

Draft Open Space, Sport and Recreation Topic Paper

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This topic paper is part of a series of background papers which provide the evidence base for the emerging Development Management Policies and Site Allocations development plan documents (DPDs). These background papers will form part of the supporting documentation for the Regulation 27 'submission' versions of both plans. It is anticipated that both plans will undergo a Regulation 27 'soundness' consultation in early - mid 2012, and will be submitted to the Secretary of State for public examination later in 2012. Some of the background papers may require updating at a later stage in the plan process to take account of changing government policy, and/or updated monitoring information.
- 1.2. The open space, sport and recreation (referred to as open space below) topic paper provides information about the way that open space policies in the Development Management DPD and open space requirement on allocations in the Site Allocations DPD have been developed, and how they respond to national planning guidance and the emerging National Planning Policy Framework.

2. Open Space, Sport and Recreation policy context

National Policy

Current national policy

- 2.1 The current national planning policy relating to open space, sport and recreation is set out in 'Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17 – "Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation," published in 2002. This states that "local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space facilities" and sets out guidance for local policies on open space to serve new developments, including the establishment of local open space standards to guide those policies. It also covers the protection of existing open spaces and their enhancement through planning obligations.
- 2.2 The companion guide to PPG17 recommends a strategic approach and sets out ways that local authorities can undertake assessments and audits of open space. Included in its guiding principles for assessment is the need to define the 'extent to which open spaces meet clearly identified local needs and the wider benefits they generate for people, wildlife, biodiversity and the wider environment'. This includes undertaking audits on the quality, quantity and accessibility of existing open spaces to establish needs, assess whether any open space is surplus and to inform the local open space standards required through policy.
- 2.3 Other planning policy statements are also relevant to open space policy:
- The supplement to PPS1: Planning and Climate Change, 2007 sets out how the spatial planning system should contribute to tackling climate change. It recognises 'the contribution to be made from existing and new opportunities for open space and green infrastructure to urban cooling, sustainable drainage systems, and conserving and enhancing biodiversity'.
 - PPS9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, 2005 promotes a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology through the creation of habitat networks.
 - PPS25: Planning and Flood Risk, 2006 highlights the important role that open space can play in flood storage.

- PPS5 requires development to have no adverse affect on the character of historic parks and gardens.

Emerging national policy

2.4 The Government has published a draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to simplify national planning guidance, which will eventually supersede all existing planning policy statements. The NPPF is part of a wider series of changes that the government is proposing or consulting upon which will change the planning system. These include the Localism Bill (which includes the abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies).

2.5 It requires local planning policies to:

- identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space;
- set locally derived standards for open space;
- protect and enhance rights of way and access.

2.6 It also states that existing open space, buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- the need for and benefits of the development clearly outweigh the loss.

2.7 The draft NPPF also creates a new designation of Local Green Space enabling local communities through local and neighbourhood plans to identify green areas of particular importance for special protection if they are not already identified as open space.

Regional Policy

2.8 RSS14's main focus is on the promotion strategic green infrastructure, protecting and enhancing existing open spaces in urban areas and creating habitat and leisure links to surrounding areas.

2.9 Policy ENV1 promotes the identification, creation, protection, enhancement and management of areas and networks of green infrastructure. This green infrastructure should promote health and biodiversity, help to achieve carbon neutral development and reduce flood risk. It requires local development documents to establish a hierarchy of green infrastructure and for connected networks to be created in urban areas, linking to the urban fringe and open countryside. It identifies the Broads as a regional green infrastructure asset.

2.10 Policy SS1 requires leisure opportunities to support new communities and ENV7 requires new development to address public health issues. Policy NR1 for Norwich promotes improved links to the Broads and other countryside around Norwich for residents and visitors.

Joint Core Strategy

2.11 The plan's vision states "there will be excellent public open space, sport and recreational facilities and community centres". Objective 9 states "Development must provide environmental gains through green infrastructure, including allotments and community gardens". Objective 11 states "the accessibility of open space, the countryside, sports and recreational facilities will be improved".

2.12 To fulfil national and regional policy requirements and to implement the plan's vision and objectives, JCS policy 1 requires development and investment to expand and link open space and areas of biodiversity importance to create green networks. This network should be multi-

functional. Open space should be included as an integral part of development and contributions should be made for off site green infrastructure and its maintenance.

- 2.13 Based on the findings of the Green Infrastructure Study (2007), an accompanying map to policy 1 sets out the green infrastructure network for Norwich, Broadland and South Norfolk. There are two sub regional green infrastructure corridors within Norwich itself, the Yare and the Wensum valleys (including the Yare Valley Walk, the Riverside Walk and the Marriot's Way). It also identifies a local green infrastructure corridor in east Norwich, from the Yare Valley, along the wooded ridge through Lion Wood and Mousehold, linking to a sub regional corridor to the north-east (see appendix 1).
- 2.14 The Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan also identifies more detailed green corridors within the urban area. These are available in figure 16 at <http://www.gndp.org.uk/content/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2010/03/Fig%2015-17.pdf>>
- 2.15 City centre policy 11 includes the relevant green links from the delivery plan for the city centre, as well as improved public realm links (see appendix 2). The policy requires improvements to be made to the public realm and open space, green linkages and connections between open spaces, linking to the river corridor and the open countryside.
- 2.16 Policy 12 covers the rest of the city. It requires green links to be protected, maintained and enhanced. It supports the completion of the riverside walks and their extension into the countryside (particularly to Whitlingham and a possible new country park at Bawburgh Lakes). It also requires the establishment of a comprehensive walking and cycling network and increased tree planting. The plan requirement for all housing developments of 10 dwellings or more to have a "Building for Life" design assessment will help to ensure that open space and links form an integral part of new housing development.
- 2.17 Policy 8 covers leisure facilities. It requires development to provide for leisure activities, including new or improved built facilities to include green space, formal recreation, country parks and performance space. Policy 7, "Supporting communities" requires community halls to support new development.
- 2.18 The Implementation policy (Policy 20) sets out infrastructure essential to secure sustainable development. This includes:
- open space and green infrastructure, including habitat creation, pedestrian and cycle links, allotments, recreation facilities, parks, trees, hedgerows, woodland and landscaping;
 - community facilities.
- 2.19 Appendix 7 of the strategy includes projects to support the development set out in the JCS. Green infrastructure projects, based on the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan, include a project for the retention and re-creation of Mousehold Heath, with improved links to the surrounding countryside (estimated delivery 2026).

Local Policies

Existing policies

- 2.20 Current policies for open space sport and recreation are set out in the Replacement Local Plan (adopted 2004) and are supported by Supplementary Planning Documents on Open Space and Play and on Green Links and Riverside Walks. They aim to:

- Provide standards for open space to support new development based on dividing the city into 19 “Open Space sectors” (SR1 and 2);
- Protect existing open space and sports and recreational facilities from development unless alternative facilities of equal or better value are provided or there would be no overriding amenity or biodiversity loss resulting from redevelopment (SR3);
- Ensure major new development provides on- site open space or funding for off-site provision nearby (SR4) and for children’s play space (SR7);
- Allocate new sites for opens space, mainly on larger housing sites. Some of these are now in place, (e.g. Old Bowthorpe Park and Bowthorpe Southern park). Others, e.g. Eaton Civil Service Sports Ground, will be delivered through forthcoming development. In some cases, such as Lakenham Common and Hobrough Lane (king Street), facilities have not yet been delivered due to site specific issues. (SR5);
- Promote dual use of open space (SR6);
- Protect historic parks (SR8) and allotments (SR9);
- Enhance the network of green links and riverside walks (SR11 and 12);
- Provide design and locational policy for new sports and recreational facilities (SR13 and 14).

2.21 The policy approach for off site provision of open space and play space and its SPD use “Open Space Sectors” to identify local facilities on which section 106 from developers money is required to meet shortages in quantity, quality or accessibility of a particular type of open space within each sector. This approach reflects the requirement that section 106 money must currently be spent on facilities that are directly related to the specific development they serve and therefore must be spent locally.

Emerging Policies

2.22 Emerging policies in the draft Development Management DPD:

- Are streamlined in comparison with Local Plan policy;
- Comply with more recent higher level regional and JCS policy;
- Take account of recent evidence and the forthcoming introduction of CIL.

2.23 Draft Policy DM8 includes policies for the protection of existing open spaces and the provision of new open space. It requires:

- protection of existing open spaces, including allotments, from inappropriate development.
- all new developments to contribute to improvements to existing open space through CIL payments.
- new developments including over 100 child bed spaces to provide on-site play space (based on the findings of the needs assessment that there is a shortage of play space throughout the city – see evidence base below).
- new developments of over 4 hectares to provide other forms of open space as appropriate to the individual site as an integral part of development. The policy does not set out a minimum proportion of the development site that should be open space.

- 2.24** Policy DM22 covers the provision, enhancement and protection of community facilities, which include indoor sports facilities. The policy requires proof that such facilities are economically unviable and evidence of marketing before redevelopment can be considered.
- 2.25** Emerging policy is less constrained as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will shortly replace section 106 funding for off-site open space provision. CIL finances can be spent on any location within the city, removing the current requirement with section 106 that money should only be spent on facilities close to the development providing the finance. This enables a more strategic rather than a reactive approach to spending funds.
- 2.26** An Open Space Strategy, an early draft of which exists but was not progressed to adoption due to funding cuts, would play a vital role in providing the overall co-ordination to ensure that CIL funding is spent in the most appropriate manner to achieve the strategic aims set out in the JCS.
- 2.27** Larger new development considered for allocation through the Site Allocation Plan would, if implemented, provide new open spaces e.g. Rose Lane/Mountergate, St Anne's Wharf and Three Score.

3. The local evidence base

- 3.1** As well as the Green Infrastructure Study and Delivery Plan commissioned to support the Joint Core Strategy, local policies have been informed by other evidence studies.
- 3.2** An Open Spaces Needs Assessment was produced in 2007 to assess and audit the quantity and quality of the existing provision. This was completed in line with the requirements of "Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation" (PPG17), and following the methodology set out in "Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17". Detail on this assessment is below.
- 3.3** In 2008/09 an 'Urban Green Grid for Norwich', funded by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership, identified areas with potential as green space opportunities, perhaps as pocket parks or to connect other green spaces. These are spaces not designated in any other way, which can be assessed, when funding becomes available locally, for their value to provide 'on the doorstep' spaces or to be managed as green corridor connections to the Greater Norwich area. The findings of this study informed the draft work on the Open Space Strategy.

The Open Space Needs Assessment

- 3.4** In line with the requirement of PPG 17, an Open Space Needs Assessment, including extensive consultation and an audit of the quality, quantity and accessibility of all open spaces in the city, has been carried out. The study describes overall provision and distribution of open space and other community facilities within the city. The full assessment is available at:

<http://www.norwich.gov.uk/Planning/Documents/Env02a.pdf>

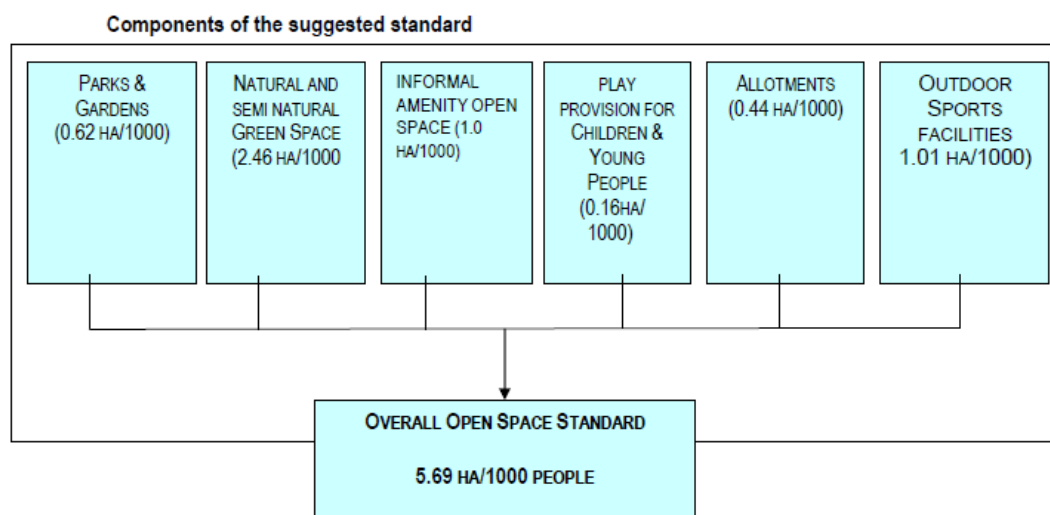
- 3.5** The results of this study have enabled the council to defend open space and target section 106 funding to address local needs more effectively.
- 3.6** Dividing the city into 4 areas, West (Bowthorpe, Wensum, University), North (Catton Grove, Mile Cross, Sewell), East (Mancroft, Thorpe Hamlet, Crome) and South (Lakenham, Town Close, Eaton), area profiles are given. These provide more detailed consideration of the adequacy of provision of open space based on the defined areas. The detailed findings by area are available at: <http://www.norwich.gov.uk/Planning/Documents/Env02b.pdf>

- 3.7 The assessment classified types of open spaces within Norwich by their primary purpose, whilst recognising that many open spaces are multi functional.
- 3.8 The study identified shortages of open space , both in terms of different types of open space and where and what type. Standards were proposed for different types of open space for quantity, quality and accessibility to inform policy making.
- 3.9 In line with PPG17, open spaces were assessed using the following typology:

Types of Open Space

- Parks and Gardens
 - Natural and Semi-natural Urban Green Space
 - Open Space Corridors
 - Informal Amenity Open Space (including civic space and cemeteries and churchyards)
 - Formal Outdoor Recreation
 - Provision for Children and Young People
 - Allotments
 - Indoor facilities
 - Accessible Countryside in the Urban Fringe
- 3.10 Tables summarising the recommended city wide quantity and accessibility standards are below. These are followed by an account, with summary tables, of how these standards were met by type of open space within Norwich as of 2007. Where major new facilities have been provided since 2007, these have been incorporated. In the case of Sports halls, more up-to-date information has been provided by Sport England.
- 3.11 Further detail is in appendix 3, including information on sub-areas of the city and recommendations in relation to planning and wider policy where applicable.

Quantity



Accessibility

A summary of the access standards for each typology is shown below (these are straight line distances):

PARKS & GARDENS	NATURAL AND SEMI NATURAL GREEN SPACE	INFORMAL AMENITY OPEN SPACE	PLAY PROVISION FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE	ALLOTMENTS	OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES
DISTRICT/ LOCAL PARKS: 900M	600M	100M	PRE-TEEN: 240M	600M	3000M
POCKET PARKS: 600M			TEEN: 720M		

Overview of Needs Assessment Findings

3.12 Parks and gardens - existing provision for parks and gardens equates with the recommended standard. The 81 hectares in the city provide 0.62 ha per 1000 population. There are few parts of the City that are not within easy reach of a major park, such as Eaton Park, Sloughbottom Park, Woodrow Pilling Park or Chapelfield Gardens. There is also a good network of Local and Pocket Parks. For some it may be necessary to use a vehicle to access a district park, unless cycle routes can be improved, which would further negate the need to use cars. Generally parks and gardens are of a good quality, with a consistency around the middle scores, and no facilities were rated at the extremes. A number of parks have benefitted from significant improvements in recent years, funded by lottery money, other grants and section 106 money e.g. Eaton Park, Wensum Park, Waterloo Park and Sewell Park. Summary:

Quantity	✓
Quality	✓
Accessibility	✓

3.13 Natural green space - The total area of natural and semi natural green space is about 430 ha, of which 293 ha are in public ownership and a further 137 ha in private ownership, but with potential public access. "Public land" is the equivalent of 2.24ha per 1000 population, with an overall ratio of 3.29 ha per 1000 population. This very high proportion of natural and semi-natural green space for an urban area results largely from the fact that Mousehold Heath and

extensive areas of river valley are within the city boundary. Natural green space quality scores are the worst for any type of open space in Norwich. Whilst many spaces, particularly in the river valleys, are of very high quality (e.g. Marston Marsh, Mile Cross Marsh), overall scores are low as many sites in or close to housing and industrial areas, such as tree belts, were badly littered and maintained. Summary:

Quantity	✓
Quality	✗ (though some very good)
Accessibility	✓

3.14 Open space corridors - The green corridor network in Norwich is primarily concentrated on routes following the two main rivers, the Yare and Wensum, together with linear routes along disused railway lines such as Marriott's Way and Lakenham Way. These links are important in joining existing areas of open space in the city with the surrounding countryside, but the network is relatively limited at present. While by definition primarily linear in nature, existing provision of green corridors in Norwich is about 29 ha or the equivalent of 0.22 ha/1000 population. Two thirds of green corridors scored at least 70% signifying a generally high quality. Summary:

Quantity	Limited, but developing
Quality	✓
Accessibility	Limited, but developing

3.15 Since the Needs Assessment was completed, considerable focus has been placed on work to develop policy and strategy for green infrastructure and to implement new schemes, as set out in the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Schemes that have been started include:

- improvements to the Riverside Parkway (formerly the riverside walk) along the river Wensum through the city centre;
- work on the Wooded Ridge in Norwich, initially through a project to improve the tree belt at Bowthorpe;
- improvements to the Yare Valley Walk, including work to increase accessibility to Marston Marsh;
- the extension of heathland at Mousehold.

3.16 The schemes have been funded through a variety of sources, including grants and GNDP growth funding. Future spending on such projects is proposed to be through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and through applying for other sources of funding. Proposed projects include both additional work on the major links set out above and wider connections between the urban area and the Broads and other open countryside.

3.17 Informal amenity open space - There are about 58 ha (0.44 ha per 1000) of informal amenity open space in public ownership within the city, and an additional 62 ha (0.48 ha per 1000) in private ownership, but with potential for public access. Overall this equates to 0.92 ha per 1000 population. In addition there are about 46 ha of churchyards and cemeteries, the equivalent of 0.35 ha per 1000 population. Overall current provision therefore stands at about 1.27 ha per 1000 population, well above the established standard. In terms of quality, overall two thirds of sites scored higher than 60% and the average figure is above that for all types of open space in Norwich. Summary:

Quantity	✓
Quality	✓
Accessibility	✓

3.18 Play provision for children and young people - In total children's play facilities occupy an area of 12.77 hectares (0.1 has/1000 population) and teenagers' facilities 3.17 hectares (0.02

ha/1000), giving a total for overall play provision for children and young people of 15.94 ha or 0.12 has per 1000 population, compared to a standard of 0.16. The quality of provision for children's and teenagers' play is the best of any category. Summary:

Quantity	✗
Quality	✓
Accessibility	✓

3.19 Allotments - The total number of allotment plots available in these sites in mid June 2007 was 1484. There are a total of 43 hectares of allotment space in the city managed by either the Council or a local allotments society, which works out at 0.33 ha per 1000 people, compared to the standard of 0.44. Allotments were generally clean with good entrances and boundaries. Disabled access and signage were considered poor. Summary:

Quantity	✗
Quality	✓
Accessibility	✗

3.20 Outdoor sports facilities – there is a significant shortage of about 80 ha of outdoor sports space in the city. The options for future provision include:

- new facility provision in the city (where feasible),
- more intensive use of parks and other open spaces which were formerly used for sport,
- use of school sites
- use of facilities in the wider Norwich area.

Recent provision of further high quality synthetic turf pitches at UEA and at the Goals centre on Hall Road has helped to reduce the shortage of facilities, whilst the improved athletics facilities at UEA meet needs. Summary:

Quantity	✗
Quality	✓
Accessibility	✓

Indoor facilities

3.21 This section summarises shortages of indoor sports facilities based on the Needs Assessment's findings and sets out its major recommendations.

3.22 Sports halls – the assessment identified a shortage of 8 sports halls in community use in Norwich. It recommended this should be addressed by improvements to community access to school halls at Heartsease, Notre Dame, CNS and possibly the private school facilities at Norwich HS and Norwich School (dependent on school requirements), improved community usage of new smaller 3 court halls and Recreation Road and Catton Grove Primary School or new facility provision in those areas currently outside reasonable walking catchments including Hewett School, Bowthorpe and the Mile Cross area.

3.23 More recent research undertaken by Sport England in October 2011 (see appendix 3, section 8 for a summary of this research and [for the full report](#)) showed a markedly different picture to the 2007 Open Space Needs Assessment as:

- There have been overall improvements in sports hall facilities in Norwich since 2007, through additional provision, refurbishment and improved public access to school facilities, though there has also been closure of the facilities at Wensum Lodge.

- The national methodology used by Sport England includes smaller facilities with public access and takes account of a wider range of data.

- 3.24 The Sport England report does not identify any areas within the city where there is a clear shortage of sports hall capacity, or a shortage in comparison with regional and national average provision. It does, however, point out that there is limited capacity elsewhere in the city to provide for the any loss of facilities such as Wensum Lodge.
- 3.25 **Swimming pools** – there is a shortage of 2 pools in community use in Norwich, which should be remedied by improvements to community access to school pools at Heartsease and the smaller pools elsewhere on junior school sites (dependent on school requirements), or new facility provision in those areas currently outside reasonable walking catchments, and in particular the Mile Cross area.
- 3.26 **Health and fitness** – there is a shortage of 5 health and fitness centres in Norwich, which should be addressed by new facility provision in those areas currently outside reasonable walking catchments, and in particular Heartsease, Eaton and west of the city centre. Much of the existing provision is private and available only through membership, and additional facilities should be provided ideally for community access on a pay and use basis.
- 3.27 **Indoor bowls** – there is a shortage of 3 rinks in Norwich, which could be remedied by new facility provision, extensions where possible to existing centres or reliance on existing provision in the wider Norwich area.
- 3.28 **Indoor tennis** – there is a shortage of 6/9 courts in the Norwich area, the options for which are new facility provision in the city, particularly where this is accessible to people in the south and west of Norwich or extensions where possible to existing centres.
- 3.29 **Community Centres** - the current number of community centres matches the recommended standard. However, whilst there is quite good spatial coverage of the City by existing venues, some areas are not well served. New facilities in these locations would improve the accessibility of local residents throughout the city to small community halls for a variety of purposes, and should be provided as the city develops and population increases.

4. Open space monitoring

Losses

- 4.1 The loss of open space to other uses is monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report. Indicator LP15 monitors the loss of open space, but does not count losses where they are permitted in policy as the sites are of low amenity or biodiversity value.
- 4.2 In the last 5 years there has been no loss of open space contrary to policy. Those open space which have been lost include:
- former bowling greens with no public accessibility and low biodiversity value at Plumstead Road, Ailwyn Hall and Browne Street;
 - redevelopment of inaccessible private open spaces of low biodiversity value at Taylors Lane and Lambert Road for housing (the former including provision of publically accessible recreational open space).

- 4.3 Scores from the Open Space Needs Assessment were taken account of in relevant decisions.

Gains

- 4.4 There have been major gains in the provision of open space in recent years through:

- Section 106 payments, sometimes used as match funding to lever in other external grants, improving the quality and accessibility of existing open space eg improvements to Gildencroft and Jenny Lind Parks, streetscape improvements to St. Georges Street, including major enhancement of the area outside the Playhouse and the adjoining St Georges Green open space.
- On-site provision of new open space in larger developments e.g. The Loke and Crome Road provided 0.32 and 0.45 hectares of green space and play areas respectively; amenity open space has been provided at the former Norfolk and Norwich Hospital site; improvements to the riverside walk and a landscaped open space were provided at Appleyards Mill on Oak Street
- Open Space developments e.g Goals development of synthetic turf pitches at Hall Road, an additional sports hall at the University of East Anglia

5. Conclusion

5.1 In general, there is good open space provision within Norwich, particularly of parks, natural spaces and amenity spaces. Indeed, there are no large residential areas of the city without access within the identified thresholds to an informal or formal amenity area, play area or park. This is due to:

- the geographical advantage of Norwich in having extensive areas of heathland, river valleys and wooded ridges within the city;
- large scale investment in parks in the early twentieth century;
- positive strategic planning for open space in the last 30 years;
- successful investment of funds in open space from developer contributions (particularly play facilities) and grant funding in recent years;
- the presence of some readily accessible facilities, such as the country park at Whitlingham, in neighbouring authorities.

5.2 The main shortfalls on which both policy and funding should be focussed are:

- The quality of some natural spaces;
- Further developing the programme of investment in improving and extending the network of open space corridors;
- New play provision to serve new development;
- New allotments and better access to existing facilities;
- More outdoor sports facilities, mainly on existing parks and through dual use of school and other facilities;
- Retention and improvement of built facilities, particularly sports halls.

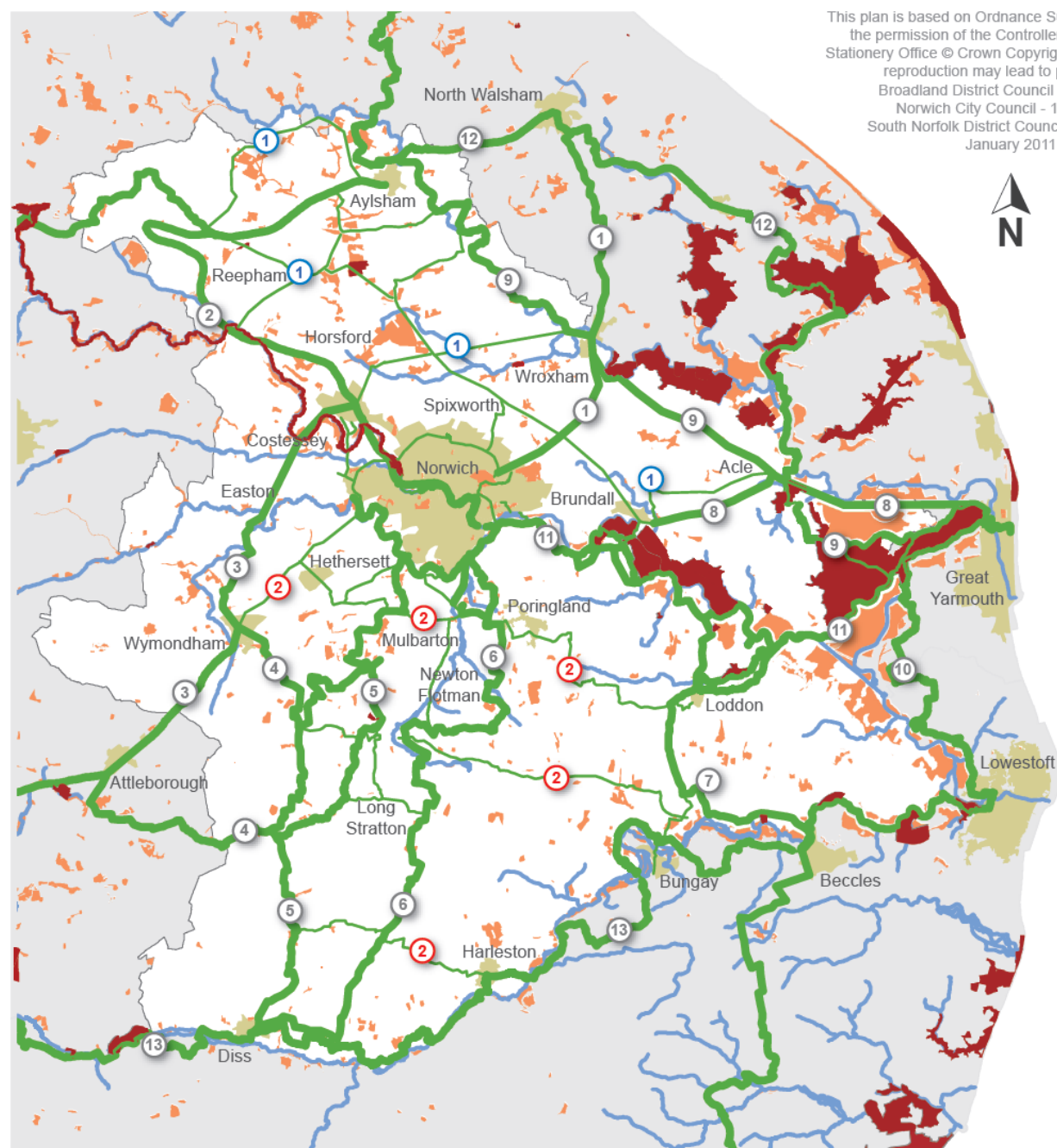
Appendix 1

Proposed Green Infrastructure Network for the Greater Norwich Area

Source: Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Study 2007.

The Green Infrastructure opportunities on this map are indicative only. The map illustrates information about opportunities at a strategic level and does not indicate a constraint on development.

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- Local Green Infrastructure Corridors
- Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Corridor
- Existing Main Urban Areas
- River Valleys & Wetlands
- Existing Green Infrastructure Sites
(Strategic Open Spaces & Core Biodiversity Areas, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest and County Wildlife Sites)
- European & International Designated Wildlife Sites

- ① North East Norwich - Wroxham - North Walsham Corridor
- ② Norwich - Reepham - Aylsham Corridor
- ③ North West Norwich - Wymondham - Attleborough - Thetford Corridor
- ④ South West Norwich - Wymondham - Attleborough Corridor
- ⑤ South Norwich - Mulbarton - Diss Corridor
- ⑥ South Norwich - East Diss Corridor
- ⑦ Loddon - Beccles - Lowestoft Corridor
- ⑧ East Norwich - Brundall - Acle - Great Yarmouth Corridor
- ⑨ Aylsham - Wroxham - Acle - Great Yarmouth Corridor
- ⑩ Great Yarmouth - Lowestoft Corridor
- ⑪ East Norwich - The Broads - Great Yarmouth Corridor
- ⑫ Acle - North Walsham - Aylsham - Cromer Corridor
- ⑬ Lowestoft - Beccles - Bungay - Harleston - Diss - Thetford Corridor
- ④ Northern Greater Norwich Area Green Infrastructure Corridor Network
- ② Southern Greater Norwich Area Green Infrastructure Corridor Network

Appendix 2

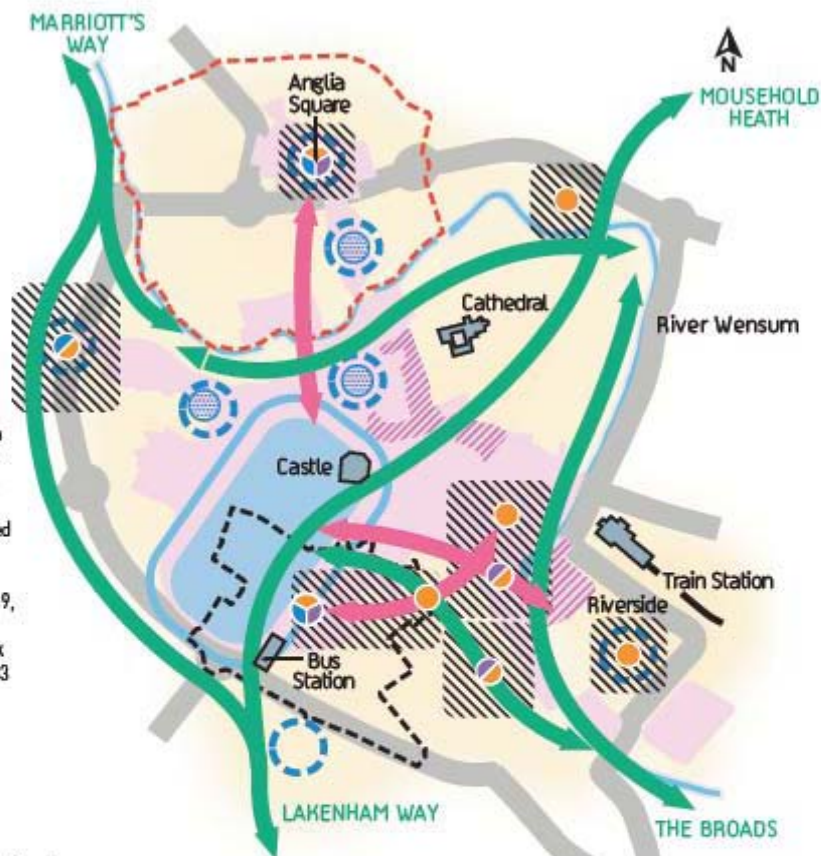
Norwich City Centre key diagram

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September 2009

Key

- City Centre
- Northern City Centre Developed as Area Action Plan
- St Stephens Area developed through masterplan
- Main Leisure Areas
- Late Night Leisure Area
- Enhanced retail function. Expansion of Primary Retail Area
- Specialist shopping areas
- Other shopping areas
- Enhanced principal Green Links
- Improved Public Realm

- Areas of change. Mixed use development sites with improved public realm.
 - Main focus of change - residential
 - Main focus of change - commercial
 - Main focus of change - retail
 - Split focus of change
- NB. Range of transport initiatives in the City Centre



Appendix 3 Summary of Open Space Needs Assessment key findings and recommendations

1. Parks and public gardens

Quantity

The total area of open space in use as parks and gardens in the city is high, at 81 hectares. This is the equivalent of about 0.62 hectares per 1,000 population and is seen as an appropriate standard. This excludes land in parks that is allocated to a separate primary typology – if these are included, open space in parks and gardens totals about 135 hectares.

Quality and Accessibility

Generally parks, gardens and recreation grounds are of good quality. Quality assessments showed that most parks, gardens and recreation grounds gained average scores, with none rated at the extremes.

The assessment recommended the council could consider establishing a hierarchy of parks of different sizes and with different ranges of facilities and natural areas to increase quality. The hierarchy could be based on district parks for strategic uses eg Eaton Park and Local (e.g. Wensum Park) and Pocket Parks (e.g. Sewell Park) for more regular use (see table below for further detail).

Few parts of the city that are not within easy reach of a major park. These areas include parts of Eaton, Mancroft, Thorpe Hamlet and Crome wards. The situation in the city centre is likely to be worsened by planned further, generally high density, development.

The table below summarises the proposed standards and typical characteristics of different types of park:

Parks and public gardens			
Type and function	Approx size	Maximum distance from dwellings	Characteristics and Quality
District park - Provision that is strategically important in Norwich. Weekend and occasional visits mainly by foot but also by car	Over 20 hectares Example: Eaton Park	c 900 metres - 15 minutes walking time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Landscape with a variety of natural and semi natural features, including natural habitats and planted beds.○ Space for outdoor pitch, other sports provision and changing rooms as appropriate.○ Space for children's and youth play facilities.○ Footpaths. Cycleways.○ Buildings for secured storage and for catering outlets.○ Due regard to external links by foot and bicycle which may require improvements to the external environment.○ Events venue. A notable and defining architectural feature. Car parking. Toilets Seating. Litter and dog bins.. Refreshment venues. Picnic tables. Consideration of zoning between active and passive zones.
Local parks - Primarily for pedestrian visits from local residents and workers	At least 2 hectares Example: Wensum Park	c 600 metres – 10 minutes walking time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Landscape with a variety of natural features, including natural habitats○ Space for outdoor pitch, other sports provision and changing rooms as appropriate.○ Space for children's and youth play facilities.○ Footpaths. Cycleways.○ Buildings for secured storage and/or catering outlets (if appropriate)○ Due regard to external links by foot and bicycle

			which may require improvements to the external environment. o Car parking, Toilets, Seating, Litter and dog bins, Picnic tables.
Pocket parks - Pedestrian visits, especially by the elderly and parents with young children. Provision is important in areas of high density housing and employment	0.2 to 2 hectares Example Sewell Park	c 300 metres – 5 minutes walk	Seating areas, local play opportunities, planted beds, trees and paved areas.

Summary of findings and recommendations

- o There is good overall provision of parks in Norwich and that these are generally well maintained and accessible.
- o No parks are surplus to requirements.
- o The main area identified as having a shortfall of formal parks is the city centre/ east of the city (Mancroft, Thorpe Hamlet, Crome) and the east of Eaton ward.
- o Smaller/pocket parks within areas of dense development could increase access to park space, though any new park provision should be of an appropriate shape and character to allow for meaningful recreational use.
- o Unused space in larger parks could be combined with provision for other open space, for example by reinstating former sports pitches or enlarging areas for biodiversity promotion to provide truly multi-functional areas
- o New standards for parks should include guidance on the improvement of approach routes by foot and bike
- o A green spaces strategy should be developed which takes into account the need for formal parks and gardens as a whole, but also the need for formal space which binds together other types of open space on multi-use parks

2. Natural and Semi-natural urban green spaces

Quantity

The total area of natural and semi natural green space is about 430 ha, of which 293 ha are in public ownership and a further 137 ha in private ownership, but with potential public access. These figures are far higher than most other cities, with “public land” providing the equivalent of 2.24ha per 1000 population and the overall figure being 3.28 hectares per 1,000 population. This is well above English Nature national suggested standard of 2 ha per 1000 population.

These high figures are the result of the existence of large semi-natural areas such as Mousehold Heath, the wooded ridges and the river valleys and a number of smaller areas, such as former chalk pits e.g. Danby Woods.

Quality

The scores for natural green space quality are the worst for any type of open space in Norwich. There are a number of high quality natural spaces, particularly in the river valleys, such as Marston Marsh, Eaton Common and Mile Cross Marsh. However, overall scores are low as many sites in or close to housing and industrial areas, such as tree belts at Sweet Briar and Three Score and other spaces such as Bevan Close, were badly littered and maintained. Since the scoring was done, tree belts at Three Score have been tidied. Privately owned spaces were of varied quality.

Accessibility

Due to the high number of such sites in Norwich and the growing green corridor network, access to natural sites is good.

Summary table

Natural and semi-natural urban green spaces						
Quantity		Accessibility	Quality			
Ha per 1000 population		Recommended standard	Comparison to existing city wide average for all types of open space %		Area comparisons for amenity spaces %	
Current Provision	3.28	600 metres	Natural spaces	61.1	West	56.9
					North	57.6
Standard	2.46		City average	68.6	East	63.2
					South	66.9

Recommendations

- The focus should be initially on improving the quality of provision and accessibility within easy walking distance
- A rolling programme of facility improvements should be put in place, with an initial focus on littered spaces
- Management agreements should be negotiated with the owners of private green space to improve accessibility by the wider community and improve biodiversity

- Increased awareness should be made of the opportunities to use natural green space by promoting access on foot and by cycle, for example through improved signing, and the benefits of this to a healthy lifestyle
- Biodiversity should be improved through a system of action plans in conjunction with land owners and nature conservation organisations
- Sites of particular nature conservation interest should be protected.

3. Open Space Corridors

Open Space Corridors are linear stretches of either land or water extending into the urban area, connecting with other open spaces and linking neighbourhoods with the countryside. They provide habitat corridors, sustainable transport links and visual amenity.

Quantity

The green corridor network in Norwich is primarily concentrated on routes following the two main rivers, the Yare and Wensum, together with linear routes along disused railway lines such as Marriott's Way and Lakenham Way.

While by definition primarily linear in nature and therefore not necessarily appropriate for a quantity standard, existing provision of green corridors in Norwich is about 29 ha or the equivalent of 0.22 ha/1000 population.

Quality

Scores varied between 84% and 49% (with an average of 70.1%). The Marriott's Way and parts of the Riverside Walk scored the highest scores.

Accessibility

These links are important in joining existing areas of open space in the city with the surrounding countryside, particularly the Marriott's Way, the Riverside Walk and the Lakenham Way, but the network is somewhat limited at present.

Recommendations

- On-site provision should be made of green corridors in new development, linking to existing corridors and other green spaces as far as possible.
- Since green links are a major focus of JCS and government policy, significant focus should be placed identifying gaps, making connections and enhancing open space corridors within the city and linking out to the open countryside. The Green Infrastructure Study and Delivery Plan provide a framework for this.

4. Informal Amenity Open Space

Amenity open spaces are those open spaces used by the public which are not laid out for a specific function. They include areas such as informal grassed areas and kickabout areas with no formal facilities. The category also includes civic spaces, usually in the city centre, (though these were not assessed), as well as churchyards and cemeteries. Amenity space also include areas in private ownership with no current private access. Highway verges and other small pieces of roadside space are not counted as amenity space.

Quantity

There are about 58 hectares of informal amenity open space in public ownership within the city, and an additional 62 hectares in private ownership, with potential for public access. This equates to 1.27 hectares per 1,000. The assessment recommends a lower standard of 1 hectare per 1,000.

Accessibility:

There are currently accessible amenity spaces in most parts of the city. The assessment recommends a standards distance of 100 metres (straight line), or about 1-2 minutes walking time as appropriate, as such spaces should be within easy reach of home for informal play and recreation opportunities. In areas of high density development, which may lack access to traditional private gardens, access to informal space and pocket parks is important.

Quality:

The quality of existing open spaces throughout the city is generally slightly above the average for all types of open space. Amenity open spaces in the west and north of the city are generally of poorer quality than those in the south and east.

Summary table:

Informal Amenity Open Space						
Quantity		Accessibility	Quality			
Ha per 1000 population		Recommended standard	Comparison to existing city wide average for all types of open space %		Area comparisons for amenity spaces %	
Current Provision	1.27	100 metres	Amenity spaces	69.2	West	66.4
					North	66.1
Standard	1.00		City average	68.6	East	71.5
					South	70.7

Civic spaces

Civic spaces are those areas where large groups of people can meet for events and gatherings associated with the civic role of the city or simply spend time. There is an extensive, and expanding, linked network of pedestrianised streets and civic spaces in the city centre including:

The Memorial Gardens
The Forum - Millennium plain
Gentleman's Walk
St Andrew's Plain
St George's Street and Green
The Lanes
Hay Hill

Proposals for new and improved civic spaces feature in the St Stephens Street Area Outline Masterplan (Oct 09) and the Northern City Centre Area Action Plan (Apr 10). The Streetscape Design Manual (Sept 06)¹ contains policies that guide the City Council's approach to street design and maintenance in the city centre.

Churchyards and Cemeteries

¹ http://www.norwich.gov.uk/intranet_docs/A-Z/Regeneration/Streetscape_Design_Manual_Final_Version_Sept_06.pdf

As an historic city, Norwich has large numbers of churchyards and cemeteries. The 46 ha of churchyards and cemeteries provide the equivalent of 0.35 ha per 1000 population. They provide protected and managed places around the city for wildlife, and, particularly in the city centre, provide locally distinctive, historic open spaces, forming a key element of green infrastructure.

The quality assessments showed that the great majority of churchyard scores to be significantly higher than the average for open spaces, with city centre churches such as St Giles and St Michael at Plea scoring particularly highly.

Summary of findings and recommendations

- All important areas of informal open space should be retained and enhanced where necessary.
- Amenity spaces, where well managed, are important both for casual use and for landscaping, particularly in housing areas. Consultation, and the focus group meetings in particular, suggested that accessible informal space is the most valued type of open space for people in Norwich.
- Resident led projects (such as that in Knowland Grove in 2009) can be effective in improving and managing such spaces.
- There are also opportunities to make better use of the biodiversity potential of such areas, including strengthening green corridors as promoted by national and JCS policy.
- The nature of the space should be determined to reflect local circumstances. Informal green space can provide an extremely valuable play resource to complement equipped provision. The shape and size of space provided should allow for meaningful and safe recreation. Attention in design of new spaces to planting, topography and safety/security will maximise its potential.
- Amenity open spaces with no public access are a substantial resource with considerable potential.
- There is scope for further development of civic space, particularly in the city centre and local shopping centres.
- Some informal amenity open space which has a low value and can not practically be improved (e.g. due to its shape or location) could be considered for redevelopment or re-use as it is expensive to maintain and can be a liability and source of nuisance.

5. Formal Outdoor Recreation

Quantity

The Needs Assessment identified that there are 97 ha of sports grounds in Norwich, the equivalent of 0.74 ha per 1000 population.

Of the 242 pitches, courts and greens in total only half (121) are in community use. It identified that there were also 6 floodlit synthetic turf pitches in the area, which cater for more specific usage, mainly for hockey and football. Since the assessment was completed, 10 new artificial grass football pitches and 2 hockey pitches have been opened at the Goals centre on Hall Road, with

community access. Voluntary sports clubs provide tennis, rugby, football and bowls facilities. The private sector provides a range of facilities for golf, cricket, tennis and football.

In addition, some sports grounds outside the city boundaries, such as UEA sports pitches, are accessible to city residents.

Quality

The quality of existing outdoor recreation facilities throughout the city is quite high, scores being well above the average for all types of open space. Facilities in the east of the city are generally of poorer quality than those elsewhere.

Accessibility

Public consultation suggests a slightly greater expectation for using a car to get to formal playing fields although the most popular trip mode is by foot. 70% of the respondents would be prepared to travel somewhere up to 15 minutes to access such facilities. Clubs are known to draw on membership from farther afield, and it may sometimes not be possible to provide playing pitches within easy walking distance. A distance of no more than 3 kilometres is therefore the proposed standard.

Summary table:

Formal Outdoor recreation						
Quantity		Accessibility	Quality			
Ha per 1000 population		Recommended standard	Comparison to existing city wide average for all types of open space %		Area comparisons for amenity spaces %	
Current Provision	0.74	3000 metres	Outdoor recreation	73.1	West	77
Standard	1.01		City average	68.6	North	76.4
					East	68.7
					South	71.8

Summary of findings and recommendations

- Shared use of facilities should be promoted, where possible (as in the recent case of the Goals development), through planning agreements. Synthetic surfaces offer the opportunity to enable facilities to be used much more intensively.
- The reinstatement of sports pitches on existing parks would be the most practical means of meeting the shortfall in provision.
- Continued use of sports pitches just outside city

6. Provision for children and young people

Formal leisure facility provision for children and young people in the city includes small children's play areas and multi-use games areas (MUGAs) - containing facilities for basketball, football and cricket, skateboard parks, teenage shelters and informal kick-about areas.

Informal play is equally important and children use all kinds of open spaces, in addition to formally equipped play areas, for their games and social interaction.

Quantity

Within the city there are 15 MUGAs; 2 cycle speedways; two BMX sites and six skateboarding sites, including the recently improved major facility at Eaton Park.

In total children's play facilities occupy an area of 12.77 has (0.1 hectares per 1000 population) and teenagers' facilities 3.17 hectares (0.02 hectares per 1000), giving a total for overall play provision for children and young people of 15.94 hectares or 0.12 hectares per 1000 population.

This is below the recommended local standard for play 0.16 ha per 1000 population for equipped space.

Provision for children and young people						
Quantity		Accessibility	Quality			
Ha per 1000 population		Recommended standard	Comparison to existing city wide average for all types of open space %		Area comparisons for play spaces %	
Current Provision	0.12	Pre-teen 240 metres Teen 720 metres	Play	77.3	West	74
					North	77.5
Standard	0.16		City average	68.6	East	80.1
					South	79.8

3 types of play provision are sought through development:

Type A: 'doorstep' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation.

This is a small open space within sight of home, where children, especially younger children, can play within the view of known adults. This could be a grassed area, a paved open space, a residential street in a homezone or a small designed play area, which is large enough to enable young children to play within sight of known adults.

Type B: 'local' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation.

A larger space which can be reached safely by children beginning to travel independently and with friends, without accompanying adults and for adults with young children to walk to with ease.

This could be a grassed area, a small park, a local open space, a designed space for play or informal recreation or a school playground open out of school hours, which is attractive to children as they begin to move around their neighbourhoods without being accompanied by adults.

Type C: 'neighbourhood' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation.

A larger space or facility for informal recreation which children and young people, used to travelling longer distances independently and can reach safely.

7. Allotments

Quantity

Norwich has over 1,484 allotment plots on 17 sites, totalling about 43 hectares of allotment space managed either by the green spaces team or by a local allotments society.

A requirement for the provision of a total of 2000 plots in the city was considered reasonable, representing an increase of 500 plots or about 33%.

There is a shortfall of provision in the city centre, the east of the city and in northern parts of Lakenham and Town Close.

Quality assessment

Scores varied between 83% and 57%, with an average of 69.0%, slightly above the average for all types of open space. Three quarters of allotments scored better than 60%. The northern sub-area scored lowest on quality.

Allotments are generally clean with good entrances and boundaries and there are water standpipes on all allotment sites.

Accessibility

The sites are, on the whole, well used by a small section of the population. However disabled access and signage were considered poor.

Summary

Allotments						
Quantity		Accessibility	Quality			
Ha per 1000 population		Recommended standard	Comparison to existing city wide average for all types of open space %		Area comparisons for amenity spaces %	
Current Provision	0.33	600 metres	Allotments	68.3	West	68.3
					North	66.8
Standard	0.44		City average	68.6	East	73.3
					South	68.6

Recommendations

Increase the number of allotments in accessible locations to meet growing demand.

8. Indoor Sports facilities

The Greater Norwich Infrastructure Needs and Funding Study concluded Norwich needs:

A 4 lane 25 metre swimming pool by 2021

A 4 court indoor sports facility by 2021 and a further 4 court facility by 2031

Needs assessment findings summary:

Category	Quantity Standard	Access standard	Provision (2007) in community use	Requirement	Shortfall	Recommendations
Sports Halls (also see update below table)	One 4 court hall per 12,000 people	20 minute trip	3 halls	11 halls	8 halls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved community use of schools facilities New provision (particularly at Hewett School, Bowthorpe and Mile Cross)
Swimming pools	One 4 lane 25 metre pool for community use per 18,000 people	20 minute trip	5 pools	7 pools	2 pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community access to school pools at Heartsease and junior schools New pool (particularly at and Mile Cross)
Health and Fitness	One 50 station centre per 8,300 people	20 minute trip	11 centres	16 centres	5 centres	New centres with community access in particular in Heartsease, Eaton and west of the city centre.
Indoor Bowls	One 6-rink indoor bowls centre per 55,000 people	20 minute trip	11 rinks	14 rinks	3 rinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New facility provision Extensions where possible to existing centres Reliance on existing provision in the wider Norwich area.
Indoor tennis	One 4-court indoor tennis centre per 57,000 people	20 minute trip	0 courts	9 courts	9 courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New facility in south and west Extensions to existing centres near Norwich
Community buildings and small halls	A community venue per 8200 people	15-minute walk time	16 halls	16 halls	0 halls	New facilities in areas of shortage (Thorpe Hamlet, Sewell, Mancroft, Catton Grove. Eaton, Town Close, the eastern part of University and south Bowthorpe wards)

In relation to sports halls, the October 2011 Sport Hall Provision in Norwich report ([available here](#)), using the Sport England Facilities Planning Model (FPM), showed a markedly different picture to the 2007 Open Space Needs Assessment summarised above as:

- There have been improvements in sports hall facilities with community access in some parts of Norwich since 2007, with additional provision at UEA sportspark (8 new courts in addition to the existing 12 courts) and Town Close House School (4 courts), refurbishment of some facilities (eg Sewell Park College) and improved public access to school facilities (e.g. Town Close School). At the same time, Wensum Lodge, previously providing 8 courts, has closed since 2007, though a community group is currently investigating the potential to re-open the facility.
- The methodology used includes smaller facilities with public access and takes account of a wider range of data.

Excluding Wensum Lodge, this means there are 47 courts available for public use at peak times within the city. Using the threshold established in the Needs Assessment, the number of courts is slightly above the 44 courts required. Though a significant proportion of the courts are at UEA and not equally accessible to the whole city, the Sport England study does not identify any areas within the city where there is a clear shortage of sports hall capacity. It does, however, point out that there is limited capacity elsewhere in the city to provide for the loss of facilities at Wensum Lodge. Overall, Sport England concluded that:

“All indicators from the outputs of the FPM model point to Norwich having a reasonable supply of sports halls with average levels of satisfied demand compared to national and regional averages and any unmet demand being spread thinly across the city. However, halls at present are operating at high levels of utilised capacity which will likely be exacerbated further if the closure of the Wensum Lodge facility is factored into the outputs. Some facilities are already operating at a theoretical figure of 100% capacity and therefore would not be able to accept any additional displaced demand.”

9. Accessible Countryside in the Urban Fringe

Through the GNDP and growth area development and funding more co-ordinated provision to provide access to the countryside will be planned. This will enable more accessible connections in and out of the urban areas via more sustainable routes.

Key areas of accessible urban fringe countryside to Norwich include:

Whitlingham Country Park

Caistor St Edmund

Catton Park

Possible future provision at Bawburgh Lakes

Smaller sites include Cary's Meadow, Charter Wood, Dunston Common and Horsford Pits.