

# South Somerset District Council

## Open Space Strategy

### 2011 - 2015



**2007-2008**  
*Neighbourhood and  
Community Champions:  
The Role of Elected Members*

**2006-2007**  
*Improving Rural Services  
Empowering Communities*

**2005-2006**  
*Getting Closer to Communities*



# Foreword

South Somerset District Council has long been aware of the importance of open space to the quality of life of its residents and visitors. Over recent years the council has sought to develop this Strategy to ensure that sufficient open space of the right quality and type is provided in the right locations.

The Victorians sought to provide landscapes that were conducive to restoring 'psychological restoration', following mass levels of migration into urban areas during the industrial revolution. City planners of the day formalised much of the UK's common land by turning it into public parks and gardens. This was not only done to provide the inhabitants of some of the country's most deprived regions with access to clean air, but also to provide them with quiet environments that offered both visual and mental stimulation. They provided landscapes that were conducive to psychological restoration.

Nowadays we recognise that places such as parks and gardens utilise a blend of natural features and relatively quiet soundscapes to help people escape from the daily stresses of modern life and therefore are just as important today as they were in the Victorian era. In addition, we also know that our public want a range of different types of open space, depending on local circumstances, rather than just formal parks.

This document sets out how the council is going to preserve a level of open space across the district, how it intends to acquire more as further development takes place and how it is going to manage the open space that it already has to the best possible standard. In this way, we will continue to preserve the ability for residents and visitors to access areas which facilitate both tranquillity and healthier lifestyles.

I hope that residents of all ages within our local communities will welcome our plans. It is my goal as Portfolio Holder to see that South Somerset District Council works with partners and communities and delivers the actions within this Strategy

Cllr Tom Parsley

**Portfolio Holder for the Environment and Property**

# CONTENTS

<b>Section</b>		<b>Page No.</b>
1	Introduction – why have a strategy?	3
2	Open space vision, objectives and key drivers	8
3	Policy background and reference library	11
4	Identifying local needs and aspirations	13
5	Where are we now? The audit of our open spaces	27
6	Setting provision standards	34
7	Quantity standards	36
8	Minimum acceptable size standards	41
9	Addressing the quality of open space	42
10	Catchment and accessibility standards	46
11	Delivering the standards – planning & developments	48
12	Addressing the sustainability of open space	52
13	Working with partners and the community	54
14	Action Plan	58
<b>APPENDICES</b>		
Appendix A	Profile of respondents to residents survey	71
Appendix B	Average travelling speeds & distance conversions used for the formulation of the standards	72
Appendix C	Hierarchal provision – Urban vs Rural	73
Appendix D	Current service standards	74
Appendix E	Parks and Public Gardens current provision	76
Appendix F	Informal Recreational Open Space current provision	78
Appendix G	Green Corridors current provision	80
Appendix H	Natural Open Space current provision	82
<b>GLOSSARY</b>		84

# 1. Introduction: why have a strategy?

## The value of open space

Open spaces are defined as those areas of green space where residents and visitors can spend leisure time, undertake a range of formal and informal activities or just have a break. They improve the social, economic and environmental fabric of the district. The provision of open space and recreational facilities contributes to the achievement of wider governmental and regional objectives, including social and community cohesion, urban renewal and promoting a healthy and enjoyable life.

Open spaces, sport and recreation provision underpins people's quality of life. The development of open space (new or enhancement of existing spaces) does not simply improve the physical landscape but improves and impacts on the cultural, ecological and economical value of the surrounding area. It is therefore imperative that the benefits of accessible open space are recognised by national and local policies and that careful and informed consideration is given when open space issues occur.

Well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are therefore fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives.

## The benefits

The following list sets out a number of benefits identified in national, regional and local policies. Each are linked to a policy document that can be seen on page 11.

- An attractive environment in which to live and work. *Ref 4*
- Provides opportunities to improve health and personal fitness and take part in a wide range of sport and outdoor activity. *Refs 2 & 5*
- Adds value to the surrounding property, both commercial and residential. *Ref 6*
- Quality and interesting open spaces contributes to attracting tourists. *Ref 6*
- Encourages employment potential and inward investment to an area. *Ref 6*
- Provide opportunities for community involvement and voluntary activities. *Ref 4*
- Provide an educational resource - an outdoor classroom, which stimulates ideas on art, design, the environment and nature. *Ref 6*
- Provides and sustains habitats for wildlife, aiding biodiversity. *Ref 4*
- Helps to stabilise urban temperatures and humidity. *Ref 4*
- Absorbs pollutants from the air and ground water. *Ref 4*
- Reduction in 'anti social' behaviour due to the provision of good quality recreational facilities. *Ref 7*

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*Ref 2 PPG 1 Delivering Sustainable Developments*

*Ref 4 PPG 12 Local Spatial Planning*

*Ref 5 Fields in Trust (previously the National Playing Fields Association - 'six acre standard')*

*Ref 6 Various reports and research publications from 'Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) Space*

*Ref 7 Natural England—Accessible Natural Greenspace in Town (ANGST)*

## The importance

National research shows <sup>Note 1</sup> that parks and open spaces are one of the most widely used facilities provided by any local authority. Our residents tell us that <sup>Note 2</sup> South Somerset has some superb spaces and they benefit from many opportunities to enjoy them. Whether walking our many historic rights of way, visiting our country parks or simply visiting their local park, the enjoyment and benefits of open space is important to us all.

Providing facilities that match all aspirations is not easy and there are always challenges to face by way of maintaining and improving the quality, quantity and accessibility of not only our existing open spaces but also the new spaces secured through housing development.

Nationally, through the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) Space <sup>Ref 6</sup> and National Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence (NICE) <sup>Ref 8</sup> there is an increased interest in the provision and management of our open spaces due to its contribution to people's well being, economical value and as a way of strengthening communities.

Despite their importance open spaces have come under increasing pressures in recent years, mainly due to the significant increase in housing demand, a general rise in the users expectations and a decline in funding available for parks and open spaces.

## The need for open space strategies

Due to the importance of open space and Central Government requirements, Open Space Strategies are required as a way of:

- **Ensuring the correct provision of open space is secured through the planning process**
- **Improving efficiency in the management of its Open Spaces**
- **Improving the quality of its Open Spaces**
- **Responding to the needs of the local community**

This strategy sets out a vision and strategic framework for the future development of open space provision across South Somerset. In line with South Somerset District Council's corporate vision of being an 'organisation consistently delivering and improving quality of life for all', the council has prepared this strategy to:

- Identify the value and contribution that open spaces make to the environment of South Somerset.

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*Note 1 CABE Space fast facts - "some 33 million people – make more than 2.5 billion visits to urban green spaces alone".*

*Note 2 Comments received from our Open Space Audit*

*Ref 6 Various reports and research publications from 'Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) Space*

*Ref 8 National Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence (NICE), Guidance 8*

- Demonstrate how open space strategic management links with other associated plans and strategies.
- Clarify what kinds of open spaces are available to use and how accessible these are to all users.
- Provide a robust set of standards covering the quantity, quality, accessibility and size of open spaces to enable the council to develop planning policies as part of the future Core Strategy.
- Explain how much and what type of open space is required to accompany new building developments and how this calculation has been derived.
- Set a clear vision for the efficient and inclusive management of South Somerset's open spaces and demonstrate how this is going to be achieved.
- Explain how we aim to encourage and work with other similar landowners to achieve shared goals.

In the main it covers the development of a set of standards for the provision of accessible green space across the city, responding to Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17):

- Quantity standard - how much green space of different types there should be.
- Catchment and accessibility standard - how far people should have to travel to reach a particular type of space.
- Quality standard - a level of quality that all spaces should attain.
- Minimum size standard – the minimum size of each type of open space to enable them to be fit for purpose.

The strategy does not identify individual areas of open space for retention or disposal. It does however set out actions for good management of existing open space, how the council will work with the community and partners and how it will work with developers for future provision. In doing so, the strategy considers a range of open spaces for which there is legitimate public access and which provide recreational benefit.

For planning purposes local authorities are required to use a typology to classify the different types of open space provision. This is influenced by the typology set out in PPG 17 illustrating the broad range of open spaces typologies that may be of public value.

- (i) parks and gardens - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens;
- (ii) natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces - including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (eg downlands, commons and meadows), wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (eg cliffs, quarries and pits);
- (iii) green corridors - including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way;

- (iv) 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, school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas;
- (v) amenity greenspace (most commonly, but not exclusively in housing areas) – including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens;
- (vi) provision for children and teenagers - including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (eg 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters);
- (vii) allotments, community gardens, and city (urban) farms;
- (viii) cemeteries and churchyards;
- (ix) accessible countryside in urban fringe areas; and
- (x) civic spaces, including civic and market squares, and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians;

This typology, or different variations of it, should be used by local authorities when preparing assessments of needs and audits of open space.

For South Somerset, the following open space typology has been used for this strategy:

- **Parks and gardens:** Sites with a formally recognised layout that have been designed primarily to provide aesthetic enjoyment. This can include sweeping landscapes of the historic estates, to ornamental gardens that include flower beds and features such as statues.
- **Informal recreational open space:** Sites where the emphasis is on providing informal activities for children, young people and adults. Some of these spaces may contain a range of features and additional facilities.
- **Green corridors:** These are generally well-planted linear corridors of land that are designed to allow the passage of people and wildlife from one point to another. They often link larger areas of open space or enable traffic free access for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Natural green space:** Sites providing people with access to, and experience of nature. It includes woodland, country parks, nature reserves and wetland areas. Areas are designed and managed using native species, to aid, conserve, and develop wildlife biodiversity.

## **What types of open space are not included in this strategy?**

- Areas of open space that are under 400 m<sup>2</sup> – although an important visual or environmental asset these smaller areas of land generally have less little public use; however a review of these smaller areas will be undertaken in 2012 to establish their open space value in terms of retention or disposal. *(See Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.06)*
- Sports facilities / equipped play areas, youth facilities & playing fields – these facilities are covered by the council's PPG 17 Play Area, Youth Facility, and Playing Pitch Assessments.
- Churchyards / cemeteries and crematoria – not generally for recreational or educational use.
- Allotments - the responsibility for the provision or management of allotments has been delegated to relevant town or parish councils. Spaces are let to private tenants and are not available or openly accessible to the public.
- Civic spaces (town squares) – although visually important within the built environment they are generally limited for informal recreational use.

Although the strategy does not cover these kinds of open spaces in its calculations and rationale, the council does recognise the contribution of all these spaces to the infrastructure of the district and their importance in providing a diversity of open space for wildlife, leisure, remembrance, gardening and ceremony.

## **What are the risks of not having a strategy?**

In recent years open spaces have come under increasing pressure from a variety of sources including housing demand, reduced resources for maintenance and development, and more intensive use from the communities they serve. All have played their part in eroding the fabric of our open spaces. If the benefit of preparing a strategy is about the protection and creation of high quality open spaces; the lack of any clear strategy will provide a disjointed and poorly managed approach to open space which could lead to a reduction in the quality, provision and quantity standards. Generally without a strategy there would be:

- No understanding of the principles by which the council manages its open spaces.
- No clear explanation of our requirements for developers; leading to a possible fall in the level of overall quantity and quality.
- A failure to identify and fill gaps in existing open space provision.
- No protection of existing open space from future development demands.
- No understanding of open space use or of what types of open space the public wishes us to provide.
- No clear prioritisation of open space resources, leading to a reduction in quality.
- No knowledge, understanding or appreciation of the potential partnerships that will maximise the use or value of open space.
- Little chance of seeking increased resources from external funding agencies
- No mechanism to measure progress.

## 2. Open Space: The vision, objectives and key drivers

### Key drivers for the production of this strategy are:

1. It is a priority in both the Local Strategic Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy (*Action 31.1*) and the South Somerset District Council (SSDC) Corporate Plan.
2. It is a requirement of Planning Policy Guidance for local authorities to provide and produce an Open Space Strategy. <sup>Ref 1</sup>
3. It is recognised as being 'best practice' for managing open spaces by CABE Space <sup>Ref 2</sup>

### The council's vision and objectives

This Open Space Strategy has to support and merge with not only the existing corporate aims, Vision and Mission statement of SSDC, but should influence and embed itself within future developed policies and strategies.

The 5 current corporate themes are

1. Increase economic vitality and prosperity
2. Enhance the environment, address and adapt to climate change
3. Improve the housing, health and well-being of our citizens
4. Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities
5. Deliver well managed cost effective services valued by our customers

The council's overall Vision and Mission Statement are:

Our Vision	Our Mission
An organisation consistently delivering and improving quality of life for all.	South Somerset District Council's strength is its flexible approach to creating a district, in which people want to live, work or visit. The Enable-Partner-Deliver concept is a bold statement of how we will work with communities and partners to seize opportunities, realise ambitions and secure improvement.

*Ref 1 Planning Policy Guidance Number 17' (PPG 17) Planning for Open Space*  
*Ref 2 PPG 1 Delivering Sustainable Developments*

**Our Vision for the  
Parks & Open Spaces  
of South Somerset**

*To have a network of well managed, attractive and living open spaces for all to enjoy.*

**This strategy contributes to the five main corporate themes of the council and fully embraces the ethos of its vision and mission; in particular it contributes towards the following key targets within the Corporate Plan:**

<b>Key Target Area</b>			<b>Open Space Strategy impact on Theme</b>
<b>Theme 1</b> Increase economic vitality and prosperity	1.12	Develop the LDF Core Strategy by October 2010 to support the economic vitality of Yeovil, market towns and villages making the most of their distinctive built heritage.	Open Space quantity and accessibility standards for developers contribute towards this target.
<b>Theme 2</b> Enhance the environment, address and adapt to climate change	2.1	Explore options for biodiversity enhancement on South Somerset Together (SST) partner land by 2012 and deliver projects each year to 2026.	Increase the % of native trees planted on council managed land by 5% annually.
	2.3	With SST partners, develop a joint Open Space Strategy for South Somerset by 2012.	Production of this strategy and contribution towards a wider South Somerset Together strategy.
	2.4	Agree land management plans for own estate by 2012.	Management Plans are developed for principal open spaces by 2012.
	2.7	Ensure exemplary development design improves access to services and facilities and stimulates business growth, starting in October 2010.	We will contribute towards the open space aspect of new developments to ensure exemplary design and accessibility.
	2.8	Reduce levels of graffiti, litter, detritus, flytipping and flyposting. (NI 195 & NI 196)	Cleanliness of open spaces is recognised as important via public consultation.
	2.9	Increase resident satisfaction with street cleaning, car parks, public toilets and open spaces / country parks.	Public surveys are carried out annually to assess satisfaction levels and identify improvements where necessary and recognise areas of good practice.
	2.14	Reduce CO <sup>2</sup> from SSDC operations.	Carbon efficiency is considered in all aspects of open space management.
	2.24	Ensure climate change adaptation is embedded in all relevant decision making, especially in the planning and delivery of services across the district.	Deliver key elements of climate change adaptation strategy, ensuring that CO <sup>2</sup> emissions are reduced.
<b>Theme 3</b> Improve the housing, wealth and wellbeing of our citizens	3.20	Increase children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas and increase adult participation in sport and recreation from 23.3% to 25.4% by 2011/12.	Open spaces are provided and maintained to encourage greater use by a wide range of user groups.
<b>Theme 4</b> Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities	4.5	Decrease perception that anti-social behaviour is a problem from 15% (2008) to 13% by 2010/11.	Management of open spaces is designed and maintained to discourage and reduce anti-social behaviour.

### 3. Policy background and reference library

#### National and Local Policies and Strategies

This section provides an overview of the relevant government policies that have been considered during the formulation of this strategy and provide the key principles that underpin it, and are used throughout the strategy by their reference number. For the purposes of this strategy, Planning Policy Guidance 17 and the Companion Guide are the key overarching documents. There have been a number of significant changes in national policy over the last few years affecting open spaces and these include the publication and revision of:

- Ref 1** *Planning Policy Guidance Number 17' (PPG 17) Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation*
- Ref 2** *PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Developments*
- Ref 3** *PPS 3 Housing, PPG 9 Biodiversity*
- Ref 4** *PPS 12 Local Spatial Planning*
- Ref 5** *Fields in Trust (previously the National Playing Fields Association - 'six acre standard')*
- Ref 6** *Various reports and research publications from 'Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) Space'*
- Ref 7** *Natural England: Accessible Natural Greenspace in Town (ANGST)*
- Ref 8** *National Institute for Health & Clinical Excellence (NICE) Guidance 8*
- Ref 9** *Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener (2002)*

There is not a single document that gives a clear indication or guidance on the production of a strategy, but all of the above have been taken into consideration in its preparation. *It should be noted that should national policies change, this document would be reviewed and revised as necessary.*

On a more local level, Somerset County Council and South Somerset District Council have several existing and emerging strategies and policies that either impact or influence the provision of open space; those that have a significant impact on SSDC's open spaces are:

- Ref 10** *SSDC Corporate Plan*
- Ref 11** *Draft core strategy incorporating preferred options*
- Ref 12** *SSDC saved policies and proposals from the existing local plan*
- Ref 13** *Sport and Active Leisure Strategy*
- Ref 14** *Play Policy and Strategy*

- Ref 15 Sustainable Community Strategy***
- Ref 16 Settlement Role and Function Study***
- Ref 17 Wild Somerset – The Somerset Biodiversity Strategy***
- Ref 18 Individual market town strategies***
- Ref 19 Rural Position Statement***
- Ref 20 Carbon Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation Strategy***
- Ref 21 Health and Well-Being Strategy***
- Ref 22 Young People’s Strategy***
- Ref 23 PPG 17 Equipped Play Assessment***
- Ref 24 PPG 17 Youth Facility Assessment***
- Ref 25 PPG 17 Playing Pitch Assessment***

This Open Space Strategy has been drawn up in conjunction with our partners and aims to take into consideration all our relevant types of Open Space within the district.

## 4. Identifying local needs and aspirations

It is crucial to us that this strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of the general public.

A significant level of research has taken place to underpin the proposed provision standards and the development of this strategy. Over 1100 people have contributed their ideas through three key consultation components:

- **Resident Survey:** A user questionnaire sent to 5000 households to ascertain their local needs and aspirations
- **Young People Survey:** The purpose of this survey was to gather the views of children, young people, parents and play providers on existing play opportunities across the district.
- **Best Value Resident Survey:** A review of the results of the 2006 Best Value Survey and the National Indicator (NI) 199 results.

The key findings emerging from each of these consultation processes is set out over the following pages.

### Resident Survey

In order to gather the evidence required and to answer specific questions about our open spaces, it was felt that a district wide resident survey was the most appropriate approach and this would form the base information used to formulate the consultation part for the core strategy.

In December 2008 5000 user questionnaires were distributed to households via a random address generator. The questionnaire was also available on our website.

Out of the 5000 questionnaires sent out, 713 were returned completed (14.7%) and a further 25 were completed on-line. This return of 724 completed forms (12 spoilt), provides a 'confidence interval of +/- 3.75%.

The survey covered the following aspects relating to open space and its use:

- What type of open space do they use most?
- How do people travel to their most used open space?
- How far do people travel to visit open spaces?
- What do people think of the existing quality and features found on our open spaces?
- What was the reason for their visit?
- What improvements would they like to see?

- What type of open space would you if possible like to see more of?
- What would prevent them from using the open space?

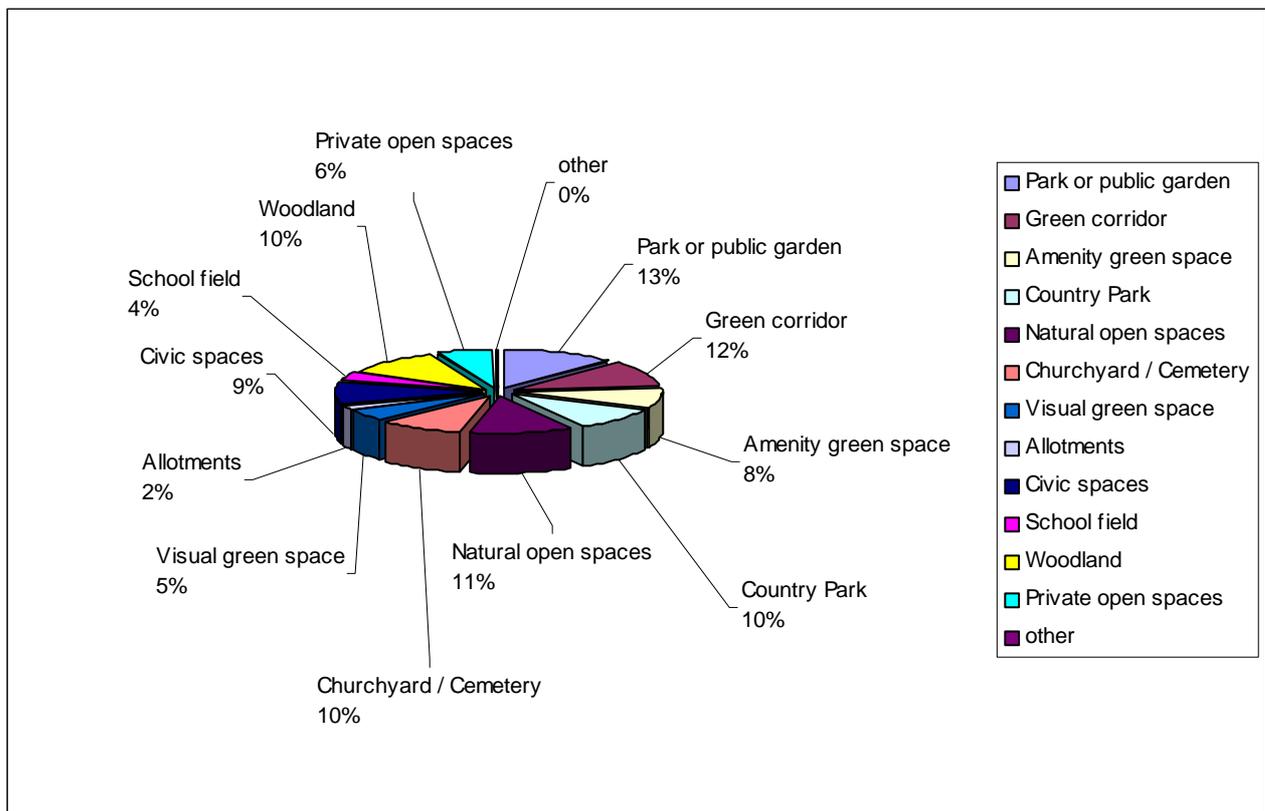
As this strategy encompasses all types of publicly accessible open space, it covers locations falling outside of SSDC ownership but still accessible to the public. This includes land that is owned and managed by town and parish councils, social landlords and private landholders.

### Resident survey findings

The following are a summary of the specific questions that were asked within the open space resident survey.

#### Question: Existing usage

The first question asked was to identify which types of open spaces individuals used on a regular basis. The results of the survey are shown in the chart below.



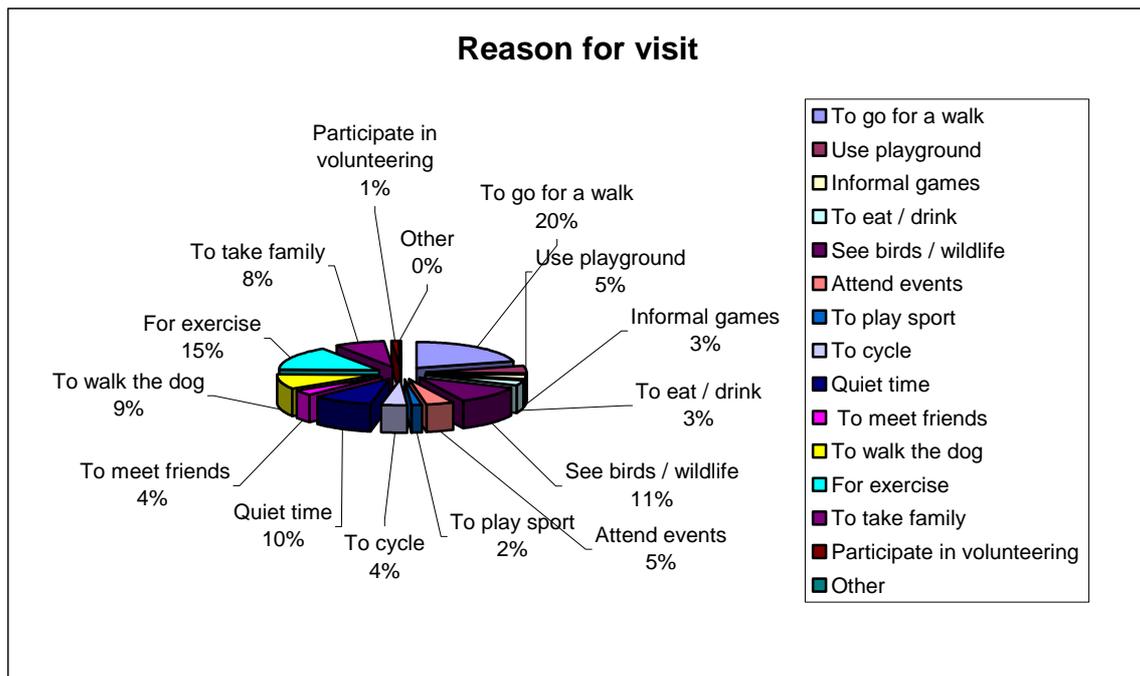
The survey found that 98.6% of respondents regularly use our open spaces and all types of open spaces provided are well used. The most popular types of open space visited were:

1. Natural open spaces (*inc woodland & country park*) 31%
2. Parks and public gardens 13%
3. Green corridors 12%

Putting these results into existing usage demonstrates that in order to meet the needs of the public, we need to ensure that we enable a mixture of both formal and natural styles of open space to be provided in new developments. (See Section 14, Objective 2, Actions 2.03 - 2.04 - 2.05).

**Question: Reason for visit**

This questionnaire was used to identify the reasons why people use open space. The results of the survey are shown in the chart below.



These results clearly identify that there are three main reasons to visit our open spaces; social, active and environmental.

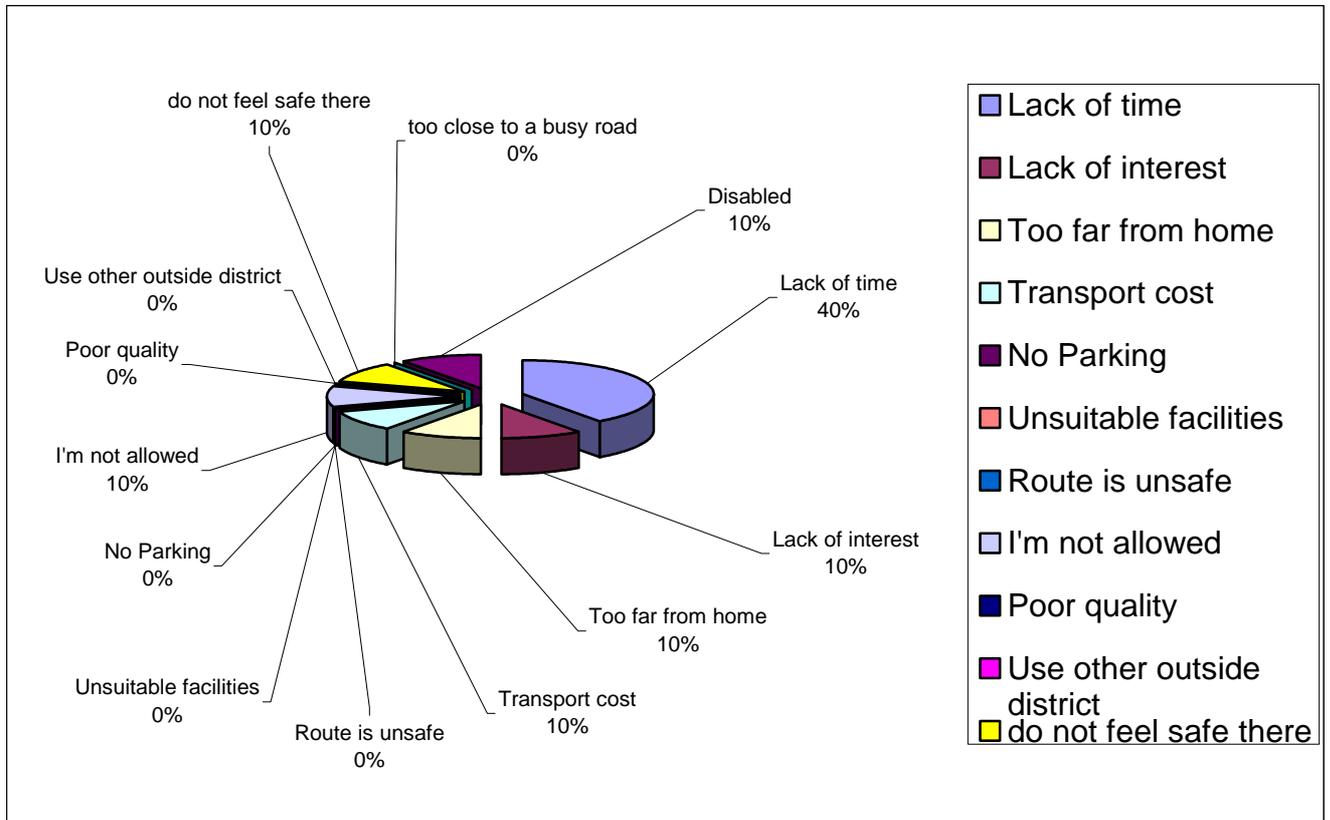
- **Social:** take the family, meet friends, attend events, eat and drink and participate in volunteering activities.
- **Active:** go for a walk, dog walking, to exercise, use the playground, cycle, and informal games or play sport.
- **Environmental:** to see birds or wildlife or quiet time

We do appreciate that some of these types of activities are not exclusive, however they do require the structure and content of the open space to be suitably equipped to enable the activity.

It is therefore essential that we review our current open spaces and ensure that their design meets these needs. This will be reflected in site specific management plans and additional open space resulting from new developments will be tailored accordingly. In this way we plan to develop a network of open spaces to meet specific needs such as wildlife areas among a wider distribution of multi functional sites. (See Section 14, Objective 1, Actions 1.03 - 1.04 - 1.19 & Objective 2, Action 2.01)

### Question: Reasons for not visiting

Within the survey there was an opportunity for people to explain why they would choose not to visit open spaces. The results of the survey are shown in the chart below.



Our conclusion is that overall there are practical steps we can take to make open spaces more attractive to people who do not currently use them. We appreciate that not everybody will want to visit open spaces, however we would like to address the following issues that currently put some people off:

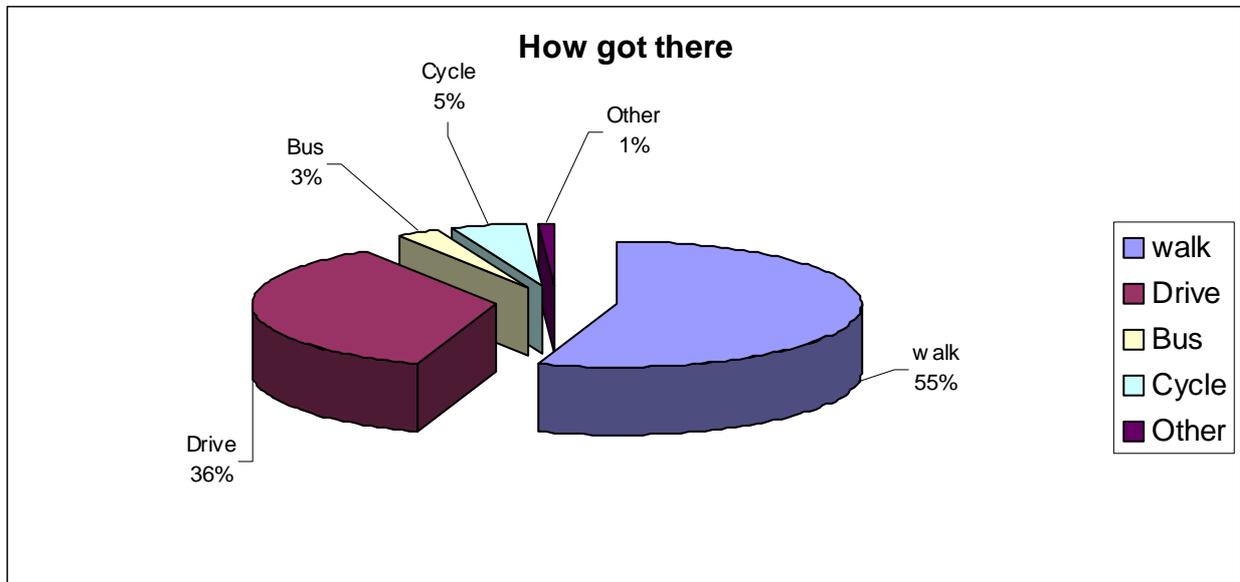
- Lack of interest (See Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.19)
- Too far from home (See Section 14, Objective 2, Action 2.06)
- Publicise (See Section 14, Objective 3, Action 3.01)
- Transport cost (See Section 14, Objective 2, Action 2.06 & Objective 3, Action 3.01)
- Do not feel safe (See Section 14, Objective 1, Actions 1.11 - 1.16)
- Disabled (See Section 14, Objective 1, Actions 1.10 - 1.12 - 1.13 & Objective 3, Action 3.01)

In order to address these concerns we aim to develop a local network of accessible, well-designed open spaces that cater for all users and to market and publicise our existing open spaces.

### Question: Travel Method

Our users were asked what form of travel they used when visiting open spaces.

This question was asked to enable the development of an accessibility standard for the district's network of open spaces (an accessibility standard defines how far you are expected to travel to access particular types of open space).



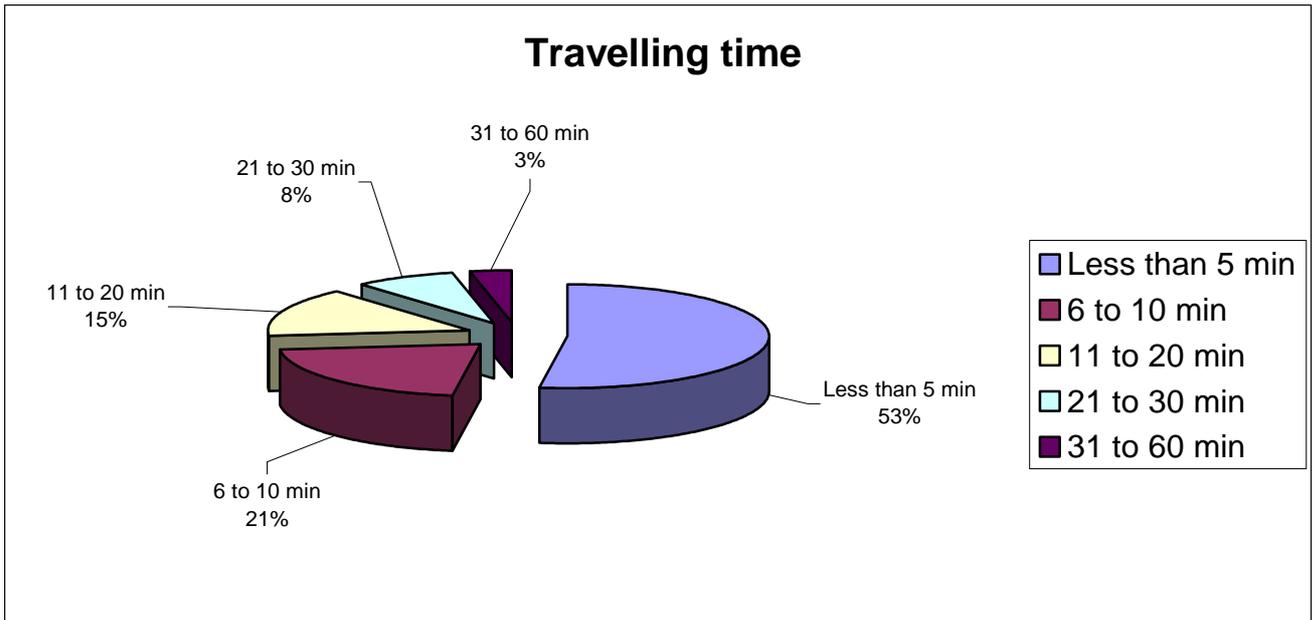
The results show that more people actually walk or cycle to open spaces than via cars or buses. This is a situation that we wish to encourage, therefore it is imperative that open spaces that are provided through the planning process are local to people's homes and have well publicised and maintained access routes. (See *Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.11 & Objective 2, Actions 2.03 - 2.06*)

It is acknowledged that for the users who access open spaces by car, parking facilities need to be available. This is especially important at strategic locations such as large formal parks, nature reserves and country parks. (See *Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.13*).

### Question: Travelling time

People were asked to identify how long they take to travel to their most regularly used open space. The chart on page 18 identifies the current trend.

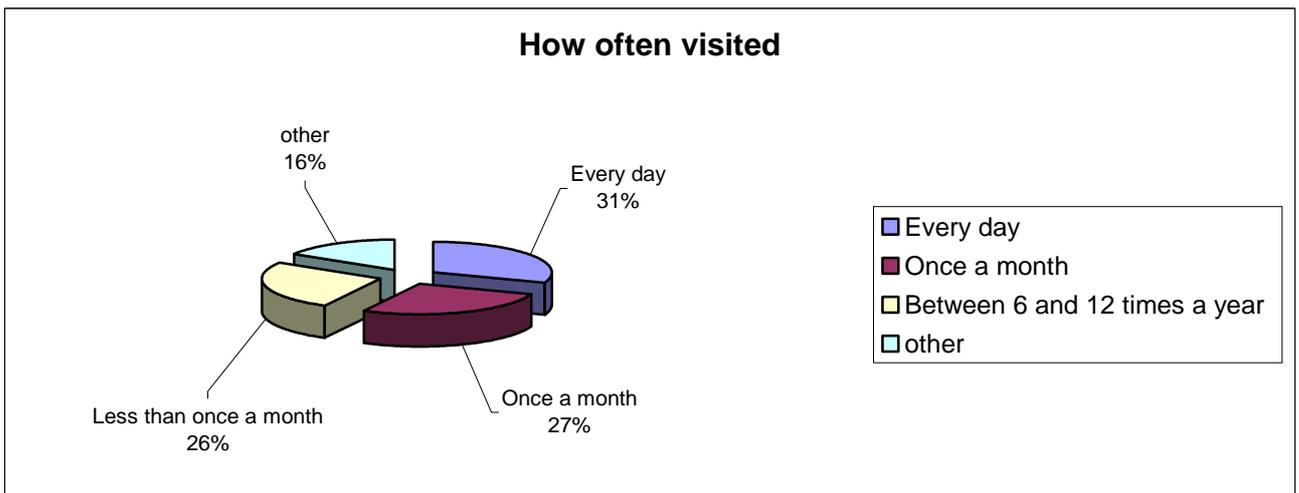
This facet of the survey enables us to identify the catchment areas of open space across the district (a catchment area is the area served surrounding any particular open space).



These results show that 74% of our users take less than 10 minutes to travel to the Open Space of their choice. This reinforces the view that locally situated open spaces are the most important to our users, and a 10 minute journey is most acceptable to the majority of users. (See Section 14, Objective 2, Actions 2.03, 2.04 & 2.05). However it also identifies that 26% of the public are willing to take longer journeys to travel to strategic sites that offer a wider range of facilities and features, which shows the importance of having a wide range of open space on offer (See Section 14, Objective 2, Actions 2.03, 2.04 & 2.05).

**Question: How often visited**

Users were asked how often they visited open spaces.



These results show that of all the people visiting open spaces, the majority use them at least once a month, with about a third visiting on a daily basis. This tells us that public open space is highly valued by many residents and one of the most used assets provided by the local authority.

## Question: Quality of the Site

Our survey included a range of questions to enable us to assess public opinion regarding the quality of the features and standard of maintenance found when visiting parks and open spaces

This information, with the results of the open space audit, will be used to formulate a quality standard, which will be applied to all of our sites.



*This is Oak Tree Park in Yeovil; it is one of our premier sites not only for size (2.2 hectares) but also for location and the variety of usage that it provides. The park is situated within one of the largest housing development sites in the district and attracts users from all over the town.*

*Features include a children's play area, skate park, multi-use games arena, two ponds and a large area for informal games and/or leisure activities.*

*The area is very keenly monitored by the local parish council and they have been actively involved in helping to increase the quality of the park over the last few years in order to help meet the increase in users.*

*Changes that have helped increase the quality for our users have included; installation of drainage, bulb and tree planting programmes, extra weekend litter picking and different bins.*

Users were asked to identify whether they thought that the features were, Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, Very Poor or Not Applicable. Overall the results were as follows:

- Standard of cleanliness 91% average, good or excellent
- Provision of trees 89% average, good or excellent
- Ease of access around the site 88% average, good or excellent
- Condition of boundary fences etc 86% average, good or excellent
- Level of horticultural maintenance 85% average, good or excellent
- Seat provision and condition 82% average, good or excellent
- Overall wildlife value 82% average, good or excellent
- Overall perception of safety 80% average, good or excellent
- Level of children's facilities 65% average, good or excellent
- Enhancement of natural features 63% average, good or excellent
- Standard of planted areas 61% average, good or excellent
- Opportunities for public involvement 52% average, good or excellent
- Range of activities available 53% average, good or excellent
- Range of visitor facilities 52% average, good or excellent
- Access to / with contact parks staff 36% average, good or excellent

It is clear from the results of these questions that the overall impression of quality for the features that we provide within our open spaces is good, with an average satisfaction rating of 72.4%. For standards of maintenance satisfaction is 87% and for facilities and activities provided the satisfaction was 67%.

However, there were some areas that were identified as needing significant improvement:

- The ability to have access to / contact parks staff. (See Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.18).
- The opportunities for community activities undertaken. (See Section 14, Objective 3, Actions 3.02, 3.03 & 3.05).
- The range of visitor facilities provided. (See Section 14, Objective 1, Actions 1.12, 1.13, 1.15, 1.17 & 1.19).

In order to address these deficiencies we will target improvements towards improving access to and contact details for parks staff, increasing the range of activities and facilities available for use.

**Question: Things people didn't like when visiting open spaces.**

Although there is a high satisfaction rate with the way that we currently maintain our open spaces, we asked the community to tell us if there was anything they didn't like about their visits to open spaces.

The most things that people dislike when visiting open spaces are:

- The way other users used the facility
- Litter & broken glass
- Dog fouling
- Poor drainage
- Muddy footpaths
- Poor lighting
- Poor gates and stiles on 'rights of way'



*This picture is of an area of land that was awaiting redevelopment. Some local residents had taken to abandoning their waste on this site rather than disposing of it legally. Once we had cleaned this site and secured the boundaries, we worked with the housing authority, enforcement team and residents to ensure that this did not recur.*

**Question: What prevents people using open spaces?**

We asked the community to tell us what, if anything, would stop them visiting the open spaces. They said that the following would discourage them from visiting our open spaces:

- |                          |                                     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Anti social behaviour  | 88% said it would stop their visits |
| • Instances of vandalism | 72% said it would stop their visits |
| • Dog fouling            | 66% said it would stop their visits |
| • Loud noises            | 65% said it would stop their visits |
| • Inadequate paths       | 61% said it would stop their visits |
| • Poor maintenance       | 58% said it would stop their visits |
| • Appearance of graffiti | 55% said it would stop their visits |
| • Litter                 | 51% said it would stop their visits |
| • Poor facilities        | 45% said it would stop their visits |

We know that 98.6% of respondents use open spaces regularly these are currently major issues. However, we must continue to monitor the occurrences of these issues and discourage and prevent them by design and proactive management (See Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.16).

**Question: What did you like about your visit?**

As well as being asked what they did not like about their visits, people were asked to identify what they particularly liked about the open spaces that they visit. The main things they liked were:

- The views and enjoying looking at the planting
- Peaceful, quiet, local parks
- Well maintained open spaces
- Plenty of space for everyone
- Good play areas
- Activities for all, including opportunities for walking
- Safe, well designed, spaces that are great to take the kids



*This picture of St Johns Churchyard in Yeovil town centre shows the benefit of good design and maintenance. Although not a particularly large site it is a very well used area for visitors and shop staff to take their lunch break in.*

*Consequently we have ensured that there is a good range of seating available and that there are adequate bin facilities. This area also benefits from the installation of CCTV cameras, lighting and high quality seasonal bedding areas.*

### **Question: What would they like to see improved?**

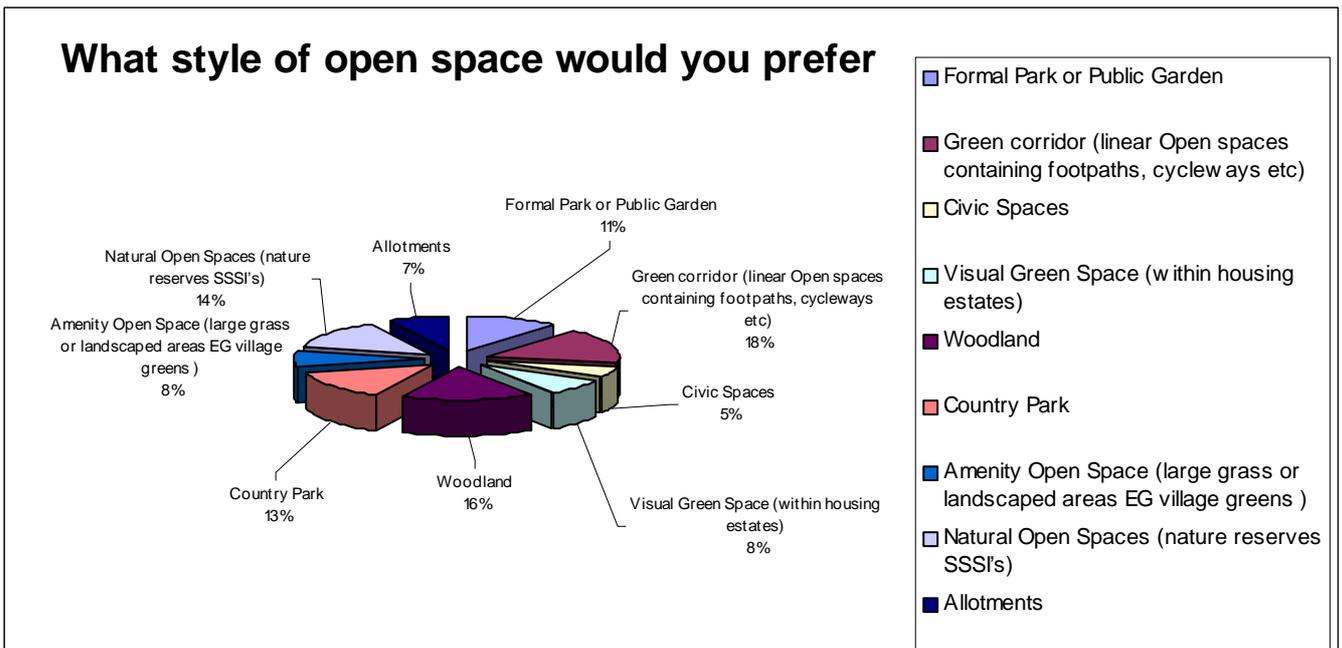
People were asked to tell us how they felt that open spaces could be improved. The top suggestions were:

- More litter and dog bins (See Section 14, Objective 4, Action 4.03)
- Better footpaths (See Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.10s)
- Areas for sheltering from the sun and rain (See Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.17)
- More tree planting (See Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.20)
- Dog free areas (See Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.14)

### **Question: What kind of open space would people like to see more of?**

In order to ensure that we can continue to provide the correct type of open spaces for our users, they were asked to identify what they would like to see more of. The results from this question indicate that the top most wanted types of open spaces are:

1. Natural open spaces (inc woodland & country park), 43% (See Section 14, Objective 2, Action 2.04)
2. Green corridors, 18% (See Section 14, Objective 2, Action 2.04)
3. Parks and public gardens, 11% (See Section 14, Objective 2, Action 2.04)
4. Informal recreational open space, 8% (See Section 14, Objective 2, Action 2.04)



These results can be used to shape the potential redevelopment of existing spaces and will aid us in specifying the correct type of Open Space within new developments.

### Resident Survey Findings: Summary

From the results of this survey we can ascertain that our parks and open spaces are visited and used on a regular basis by around half of our residents and that they are generally very satisfied with what we provide. Typically those that visit open spaces do so at least once a month, with many people visiting on a daily basis. It appears that the most popular open spaces are those that are located within 5 minutes of their home.

The most popular reason for visiting parks or open spaces is to walk or exercise. Overall the survey shows that a network of green corridors and well designed natural and formally planted parks and open spaces are desirable to residents. People are currently satisfied with the quality of maintenance and facilities that are provided, but they would like to see some improvements, including more bins, trees, paths and places to shelter.

When asked what would stop them from using our open spaces they identified anti-social behaviour, inadequate paths, poor facilities and low standards of maintenance as the potential primary deterrents. However, our incident reporting database shows that none of the above mentioned issues are currently a problem.

*For additional information regarding the user profile, see **Appendix A**.*

## Young People Survey

The purpose of this survey was to gather the views of children, young people, parents and play providers on existing play opportunities across the district.

### *Range:*

16 venues were visited.

- To cover the different age ranges, and the wide geographical area, we selected one parent & toddler group, one preschool, one primary school and one community school in each of the 4 Areas of South Somerset.
- We selected communities that represent different types of communities in South Somerset, eg urban and rural.
- The consultation was carried out on the Community Resource Service double decker bus over 2 weeks in November 2004.

### *Methods:*

The children were asked;

- Where they play outside
- What their 3 favourite activities are
- What stops them playing
- What they wish for to make playing better

### *Results:*

266 children were consulted. This was made up of 122 children aged over 8 and 144 children aged under 8. 164 parents returned questionnaires.

### *Main issues drawn from results of consultation:*

- **Access to open places:** (43%) of the young people access open spaces away from their homes.
- **Favourite activities:** ball games are the most popular activity for all ages (20.7%), followed by equipped outdoor play (15.4%), and unstructured play with friends (10.8%).
- **Supervision:** requests for supervised play and park areas, from all age ranges, and especially from parents and carers (45%). The average age when parents would let their children out on their own is 9 to 10years. The other major safety suggestion was speed limits for traffic (31%).
- **More Facilities:** more equipment in the park and having an easily accessible play and sport park were the most common wishes expressed by children (36%) and parents (43%) alike.
- **Most used facilities:** are playing fields, playgrounds.
- **Transport:** the majority of under 8's access open space with adults and/or by car (62%). A lack of affordable transport for over 11's causes rural isolation.
- **Rural isolation:** this stops young people meeting up with their friends and being reliant on parents to access after school activities or other play opportunities. Comments include, "I live down a track", "My friends don't live

near me”, “I live out in the sticks”, “my friends live on the other side of the A303”, and “My parents can’t drive me”.

- **Special Needs young people:** suffer especially from rural isolation, as going to special schools, they don’t make friends in their community. This is compounded by the fact that parents are fearful of letting them out of the home unsupervised because of their special needs.
- 45% of parents live less than 5 minutes away from a play area. 16% live more than 15 minutes away and in some rural villages there is a marked lack of provision of outdoor play space. Parents will often drive to different area, especially to Ninesprings in Yeovil.
- **Lack of free space:** Young people in rural areas are especially dependent on adults and cars, as the traditional free space (like waste land or fields) is no longer available to the majority of young people. Where it is available and there is no equipment, they consider there is nothing for them to do.
- **Danger from traffic:** followed by **danger from strangers** being the most commonly cited reasons parents stop their children playing outside.
- **Parents:** 79% considered play opportunities were very important and 63% were satisfied with existing play provision.

### Results of Best Value Survey (2006) and NI 199

These are the results of the Best Value Survey from 2006. The survey is carried out every three years and where data is available from previous years this has been incorporated. The 2006 survey was sent to 3,500 randomly selected addresses between September and November 2006. There were 1,510 responses – a response rate of 44%.

**Q1: What makes South Somerset a good place to live:**

*(2006 top 5: 1- level of crime, 2 - health services, 3 - affordable decent housing, 4 - clean streets, 5 - education provision)*

**Q 2: What needs improving:**

*The areas relating to Sport Art & Leisure services that respondents felt **most needed improving** were:*

Area of activity	2006		2003	
	Ranking (out of 20)	% of respondents	Ranking (out of 20)	% of respondents
Activities for teenagers	1	45%	8	32%
Facilities for young children	11	13%	17	12%
Community activities	15	9%	1	55%
Parks and open spaces	16	8%	14	13%

- In 2006 therefore residents feel activities for teenagers now feature as the top area that respondents feel most need improving.
- In both years parks, open spaces and facilities for young children ranked in the bottom 10 in this section, ie residents felt they did not need improving, although facilities for young people has moved up the ranking in 2006.

#### Q14: Usage of Sport, Arts and Leisure Facilities

Frequency data is also available for almost every day, about once a month, within last year and longer ago, but a snapshot has been provided below:

	At least once a week (%)			Within last 6 months (%)			Never used (%)		
	2006	2003	2000	2006	2003	2000	2006	2003	2000
<b>Parks and open spaces</b>	27	21	12	15	16	14	6	14	36

- Frequency of use of all our services has increased or stayed the same over 6 years.
- The number of people who have never used our services is declining.

#### Q13: Satisfaction Levels

The following satisfaction scores relate to our services. These are also used to report back as Best Value satisfaction indicators and the percentile score is also shown.

Service	% of respondents who were very or fairly satisfied			Percentile league position for BVPI scores	
	2006	2003	2000	2006	2003
<b>Parks and open spaces (BVPI 119e)</b>	77	73	61	68%	53%

#### Q20: How people find out about the council

The majority (42%) of respondents find out about the council's activities and services from information provided directly by the council (newspapers, magazines, leaflets, posters), with 28% using the local media.

**NI 199 for Somerset for 2009/10** shows that 52% of children and young people were satisfied with parks and play areas. This represented an improvement from 2008/09 of 6%.

Consultation with children and young people identified that 61% of respondents were happy or very happy with local outdoor recreation facilities.

Respondents to the council's Sport and Recreation Needs survey in 2004 identified local parks and recreation grounds as the most visited type of facility in the last 12 months, out of 46 different facilities.

## 5. Where are we now? Analysis of our open space

### Site Audits - Existing Open Spaces

In 2008 an audit was carried out on public open space areas that were at least 400m<sup>2</sup>. The audit measured the quantity of open space provided, how well equipped the areas were, the quality of grounds maintenance and classified the site in terms of typology.

From this audit we can identify that we manage 233 public open spaces over 400m<sup>2</sup> in area (330 hectares in total). They can be broadly defined as 10 parks or public gardens, 7 natural open spaces, 9 green corridors and 142 informal recreational open spaces. Partners such as town and parish councils manage a further 45 public open spaces and these are predominantly classed as informal recreational open spaces. These types of open spaces are defined in the following pages and any specific findings from the audit are summarised within those sections.

However, some general findings also emerged from the audit:

#### Open space provided:

- From this audit we are able to map our current provision and identify where there is an over or under provision of open space. (See Section 14, Objective 2, Action 2.01) This information will be used to influence future open space demand from new developments.
- Most of our open spaces are easily accessible to the neighbouring properties.

#### Facilities provided:

- From the audit we can identify that many of our sites are lacking in certain facilities (such as internal hard surface footpaths) and that of those sites that do have certain features some are in need of renovation or alteration.
- Some site boundaries need further investigation, identification and, where needed, demarcation.
- There is a clear lack of signage throughout our open spaces.
- Seat and bin provision across the district is generally very good.
- The range of floral / planted areas are average, with an insufficient number of natural / woodland type planted areas.

#### Quality of grounds maintenance

- Many of our open spaces scored well overall when audited for quality. However, there are certain features that need addressing, eg some planted areas were rated poor and decisions need to be taken to consider either removing or renovating them.

Any deficiencies found in the audit are addressed in the Action Plan.

### **South Somerset typology: the types of open space available**

Although most spaces provide a multitude of uses, for the purpose of this strategy each open space has been designated a primary use so that quantity standards can be reached. This complies with 'Planning Policy Guidance Number 17' (PPG 17-2.6) *Planning for open space, sport and recreation* as closely as possible. This strategy covers four main types of open space, which are described in the following section.

#### **Park or Public Garden**

**Definition:** Sites with a formally recognised layout that have been designed primarily to provide aesthetic enjoyment. This can include sweeping landscapes of the historic estates, to ornamental gardens that include flower beds and features such as statues.

**Primary purpose:** To offer well-equipped and maintained areas that are accessible to all, designed for informal recreational use and providing opportunities for community events

On the whole, our parks offer well-designed areas that are available for use all year round. They are accessible to all user groups with all weather pathways, seating, signage and facilities for disposing of litter. Many are formally planted to provide interest to users all year round.

Some sites offer additional features such as ponds, lighting, sport and play facilities, or specific ecological and historical interest.

All sites offer opportunities for informal exercise and recreation in attractive surroundings. Some restrictions on use are also enforced, eg horse riding, mini motos, or golf practice. These restrictions are in place for the enjoyment of the majority of users, and people have the opportunity to carry out their hobbies and past times elsewhere.



*Sidney Gardens, Yeovil, is an example of a Park or Public Garden. Whilst sadly many of its original features have long vanished, it still retains the original fountain, layout and some fine original specimen trees. It is highly valued by the local residents and much appreciated by those who visit or pass through on their way to town.*

*Consultation has shown that whilst people appreciate this formal park so close to the centre of Yeovil, many people in other parts of the town were unaware of its existence. In order to enable others to enjoy this historic park and increase its use we intend to undertake a promotional campaign, which will publicise all our principal open spaces and their features.*

Our resident survey findings show that parks or public gardens attract the majority of users many of whom travel specifically to access these kinds of facilities, as traditional parks design is still valued by many people. We are fortunate that many of our market towns possess formal parks and gardens available for use. These are owned and maintained by both district & town councils.

### **Audit summary**

The audit showed that our parks and public gardens are provided mainly in the larger market towns of Yeovil and Chard. It identified that access to these sites was generally satisfactory, with good accessible internal pathways. However it also showed that the boundaries of these sites need some investigation and renovation. Generally they provided a good range of habitat styles with some well maintained and planted areas, although some areas are in need of renovation with some sites lacking in quality tree planting. The range of visitor facilities available is limited, with poor provision of public art and access to refreshments and overall signage. However, seating and litterbins were generally well provided.

Full details of the audit can be found in **Appendix E**.

### **Informal Recreational Open Space**

**Definition:** Sites where the emphasis is on providing informal activities for children, young people and adults. Some of these spaces may contain a range of features and additional facilities.

**Primary purpose:** To provide opportunities for people to access open space close to home and to enhance the appearance of the local environment.

These areas are our main source of open space provision and are typically found within most housing developments across the district. They are generally lacking in any formal features and mostly consist of plain grass areas with limited shrub or tree planting.



*Hills Lane open space in Martock is a well used example of an informal recreational open space. The site has some equipped play facilities for young people to use, but is primarily used by locals for dog walking or by youngsters who wish to play informal ball games.*

*One of the main access points to this open space is through a long lane that had become slightly overgrown. To address this we worked with a voluntary youth group to clear and tidy the lane. Residents and users appreciate and value the visual aspect of the site and to further improve this we have undertaken some more bulb and tree planting.*

They are primarily used for informal activities, eg kick-about and dog walking. Unfortunately these areas also can be rather small and occasionally do not accommodate all functions adequately.

These sites provide an important function in improving the quality of local neighbourhoods by providing easily accessible open space for everyday use.

Many of our smaller towns and villages provide 'Village Green' type facilities; these areas are classified as informal recreational open spaces and are used for a wide variety of functions and often include equipped play areas and youth facilities.

### **Audit summary**

The audit showed that our informal recreational open spaces are situated across the whole of the district in most of our towns and villages. It identified that whilst access to these sites was generally satisfactory, many of them did not have any internal pathways therefore hindering all year round use, and that some boundaries were in need of renovation or demarcation.

Generally they provided a satisfactory range of habitat styles, however most planted areas are in need of renovation with many sites lacking in quality tree planting. The range of visitor facilities available is limited, with poor provision of public art and access to refreshments and overall signage. However, seating and litterbins were generally well provided.

Full details of the audit can be found in **Appendix F**.

### **Green Corridor**

**Definition:** These are generally well-planted linear corridors of land that are designed to allow the passage of people and wildlife from one point to another. They often link larger areas of open space or enable traffic free access for pedestrians and cyclists.

**Primary purpose:** Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel and opportunities for wildlife movement across urban areas.

Some green corridors have resulted from urban developments overlapping existing public 'rights of way' that retain their protection and function.

Our established green corridors are well used and highly valued by the public and our resident survey findings demonstrate that this is the type of open space that the public want to see more of. They offer traffic free, safe travel options for pedestrians and cyclists in attractive environments within built up areas.

The value of green corridors for wildlife access, linking feeding and nesting areas, is well documented, and prevents established natural open spaces becoming isolated due to extensive urban development. Some green corridors result from the protection of existing hedgerows that have been identified as having ecological value and impact.

The other form of green corridor commonly encountered is the 'shelter belt'. These consist predominantly of trees and shrubs and are used to protect properties from road disturbance, adverse weather or simply to screen unsightly developments.

Much work has already been undertaken nationally to ensure that major developments, wherever feasible, incorporate green corridors and link with the existing infrastructure. <sup>Ref 7</sup>.

### **Audit summary**

The audit report showed that the majority of our accessible green corridors are situated mainly within Yeovil. It identified that access through these sites was generally good, with most having good internal hard surfaced pathways allowing all year round use.

Generally they provided a good range of habitat styles, with some well planted areas and quality tree planting schemes.

The range of visitor facilities available is limited, with poor provision of public art and access to refreshments and overall signage. However, seating and litterbins were generally well provided.



*Mitchell Gardens in Chard is a good example of a green corridor. It is made up of 4 separate pieces of open space that are joined together to form a link between a significant residential area and the town's shopping centre. This open space is highly valued by the local residents' association and is closely monitored by them for instances of anti social behaviour and to help identify potential future developments for which they have provided some resources. We know from the number of walkers and cyclists who use this green corridor that it significantly reduces the amount of road trips into the town. This has a wide range of benefits; it is good for a healthy lifestyle and, reducing carbon emission and reducing traffic congestion.*

Full details of the audit can be found in **Appendix G**

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*Ref 7 English Nature: Accessible Natural Greenspace in Town (ANGST)*

## Natural Open Spaces

**Definition:** Sites providing people with access to, and experience of nature. It includes woodland, country parks, nature reserves and wetland areas. Areas are designed and managed using native species, to aid, conserve, and develop wildlife biodiversity. They are owned by various agencies and trusts and our resident survey indicates that these are widely used and highly valued.

**Primary purpose:** To preserve and develop Somerset's unique wildlife habitats, whilst enabling public access to these environments and raising awareness through educational opportunities.

Across South Somerset there are numerous natural open spaces available for public enjoyment and these can be divided into four clear differing categories:

**Natural Open Spaces.** These are common areas that are managed in a sympathetic manner to offer a more 'natural' type of grassland, scrub, hedgerow or woodland. They may include ponds, lakes or other features and can be stand alone sites or alternatively incorporated into larger sites as a specific feature.

### Audit summary

The audit identified that whilst access to these sites was generally satisfactory, there were no internal hard surfaced pathways, which hinder the use of the sites throughout the year. Generally these sites provided a good range of habitat styles, with quality tree planting and a variety of natural style planning available. The range of facilities available at these sites are necessarily limited but this does not detract from site usability.

**Country Parks.** South Somerset District Council currently manages two country parks covering 517 hectares; these are the Yeovil Country Park (owned) and Ham Hill Country Park (managed). All countryside sites are significant visitor destinations, deliver local green space provision and include a number of protected areas like SSSI's and County Wildlife Sites.



*Larkhill open space project (LOSP) in Yeovil is a good example of a widely used and locally recognised Natural open space. This site is unusual as it encompasses a variety of natural open space types such as; a stream corridor, meadow grassland, scrubland and wooded areas all situated within an urban environment.*

*The project was initiated following a 'planning for real' event in 2006, where the importance and desire for this area to be managed sympathetically was identified. This event involved consultation with the local residents, school and parish council. Following the event a range of enhancements and developments were identified; and in 2008 a dedicated joint funded part-time ranger was appointed to undertake these improvements. The area is well used as a walk to school route and is greatly enjoyed by all the local residents. In 2009 it was entered into the "South West in Bloom - It's Your Neighbourhood" Scheme and was awarded an 'outstanding achievement' award.*

Both Country Parks have been awarded Green Flag status and encourage a diverse range of opportunities for both visitors and volunteers who wish to get involved in the running of the facility. They have designated ranger teams who manage the upkeep of the sites and run large active weekly volunteer parties. The parks have 5-year Land Management Plans, which are available to the public upon request.

**Woodland.** These are areas of trees that are predominantly planted and managed for visual effect and public enjoyment. They are mostly planted with native species and are not commercially managed for their timber. Woodlands provide a variety of wildlife habitats and offer a unique visitor experience. Woodland areas often form part of the wider landscape and are incorporated within the design of our open spaces, but the Forestry Commission provides the majority of publicly accessible woodland.

**Nature Reserves.** South Somerset District Council currently manages three local nature reserves covering a total of 39 hectares, the largest being Chard Reservoir (which also has a Green Flag accreditation), Moldram's Ground in Wincanton and Eastfields in High Ham. The biodiversity of each site varies from the large open water site at Chard, to the calcareous grassland at High Ham.

In addition to the local nature reserves detailed above, other agencies such as Somerset Wildlife Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) provide nature reserves that are accessible to the public.

The audit showed that our main provision for this type of open space is provided by our existing 'country parks'. These sites were not audited as part of this process as they have been previously audited by the Countryside Service, the results of which can be found in the Country Park Management plan.

Full details of the audit can be found in **Appendix H**.

## 6. Setting provision standards

### Introduction

In 2002 the government published 'Planning Policy Guidance Number 17' (PPG 17), Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation', which sets out the policies needed to be taken into account by local planning authorities in the preparation of their development plans. It identifies a need for all councils to set local standards for the provision of their public open spaces. These standards are set locally as there are currently no nationally accepted formulae for setting the levels of open space provision, quality or accessibility.

Local standards will help us to meet the needs of the community by identifying clear guidance for 'on' or 'off' site open space contributions available to the developers of new builds.

For clarity it is important to note that the standards that are identified are not targets for district-wide provision, rather they are the minimum that the District Council wishes to achieve for each new development, having been formulated from PPG 17 guidance, existing local information, benchmarking with the council's 'family group' and from the results of our public consultation. This will be integrated in the CORE STRATEGY process (*See Section 14, Objective 2, Actions 2.04, 2.05, 2.06*).

These standards form the basis for negotiating open space provision and clarify the required quality, quantity, and accessibility within new developments. Should local open space exist already, the standards within this strategy will guide any financial payments from developers required to upgrade existing local facilities to meet increased demands.

### What do the standards cover?

The standards cover:

- **Quantity:** How much open space is currently provided with deficiencies, excesses and future requirements identified.
- **Quality:** Our approach to managing and maintaining open spaces (*see Section 12, Addressing the sustainability of open space*).
- **Accessibility:** How far users should have to travel to a particular type of open space.
- **Minimum size:** What size open spaces should be.

## **How will they be applied?**

Currently only a quantity standard exists (Policy CR2 of South Somerset's Local Plan) and this is simply applied across all settlement types equally and allows for the provision of informal recreational open space only.

### **Policy CR2 (extract)**

*Where new housing development generates a need for additional formal and informal recreation facilities, provision will be made pro rata in accordance with the following standard per 1,000 population:*

1. *Youth and adult use: 1.8 - 2.0 hectares (4.5 - 5.0 acres) of which 1.4 hectares (3.5 acres) should be playing pitch provision.*
2. *Young people and children's use: 0.6 - 0.8 hectares (1.5 - 2 acres) comprising:*
  - (a) Outdoor equipped playgrounds: 0.2 - 0.3 hectares (0.5 - 0.75 acres)*
  - (b) Casual or informal play space: 0.4 - 0.5 hectares (1.0 - 1.5 acres)*

*Sheltered housing schemes, rest homes, special needs housing and developments of one bedroom dwellings will be exempt from this standard but will be expected to provide informal open space. Provision should be made for future maintenance to ensure its continued availability as outdoor play.*

Consequently this approach has only been partially effective as it has only considered the amount of open space provided, missing out both the quality and accessibility standards.

## 7. Quantity standards

### Quantity of district owned open spaces – current provision

In 2008, in accordance with the PPG17 typology, SSDC audited the amount of existing open space available to the public within South Somerset.

This information has been used to benchmark with our family group (similar local authorities determined by Government for the purposes of comparison) and the 'Fields in Trust' national guidance produced by the National Playing Fields Authority, who are recognised as the leading authority for sports ground provision.

This benchmarking has enabled us to align our standards in line with other local authorities and user demand. The overall aim of the quantity assessment is to:

1. Provide an understanding of the adequacy of the existing provision for each type of open space within the district.
2. Establish areas of the district suffering from a relative deficiency in provision of open space or potentially an over provision.
3. Provide a guide to developers as to the amount of open space expected from any new development.
4. To protect and preserve the existing provision

In order to identify and implement the relevant quantity standard it has been necessary to review and consider the following per type of open space: -

- Any relevant national standards (eg, Fields in Trust standard)
- Any existing local provision standards (eg, Local Plan or Local Development Framework)
- Current provision
- User consultation results
- Benchmarking with other similar local authorities

Following the review of these criteria, taking into account current provision and the potential future demand, we have developed quantity standards that address these issues.

The following table compares our current provision with those of other local authorities that are of a similar nature who have produced open space strategies and any relevant national standards.

<b>BENCHMARKING COMPARISON TABLE (2009)</b>					
<b>Authority</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Park or public garden</b>	<b>Informal recreational open space</b>	<b>Green corridors</b>	<b>Natural open space</b>
<b>SSDC current supply</b>	Population in 2007: 158,460	0.13 ha per 1000 population	0.22 ha per 1000 population	0.06 ha per 1000 population	0.78 ha per 1000 population
<b>Braintree Council</b>	Population in 2001: 141,179	1.2 ha per 1000 population	0.8 ha per 1000 population	N/A	2.0 ha per 1000 population
<b>Breckland Council</b>	Population in 2001: 78,000	1.0 ha per 1000 population	0.47 ha per 1000 population	N/A	2.0 ha per 1000 population
<b>South Kesteven Council</b>	Population in 2007: 131,100	0.78 ha per 1000 population	0.8 ha per 1000 population	N/A	2.0 ha per 1000 population
<b>Newark Council</b>	Population in 2001: 106,273	0.6 ha per 1000 population	0.6 ha per 1000 population	N/A	10.0 ha per 1000 population
<b>Taunton Deane</b>	Population in 2001: 102,299	1.68 ha per 1000 population	0.98 ha per 1000 population	N/A	1.61 ha per 1000 population
<b>Amber Valley Council</b>	Population in 2001:	0.18 ha per 1000 population	0.11 ha per 1000 population	0.03 ha per 1000 population	0.36 ha per 1000 population
<b>National Standards</b>		0.55 ha (Fields in trust)	0.5 ha (Fields in trust)	N/A	1.0 ha per 1000 population (ANGST)

The table on the following page compares our current open space provision per type with the equivalent average provision from our family group and recommends a quantity standard that is to be applied to any residential development.

**PROVISIONAL QUANTITY STANDARDS PER TYPE OF SSDC OPEN SPACE**

Type of open space:	Parks and public gardens
Current provision:	0.13 ha per 1000 population
Benchmarked average provision:	0.90 ha per 1000 population
Proposed provision standard:	0.19 ha per 1000 population
<p><b>Rationale:</b></p> <p>Parks and Public gardens are perceived as being of particular importance to our residents and are used regularly by 13% of visitors (<i>2nd highest type of open space used</i>) and were seen as the 3rd most wanted type of open space.</p> <p>In the absence of any national standards a local setting should be set balancing the gathered evidence base with the results of the user consultation. In order to address the aspirations of our users and to minimize local deficiencies a standard set marginally above the current level of provision will enable us to achieve this.</p> <p>In reality this provision standard will enable us to provide two further minimum size formal parks or public gardens within the district.</p>	

Type of open space:	Informal Recreational Open Space
Current provision:	0.22 ha per 1000 population
Benchmarked average provision:	0.62 ha per 1000 population
Proposed provision standard:	0.55 ha per 1000 population
<p><b>Rationale:</b></p> <p>Residents were split in their opinions about informal recreational open space. Whilst the results of the resident survey identified that informal recreational open space was the 6<sup>th</sup> most used type of open space (<i>with 8% of our users visiting</i>), it also showed that other open space types were more valued by the users.</p> <p>However, our own findings identify that informal recreational open space is of significant value, as quite often these areas fulfil our main or only source for open space contributions within the built environment and they generally have multiple functions. There is a national standard currently available for 'informal' open space provision through the 'Fields in trust' <sup>Ref 5</sup> standard, and we have chosen to adopt this in order to reflect the importance of informal recreational open space.</p>	

*Ref 5 Fields in Trust (previously the National Playing Fields Association - 'six acre standard')*

<b>Type of open space:</b>	<b>Green Corridors</b>
Current provision:	0.06 ha per 1000 population
Benchmarked average provision:	0.03 ha per 1000 population ( <i>Amber Valley Council only</i> )
Proposed provision standard:	To be determined by future work on the Green Infrastructure Strategy.
<b>Rationale:</b>	
Green corridors were seen as one of the most valued types of open space that we provide with 18% of respondents wishing to see more provided and it was also the third most visited type of open space. There are currently no national standards that can be applied to the provision of green corridors. The development of a proposed standard will be prepared as part of the Green Infrastructure Strategy	

<b>Type of open space:</b>	<b>Natural Open Spaces</b>
Current provision:	0.78 ha per 1000 population
Benchmarked average provision:	2.66 ha per 1000 population
Proposed provision standard:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed provision standard for country parks is 1.32 ha per 1000 population</li> <li>• Proposed provision standard for natural open space is 0.25 ha per 1000 population</li> <li>• Proposed provision standard for woodland is 0.024 ha per 1000 population</li> </ul>
Proposed provision standard (total)	1.594 ha per 1000 population
<b>Rationale:</b>	
<p>The value placed on natural open spaces is clear, both in terms of a recreational resource and the role they play in biodiversity and conservation.</p> <p>The results of the resident survey indicate that not only are they one of the most visited types of open space (31% of users) but are also the type for which the greatest demand in increase was for (43% of users).</p> <p>The current national recommended standard from English Nature identifies; a 2.0ha of accessible natural open space required per 1000 people. The green nature of South Somerset means that most people have relative easy access to natural open space and the national English Nature standard would be unachievable. It is therefore suggested that we set the quantity standard at 1.0ha per 1000 in order to satisfy the aspirations of residents and to meet any local deficiencies.</p>	

**Total of all 4 types: 1.84 ha per 1000 population**

*Further calculations and rationale can be found in **Appendix B**.*

It is our intention to undertake a review of these standards once the Draft Core strategy consultation process has been completed and amend as required. To ensure that we are able to achieve these standards they will be incorporated into the emerging, Core Strategy publication plan document and in due course the finally approved document (*See Section 14, Objective 2, Action 2.04*). It is our aim that the new standards are applied to each new residential development, so that they provide a minimum of 1.84ha per 1000 population of open space, of which 0.55ha per 1000 should be of Informal recreational open space, the remainder shall be assessed on a case by case basis and will reflect the developments context and situation.

It should be noted that developers would need to also provide additional equipped play space, youth facility space and playing pitch space through new residential development.

## 8. Minimum acceptable size standards

In addition to considering the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces, PPG17 recommends that we also consider minimum acceptable size standards for the various types of open space we provide. This enables us to produce a transparent policy-based system of deciding whether a developer should provide either on-site or off-site open space contributions.

In order to decide what is an acceptable size of open space, we have considered our current standards and compared this to levels of provision recommended by national bodies and to the levels of provision supplied by the peer group of similar authorities and consequently have produced a series of acceptable minimum size standards.

MINIMUM SIZE STANDARDS PER TYPE OF OPEN SPACE				
Type of open space	Current standard	Benchmarked average provision	Proposed provision standard	Rationale
Parks and Public Gardens	N/A	2.0ha (Fields in Trust)	1.0 ha	Due to geographical constraints within our towns, finding a site of 2 ha is unachievable; hence a more feasible standard of 1 ha is set.  Consultation currently identifies a high satisfaction rate with Sidney Gardens, which is less than 1 ha in size.
Informal Recreational Green Space	0.25 ha	Not available	0.25 ha	0.25 ha is the standard already set in the Landscape Design, 'A Guide to Good Practice' planning guidance already adopted by the council
Green Corridors	N/A	Not available	Case by case	No national standards apply, but as this is a high community aspiration we will consider size on a case by case basis.
Natural Open Spaces	N/A	0.25 ha (ANGST)	0.25 ha	Community aspiration shows that natural open spaces are highly regarded and desired. We have therefore set the minimum standard in line with current national guidance.

To ensure that we are able to achieve these standards they will be incorporated into the emerging Core Strategy publication plan document and in due course the finally approved document. (See Section 14, Objective 2, Action 2.05)

## 9. Addressing the quality of open space

### Quality Standards

Whilst quantity and accessibility can be measured in hectares and distance travelled, quality is subjective and will differ from person to person. The purpose of these standards is to clarify what standard of open space management and maintenance the public can expect to find when visiting open spaces and how we respond to the general views and aspirations of the community. Quality is an integral part of the provision of open space and directly influences the type and amount of users a site attracts, there is much guidance and best practise examples available, and the current national quality standards that apply to open space are:

- **Green Flag & Green Pennant** - raising the standard (*SSDC currently has three green flagged sites*)
- **Cleaner Safer Greener Communities** - creating quality parks and open spaces

These two standards outline the current best principles for open space maintenance, management, sustainability and community involvement.

### Existing open space

Using these national standards as guidance we have identified a series of baseline quality principles that will be applied to our existing open spaces. However, as these are not yet fully measurable, a benchmarking exercise will be undertaken in the next six months and by the time the strategy is revised in 2012, these standards will be SMART (*See Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.23*).

### We will strive to ensure that as a minimum our open spaces will:

- Be clean, attractive and well maintained
- Be welcoming and well signed with attractive entrances and exits
- Be safe and secure for our users
- Have good access routes into and around the open spaces
- Be managed in a sustainable manner
- Reflect the needs of the community
- Promote the conservation of wildlife and South Somerset's unique landscape
- Promote community involvement

These quality principles interlock with and will be measured by the following quality objectives in the action plan:

Objective 1: To ensure that all open spaces are managed in an environmentally sustainable manner by 2015.

Objective 2: To secure adequate open space on new and existing developments that meets the needs of the local residents.

Objective 3: To work closely with partners and the community.

Objective 4: To ensure local customer satisfaction levels are maintained at 85% for the quality of maintenance of our open spaces.

So that we could understand the current quality situation of our existing open spaces we undertook an assessment as part of the open space audit in 2008. In order to identify any shortfall in quality we developed a simple means scoring test, which gives each site a score rating, thus producing a quality 'league' table.

The features assessed included auditing the quality of:

- Accessibility
- What features there are (planting, ponds etc)
- Signage and interpretation
- Site facilities (toilets, public art etc)
- Existing maintenance

This information will be used to identify either poorly performing open spaces that require investment, or open spaces that can be identified as models of good design and management.

### **Open space on new developments**

Where a new development is required to provide areas of open space 'on-site', the council provides the developer with advance notice of the essential characteristics required to provide an acceptable landscape scheme and open space design.

This is provided in the documents "Landscape Design – A Guide to Good Practice" and its associated Addendum, these documents identify our expected standards and treatment for:

- Landscape design principles
- Nature conversation
- Ground preparation standards
- Detailed design standards
- Development within the countryside
- Site aftercare and quality provision

## Customer consultation

As part of our annual service programme we undertake a customer satisfaction survey to identify our maintenance performance according to our residents. The results for 2008/09 were:

	<b>% Satisfied or above</b>
Planted areas	85%
Hedges	83%
Litter	88%
Litter bins	93%
Grass cutting	94%

These results clearly show that our residents currently appreciate the level of maintenance that we provide.

## National Indicators

Central Government has identified a need to measure an annual 'cleanliness' score (National Indicator 195) for each local authority and part of this process involves assessing and scoring our relevant parks and open spaces. The results for 2008/09 were:

<b>NI 195</b>				
Litter	Detritus	Graffiti	Fly posting	Total average
2%	0%	1%	0%	1%

Note: The lower the score, the better. Nationally this indicates that we are in the top quartile for our cleansing performance for parks and open spaces.

## Service maintenance standards

Our current service maintenance standards were devised in 2007 and can be found in **Appendix D**. In order to ensure that we continue to manage the expectation of our residents effectively and respond to the current economic climate, we intend to review and evaluate our current open space service standards (*See Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.07*).

## Results of the resident survey

As identified in Section 6 we asked the users to measure the quality of some of the facilities and current levels of maintenance that we provide. Overall the user satisfaction rating was high, with 72.4% identifying an average satisfaction rating or higher. Those areas that did not score so highly have been identified and will be addressed as part of the action plan (see Section 14). However, it should be noted that these lower scoring areas might require a multi agency approach as the responsibility for provision may fall outside of the district council's responsibility.

## **Results of the open space audit**

Whilst both the consultation and National Indicator results show that we are currently providing good quality facilities, SSDC has identified some areas for improvement and these include signage, planting quality and improved footpaths. These will be addressed with the implementation of our quality principles and through the Action Plan (see Page 58) within this strategy

## **Management plans and maintenance schedules**

Even though SSDC own many different types of open spaces, providing a variety of functions, not all will require management plans; it is only those sites that are complex in nature, of significant size or use, or those that are of historical interest which require an in-depth plan; we refer to these as 'principal' open spaces. (See *Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.08*).

Site specific management plans for our principal open spaces are used to create a clear, structured, guide identifying how each site will be developed and maintained according to our quality standards.

These management plans will identify:

- The open space's primary function and current public usage
- A site specific tailored maintenance schedule
- A site inventory of its features and contents
- The management approach
- Habitat survey results (where available)
- Landscape enhancement plan (where applicable)

## **Costed implementation plan**

In order to maintain the quality of any open space, there is a need to renew and rejuvenate its features, which needs careful financial investment. Good structured maintenance maintains the quality of the site, but all things only have a limited working life and inevitably will need replacing at sometime, otherwise the general design and functionality of the site deteriorates.

## 10. Catchment and accessibility standards

Accessibility Standards relate to the distance which people have to travel to a particular type of open space, for example with informal recreational green space or public parks users are able to access them via a short walk from their homes. However for access to other types of open space such as natural open spaces, country parks or woodlands, users are expected to travel further.

The value of this approach is that it shows how open space can be assessed in terms of hierarchy, using the concept of an 'access threshold distance' to link attributes of quantity, quality and purpose to accessibility. This catchment area needs to be interpreted carefully, because it may be influenced by local factors and the overall distribution of open space.

The accessibility of open space is paramount in ensuring maximum opportunity for people to use the sites and therefore distance standards (both on time and mileage) have been developed to guide future provision of open space to enable most residents to have greater access to a range of appropriate open spaces.

South Somerset has a wide range of settlement types with various functions, in order to ensure that the standard for accessibility to open space is achievable, two standards are required; one for the Strategically significant towns, Market towns and Rural Centres as identified in the *Draft Core Strategy* <sup>Ref 11</sup> and another for the Rural Settlements. However, the quality and quantity standards are shared across all settlement types. See **Appendix C** for further information

### **Yeovil, Market towns and Rural Centres**

Yeovil	Somerton
Chard	South Petherton
Crewkerne	Ansford / Castle Cary
Ilminster	Bruton
Wincanton	Langport / Huish Episcopi
Martock	Milborne Port
Ilchester	Stoke sub Hamdon

This approach of setting two standards in line with settlement function is referred to as the 'hierarchy of provision'; this simply reflects the distances that people are expected to travel in a rural setting to access local services compared to an urban environment (See *Section 14, Objective 2, Action 2.03*).

To help set the standards, we have reviewed and considered national guidance from PPG17, user consultation responses, family group benchmarking and the council's 'function role and study' findings.

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*Ref 11      Draft core strategy incorporating preferred options*

MINIMUM DISTANCE STANDARDS OF NEW OPEN SPACE ARISING FROM DEVELOPMENT		
Type of open space	Proposed walking distance	Proposed driving distance
Yeovil, Market towns and Rural centres specification		
Parks and Public Gardens	15 minutes walking time or 720m in a straight line	N/A as would wish to encourage walking
Informal recreational Green Space	10 minutes walking time or 480m in a straight line	N/A as would wish to encourage walking
Natural Open Spaces	N/A as likely to be on urban fringe	10 minutes travelling time or 5.8km in a straight line
Green Corridors	These have no distance standards as they are integrated through the urban infrastructure	

MINIMUM DISTANCE STANDARDS OF NEW OPEN SPACE ARISING FROM DEVELOPMENT		
Type of open space	Proposed walking distance	Proposed driving distance
Rural settlements specification		
Parks and Public	N/A these sites are generally of a strategic nature	20 minutes travelling time or 6.6km in a straight line
Informal recreational Green Space	10 minutes travelling time or 480 m in a straight line	N/A as would wish to encourage walking
Natural Open Spaces	20 minutes travelling time or 960m in a straight line	N/A as would wish to encourage walking
Green Corridors	These have no distance standards as they are integrated through the urban infrastructure	

NB: Walking speeds are assumed to be 6 km/hr (all areas) and driving at 35 km/hr in (urban areas only ) these are consistent with national guidance. Actual walking times may be different in practice due to the participants age or the local topography. All distances quoted are not actual walking times, but are based on an 'as the crow flies' distance from the centre of the site.

See **Appendix B** for distance and travel conversions.

To ensure that we are able to achieve these standards, they will be incorporated into the emerging Core Strategy publication plan document and in due course the finally approved document. (See Section 14, Objective 2, Action 2.04)

It is intended that this standard be applied to each new residential development.

## 11. Delivering the standards – planning & developments

### Open space contributions on new developments

In terms of the provision of open space in South Somerset, local standards for quantity (Section 7), quality (Section 5 & 12), size (Section 9) and accessibility (Section 10) have been developed as part of this Open Space Strategy. These standards have then been used to identify areas where there is a shortfall / over-provision in these areas. It is important to ensure that any new development does not exacerbate any existing deficiencies and that opportunities are taken to secure improvements both in quantity and the quality of open space where appropriate.

#### **PPG 17, paragraph 33 states:**

*‘... Planning obligations should be used as a means to remedy local deficiencies in the quantity or quality of open space, sports and recreational provision. Local authorities will be justified in seeking planning obligations where the quantity and quality of provision is inadequate or under threat, or where new development increases local needs. It is essential that local authorities have undertaken detailed assessments of needs and audits of existing facilities, and set appropriate local standards in order to justify planning obligations’.*

In accordance with Draft Core Strategy Policy SS7, these standards are then applied and used to assess the level of open space, outdoor playing space and sports, cultural and community facilities that would be needed to meet the reasonable requirements of a development’s future occupants.

Should a new development require open space to accompany it, the amounts and types of open space that are required as detailed earlier in this document will be clarified at the initial stages of the planning process.

The provision of ‘dual use’ open space associated with schools to meet standards may be combined but only where open access can be secured to where the district council is satisfied that long term open access can be achieved.

The viability of the proposed development will also need to be taken into account in accordance with Draft Core Strategy Policy SS8. In the case of an enabling development, or where the development is unable to deliver all the policy requirements for reasons of viability, an open book approach will be required in line with the policy.

#### **Exemptions**

In calculating the amount of space required, the type of development and make up of individual housing schemes will need to be taken into account in order to determine likely household size. It is accepted that not all types of development generate the same demand for open space, such as single bedroom accommodation, rest homes, nursing homes, sheltered accommodation, special needs housing.

## Open space provision: the process

In order to identify what type and how much open space should be provided on new developments, a complex process of evaluation needs to be undertaken.

When an outline application is received and the number and type of dwellings are uncertain then an initial guide to the open space requirements can be ascertained. Once a reserved application has been received with a confirmed dwelling total then a detailed calculation for the open space can be determined using the following process.

1. Calculate number of residents living in proposed new development.
2. Calculate existing amount of open space within the distance standards of the new housing development.
3. Estimate the existing residential population within the relevant distance threshold. Add this to the estimated population of the new development to give a total population figure.
4. Compare the existing amount of open space and the total population within the relevant distance of the quantity standards.
5. Assess whether the developer is required to provide for a new area of open space. A new area will normally be required if the existing amount of open space is insufficient to cater for the needs of the total population, for example:
  - The quantity standard for informal recreational open space is 0.55ha per 1000 population.
  - The estimated population of the new housing development is 50 people and the population within the distance threshold (0.48km urban std) is 600, giving a total population of 650.
  - Therefore the level of informal recreational open space provision should be  $(0.55/1000) \times 650 = 0.35\text{ha}$ .
  - If the existing amount of informal recreational open space within the 0.48km distance threshold is 0.2ha, then this is below the 0.35ha that is acceptable. The developer will therefore need to provide a new area of informal recreational open space.
6. If a new area is required, calculate how large this should be (*using the above example*)
  - $(0.55/1000) \times \text{estimated population of new housing development (50)} = 0.0275 \text{ ha}$ .
  - The developer will therefore need to provide 0.0275ha of new informal recreational open space.

7. Each development will be assessed on a 'case by case' basis to identify if any particular type of open space takes precedent when taking into consideration the development's situation within the wider landscape context. Generally, the assessment will be carried out individually for each of the 4 types of open space unless a higher priority demand for a particular type of open space is identified. However a requirement to provide a new area of open space will normally only be waived if it is found to have met or exceeded it at stage 5.

### **On or off-site provision and contributions**

If the new development has been proven to increase local needs, the provision of open space may be required on site or may form part of a contribution towards off-site provision of either new or improved facilities. The requirement for an off-site contribution may arise because of the following:

- If it is found that there is a sufficient amount of open space available to meet the needs of the total population, the council may instead expect the developer to enhance the quality of an existing open space to meet the increased use from the new development.
- The size, layout and topography of the development.
- There may be other opportunities within the appropriate distance of the site which could better meet the needs of the development; or
- The contribution is towards strategic facilities, which by their nature cannot be provided within the appropriate distance threshold of every development and have a large effective catchment area and high distance threshold.

The council will normally expect the parish or town council, or appropriate voluntary body to be involved in any discussions if they are the landowners of the proposed open space or facility.

PPG17 advises that in principle, planning authorities will be justified in seeking either on-site provision or contributions towards off-site provision, for the full range of open spaces for which they have standards. <sup>Ref 1</sup>

Where a development is of a particular size so that an open space requirement such as a formal park is crossed and such a facility is required, the council would seek early discussion with developers and local councils to consider provision of the facility in question off-site but nearby where appropriate for amalgamating facilities and providing operational facilities and potential to provide better facilities present themselves. Any such off-site provision must be accessible and beneficial to the residents of the new development in question. PPG17 identifies that residents in rural areas cannot realistically expect to have the same level of access to the full range of different types of open spaces and recreation facilities normally available in more densely populated urban areas. This means that residents of rural areas usually have to travel further than most urban residents to some forms of provision.

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*Ref 1 Planning Policy Guidance Number 17' (PPG 17) Planning for Open Space*

Where this Open Space Strategy identifies deficiencies in provision of strategic facilities, off-site contributions may be requested in accordance with the catchments and distance thresholds of each facility type and the strategic priorities identified in the assessments.

Where off-site contributions towards facilities are required, this will usually be implemented through a planning obligation between the council and the developer.

### **Commuted sums for future maintenance**

Provisions for future maintenance will be sought towards on site provision or contributions towards off site provision, to ensure the continued availability of the open space.

On completion of the development and its associated open space, the developer is required to maintain the land in line with the requirements of the agreed landscape maintenance schedule for a period of time as set in the planning obligation. After this time the land may be transferred to the local authority along with a commuted sum, which is used to maintain the land for a set period of time, after which the costs of on-going maintenance becomes the responsibility of the landowner.

The provision of on-site and contribution towards off-site public open space and landscaped areas will require developers to agree the future management of this space with the council.

### **Transfer of Adopted open spaces**

Historically the open spaces will be adopted by the local authority, town or parish council or possibly through a private management company set up by the developer. It is our intention to review this practise and prepare a land adoption and transfer policy. **(See Section 14, Objective 2, Action 2.08)** In such situations where the open space is transferred to a management company any issues raised by residents must be taken up with the landowner rather than the local authority.

The council will need to be satisfied that any management company is suitably financed and of good standing. The former will require an initial landscape maintenance plan to be implemented with a commuted sum to cover maintenance for the 10 years following adoption, normally 5 years after its formation. The latter will require a formal management plan, including maintenance schedule, to be agreed as part of the planning obligation.

## 12. Addressing the sustainability of open space

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability is a wide-ranging term that can be applied to almost every facet of life, from a local to the global scale. A universally accepted definition of sustainability is elusive because it is expected to achieve many things, however simply put it is '*conserving an ecological balance by avoiding depletion of natural resources*' thereby maintaining long lived and healthy ecosystems.

As our population has increased our local natural ecosystems have been put under pressure and the balance of natural cycles have become under pressure; the need to increase sustainability is more prevalent than ever.

### **Pesticides**

Wherever possible we avoid the use of pesticides and herbicides and will use manual horticultural methods. However there are certain situations where chemical control is the most economical or only option. Where there are no alternatives we will use the most environmentally sensitive chemical available and ensure that it is applied within the manufacturer's recommended guidelines.

In the plant nursery at Lufton, we keep chemical control to a minimum by making the best possible use of biological control. The majority of our pesticide application is undertaken by council staff who are fully COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) trained and have the PA1 & PA6 pesticide application qualification (See *Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.01*).

### **Peat**

The council's aim is to keep the use of peat products to an absolute minimum and trial alternatives as and when they become available (See *Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.02*).

### **Soil**

In order to achieve sustainable and natural plant growth, a good suitable growing medium is required (dependent on plant type). Whenever we need to improve or change soil quality we ensure that any soil conditioners / improvers are either locally sourced or are derived from recycled green waste, which is produced at Dimmer recycling centre (See *Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.02*).

### **Plant choice**

Plant choice is important, as many of our native species have been in decline for many years due to the increase in planting of invasive non-native species. However,

it is perfectly feasible to value both native and non-native species as long as they are used appropriately.

Most planting in rural areas is now typically native/naturalised, as is an increasing percentage of structural woodland edge planting in urban areas, as this type of planting visually links the development with the surrounding landscape character, whereas the use of non-native planting has generally been constricted to within urban sites where they are part of our highly developed gardening culture and are more familiar and valued by our residents.

Planting schemes within new housing developments are scrutinised by both the council's Planning Conservation Officer and Landscape Officer in order to ensure that they represent our local landscape wherever possible or to identify where more suitable plant choices could be made.

The sourcing of plant material plays an important role in ensuring a project's sustainability. Wherever feasible, all native species should be of British provenance and non-native species sourced locally to reduce its carbon footprint.

It is also preferable when specifying plant choice to identify those species and cultivars that are more adaptable to climate change and that may require less initial maintenance or those plants that are capable of helping to reduce the impact of climate change.

### **Climate Change adaptation**

The provision of open space is not just about providing a service; the open spaces we provide have a significant impact on the wider biodiversity. We therefore need to be particularly aware of the need to address climate change, energy reduction and the sustainable development of our parks and open spaces.

Climate change can have a particular impact on existing plant species and it is possible that some naturalised plants will perform poorly due to increased dry or wet period. In order to ensure that our planting schemes remain sustainable we aim to ensure that future planting scheme specifications address:

- Local soil conditions
- Drought tolerance
- Shade giving abilities
- Plant hardiness

## 13. Working with partners and the community

### Partners and open space provision

In order to ensure a holistic approach to open space management across the district we need to consider all accessible open space and recognise that many key open spaces are managed privately or by town and parish councils particularly in rural and market town areas. Wherever possible we share expertise and where possible provide a joined up approach to delivering strategic provision of all types of open space.

Whilst this strategy shows how we as a council aim to manage the land for which we are responsible, it also is intended to show that wherever possible those open space that are owned or managed by our partners will be taken into consideration when new residential developments are being assessed for their open space provision.

With the downturn in the UK's economy, funding for open spaces is likely to come under increasing pressure and with the onset of diminishing resources working with our partners and community groups is going to increase in importance and potentially determine how we manage some of our open spaces.

Some of our partners provide open spaces that we do not. Typically, these are:

#### **Churchyards**

- When churchyards are no longer used for burials they are referred to as 'closed churchyards', however they are still open to the public and are of an aesthetic, historical and environmental value.
- The maintenance of the churchyard then passes from the church to the local parish or town council (*the cost of which is raised by the relevant parish or town council through the council tax precept*), who in turn may choose to pass on this responsibility to the district council. Even though the maintenance responsibility passes from the church they retain the management control of the site.

#### **Allotments**

- Allotments are areas of open space that are provided by town and parish councils to enable residents to partake in the growing of crops and flowers.
- While these are not strictly publicly accessible open space they meet a lot of local needs by providing opportunities for active lifestyles, social activities, ecological habitats and educational opportunities, while at the same time being aesthetically pleasing in a traditional manner.

#### **Equipped play areas, youth facilities and sports grounds**

- These are managed by a variety of management agents. For more details please refer to the council's 'Sport and Active Leisure Strategy' and PPG17 assessments. <sup>Ref 13</sup>

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*Ref 13 Sport and Active Leisure Strategy*

## **Civic spaces**

- Civic spaces are public areas mainly within town centres. They are hard surfaced areas, such as a town square, that are used for public events. This strategy does not include these areas, as the Highway Authority generally owns them.

Although we are not responsible for providing these types of open spaces we may need to consider these when assessing the accessibility and typology for open space within new developments. We also have to take into account public land that is held by neighbouring authorities.

## **Internal Partners**

These include all services that have an impact on the provision or maintenance of our open spaces.

Currently several services are responsible for the provision of the council's open spaces; these are Streetscene, Countryside and Community Health & Leisure. They are individually responsible for securing the provision of and managing their particular types of open space, with the Leisure Service already having several related strategies in place. These services are responsible for:

- Community Health & Leisure: play areas, sports facilities and playing pitches.
- Countryside: Yeovil Country Park, Ham Hill Country Park, Chard Reservoir, Eastfield Nature Reserve, Sampson's Wood and Moldram's Local Nature Reserve.
- Streetscene: park or public gardens, informal recreational open spaces, green corridors and natural open spaces.

It is also important to identify the role that the Development Management team play with regards to our open spaces. Not only do they enforce the controls to ensure that the appropriate open space provision is secured through the planning process, they ensure that all new developments abide by the necessary landscape, ecology, building, conservation, and urban design criteria.

## **Town and Parish Councils**

South Somerset has 121 town and parish councils, many of which provide their own open space facilities. We are able to provide them with management or maintenance advice (*See Section 14, Objective 3, Action 3.04*). As part of our planned management approach we will be reviewing the value of our smaller open spaces to identify those areas that add little value to the wider landscape and following this review we may seek to dispose of these areas either through the planning process or seek to transfer their ownership to the local town, parish council or housing association.

For the last two years, as part of our annual winter enhancement programme, we have offered all our town and parish councils the opportunity to partake in a spring bulb planting campaign, where we have donated a variety of spring flowering bulbs and the town or parish council have identified where they would like to plant them and they have arranged for volunteers to help plant. Over the previous two years we have helped our towns and parish councils to plant over 180,000 bulbs in over 50 parishes. Our aim is to continue to offer this scheme in a more structured way from 2011 (See Section 14, Objective 1, Action 1.21).



### **Other Government agencies**

We have undertaken a range of partnership working schemes with various government retraining agencies during the last couple of years. These have varied from single person placements into group placements, which have been used to tackle particular projects.

On a more regular basis we engage with the 'New Deal' and 'County Training' Back to Work Government initiatives by offering short-term training positions for their clients within our horticultural section.

We have also initiated a range of green projects in partnership with the environmental charity 'Groundwork'. These projects include willow coppicing at Larkhill open space and hedge laying in Chard.

### **The Big Society / Volunteers / Community Groups**

In the current economic climate, voluntary and community groups play an increasingly important role in helping to face the financial challenges that we face as an authority. Central Government has announced the "Big Society" idea, which aims to encourage people to take a more active role in changing their environment, these groups often offer us a greater freedom in being able to react to specific issues or taking on the responsibility for certain tasks or local projects.

We currently support and encourage a range of local community and volunteering groups, ranging from residents' associations to schools and brownie packs, and have in recent years encouraged and supported them to achieve or involve them in:

- Helping residents' associations to achieve housing estate clean-ups
- Undertaking 'Planning for Real' events involving the local community
- Donating plants to local schools and brownie / cub packs
- Encouraging neighbourhood areas to join the Yeovil in Bloom initiative
- Offering horticultural advice and consulting local groups on design or maintenance issues for their local open space
- Offering free bulb and tree planting initiatives
- Working together to tackle anti-social issues

However, we do recognise that the possibilities for volunteering opportunities within our open spaces are limited, but we are keen to increase the amount of volunteering projects that are undertaken and to achieve this we aim to work towards identifying a range of suitable opportunities that these groups can become involved in (See *Section 14, Objective 3, Actions 3.02, 3.03, 3.05 & 3.06*).

### **Understand the changing needs of the community**

As communities grow and develop there needs and desires change and in order to continue to respond to their aspirations we need to monitor and review on a regular basis what they are telling us.

In the update of this strategy, following the publication of the Core Strategy, an Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken to ensure the needs of all individuals within our communities are addressed by the actions of the strategy.

In order to understand what the community wants we will continue to undertake an annual customer satisfaction survey and respond as necessary (See *Section 14, Objective 4, Action 4.02*).

## 14. Action Plan

### OBJECTIVE 1: To ensure that all open spaces are managed in an environmentally sustainable manner and are aligned with the Somerset Biodiversity Strategy by 2015

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
<b>Sustainability</b>								
1.01	Protect the environment by ensuring that only the least hazardous pesticides or biological control are used	Review and monitor industrial developments on a biannual basis	Review chemical usage policy by December 2011	Storekeeper	Review current stock level & reduce toxic/harmful chemicals as required	To improve soil quality and reduce toxic/harmful materials	Audit will identify that the lowest hazardous rated chemicals are used	Within existing budget
1.02	To manage the soils on our own estate in a sustainable manner	Assess amount of organic matter currently used and increase by 5%	Prepare guidelines for soil improvements by December 2011	Streetscene Manager & Landscape Officer	Increase in organic matter use by 5%	Healthier managed local soils and increase in recycled organic matter use	Measured increase in organic matter use (5%)	Within existing budget
1.03	Incorporate bespoke habitat planting across our network of open spaces to encourage wildlife in appropriate sites	Develop a network of wildlife habitats through 50% of our principal open spaces	Audit of what is currently available by August 2012	Landscape & Open Space Officer	1 new wildlife habitat area each year	Increase in biodiversity in our open spaces	Delivery of implementation plan	Within existing budget

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
1.04	Create wildlife corridors through appropriate open spaces	Develop a network of wildlife corridors through our principle open spaces	Develop habitat corridor implementation plan by October 2012	Landscape, Open Spaces & Ecologist Officers	Minimum of 1 new corridor each year	Network of green wildlife corridors	Delivery of implementation plan	Within existing budget
1.05	Incorporate drought resistant plants into new informal recreational open space and herbaceous plantings in urban areas	10% reduction in planting scheme watering	December 2012	Landscape Officer	Assess drought resistance of all planting schemes	Provide more planting that is adaptive to climate change	Reduction in watering of planting schemes (10%)	Within existing budget
<b>Well Managed</b>								
1.06	Undertake value assessment of areas of structured landscaping of less than 400 sq m	Identify sites and undertake review	Deliver action plan to assess land under 400 sq m by December 2013	Landscape Officer	To understand the value of our smaller open spaces and to identify key structural landscaping sites	Carry out open space assessment and produce league table	Delivery of plan	Within existing budget
1.07	Review horticultural service standards	Review current standards	December 2011	Streetscene Team	Carry out review process	New standards produced where required	Delivery and publication of new standards	Within existing budget

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
1.08	Develop site specific management plans for new and principal open spaces (37 exist in 2010)	Identify all principal open spaces and produce action plan	Complete current corporate target by Dec 2012. Review and update biannually from 2012	Landscape Officer	At least 1 additional plan each year	A structured approach to open space development and management	Delivery of action plan	Within existing budget
1.09	Ensure the delivery of a tree and open space risk assessment programme	All tree stock and principal open spaces to be risk assessed	Completion by Dec 2011. (a) High-risk works by Feb 2012, (b) medium risk works by July 2012 (c) low risk works by December 2012.	Tree Inspector and Open Spaces Officer	Undertake risk assessment programme	All tree stock and principal open spaces risk assessed	Delivery of risk assessment plan	Will require capital investment. Will need Member approval in 2012
<b>Accessible</b>								
1.10	Review pathways in open spaces & produce a costed, prioritised plan to install, repair & maintain existing pathways	Review current provision and prepare action plan	Production of action plan by April 2013	Streetscene Manager & Landscape Officer	Assess current provision and cost required improvements	Good quality hard surface pathways through our principal open spaces	Delivery of risk action plan	Will require capital investment. Will need member approval in 2013

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
1.11	Ensure that entrances and exits to open spaces are inviting, accessible and feel safe to use	Audit sites and prepare action plan	Production of action plan by December 2013	Streetscene Manager & Landscape Officer	Assess current conditions and cost required improvements	Quality entrance- ways into our principal open spaces	Delivery of risk action plan	Capital investment requiring member approval
1.12	Increase the number of open spaces that are accessible to those with mobility problems	Audit and review current provision	Publicise which open spaces are currently suitable for use by those in wheelchairs, with pushchairs or poor mobility by Jan 2012	Streetscene Manager & Landscape Officer	Add 1 more open space onto this list each year	Provide advertised network of open spaces that are accessible to all	Publication of accessible sites	Will require capital investment. Will need member approval in 2013
1.13	Ensure appropriate parking is available for cars or bicycles	Prepare action plan for those sites that necessitate parking facilities	Bicycle racks to be provided in 2 principal sites by April 2012	Streetscene Manager & Landscape Officer	1 more bicycle facilities per year from 2012	Greater user satisfaction	Delivery of action plan	Within existing budget
<b>Well Designed</b>								
1.14	Investigate the feasibility of creating some areas free of dogs, mini moto, golf, ball games, etc within open spaces	Review and investigate existing bylaws & implement enforcement controls as required	Develop a network of 'quiet' open spaces across the district by December 2015	S'cene Mgr, Landscape Officer, Enforcement Supervisor, Senior Land & Property Officer	Carry out review and develop a plan for implementing a minimum of 2 sites per annum	Increased user satisfaction	Delivery of implementation plan	Within existing budget

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
1.15	Improve health & fitness opportunities by developing and publicising activity routes in open spaces	Assess and identify potential sites	Produce list of sites suitable for inclusion as activity trails by April 2014	Open Spaces Officer & Leisure Team	Undertake assessment programme	Provision of a network of fitness / activity trails within open spaces	Develop plan and publicise routes	Within existing budget
1.16	Monitor hot spots of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and review whether amending the design could reduce the issues	Review current design process by December 2011	Identify any existing cases of ASB and review current design by December 2011	Streetscene Manager, Landscape Officer, Enforcement Supervisor	Continual monitoring of ASB occurrences	Lower perception of crime	Monitor and review instances of ASB	Within existing budget
1.17	Design sheltered sitting areas that improve the users experience	Review current facilities	Identify options by October 2012	Landscape Officer & Leisure Team	1 new sheltered sitting area per year	Greater user satisfaction	Number of shelters in place	Within existing budget
1.18	Ensure principal open spaces have signage	Identify suitable style of signage by December 2011	Install suitable signage at 20 sites by end of 2012	Landscape Officer	Install suitable signage at 20 sites by end of 2011/12	Increased user satisfaction	Number of sites agreed	Within existing budget
1.19	Review function of each open space to assess those that could be developed with tailored functions and ensure that these are linked to the relevant PPG17 assessment	Review current facilities	Audit level of site specific function and action plan by December 2012	Streetscene Manager and Landscape Officer	Develop sites with a specific tailored function	Increased user satisfaction and use	Number of tailored sites developed	Within existing budget

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
1.20	Plant shade trees in appropriate urban areas on land we manage whilst encouraging developers to do the same	Continue to develop a healthy tree stock within South Somerset	Increase tree cover on public land by 5%	Landscape Officer and Streetscene Coordinators	Undertake an annual tree planting programme	Assist in stabilising open space temperatures / air temp	Amount of trees planted per annum	Within existing budget
1.21	Compile and deliver a biannual plan for bulb planting with volunteers	Compile a biannual bulb planting plan	20 parishes or groups per year	Landscape Officer	Increase the attractiveness of open spaces and verges	Greater user satisfaction	Amount of bulbs planted	Within existing budget
1.22	To consider and incorporate the council's Play Policy & strategy when designing open spaces	Identify current design process and potential integration.	Review current design practises by August 2012	Landscape Officer, Open Space Officer	Carry out review process	Potential increase in amount of users.	Greater user satisfaction due to better developed open spaces	Within existing budget
<b>General</b>								
1.23	Refine the set of quality standards in Section 9 to be SMART	SMART quality standards in place by July 2011	To have completed benchmark with other authorities by June 2011	Open Spaces Officer	Quality standards in place	Better quality of open space	Delivery of new SMART targets by July 2011	Within existing budget

**OBJECTIVE 2: To secure adequate open space on new and existing developments that meets the needs of the local residents**

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
2.01	Undertake information gathering exercise with the towns, parishes, ward members and community groups, in order to produce a plan of the district showing all relevant publicly accessible open space	Produce a plan of the district identifying all publicly accessible open space.	Consultation undertaken by December 2011  Map produced by April 2012	Landscape Officer, Open Space Officer & GIS Team	Map based system showing deficiencies and over provision	Ensuring a mixture of open spaces to be provided in developments	Implementation of proposed open space standards	Within existing budget
2.02	Ensure that open space design guidance is available via the council's website	Ensure open space design guidance is on website for developers	Guidance on website by January 2011	Streetscene Manager	Production and availability of guidance	Clear guidance available for developers	Open space on developments comply with current design guidance	Within existing budget
2.03	Ensure the accessibility (distance) standards are embedded in the planning process through the Draft Core Strategy	Development of new open space accessibility standards	Ensure that the standards are included in the consultation Draft Core Strategy by October 2010	Streetscene Manager & Landscape Officer	Assessment of standards on new developments	Potential increase in locally accessible open spaces	Increase in user satisfaction due to new open space supplied by new developments matching the relevant accessibility standards	Within existing budget

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
2.04	Work with developers at the planning stage of each major development (over 25 houses) to ensure that the type of open space provided fulfils the requirements of the locality and complements the provision	Apply the following quantity standards: <b>Parks &amp; public gardens</b> – 0.19ha per 1000 population <b>Informal recreational open space</b> – 0.55ha per 1000 population <b>Natural open spaces</b> – 0.25ha per 1000 population <b>Country park</b> – 1.32 ha per 1000 population <b>Woodland</b> – 0.024ha per 1000 population.	All major developments are to be assessed as from December 2010	Open Spaces Officer & Landscape Officer	Officers work with developers to identify correct provision of open space required	Suitable and relevant types of open space are provided through the planning process	Increase in user satisfaction due to new open space supplied by new developments matching the relevant open space standards	Within existing budget

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
2.05	Ensure minimum size standards for new open space are delivered through the Draft Core Strategy	Development of open space minimum size standards	Ensure that the standards are included in the consultation of the Draft Core Strategy document by October 2010 – Completed	Streetscene Manager, Open Spaces Officer & Landscape Officer	Assessment of standards on new developments	Potential increase in locally accessible open spaces	Increase in user satisfaction due to new open space supplied by new development matching the relevant standards	Within existing budget
2.06	Monitor development to ensure that additional housing does not reduce the open space accessibility and quantity standards	Ensure that we identify and retain adequate open space provision in regards to our population size	Implementation of the open space standards by December 2010	Streetscene Manager, Landscape Officer, Open Spaces Officer	Aim to retain accessibility and quantity standards similar to that for new developments	Suitable & relevant types of open space are provided through the planning process	Increase in user satisfaction due to open space standards applied to any residential development	Within existing budget
2.07	Produce and publish PPG17 assessments for each type of open space.	To ensure that we continue to provide the correct amount of relevant OS to a particular area.	Ensure that the PPG17 assessments are available for inclusion within Draft Core Strategy by April 2011	Streetscene Manager and the Landscape Officer,	To identify by OS type any areas of over or under provision.	Suitable & relevant types of open space are provided through the planning process	Increase in user satisfaction due to correct amount and type of open space being provided.	Within existing budget

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
2.08	Produce and publish a Land Adoption and Transfer policy	To produce policy document	Policy produced by 2015	Streetscene Manager, Landscape Officer, Open Spaces Officer and Planning Policy Officer	Policy produced identifying the process for the adoption or transfer of open spaces provided by new developments.	Clear guidance available for developers.	No of open spaces adopted.	Within existing budget
<b>OBJECTIVE 3: To work closely with partners and the community</b>								
Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
3.01	Publish a list of sites to increase local knowledge about availability	Production of leaflet / advertise on SSDC website	Publish list by December 2011	Landscape Officer	Review of current use of open space	Increase awareness & use of available open space	List published	Within existing budget
3.02	Support voluntary groups that wish to become more involved in looking after their local open spaces to increase ownership responsibility.	Increase voluntary involvement in our open spaces	Increase number of voluntary activities by December 2012	Streetscene Manager, Landscape Officer, and 'In Bloom' Officer	Develop opportunities for volunteer involvement	Greater local ownership of public open space	No. Of volunteering activities per year	Within existing budget

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
3.03	Create opportunities for schools to use open spaces for educational purposes	Identify opportunities for school involvement by April 2011	Send leaflet to schools by December 2012	Streetscene Manager, Landscape Officer, and 'In Bloom' Officer	Publication of leaflet identifying educational opportunities	Greater educational use of parks and open spaces	No. Of schools involved per year	Within existing budget
3.04	Liaise with other owners of open spaces to initiate a consistent management approach to open space	Identify fellow open space management agencies by April 2011	Present strategy to LSP by November 2011	Streetscene Manager	Open space managed and provided in a co-ordinated manner	Increase user satisfaction and use	Attendance at LSP meetings	Within existing budget
3.05	Work with community and partners to encourage cultural events designed to increase open space usage, eg storytelling, art exhibitions, plays, picnics/music events, historical re-enactments	Identify potential user groups, opportunities and locations	Publication of community participation plan by December 2012	Streetscene Manager, Landscape Officer, 'In Bloom' Officer, & Arts Officer	Consult with current user groups to identify opportunities	Increase user satisfaction and use	No. Of cultural events undertaken	Within existing budget
3.06	Identify any market sites and events suitable for sponsorship	Review and identify sites for possible sponsorship	Produce list of sponsorship opportunities by April 2012	Landscape Officer and 'In Bloom' Officer	Identification of sites for improvement	Increased user satisfaction	Increase in sponsorship sites	Within existing budget

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
3.07	Consult with the disability forum to identify open space access issues.	Review and identify sites requiring access improvements.	Production of equality impact assessment by October 2011	Streetscene Manager and, Landscape Officer	Identification of sites for improvement	Increased user satisfaction	Increase in freely accessible open spaces.	Within existing budget
3.08	Production of simple guide to the open space strategy for interested members of the public and developers.	Production of guide / available on SSDC website	Produce guide by December 2011.	Streetscene Manager and Landscape Officer	Review of open space strategy to identify potential frequently asked questions.	Increase in understanding of the open space strategy	Leaflet published	Within existing budget
<b>OBJECTIVE 4: To ensure local customer satisfaction levels are maintained at 85% for the quality of maintenance of our open spaces</b>								
Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
4.01	Maintain sites in a clean manner	Undertake annual NI 195 cleansing inspection	Achieve less than 5% unacceptable areas as set by NI 195	Streetscene Manager	Cleaner open spaces	Increased user satisfaction	NI 195 result	Within existing budget

Action No.	Key Task	Target	Milestone	Lead	Output	Outcome	Performance Measure	Resource
4.02	Undertake biannual customer satisfaction survey	Undertake district wide satisfaction survey	Completion of satisfaction survey by December 2012	Streetscene Manager and Support Supervisor	Undertake survey	Better understanding of public requirements and an increase in user satisfaction	Meet customer satisfaction target of 70%	Within existing budget
4.03	Review bin provision and provide adequate facilities to meet individual site requirements	Review current facilities	Review current use and amend as required by June 2012	Streetscene Managers and Streetscene Coordinators	Effective use of Streetscene budget	Cleaner open spaces and greater user satisfaction	Open Space NI 195 results	Within existing budget

## Appendix A Profile of respondents to residents survey

### **Gender**

Of those questionnaires returned, 61% were male and 39% female. This is comparative with the 2007 census data results for South Somerset that shows a return of 51.2% female and 48.8% male. However it does identify that we may need to consider how we target our female users for future consultation exercises.

### **Age**

The results identified that 57% of respondents were 40 years of age or over and that only 9% were 39 or under.

The 2007 census data results for South Somerset shows that 52% are 44 or under, this clearly shows a lack of response from the younger generation, which will need to be addressed.

### **Ethnicity**

The results show that 37.5% of the people declined to respond. Of those who did respond, 98% were of a 'White British' background, 0.6% were Polish and 0.2% were other ethnic groups.

The 2007 census data results for South Somerset shows that 97.1% of our community are 'White British', with the remainder made of other ethnic groups, our results identify that we achieved a satisfactory result comparative with the census data.

### **Disability**

Of the questionnaires returned, 34% refused to comment. Out of the remaining 477 responses, 12.5% identified a type of disability that would affect their use of our parks and open spaces.

## Appendix B Average travelling speeds and distance conversions used for the formulation of the standards

### Accessibility assumptions

Average walking speed	All areas	6 km/ph
Average car driving speed	All areas	35 km/ph (urban)

### Distance conversion (walking)

Time (mins)	Km (miles)	Metres	Factor reduction	Meters (mapped in straight line)
5	0.4 (0.25)	400	40%	240
10	0.8 (0.5)	800	40%	480
15	1.2 (0.75)	1200	40%	720
20	1.6 (1)	1600	40%	960
25	2 (1.5)	2000	40%	1200

**Note:** National guidance reduces actual distances into straight-line distances by a 40% reduction. This is to allow for the fact that routes to open spaces are not straight-line distances but more complex. The 40% reduction is based on robust research by 'Fields in Trust' using a representative sample of pedestrian routes.

### Distance Conversion (Driving)

Time (mins)	Km (miles)	Metres	Factor reduction	Meters (mapped in straight line)
5	2.9	2900	40%	1700
10	5.8	5800	40%	3400
15	8.7	8700	40%	5200
20	11.6	11000	40%	6600
25	14.5	14500	40%	8700

## Appendix C Hierarchical provision – Urban vs Rural

South Somerset has a mix of urban and rural environments, with a selection of both densely populated market towns and small hamlets and villages. The 'Assessing Needs & Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17,' recommends that in areas of mixed population a 'settlement hierarchy' approach is undertaken for the provision of open space. This is because a 'one size fits all' approach is often of little relevance and is rarely achievable. In 2009 the council undertook a district wide study of its towns and villages in order to:

- Identify the current role, function and relationship between settlements while identifying their potential future roles
- Provide recommendations on settlement classification as defined in Regional Spatial Strategy for the South west (Policy A, B & C) – *Now proposed for withdrawal through the Localism Bill 2010 - 11*

The findings of this study were published in the 'Settlement Role & Function Study 2009' and identified the towns and villages that undertake a strategic role in their provision of employment, housing, retail and community services. As this study has already categorised settlement types across South Somerset, we have used the results of this to identify areas that are urban or rural in order to determine what our acceptable accessibility standards should be.

Principal open spaces are primarily located within urban areas and attract users from a much wider area than those attracted to smaller local facilities. In rural areas where village populations are comparatively low and there is a significant distance between settlements, it is unlikely that every settlement will have its own formal park, woodland or country park, however everyone should have access to some form of useable space.

Separate accessibility standards reflect that greater open space provision is needed within areas of higher population in relation to the rural areas which, by their very nature, are located in the countryside which functions as accessible open space. This is not to suggest that the council should not be pursuing improvements to those areas that are 'non strategic' or rural, but rather offers an approach of providing facilities that are designed to meet local need.

This gives rise to the concept of settlement hierarchy; in which urban areas have a range of open space types within shorter travelling distances than those in rural locations. Some types of open space, eg formal and country parks are situated in strategic locations throughout the district and it is widely accepted that the accessibility standards for these kinds of facilities will be considerable and users will travel greater distances to visit them.

In this way, the Open Space Strategy aligns with the hierarchy of provision in the 'Settlement Role & Function Study 2009'. <sup>Ref 16</sup> In accordance with this study it recommends that different accessibility standards are produced for urban and rural areas as well as those that provide a strategic function.

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*Ref 16 Settlement role and function study*

## Appendix D Current service standards

### **Grassland Maintenance**

Mowing is carried out on a fortnightly cycle throughout the growing season and at a reduced frequency outside this period. This can vary with seasonal conditions and type of grassland.

The mowing season takes place during March to October with occasional cuts made in winter as weather conditions allow.

Most grassland is maintained at a height of 4 to 8 cm, depending upon site requirements, using a variety of pedestrian and ride on mowers, which dispose of grass cuttings evenly across the site. Neighbouring paths and hard surfaces are cleared of grass cuttings after mowing.

The mowing operations may at any time be postponed due to adverse weather conditions such as heavy rain or drought. Some areas are maintained at a lower frequency in line with the management regimes developed for specific sites.

Grass is cut on a continuous cycle, but may change due to adverse weather conditions. Mowing frequencies are calculated to meet the mowing season, which is between March to October, and the height of the grass which may vary depending on the specification of the site.

### **Planted Areas**

Shrub beds that are on land owned by South Somerset District Council, Yarlinton Housing Group, Yeovil Town Council and Highways in urban areas are maintained by a series of herbicide applications throughout the spring and summer and routine formative pruning operations that are timed according to the nature of the plant material.

These areas are routinely cleared of litter when other operations are being carried out and a layer of mulch is applied or topped up as required to additionally help suppress weed growth.

All planted areas are regularly reviewed as part of our ongoing district redevelopment plan.

### **Hedges**

In line with good environmental practice the majority of our hedges receive a "cut" shortly after the bird-nesting season has finished. This is normally in July but can be delayed by seasonal variations. For those hedges, which are of a quicker growing variety or are next to footpaths we aim to give them a second cut in the winter period.

### **Landscape Management**

South Somerset District Council land, Yarlinton Housing Group land, Yeovil Town Council land and highway beds in urban areas are maintained by a series of herbicide applications throughout the spring and summer and routine formative pruning operations are timed according to the nature of the plant material.

The areas are routinely cleared of litter when other operations are being carried out and mulch is then applied or topped up as required to suppress weed growth. The primary herbicide currently used is Glyphosate based; which the world health organisation rates as 'practically non toxic' that is the lowest classification possible. There is no need to restrict public access following its application. The planted areas are regularly reviewed and are refurbished or removed as necessary.

### **Dog Fouling**

Our Dog Wardens carry out a range of duties to prevent and reduce dog fouling in public areas. These duties include the routine patrols of parks and open spaces, presentations to schools and the issuing of fixed penalty notices to dog owners who fail to clean up the mess left by their dog. Failure to clean up after your dog is a criminal offence. Dog owners who fail to clean up after their dog can be fined and even prosecuted in court.

### **Dangerous/stray dogs**

Our Dog Wardens collect loose or stray dogs. If a dog has an identification tag, the Wardens will seek to immediately return it to its owner. If a dog has no identification tag or if the owner is unavailable, the Wardens will transport the dog to our stray dog kennels, where they will be scanned for microchips in order to identify the owner. Once a dog has been taken to kennels, charges are incurred. A dog will not be released until all charges are paid.

Contained stray dogs will be collected from 8.30 am to 9.00 pm week days and from 8.30 am to 5.00 pm on weekends and bank/public holidays. If a dog is found outside these hours, you can report it to us and the dog will be picked up first thing the next working day.

If you have lost your dog you should contact the dog wardens during normal working hours. If you have found a stray dog you should contain the dog as safely as possible and contact your local dog warden.

### **Graffiti**

We are responsible for removing graffiti from public buildings, subways and public areas. Offensive graffiti can be cleaned off highway signs at the request of the Police or Community Safety Co-ordinator.

We aim to remove offensive graffiti the same day it is reported.

### **Litter bins**

We are responsible for regularly emptying public litterbins. If you would like a public litterbin located in an area near you, please contact your local parish or town council.

## Appendix E Parks and public gardens current provision

Parish Name	Existing open space sites (sq m)	Parish Name	Existing open space sites (sq m)
Abbas & Templecombe	0	Curry Mallet	0
Alford	0	Curry Rivel	0
Aller	0	Dinnington	0
Ansford	0	Donyatt	0
Ash	0	Dowlish Wake	0
Ashill	0	Drayton	0
Babcary	0	East Chinnock	0
Barrington	0	East Coker	0
Barton St David	0	Fivehead	0
Barwick	0	Hambridge & Westport	0
Beercrocombe	0	Hardington Mandeville	0
Bratton Seymour	0	Haselbury Plucknett	0
Brewham	0	Henstridge	0
Broadway	0	High Ham	0
Bruton	0	Hinton St George	0
Brympton	26,247	Holton	0
Buckland St Mary	0	Horsington	0
Castle Cary	0	Horton	0
Chaffcombe	0	Huish Episcopi	0
Chard	0	Ilchester	1,993
Charlton Horethorne	0	Ilminster	6,518
Charlton Mackrell	0	Ilton	0
Charlton Musgrove	0	Isle Abbots	0
Chillington	0	Isle Brewers	0
Chilthorne Domer	0	Keinton Mandeville	0
Chilton Cantelo	0	Kingsbury Episcopi	0
Chiselborough	0	Kingsdon	0
Closworth	0	Kingstone	0
Combe St Nicholas	0	Kingweston	0
Compton Dundon	0	Knowle St Giles	0
Compton Pauncefoot	0	Langport	0
Corton Denham	0	Limington	0
Crewkerne	1,178	Long Load	0
Cricket St Thomas	0	Long Sutton	0
Cucklington	0	Lopen	0
Cudworth	0	Lovington	0
Maperton	0	Somerton	0
Marston Magna	0	South Barrow	0

Parish Name	Existing open space sites (sq m)	Parish Name	Existing open space sites (sq m)
Martock	0	South Cadbury	0
Merriott	0	South Petherton	0
Milborne Port	0	Sparkford	0
Misterton	0	Stocklinch	0
Montacute	0	Stoke sub Hamdon	0
Muchelney	0	Stoke Trister	0
Mudford	0	Tatworth & Forton	0
North Barrow	0	Tintinhull	0
North Cadbury	0	Wambrook	0
North Cheriton	0	Wayford	0
North Perrott	0	West Camel	0
Norton sub Hamdon	0	West Chinnock	0
Odcombe	0	West Coker	0
Pen Selwood	0	West Crewkerne	0
Pitcombe	0	Whitelackington	0
Pitney	0	Whitestaunton	0
Puckington	0	Wincanton	0
Queen Camel	0	Winsham	0
Rimpton	0	Yarlington	0
Seavington St Mary	0	Yeovil Town	215,787
Seavington St Michael	0	Yeovil Without	1,898
Shepton Beauchamp	0	Yeovilton	0
Shepton Montague	0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>253,621</b>		

**NOTE:** Table to be updated following consultation with parish councils, ward members and other community groups to ensure all known and relevant publicly accessible open space is included. This audit evidence will subsequently be made available following the completion of the relevant PPG17 assessments.

## Appendix F Informal recreational open space current provision

Parish Name	Existing open Space Sites (sq m)	Parish Name	Existing open space sites (sq m)
Abbas & Templecombe	1,354	Curry Mallet	
Alford	0	Curry Rivel	6,405
Aller	0	Dinnington	0
Ansford	13,775	Donyatt	621
Ash	0	Dowlish Wake	0
Ashill	0	Drayton	0
Babcary	0	East Chinnock	0
Barrington	1,974	East Coker	0
Barton St David	0	Fivehead	0
Barwick	0	Hambridge & Westport	0
Beercrocombe	0	Hardington Mandeville	0
Bratton Seymour	0	Haselbury Plucknett	712
Brewham	0	Henstridge	1,997
Broadway	800	High Ham	0
Bruton	0	Hinton St George	0
Brympton	163,358	Holton	0
Buckland St Mary	0	Horsington	0
Castle Cary	3,713	Horton	0
Chaffcombe	0	Huish Episcopi	3,578
Chard	25,253	Ilchester	1,993
Charlton Horethorne	0	Ilminster	6,519
Charlton Mackrell	0	Ilton	0
Charlton Musgrove	0	Isle Abbots	0
Chillington	0	Isle Brewers	0
Chilthorne Domer	1,163	Keinton Mandeville	0
Chilton Cantelo	0	Kingsbury Episcopi	0
Chiselborough	0	Kingsdon	0
Closworth	0	Kingstone	0
Combe St Nicholas	0	Kingweston	0
Compton Dundon	0	Knowle St Giles	0
Compton Pauncefoot	0	Langport	3,449
Corton Denham	0	Limington	0
Crewkerne	1,141	Long Load	0
Cricket St Thomas	0	Long Sutton	0
Cucklington	0	Lopen	0
Cudworth	0	Lovington	0

Parish Name	Existing open Space Sites (sq m)	Parish Name	Existing open space sites (sq m)
Maperton	0	Somerton	3,027
Marston Magna	0	South Barrow	0
Martock	16,959	South Cadbury	0
Merriott	414	South Petherton	2,231
Milborne Port	2,050	Sparkford	0
Misterton	800	Stocklinch	0
Montacute	0	Stoke sub Hamdon	0
Muchelney	0	Stoke Trister	0
Mudford	0	Tatworth & Forton	0
North Barrow	0	Tintinhull	1,371
North Cadbury	0	Wambrook	0
North Cheriton	0	Wayford	2,325
North Perrott	0	West Camel	0
Norton sub Hamdon	5,458	West Chinnock	0
Odcombe	0	West Coker	0
Pen Selwood	0	West Crewkerne	0
Pitcombe	0	Whitelackington	0
Pitney	0	Whitestaunton	0
Puckington	0	Wincanton	3,699
Queen Camel	1,894	Winsham	0
Rimpton	0	Yarlington	0
Seavington St Mary	0	Yeovil Town	62,134
Seavington St Michael	0	Yeovil Without	7,904
Shepton Beauchamp	1,127	Yeovilton	0
Shepton Montague	0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>349,198</b>		

**NOTE:** Table to be updated following consultation with parish councils, ward members and other community groups to ensure all known and relevant publicly accessible open space is included. This audit evidence will subsequently be made available following the completion of the relevant PPG17 assessments

## Appendix G Green corridors current provision

Parish Name	Existing open space sites (sq m)	Parish Name	Existing open space sites (sq m)
Abbas & Templecombe	0	Curry Mallet	0
Alford	0	Curry Rivel	0
Aller	0	Dinnington	0
Ansford	0	Donyatt	0
Ash	0	Dowlish Wake	0
Ashill	0	Drayton	0
Babcary	0	East Chinnock	0
Barrington	0	East Coker	0
Barton St David	0	Fivehead	0
Barwick	0	Hambridge & Westport	0
Beercrocombe	0	Hardington Mandeville	0
Bratton Seymour	0	Haselbury Plucknett	0
Brewham	0	Henstridge	0
Broadway	0	High Ham	0
Bruton	0	Hinton St George	0
Brympton	35,706	Holton	0
Buckland St Mary	0	Horsington	0
Castle Cary	0	Horton	0
Chaffcombe	0	Huish Episcopi	2,465
Chard	0	Ilchester	0
Charlton Horethorne	0	Ilminster	0
Charlton Mackrell	0	Ilton	0
Charlton Musgrove	0	Isle Abbots	0
Chillington	0	Isle Brewers	0
Chilthorne Domer	0	Keinton Mandeville	0
Chilton Cantelo	0	Kingsbury Episcopi	0
Chiselborough	0	Kingsdon	0
Closworth	0	Kingstone	0
Combe St Nicholas	0	Kingweston	0
Compton Dundon	0	Knowle St Giles	0
Compton Pauncefoot	0	Langport	0
Corton Denham	0	Limington	0
Crewkerne	0	Long Load	0
Cricket St Thomas	0	Long Sutton	0
Cucklington	0	Lopen	0
Cudworth	0	Lovington	0

Parish Name	Existing open space sites (sq m)	Parish Name	Existing open space sites (sq m)
Maperton	0	Somerton	0
Marston Magna	0	South Barrow	0
Martock	0	South Cadbury	0
Merriott	0	South Petherton	0
Milborne Port	0	Sparkford	0
Misterton	0	Stocklinch	0
Montacute	0	Stoke sub Hamdon	0
Muchelney	0	Stoke Trister	0
Mudford	0	Tatworth & Forton	0
North Barrow	0	Tintinhull	0
North Cadbury	0	Wambrook	0
North Cheriton	0	Wayford	0
North Perrott	0	West Camel	0
Norton sub Hamdon	0	West Chinnock	0
Odcombe	0	West Coker	0
Pen Selwood	0	West Crewkerne	0
Pitcombe	0	Whitelackington	0
Pitney	0	Whitestaunton	0
Puckington	0	Wincanton	1,274
Queen Camel	0	Winsham	0
Rimpton	0	Yarlington	0
Seavington St Mary	0	Yeovil Town	46,760
Seavington St Michael	0	Yeovil Without	0
Shepton Beauchamp	0	Yeovilton	0
Shepton Montague	0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>86,205</b>		

**NOTE:** Table to be updated following consultation with parish councils, ward members and other community groups to ensure all known and relevant publicly accessible open space is included. This audit evidence will subsequently be made available following the completion of the relevant PPG17 assessments

## Appendix H Natural open space current provision

Parish Name	Existing open Space Sites (sq m)	Parish Name	Existing open space sites (sq m)
Abbas & Templecombe	0	Curry Mallett	0
Alford	0	Curry Rivel	0
Aller	0	Dinnington	0
Ansford	0	Donyatt	0
Ash	0	Dowlish Wake	0
Ashill	0	Drayton	0
Babcary	0	East Chinnock	0
Barrington	0	East Coker	0
Barton St David	0	Fivehead	0
Barwick	0	Hambridge & Westport	0
Beercrocombe	0	Hardington Mandeville	0
Bratton Seymour	0	Haselbury Plucknett	0
Brewham	0	Henstridge	0
Broadway	0	High Ham	0
Bruton	0	Hinton St George	0
Brympton	0	Holton	0
Buckland St Mary	0	Horsington	0
Castle Cary	0	Horton	0
Chaffcombe	0	Huish Episcopi	0
Chard	355,500	Ilchester	0
Charlton Horethorne	0	Ilminster	0
Charlton Mackrell	0	Ilton	0
Charlton Musgrove	0	Isle Abbots	0
Chillington	0	Isle Brewers	0
Chilthorne Domer	0	Keinton Mandeville	0
Chilton Cantelo	0	Kingsbury Episcopi	0
Chiselborough	0	Kingsdon	0
Closworth	0	Kingstone	0
Combe St Nicholas	0	Kingweston	0
Compton Dundon	0	Knowle St Giles	0
Compton Pauncefoot	0	Langport	0
Corton Denham	0	Limington	0
Crewkerne	0	Long Load	0
Cricket St Thomas	0	Long Sutton	0
Cucklington	0	Lopen	0
Cudworth	0	Lovington	0

Parish Name	Existing open Space Sites (sq m)	Parish Name	Existing open space sites (sq m)
Maperton	0	Somerton	0
Marston Magna	0	South Barrow	0
Martock	0	South Cadbury	0
Merriott	0	South Petherton	0
Milborne Port	0	Sparkford	0
Misterton	0	Stocklinch	0
Montacute	0	Stoke sub Hamdon	0
Muchelney	0	Stoke Trister	0
Mudford	0	Tatworth & Forton	0
North Barrow	0	Tintinhull	0
North Cadbury	0	Wambrook	0
North Cheriton	0	Wayford	0
North Perrott	0	West Camel	0
Norton sub Hamdon	1,570,000	West Chinnock	0
Odcombe	0	West Coker	0
Pen Selwood	16,000	West Crewkerne	0
Pitcombe	0	Whitelackington	0
Pitney	0	Whitestaunton	0
Puckington	0	Wincanton	0
Queen Camel	0	Winsham	0
Rimpton	0	Yarlington	0
Seavington St Mary	0	Yeovil Town	576,892
Seavington St Michael	0	Yeovil Without	0
Shepton Beauchamp	0	Yeovilton	0
Shepton Montague	0		
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,518,392</b>		

**NOTE:** Table to be updated following consultation with parish councils, ward members and other community groups to ensure all known and relevant publicly accessible open space is included. This audit evidence will subsequently be made available following the completion of the relevant PPG17 assessments

## Glossary

Adopted open space	This is typically land that has been adopted by the council through the planning process
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ASB	Anti Social Behaviour
Best Practise	These are informally-standardised techniques, methods or processes that have proven themselves over time to accomplish given tasks. Often based upon common sense, these practices are commonly used where no formal methodology is in place.
CABE	Commission for the Architectural Built Environment
Cleaner safer greener	This document sets out the Government's approach to making cleaner, safer, greener public spaces
Commuted sum	This is a sum of money that is paid to the council by housing developers for the maintenance of adopted open space, for a set period of time following its adoption.
COSHH	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
Council tax precept	This is an element of the council tax payment that is set by either the town or parish council for services provided on a local level.
DCSP SS7	Draft Core Strategy Policy 7
DCSP SS8	Draft Core Strategy Policy 8
Detritus	This is organic waste material produced by the decomposition of dead plants.
Equalities Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessments have been developed as a tool for ensuring that equality, social inclusion and community cohesion issues are considered and addressed when implementing policies or strategies.
Green Flag / Green Pennant	The Green Flag / Green Pennant Awards are the national standards for parks and green spaces in England and Wales. They

	encourage parks and green spaces to achieve high environmental standards, creating a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas.
Herbicide	A chemical designed to control or destroy plants, weeds, or grasses.
LDF / Core Strategy	This is the overarching local development document and is currently being progressed and developed through consultation; it will largely replace the current Local Plan standards and policies.
Local Plan	This document was approved in 2006 to cover the period until 2011, and contains the current open space standards. It no longer forms part of the Local development Framework. However many of its policies have been retained for future use.
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
Natural England (ANGST)	Accessible Natural Greenspace in Town: this is a tool that is used to measure current levels of accessible natural greenspaces.
NI 195 *	National Indicator 195: is designed to measure local environmental quality, and covers litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting
NI 196 *	National Indicator 196 is designed to measure local environmental quality, and covers illegally dumped waste or fly tipping
NI 199 *	National Indicator 199 is designed to measure children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas.
NICE	National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence

NPFA – six acre standard	National Playing Fields Association - The Six Acre Standard aims to help ensure a sufficient level of open space is provided through the planning process. The standard suggests that for each 1000 residents there should be 6 acres (2.4 hectares) of open space provided. This has since been relaunched as 'Fields in Trust'.
PA1 & PA6	Pesticide Application modules 1 & 6
Pesticide	A pesticide is any substance or organism used to protect plants or plant products from harmful organisms.
Planning for real	A consultation method involving creative exercise (for example, the use of maps and model buildings) designed to engage the public in plan making.
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance Number 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Shelter belt	This is an area of planting usually made up of one or more rows of trees or shrubs planted in such a manner as to provide shelter from the wind and to protect soil from erosion. They are commonly planted around the edges of fields.
Site audit	An assessment of on and off-site facilities
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic & Time bound targets
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
Strategy	A plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal
Village green	Traditionally, this is an open area at the centre of a small settlement, used for community events.
Woodland Trust	The UK's leading woodland conservation charity.

\* A new set of National Indicators is currently being prepared by Central Government to replace existing

## Tell us

We welcome all feedback.



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