

Open Space Assessment

SPELTHORNE BOROUGH COUNCIL



Spelthorne Takes Shape

November 2019



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study defines the type and distribution of open spaces within Spelthorne and identifies the quantity and quality of the provision, to determine locations where there is under provision or where the quality could be improved. The study will be used to make recommendations to meet future requirements.

The study has been produced in line with national planning policy and guidance and has been done specifically for Spelthorne to ensure that the evidence base that supports the emerging Spelthorne Local Plan is robust and as up-to-date as possible.

Key findings

A total of 1995.25 ha of open space is identified across the Borough. Of this, 639.89 ha is deemed accessible through being open to the general public and not requiring a fee or membership to enter. The accessible open space figure equates to 6.45 ha of open space per 1000 population.

There are identified shortfalls in parks and recreation grounds, amenity green space and provision of children and teenagers across the Borough both in terms of supply and accessibility.

The provision of open space in the Borough rates average to good on the whole in terms of quality. This is when assessed against accessibility; facilities; safety and security and cleanliness and maintenance.

The Borough has some exemplar sites with Sunbury walled garden and Staines cemetery recipients of the Green Flag award. The Borough Parks of Staines Park, Fordbridge Park, Laleham Park, Sunbury Park and Lammas Park are all of high quality and provide significant benefits to the community.

Many of the poorer quality sites tended to be in urban areas where usage is likely to be high and maintenance has not kept up with this. There are also issues of anti-social behaviour and vandalism in many of these spaces. Some spaces in Stanwell and Ashford were considered lower quality and in need of improvement.

Significant housing growth is anticipated in the Borough during the plan period (2020-2035) in order to meet the identified housing needs of 603 dwellings per annum. This places pressures on both land and the need to ensure that open space provision is suitable to keep up with the level of growth required.

Existing open spaces will be protected to ensure that current provision is retained. New provision should be directed to the areas which have deficiencies in provision identified. Improvements to the quality of those spaces rated poorly is a necessity to ensure that local communities benefit from the value that these spaces can provide.

1. INTRODUCTION

The need for the Study

- 1.1 The purpose of this study is to identify the quantity and quality of open space across the Borough as well as the classifications and broad locations of the spaces. The Open Space Study will form part of the evidence which will inform the emerging Local Plan 2020-2035 for Spelthorne Borough Council.

Definition of Open Space

- 1.2 The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (section 336) defines open space as 'any land laid out as a public garden or used for the purposes of public recreation or land which is a disused burial ground'.
- 1.3 In addition, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) definition of open space extends this further by stating that 'all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity'.
- 1.4 For the purpose of this report, open space is used as a collective term that brings together the provision of parks and gardens, natural and semi natural spaces including reservoirs and common land, spaces that provide for outdoor sports, amenity green spaces, children's play areas and provision for teenagers. In addition, the term open space also includes allotments, cemeteries and churchyards. The classifications are shown in greater detail within Table 1. The classifications are in line with previous guidance under Planning Policy Guidance Note 171 which has now been withdrawn and archived.
- 1.5 Open spaces are important as part of a Green Infrastructure network which supports biodiversity and wildlife habitats.

Borough Profile

- 1.6 The area of the Borough is 5,118ha and is bounded by Heathrow Airport to the north, areas of open Green Belt land within London boroughs to the east. The River Thames forms the southern boundary to the Borough and also part of its west edge in addition to the M25 with the Wraysbury Reservoir beyond. 65% of the Borough is designated as Green Belt which equates to 3,324 ha and includes the reservoirs.
- 1.7 The urban area of the Borough occupies about 35% of the total area. The largest part of the urban area of Spelthorne lies across the middle of the Borough from east to west. Stanwell, Ashford and Sunbury comprise a continuous urban area with no separation by open land and there is only a small gap between Staines and Ashford. The settlements of Stanwell Moor,

¹ Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation

Laleham, Shepperton, Upper Halliford and Charlton are separate urban areas albeit by only small distances.

- 1.8 The populations of the Borough's key settlements were recorded in the 2011 Census as follows:

Table 1 Population of the Borough

Settlement	Population (2011 census)
Ashford	26,547
Staines	25,156
Sunbury	20,143
Shepperton	10,992
Stanwell	10,694
Stanwell Moor	1,371

- 1.9 The topography of the Borough in the Thames Valley is such that the area is flat and low lying. In addition to the Thames, the Borough is crossed by two tributaries, the Ash and Colne. The River Colne runs through the northern part of the Borough down to Staines-upon-Thames with the main branch flowing into the River Thames on the reach above Penton Hook Lock at Staines-upon-Thames, whilst the River Ash (a distributary of the River Colne) snakes through the southernmost section of the Borough before joining the Thames.
- 1.10 The rivers and river landscapes provide attractive areas of countryside with significant opportunities for recreation. There is public access to much of the Thames riverside in Spelthorne, although access to the River Ash, Colne and the River Thames downstream of Shepperton Lock is more limited.
- 1.11 Spelthorne's geography is also dominated by the elevated forms of four reservoirs: Wraysbury, King George VI and Staines Reservoirs (which are all designated as part of a Special Protection Area (SPA) for Wildfowl conservation) in the north-west corner and the Queen Mary Reservoir located more centrally to the south-east. Whilst there is access via a public walkway to the Staines Reservoirs and the Queen Mary Reservoir has arrangements with a club for access for watersports, these water bodies make only a limited contribution to the recreational resources of the Borough. In total Spelthorne's reservoirs amount to an area of approximately 870 ha.
- 1.12 In addition, due to the legacy of mineral working the Borough contains many lakes and wetland areas, particularly around the edges of the Borough. Many of these are now used for angling and others host water sport activities.

- 1.13 Due to its low lying location and the extensive fluvial network the area is liable to flooding with 17.5% lying within Flood Zone 3 around the south and west of the Borough. To address these issues the River Thames Scheme proposes to construct a new flood channel between 30 to 60 metres wide built in 3 sections, including a section between Laleham and Shepperton.
- 1.14 Another particular feature of the Borough is the substantial swathes of common land, particularly to the north and east of Staines. Much of this land, notably Staines Moor, is of nature conservation importance.
- 1.15 Staines cemetery and Sunbury Walled Garden are current holders of the Green Flag award within the Borough. This award recognises and rewards well managed parks and green spaces, setting the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world.²
- 1.16 Spelthorne is an area made up of small and medium size towns and villages. There are many important natural environments across the Borough which are afforded various levels of protection. The Borough has a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Ramsar and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). In addition, a number of green spaces are protected through the Protected Urban Open Spaces (PUOS) designation.
- 1.17 The Council's *Spelthorne Health and Well-Being Strategy* 2016-19 notes the important role that access to recreation and leisure provision plays in ensuring the health and quality of life for the Borough's residents.

Assessing open spaces provision in the Borough

- 1.18 In order to fully assess provision across the Borough, a ward specific approach has been used. This approach allows the ability to capture population statistics more accurately which have been used as the basis for much of the current and future assessment of needs. By using ward boundaries, this assists in determining accessibility for a 'local' catchment of people and allows for deficiencies to be more identifiable. The wards used in the assessments are laid out below in Table 2.
- 1.19 The population figures used for Spelthorne as a whole and then as part of the breakdown for each ward are based on ONS mid-year estimates for 2017.

² <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/>

Table 2 Population of Spelthorne by Ward

Ward	Total Population (2017)
Spelthorne	99,120
Ashford Common	8,111
Ashford East	7,273
Ashford North & Stanwell South	9,343
Ashford Town	7,146
Halliford & Sunbury West	6,035
Laleham & Shepperton Green	8,113
Riverside & Laleham	6,764
Shepperton Town	6,625
Staines	8,640
Staines South	7,269
Stanwell North	8,304
Sunbury Common	8,200
Sunbury East	7,297

Source: Office for National Statistics mid-year estimates 2017

2. POLICY CONTEXT

National Policy

- 2.1 The study has been produced in line with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)³ which sets out the Government's national planning policies for England and how these should be applied by Local Authorities.
- 2.2 Within the Framework, paragraphs 96 and 97 recognise that access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities.
- 2.3 This places a requirement on Local Authorities to provide up-to-date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses as well as identifying opportunities for new provision.
- 2.4 The NPPF states that existing open space and facilities, 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 benefits of which clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 2.5 The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) states that open space should be taken into account for new development and when considering proposals that may affect existing open space. Open Space, which includes all open space of public value, can take many forms, from formal sports pitches to open areas within a development, linear corridors and country parks. It can provide health and recreation benefits to people living and working nearby; have an ecological value and contribute to green infrastructure as well as being an important part of the landscape and setting of built development and an important component in the achievement of sustainable development.

Former Planning Practice Guidance

- 2.6 The NPPF and PPG both replace Planning Practice Guidance 17 (PPG17) however the principles and approach within PPG17 are still considered best practice when preparing an open space assessment. PPG17 states that the main purpose of undertaking local assessments is to plan positively,

³ National Planning Policy Framework published July 2018 which supersedes the previous Framework dated March 2012

creatively and effectively to ensure that there is adequate provision to meet the needs of local communities and visitors.

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) guidance – ‘Open Spaces Strategies: Best Practice’.

- 2.7 The CABE guidance provides practical advice to Local Authorities on how to undertake an open space assessment with the intention of understanding the supply and demand. The guidance also highlights the social, economic and environmental benefits of open spaces. The guidance sets out a six stage approach which has been incorporated into the methodology used by Spelthorne as part of this OSA. This guidance, like PPG17, has been archived however it remains relevant and is still considered to conform with guidance set out in the NPPF. This guidance utilises PPG17 to classify the Open Space typologies as listed in Appendix I of the Study.

Fields in Trust

- 2.8 Fields in Trust guidance on planning and design for outdoor recreation is a relevant document for Local Authorities. Fields in Trust previously provided the benchmark standards for outdoor sport provision prior to PPG17 and utilised the ‘six acre standard’. The guidance has been used as part of the OSA to inform quantity and accessibility standards.

Natural England

- 2.9 Natural England provides guidance around accessible green space and, as part of this, sets benchmark standards for accessibility. This is based around ensuring people have access to places near to where they live. In particular, Natural England utilises Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGst). These standards have been used as part of the OSA in order to determine accessibility and any under provision within the Borough that is identified as part of this.

Local Policy

- 2.10 The Core Strategy and Development Control Policies (DPD) was adopted in February 2009 and is the current local plan which guides development in Spelthorne. The Core Strategy contains Policy EN4: *Provision of Open Space and Recreation Facilities* which seeks to ensure there is sufficient open space which is well sited and suitable to meet a wide range of outdoor sport, recreation and open space needs. This policy sets out the approach to provision, maintenance and improvement of open space and sport and recreation facilities.
- 2.11 As part of Policy EN4 within the Core Strategy, a number of sites were designated as Protected Urban Open Space (PUOS)⁴ and are identified as such on the Proposals Map. A number of these designated sites are recreation grounds and areas of open space which are accessible by the public.

⁴ List of the PUOS are contained within Appendix 1 of the adopted Core Strategy

- 2.12 Spelthorne published its first Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2016-2019)⁵ which identifies key priorities where it is recognised that through partnership working the greatest results can be achieved to improve the health and wellbeing of Spelthorne's residents.
- 2.13 The Spelthorne Corporate Plan (2016-2019)⁶ has as one of its priorities the provision of a clean and safe environment which is important for the health and wellbeing of communities and to provide a clean, attractive borough with good leisure facilities.
- 2.14 The Council has produced a Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA)⁷ which identifies the land supply in the Borough which will help to meet identified housing needs. The Government have sought to increase supply of new homes in order to meet housing needs and have produced a standardised methodology to calculate local authority housing need. The housing requirement set for Spelthorne is 603 dwellings per annum and this is to be met over the Plan period. The SLAA also identifies land for other uses besides housing such as for employment use.

⁵ Spelthorne Health and Wellbeing Strategy <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/Spelthorne-Health-and-Wellbeing-Strategy-2016-2019/>

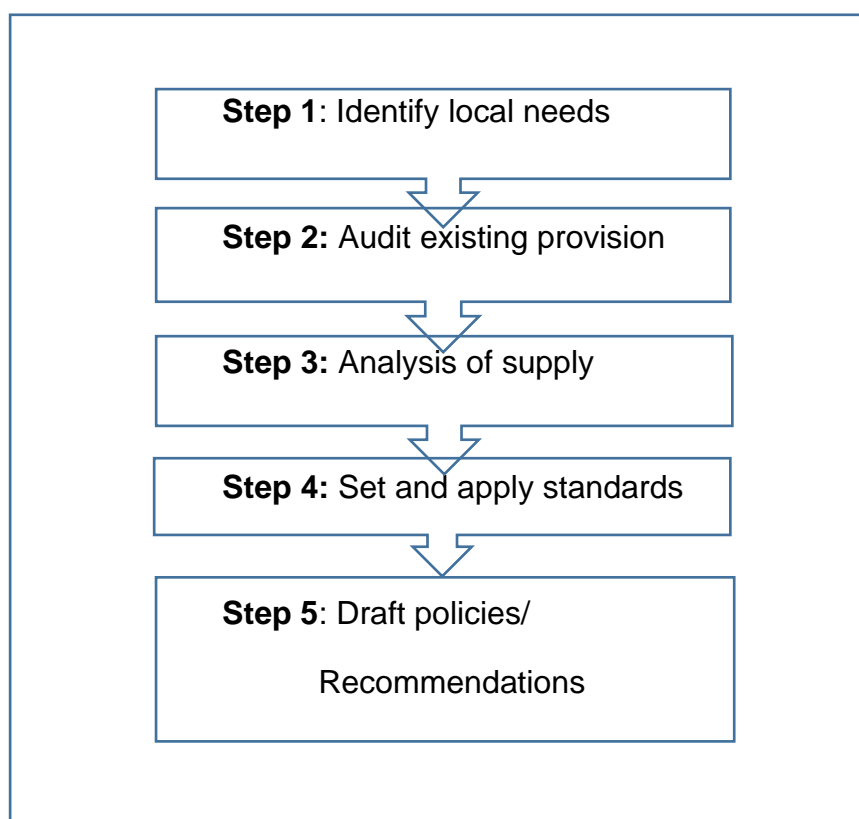
⁶ Spelthorne Corporate Plan <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/Spelthorne-Corporate-Plan-2016-2019>

⁷ Spelthorne Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) <https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/Strategic-Land-Availability-Assessment>

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The starting point for the study is the guidance contained in section 8 of the NPPF. This guidance is up-to-date through giving recommendations for the protection of and appropriate provision for open space. However, there is no detailed guidance on how to carry out an open space assessment. It is therefore considered best practice to follow the approach as set out by the now withdrawn PPG17 and its Companion Guide.
- 3.2 The purpose of the OSA is to seek to:
- Identify the existing quantity and quality of open space
 - Understand the demand and needs for open space in Spelthorne
 - Provide a strategy for open space provision across the Borough
- 3.3 The stages of the assessment process are shown below. The Companion Guide suggests a range of methods and techniques which may be used as part of the assessment process and where appropriate these have been employed in the study.

Figure 1 Stages of the Open Space Assessment



- 3.4 The stages are set out below in a further level of detail. Once complete, the Open Space Assessment will inform the preparation of the emerging Local Plan.

Step 1 – Identifying Local Need

- 3.5 The assessment examines local needs for various types of open space and recreational opportunities. An inclusive approach is taken in assessing the demand and needs for open space. This seeks to ensure that all members of society are identified and their use of open spaces acknowledged. The greatest barriers to people using the spaces are accessibility and establishing if the spaces are safe for users. The provision of facilities or lack thereof is also a crucial factor in ensuring that demand and need is met. This forms the basis around which the quality surveys have been undertaken. Need is also assessed through the quantity of accessible open spaces identified and how this compares to national standards.
- 3.6 Demand for Local Green Space (LGS) was identified through the Issues and Options consultation undertaken as part of the Local Plan process. The LGS designation was brought in by the NPPF and a methodology for considering sites to be suitable as LGS has been produced.
- 3.7 The Council's Leisure team have carried out an assessment of need for leisure facilities in the Borough and an updated Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) will further identify demand and need within the Borough. The PPS will be included as evidence as part of the work on the emerging Local Plan.

Step 2 – Audit of existing Open Space provision

Defining the scope of the audit

- 3.8 In order to create an accurate picture of the current open space and play provision in Spelthorne, an initial desktop audit of the open space was carried out, this included:
- Analysis of existing GIS data held by Spelthorne Borough Council
 - Desktop mapping of open space
 - Liaison with council officers within different departments
 - Setting up of an open space database to collate and hold information about each identified site
- 3.9 Following the desk-based exercise, site visits were undertaken to the open spaces that had been identified. All open spaces where public access was possible were assessed. Public access is deemed to be where access to the space is possible without having to pay a fee or hold a membership. Sites which are privately owned and restrict access to either fee-payers, members or for security reasons were not included as part of this assessment. In these instances, the landowners were written to requesting they provide information to assist with the development of the open space database. These sites include golf courses, school playing fields and private clubs.
- 3.10 The qualitative assessment drew on criteria set out in the 'Green Flag Award'. The site assessments were carried out using a standard methodology to ensure consistency in approach. The main purpose of the assessments were to provide an objective assessment of the existing uses of the sites and potential improvements that could be made.

- 3.11 A number of open spaces within the borough support multi-functional uses. The guidance recommends that each space be classified by its primary function. This helps to ensure there is no double-counting of the spaces and where a space supports more than one use, such as a playground which is physically separated from a recreation area, each type would be considered separately.
- 3.12 It was determined that sites which were below 0.2 hectares in size would not be visited and would be assessed through a desk-based exercise unless the site contained equipment for sport or play. In addition, sites which were above 2 hectares were not visited and were subject to a desk-based exercise. Assessments were based on up-to-date aerial photographs, historical knowledge of the spaces and any relevant planning histories.

Step 3 – Analysis of supply

- 3.13 The assessment analyses the findings of the quantitative and qualitative audits of existing open space provision within the Borough. This will allow for the key findings and issues to be clearly identified and analyses to then inform the drafting of relevant policies and recommendations for future management.

Step 4 – Set and apply provision standards

- 3.14 Local provision standards have been set, which include three main elements:
- Quantity
 - Accessibility
 - Quality

Quantity

- 3.15 The GIS mapping and open space database have been utilised so as to fully assess the existing open space provision within the Borough. The findings of previous studies, notably the *Assessment of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision in Spelthorne 2005*, local needs assessments undertaken and consideration of national standards are to be used as benchmarks. Local quantity standards should be locally derived and achievable.

Accessibility

- 3.16 Accessibility of open spaces is a key consideration as part of this assessment. This is both in terms of distance and physical access into sites. In terms of distance, typically standards are expressed using straight line walk times. Evidence from previous studies and consideration of national benchmarks are important components of developing access standards for open space.

Quality

- 3.17 Quality standards have been developed drawing on previous studies and findings of the quality audits. The quality standards also include recommended policies to develop the provision of open space, either through new or by enhancing existing, over the life of the plan period.

Step 5 – Drafting policies and recommendations

3.18 This section looks at developing strategic options which are applicable at the local level. These options will focus on the following key areas for open space provision:

- Retention of existing provision and suitable protections
- Enhancement of existing provision
- Opportunities for the re-location or re-designation of open space
- Identification of deficiencies
- Identification of areas for new provision

3.19 This will seek to allow for interventions and support through policy where appropriate and required to either impact on quantity, accessibility or quality or all three if appropriate.

4. ANALYSIS OF QUANTITY OF PROVISION

- 4.1 This section summaries the findings of the assessments carried out for existing open spaces within the Borough in terms of both quantity, quality and accessibility.
- 4.2 The sites which have been assessed have been plotted using GIS and this has allowed a determination of the size of each site. This plays a key role in providing an analysis of the current level of provision across the borough and within each ward.

Analysis of Overall Type and Quantity of Provision

- 4.3 Table 3 summarises the overall quantity of open space in Spelthorne by type.
- 4.4 The calculations for Outdoor Sports Facilities, provision for Children and Teenagers and Allotments also include provisions which are recorded as secondary uses within other typologies such as Parks and Gardens. This is because these sites often provide dual functions.
- 4.5 The Outdoor Sports Facilities includes facilities such as school playing fields and golf courses, much of which are private. Access to school playing fields and private clubs are restricted and the level of use is difficult to estimate. Therefore such sites are excluded from the assessed sites and, in the ward breakdowns, will not be included in the figures.
- 4.6 The table below shows the open spaces which are publicly accessible, with general public access. The spaces which have restricted access e.g. through need to be a member, require payment for access or restrict through other means such as school playing fields have been filtered out. This provides a greater understanding of existing provision where access is unrestricted to members of the public.

Table 3 Publicly accessible open spaces

Typology	Number of sites	Total area (hectares)	Provision per 1,000 population (hectares)
Parks and Recreation Grounds	16	40.07	0.4
Natural and semi natural space	19	448.3	4.52
Outdoor Sports Facilities	13	48.4	0.49
Amenity Green Space	25	58	0.58
Provision for Children and Teenagers	18	4.05	0.04
Allotments	16	26.41	0.26

Typology	Number of sites	Total area (hectares)	Provision per 1,000 population (hectares)
Cemeteries and Churchyards	10	15.09	0.15

Analysis by Typology

- 4.7 The current position with regards to each separate type of open space within the Borough is considered below:

Parks and Gardens

- 4.8 Parks and Gardens provide accessible, high quality opportunities for a range of informal recreational activities, formal sports opportunities and organised community events. This typology includes parks within urban areas, larger areas of parkland and formal public gardens. Many parks within this typology also include important facilities for outdoor sport and recreation, children and teenagers and additional natural and semi-natural open space. These spaces therefore play a key role in often providing multi-use for the local community.

Quantity – Parks and Gardens

- 4.9 The audit of spaces revealed a total of **16** sites occupying **40.07** ha of land and providing a current standard of 0.4 ha for every 1000 residents across the Borough. This includes:
- 6 Borough parks above 5ha in size including Shepperton Manor Park, Halliford Park, Fordbridge Park, Staines Park and Lammas Recreation Ground.
 - There are a further 10 smaller neighbourhood and pocket parks which provide areas of recreation within urban areas.
- 4.10 A summary of the quantity of parks and gardens serving each ward is shown in the table below.

Table 4 Provision of Parks and Gardens by Ward

Ward	Population (mid-2017)	No of Sites	Total hectares (ha)	Ha/1000 population
Ashford Common	8,111	0	No provision	No provision
Ashford East	7,273	0	No provision	No provision
Ashford North and Stanwell South	9,343	1	0.12	0.01
Ashford Town	7,146	1	0.85	0.11
Halliford and Sunbury West	6,035	2	7.59	1.25
Laleham and Shepperton Green	8,113	0	No provision	No provision
Riverside & Laleham	6,764	0	No provision	No provision
Shepperton Town	6,625	1	7.34	1.10
Staines	8,640	5	14.07	1.62
Staines South	7,269	1	6.86	0.94
Stanwell North	8,304	3	1.61	0.19
Sunbury Common	8,200	0	No provision	No provision
Sunbury East	7,297	2	1.62	0.23

- 4.11 It is clear from the above that there is a significant shortage of parks and gardens within the Borough. This shortage is particularly acute within Ashford where there are two sites only across the four wards.

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 4.12 Natural and semi-natural green spaces are areas of unmanaged or managed land that promote a wildspace or countryside experience. These sites take a variety of forms and are often significant contributors to biodiversity and habitats for flora and fauna. These spaces also offer informal recreation and allow for the appreciation of nature. The typology can include green corridors, woodlands, moorlands, scrubland, wetland and other nature conservation and wildlife areas.

Quantity – Natural and semi-natural space

- 4.13 The audit revealed a total of **19** sites within the natural and semi natural green space typology, occupying **448** ha of land providing a standard of 4.52 for every 1000 residents across the Borough. This includes:
- 5 common land spaces at Staines Moor, Shortwood Common, Moor Lane, Church Lammas and Priory Green.
 - Laleham Park and Sunbury Park which also provide dual functions
 - Ash Link Nature Reserve

- 4 Green corridors spaces including land at River Colne, land adjacent to Staines by-pass, Studios Walk close to Shepperton Studios and areas close to River Ash.
- Dumsey Meadows is also included as a significant area of natural space to the south of the Borough alongside the Thames.

4.14 A summary of the quantity of natural and semi-natural space is included in the table below.

Table 5 Provision of natural and semi-natural green space

Ward	Population (mid-2017)	No of Sites	Total hectares (ha)	Ha/1000 population
Ashford Common	8,111	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Ashford East	7,273	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Ashford North and Stanwell South	9,343	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Ashford Town	7,146	1	3.66	0.51
Halliford and Sunbury West	6,035	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Laleham and Shepperton Green	8,113	4	49.44	6.09
Riverside & Laleham	6,764	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Shepperton Town	6,625	4	33.01	4.98
Staines	8,640	6	143.71	16.6
Staines South	7,269	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Stanwell North	8,304	3	204.59	24.6
Sunbury Common	8,200	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Sunbury East	7,297	1	13.95	1.91

4.15 The above shows that the majority of this space typology is located towards the north of the Borough where many of the larger natural spaces such as Staines Moor and Shortwood Common are located.

4.16 Whilst there is no such provision in Ashford, Bedfont Lakes Nature Reserve which sits in the London Borough of Hounslow, is located close to the Ashford wards. Improving accessibility to this space will help to ensure provision of such an area for many residents within these wards.

Outdoor Sports Facilities

4.17 This typology includes a variety of sports facilities providing participation in outdoor sports, including playing pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts. There are many spaces within the Borough which provide such facilities however a large proportion of these are private or member clubs where general public access is not possible unless a fee is paid. In addition, school playing fields have restricted access and are dependent on local management decisions rather than being available for wide use within the community.

Some of the spaces with outdoor sports facilities also offer smaller areas for Children and teenagers to use therefore providing a dual function. This assessment will include sites where the primary use is for outdoor sports facilities and where public access is possible.

Quantity – Outdoor Sports Facilities

4.18 The audit revealed a total of 13 sites where the primary use is for the provision of outdoor sports facilities, occupying 48.44 ha of land providing a standard of 0.48 ha for every 1000 residents across the Borough. This includes:

- 6 recreation grounds (Long Lane, Cedars, Kenyngton Manor, Ashford, Litteton and Shepperton)
- 1 neighbourhood level park at Bishop Duppas
- 3 sites where there is an element of shared or dual use at Ashford Sports Club, Gaflac Sports ground and St James' Senior Boys School.

4.19 A summary of the quantity of outdoor sports facilities is included below as Table 6.

Table 6 Provision of Outdoor Sports Facilities

Ward	Population (mid-2017)	No of Sites	Total hectares (ha)	Ha/1000 population
Ashford Common	8,111	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Ashford East	7,273	1	4.71	0.64
Ashford North and Stanwell South	9,343	3	19.7	2.1
Ashford Town	7,146	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Halliford and Sunbury West	6,035	1	4.08	0.67
Laleham and Shepperton Green	8,113	1	4.29	0.52
Riverside & Laleham	6,764	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Shepperton Town	6,625	2	5.05	0.76
Staines	8,640	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Staines South	7,269	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Stanwell North	8,304	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Sunbury Common	8,200	1	5.26	0.64
Sunbury East	7,297	1	5.35	0.73

4.20 As can be seen from the above, there is a clear deficiency of outdoor sports facilities in Staines.

- 4.21 Outdoor sports facilities will be more fully examined through the Playing Pitch Strategy which will accompany the Open Space Assessment and form part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan.

Amenity Green Spaces

- 4.22 This typology includes smaller open spaces which can operate as village greens, areas within housing developments, informal recreation space and hard-surfaced areas designed primarily for pedestrians. These spaces can also provide visual amenity within an area.
- 4.23 Amenity green space often provide a supplement to larger spaces such as parks and gardens. They can also provide small play areas as a secondary use but often do not provide areas for formal recreation such as football pitches. These spaces assume even greater local importance where larger spaces are otherwise not available within the immediate vicinity.

Quantity – Amenity Green Space

- 4.24 The audit revealed a total of **25** sites where the primary use is as an amenity green space, occupying **58** ha of land providing a standard of 0.56 ha for every 1000 residents across the Borough. This includes:
- 11 Local Parks which also provide provision for Children and Teenagers in the form of a playground or games area as a secondary use within the AGS

Table 7 Provision of Amenity Green Spaces

Ward	Population (mid-2017)	No of Sites	Total hectares (ha)	Ha/1000 population
Ashford Common	8,111	2	2.9	0.35
Ashford East	7,273	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Ashford North and Stanwell South	9,343	1	4.80	0.51
Ashford Town	7,146	2	2.85	0.39
Halliford and Sunbury West	6,035	1	0.66	0.10
Laleham and Shepperton Green	8,113	1	0.88	0.10
Riverside & Laleham	6,764	1	4.84	0.71
Shepperton Town	6,625	4	12.05	1.82
Staines	8,640	6	9.07	1.04
Staines South	7,269	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Stanwell North	8,304	3	9.43	1.13
Sunbury Common	8,200	1	2.92	0.35
Sunbury East	7,297	3	6.35	0.87

- 4.25 As can be seen above, the Borough has a good spread of AGS with the largest concentration within Staines. However, there are some wards with low or no provision and therefore have significant accessibility issues.
- 4.26 Much of the amenity space in the Borough doubles up as provision for children and teenagers however there are also some spaces such as Shortwood Common south which provide more tranquil areas of common land.

Provision for Children and Teenagers

- 4.27 Provision for Children and Teenagers consist of areas which have been specifically designed or set aside for play and social interaction. These spaces include equipped play areas, multi-use games areas (MUGA), shelters, BMX tracks and skateboard parks.
- 4.28 Much of this provision is often secured as part of large-scale housing developments and are therefore often located within these which can limit accessibility for people who live nearby but do not reside within the development.

Table 8 Provision for Children and Teenagers

Ward	Population (mid-2017)	No of Sites	Total hectares (ha)	Ha/1000 population
Ashford Common	8,111	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Ashford East	7,273	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Ashford North and Stanwell South	9,343	5	1.69	0.18
Ashford Town	7,146	1	0.12	0.016
Halliford and Sunbury West	6,035	3	0.53	0.08
Laleham and Shepperton Green	8,113	3	0.37	0.04
Riverside & Laleham	6,764	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Shepperton Town	6,625	2	0.52	0.07
Staines	8,640	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Staines South	7,269	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>
Stanwell North	8,304	3	0.28	0.03
Sunbury Common	8,200	1	0.55	0.06
Sunbury East	7,297	0	<i>No provision</i>	<i>No provision</i>

- 4.29 Whilst the above table shows a number of areas which are deficient in such provision, it should be noted that there are some typologies whereby a prominent secondary use is provided for children and teenagers

5. ANALYSIS OF QUALITY OF PROVISION

Quality

- 5.1 The criteria applied to the site assessment process for open spaces in the Borough are set out below:

Table 9 Criteria for site assessment

Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access details – opening times, safe and in good condition• Number of access points• Car parking & its condition• Signage• Cycle parking
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Type and quality of facilities provided• Community /picnic areas
Safety and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lighting• Natural surveillance• Unsafe areas• Safety of entrance areas
Cleanliness & maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Litter/flytipping• Condition of boundary• Quality of maintenance – grass cutting, condition of pathways• Condition of trees

- 5.2 These standards are used as the baseline to make an assessment on the condition of each of the spaces that were assessed. Whilst in some cases not all criteria were applicable, this gives a good understanding of what is on site and where improvements could be sought or where there is scope to provide new facilities. Safety and security is also a key priority as many of the Borough's open spaces are in more isolated locations with access possible through the whole of the day and night.
- 5.3 In order to assess the quality of the provision, site visits were undertaken over the summer months in 2018 when use of the spaces was higher. For each site visit, a proforma was completed which included the four criteria listed above. A copy of the proforma used is found in Appendix II of this document. The sites that were publicly accessible were assessed using this process.
- 5.4 Each criteria was given a score ranging from 1 (unsatisfactory) through to 5 (excellent). Achieving a 1 or 5 was rare as this was used to identify either the sites which had significant defects which require immediate attention or where there are few improvements required. For example, Sunbury Walled Garden scored a 5 on the grounds that it performed well against all criteria and has achieved Green Flag status.
- 5.5 The majority of the Borough's open spaces that were assessed scored either 2 (poor), 3 (average) or 4 (good). For each of these three scores, recommendations for improvements were identified in order to push these up the scoring in future

assessments. The scoring can be fairly subjective and is judged largely on the observations at the time of the site visit plus any local knowledge or information provided by the Council's parks team. In order to limit the potential for subjectivity, the 1-5 scoring system was deemed to be suitable as it shows a definable difference between the scores.

6. ACCESSIBILITY OF OPEN SPACE IN SPELTHORNE

- 6.1 As part of the OSA, as well as carrying out a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the open space, accessibility is also assessed in terms of the distance users have to travel from their homes. This is an important part of determining open space usage as the less accessible an open space is the less likely it will be used. Open spaces need to be accessible to the public both in terms of being publicly accessible along with being within a suitable distance from where people live to increase usage.
- 6.2 The following identifies accessibility distance thresholds used in the 'Assessment of Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision in Spelthorne 2005' and those used by neighbouring boroughs who have more recently produced Open Space Studies in Runnymede and Elmbridge. These thresholds are similar to Spelthorne and also take into account national guidance such as appropriate walking times for which the average walking speed of 5km/h was used.

Accessibility standards

- 6.3 The table below summarises the thresholds used in previous studies to gain an understanding of a suitable baseline that could be applied within this study.

Table 10 Accessibility standards from previous studies

Classification	Spelthorne 2005	Runnymede 2017	Elmbridge 2014
Parks and Gardens	5 minute walk – 400m distance	10 minute walking distance – 800m	Access to a park within 400m from home
Natural/semi natural green space	10 minute drive (4km)	5 minute walking distance (400m)	Access to natural greenspace within 800m
Outdoor Sports Facilities	10 minute drive (4km)	15 minute walking distance – (1200m)	None
Amenity Green Space	5 minute walk from residential areas (400m)	5 minute walking distance – (400m)	None
Provision for Children and Teenagers	5 minute walk from residential areas	5 minute walking distance – (400m)	Access to play provision within 400m
Allotments	None set	10 minute walking distance – (800m)	Access to allotments within 800m of home
Cemeteries	None set	10 minute walking distance – (800m)	None

- 6.4 Determining accessibility distances to different open space classifications is challenging. This is whether to use straight line distances as often these are not accurate travelling distances. An alternative option is to use accurate travelling distances from points that were located with connections to the nearest road. However using the nearest road may not be appropriate as in some circumstances there may be no formal footpath for pedestrians to use.
- 6.5 There is limited up-to-date national guidance to inform accessibility thresholds. Paragraph 96 of the NPPF refers to providing 'access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity'. In addition, para 98 of the framework states that 'planning policies and decisions should protect and enhance public rights of way and access'.
- 6.6 PPG17 and the Assessing Needs and Opportunities companion guide remains the most relevant national guidance to use. Step 3 of the guide outlines distance thresholds which are defined as the maximum distance that typical users can reasonably be expected to travel to each type of provision. The guidance also states that there may be good reasons as to why higher or lower thresholds are set. PPG17 identifies the need to establish a catchment area around each facility or open space with a radius of the relevant threshold. By doing this, it is also necessary to take account of any barriers which may fall within the catchments where free movement is prevented such as motorways, railway lines, crossing private land without permission etc.
- 6.7 The quantity of the existing open space provision in the Borough has been recorded on a ward by ward basis as in most cases people will use the facilities that are located within the local area near to which they live. However it is recognised that users may live closer to a facility or open space which is located in another ward and for which accessibility is easier than for similar provision in their ward. This has been taken into account when considering accessibility where provision straddles ward boundaries or where distances between them are fairly small. The main aspect of this is to ensure that all facilities and open spaces in the Borough are able to be accessed by users where appropriate rather than forcing people to use particular spaces within their ward. The ward-by-ward quantitative analysis was appropriated as a means of determining the quantity and is flexible when it comes to applying accessibility.
- 6.8 The standards set by Fields in Trust (FiT) for each open space typology are set out in the below table. These are recommended benchmark guidelines and it is advised that they are adjusted to take into account local circumstances.

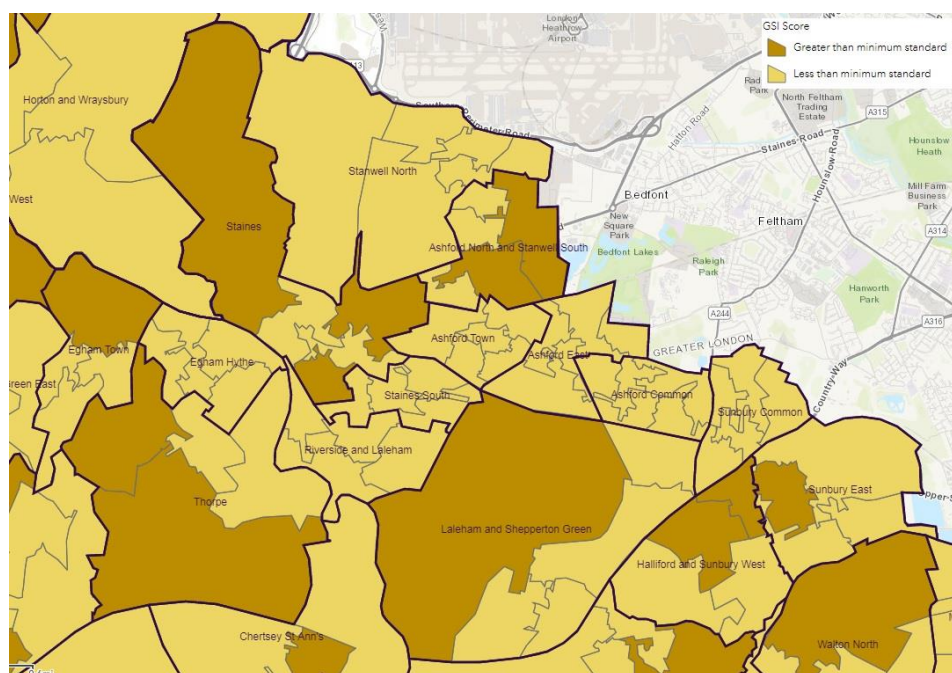
Table 11 Fields in Trust guidance

Open Space Typology	Quantity Guideline (ha per 1000 population)*	Walking Guideline (walking distance: metres from dwelling)
Parks and Gardens	0.80	710m
Amenity Green Space	0.60	480m

Open Space Typology	Quantity Guideline (ha per 1000 population)*	Walking Guideline (walking distance: metres from dwelling)
Natural and semi-natural green space	1.80	720m
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.60	1200m
Equipped/designated play areas	0.25	LAPs – 100m LEAPs – 400m NEAPs – 1000m
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	0.30	700m

6.9 Fields in Trust have produced a Green Space Index⁸ which records publicly accessible park and green space provision. Through using the Green Space Index, this allows Fields in Trust to take stock of the quantity of local parks and green spaces. The below map shows the provision for Spelthorne across ward areas when recorded against FiT minimum standards. This gives a good understanding of local issues when measured against national standards and forms part of the overall work in determining where deficiencies lie and local standards needed to be applied.

Figure 2 Parks and Open Space provision as measured against FiT standards



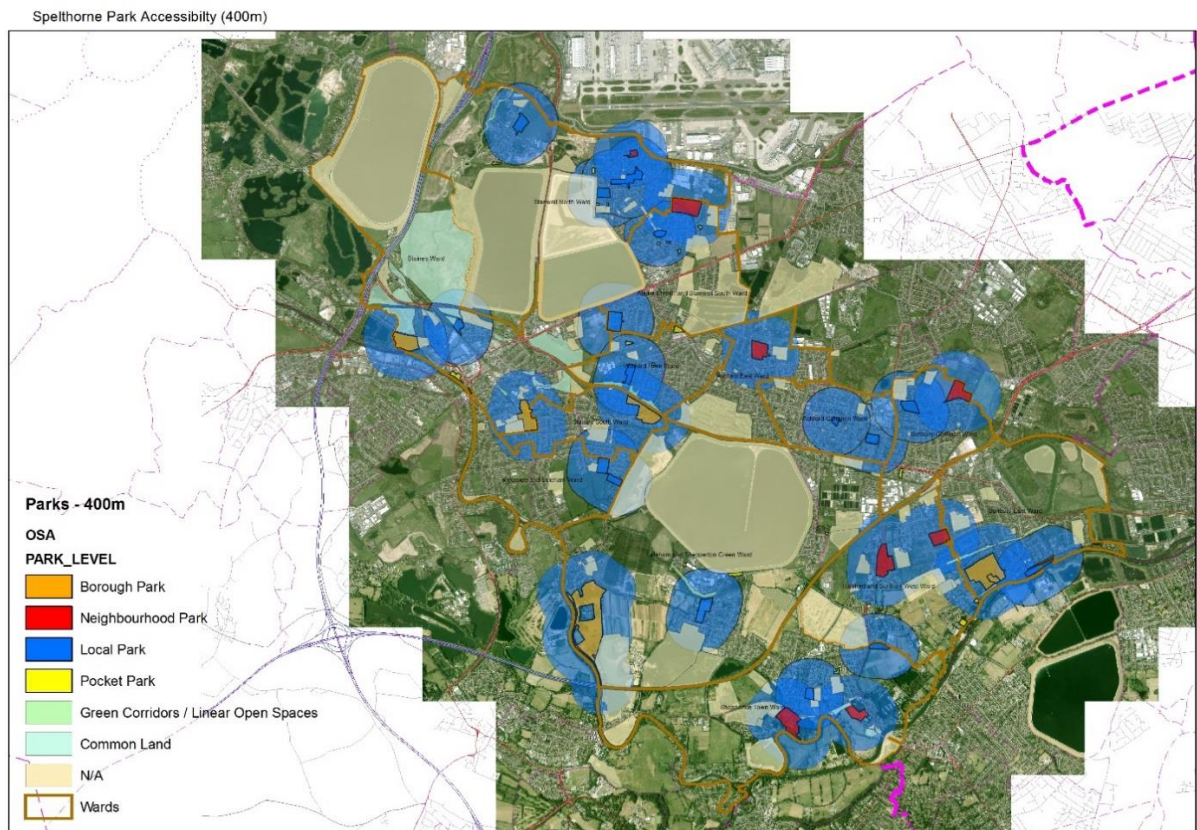
⁸ <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/green-space-index>

- 6.10 Figure 2 shows that there are identifiable areas of deficiency when measured against FiT standards. This is a useful overview however does not provide a dive down into provision of individual typologies for each ward area. This map will be used to inform further work carried out as part of this OSA in determining current provision and setting local standards.

Access to open space in the Borough

- 6.11 This section provides an overview of access to open space typologies which are able to be recorded across the whole of the Borough. These maps are intended to provide an overview and are for illustrative purposes only.

Figure 3 Accessibility zones to Parks and Recreation Grounds (400 metres)



- 6.12 The above map includes a breakdown of parks in categories which are defined predominantly through size.

Figure 4 Accessibility zones for parks and recreation grounds, including pocket parks (250m)

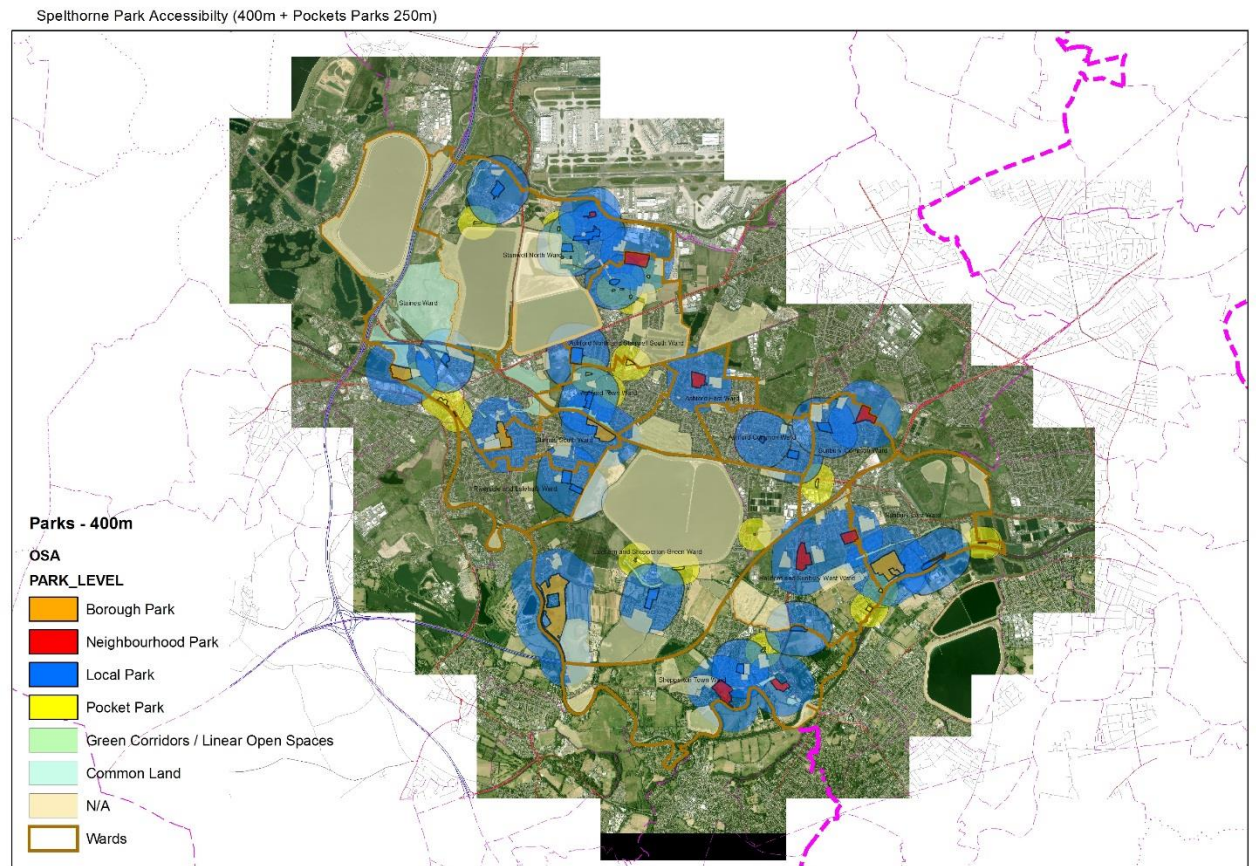


Figure 5 Accessibility zones for natural and semi-natural green spaces (300m - 500m)

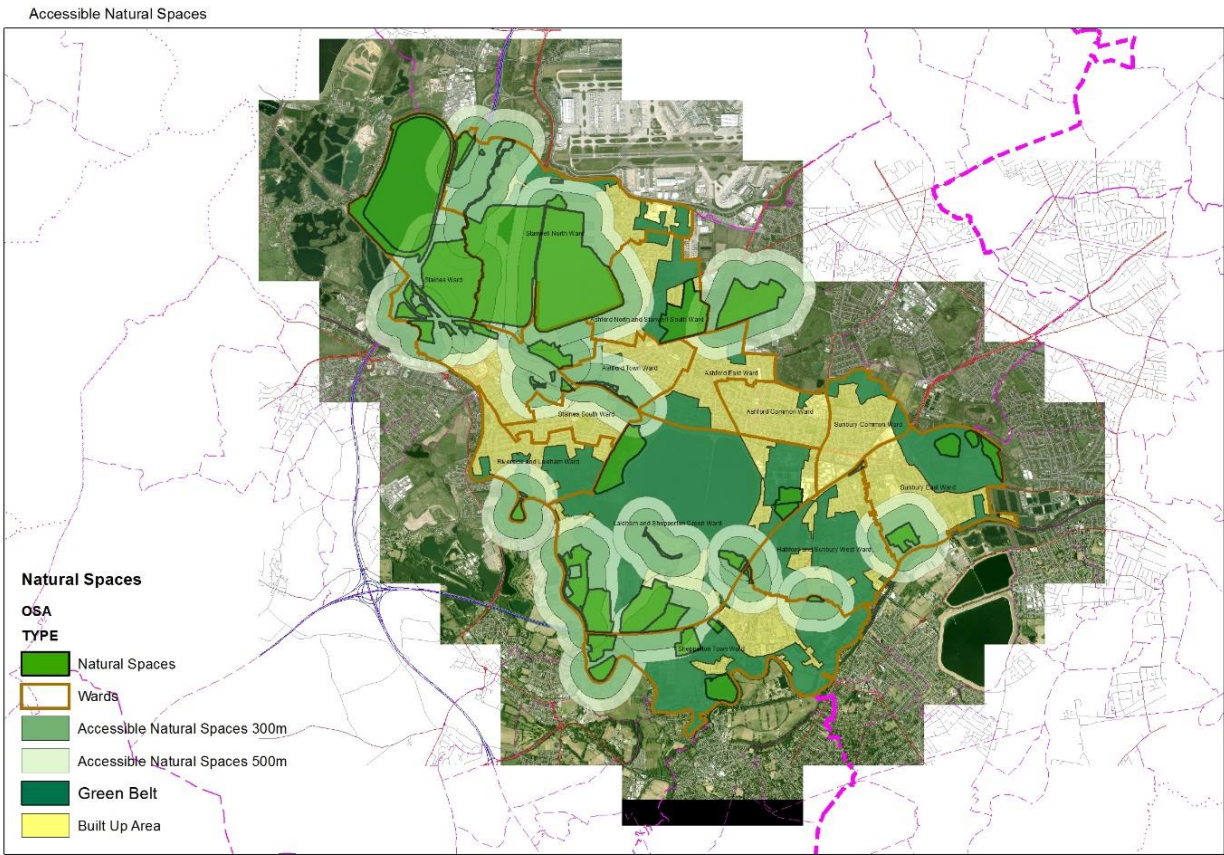
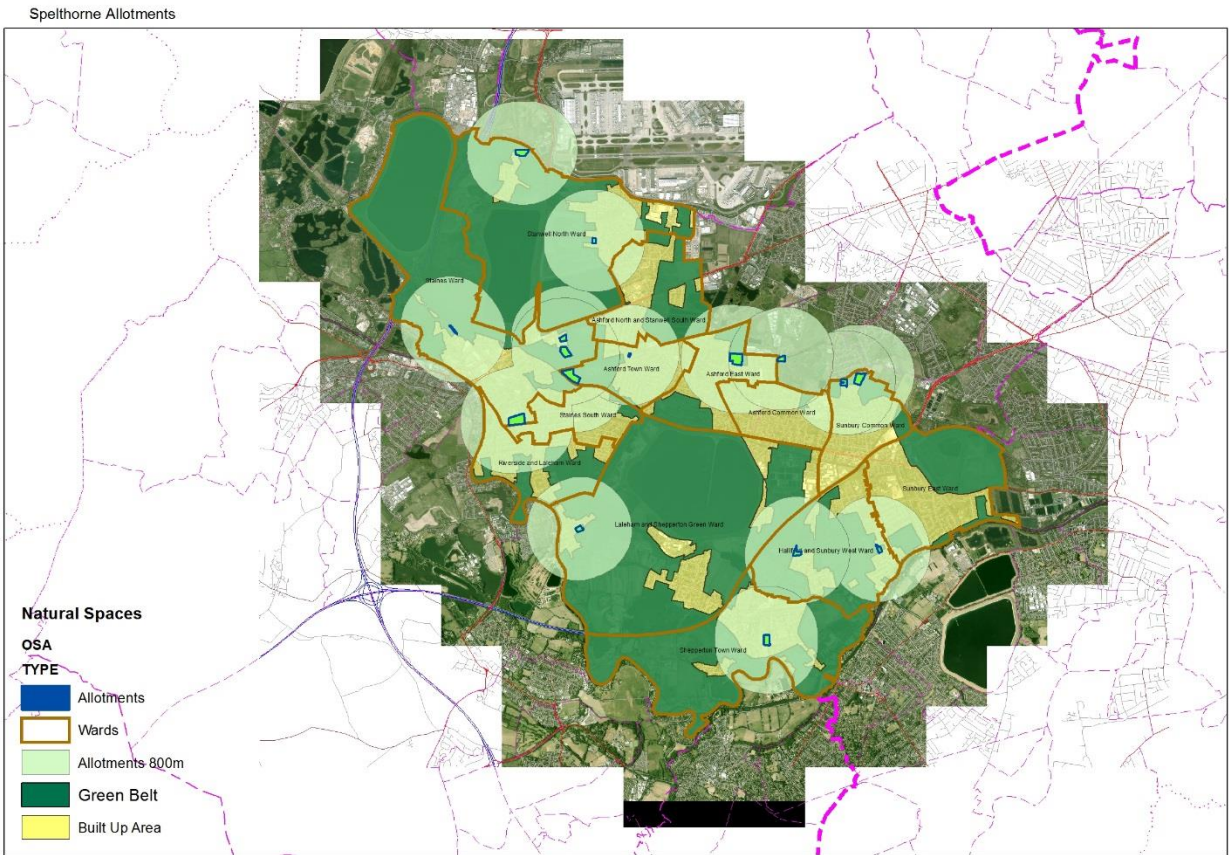


Figure 6 Accessibility zones for allotments (800m)



7. THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL STANDARDS

- 7.1 Following the completion of the assessment of local needs and the audit of existing provision, new local standards of provision for open space are proposed. This section outlines the development of the standards for Spelthorne and provides information for each of the typologies where standards have been proposed.
- 7.2 The standards for open space have been developed in line with the NPPF. Standards comprise the following elements;
- Quantity – determined by analysis of existing quantity, consideration of existing local and national standards and evidence gathered from local needs. It is important that quantity standards are locally derived and realistic. The recommended standards need to be deliverable through new development and future mechanisms of contributions either by on site provision or through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
 - Quality – standards for each typology are derived from the quality audit analysis, existing good practice and the views of users of the spaces. These should be achievable.
 - Accessibility – should reflect the needs of all potential users including those with physical or sensory disabilities both young and older people. Spaces which are used on a regular basis need to be within comfortable walking distance and to have safe access.
- 7.3 The standards will form Council policy on open spaces once adopted through the new Local Plan. The proposed standards are to be considered as minimum levels of provision. Therefore were wards may benefit from levels of provision which exceed the minimum standards this does not mean that there is a surplus as all such provision may be well used.

Park and Recreation Grounds

- 7.4 Fields in Trust (FiT) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play report 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' recommends a benchmark guideline of 0.80ha/1000 population for parks and gardens, along with a walking distance of 710m. The existing average level of provision in Spelthorne is 0.40 ha/1000.
- 7.5 A standard of 0.8 ha/1000 population is recommended for publicly accessible provision in order to bring Spelthorne's local standards in line with national guidance for all new provision.
- 7.6 Requirements for playing pitches and specific outdoor sports facilities are not covered in this standard and reference for this should be made to the Playing Pitch Strategy.

Access standards for park and recreation grounds

- 7.7 The majority of people who use open spaces, have access to these within 10 minutes from their home. Of these, most open spaces used are parks and recreation grounds. The previous Spelthorne 2005 assessment had a standard of 400m. This distance falls comfortably below a 10 minute walk which would match current access to provision. It is therefore suitable to

continue this to encourage accessibility to parks and recreation grounds and therefore a standard of 400 metres (5-10 minutes' walk) is recommended.

- 7.8 In addition to the parks and recreation grounds, the Council will also encourage the use of pocket parks. These are defined as 'a piece of land of up to 0.4 hectares (although many are around 0.02 hectares, the size of a tennis court) which may already be under grass but which is unused, undeveloped or derelict'⁹. Pocket parks can be located anywhere however they may be more suitable in urban environments where there is limited available land to provide significant areas of green space or where there is less access to quality green space. For pocket parks, the standard is 250 metres.

Quality standards for parks and recreation grounds

- 7.9 National guidance relevant to this typology is provided in the 'Green Flag' quality standard for parks which sets benchmark criteria for the quality of open spaces. Sport England have produced a number of documents outlining the quality standards for outdoor facilities such as playing pitches, MUGAs and tennis courts. Staines Park has been subject to a Deed of Dedication between the Council and Fields in Trust as part of the Active Spaces programme, which will protect the park for future generations to enjoy and use. It is recommended that using the guidance set out in these documents would form the basis of new provision and to seek improvements to existing provision.

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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/767523/PPP_Q_A.pdf

Natural and semi-natural green space

- 7.10 For natural and semi-natural green space there are a number of national standards as recommended by Natural England and the Woodland Trust. FiT also set standards in relation to this typology.
- 7.11 It is recommended that new provision for natural and semi-natural green space is considered in tandem with provision of amenity green space. The aim of this would be to seek to provide a greater connection between amenity and natural green spaces, both of which provide recreational and biodiversity values. When applied for new developments, this provision will allow for a greater connection as part of the wider green infrastructure network and would move away from providing small amenity grass areas to providing larger amenity/natural spaces as part of new development.
- 7.12 In areas where it is not appropriate to provide additional natural green space consistent with the standard, other approaches should be considered such as:
- Changing the management of marginal space on playing fields and in parks to enhance biodiversity opportunities
 - Encouraging the creation of mixed species hedgerow
 - Additional use of long grass management regimes where appropriate
 - Improvements to watercourses and water bodies
 - Use of native trees and plants with biodiversity value within a high quality soft landscape environment as part of new developments.
- 7.13 The use of green roofs as part of new development or redevelopment may be encouraged where appropriate however this should only be used in circumstances where none of the above are deliverable and the imposition of such a roof does not have any negative impacts.
- 7.14 The above should in any event be principles to be encouraged and followed at all times. Consultation with the Borough's Countryside and Common Officer or equivalent should be undertaken.
- 7.15 In terms of a local standard, the Borough will seek natural and semi-natural green space to be accessible within 500m from a dwelling.

Quality standards for natural and semi-natural green space

- 7.16 In considering natural and semi-natural green space in tandem with amenity green space, it is important to ensure that new or improved spaces within this typology cannot be considered in isolation. Two significant requirements for these spaces are the ease of access for all and providing a safe environment to remove perceptions or occasions of anti-social behaviour. The shape and size of the space provided should allow for recreational use and would be expected to include elements of woodland, wetland, meadow and heathland where appropriate. Opportunities for informal public access through recreation corridors should also be encouraged.
- 7.17 For larger areas, where access may necessitate to the use of motor vehicles, parking provision will be required. Larger sites will also carry greater nature conservation and biodiversity interest and value and enhancements for these

will be required. Wherever possible, these sites should be linked so as to improve wildlife corridors and value as part of a network.

Provision for children and teenagers

- 7.18 The FiT guidance recommends provision of 0.25ha/1000 population for 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 however does not fully address the needs for most teenagers.
- 7.19 Previous Spelthorne standards set provision to be within 5 minutes' walk from residential areas. Across the Borough, there is an average of 0.02 ha/1000 population for this typology. There is deficiency in provision across a number of wards and many have no provision of this type whatsoever. The quality of much of the existing provision is poor to average and improvements are required. There are no wards where the provision achieves the 0.25 ha/1000 standard. There is therefore clear scope for improvement in this across the Borough and the majority of local people wish for the open spaces and their facilities to be within 5 minutes walk from their home.

Access standards for provision for children and teenagers

- 7.20 The recommended level of provision in the guidance is high however there is a requirement to improve provision across the Borough. To meet this, a local standard of 0.1ha/1000 population will be set and the walking distance standard of 400m will be applied for all provision types. This remains in line with the desire of local users to have spaces within 5 minutes walking distance.

Quality standards for provision for children and teenagers

- 7.21 Given the range of facilities which are and can be included within this provision there are a variety of play spaces which can be applied in all urban environments. The existing provision is generally split across the Borough between local play spaces, usually on recreation grounds or amenity green spaces, in or close to residential areas or neighbourhood spaces which tend to be in larger parks or are more standalone facilities which support particular activities such as football and basketball courts and skate parks. All such provision should be within walking distance.
- 7.22 Reference should be made to the Fields in Trust guidance ¹⁰ and to Play England's 'Quality Assessment Tool'¹¹ which can be used as a basis to judge the quality of individual play spaces.

Amenity Green Space

- 7.23 Existing level of provision across the Borough is 0.56ha/1000 population however amenity green space can vary in size quite significantly. It is therefore more down to the quality of AGS provided. There are two wards which have no provision and the rest is distributed fairly evenly across the Borough however there are some wards where provision is lower than the average. It is therefore considered that the aim should be to address shortfall in areas where there are identified provision either where none exists or there is a low level of provision.
- 7.24 Fields in Trust standard is 0.6ha/1000 population and whilst this is a useful guide for Borough-wide provision, it is important to ensure that the quality of the spaces are suitable. Much of the AGS across the Borough has a dual function, often providing play spaces for children and teenagers. However there are also a number of small amenity spaces which have very limited recreation function. Future provision should seek to avoid this where possible to provide a more focused space either through offering recreation opportunities or by seeking to provide these in tandem with natural spaces. Reducing isolated patches of green space with residential areas and offering greater amenity value for a wider section of the community would be a much greater asset.

Access standards for amenity green space

- 7.25 By virtue of their nature, these spaces should be located close to residential areas offering users the opportunity to walk to these. Whilst the 2005 Spelthorne standards were set at 400m, to reduce the number of small, fairly unusable amenity spaces and provide better quality ones it is recommended to follow the FiT guidelines of 480m walking distance. This would allow for the opportunity to tie amenity green spaces with natural spaces.

Quality standards for amenity green space

- 7.26 Amenity green spaces provide a great importance to local people allowing them to have access to open space close to home. The value of such spaces should be recognised especially within residential areas where these spaces can provide important opportunities for play, exercise and visual amenity. These spaces can however be costly to maintain and it is important to ensure that such spaces meet the needs of the community with accessible and attractive spaces. There should also be scope for the use of some form of public recreation activity. The following principles should be considered when designing this provision:
- Capable of offering opportunities for informal recreation such as space for dog walking or areas to relax and sit;
 - Inclusion of high quality planting particularly to help to create a strong landscape identity and biodiversity value rather than just large grassed verges;
 - Allow for easy maintenance both for vehicles to access the space to maintain and to minimise costs;
 - Where linked with natural spaces include paths to assist with access as part of the wider network of green infrastructure.

Allotments

- 7.27 There is limited national guidance for allotments in terms of determining standards. Spelthorne has no existing standards for allotments. The National Allotment Society provide guidance relating to sizes of plots and standards of sorts by advising of 20 plots per 1000 population. Spelthorne's Allotment Strategy 2010 – 2014 has identified that the Borough is well provided for in terms of allotment provision though this Strategy does require updating. Figure 5 uses an 800m distance which covers a substantial amount of the Borough and much of the provision is distributed fairly evenly across most wards, through there are some areas with no provision. There is a fairly high demand for plots and being able to increase provision where possible would go some way to meeting this.

Access standards for allotments

- 7.28 Allotments should be accessible and should involve limited travel time. However due to the size of land required to provide for these spaces does restrict where this can be provided. The average provision across the Borough is 0.26 ha/1000 population. Maintaining this level of provision would seem a reasonable expectation and the focus should be on addressing deficiencies where no provision exists. To assist with this a local standard of 800m is recommended to provide a suitable walking distance for this provision.

Quality standards for allotments

- 7.29 Quality standards for allotments are difficult to judge as each plot holder may operate their plot in a different manner with different facilities to help with this. Additionally, as allotments are locked and access is severely restricted, the use of these are low in comparison to other open spaces therefore comments about quality are less frequent. Plot holders and allotment landowners will be engaged in a future Allotment Strategy.

The following recommendations are made in relation to the quality of allotment sites across the Borough:

- Good access and security at sites including boundary fencing
- Well maintained pathways and parking areas
- Adequate water provision where possible
- Adequate lockable storage facilities
- Access for all sections of the community
- Notice boards where appropriate
- Opportunities and encouragement to individuals and communities wishing to be involved in the cultivation of allotments
- Fair rents, equitable treatment and safe tenure
- Minimal number of neglected plots

Summary of open space standards

Table 12 Summary of open space standards

Typology	Quantity standards	Access standard
Allotments	0.25	Access within 800 metres (15 minutes walking time)
Amenity Green Space	0.6	480 metres (5-10 minutes walking time)
Parks and Recreation Grounds	0.8	400 metres (5 minutes walking time)
Provision for Children and Teenagers	0.1	400 metres (5 minutes walking time)
Natural Green Space	1.0 for new development including amenity green space	500 metres (10 minutes walking time)
Churchyards and cemeteries	None, sites mapped and quantity recorded	None

8. APPLICATION OF LOCAL STANDARDS

- 8.1 This section uses the recommended standards to analyse provision across the Borough. The individual wards are used to breakdown provision by these areas and this helps to give a good overview of provision.
- 8.2 The quantity of provision is measured against the recommended quantity standards for each of the typologies where such a standard has been developed. The standards are stated as hectares per 1000 people.
- 8.3 The assessment of quantity looks at the existing provision then uses the recommended standards to assess the required level of provision. This will determine where deficiencies exist in terms of under supply against the recommended standards. The quantity analysis is broken down as follows:
- Existing provision (hectares)
 - Required provision against the recommended standards (hectares)
 - Surplus or deficiency of supply (hectares)

Table 13 Provision of open space across Spelthorne

Typology	Existing provision (ha)	Existing provision (ha/1000)	Required Provision (ha)	Required Provision (ha/1000)	Supply (Ha)	Supply (ha/1000)	Overall supply
Parks and Recreation Grounds	70.97	0.71	80	0.8	- 9.03	-0.09	Under Supply
Natural and semi natural green space	448.3	4.52	0	0	448.3	4.52	N/A
Amenity Green Space	58.27	0.58	60	0.6	-1.73	-0.17	Under supply
Provision for Children and Teenagers	4.05	0.04	10	0.1	-5.95	-0.06	Under supply
Allotments	26.41	0.26	26.41	0.25	0	0	Sufficient supply
Cemeteries and Churchyards	15.09	0.15	0	0	15.09	0.15	N/A

- 8.4 From the above it can be seen that the main under supply relates to more specific recreation areas and these deficiencies in supply are fairly large. These will need to be addressed over the plan period.

Table 14 Supply of open space by ward (ha/1000)

Ward	Parks and Recreation Grounds	Amenity Green Space	Provision for Children and Teenagers
Ashford Common	-0.80	-0.25	-0.1
Ashford East	-0.80	-0.60	-0.1
Ashford North and Stanwell South	-0.79	-0.09	0.18
Ashford Town	-0.69	-0.21	-0.084
Hallford and Sunbury West	1.25	-0.5	-0.02
Laleham and Shepperton Green	-0.80	-0.5	-0.06
Riverside & Laleham	-0.80	0.71	-0.1
Shepperton Town	1.10	1.82	-0.03
Staines	1.62	1.04	-0.1
Staines South	0.94	-0.60	-0.1
Stanwell North	-0.61	1.13	-0.07
Sunbury Common	-0.80	-0.25	-0.04
Sunbury East	-0.57	0.87	-0.1

- 8.5 The above table outlines the deficiencies in open space by ward boundaries. The highlighted red areas are clear under supply when measured against the recommended standards per 1000 of the population.
- 8.6 Where no under supply has been identified, these have not been included as the current levels should remain as the minimum provision. Existing quantities of the remaining typologies have been included in the respective tables with ward breakdowns in Chapter 4.

9. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

9.1 As part of the Open Space Assessment, the Council undertook a consultation exercise over the summer (July to September 2019). This took the form of a questionnaire, the basis of which was to establish use of the spaces, regularity of use and general comments on quantity and quality of the spaces. A copy of the questionnaire is attached at Appendix III of the OSA.

9.2 The Council received a total of 539 responses to this questionnaire which provided a large sample of users. The responses are summarised below:

Q1 – 52% of total respondents believe that there is too little open space provision with 47% of the opinion that provision is about right.

Q2 – 60% of respondents use spaces in the Borough on a daily basis with 33% using the spaces on at least one day a week.

Q3 – The majority of respondents use the spaces primarily for dog walking and for recreation for children. The main spaces used tended to be the larger Borough parks such as Staines Park, Fordbridge Park and Lammas Park with smaller local recreation grounds also being heavily used particularly where provision for children is available.

Q4 – The majority of respondents walk to the open spaces they use, and of this, 35% of people access spaces within 5-10 minutes of their homes and 33% walk for 5 minutes or less. For all modes, the numbers of respondents having to travel more than 20 minutes to the open spaces they use was low which suggests that accessibility for those wishing to use open spaces in the Borough is good. It was however notable that a total of 282 respondents drive to the spaces in less than 5 minutes which shows the need to maintain car parking at these spaces and to consider encouraging these people to walk or cycle or where this is not possible, seek to enhance the accessibility opportunities by foot where this may be a limiting factor.

Q5 – The majority of respondents were of the opinion that all five of the criteria set out in relation to the spaces were good. Of those rated very poor or unsatisfactory, this predominantly applied to the facilities. The condition of facilities was also identified as being an issue in the qualitative assessment work undertaken.

Q6 – This question was left open to allow users to provide a wide range of comments covering areas where improvements could be sought. The five main issues that arose as a result of the analysis of the responses were:

- More rubbish and dog bins
- Facilities, including toilets, to encourage greater opportunities for use.
- Increased planting of trees and other vegetation to encourage biodiversity
- General improved maintenance such as better signage, repairs to pathways and fencing
- Issues of drug use and other paraphernalia being left as well as general issues of anti-social behaviour

Q7 – This question sought further comments regarding the spaces. From this it was clear that issues of anti-social behaviour and maintenance are prevalent. There was also a strongly expressed desire to ensure the open spaces are protected from development.

- 9.3 The questionnaire helps to form an understanding of local needs and demand. From the responses, it can be seen that open spaces in the Borough are used regularly and users visit the spaces which are local to them. There is a small majority for an increase in provision of spaces however, where this may not be possible, the enhancement of existing or provision of new facilities to enable multi-use of some of the more suitable spaces could provide for this demand.

10. CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 Conclusions have been drawn from the work undertaken above. When considering the findings, it should be noted that the Council will only have control over Spelthorne Borough Council owned sites.
- 10.2 There is a significant shortage of provision for children and teenagers across the Borough, with under provision or no provision in almost all wards.
- 10.3 For parks and recreation grounds there is low provision in Ashford as a whole, with no provision in two wards and large under provision in the remaining two wards. There is also significant under provision in Sunbury Common and Sunbury east wards and no provision in Laleham and Shepperton and Riverside and Laleham wards.
- 10.4 There is also significant under provision in amenity green space, particularly within the four Ashford wards with no provision in Staines South.
- 10.5 Access to natural spaces across the Borough is generally good with a lower level of accessibility in Ashford East, Ashford Town and Ashford Common. The greatest concentration of this typology is to the north of the Borough. The Staines Commons and Bedfont Lakes do provide substantial areas of natural spaces.
- 10.6 Access to allotments in the Borough is generally good, with the greatest concentration located across the central areas of the Borough. There is limited or no provision in Sunbury East, Shepperton Town and Staines wards.

Identify objectives and recommendations

- 10.7 The Council's OSA has identified the amount and variety of open spaces available within the Borough. There is a shortfall of provision for children and teenagers across the Borough and a need to provide parks and recreation grounds in a number of wards where there is no provision.
- 10.8 The questionnaire identified that many people in the Borough use the open space closest to where they live. Existing, well used sites near to residential areas must be protected.

Recommendations for further work

- 10.9 The following recommendations have been identified and will be used to inform the development of Spelthorne's Local Plan 2020-2035.
- 10.10 The OSA will inform future Green Infrastructure studies and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- 10.11 The Council will protect all existing green spaces and seek new provision particularly for park and recreation grounds, amenity green spaces and provision for children and teenagers, where there are clear shortages identified.
- 10.12 The Council should apply the recommended standards to inform the development of the Council's Local Plan and to help in the preparing of

relevant policies. The Council should use the recommended standards to identify future requirements for provision of open space across the Borough. The Council should also maintain and improve, where appropriate, the quality of open spaces across the Borough for the needs of the community both at present and for the future.

- 10.13 The Council should monitor open space sites regularly to identify any changes to quality and quantity of these. This will ensure that recommended standards are still met.

APPENDIX I

Typology	Primary purpose
Parks and Gardens	Including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens.
Natural and semi-natural green spaces including woodlands	Including urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (for example, downlands, commons and meadows), wetlands, open and running water, wastelands, and derelict open land and rock areas (for example, cliffs, quarries and pits).
Green Corridors	Including river and canal banks.
Outdoor Sports Facilities	With natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks and school and other institutional playing fields.
Amenity Green Spaces	Most commonly but not exclusively in housing areas including informal recreation spaces, green spaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens.
Provision for children and teenagers	Including play areas, skateboard parks and outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (for example, 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters).
Allotments, community gardens and city (urban) farms	Provide an opportunity to grow produce from the land, individually or as part of a group to promote understanding of food and horticulture and promote health and social inclusion.
Cemeteries and churchyards	Land associated with churches and the burial of the dead, land used for quiet contemplation.
Civic squares and spaces	Hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians, providing a setting for civic artwork and community events.

APPENDIX II

Site Assessment Form

Site details	
Name of space	
Managing organisation	
Date & time of survey	
Type of Space	
Users observed	

1. Accessibility	
Access Details (General Public Access etc., details of opening and closing if applicable)	
Number of access points	
Car parking & its condition	
Are the access points safe and in good condition and provide access for all?	
Presence and quality of signage and information (boards etc)	
Cycle parking/areas for cycling - pathways	
Additional notes/observations	

2. Facilities	
Quality of furniture - Seating, toilets & their number; any	
Type of facilities and activities provided	

- playgrounds, tennis courts, cafes, event stands	
Quality of facilities and activities provided - safe/condition	
Community/picnic areas	
Additional notes/observations	

3. Safety and Security	
Does the space have lighting? (if so how many)	
Does the space benefit from natural surveillance?	
Are there any areas that could be used for ambush?	
Does the site feel safe on entering?	
Additional notes/observations	

4. Cleanliness and maintenance	
Evidence of litter/fly tipping - Number of litter bins	
Evidence of dog fouling - number of dog bins	
Are the spaces boundaries clearly defined (if so, what is the condition of the boundary)	
Quality of maintenance - grass cutting, condition of pathways	

Are there trees on the space? - Management/condition	
Additional notes/observations	

Scoring				
1 Unsatisfactory	2 Poor	3 Average	4 Good	5 Excellent

Accessibility	Score
Notes/Reasoning:	

Facilities	Score
Notes/Reasoning:	

Safety and Security	Score
Notes/Reasoning:	

Cleanliness & Maintenance	Score
Notes/Reasoning:	

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APPENDIX III

Open Space Assessment – questionnaire

Spelthorne Borough Council is in the process of producing an Open Space Assessment. Open spaces and recreation areas provide a vital function as part of the network of green infrastructure supporting town and other urban areas to make them attractive, provide a positive contribution to biodiversity and nature conservation and for use by local communities. Through this, such spaces help to aid healthy lifestyles and lay a role in general well-being for the Borough's residents and other users.

The Assessment involves assessing the quality of open spaces in the Borough. As part of this, we would like to hear the views of residents and others who use the Borough's open spaces through a questionnaire. Please find below seven questions to answer if appropriate.

Open Space Provision

1. **With regards to the amount of open space in Spelthorne Borough which is available for public use, do you think the amount is:**

Too Much	About Right	Too Little	Don't Know	No Opinion

2. **How often do you use open spaces within the Borough?**

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Occasionally	Don't use	Other (Please specify)

3. **Please provide the name(s) of the open space(s) that you use as above and for what purpose you use the space e.g. dog walking, recreation for children, attendance at fitness class**

4. In terms of time, how long does it take to reach the open space(s) you use?

	Less than 5 minutes	5-10 minutes	10-20 minutes	More than 20 minutes
Walking				
Cycling				
Driving				

5. How would you rate the following in relation to the open space(s) you use or are close to you?

	1 (Very poor)	2 (Unsatisfactory)	3 (No opinion)	4 (Good)	5 (Very Good)
Accessibility					
Cleanliness					
Facilities					
Safety					
General Appearance					

6. Are there any particular areas that you would like to see improved in the open space(s) you use?
7. Do you have any further comments in relation to open spaces within the Borough?