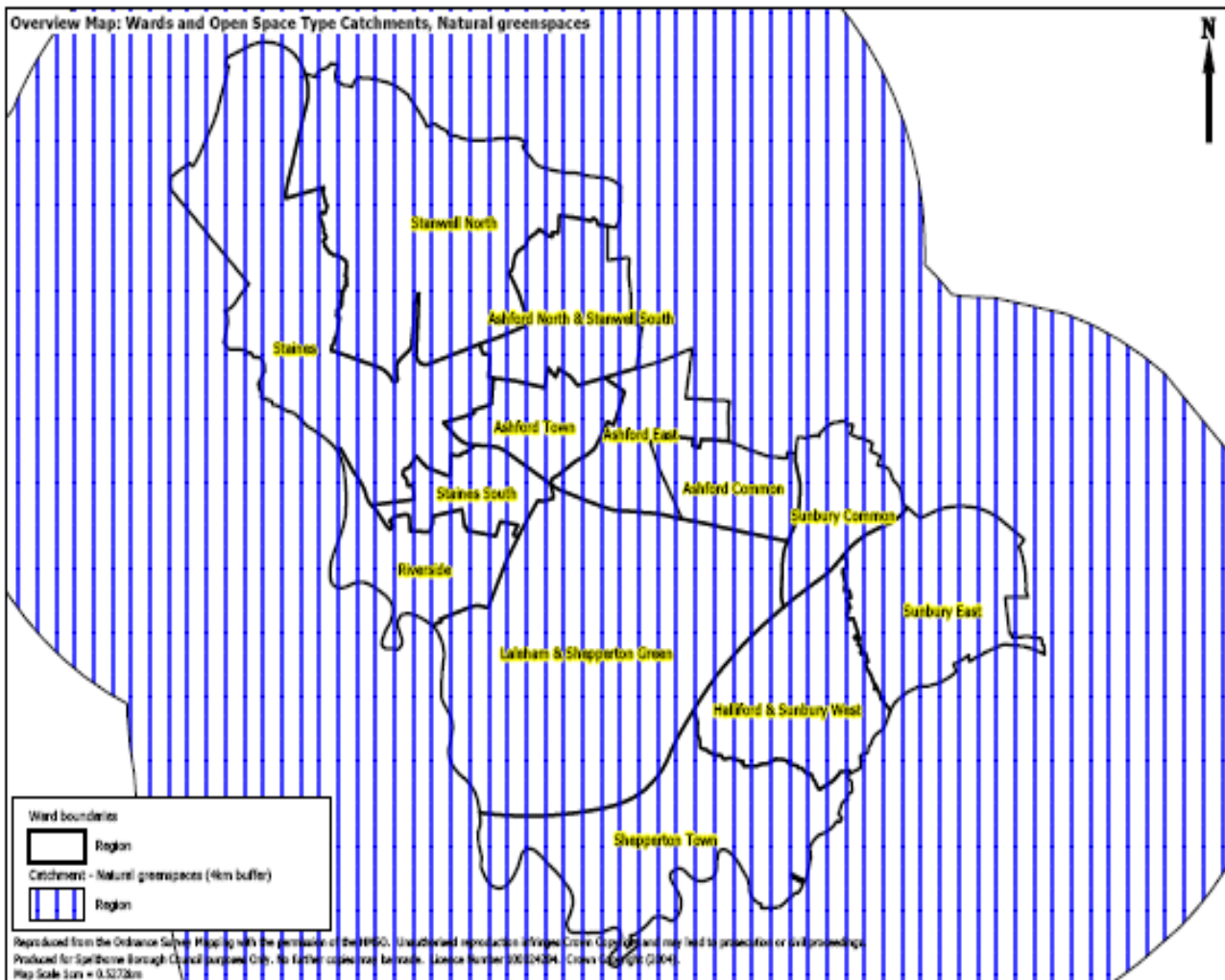
**RECOMMENDED LOCAL  
ACCESSIBILITY  
STANDARD**

***10 minute drive (4km)***

**Applying Provision Standards – Identifying Geographical Areas**

- 4.21 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs we have applied both the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards identify quantitative surplus and deficiencies and the accessibility standards will help to determine where those deficiencies are of high importance.
- 4.22 When applying the quantity and accessibility standards, all of the Borough falls within the catchment of natural and semi-natural sites (as illustrated in map 4.1), although as detailed above there are quantitative deficiencies in ten of the 13 wards. Whilst in principle there is merit in improving accessibility to existing sites such as Staines Moor, Shortwood Common and Dumsey Meadow with nature conservation designated access needs to be carefully balanced with the needs of conservation of which their use for grazing is an important aspect.

**Map 4.1 – overview map showing coverage of natural and semi-natural open space in the North of the Borough**



**Site visit value assessment – identifying specific sites**

- 4.23 Most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. Most sites with a low level of use would have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked.
- 4.24 There are two sites of natural and semi-natural open space within the Borough, which have high quality, high accessibility and high usage. These are Laleham Park and Sunbury Park. These sites should be protected as valuable open space assets for the local community.
- 4.25 Shortwood Common and Shortwood Pond are sites that are used often. They are rated as good quality and yet their accessibility value is low. Having said this, the SSSI status does put limitations on what can be done and the level of use that is appropriate.

- 4.26 Sites such as Donkey Meadow, which is rated as having good accessibility but average usage and of average quality, should be considered in relation to enhancing quality where possible to increase its value and support optimum usage.

### **Summary**

The audit has shown that the borough overall is well provided for in terms of natural and semi-natural spaces. It has a large overall quantity of this type of space and many sites are designated sites of, for example, SSSI. Staines Moor is a significant site within the borough. It makes up approximately 65% of this type of open space within the borough and is an SSSI. In addition, the borough is fortunate to have additional sites distributed across the borough such as Lammas, Sunbury Park and Laleham Park.

From the consultation residents have indicated that provision of this type of open space is adequate. A provision standard of 2.16 ha per 1,000 population has been agreed.

It is proposed that people should be able to access a natural or semi-natural green space within 10 minutes drivetime (equivalent to 4km) of their home throughout the borough. This results in blanket coverage of the borough with all residents within an accessible catchment of a natural and semi-natural site.

Natural and semi-natural sites are rated as the least accessible open space sites within the Borough. This is partly due to the remote location of such sites. The importance of balancing accessibility and conservation of such sites should be recognised and carefully managed.

## Amenity green space

### Definition

- 5.1 This type of open space is most commonly found in housing areas. It includes informal recreation spaces and green spaces in and around housing, with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancing of the appearance of residential or other areas.

**Picture 5.1 – Littleton Green, Shepperton**



### Strategic context and consultation

#### *Doorstep Greens and Millennium Greens (Countryside Agency)*

- 5.2 The Doorstep Greens programme is helping communities around England to create their own new amenity green space, or to transform existing open spaces to meet their needs. Many projects have been funded in urban and rural areas, particularly in disadvantaged areas, to create and manage 'multi-purpose' community greens and for the community to be involved in creating open space.
- 5.3 The aim of the Millennium Greens initiative is to provide new areas of public open space close to people's homes that could be enjoyed permanently by the local community. They should be breathing spaces - places for relaxation, play and enjoyment of nature and pleasant surroundings. They could be small or large, and in urban or rural locations.

**Consultation**

- 5.4 Consultation undertaken as part of the study highlighted the following key issues:
- 81% of respondents rated amenity green space as important but only 26% of people stated they used amenity green space on a daily basis
  - only 6% of respondents stated amenity green space as the type of open space they used most frequently
  - 67% of respondents considered amenity green spaces to be the best maintained.
- 5.5 The returned household questionnaires list a number of amenity green spaces frequently used in various locations across the Borough. These include Cedars Recreation Ground, Upper Halliford Park and Groveley Road Recreation Ground.

**Setting Provision Standards**

- 5.6 In setting local standards for amenity green space there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other local authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs.

**Quantity**

- 5.7 There are 131.73 hectares of amenity green space across the Borough, with sites ranging in size from 0.01 ha (Ferry Lane, Shepperton) to 9.54 ha (Halliford Park Recreation Ground). The current provision of amenity green space per 1,000 population equates to 1.46 ha.
- 5.8 Provision is found in every ward, with only Ashford East having less than 1 ha of amenity green space. However, provision is unevenly spread varying between 0.15 ha in Ashford East to 18.29 ha in Staines. Nine of the 13 wards have provision of over eight hectares, which indicates that the majority of the borough is well provided for in terms of amenity green space. The size of provision therefore varies with some small sites in residential areas having mainly a visual amenity function.
- 5.9 The only national standard for amenity green space provided is by the Rethinking Open Space Report – an average of all local authority applicable standards, which is 2 ha per 1,000 population.
- 5.10 Other national standards make reference to amenity green space, including National Playing Fields Association (NPFA), which states 2 acres (0.8 ha) per 1,000 population for 'playing spaces'. Some local authorities in the past have added an extra 1 acre (0.41 ha) per 1,000 population intended for residential areas.

**RECOMMENDED  
LOCAL QUANTITY  
STANDARD**

**1.46 ha per 1,000  
population**

- 5.11 46% of respondents believe provision of amenity green spaces sites to be 'about right'. However, as described above, this provision, although spread across all wards in the Borough, has areas of higher concentration. In line with current provision, we recommend a local standard of 1.46 ha. This indicates an adequate level of provision borough wide but also draws out some deficiencies by ward. The wards in the south of the Borough ie Shepperton Town, Halliford and Sunbury West, are particularly well provided for, whereas Ashford East, Ashford Common and Sunbury Common are areas of quantitative deficiency.
- 5.12 As the level of provision of amenity green space is above the recommended standard within some wards, notably in the south of the borough, there is potential for some of these sites to be re-designated as other types of open space provision. Re-designation of sites would only be in those areas above the minimum standard and with multiple sites within a single accessibility catchment. Site specific options for re-designation are explored in Section 12.
- 5.13 In line with the PPG17 Companion Guide, it is appropriate to consider a minimum acceptable size component within the provision standards as this provides a transparent, policy based way of deciding whether to require a developer to make or contribute to off-site provision. The Council have set a minimum size of 0.1 ha, this will ensure that provision is of a reasonable size to be of benefit to local communities and individual sites are cost effective to maintain.

### **Quality**

- 5.14 There is no national or local quality standard for amenity green space. The Council state that amenity areas are particularly important for informal play and they make a contribution to the character of an area, its recreational value, nature conservation value and provide a break in the built environment.
- 5.15 From the site visits, overall quality of amenity green space across the Borough is considered to be good or average with 24 sites meeting the average quality rating and 18 sites rated good. Only two sites were rated as very good, these are:
- Knowle Green
  - Stanwell Village Green.
- 5.16 Seven sites within the borough were given poor or very poor quality ratings during the site assessments. These were:
- Jordens Close Open Space (very poor)
  - Lauser Road Open Space (very poor)
  - Gordon Road
  - Preston Road
  - Lime Crescent
  - Holywell Way
  - Greeno Park (Shepperton Recreation Ground).

## SECTION 5 – AMENITY GREEN SPACE

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- 5.17 The majority of amenity green space sites generally provide structural and landscaping benefits rather than any other wider benefit.
- 5.18 In general the quality of the areas are considered satisfactory and residents believe these are the best-maintained open space type in the Borough. The main concerns are with regards to dog fouling, vandalism, litter and anti social behaviour.
- 5.19 A quality standard for amenity green space should therefore include elements of these aspirations to meet the needs of the public, and also other local and national standards.

- 5.20 This local quality standard provides the vision for any new provision and also a quality benchmark for existing amenity green space to, most notably those sites listed in paragraph 5.16.

### **QUALITY VISION STANDARD**

***“Amenity green space should be free from dog fouling, vandalism, litter and anti-social behaviour. The layout and design should follow ‘safer by design’ principles and sites should be clean and well maintained with clearly defined boundaries, high quality facilities appropriate to their use and appropriate planting”.***

### **Accessibility**

- 5.21 With regards to accessibility there are no definitive national or local standards.
- 5.22 From the site visits, the accessibility of amenity green space across the Borough is considered to be average. The highest rated site was Lower Hampton Road, followed by Staines Park, Keywood Drive and Cedars Park Recreation Ground. The lowest rated sites were Jordens Close Open Space and Lauser Road Open Space.
- 5.23 On the whole, borough residents who use open space were satisfied with the visibility of the site entrance and with accessibility. Levels of dissatisfaction were relatively low and related to aspects such as accessibility with pushchairs or wheelchairs.
- 5.24 The consultations highlighted specific accessibility issues to Shepperton Recreation Ground where there is a need to park and walk to it. Other factors include a lack of parking in residential areas, with cars being parked on grass verges.
- 5.25 In the household survey, of those who use amenity green spaces most frequently, 100% walk, with 75% walking five minutes, the equivalent of 0.4km. This data was supported by the findings from the schools Internet survey.

### **RECOMMENDED LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD**

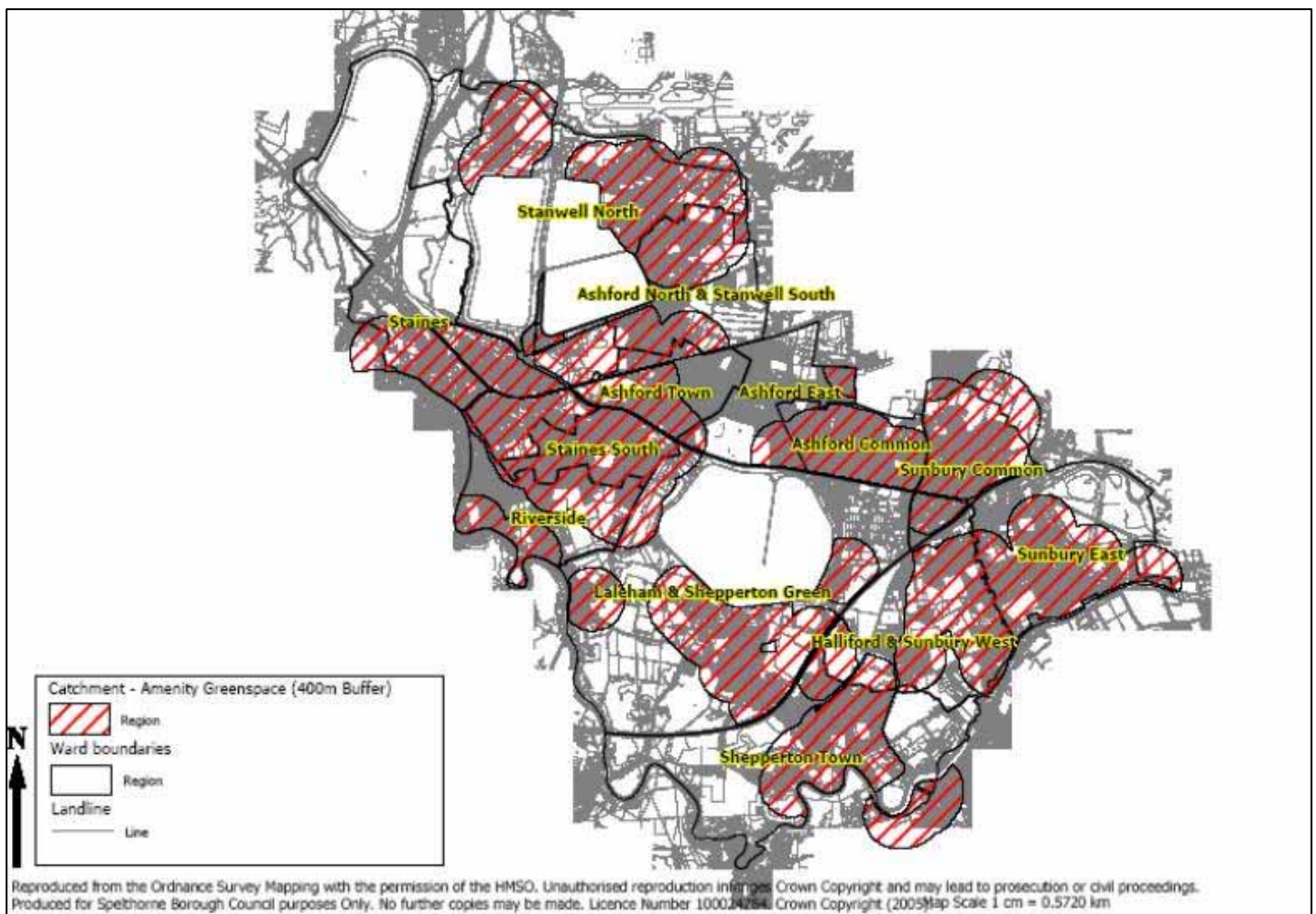
***5 minute walk from residential areas***

***(400m)***

## Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 5.26 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs we have applied both the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards identify quantitative surplus and deficiencies and the accessibility standards will help to determine where those deficiencies are of high importance.
- 5.27 There are a number of minor deficiencies identified within the quantitative analysis. Figure 5.1 illustrates areas of the borough within an accessibility catchment area. It shows that there are numerous amenity greenspace sites located throughout the Borough and most residential areas are within an accessible catchment of a site (even when taking in to account the impact of physical boundaries). The exceptions are Ashford, Riverside and parts of Sunbury; these are the main residential areas located outside a reasonable catchment of existing amenity green space.

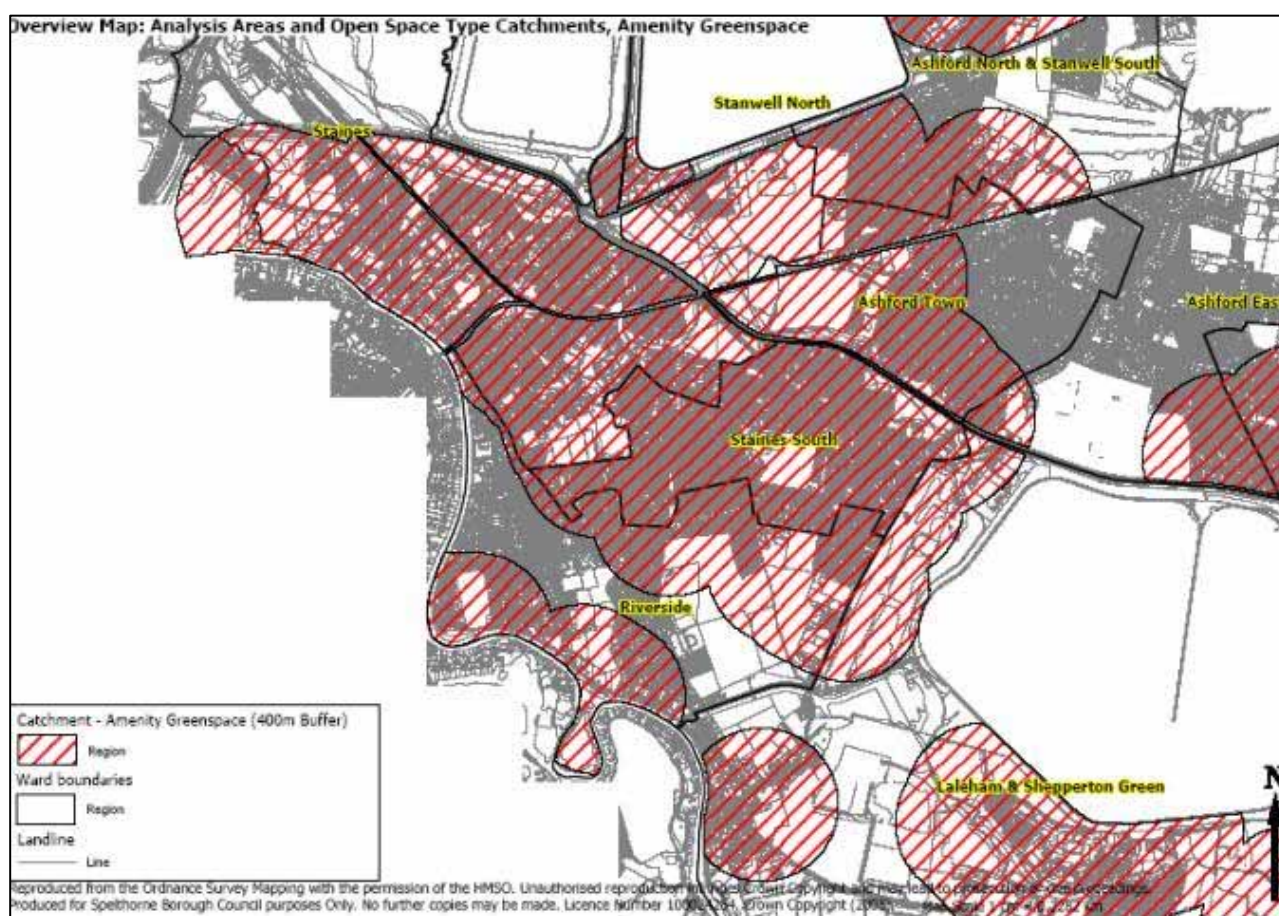
**Figure 5.1 Overview of amenity green space accessible catchment areas in the Borough**



## SECTION 5 – AMENITY GREEN SPACE

- 5.28 Six of the Borough wards are above the minimum standard of amenity green space provision in six of the 13 wards - Ashford North and Stanwell South, Ashford Town, Halliford and Sunbury, Shepperton Town, Staines and Stanwell North. As mentioned in Sections 3 and 4, this may provide opportunities for addressing shortfalls in other open space typologies. Ashford East has the highest quantitative deficiency, and although accessibility to existing sites should be considered as a priority, further analysis may be required to determine where this quantitative deficiency is located within this area.

**Figure 5.2 – overview of catchment areas of amenity green space in the Centre of the Borough**



- 5.29 Open spaces such as football pitches are classified under outdoor sports facilities as their primary purpose. In a number of instances, however, pitches do provide an amenity green space function in areas where there are limited amenity green spaces. This must be taken into account within the analysis of amenity green space.

### **Site visit value assessment – identifying specific sites**

- 5.30 Assessing quality and value is fundamental to effective planning for open space. This can be done simply through comparing value with quality or in more detail by assessing all options and combinations when comparing quality, accessibility and usage of sites.
- 5.31 Of the 51 sites assessed, 29 of these were considered to have high use, 15 with average use, leaving seven amenity green space sites with low/no usage levels.
- 5.32 Most sites with a low level of use would normally have an ‘average’ or ‘poor’ quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked. This certainly seems to be the pattern and there are no sites of low use with higher quality or accessibility.
- 5.33 Similarly, most sites that have a high level of use would normally have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. However, there are variations from this and there are a number of sites identified where the use level is ‘often’ or high and yet the quality and access are average or poor, which suggests that these sites would need some further analysis and should be priority sites for enhancement.
- 5.34 Examples of these sites which require further investigation are:
- Woodthorpe Road Open Space
  - Preston Road AGS (often)
  - Lime Crescent AGS (often)
  - Belgrave Road AGS (often)
  - Alexandra Recreation Ground
  - Catherine Drive AGS (often)
  - Groveley Road
  - Holywell Way AGS (often)
  - Hadrian Way Open Space
  - Strodes Crescent AGS
  - Royal Estate AGS
  - Shepperton Recreation Ground
  - Hengrove Recreation Ground
  - Keywood Drive
  - Scott Freeman Gardens
  - Selwood Gardens Park (often)
  - Long Lane Recreation (often)

## **SECTION 5 – AMENITY GREEN SPACE**

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- Brookside Avenue AGS (often)
  - Diamedes Avenue Open Space (often)
  - Cordelia Road Open Space (often).
- 5.35 There are several sites with average to low quality and average accessibility, which have low/no usage. These are:
- Gordon Road AGS
  - Heathcroft Avenue AGS
  - Jordens Close Open Space (no usage)
  - Lauser Road Open Space (no usage)
  - Splash Meadow
  - Shepperton Green
  - Littleton Playing Field.
- 5.36 These sites need the quality and value enhancing and the accessibility issues addressing. Alternatively these sites could be primary sites for any re-designation to other open space types, assuming that there are alternative amenity greenspace sites within the immediate catchment area.

### **Summary**

Currently the Borough is well provided for in terms of this type of open space. On the whole these spaces are valued by local people and are of an average to good standard in terms of quality and accessibility.

The catchment area analysis indicates that such spaces should be seen as local neighbourhood facilities, and people should be able to access an amenity green space within a five minute walk (or 400m) of their home.

When applying the proposed Borough-wide standard of 1.46 ha per 1000 population, there is currently an adequate level of provision. The minimum site size should be 0.1ha.

The Council should seek to investigate sites of low/ poor quality. In addition, the Council should continue to gain provision for this type of space as part of all new proposed housing developments in accordance with the standards either in the form of new space to meet the increased population or in quality improvement to existing sites in areas of need.

## Provision for children and young people

### Definition

- 6.1 This type of open space includes areas such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters with a primary purpose to provide opportunities for play and social interaction involving children and young people.

**Picture 6.1 – Laleham Park Play Area**



### Strategic context and consultation

- 6.2 The Council has invested significantly in refurbishing existing sites and providing new play areas over recent years but some parts of the Borough still do not have standard provision. The Leisure and Culture Strategy for Spelthorne has identified more play facilities for children and more safe places for teenagers to go as key priorities.
- 6.3 Consultation throughout this study has highlighted a number of issues with regards to provision for children and young people:
- there is a perceived lack of provision of open space for young people and children, particularly teenagers and young adults. It appears that this is a problem in all areas of the Borough, which is resulting in disturbances to the general public, and anti-social behaviour problems.
  - difficult issues include vandalism, upkeep and nuisance for residents
  - there has been a move away from the 1970's policy of many small sites close to housing towards larger areas sited further out into open space

## **SECTION 6 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

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- closer supervision and the chance of wider supervised usage would be preferable
- many of the playgrounds are old and taking into account the positioning of major roads such as the M3 and A30, it is difficult to meet the NPFA standards
- with regards to teenagers, consideration should be given to more dedicated provision such as that provided through the Liveability project at Lammas Recreation Ground with the introduction of a skatepark. These would be better used and policed if sited in close proximity to existing community facilities. This might encourage both casual and organised use of facilities.

6.4 The consultations flagged up a number of play areas frequently used across the Borough. These included Halliford Park Play Area (site # 290), Groveley Road Play Area (site # 144) and Laleham Park YPC (site # 146).

### **Setting provision standards**

6.5 In setting local standards for provision for children and young people there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other local authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs.

### **Quantity**

6.6 From the audit, the current provision for children and young people is 3.50 hectares in total across the Borough. The current provision for children and young people per 1,000 population equates to 0.038 hectares.

6.7 The main national standard for the provision of children and young people comes from the NPFA 6 Acre standard which stipulates 2.43 ha of 'playing space' per 1,000 population, consisting of 0.81 ha per 1,000 population for children's playing space.

6.8 In the consultation, 60% of respondents stated that they felt the current provision for children and young people was not enough, whilst only 32% indicated they thought this particular provision was 'about right'.

**RECOMMENDED  
LOCAL QUANTITY  
STANDARD**

***To be confirmed,  
current provision  
0.038 ha per 1,000  
population***

6.9 The consultation results support details within the Local Plan, which states that there is an overall shortage of equipped children's play and acknowledges that despite a refurbishment of existing sites, many parts of the Borough do not have the standard provision, most notably Ashford. This is evident in the quantitative analysis, where Ashford wards have an undersupply. Two wards in the Borough (Staines South and Sunbury East) have no provision at all and seven are below the average level of provision per 1,000 population.

- 6.10 The Council recognise the need for additional facilities for children and young people and the Local Plan states that ‘*opportunities to provide further sites will be taken as they arise*’, which will help to alleviate the current levels of deficiency across the borough.
- 6.11 To address the quantitative deficiencies it is recommended that the local standard is set above the current level of provision. A minimum provision by size will be dependent on the type of play provision, which will be based on the latest NPFA guidelines for LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs.

### **Quality**

- 6.12 Guidance on NPFA LAPs<sup>1</sup>, LEAPs<sup>2</sup> and NEAPs<sup>3</sup> indicate some quality aspirations in terms of providing seating for adults, a varied range of equipment and teenager meeting places for teenagers.

#### *Footnotes:*

<sup>1</sup> – *Local Areas for Play*

<sup>2</sup> – *Local Equipped Areas for Play*

<sup>3</sup> – *Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play*

- 6.13 The household survey revealed concerns regarding quality and provision of sites for children and young people. The site visits highlighted the quality of some play areas as good, with the most highly rated site being Stanwell Recreation Ground Play Area (site # 137), and others were rated as poor, such as Studios Road (site # 56).
- 6.14 Further consultation supported this conclusion with good quality provision specifically at Lammas Recreation Ground (site # 283/284). Overall the main concern is that current play areas are vandalised and run down, dominated by teenagers displaying anti social behaviour as there is a lack of mixed provision.
- 6.15 Much is being done to improve provision for children and young people, specifically through the Liveability Park Project, through which the Council received £2.135 million funding from the ODPM.

#### ***Example of Improving Practice – Lammas Recreation Ground Skate Park***

*There appear to be many problems within Spelthorne in terms of vandalism by youth/teenagers of play areas with a lack of provision for this age group. However the skate park at Lammas Recreational Ground is an example for other sites in Spelthorne to follow. This is a new skate park aimed at teenagers and older children, which has community backing and user ownership of the site. Users have formed a forum to ensure that the skatepark is successful before embarking on plans to develop further skateparks across the Borough. The problems elsewhere with vandalism of sites is not as evident mainly due to the ownership by users and its high usage.*

- 6.16 A quality standard has been developed to address the concerns of local residents and build on enhancement of provision and good practice that has been undertaken under the Liveability Parks Fund.

**QUALITY STANDARD**

***“Facilities for children and young people should be free from dog fouling, vandalism, litter and anti social behaviour. The layout and design should follow ‘safer by design’ principles and sites should be well maintained, appropriately planted and equipped to provide range of activities to suit varied interests and age groups.”***

**Accessibility**

- 6.17 With regards to accessibility there are national standards for LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs:
- LAPs – suitable for children aged 4-6 years; 1 minute walk or within 100 metres with a minimum area of 100m<sup>2</sup>. LAPs typically have no play equipment and therefore could be considered as amenity green space
  - LEAPs – suitable for children aged a minimum of 5 years; minimum area of 400m<sup>2</sup> or within 5 minutes walking time along pedestrian routes
  - NEAPs – suitable for children aged a minimum of 8 years; minimum area of 1000m<sup>2</sup> and should be located within 15 minutes walking time along pedestrian routes.
- 6.18 Further analysis should be undertaken with regards to play provision in the borough in line with the above national standards. It is recommended that this be progressed within a dedicated play strategy for the borough.
- 6.19 Information gained from the site visits show that access to the majority of sites is considered good with no one particular site scored more highly than another. None of the sites were considered poor or very poor.
- 6.20 In general, site access to play areas is reasonable with the main concerns being information and signage.
- 6.21 From the household survey the general perception is that a travel time of five minutes is reasonable for access to play areas. 75% walk to these sites, which emphasises the need for local provision.

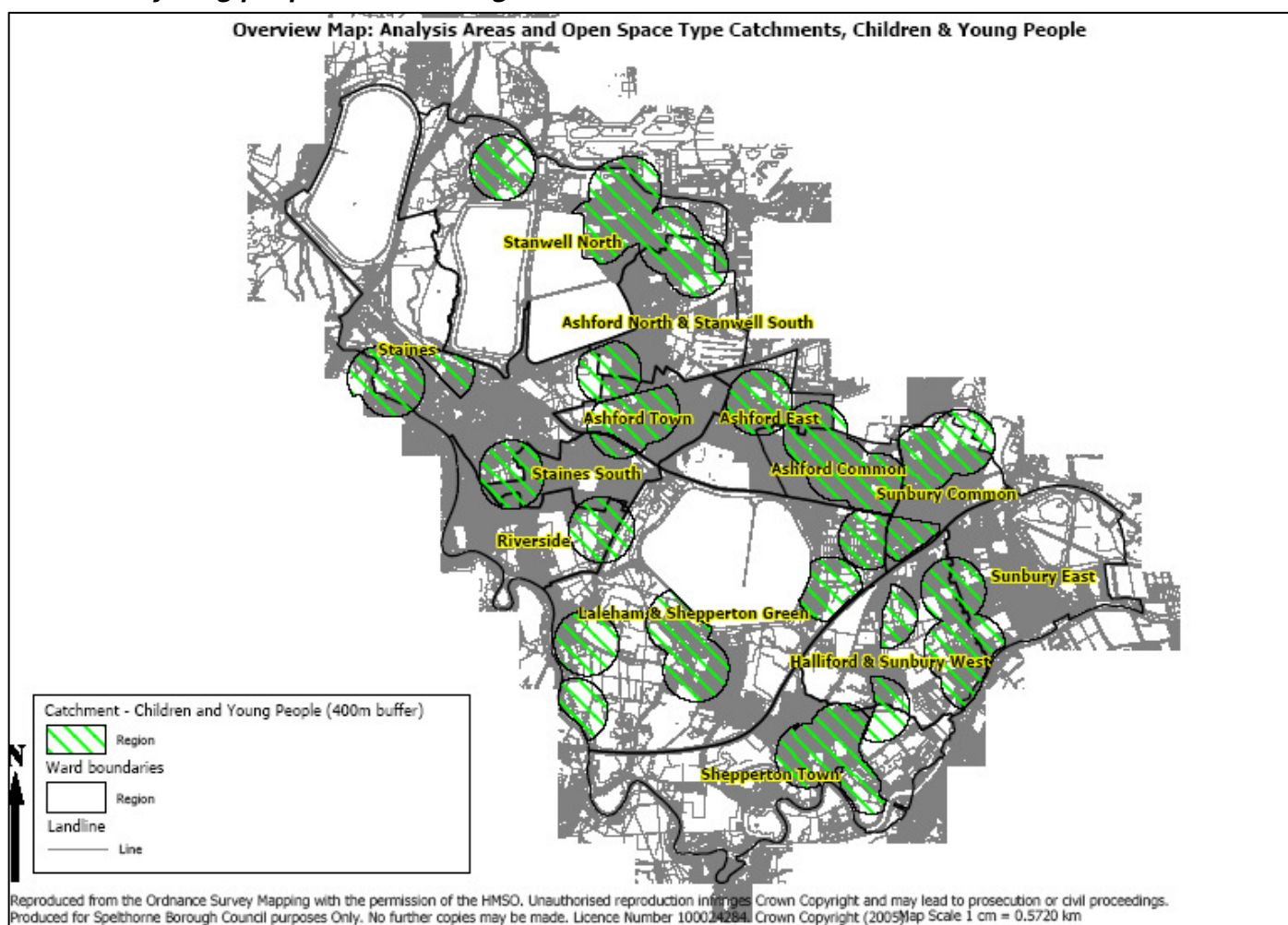
**RECOMMENDED LOCAL  
ACCESSIBILITY  
STANDARD**

***5 minute walk from  
residential areas***

### **Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas**

- 6.22 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with required local needs the quantity and accessibility standards are applied together. The quantity standards identify quantitative surplus and deficiencies and the accessibility standards will help to determine where those deficiencies are of high importance.
- 6.23 Consultation suggests there are many deficiencies for children and young people within the borough. However the deficiencies are concentrated in specific areas, as illustrated in Figure 6.1 below.

**Figure 6.1 Overview map showing coverage of provision for children and young people in the borough**



- 6.24 The specific residential areas with both a quantitative deficiency and outside the catchment of existing play areas are a high priority for new provision. These are predominantly within Staines, Sunbury, Ashford and Stanwell.
- 6.25 As is the case for many open space sites in the borough, the major roads and railways that bisect the Borough, as well as the vast expanses of water, negatively impact on the effective catchment area.
- 6.26 Consideration should be given to what other open space provision is within these areas of deficiency and whether there is a need for new provision. There is scope to provide facilities for children and young people at a number of amenity green space sites. In addition, consideration should be given to whether there is a need to enhance the accessibility and quality of existing sites. This is further explored within Section 12.

### **Site visit value assessment – identifying specific sites**

- 6.27 Assessing quality and value is fundamental to effective planning of future provision for children and young people. This can be done simply through comparing value with quality or by assessing all options and combinations when comparing quality, accessibility and usage of sites.
- 6.28 There are 38 sites providing for children and young people. Of the 21 assessed, all were considered as having good /high usage levels. The majority also benefit from a good quality and accessibility rating, which is to be expected as these factors are related or interlinked. There is one site of particularly good quality and access, which is Stanwell Recreation Ground Play Area (site # 137). This is considered a highly valuable site.
- 6.29 There are a few sites that deviate from this ideal such as Alexandra Recreation Ground Play Area (site # 156), Caesars Way Play Area, Shepperton (site # 299) and Shepperton Recreation Ground Play Area (site # 145). These have average quality and accessibility ratings. In order to maintain and increase their usage further, these issues should be addressed.
- 6.30 Overall, there are no sites that have low usage but there are sites which are used 'often' and have average quality and accessibility ratings. For example, Caesars Way Play Area (site # 299) and Shepperton Recreation Ground Play Area (site # 145). Littleton Recreation Ground YPC (site # 148) is rated as being average in quality and Groveley Road Play Area (site # 144) is rated as having average accessibility. The Wickets (site # 35), Stanwell Moor Playground (site # 135), Laleham Park YPC (site # 146/147) and Donkey Meadow were all rated as having good accessibility and quality but are visited only often.
- 6.31 In order to address the perception that there is not enough provision for children and young people, enhancement of the sites of lower quality and addressing any accessibility issues should be a priority to attract even greater use.

### Outdoor sports facilities

#### Definition

- 7.1 Outdoor sports facilities is a wide-ranging category of open space and includes natural or artificial surfaces either publicly or privately owned which are used for sport and recreation. Examples include playing pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens and golf courses with the primary purpose of participation in outdoor sports.
- 7.2 Outdoor water sports facilities are considered separately at the end of this section.

Picture 7.1 – Laleham Park



#### Strategic context and consultation

- 7.3 There is currently no local playing pitch strategy. However, the Local Plan recognises the importance of playing fields and sports pitches and as a consequence these types of open space are protected from development due to their recreational value.
- 7.4 A policy on sports provision for the development of team sports in Spelthorne's parks was put to and resolved by Council members in June 2004 through a recognised need to develop management plans for parks. The proposal was to proceed with self-management for certain pitches *“but to ensure that the open space is protected for the benefit of the local community.”*
- 7.5 Consultation throughout the study has highlighted a number of issues with regards to outdoor sports facilities: