



Greenspace Strategy

2008 - 2018



Contents

	Page
SECTION I - Introduction and Methodology	
Introduction to Section I	2
A vision for Coventry City's Green Spaces	2
Purpose of the Strategy	3
The development of the Greenspace Strategy	4
Methodology	
Definition of Green Space	5
The approach to the Strategy	8
A review of existing plans, policies and strategies	9
National Standards	9
Audit and digital mapping	9
Assessing needs	10
Public and Staff Consultation	10
Neighbourhood Management Areas	12
Comparison with other local authorities	14
Management issues and Financial Implications	14
Overview of the character - City of Coventry	
History	15
Demographic Profile	17
Population Profile	17
Ethnic Origins	18
Car Ownership	18
Deprivation Indices	19
The importance of green space	
Health	19
Sense of Place and Civic Pride	19
Education	20
Environment	20
Greenspace in Coventry	20
Consultation (What People Said)	
Key Stakeholders (internal)	21
Schools	22
Friends of Parks	23
Staff and Residents	24
Greenspace and Planning Framework	
National Policy	25
Planning Policy Guidance (PPG's)	25
National Agency Guidance	34
Sport England	34

	Page
CABE Space	36
The Green Flag Award	38
Regional Context	39
Local Planning and Local Development Framework	
Other Green Space Policies and Strategies	
The Coventry Development Plan 2001-2011	42
Coventry Community Safety Strategy 2005-2008	44
Corporate Plan	45
Coventry Heritage Strategy	45
Progress through prevention	46
Draft Sports Strategy 2004-2010	46
'Something To Do' Coventry Play Strategy	47
Community Cohesion Strategy 2006-2009	47
Charging Strategy (Cultural Services) 2007	48
Developer Contributions	48
The Regional Biodiversity Strategy for West Midlands	49
Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity	49
Action Plan	50
Coventry Walking and Cycling Strategies	50

SECTION II - Audit Findings

Introduction to Section II	52
Assessing Greenspace Quantity	52
Assessing Greenspace Quality	53
Assessing Greenspace Accessibility	54
The Greenspace Resource	54
Existing Policies and Standards	55
Comparison with other authorities	56
Parks and Open Space	
Introduction	58
Quantity	58
Comparison with other authorities	60
Principal Open Space, Incidental Open Space and	61
Ornamental Areas	
Existing Policies	63
Quality	64
Accessibility	66
Standards:	68
● Quantity	
● Quality	
● Accessibility	
Deficiencies:	69
● Quantity	
● Quality	
● Accessibility	

	Page
Woodlands	
Introduction	70
Quantity	70
Existing Policy	72
Quality	73
Accessible Natural Greenspace	74
Strategic Green Routes	76
Local Nature Reserves (LNR's)	77
Accessibility	78
Standards:	79
● Quantity	
● Quality	
● Accessibility	
Deficiencies:	80
● Quantity	
● Quality	
● Accessibility	
 Provision for Children and Young People	
Introduction	81
Existing Policies	81
Consultation	83
Financial Implications	84
Current Standards	84
Quantity	85
Quality	88
Accessibility	90
Standards	91
● Quantity	
● Quality	
● Accessibility	
Deficiencies:	92
● Quantity	
● Quality	
● Accessibility	
 Outdoor sports	
Introduction	93
Quantity	93
Existing Policy	94
Sports Grounds (Quantity, Quality)	96
Grass Pitches (Quantity, Quality)	98
Other Outdoor Sports Facilities	101
Comparison with other authorities	103
Outdoor Sport Accessibility	107
Standards:	107
● Quantity	
● Quality	
● Accessibility	

	Page
Deficiencies:	108
● Quantity	
● Quality	
● Accessibility	
Allotments	
Introduction	109
Existing Policy - Local, National	110
Consultation with plot holders	111
Quantity	111
Comparison with other authorities	112
Quality	113
Accessibility	115
Standards:	115
● Quantity	
● Quality	
● Accessibility	
Deficiencies:	116
● Quantity	
● Quality	
● Accessibility	
 Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards	
Introduction	117
Quantity	117
Quality	118
Accessibility	119
Standards:	119
● Quantity	
● Quality	
● Accessibility	
Deficiencies:	120
● Quantity	
● Quality	
● Accessibility	
 SECTION III - Resourcing the City's Greenspace	
 Introduction to Section III	 122
Revenue Funding	122
Capital Funding	122
Lottery Funding	123
Big Lottery Funding	124
Lottery Small Grants Scheme	124
Land Fill Tax Credits	125
Barclay's Site Saver	125
The Esmee Fairburn Foundation	125

Governing Bodies-Sport England	125
Football Foundation	126
Developer Contributions	126

SECTION IV - Generic Recommendations

Design of Greenspace	131
Parks and Open Space	134
Woodlands/ Natural Greenspace/ Local Nature Reserves	134
Provision For Children and Young People	135
Outdoor Sports Facilities	136
Allotments	137

SECTION V - Action Plan

Objective 1 - Developing Green Space	139
Objective 2 - Working in Partnership	140
Objective 3 - Improving Accessibility	141
Objective 4 - Improving Quality	142
Objective 5 - Increasing Public Awareness	143
Objective 6 - Sustainability	144
Objective 7 - Woodland Resource Management	144
Objective 8 - Resource and Funding	145
Objective 9 - Biodiversity	146
Coventry Proposed Quantity Standards	147
Area Action Plan-North East	148
Area Action Plan-North West	149
Area Action Plan-South	150
Ward Based Provision Against Standards - NE	151
Ward Based Provision Against Standards - NW	152
Ward Based Provision Against Standards - S	153

SECTION VI - Implementation Plan

To be drafted following consultation

Appendices

1 - List of Consultees	156
2 - Quality Audit Key and Sub Criteria	162
3 - Pitch Quality Audit	164
4 - Map of City with Greenspace Provision	187
3 - Quality Assessment Results ?	
4 - Proforma for play areas quality assessment ?	

Section I

Introduction and Methodology



Introduction to Section I

1.1 Section 1 of the Greenspace Strategy identifies the context, background and methodology against which the Strategy has been developed. The main headings within this section are:

- **Purpose of the Greenspace Strategy** - Why Coventry City Council believe it necessary to develop a Greenspace Strategy.
- **Methodology** - the steps and criteria used in developing this Strategy
- **The Nature and Character of Coventry** - including the characteristics and differences across the city and its local communities
- **The Planning Framework** - The key policy guidance at the National, Regional and Local Level and how will the Greenspace Strategy fit within the Councils Local Development Framework.
- **The importance of Greenspace** - to identify from the consultation what people have said, what the issues are and how greenspace can support the Councils wider agendas in relation to health, conservation, crime, education and regeneration
- **Other Policies and Strategies** - these are the current strategies that will have an influence on the Greenspace Strategy

1.2 The assessment undertaken in Section 1 will provide the evidence and foundation to guide the proposed new local standards of provision across the city in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility

Coventry City Council Vision for Greenspace

'To provide attractive, high quality, accessible greenspaces that are well maintained, safe, clean and are important to local people. This will be achieved through clear, open and robust planning policies that ensure green space contributes to local character and plays an important role in everyday life of residents whilst supporting the regeneration of the city.'

Purpose of the Strategy

- 1.3** The city of Coventry is a Metropolitan Authority located in the West Midlands, in the centre of the UK. The city has a population of 300,848 (2001 census) and has an administrative area that covers 9,980 hectares. The city has the rural area to the North and the Counden Wedge is an integral part of the city's greenbelt.
- 1.4** The city's character is one that is predominantly urban. The urban character of the city is tightly constrained and is bounded by the Warwickshire and West Midland Green Belts. The city lies at the heart Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull sub-region and as a result serves over 1.8 million people. The city has over 1764.10 hectares of greenspace provided for recreation or enjoyment of local people as well as contributing to the visual appeal and appearance of the city.
- 1.5** It is well documented that greenspace contributes to the quality of life for local people. Planning policies that influence provision need to be well designed, easy to understand and robust if they are to support the Council in delivering the attractive, high quality accessible greenspace and to ensure that the right level of provision is in the right place to meet local need.
- 1.6** The desired outcome of the project brief is to provide a Greenspace Strategy for the city that is based on a robust assessment of local need and helps :
- To meet the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17(PPG17): Planning for open space, sport and recreation through the development of local standards of provision relating to each different type of greenspace. PPG17 advocates that standards need to be set in relation quantity, quality and accessibility that are based on local need.
 - To provide high quality networks of accessible greenspace and outdoor recreational facilities that are valued by the local community and cater for local need in both urban and rural areas.
 - To provide fit for purpose provision that is economically and environmentally sustainable.
 - To ensure that the city provides an appropriate balance between new provision and ensures that existing provision is improved and enhanced
 - To provide clarity for developers and land owners with regards to what the Council expects from development proposals in relation to greenspace provision.
 - To provide a clear framework of investment that balances increased accessibility, enhancement and improvement to existing provision, and new provision.
 - To deliver a consistent approach through relevant strategies that supports the emerging Local Development Framework

- 1.7** The Greenspace Strategy will provide a clear framework and approach that determines the priorities for investment, guides policy and identifies opportunities for the city and its partners in relation to the city's greenspaces.

The development of the Greenspace Strategy

- 1.8** In developing the Greenspace Strategy the city has been subdivided into three core areas, these are the existing Neighbourhood Management Areas currently utilised by the city. Using the neighbourhood areas enables the city to identify the priorities for each area of the city in relation to the emerging Local Development Framework. Priorities may also be drilled down to the ward level.
- 1.9** The Greenspace Strategy has been developed following the stages as outlined in the companion guide to PPG17 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' as published by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2002). This has included the following:
- A comprehensive review of existing strategies, corporate documents and policies that may influence greenspace (this includes planning policy)
 - Identification of all existing greenspace and the associated facilities such as outdoor sport or recreation
 - The establishment of a steering group and project board of internal and external stakeholders to oversee the development of the Greenspace Strategy
 - Consultation with key stakeholders within the City Council, Local, Regional and National Governing bodies
 - A digital mapping exercise firstly to identify provision by type and secondly to transfer the findings for quality, quantity and accessibility into a computer based mapping management tool (GIS). This will enable informed management decisions to be made in the future
 - Utilising the GIS data to establish and to test local standards of provision at the city and Neighbourhood Area level
 - The development of an Action Plan to guide future management and planning decision in relation to greenspace
- 1.10** In order for the city to achieve the network of accessible good quality greenspace of the right type, in the right place for the right needs will require investment and as such will greatly depend on the availability of funding both capital and revenue. The Capital funding will be required to improve quality and accessibility of existing space and to design and provide new space where required. The revenue funding will ensure long term sustainability of sites.

It is recognised that Coventry City Council will work in partnership with a wide variety of organisations to secure funding and deliver and manage improvements

Methodology

Definition of Greenspace

- 1.11** The most complete description of greenspace comes from the Council of Europe Recommendation No. R (86)11 of the Committee of Ministers States on Urban Open Space (1). As revised by the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management, outlined below is a derivative of that description:

“Urban parks and green spaces are an essential part of the urban heritage and infrastructure, being a strong element in the architectural and landscape character of towns and cities, providing a sense of place and engendering civic pride. They are important for enabling social interaction and fostering community development, as well as providing an outdoor classroom for biological and ecological studies. Public green spaces help to conserve natural systems, supporting ecosystems and providing the contrast of designed landscapes and conserved wildlife habitats within our urban settlements”.

- 1.12** The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 defines open space as land laid out as a public garden or used for the purpose of public recreation or previously used as burial ground. This definition does not go far enough in recognising the variety of greenspace types both private and public.
- 1.13** For the purpose of this strategy ‘greenspace’ is a collective term that refers to the city’s provision of parks and public gardens, children’s play areas, outdoor sports facilities such as playing pitches and sports grounds, woodlands, nature reserves, allotments, cemeteries and linear open space.
- 1.14** PPG17 guidance advocates the development of a local typology for the different types of greenspace within the city. For this strategy we are referring to the range of green areas that are used by the public and are in the main managed by Coventry City Council.
- 1.15** The Greenspace Strategy considers core typologies of provision in Coventry, as well as setting out plans and policies for each of the typologies the strategy proposes provision standards to ensure that people have equal access to the range of typologies regardless of where they live.

Table 1 - City of Coventry Typology - part 1

Coventry City Typology	Hierarchy of Provision	Primary Purpose and Vision
<p><i>Parks and Open Space</i></p>	<p>Premier Park</p>	<p>The city has identified War Memorial Park as the Premier Park using the following justification: Significant numbers of people visiting the park from all over the city. The park is easily accessible by public transport and is close to the city centre. The park includes many attractive features and is of a scale that provides a rich variety of opportunities. An improvement plan has been developed for the park.</p>
	<p>Area Park</p>	<p>The city has identified 4 sites - Allesley, Holbrooks, Longford and Caludon that have been selected as having the potential to become Area Parks. These parks provide a broad range of opportunities for local people. In developing these parks the emphasis will be placed on community involvement. The parks are well located and development plans for each site will include a varied range of activities.</p>
	<p>Neighbourhood Park</p>	<p>These are the large areas of open space that are not of significant scale to warrant development as Area Parks, these sites are strategically placed to serve smaller local communities around the city.</p>
	<p>Principal Open Space</p>	<p>Large open space areas where development is restricted due to the nature of the site, such as they form part of the flood plain or have had a history of previous tipping, some sites being important and are designated as open space, others are protected as sites important to nature conservation.</p>
	<p>Incidental Open Space</p>	<p>Small pockets of amenity space in residential areas maintained to minimum requirements, clean and safe to use.</p>
	<p>Ornamental Areas</p>	<p>Important heritage landmarks in the city that help to enhance the quality of the city as a tourist venue. Horticultural elements include shrub beds and bedding plants providing colour and interest.</p>
	<p>Country Park</p>	<p>The aim is to realise the potential which the park offers for social, educational and community development for the people of Coventry.</p>

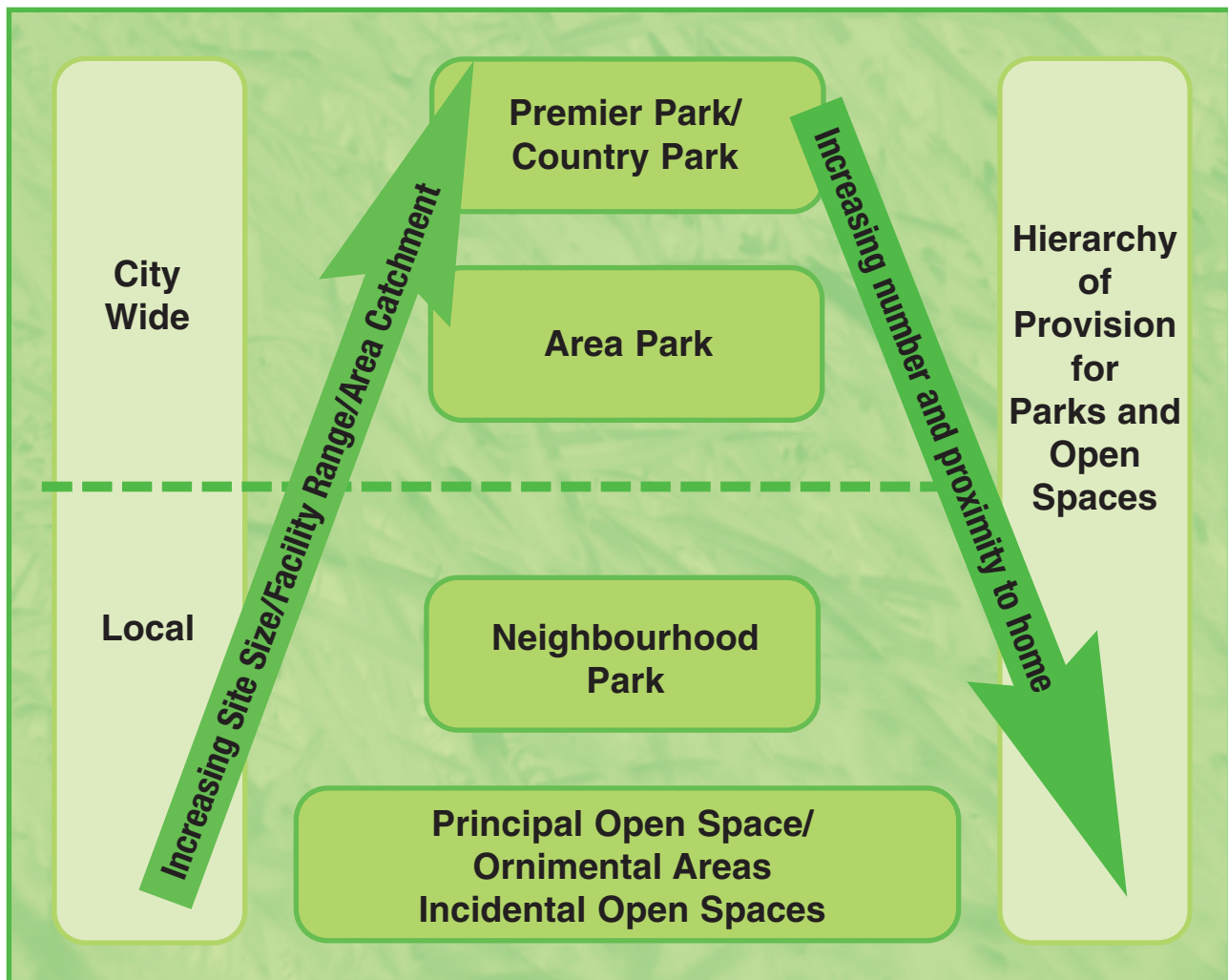
Table 1 - City of Coventry Typology - part 2

Coventry City Typology	Hierarchy of Provision	Primary Purpose and Vision
<i>Outdoor Sport</i>	Sports Grounds	Sites specifically intended to meet demand for formal participation in sport.
	Grass Pitches	Grass pitches for football, cricket and rugby.
	Other Outdoor Sport Provision	Participation in outdoor sports such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls and athletics.
<i>Accessible Natural Greenspace</i>	Woodland	Sites that promote respect and understanding of accessible natural greenspace through programmes of interpretation, conservation and management. These sites will also provide for recreation and wildlife.
<i>Provision for Children and Young People</i>	Equipped Play Areas	Accessible, safe, clean and well maintained areas designed for or including facilities primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people.
<i>Allotments</i>	Allotments	Opportunities for those people who wish to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
<i>Cemeteries and Churchyards</i>	Cemeteries and Churchyards	Areas for quiet contemplation to remember the deceased.

The Approach to the Strategy

- 1.16** The Strategy covers all greenspaces where there is legitimate public access. The Council owns and manages much of the provision but there are areas under private control or that are not fully publicly accessible such as school grounds.
- 1.17** The following greenspace types are not considered in any great depth as part of this strategy:
- Private land including domestic gardens, countryside, the public rights of way network, private sports grounds or school grounds with no community use.
- 1.18** The geographical scope of the Strategy conforms to the administrative boundary of Coventry City Council. However, it is important to recognise that several sites belonging to the city fall outside the City Council boundary namely Coombe Abbey Country Park, Westwood Heath Allotment Leisure Gardens, Bagington Mill Allotment Leisure Gardens These sites are included within the Greenspace Strategy as they are City Council assets.

Table 1a - Coventry Parks and Open Space Hierarchy



A review of existing plans, policies and strategies

1.19 In order to develop a Greenspace Strategy for the city it has been necessary to consider and review the existing large number of plans, policies and strategies produced by the city and its partners that have an influence on greenspace across the city. These existing documents have to be considered as they provide an important source of information, background and context with regards to provision and policy that has shaped the current provision of greenspace across the city.

National Standards

1.20 Greenspace policy in Coventry has been influenced by national standards that have been produced by national bodies. The most influential has been the standards set through the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) and Sport England. Other national bodies such as Natural England (formerly English Nature), the Lawn Tennis Association and to a lesser degree the Association of Leisure and Allotment Gardens have all promoted standards of provision. These have all been considered and applied where relevant or possible and are discussed within the relevant sections of the Greenspace Strategy.

1.21 PPG17 guidance advocates the development of locally determined provision standards based on local needs that are sustainable and more importantly reflect local circumstance.

Audit and Digital Mapping

1.22 The study adheres to the guidance detailed in “Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17” providing guidance on undertaking local assessments of open space, sport and recreation provision. The Council already hold large amounts of information in relation to greenspace. This information is spread through different Directorates and divisions within the Council and external bodies. This has resulted in parts to an inconsistent approach to the provision of greenspace. The Council is not alone in this as many other Authorities are finding they are in a similar position as they also undertake the required PPG17 assessments.

1.23 A key stage in developing the strategy was to pull together the information currently held by the Council and governing bodies into a digital data base. The database has pulled together the threads of information and has captured sites by creating digital layers for each of the different typologies. The database has been created to enable the Council to regularly update the information and to use the information as a management tool to guide future decisions for planning and management of greenspace.

1.24 In developing the Greenspace Strategy a comprehensive qualitative audit of open space, sport and recreational facilities in terms of quality and accessibility has been undertaken to support the quantitative data captured as part of the digital mapping. The audit has assessed each site against best practice in terms of the physical condition of the site and the infrastructure within them.

- 1.25** Digital maps have been produced from the data base and are an important element in providing the information that has guided the development of this Greenspace Strategy.

Assessing Needs

- 1.26** Consultation has taken the form of questionnaire surveys to the public and user groups, face to face consultation, telephone and questionnaire surveys of key stakeholders, National Governing Bodies and other interested bodies.

Public and Staff Consultation

- 1.27** The Council undertook consultation with the residents and City Council staff living within Coventry. The Consultation was through a standard questionnaire approach as follows:
- Questionnaire on Web Site – this went ‘live’ in June 2007 and was made available to local people until September 2007. The survey was advertised 4 times in the local press and was advertised on the Council Web Site
 - Questionnaire to other places – A hard copy of the questionnaire was available in libraries, community centres and key reception areas. The survey was advertised in Council buildings via a poster campaign. The survey was also promoted at large Council Events such as the Godiva Festival
 - Staff Questionnaire - Staff in three core departments who live and work in the City Council were notified of the opportunity to have their say via a note attached to their pay slips pointing them to the questionnaire on the web site
 - Other media - An article was placed (on two occasions) in City Vision (the free news letter delivered to all homes in the city)
- 1.28** Consultation with the public has attempted to identify local needs and aspirations and importantly to identify the issues at the local level to enable informed decisions about the future management and provision of greenspace to be developed. In order to develop a strategy and set local policies from it, it is essential to consult with the local community to gain an insight into local needs and aspirations. It is also important to ascertain the views of local communities as part of the Best Value and community planning process.
- 1.29** It has to be stated that the response from the public consultation outlined above has been limited and as a result evidence gathered from other Council initiated consultation has been used to strengthen the development of this strategy. In addition the draft strategy and executive summary are being distributed widely for consultation in particular in relation to the proposed standards for each type of green space.
- 1.30** Additional consultation has been undertaken in August 2008 with the sports clubs to meet the requirements of PPG17 regarding latent demand.

1.31 Previous consultation with organisations clubs and groups held by the city has been reviewed along with a resident and staff survey. The questionnaire responses have been analysed, and a database has been established that will provide the Council with detailed analysis for types of open space and areas of residence.

1.32 The survey was designed to assess views of residents, their attitude and aspirations with regard to open space, outdoor sport and recreational facilities across the city. In particular the survey set out to identify and establish the following:

- The usage of open space, sport and community recreational facilities by residents within the city
- The value local people attach to open space, sport and community recreational facilities
- The attitude of local residents towards open space, sport and community recreation facilities
- Attitudes to the level of existing provision and facilities
- The frequency of use by local residents to the differing types of provision
- Main mode of transport local resident use to access open space, sport and community recreational facilities
- The views of residents to the accessibility of open space, sport and community recreational facilities
- The barriers that prevent or reduce local use of open space, sport and community recreational facilities
- Local needs and expectations

Key Stakeholders

1.33 50+ individuals and regional governing bodies were consulted either by face to face interviews, telephone interview or via an email survey. The key stakeholders are listed on the website and were selected as having an influence or interest in greenspace across the city.

Local Groups and Schools

1.34 Questionnaire surveys were sent to Friends of Parks Groups, Allotment Societies, Schools, Football Clubs, Cricket Clubs, Bowls Clubs, Tennis Clubs, and Athletics Clubs.

Young People

1.35 The City Council has recently produced a Play Strategy for Children and Young People and the evidence collated is incorporated into the Greenspace Strategy.

Neighbourhood Management Areas

- 1.36** In order for the Greenspace Strategy to reflect the differences in provision and spatial distribution of facilities within local communities the city strategy has considered provision on two levels. Firstly the quantity, quality and accessibility of greenspace at a citywide provision level and secondly using the city's existing Neighbourhood Management Areas. Neighbourhood Management is the way in which the Council works to reflect needs and preferences in local neighbourhoods to improve its services and the quality of life of local people.
- 1.37** By making use of the Neighbourhood Management Areas the Greenspace Strategy can support the Council's three key roles for Neighbourhood Management:
- Problem solving – working with local partners and residents to find local solutions to local problems
 - Community involvement and consultation – making sure that local residents and community groups have the opportunity, skills and confidence to take part in deciding how local services are delivered
 - Planning to deliver better services – making sure that neighbourhood priorities are included in future plans for your neighbourhood
- 1.38** The use of Neighbourhood Management Areas will also enable:
- A comparison to be made between the different areas of the city
 - Identify the spatial distribution and accessibility of facilities within the Neighbourhood Areas compared to the city overall
 - Provide an insight into what facilities or provision need investment, replacement or new provision when negotiating financial contributions with developers
- 1.39** The data collected in developing the Greenspace Strategy has been developed in such a way as to enable the Council to drill down further and to undertake analysis if needed at the ward level.
- 1.40** In developing the Greenspace Strategy the city has been subdivided into the three core Neighbourhood Management Areas:
- North East
 - North West
 - South

Table 2 - Area and Ward Population

Area	Area Population	Ward	Ward Population
North East	104993	Foleshill Ward	17968
		Henley Ward	17027
		Holbrook Ward	18427
		Longford Ward	17601
		Radford Ward	16901
North West	82008	Upper Stoke Ward	17069
		Bablake Ward	15041
		Sherbourne Ward	16531
		St. Michael's Ward	15413
		Whoberley Ward	16537
		Woodlands Ward	18486
South	113847	Binley and Willenhall	18296
		Cheylesmore Ward	13983
		Earlsdon Ward	16543
		Lower Stoke Ward	15778
		Wainbody Ward	16306
		Westwood Ward	14983
		Wyken Ward	17958
Total Population	300848		300848

1.41 For the purpose of this Greenspace Strategy the following definitions are relevant;

- city wide – everything within the administrative footprint of the city of Coventry
- Area – the administrative division within the city
- Neighbourhoods – the places where the communities live and identify with
- Wards – the electoral boundaries that elected members represent.

Comparison with other local authorities

- 1.42** It is useful to gauge the city provision against other similar Local Authorities and as such the findings and standard from other authorities PPG17 assessments would be a valuable point of comparison. The use of this information is dependent upon its availability and accessibility. The provision within the city is compared with other local authorities of a similar size where possible.
- 1.43** PPG17 advocates Local Authorities move away from the use of national provision standards in order to develop local standards that best fit the city and local need. The use of benchmarking with other city's is useful to ensure the people of Coventry are provided with a good level of facilities and provision.

Management Issues and Financial Implications

- 1.44** Ownership and management of greenspace and the associated facilities across the city is subject to different regimes. The regimes are linked to the function and type of provision dependent upon ownership. Therefore sites of the same type may well be subjected to differing maintenance and management practices.
- 1.45** A key issue for the Greenspace Strategy is to raise awareness of both the capital and revenue funding required to maintain and manage the city's greenspace facilities. People are often aware of the cost of built facilities such as sports halls and swimming pools, but tend to be less aware that the footpaths in the local park have a predicted lifespan and will need resurfacing in a similar way that the roads and public footpaths need re surfacing, purely and simply because after so many years they wear out. The cost of resurfacing the paths for example in one of the city's larger parks such as Allesley Park would cost hundreds of thousand pounds and considering the city has 20+ other parks the cost runs into millions.
- 1.46** Another issue is the fact that much of the city's greenspace is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week and as such is often unprotected and therefore exposed to the more undesirable activities such as vandalism and abuse. However if something is damaged or broken it has to be repaired or made safe in order to reduce the insurance liability and risk to the people using the site. This is very much dependent upon factors such as location, community involvement or the more difficult to predict the long term unexpected costs such as vandalism, abuse, cost of keeping building and facilities secure through staffing, policing and ongoing repair.
- 1.47** The Greenspace Strategy will provide a framework for the city to achieve key objectives over the next 10 years. The strategy identifies the issues that will need to be addressed and will form a key planning and management document for the future provision across the city by setting out the future vision for enhancing, improving, preserving and managing the city's greenspaces.

Overview of the Character - City of Coventry

History

- 1.48** The city of Coventry is a Metropolitan Authority located in the West Midlands, in the centre of the UK. The city's character is one that is predominantly urban and covers an area of approximately 9,980 ha. The urban character of the city is tightly constrained and is bounded by the Warwickshire and West Midland Green Belts. The city lies at the heart Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull sub-region and as a result serves over 1.8 million people. The city has a long and varied history which is summarised below
- 1.49** Traditionally Coventry is believed to have been established in 1403 with the founding of a Benedictine Abbey by the Earl of Mercia, Leofric and his wife Lady Godiva. By the 13th Century Coventry was a centre for textiles trades and dyers who produced the "Coventry blue" cloth which was sought after across Europe and renowned for its non-fading quality
- 1.50** By the 14th Century and the medieval period Coventry was the fourth largest city in England with a population of 10,000 people, only Bristol Norwich and London were larger.
- 1.51** During the English Civil War Coventry was a stronghold for the Parliamentary forces and was attacked on several occasions by Royalists who were unable to breach the city walls. In 1642 following the restoration of the Monarchy the city walls were demolished in revenge for the support the city gave to the Parliamentarians during the Civil War.
- 1.52** By the 18th Century the city was home to French immigrants who introduced silk and ribbon weaving skills which became the basis for the city's economy. The Coventry Canal was opened in the late 1700's and one of the earliest trunk railway lines from Birmingham to London passed through Coventry opening in 1838.
- 1.53** The city's first industrial boom came to an end in the 1860's due to foreign imports. However, other industries including clock and watch making, the manufacture of sewing machines and in the 1880's James Starley pioneered the manufacture of bicycles. The 'Starley Safety Bicycle' was developed in 1885 by John Kemp and produced by Rover. The safety bicycle had a number of features including a chain driven rear wheel.
- 1.54** By 1890 Coventry had developed the largest bicycle industry in the world with over 40000 workers in 248 cycle manufacturers.
- 1.55** By the 20th Century cycle manufacture had progressed and evolved into motor manufacture. The city had become the centre of the British motor industry. Jaguar, Rover and Rootes being three of the many famous companies based in Coventry. By 1930 Coventry was prospering and the population increased by 90,000

- 1.56** The darkest time for Coventry as a city was during the Second World War when the city was subjected to sustained heavy bombing campaign which left much of the city Centre and the city's medieval cathedral destroyed.
- 1.57** Post war the city was extensively rebuilt with the city Centre being completed in the 1950's and designed by Donald Gibson and was one of the earliest centres to provide traffic free shopping precincts. The Cathedral was rebuilt and opened in 1962.
- 1.58** As a result of the post war redevelopment Coventry shares the 1960's stereotype concrete architecture. The business district was restricted through the development in the 1970's of an orbital ring road which led to a city centre that was undefined, had a mixed use appearance with no clearly defined functions. The exception being the Cathedral quarter.
- 1.59** The city remained prosperous up until the mid 1970's and was often referred to as the 'Motor City' or Britain's Detroit owing to the large concentration of car production and manufacturing plants spread throughout the city. Manufacturers such as Jaguar, Standard Triumph (British Leyland), Alvis and Hillman-Chrysler. The population of the city peaked at this time at around 335,000 people.
- 1.60** The city at this time had one of the country's highest standards of living outside the south east of England; high quality residential developments took place around the southern suburbs. Middle class development occurred with development such as Styvechale Grange, South Finham and Cannon Park. This was coupled with the city having some of the best sporting facilities in the UK, including an Olympic sized swimming pool, and meant that residents benefited from the prosperity.
- 1.61** The decline in the motor industry during the 1980's hit the city hard and 20% of the workforce was unemployed, the city was hit hard again by the recession of the 1990's. The impact of this historical background on green space is particularly visible in the relatively high number of old "works" sports clubs which have left the city with a broadly decaying stock of pitches and other sports provision.
- 1.62** In recent years the city has largely recovered with regeneration and redevelopment high on the agenda, the city has recently secured significant investment to completely redesign the city Centre and make the city prosper once more through investment and encouraging business in, whilst making the city an accessible and attractive place to live, work and visit.
- 1.63** Coventry has seen a return to population stability and slight growth. The 2001 Census population was approximately 300,800 - an increase of 2.3% from the 1991 Census – and the 2005 estimate is 304 000, although recent indications are that the population may be even higher. The population structure largely replicates the national structure, with a slightly younger population and a higher percentage of ethnic minority groups, particularly of Asian and Caribbean background. In recent years, the city has been undergoing major regeneration and redevelopment projects.
- 1.64** If the city is successful in its bid for population growth, the 30,000+ additional

households will need to be designed with the current standards within the strategy reflected in the planned infrastructure.

- 1.65 Coventry City Council is aiming to provide a cleaner greener area and this is one of the underlying themes in many of the Councils strategic objectives. Open countryside, attractive scenery, and historic trails all feature within the local landscape. The proposed redevelopment of the city Centre is to see 20% of the development given over to the provision of greenspace within the design and layout.

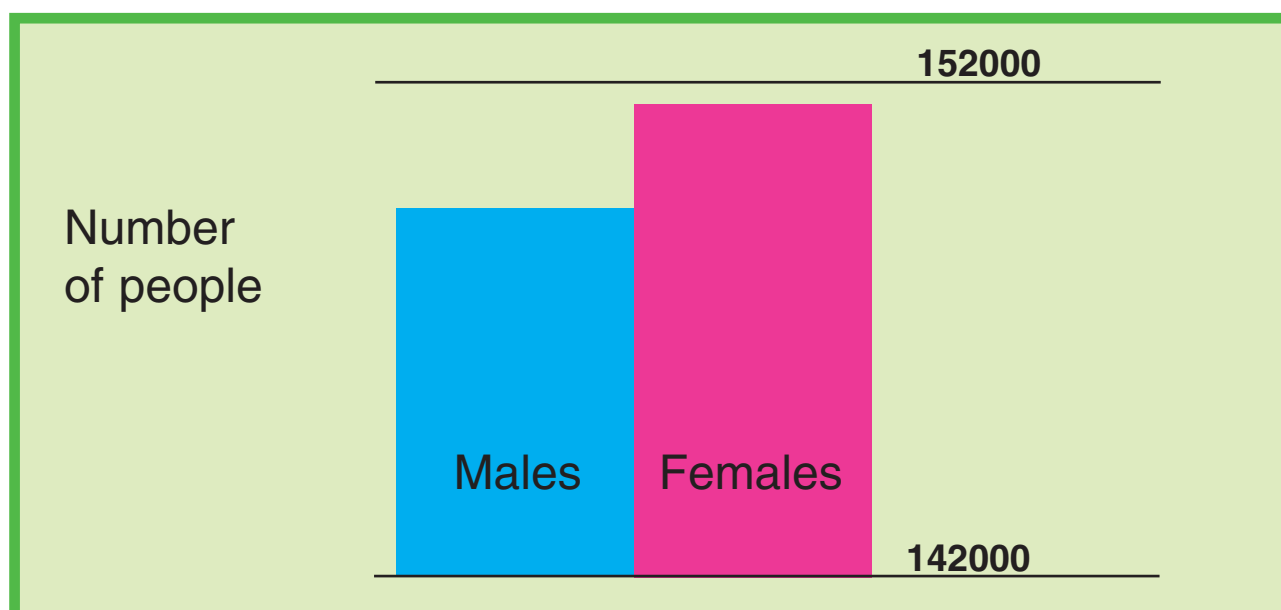
Demographic Profile

- 1.66 It is important to consider the demographic make up of the city as key demographic and socio-economic characteristics are known to influence demand characteristics. For example certain age-groups are known register higher participation rates in a number of sport and leisure activities; deprived communities often experience issues relating to access to services and opportunities; cultural backgrounds may result in some passive and active recreation pursuits being favoured over others; car ownership levels can impact on the range of facilities that can be accessed.

Population Profile

- 1.67 The population of the city is 300,848 (2001 Census) and is predicted to rise according to 2005 estimates to 304,000. For the purpose of this Strategy the 2001 figures are utilised.
- 1.68 The overall population gender composition is; 49.6% of the total population are male and 50.4% female according to the Office of National Statistics 2001 (ONS).

Figure 1 - Gender



Age

1.69 15% of the city population are aged 65 or over, and the city has a generally younger population that is not in line with the national trend with 42% of the population under the age of 30 compared to the national average of 38%.

Ethnic Origins

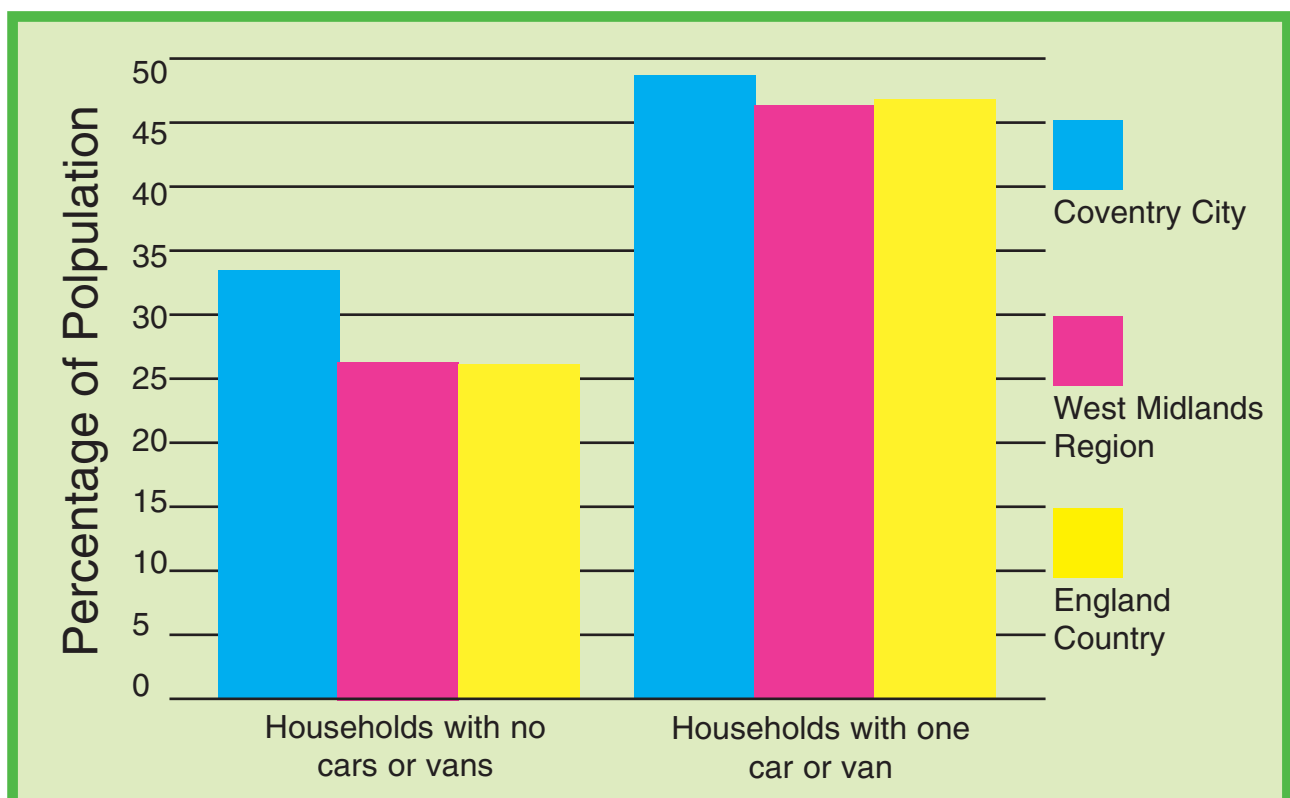
1.70 Ethnicity compared to regional and national comparisons the city has a high minority ethnic population with approximately 21.7% of the city's population falling in this category. 84% of the population are white, in comparison to the England & Wales average which is 90.9%; the next largest ethnic group is Asian comprising 11.27% of the total population. 23% of young people aged 0-19 are from BME communities.

1.71 Crime according to 2005 figures there are on average 129 crime incidents per 1000 population which is high when compared to 107 crimes per 1000 in England, the highest crime rates recorded are in the city Centre.

Car Ownership

1.72 The percentage of households with no access to a car is 33% compared to 26% in West Midlands Region and 27% in England, Households with at least one car is 44% compared to 43% in West Midlands Region and England.

Figure 2 - Car Ownership



Deprivation Indices

1.73 Coventry was ranked 64th (most deprived) out of 354 Local Authorities based on the average deprivation scores of its constituent Lower Level Super Output Areas. Levels of deprivation are measured on a localised basis through data from “super output areas”. These provide a clearer picture to ward data (on which previous indices of deprivation were based) of deprivation at a local level. There is considerable deprivation and economic disadvantage in the north and north east areas of the city. 9% of the population live in areas ranked within the top 10% of the most deprived in England

The Importance of Greenspace

1.74 The following information identifies how Greenspace is important to local people and how it contributes to wider social agendas of Health, Local Pride, Education and the Environment , and then its importance locally in Coventry.

Health

1.75 The health benefits of greenspace are well documented. Access to good quality, well maintained greenspace has significant impact on our physical health and mental well being. They provide opportunities to enjoy the natural world and to get involved in a wide range of leisure activities; they encourage people to walk more, to participate in sport or to simply enjoy the green and natural environment. The more attractive and accessible the green space is, the more likely it is to be used by a wide range of people. It has long been accepted that physical activity is a major contributor to good health and can reduce coronary heart problems, diabetes, certain cancers and mental health problems. Trees and Woodlands help reduce the effect of urban pollution and allotments provide opportunity for more sustainable organic lifestyles.

Sense of Place and Civic Pride

1.76 Well managed, good quality greenspaces improve the appearance of an area For the city they attract tourists and visitors. An urban area with good quality greenspaces and areas for wildlife create a positive image and help attract inward investment from the relocation of businesses. In turn this increases employment opportunities for local people and support physical regeneration. At the local level they stimulate local pride and make people feel good about where they live.

1.77 Research by national organisations such as CABI (Commission for Built Environment) “Does Money Grow on Trees?” (2005) shows that property value in areas of good quality greenspace can increase by more than 10%. Greenspaces are important to community cohesion by bringing people together, by providing

meeting venues and social spaces for events and activities. They are an essential part of urban heritage and the urban fabric that makes up an area as such they have an integral role in providing balanced and sustainable communities.

Education

1.78 Greenspaces provide a valuable resource for education as outdoor classrooms, spaces for training in vocations such as nature conservation, horticulture, community work, landscaping, forestry, sports development. They provide an important environment for children to learn and play through social interaction.

Environment

1.79 Greenspaces are essential to supporting the species diversity of the city, providing habitat and access to a rich variety of flora and fauna in an increasingly urbanised society where urban expansion has meant that true countryside becomes increasingly distant from most people. Greenspace has an increasingly important role to play in mitigating the effects of climate change, as urban areas get hotter the cooling effect of greenspace and the shade they provide will become increasingly valuable. Greenspaces can act as wildlife corridors that allow the migration of plants and animals from one area to another, thereby acting as important stepping stone links between urban and rural areas ensuring wildlife in both can connect.

Greenspace in Coventry

1.80 Coventry is primarily a densely populated urban area especially in the North East and South of the city. The North West is less densely populated and has the more rural greenbelt area of Counden Wedge. The city also has the large and very popular Coombe Abbey Country Park, which is owned and managed by Coventry City Council, though just outside the city administrative boundary.

1.81 The city currently provides 5.86 ha of accessible greenspace per 1000 population across the city and this varies across the Neighbourhood Area from 3.4 ha in the North East, 5.4 ha in the North West to the largest provision per 1000 people in the South with 8.3 ha. It is important to recognise the different character of these areas and the difference in character of the North and South of the city

1.82 The survey of residents, stakeholders and staff who live within the city boundaries has identified how people use greenspace and what the main issues are. It also identifies how important greenspace is to local people.

Consultation - What People Said

1.83 From the Consultation undertaken to inform this strategy a number of issues have been raised with regards to the provision, management and maintenance of Greenspace in Coventry the core key issues are outlined below;

Key Stakeholders (Internal)

1.84 Consultation has been undertaken with internal consultees at the City Council, the consultees are all people who in some way or another have an influence or involvement in the provision management ,maintenance or public use of greenspace across the city: the core findings derived from the consultation are:

- Sites suffer as a consequence of inappropriate maintenance levels
- Sites suffer from inadequate levels of investment
- Many sites have a longstanding legacy of underinvestment which is now resulting in site quality being reduced by crumbling infrastructure
- People want to see staff in parks and there is a definite need for on site presence/ staff in park to make people feel safe and to deter antisocial elements
- The Parks in the city are a major asset and have increasing demands placed on them yet the budgets are same as a decade ago and have not increased to reflect demand or to improve the infrastructure
- There are a number of agencies involved in the management and ownership of greenspace which in turn leads to different quality standards
- The city's Countryside Rangers are based in the Planning Department and focus on Countryside and rights of way not on the parks
- There is a real need for coordination across departments to reduce duplication and ensure best value
- The people responsible for the maintenance of sites have limited opportunity to discuss the implications of new provision especially as a result of new development
- People have expressed a strong desire to protect the Greenbelt and a strong will to keep Coventry separate from Birmingham(local identity and protect Greenbelt)
- The current section 106 procedures and the need for the development of a central pot that is ring fenced for park and open space improvements needs further discussion.

Schools

1.85 The following key headline findings have been obtained from consultation with the schools in Coventry. (82% of schools within the Coventry city area responded to the questionnaire survey and telephone follow-up):

- The Schools that responded have varying levels of community use
- The Schools that responded identified that they have varying levels of quality of facilities
- Many the Schools stated they are undergoing programmes of improvement
- From the responses the schools are well served by facilities
- 25 primary schools have community use
- All Secondary have a level of Community use
- 1 of the 3 16+ schools has Community use
- The main reasons for non use by the community identified by the schools are – Staffing cost, Vandalism, fear of over use

Friends of Parks

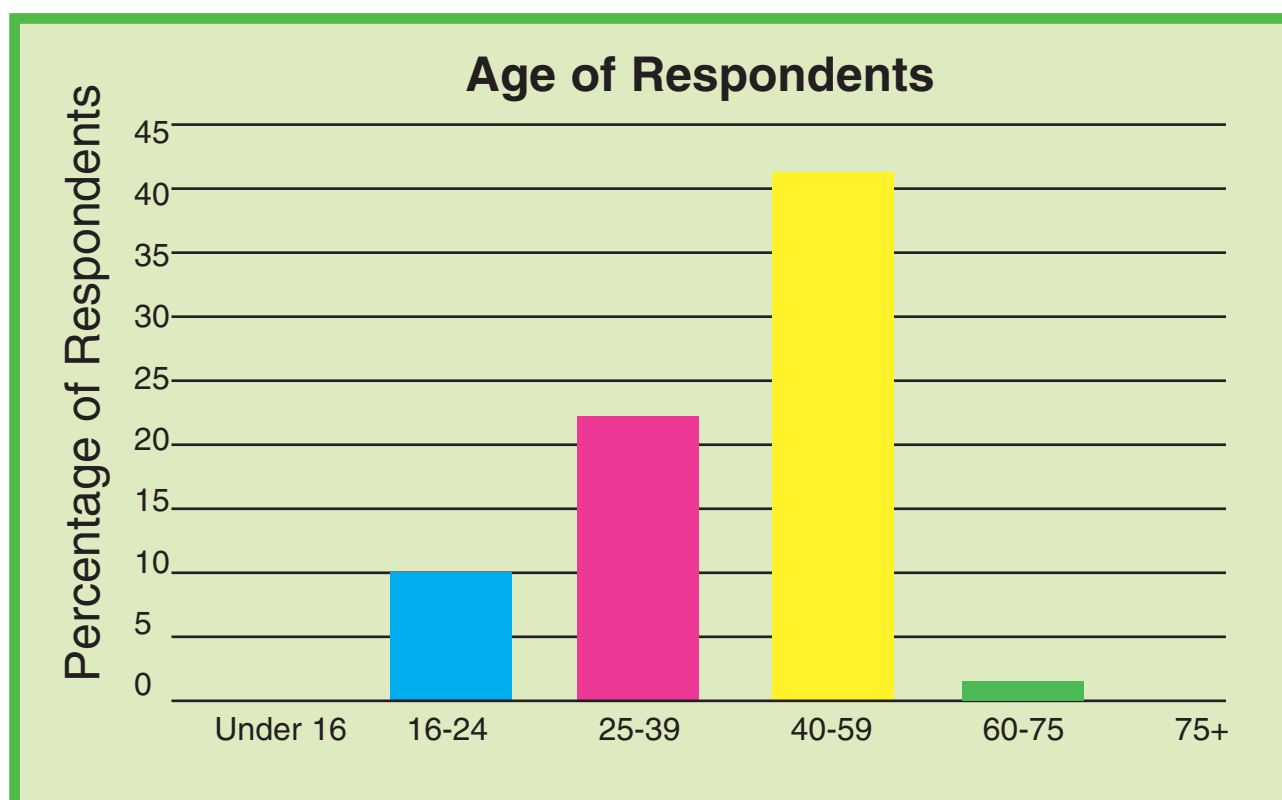
1.86 Four of the known friends of parks groups in Coventry returned questionnaires (80%). Friends of War Memorial park have been in existence the longest, since May 2006, Friends of Caludon and Longford Parks have each been in existence for 2 months and Friends of Allesley Park are in the process of forming. The Friends of Parks groups identified the following as key issues:

- Inappropriate maintenance of parks
- Vandalism is a concern
- Low staffing levels in the city's parks and open spaces
- The real need to improve the quality of existing facilities
- Maintain a sense of place
- Dog fouling is a concern and the City Council need to address dog fouling issues

Staff (who live in the City) and Resident Response

- 1.87** Staff and Local residents were given the opportunity over a period of three months to respond to consultation via a questionnaire that was made available on the Council web site, in key reception areas and at the Godiva festival. It is important to state that the response has been limited. For this reason the draft strategy and standards are being widely consulted on.
- 1.88** From the responses given 36% are male and 49% female (15% of identified respondents did not answer the question).
- 1.89** 71% of respondents identified themselves as being white, 5% identified themselves as Indian, 2% as Asian British. (22% of people that responded to the questionnaire did not provide an answer to their origin,)
- 1.90** Figure 3 below provides a breakdown of the age of local people who responded to the survey; the survey shows that all age categories (over 16 years) are well represented with the middle age ranges of 40-59 being the main respondent age groups.

Figure 3 - Age of respondents



1.91 From the Consultation the following can be stated:

- From the consultation local people have stated that all types of greenspace provision are seen as important. None of the different types receiving less than a 60% response. Parks and gardens(95%), natural greenspace (95%), green corridors (93%) and local nature reserves (95%) all rating as highly important with over a 90%response. Greenbelt land (84%) and amenity greenspace (86%) are also highly valued by local people
- Parks and gardens rated as the most important type of greenspace with 79% of respondents rating them as important, the least important type of greenspace are cemeteries and churchyards with 11% of respondents identifying them as important to them.
- Local people do believe that the level of provision of parks and gardens (52%), natural green space (59%), green corridors (43%), local nature reserves (42%), amenity greenspace (36%), allotments (39%), cemeteries and churchyards (50%), civic space (34%) and greenbelt land (30%) is about right in their local area.
- They do not believe that there is enough provision for children or young people (45%) nor do they believe that there are enough outdoor sports facilities (41%) in their area.
- From the responses re the level of provision of the different types of greenspace the variance between the perception that there is enough provision and the perception that there is not enough provision for greenbelt land was marginal with a 3% difference between the responses
- Most people identified using parks and gardens on a weekly basis (32%), natural greenspace (39%), green corridors (42%), Local Nature Reserves (61%) and greenbelt land (38%) on an occasional basis.
- 60% of the people who responded to the survey stated that they do not make use of the amenity greenspace near to where they live, 54% stated they do not use outdoor sport facilities, 77% stated they do not use allotments, 55% do not use cemeteries and 30% do not use civic space facilities provided in their local area.
- The main reasons local people make use of greenspace across Coventry are:
 - For Fresh Air 63%
 - To Walk 61%
 - Peace and Quiet 45%
 - To Take Children Out 41%
 - To Attend Events 32%
 - To Watch Wildlife 25%
- In terms of the greenspace people visit the most 48% stated they visit natural greenspace most and 54% identified they travel by car when normally travelling to the site they visit most, they also normally stay on site for between 30

minutes to an hour and it takes 5-10 minute to travel.

- From a personal safety perspective most people (51%) stated that the factors that would make them feel safer when visiting sites are:
 - Good Lighting 52%
 - The site is in a good state of repair 48%
 - The site has staff on site 39%
 - The site is clean and tidy 39%
- The less important personal safety factors for local people are: other users (25%) and plenty of on site parking (7.1%)
- 47% of Local people rated the quality of the site they visit the most as being GOOD
- The most important improvement people would like to see is more seating and tables (43%), more litter bins (41%), better toilet provision (32%), better maintenance (30%).
- The main barrier to use for people who identified non use of greenspace in Coventry is vandalism and gangs of young people (16% of respondents), Anti social behaviour and not feeling safe (13% of respondents)
- Disability, lack of facilities age and too many roads to cross are not seen as key barriers to use by local people.

Greenspace and Planning Framework

1.92 It is important in developing the Greenspace Strategy to consider and recognise national regional and local planning policy and guidance. The implications and opportunities are summarised below:

National Policy

Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG'S)

1.93 This guidance seeks to ensure Local Authorities plan effectively for open space, sport and recreation by using a number of tools, including

- Assessments of needs and opportunities - Local Authorities are required to carry out open space assessments and to consult with local people to identify local needs
- Setting standards - National standards such as the NPFA standards for outdoor sport and children's play will be replaced by local standards set in development

plans that must include quality, quantity and accessibility and are based on local needs

- Maintaining an adequate supply of open space and sports and recreational facilities:
 - Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land should not be built on unless the land can be shown as surplus to requirements (A key driver for PPG17 is not to dispose of sites rather ensure local people have access to a range of good quality provision)
 - High quality open spaces and those of particular value to communities should be protected through development planning policies.
 - Planning conditions or obligations can be used to enhance the quality of existing spaces or create new ones where an assessment recognises a deficit in provision of open spaces, sport or recreational facilities
 - Local Authorities should also ensure that commercial and industrial developments do not just include landscaping, and to consider visitors' needs such as accessibility and safety and ensure the development has an element of open space provision
 - Obligation funding can also be used as investment in parks, open spaces and tourist areas to improve the quality and accessibility for local people
 - That provision should be based on local need and the crux of the guidance is not to providing more of the same, rather improving and enhancing what is already there.

1.94 Planning new open space and sports and recreational facilities – Local Authorities should:

- Develop and locate intensive recreational uses where they can contribute to town centre vitality and viability
- Strive to avoid any significant loss of amenity to residents, neighbouring uses or biodiversity
- Aim to improve quality through good design
- Seek to promote accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, and ensure that facilities are accessible for all
- Continue to add to and enhance the range and quality of existing facilities
- Seek to promote areas of open space in commercial and industrial areas
- Consider using any surplus land for open space, sport or recreational use, weighing this against alternative uses

- Assess the impact of new facilities on social inclusion; and consider the recreational needs of visitors and tourists.
- Meet the regeneration needs of areas
- Consider security and personal safety, especially for children

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17 Planning for open space sport and recreation 2002)

1.95 The Government's policy objectives for open space, sport and recreation are set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation 2002) The long term aims are to ensure the delivery of:

- Networks of accessible, high quality open spaces and sport and recreation facilities in both urban and rural areas , which meet residents and visitors needs, are economically and environmentally sustainable and are fit for purpose
- To ensure an appropriate balance between new provision and the enhancement of existing provision
- To provide clarity and reasonable certainty for developers and landowners in relation to the requirements and expectations of the local planning authority in respect of open space and recreational provision.

1.96 A key aspect of PPG17 is that local authorities should undertake a local needs assessment and audit of existing provision. The objective being to move away for the use of national; standards of provision and to establish local standards of provision that address quality quantity and accessibility.

1.97 The guidance advises in paragraphs 1-10 Local Authorities to undertake and consider:

- Undertake robust assessments of existing and future need to guide effective planning for open space, sport and recreation, therefore consultation is essential to ensure the needs of the local communities are known
- As a minimum needs assessment should include the differing population and community needs for open space sport and recreational facilities
- The needs of people living working and visiting should be taken into account
- To undertake an assessment that identifies specific surpluses and deficiencies that can form the basis to guide the development of a more strategic framework and approach to management and future provision at a local level
- Ensure that sport and recreation facilities are easily accessible by a choice of transport modes and wherever appropriate the facilities are centrally located

- To consider factors such as cost and location as an accessibility factor
- Quality audits will be important as they will allow the identification of potential for increased use through better design management and maintenance
- The assessment will enable the Council to deliver more effective planning policy
- Provide good quality open space and recreational facilities as an integral part of new communities not as a bolt on to ensure they are attractive places for people to live and work
- To develop locally derived standards of provision which are evidence based.
(See para 1.95)
- Adopt a strategic approach and to plan in a progressive and positive manner for the provision and enhancement of well designed open space, recreational and sporting facilities
- To provide the strongest protection for open space that is or that has the potential to be of value to local people

1.98 PPG17 states that local authorities should utilise the information gathered from undertaking a needs and opportunities assessment and set locally derived standards of provision for open space, sport and recreation. In setting local standards they should include

- A quantitative assessments (how much have they got and how much do they need and where),
- A qualitative standard which can be used as a means of measuring what needs to be improved and assessing performance though the number of sites that have been improved
- An accessibility standard that considers how people travel how long it takes and if travel time is acceptable. It should also consider other factors such as cost and barriers to use.

1.99 In setting such standards based on local needs will form the basis for redressing the surplus or deficiencies through the planning process. It will also allow standards to be used in city wide or local development plans

1.100 The guidance advocates a cross department approach to undertaking the needs assessment and auditing. This approach links planning processes with the Community Strategy and Best Value process. Local planners, managers of parks and open space, outdoor sport and recreation are encouraged to work together in the delivery of the audit and assessment. External stakeholders and local people are also an integral part of the assessment.

1.101 The Guidance identifies a five step process for undertaking a local assessment:

Step 1 - Identify Local Need

Step 2 - Audit Local Provision

Step 3 - Determine Provision Standards

Step 4 - Apply Provision Standards

Step 5 - Draft Local Policies

1.102 PPG17 maintains that open spaces, sport and recreation all underpin people's quality of life. Well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are therefore fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives.

1.103 PPG17 stresses the importance of protecting and enhancing the Public Right of Way network for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The guidance also stresses that parks, recreation grounds, playing fields and allotments must not be regarded as 'previously-developed land'.

1.104 PPG17 states that open space and sports and recreational facilities that are of high quality, or of particular value to a local community, should be recognised and given protection by local authorities through appropriate policies in plans. Areas of particular quality may include small areas of open space in urban areas that provide an important local amenity and offer recreational and play opportunities

- Areas of open space that provide a community resource and can be used for informal or formal events such as religious and cultural festivals, agricultural shows and travelling fairs. Travelling fairs may also require suitable winter quarters

- Areas of open space that particularly benefit wildlife and biodiversity

1.105 This strategy will ensure the city meets the requirements placed on the Council by PPG17 by setting local standards of provision for each different type of greenspace. The local standards will be derived from existing provision and consultation with key stakeholders (both internal and external), local people and interested groups.

1.106 PPG17 directs local authorities away from the use of traditional simple standards such as the National Playing Field Association (NPFA) 6 Acre Standard. The standard has been used traditionally by planners as the generic standard to adopt, even though it was never intended to be a prop for planners it somehow became one. The 6-acre standard whilst a worthwhile tool did not set standards for every type of space such as parks or natural areas.

1.107 PPG17's wider objectives are:

- Supporting an urban renaissance - local networks of high quality and well managed and maintained open spaces, sports and recreational facilities help create urban environments that are attractive, clean and safe. Green spaces in urban areas perform vital functions as areas for nature conservation and

biodiversity and by acting as 'green lungs' can assist in meeting objectives to improve air quality.

- Supporting a rural renewal - the countryside can provide opportunities for recreation and visitors can play an important role in the regeneration of the economies of rural areas. Open spaces within rural settlements and accessibility to local sports and recreational facilities contribute to the quality of life and well being of people who live in rural areas.
- Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion - well planned and maintained open spaces and good quality sports and recreational facilities can play a major part in improving people's sense of well being in the place they live. As a focal point for community activities, they can bring together members of deprived communities and provide opportunities for people for social interaction.
- Health and well being - open spaces, sports and recreational facilities have a vital role to play in promoting healthy living and preventing illness, and in the social development of children of all ages through play, sporting activities and interaction with others.
- Promoting more sustainable development - by ensuring that open space, sports and recreational facilities (particularly in urban areas) are easily accessible by walking and cycling and that more heavily used or intensive sports and recreational facilities are planned for locations well served by public transport. (Source ODPM Assessing Needs and Opportunities –A Companion Guide to PPG17 2002

1.108 Planning Policy Statement 1 PPS1 has sustainable development as the core principle for planning policy nationally. Sustainable development delivery aims to

- To provide high quality developments of mixed use and sustainable communities
- Reduce the need to travel by car
- Using land in an efficient manner including sites that have previously been developed by reusing them

1.109 In applying this to the Greenspace Strategy it has important links in developing greenspaces that are sustainable, valued by local communities and will support the Council in providing a balance of provision across the city and Neighbourhood areas through determining deficiencies or surpluses and potentially changing the management regimes on sites to meet the needs.

1.110 Planning Policy Statement 3 (PPS3 :Housing) states that new residential environments should provide or enable good access to community space including greenspace, open amenity and recreational space (including play space) and emphasis is given to the needs of children and young people. The guidance advocates the need for well designed, safe secure stimulating areas with safe pedestrian access.

- 1.111** Nationally the Government has encouraged local authorities to develop a Greenspace Strategy as part of the national drive to create cleaner, greener, safer sustainable communities.
- 1.112** Greenspace is important to the health and everyday well being of the people of Coventry. Therefore well designed and implemented planning policies are fundamental and it is essential that the city provides sufficient facilities of the right type in the right places and that these facilities are correctly resourced, well managed and maintained both now and in the future.
- 1.113** The Greenspace Strategy will help to meet the need for accessible good quality greenspaces that meet local needs through the creation of networks of provision that are sustainable and valued by communities they are designed to serve. It will ensure that the city provides an appropriate balance and equal access to a network of good quality provision through enhancement, refurbishment or new provision where necessary. It will provide a clear framework for investment and management action.
- 1.114** Planning Policy Statement 12 –Local Development Framework(LDF) sets the Government's objectives for the preparation of locally derived spatial planning policies for the local planning area. The LDF is designed and intended to streamline planning processes and to promote a positive and proactive approach to delivering change and managing development.
- 1.115** The LDF should provide planning authorities to take a fresh look at their areas and to develop a strategic approach to spatial planning that reflects local need and aspirations whilst delivering sustainable development.
- 1.116** It is possible to identify six principles in relation to local development frameworks. Spatial planning can instil an approach to plan-making that is:
- **Visionary** – setting out a clear vision that is realistic and achievable as to how an area will develop and change
 - **Wide-ranging** – to provide a mechanism that is broader than the usual narrow land use focus to enable delivery of sustainable development objectives by addressing social, economic environmental issues and relating them to the use of land
 - **Participative** – to consider the needs, issues and aspirations of communities and stakeholders within an area, to provide a basis for making difficult choices and to build commitment to delivery
 - **Integrating** – an integrated approach which, helps deliver other strategies takes account of and informs policy
 - **Responsive** – a flexible approach, informed by monitoring, that can respond to developments in wider policy, development pressures and changes on the ground.

- **Deliverable** – setting out delivery mechanisms, including development control, and identifying how the plan will be delivered with and through other organisations with the powers and resources to make a difference.

- 1.117** It will be for each local planning authority to determine how best to apply these principles in their local context. However, they should avoid strategies that contain undeliverable ‘wish lists’ or require unrealistic levels of resources.
- 1.118** Planning Policy Statement 9 – PPS9 -Biodiversity and Geological Conservation- Planning policy guidance relating to biodiversity and geological conservation was developed in 2005. The purpose of the guidance is to ensure enhancement and conservation of biological and geological diversity are an integral part of sustainable development and that they contribute towards urban renewal and the wider urban renaissance.
- 1.119** Conservation and enhancement are seen as important in the guidance. The guidance refers to local importance, such as veteran trees and ancient woodland. It also advocates that conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology should be an intrinsic part of the strategic approach to development location and form.
- 1.120** The Council will need to ensure that future development plan documents will identify the location of sites designated as important for bio diversity and geological importance. The document will also need to recognise the need for the creation of new habitat ion order to meet future targets.
- 1.121** Planning Policy Guidance Note 9 (Nature Conservation) PPS9 (Biodiversity and geological Conservation) re-affirms the Governments position on the conservation of the natural environment. It outlines the need to protect sites that are both designated and undesignated and to manage wisely and promote the creation of new habitats. The guidance advocates the integration of measures to promote and protect nature across all aspects of the Council’s work.
- 1.122** The standards set and subsequent policy guidance will be based on a comprehensive audit that considers quantity, quality and accessibility of the city’s provision. The standards and subsequent policy framework recommendations will be in keeping with national, regional and local plans and strategies and will support the emerging Local Development Framework.

Circular 05/2005 Planning Obligations

- 1.123** A revised guidance for local authorities on the use of planning obligation funding such as section 106 (Town and Country Planning Act 1990). The Circular clarifies the policy terms and provides the guidance to secure planning obligations and the process to secure them.
- 1.124** The Circular defines planning obligations as ‘Private Agreements’ negotiated by the local authority and private developers or people who wish to develop a piece of and. The purpose is to limit the impact of development or to allow development in circumstances that would otherwise be unacceptable from a planning perspective.

It means developers may have to commit to a recreational provision or contribute to improvement off site. This can be either a required new provision, a provision off site or a financial contribution.

- 1.125** Obligations (Financial) can be made to compensate for loss or damage caused by the development or to reduce the impact of a development. This again maybe on or off site financial obligations.
- 1.126** The planning obligation may therefore be used to restrict development or require the land to be utilised in a specific way and require a payment to the local authority for loss or future maintenance (if it is new provision).
- 1.127** In order to clarify if planning obligation is to be sought the Circular stipulates a number of tests as specified by the Secretary of State and basically it has to be:
1. relevant to planning
 2. necessary to make proposed development acceptable in planning terms
 3. related directly to proposed development
 4. fairly and reasonably related in scale an type
 5. reasonable in all other respects
- 1.128** Test 1 and 2 'relevant and necessary' requires justification for developer obligations to be established in national, regional or local planning policy. Such obligations are identified in the Coventry Development Plan in relation to certain types of greenspace such as outdoor sport or children's play, however these need bringing up to date and strengthening through Development and Supplementary Planning Documents (DPD'S and SPD's) to cover all types of greenspace identified in this strategy:
- Parks and Gardens
 - Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace (including Local Nature Reserves)
 - Amenity Greenspace
 - Provision for Children and Young People
 - Civic Space including gateways
 - Outdoor Sport
 - Allotments
- 1.129** The Circular and associated tests allow for the improving both quantity and quality of greenspace and associated facilities. It also allows for the pooling of contributions towards strategic provision. This includes pooled provision with neighbouring authorities.
- 1.130** Developer contribution as a support to new facilities is allowed. By this developer funding can be utilised as a contribution towards a facility planned by the Council.

- 1.131** The Circular also advises on maintenance payments for facilities that are primarily for the benefit of users and the associated development. Developers may be required to make payment in perpetuity for the subsequent maintenance of provision.
- 1.132** The Government's objective in relation to planning policy and developer contributions is for local authorities to provide clear and specific justification within the local development framework that is based on clear and robust evidence, particularly local need.
- 1.133** Summary of Audit Commission Report June 2006 A study was conducted aimed at examining how local authorities in England are managing their approach to providing their public sports and recreation facilities and attempts to improve access and value for money.
- 1.134** Observations are made on strategic planning of sport and recreation services, operational management options and success of options appraisals.
- 1.135** It was recommended that Councils should improve the strategic planning of sports and recreation provision and increase overall efficiency by: assessing current and future sports and recreation needs, forming partnerships to aid the planning, procurement and delivery of services, appraise the options for delivery and test the market to ensure that the best value option is identified, and improve the collection, analysis and use of performance information.
- 1.136** Urban Greenspaces Task Force "Greenspaces, Better Places The report aims to highlight principles and recommendations to support the renaissance of sustainable parks and green spaces and re kindle the relationship between people and the places they live.
- 1.137** This recognises that parks and open spaces have the potential to make a significant contribution to urban regeneration by making places more liveable and sustainable whilst also enriching the quality of people's lives.

National Agency Guidance

Sport England (1999) Planning for Sport A Land Use Planning Policy

- 1.138** This provides the guidance Sport England wish to be considered within the different levels of planning policy for sport. The document needs updating to reflect more current planning system and Local Development Framework.
- 1.139** Key objectives are:
- To prevent loss of facilities or access to natural resources pertinent to sports development
 - To promote development that contributes to quality of life for current and future generations

- To ensure the community has equal access to facilities and opportunity to participate
- To ensure the needs of different groups are reflected in the design and management of new facilities
- To ensure no further reduction in supply of local, conveniently located playing fields for sport and that supply meets local current and potential future demand
- To utilise planning obligations as a means of securing provision of new or enhanced places for sport, with a future maintenance contribution
- To promote outdoor sports facility development in the Green Belt
- To ensure facilities both new and existing serve more than one group
- To support a strategic approach to the provision of sport in rural areas based on networks of accessible sites
- To promote and support the public rights of way network
- To promote the use of floodlighting for sports facilities to ensure and increase in opportunity for sport
- To promote the development of multi use games areas and synthetic pitches as integral to community sports provision.

Providing Sport and Recreation through New Housing Development - A Good Practice Guide (2001)

1.140 Sport England Guidance advocates a 6 stage approach for Local Authorities to undertake to successfully agree and secure developer contributions towards sport and recreation in new housing development. The 6 stages are

- To develop a clear sports strategy with regularly updated Sport Action Plans that detail needs, facilities and management options
- To develop a checklist approach or template to assess the content of planning obligations
- To establish a team approach to negotiating with developers
- To establish appropriate policies in development plans and supplementary planning guidance to identify the contribution required and how it will operate
- To provide the evidence through the preparation of locally justified facility assessments and management cost to ensure openness and fairness in seeking appropriate developer contribution
- To establish open and accountable procedures for negotiating planning obligations which are transparent and subject to monitoring and review.

Planning for Open Space (2002)

1.141 The key messages within the document that Sport England advocate are:

- The Sport England policy on planning applications for the development of playing fields provides 5 exceptions to the opposition normally raised by Sport England to the loss of facilities
- Any development affecting playing fields has to have been considered by Sport England as a key consultee
- Planning Inspectors will no longer accept the traditional Six Acre Standard approach in emerging development plans within local authorities and expect to see the development of local standards of provision
- Local authorities will need to consider the Towards a Level Playing Field Methodology (Guidance on the production of playing pitch strategies) when undertaking open space assessments

CABE Space

1.142 CABE Space is a part of The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), and was set up in early 2003. It has a primary role to champion excellence in the design and management of parks, streets and squares in towns and cities.

1.143 CABE space receives its funding through central government and their work is to encourage a more holistic approach to greenspace. A primary objective for CABE is to ensure people have access to good quality, well designed, and well managed public open spaces. They are raising the profile and importance of greenspace in the wider agenda of regeneration, health and well being of local communities.

1.144 The key document relevant to this strategy is the good practice guide for developing Greenspace Strategies (2004)

Greenspace Strategies – A Good Practice Guide (2004)

1.145 The guidance has been developed to support the guiding messages in PPG17 and to contribute to the wider agenda of improving greenspace through a more strategic approach. The document outlines the importance of good strategic planning in relation to greenspace and the benefits it can bring.

1.146 The document demonstrates the importance of developing a Greenspace Strategy and the benefits it can bring. These include:

- Improving the physical character of an area and reinforcing its local identity, and shaping future development
- Increasing the attractiveness of an area by creating a sense of civic pride

- Focusing capital and revenue expenditure and securing external funding
- Increasing accessibility through physical improvements and social inclusion particularly for people with disabilities, young people and the elderly.
- Protecting habitats and biodiversity

1.147 The guidance outlines 3 stage to developing a Greenspace Strategy:

- Stage 1 Preliminary Activities –includes the importance of robust consultation, reviewing core documents and policies from national to local level
- Stage 2 Information Gathering- advocates a robust quality assessment of sites, development of local typologies and the use of digital mapping to establish quantity, quality and accessibility of greenspace. The gathering of evidence is crucial to providing a robust assessment and to enabling informed management decisions
- Stage 3 Strategy Production- pulling together the key themes and strands into a clear and concise framework, establishing standard of provision and preparing a final strategy.

Is the Grass Greener? (CABE Space 2004)

1.148 Using international examples of both good and bad practice to demonstrate issues common in many local authorities that have been combated abroad. The guide focuses on maintenance and management practices to provide challenging solutions to common issues namely:

- Poor maintenance
- Hostile environments
- Lack of a strategic coherent approach to the management of greenspace
- Poor design
- Lacking facilities to engage users

1.149 CABE space have produced a wealth of similar publications including ‘A manifesto for better public spaces (2003) and ‘The Value of Public Space(2004)’ which promote and advise on the value and benefit that good quality well managed greenspace can provide. A key message from all the documents are:

- High quality public environment Is a vital part of any regeneration strategy and can have a positive impact on the value of property
- Good quality accessible greenspace is important to our mental well being and research shows that well maintained spaces can help reduce stress and encourage more people to become active

- Greenspace that is well designed, well used and intrinsic to a community can reduce crime or the fear of crime, they benefit young people and encourage children to play freely outdoors experiencing the natural environment
- Well designed well maintained spaces can bring people together and foster social ties
- Greenspace brings people closer to the natural environment, biodiversity and wildlife

The Green Flag Award - The National Standard for Parks and Open Spaces

- 1.150** A national award scheme for parks and open space in England, Wales and more recently Scotland. The Civic Trust manage the award on behalf of central government (Communities, gsi) and is backed by Natural England, English heritage the Countryside Commission for Wales, the Heritage Lottery and other similar organisations .
- 1.151** The scheme encourages the provision of good quality parks and open spaces that are well managed and sustainable. The Award encourages community involvement and stipulates that sites must have a management plan in order to be considered.
- 1.152** The award is increasingly raising expectations as to what public greenspaces can offer and gives reassurance to people that the value they place on their local space is not misplaced.
- 1.153** Coventry has Green Flag Award winning parks and the parks management team aspire to deliver the core principles behind the award to greenspace across the city.

CABE and TCPA Guidance

- 1.154** Environmental infrastructure, including parks and green spaces, will play a critical role in adapting our areas to climate change and the mitigation of its effects. In responding to climate change there is an opportunity for green space managers to lever additional sources of funding by thinking differently about the functions that these areas play and the facilities that they provide.

As a result of climate change, Britain is going to experience hotter, drier summers and wetter winters. Good quality, well-maintained networks of green spaces play a role in flood management and natural drainage, reduction of pollution, conservation of biodiversity and can potentially provide land for biomass, food or wind energy production, or recycling and composting schemes.

In addition, the cooling effect of green spaces constracts the ‘urban heat island effect’, whilst shade from vegetation and trees will provide respite from hotter weather and important green networks in encouraging people to walk or cycle.

The TCPA publication “Climate Change Adaption by Design” also provides some useful guidance.

“Built environment professionals should aim for integration of water, open space and built form through greenspace and bluespace strategies, developed as part of a masterplan. This should consider a number of climate risk management options (bearing in mind the potential conflicts between options and with GHG mitigation efforts), including high quality greenspace, made up of a linked network of well-irrigated open spaces that can be used by a range of people (a ‘green grid’), which has additional ecological, recreational and flood storage benefits. Green infrastructure in urban areas includes open spaces, woodlands, street trees, fields, parks, outdoor sports facilities, community gardens, village greens, private gardens and green or living roofs and walls...” TCPA also mentions the “evaporative cooling effects from a matrix of green corridors, smaller open spaces, street trees, and green or living roofs or walls.”

Regional Context

West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG11) 2004

1.155 The regional planning considerations are outlined in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG11). The strategy sets out the fundamental importance of high quality greenspace and greenspace networks in the development of urban communities that are sustainable. The strategy states that the environment plays a big part in the social and economic regeneration. The Strategy has specific policies on:

- Conserving and enhancing the environment (policy QE1)
- Creating high quality built environments(policy QE3)
- Landscapes(policy QE1 &QE6)
- Enhancing Urban Greenspace and Public Space(Policy QE4)
- Historic Environment (Policy QE5)
- Restoring Degraded Land (Policy QE2)
- Increasing Woodland and Forestry (Policy QE8)
- Increasing Bio diversity (Policy QE7)

1.156 The underlying theme to all the policies are:

- To conserve protect and enhance greenspace through strategic planning policies.
- To provide good quality, well managed networks of spaces that are equally well maintained and are valued by local people

Community Improvement

- Regeneration/ Economic Development
- Quality of Life /Healthy Living
- Community Cohesion
- Crime Reduction
- Local Strategic Partnership Targets
- Community Consultation
- Community Safety Strategy (2005-2008)

Strategic Improvement

- Coventry City Corporate Plan (2006-2009)
- Sustainable Communities Strategy
- Play Strategy "Something To Do"
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Cultural Strategy (2004-2010)
- Charging Strategy (Cultural Services) 2007
- Draft Sports Strategy (2004-2010)
- Coventry Heritage Strategy
- Community Cohesion Strategy (2006-2009)

Greenspace Strategy

Strategic Improvement

- Coventry City Development Plan and Core Strategy
- Coventry Local Development Framework
- Regional Bio Diversity Action Plan
- Community Involvement Statement
- Section 106 Agreements
- Supplementary Planning Guidance

Supporting National Bodies

- CABE Space
- Natural England
- Greenspace
- ISPAL
- NPFA
- Civic Trust
- National Leisure Gardens
- Sport England

Supporting Local Bodies

- Community Partnership
- Friends of Parks
- Allotments Societies
- Community Groups

Note: This list is not exhaustive

- Promotes regeneration and significantly improve the image of the area and the health and well being of local people
- The spatial strategy recognises the fact that environmental considerations may prevent development and that on the other hand development can enhance or create new environmental assets
- To ensure a consistent and transparent approach is undertaken in protecting and enhancing facilities, the regions landscape, wildlife habitat and rich diversity

Local Planning and the Local Development Framework

1.157 The Greenspace Strategy links to corporate policy, community objectives and the Local Development Framework and delivers keys objectives from each through the ongoing maintenance and provision of public greenspaces. The objectives of the Greenspace Strategy cannot be achieved in isolation and therefore to optimise the sustainability and effectiveness, the Greenspace Strategy will be delivered in partnership with other agencies and in line with the wider corporate plans and strategies currently being implemented by the city Council.

1.158 The Greenspace Strategy has links with a number of other strategies as shown in the diagram overleaf:

Other Greenspace Policies and Strategies

The Coventry Development Plan 2001-2011

1.159 The Coventry Development Plan is the second Unitary Development Plan for the city of Coventry and will be in place until 2011. This is to be replaced by the Local Development Framework. The plan contains policies and proposals for the physical development and use of land, including measures for the improvement of the environment and management of traffic and takes social and economic factors into account. The vision of the plan is:

‘The development of a prosperous, attractive and vibrant city. One that Provides for the needs of all individuals and communities in a civilised and sustainable manner.’

1.160 The objectives of economic regeneration, social equity and environmental quality in Coventry will be promoted in order to create a regenerated, sustainable and high quality city. These will be achieved by the Coventry Development Plan through:

- The promotion and encouragement of desirable change

- The control of development

1.161 The strategic outcomes are hoped to be:

- A regenerated city
- A sustainable city
- A high quality city

1.162 The plan and relating policies are divided into the following sections:

- Overall Strategy
- Housing
- Shopping
- Built Environment
- Social, Community and Leisure
- Environmental Management
- Economy and Employment
- Access and Movement
- Green Environment
- City Centre

Green Environment

1.163 The policy aim of the green environment chapter is;

‘To provide people with rich, accessible and diverse green spaces, linked to the surrounding countryside where possible, while ensuring effective conservation of wildlife, landscape and natural features as important elements of a clean, healthy and sustainable green environment.’

- There are a number of documents that form Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the plan and 15 policies (GE’s) for green space. The policy also adopts minimum standards for the provision of green space in Coventry these standards are discussed later in this strategy.

Social, Community and Leisure Facilities

1.164 The policy aim of the social, community and leisure chapter is;

‘To promote the continued development of well located social, leisure and community facilities to meet the needs of the Coventry community both locally and city-wide.’

1.165 14 planning policies are listed in the plan relating to social, community and leisure facilities. Policies SCL1, 2, 3, and 5 specifically relate to sport and leisure.

1.166 Coventry Sport and Physical Activity Facility Strategy – July 2006- The aim of the strategy is;

‘To promote active lifestyles and enhance the quality of life for Coventry people through the development of a sustainable network of accessible, high quality sport, recreation and fitness facilities, offering a wide range of activities with opportunities for everybody to participate and to progress to achieve their sporting potential’.

1.167 There are two main objectives of the strategy which are:

- To provide facilities where people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities can get started in sport with access to the right facilities, equipment, coaching and encouragement
- To ensure that facilities are available to meet the particular needs of groups in the city who may experience barriers to becoming involved in sport and fitness activities

1.168 From the assessment undertaken for the strategy, the following issues are identified:

- There is an undersupply of badminton courts
- There is an undersupply of water space of 822m²
- Health and Fitness – undersupply of 654 stations available for ‘pay and play’
- Artificial Turf Pitch provision – oversupply of 0.9 pitches. Local demand must be taken into account
- There is a need to increase access and quality of provision
- There is a need to assess the strategic need and priorities for education based facilities
- Multi Use Games Facilities need to be used more regularly and include access by local schools

Coventry Community Safety Strategy 2005 - 08

Towards a Safer, More Confident City (March 2005)

1.169 The priority themes for this strategy are:

- Reducing crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Offenders
- Reducing the harm of illegal drugs and alcohol
- Cleaner, greener, safer neighbourhoods
- Community cohesion and empowerment
- Children and young people

1.170 The strategy includes:

- The results of Coventry's Community Safety Audit (2004), including a review of how well we have delivered activity from our last strategy
- Detailed chapters giving target outcomes, a programme of proposed activities and key performance indicators
- Information about how the new Strategy will be managed

1.171 The structure of the Community Safety Strategy will necessitate a change in the existing delivery mechanisms of the Community Safety Partnership. Although some existing groups will be retained, other new groups will be established in order to reflect new priorities. These will include alignment with the work of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership, which will be evolved into Coventry's Children's Trust in 2006.

1.172 Under the priority, 'Creating cleaner, greener and safer public spaces - Improving the quality of life for people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods', measures to improve the physical and social environment will include:

- Increasing the speed with which abandoned vehicles are removed from streets
- Use of Domehawk cameras in target areas where anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping problems have been identified.
- Accessing the Liveability Block Grant Scheme to make improvements to vacant and derelict land and property and making Liveability physical improvements to two major parks, small-scale green spaces and Streetscape.
- Development of the AIM approach in order to maximise the effect of the "presence" of capable guardians (representatives of a number of partner agencies who are highly visible and whose functions collectively contribute to promotion of community safety) including street cleaners, grounds maintenance etc.

Corporate Plan 2006/07 - 2008/09 Part One of the Best Value Performance Plan 2006/07 (being replaced by the Sustainable Communities Strategy)

1.173 The Vision for Coventry:

“The Council wants Coventry to be a growing accessible city where people choose to live, work and be educated and businesses choose to invest.”

1.174 Neighbourhood Management is the way in which the Council works to reflect needs and preferences in local neighbourhoods to improve its services and the quality of life of local people. The benefits that Neighbourhood Management is intended to achieve are:

- More joined up services which offer a better customer experience and better use of resources
- Better value for money in Council and partner service delivery
- Delivery of agencies’ service targets and objectives
- Better involvement and engagement of local communities
- Long term quantifiable improvements in quality of life for local people.
- Making Coventry an attractive place to live and visit

Coventry Heritage Strategy

1.175 This Heritage Strategy aims to build on the principles of the Coventry Community Plan and the overall Vision, Themes and Priorities of Coventry’s Cultural Strategy, so that heritage plays a part in the process of regeneration and helps to improve the quality of life for everyone in Coventry. The overall ambition is to “discover, conserve, learn from and celebrate the past in order to inspire a better future for the city and people of Coventry.”

Progress through Prevention (Sustainable Communities Strategy)

1.176 This revised plan is focused on those key issues which now need to be tackled by working together even more closely, locally and with the Government. This plan reflects the fact that more groups and organizations across every sector in Coventry are working together towards common outcomes that are based on shared themes and towards strategic issues

Draft Sports Strategy 2004-2010

1.177 In the context of Coventry's strategy, sport encompasses a broad range of activities including physical education, physical activity, exercise/health and fitness, dance, walking, cycling, outdoor activities, as well as individual and team sports.

1.178 Coventry's Sports Strategy will provide a framework for individuals, groups, organisations and agencies collectively, through productive partnerships; to work together to improve sports opportunities between 2004 and 2010.

1.179 The City Council aim to achieve this through adopting the following themes:

● **Theme 1:** Enabling People to Participate in Cultural and Leisure Activity in Coventry some priorities linking to this study are:

- The network, range, quality and accessibility of cultural and leisure facilities in the community, voluntary, public, faith and commercial sectors
- Creating and signposting routes into and between cultural and leisure activities and opportunities to develop interests and progress to achieve personal and team potential in a chosen activity

● **Theme 2:** The city's Cultural and Leisure Sector supporting the social, economic and physical regeneration of the city One of the Priorities is:

- Safeguarding, maintaining and improving leisure land uses and facilities – green space, built heritage, woodlands, footpaths, biodiversity/wildlife habitats/nature conservation/informal recreation

● **Theme 3:** Producing Excellence and World Class Performance Some priorities linking to this study are:

- Raising standards and quality of cultural and leisure services throughout
- the city to meet the changing needs of citizens, communities, customers and visitors.

1.180 Implementation- This Vision, Themes and Priorities paper is the start. Also, there are, or will be, strategies for the arts, sport, heritage, libraries, performance venues, green space and events. Coventry's Cultural Strategy will be linked to Coventry's new Communities Plan for 2004-2010.

'Something to Do' - Coventry Play Strategy

1.181 The purpose of this Play Strategy is to help Coventry City Council and its partners, develop more and better local and inclusive play spaces and opportunities and to create a more child-friendly public realm. The strategy also aims to improve understanding of the importance of children's play across the range of

policy areas that have an impact on children's lives and to ensure that the city make effective use of funding

- 1.182** The City Council's policy has been to provide a play area with 10 pieces of fixed equipment within half a mile (i.e. 15 minutes walking distance) of all children in the city. Based on the mapping exercise, this aim has been achieved, and with the provision of two planned play areas, it will be achieved. Accessibility is an issue, with only 6.1% of play areas being classed as good.

Community Cohesion Strategy 2006-2009

1.183 A cohesive community is one where there is:

- A common vision and sense of belonging for all communities
- The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds."

1.184 The aim of the strategy is to; ' Develop strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds

The City Council's community cohesion strategy uses the community cohesion framework developed by the Coventry Partnership to:

- Identify and consider together Council strategies and activities that are key to each strategic objective
- Set out how these are being reported and managed
- Identify planned activity and further activity that is required;
- Monitor and manage the collective impact of this activity through a set of key community cohesion indicators.

1.185 This activity is summarised briefly below under general activity and four strategic objectives

- General activity
- Develop a sense of belonging and involvement for all Coventry's communities
- Appreciate and positively value the diversity of Coventry people's backgrounds and circumstances

- Ensure that people from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- Develop strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds

Charging Strategy (Cultural Services) 2007

- 1.186** Previously the focus for leisure, sport and recreation provision within the local authority had been on the provision of sporting facilities and activities, both indoor and outdoors.
- 1.187** In the current climate of increasing health issues around obesity and physical activity interventions, the Local Authority is shifting its focus to the physical activity agenda, and specifically increasing levels of physical activity to reduce health inequalities at ward level.
- 1.188** This supports the drive for this strategy to review market forces and pricing of sports and recreation opportunities, in light of the fact that sport and recreation are relatively small contributors to the overall picture of physical activity.
- 1.189** The priority areas of Coventry have lower participation rates than the rest of the city. The charging strategy seeks to interpret Coventry's vision objectives and values through promoting a pricing structure and approach which will uphold in particular the priority of reducing inequalities and improving quality of life. This includes targeted discounts to those most in need through the city's Passport to Leisure Scheme.

Developer Contributions

- 1.190** A potential major source of future funding is through developer contributions linked with new development of residential, industrial, commercial or retail development. There is real potential to generate both revenue and capital funding for the improvement enhancement or provision of new greenspace or greenspace facilities. Coventry has made use of section 106 agreements but not to the full potential.
- 1.191** If the city is to achieve the full potential for greenspace then section 106 and developer contributions for greenspace need to be strengthened. The best practice model advocated by Sport England is that of Fareham Borough Council. Fareham has adopted a detailed supplementary planning guidance that outlines the required standard and appropriate level of funding required for maintenance. The contribution is based on bed space rather than the number of dwellings.
- 1.192** This strategy will influence changes in the framework for developer contributions in the city.

The Regions Biodiversity Strategy for the West Midlands- Restoring the Regions Wildlife

- 1.193** The document identifies the strategic direction for bio diversity in the West Midlands over the next five years. It identifies five key challenges and their associated actions that will be delivered through a framework that delivers a co-Partnership.
- 1.194** The key challenges include maintaining and improving habitat, species and ecosystems, developing an area approach to wildlife restoration, monitoring habitat, species and ecosystems, integration and reconnecting biodiversity within other environmental, economic and social activity and recognising and coping with the impact of climate change.
- 1.195** The Strategy strives to protect and enhance sites in accordance with international, national, regional and local legislation whilst also meeting land use planning and other legislative obligations. The regional role for biodiversity is significant and three strategies will play a key role in ensuring appropriate coverage of biodiversity in Coventry. The Regional Sustainable Development Framework, the Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Economic Strategy all have a role to play. At the local level biodiversity action plans will set out priorities for local areas. The setting of biodiversity targets is an integral part of the process for developing a biodiversity action plan. The UK BAP contains the national targets for priority habitats at the local and county level it is the LBAP partnerships that have the identified biodiversity targets.

Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan

- 1.196** A number of differing local habitat and species plans have been developed to guide the local management of relevant greenspace types these include:- School Grounds, Churchyards and Cemeteries, Canals, Built Environments, Hedgerows and as such it is important for the Greenspace Strategy to pick up on the objectives in accordance with the LBAPs.

Coventry Walking and Cycling Strategies

- 1.197** The Strategies recognises the role walking and cycling has to play in today's society. The benefits outlined improve the "Liveability" within the city and its associated neighbourhoods, making the streets safer and more vibrant for local people. The strategies also recognise how walking and cycling can contribute to better accessibility, improved job opportunities and education for the majority of Coventry residents and particularly those with limited or no access to a car. Walking contributes to a cleaner city and better quality environment through the reduced need for car trips. It improves health through increasing physical activity.

1.198 The Strategies sets out a range of integrated policies and proposals to ensure that walking and cycling in Coventry is safer, easier and a more attractive option as a mode of travel in and around Coventry

SECTION II

Audit Findings



Green Space in Coventry

Introduction

- 2.1** The audit of greenspace in the city has identified a managed resource of approximately 1670 ha. The resource includes both Council and non-Council land with a range of access from unrestricted open public access to sites controlled by membership or sites where access is by permission only.

Assessing Greenspace Quantity

- 2.2** In order to recognise the differing levels and type of provision the city developed a Parks Strategy in 1996 that classified sites into a hierarchy of provision. For the purpose of this Greenspace Strategy this has been enhanced through categorising the different tiers of the original hierarchy into a Typology for the city in accordance with the guidance developed to support PPG17. The city's provision of open space, sport and outdoor recreation can be classified simply into 6 core Greenspace types and an associated hierarchy within them, as shown in Table 3 below.
- 2.3** This section outlines the provision of greenspace across the city by its primary purpose. It provides detail on the quantity, quality and accessibility by typology and considers the policies and standards for the future management.
- 2.4** The hierarchy of provision developed by the city in conjunction with other agencies and the local community recognises the variety of spaces across the city. These spaces include the city's parks and gardens, greenspaces, woodlands, natural areas and sites that require the development of specific standards such as provision for children and young people.
- 2.5** The objective of the hierarchy is to provide the city with a network of spaces that are accessible to people. The hierarchy will ensure that people have access to a wide range of site from the largest such as the city's premier park and country park down to the smaller spaces provided in new residential areas design. Many sites will contain other types of provision such as the more formal and specific children's fixed play areas or provision for sport such as bowls or tennis, others will provide for specific needs such as allotments, or private sports clubs. What they will have in common is that wherever possible will be linked as part of a greenspace network.
- 2.6** The assessment and subsequent analysis of provision has been undertaken on a city wide and Neighbourhood Area basis. The analysis and standards will allow the Council to benchmark and to make informed decisions about the supply and demand of provision across the city.
- 2.7** In accordance with the PPG17 guidance standards have been set following a robust assessment that considered the quality and quantity of greenspace provision across the city by type.
- 2.8** In order to set local standards existing and previous consultation undertaken with

regards to greenspace has been considered. Further consultation has taken place with key stakeholders, schools, clubs, residents and staff, although response from the latter three have been significantly lower than expected.

- 2.9** The assessment has considered existing policies, strategic documents and national, regional and local policy.
- 2.10** Wherever possible the strategy has benchmarked the findings with other local authorities of a similar size. It has also considered provision against national benchmarks or standards for those types of greenspace provision where such standards exist, such as the Natural England standards for Accessible Natural Greenspace.

Assessing Greenspace Quality

- 2.11** To ensure the Greenspace Strategy complies with PPG17 guidance a quality assessment has been undertaken to the city's greenspaces. The quality audit essentially has four recognised purposes these are:
- To gauge the quality of each site at a given time, through the evaluation of the site infrastructure its condition and quality. The sites are measured in a consistent and objective way and the audit reflects the condition of sites from a visitors perspective
 - To identify site characteristics and features that result in some sites being low quality and to provide information regarding the opportunity for improvement
 - To establish a quality standard for the city's greenspace provision.
 - To identify sites that the Council should protect and those that would benefit from improvement
- 2.12** Quality relates to the range of facilities and physical infrastructure contained within individual sites, the audit considers factors such as accessibility, safety, management, maintenance and overall impression it also considers the presence of fixtures such as benches, bins, gates, signage hedges trees and paths.
- 2.13** Although the audit was primarily driven by PPG17, the information collated will provide the city with a comprehensive overview of the condition of the greenspace provision and will provide a level of management information not previously available. The information will enable the city to make informed decisions with regards to the resources required to undertake improvements in site management and maintenance.
- 2.14** A comprehensive audit of over 500 individual sites has been undertaken based on the variety of greenspace provision across the city. The scores provide a means of comparing sites both by type and within the individual hierarchical tiers that have been developed as part of this Greenspace Strategy. The audit also gives a clear and robust overview of the physical condition of greenspace across the city and

within defined neighbourhoods.

- 2.15** Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit and the completion of a scored proforma. The quality assessment proforma is based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of the Green Flag Programme, ILAM Parks Management Guidance and the Tidy Britain Scheme. The quality assessment results are attached as Appendix 2. The site scores are translated into a percentage and then measured against the quality line rating below:

Quality Line					
0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent

- 2.16** The quality audit provides an indicative rating of quality out of 100%. It is important to note that the quality score represents a “snapshot” in time and records the quality of the site at the time of the visit audit.

Assessing Greenspace Accessibility

- 2.17** An assessment of accessibility has been undertaken to identify the extent to which local residents are able to access the various differing forms of greenspace provision across the city and within recommended distance thresholds. This is based on travel time and travel method to the variety of greenspace provision. These thresholds have been digitally mapped to show the spatial distribution of provision and the distance threshold identified. The maps are contained within the appendices and distance is represented by simple circles (GIS buffers).
- 2.18** The maps represent the city provision and distance thresholds are illustrated for walking and travel by car. They are based on straight line distance and do take into consideration local geography, community area severance.
- 2.19** For certain greenspace types such as natural greenspace and Local Nature Reserves the use of national recommended distance thresholds have been applied as recommended by Natural England, for others the distance thresholds identified within the City Council Unitary Development Plan have been applied.

The Greenspace Resource

Quantity

- 2.20** The Greenspace resource and associated hierarchy of provision is described below from the Large Premier Park to the small incidental greenspace in residential areas. The quantity of provision varies across the typologies and within the hierarchy of greenspace provision.

Table 4 - Quantity of Greenspace

Typology	Hierarchy	Total provision	Provision per 1000 population
Parks and Open Space	Premier Park	49.06	0.16 ha
	Area Park	99.05	0.31 ha
	Neighbourhood Park	78.28	0.26 ha
	Country Park	197.70	0.65 ha
	Principal Open Space	195.92	0.65 ha
	Incidental Open Space	539.13	1.79 ha
	Ornamental Sites	3.97	0.01 ha
Outdoor Sport	Sports Grounds	221.24	0.73 ha
	*Grass Pitches	308.10	1.02 ha
	*Other Outdoor Sport	63.17	0.20 ha
Natural Greenspace	Woodland	165.85	0.60 ha
Provision for Children and Young People	*Provision for Children	7.89	1.08 ha
Allotments	Allotments	115.32	0.38 ha
Churchyards	Churchyards and Cemetery	44.41	0.15 ha

* not included in overall ha per 1000 calculation as they are contained within sites within other recognised tiers.

Existing Policies and Standards

2.21 The City of Coventry Unitary Development Plan UDP (1996-2011) identifies Green Space Standards for the city and the relevant policies contained within the UDP include Policy GE1 as follows:

Policy GE1 Green Environment Strategy

2.22 The policy aim is to provide people with a rich diversity of accessible green space that are linked to surrounding countryside wherever possible, whilst also ensuring effective conservation of wildlife, landscape and natural features.

2.23 Policy GE1 Identifies the Council commitment to working with other agencies and the local community to:

- Protect greenspace
- Enhance the provision and quality of greenspace
- Make greenspace accessible to all sections of the community
- Encourage the appropriate management of greenspace
- Give protection to valuable wildlife habitats and landscape features
- Maintain the Green Belt protecting the Green Wedges and the Arden Countryside from inappropriate development

Existing Standards

2.24 The City Council will employ the following minimum standards for physically accessible and publicly available Green Space in Coventry, based on the previous (1994) Coventry Green Space Strategy, local consultation, the Coventry Parks

Strategy and recommendations by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) and English Nature:

Table 5 – Unitary Development Plan Existing Standards

Type of Provision	UDP Standards	
Outdoor Playing Space	2.4ha total playing space per 1,000 population	0.6-0.8 ha for children’s play per 1,000 population within 400 metres of home
Public Parks and Gardens	0.6-0.8 ha for children’s play per 1,000 population within 400 metres of home	
	a Premier Park for all residents in the City	
	an Area Park providing a broad range of facilities for local people within 800 metres of home	
	a Neighbourhood Park, Principal Open Space or Ornamental Garden within 400metres of home	
	a natural Green Space within 400 metres of home	
Natural Green Space	1 ha of nature reserve (or land of similar nature conservation value) per 1,000 population within 1200 metres of home	
	at least one 20 ha site within 2 kilometres of home;	
	one 100 ha site within 5 kilometres of home	
	and one 500 ha site with 10 kilometres of home	

2.25 The UDP recognises that the standards outlined above do not refer to all the differing kinds of greenspace such as allotments or private areas that may have a value and are thereby protected through policies GE2, GE3 GE4, GE5, GE8 and GE9. These policies will be referred to where they apply to the differing types of space

2.26 The UDP recognises the fact that Greenspace can contribute to more than one category in the standards.

2.27 The natural greenspace standard of one 500 ha site within 10 kilometres of home is not relevant to the provision within the city and needs to be discarded.

Comparison with other authorities

2.28 The purpose of PPG17 assessments of need is to provide an audit of the quantity, quality and accessibility of greenspace in an area and to move away from applying Nationally-led standards of provision in order to establish local standards of

provision based on local needs. Due to the limited response to consultation in the formulation of the strategy, extensive consultation is being undertaken on the proposed standards and draft strategy and executive summary to ensure a robust final strategy which will support the planning process in Coventry.

- 2.29** The importance of the consultation in identifying local needs and satisfaction with the level and extent of provision and the quality and accessibility of sites cannot be stressed enough in the development and setting of local standards that are acceptable and meet local needs.
- 2.30** In order to gauge the levels and extent of provision data and standards of provision from other authorities has been collated to identify how the city is comparing in its greenspace provision. It has proven difficult to collate data from similar sized authorities in terms of population or land holding as Coventry city and as such some generic examples have been gathered.
- 2.31** The city currently has a provision in the region of 1,670 hectares of greenspace provision (this excludes golf courses and Coombe Country Park) which equates to 5.56 hectares of greenspace per 1000 population.
- 2.32** The table below shows how the city compares with a number of other authorities who have published their local standards of provision.

Table 6 – Comparison with Similar Authorities

Local Authority	Overall Provision per 1000
Coventry City Council	5.56 ha per 1000
Chorley Metropolitan Borough Council	10.01 ha per 1000
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	8.00 ha per 1000
Redditch Borough Council	7.40 ha per 1000
North Staffordshire	6.6ha per1000
Oxford City Council	5.75ha per 1000
Walsall Council	4.98 ha per 1000
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	4.90 ha per 1000
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council	4.42 ha per 1000
London Borough of Croydon	4.3ha/1000
Newcastle City Council	3.5 ha per 1000
Staffordshire Moorlands	3.2ha per 1000
London Borough of Southwark	2.6ha/1000
London Borough of Sutton	2.9ha/1000

Local authorities highlighted by bold text above are similar in population size to the city

- 2.33** Where it has been possible to compare or identify provision standards by type these figures are discussed within the relevant sections through out the Strategy. Planning Policy Guidance Note 17(PPG17) advocates the development of local standards of provision, as such this strategy sets standards based on the current levels of provision for each type of greenspace at both city and Neighbourhood levels. The standards are based on the current provision as a starting point and are the minimum required to maintain the character and nature of the city.

Parks and Open Spaces

Introduction

2.34 The city has identified a hierarchy of provision for its parks and open spaces. Within that hierarchy the sites defined as parks and open space (Premier Park, Area Park, Neighbourhood Park, Country Park, Principal Open Space, Incidental Open Space and Ornamental Areas) are important elements of the city's Greenspace. They provide a sense of place for the local community and provide landscape quality to particular dense urban areas of the city.

Quantity

2.35 The larger parks provide a wide range of facilities and are capable of providing space for a large number of activities and people as well as attracting people from outside the city.

Table 7 – Number of Quantity of Provision

Hierarchy	Number of sites	Site Name	Hectares	
Premier Park	1	Memorial Park	49.06	
Area Park	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allesley Park ● Caludon Castle Park ● Holbrook Park ● Longford Park ● Prior Deram Park 	94.16	
Neighbourhood Park	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cash's Park ● Edgwick Park ● Gosford Green ● Gosford Park ● Lake View Park ● Peggys Park ● Quinton Park ● Red House Park ● Sovereign Park ● Spencer Park ● Swanswell Park 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Eastern Green Recreation Ground ● Moat House Farm ● Moseley Avenue Park ● Nauls Mill Park ● Primrose Hill Park ● Radford Recreation Ground ● St Margaret's Park 	65.14
Country Park	1	Coombe Abbey	198.3	
Principal Open Space	51	There are too many to list here examples include Leaf Lane, Hearsall Common, De Montford Way, Wyken Croft, Wyken Slough	195.92	
Incidental Open Space	280	There are too many to list individually here but examples are Clifton Bridge, Hazelbeck Road, Canley Ford, Banner Lane	526.70	
Ornamental Open Space	4	Bird Street Gardens Greyfriars Green, Lady Herbert Gardens, Top Green Park	3.98	

Parks (Premier Park, Area Park, Neighbourhood Park, Country Park)

- 2.36** The parks are freely accessible and open for use by all sections of the local community. Some sites include facilities for sport such as grass pitches, tennis or bowls; others provide fixed play equipment or multi use courts for children and young people. There are 19 fixed play areas, 4 skate areas and 13 multi use games courts located in the sites identified as parks.
- 2.37** Memorial Park has been identified as the city's Premier Park. The park is easily accessible by public transport and is reasonably close to the city Centre. The park is an important part of the city's heritage serving as a memorial to those who gave their lives in wartime. The park has many attractive features and phased improvements will ensure the park provides wider opportunity for Coventry people.
- 2.38** The five area parks were originally selected by the city because of their potential for development into parks that serve a wider community and are sites that could provide a broad range of opportunity for local people. The emphasis of these parks is the community and encouraging involvement to help shape the future of the sites. These parks are well located and are of sufficient size to offer variety.
- 2.39** The area parks vary in size from 9 -37 ha in size with an average size of 18ha.
- 2.40** The neighbourhood parks are sites that are strategically well placed to serve smaller local communities across the city. These sites prove a valuable source of outdoor recreation in otherwise deprived urban inner city areas; the city is keen to work with local communities to develop these sites further as community assets.
- 2.41** The neighbourhood parks have a variety of roles ranging from environmental education, ecological or leisure pursuits such as walking or jogging and play an important role in the everyday quality of life for local people living nearby.
- 2.42** The neighbourhood parks vary in size from 0.8 -22 ha in size with an average size of 3.80 ha.
- 2.43** Coombe Abbey Country Park is situated outside the administrative boundary of the city but provides a very important educational resource that benefit social and community development, the site is the single largest area managed by the city that is freely accessible for local people. The site is also an important wildlife habitat, contributing to the wider biodiversity and species richness of the area.
- 2.44** The larger parks have support from organised community Friends of Parks groups. The groups are at various stages in development and it is important that they are supported and recognised for the important role they will play in engaging the community and bringing the community in.
- 2.45** The consultation revealed that 79% of the respondents see parks as the most important type of greenspace in the city. Local people also see the level of provision of parks in their local area is about right for their needs.
- 2.46** The parks also have provision for outdoor sport such as bowling greens, tennis courts and grass pitches as well as fixed play areas for teenagers and children

2.47 The provision of formal parks(Premier, Area, Neighbourhood and Country park) equates to a provision of approximately 407 hectares, however it is important to recognise that Coombe Abbey Country Park is outside the city administrative boundaries and as such serves a much wider catchment than the city. As such it is not included in the following minimum provision standards.

2.48 The audit has revealed the following in terms of provision of sites classified ‘parks within the hierarchy.

Table 8 – Parks Provision per 1,000 population

Neighbourhood Area	Population	Number of Sites	Hectares	Ha per 1000
North East	104993	9	61.51	0.58
North West	82008	9	72.62	0.88
South	113847	6	74.23	0.65
City Wide	300848	24	208.36	0.69

2.49 The city has a standard of parks provision of 0.69 ha per 1000 population based on 208.36 hectares.(This excludes the Country Park Coombe Abbey as it is outside the city boundaries and as such would skew the provision standard calculations).

2.50 The table above shows that the North West has a higher provision per 1000 population than the city wide minimum standard. The North East Neighbourhood is the least served of the three areas for park provision with a standard of 0.58 ha per 1000. The North East and South falls slightly below the city minimum standard of 0.69ha per 1000

Comparison with other authorities

2.51 Outlined below is an indication of how the city compares to other local authorities who have published the quantitative findings from their PPG17 Assessments.

Table 9 – Provision of Parks per 1,000 population, compared with similar local authority provision

Local Authority	Provision of parks per 1000 population
Coventry City Council	0.69ha
Erewash Borough Council	0.70ha
South Northamptonshire	1.55ha
Northampton	1.8ha
Newcastle City Council	1.0ha
Walsall	1.03ha
Sandwell	0.93ha

2.52 The review of other local authorities showed that many are following similar initiatives by splitting the park provision into similar tiers such as District Park, Neighbourhood Park, and Local Park. The purpose of the PPG17 assessment of greenspace in the city was to establish a provision standard for each type of greenspace and to ensure it reflected the local circumstance rather than national standards. It is important to note that Coventry’s park standard excludes Coombe Country Park, as although managed and owned by Coventry city Council, it is outside the city administrative area. The ha per 1000 figure would be higher if the park was included and this would then have a knock on effect when calculating provision based on population or Neighbourhood Area.

Principal Open Spaces, Incidental Open Space and Ornamental Areas

2.53 The principal open spaces refer to larger tracts of land around the city; these may be smaller parcels of land that are connected to provide a larger greenspace that cuts through several wards or neighbourhoods. In a number of instances these sites are by their very nature not likely to be developed because the site either forms part of the floodplain or has restrictions due to former tipping. A number of sites have a less formal maintenance regime to minimise maintenance resources.

2.54 As and when resources become available a focus will be to increase woodland areas and to improve infrastructure provision within these sites. Incidental open spaces are the small pockets of open space within residential areas that are maintained to minimum standards to ensure cleanliness and safety. The Ornamental Areas identified as part of the parks and open space hierarchy are considered as important heritage landmarks for the city and they contribute to the city as a tourist venue. Horticultural elements include shrub and bedding plants. They also provide areas for quiet contemplation for workers in lunch breaks and people wanting to simply sit in a pleasant and attractive environment.

2.55 The table below identifies the provision of principal open space, Incidental open space and ornamental areas across the city. It is important to recognise that these sites may address the shortfalls identified above in the provision standards for parks when considered at a Neighbourhood Area level. It is also important to recognise that a number of these sites are managed as or contain accessible natural and semi natural greenspaces. (These are discussed later in the strategy).

Table 10 – Provision of Principal Open Space, Incidental Open Space and Ornamental Areas per 1,000 population

Neighbourhood Area	Population	Number of sites	Hectares	Ha per 1000 population
North East	104993	109	177.21	1.68
North West	82008	72	100.38	1.22
South	113847	128	449.01	3.94
City wide	300848	309	726.6	2.44

2.56 The table above shows the city to have a combined standard of 244 per 1000 for principal open space, incidental open space and ornamental areas. There is a variance in the level of provision across the city when considered at the neighbourhood area level. From the table the South neighbourhood area has over 62% of the total provision and is the above the city wide standard, whereas the North West and the North East are below the city's minimum standard.

2.57 The table below identifies the provision of principal open space, incidental open space and ornamental areas at city and Neighbourhood Area levels. These figures can be used to guide the future provision within the city. The levels of provision may also go some way to addressing deficiencies of parks in the neighbourhood areas or at the ward level

Table 11 – Provision per 1,000 population by sub-type and Neighbourhood Area

Neighbourhood Area	Population	Principal Open Space		Incidental Open Space		Ornamental Area	
		Hectares	Ha per 1000	Hectares	Ha per 1000	Hectares	Ha per 1000
North East	104993	52.92	0.50	123.78	1.18	-	-
North West	82008	41.05	0.50	57.12	0.69	2.21	0.02
South	113847	101.95	0.89	357.72	3.1	1.76	0.01
City wide	300848	195.92	0.65	526.70	1.79	3.97	0.01

2.58 The principal and incidental open space distribution contributes to the greening of the city and enhances the appearance of local neighbourhood whilst providing informal play space for local children and young people. The city approach has been to try wherever possible to link these sites to create larger more valuable usable spaces.

2.59 The future proposed standards of provision will be

- Parks 0.69 ha per 1000 with a minimum size for new provision of 4.12 for neighbourhood parks and 16.5 ha for Area Parks ha based on the current average sizes within the hierarchy
- Principal Open Space 0.65 ha per 1000 with a minimum size for future provision of 5.57 ha based on the average size of current provision
- Incidental Open Space 1.79 ha per 1000 with a minimum size of 0.3 ha – in accordance with Sport England size threshold for mini soccer pitches

2.60 Researching provision in other local authorities shows that for equivalent open space provision that serves a similar purpose to the city's principal and incidental open space they have set standards as identified in the table below

Table 12 – Provision of Amenity Open Space per 1,000 population compared with other local authorities

Local Authority	Provision of Open Space
Coventry City Council	0.69ha(Principal and Incidental open space combined)
Erewash Borough Council	1.00ha
South Northamptonshire	1.10ha
Northampton	1.07ha
Newcastle City Council	1.40ha
Walsall	0.48ha
Sandwell	0.78ha

Existing Policies

- 2.61** Principal open spaces form part of the city’s green corridor network and as such support policies GE2 and GE3 in the UDP. Policy GE2 supports a network of greenspace enhancement sites being developed in partnership with a range of organisations to improve environmental quality; these include Nature Reserves, Community Woodlands, wetlands and river corridors. Policy GE3 states that a network of greenspace corridors will be protected and encouraged across the city for amenity, access to open countryside, outdoor sport and recreation, environmental education and landscape and nature conservation. They include wetlands, river corridors and linear open spaces. Some principal open spaces are designated as open space or are important protected nature conservation areas others certainly when linked together form large linear corridors that meet policy GE2 and GE3 description.
- 2.62** The management of these spaces is primarily through the City Council with very few publicly accessible sites being under the management of outside agencies.
- 2.63** Incidental open spaces are the small pockets of open space within residential areas that are maintained to minimum standards to ensure cleanliness and safety. For the purpose of this Greenspace Strategy sites above 0.1 hectares have been considered. PPG17 guidance stipulates that sites above 0.2 ha should be considered.
- 2.64** However it was felt that this threshold would not best fit the greenspace provision in Coventry and by going down to 0.1 ha would allow for sites that provide a very important local level resource for the communities to be recognised, as such Policies GE8 and GE9 in the UDP support the provision of such sites. Policy GE8 (control over development in urban greenspace) refers to urban greenspace as any area of open land or water not designated as Green Belt with value for amenity, outdoor sport and recreation, they can be developed only if development would lead to enhancement or compensatory measures. Policy GE9 refers to new levels of provision in new housing developments outside the city centre.
- 2.65** The cost of maintaining smaller greenspaces across the city is high, sites may be subject to fly-tipping or litter and the Council cannot always respond to all the

issues that occur. There is a need to provide fewer but larger sites and to review sites that fall below 0.1 -0.2 Ha

2.66 At present the lower tiers of the parks and open space hierarchy (namely the Incidental spaces) provide little opportunity in the management and future development by the local community. Schemes may have started with the best intentions but have proven not to be sustainable and it is important at the neighbourhood area level to ensure communities are given the support to build confidence and ownership over sites.

2.67 From consultation with Council officers it is recognised that sites suffer as a consequence of inappropriate levels of maintenance and funding. With years of under-resourcing now beginning to take its toll on the infrastructure of sites. The consultation with local people and Council staff who live in the city identified that 60% of the respondents do not make use of the amenity greenspaces near to where they live.

Quality

2.68 Site audits were undertaken to the city’s parks, the quality audit provides an indicative rating of quality out of 100%. It is important to note that the quality score represents a “snapshot” in time and records the quality of the site at the time of the visit audit

2.69 The overall quality findings from the site audits are outlined below

Table 13 – Quality ratings of Parks

Hierarchy	Quality Range	Quality Average	Quality Rating
Premier Park	71%	71%	Very Good
Area Park	14%-67%	50%	Good
Neighbourhood Park	30%-59%	49%	Good
Country Park	77%	77%	Excellent
Principal Open Space	27%-57%	40%	Average
Incidental Open Space	5%-77%	43%	Average
Ornamental Areas	63%-74%	70%	Very Good

2.70 The quality audit has demonstrated a significant variance in the quality of sites within the hierarchy of parks and open space. What is reassuring is the Council measures to develop and improve the city’s larger parks and particularly Memorial Park appears to be working with the site being rated very good. The Councils’ other flagship site Coombe Country Park was rated as Excellent. This is in keeping with the sites status as a Green Flag Award winning park.

2.71 The city’s area and neighbourhood parks where also found to be to a good standard. It is important to recognise that several sites identified as neighbourhood

or area parks fell below a good standard and these sites will need to be prioritised for future improvement.

2.72 The table overleaf identifies the quality of sites identified as Area and Neighbourhood Parks within the hierarchy at the Neighbourhood Area level and compares it with the quality citywide.

Table 14 – Quality Rating of Parks by sub-type and Neighbourhood Area

Neighbourhood Area	Area Parks			Neighbourhood Parks		
	Quality Range	Average	Quality Rating	Quality Range	Average	Quality Rating
North East	60%-67%	64%	Very Good	30%-50%	43%	Average
North West	61%	61%	Good	41%-59%	51%	Good
South	37%-62%	49%	Good	50%-55%	52%	Good
City Wide	37%-67%	57%	Good	30%-59%	49%	Good

2.73 The table shows a significant variance in the overall quality of both area parks and neighbourhood parks and although the quality ratings average out to good or above for all but the neighbourhood parks in the North East Area there are a number of these key sites that fall below the city wide averages (57% for area parks and 49% for neighbourhood parks).

2.74 It is proposed to combine the average scores for area and neighbourhood parks to establish a new quality standard for the city for parks .The recommended standard is therefore 50%(good) The average score is the minimum that sites should be maintained to in the future.

2.75 The sites that fall below this city standard are:

- Quinton Park
- Cash’s Park
- Moat House Park
- Peggy’s Park
- Primrose Hill Park
- Pior Deram Park
- Lake View Park
- Moseley Avenue Park
- Gosford Green
- Radford Recreation Ground
- St Margaret’s Park

2.76 Factors that affect the quality of the sites included 3 parks having no signage, no contact detail or site name, 1 site had no litter bins, 2 sites lacked seating and 6 sites had no form of lighting.

2.77 The principal and incidental open spaces rated as average in terms of quality when measured against the quality value line. A number of sites(51%) fell below this average threshold and these sites need to be considered at the local level with priorities given to the worst sites considering what the factors are that affect the sites quality. For example it may be the site is a through route to a local school and

as such suffers from litter problems and as a consequence either needs more litter bins or a targeted litter campaign at the school to raise awareness to provide equal access to local people to safe, clean and well maintained sites at a local level.

- 2.78** The audit revealed that 180 sites had no litter bin, 144 sites had no form of signage to identify the site or to let people know who to contact, and 238 sites had no seating. On a positive note the sites are generally litter free with only 4 sites scoring less than 10 out of a possible 20 marks for cleanliness, 3 of the sites are in the North East Area(Foleshill Ward)
- 2.79** These sites are more likely to be sites where children and young people play on a regular basis due to them being the sites located near to where they live. As such it is important that they are kept safe and clean.
- 2.80** The factors that affected the quality of the principal open spaces are lack of seating (68% of the site lacked any form of seating), lack of signage (43% of site lacked signage or signage did not contain basic information such as site name, ownership or contact detail), and 18% lacked any litter bins. However the site did appear to be relatively clean and free from litter with the sites averaging 16 out of a possible 20 (80%) for cleanliness.
- 2.81** The audit revealed that the incidental and principal open spaces varied from very formal areas to very informal semi natural greenspaces that promoted wildlife habitat and as such are managed and maintained in a different manner. It is important that these sites are maintained to high standards to protect and sustain the habitats within them and to also ensure they are safe, clean and usable by local people.
- 2.82** The city's ornamental sites rated on average as very good with consistent high scores all within the very good range. These sites are important to the image of the city for visitors and tourists and the quality reflects their importance.
- 2.83** In setting standards for the quality of parks and open space across the city it is important to recognise that it will not always be possible to achieve all aspects of the standards in relation to existing provision primarily due to limited resources. Therefore standards of quality vary within the different tiers of provision, the standards set are challenging but realistic and achievable and the Council will strive to achieve them as a minimum wherever practicable.
- 2.84** The consultation revealed that local people overall are satisfied with the quality of parks and open space across the city. The main issues raised relate to safety, cleanliness, upkeep and facilities.

Accessibility

- 2.85** For the purpose of this strategy accessibility is based on distance thresholds identified through public consultation and through existing thresholds identified within the Council's planning policy documents such as the UDP. National guidance identifies that the average walking speed in the UK is 3 miles per hour and

research undertaken by the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) states that actual distance should be reduced by 40% to recognise that fact that routes to open space are not straight line distances.

2.86 The standards identified in the current UDP are:

- Area park 800m from home
- Neighbourhood park, principal open space or ornamental garden 400m from home

2.87 The accessibility thresholds have recognised the classification of sites and the associated hierarchy of provision. The standards reflect the fact that open spaces serve catchment areas that is varied according to the size and nature of the site.

2.88 The hierarchy put forward as part of this Strategy is based on the Council’s existing approach and has been adopted in considering provision across the city and Neighbourhood Areas. The hierarchy accessibility thresholds have been modified in accordance with best practice and national guidance and are set out below.

2.89 Accessibility has been assessed by plotting the classifications used in the hierarchy and associated thresholds onto the digital mapping data. The accessibility thresholds are outlined below;

Table 15 – Parks Accessibility Thresholds

Type of Open Space	Accessibility Threshold	Source
Premier Park / Country Park/ Area Park greater than 20 ha	2000m	English Nature Accessible Natural Greenspace
Area Park 2-20 ha Neighbourhood Park Principal Open	800m 400m	Local Plan Local Plan
Space Incidental Open Space	400m	Local Plan(Children’s Play is taken as meaning a play space)

2.90 Accessibility has been assessed using a variety of techniques including mapping exercises and consultation. The key findings show that:

- 79% of respondents to the residents survey stated that formal open space(parks and gardens) are the most important type of open space
- 90% of respondents see parks and gardens as being important to them
- 52% of respondents believe that the level of provision of formal open space is about right for where they live
- 32% of local people use parks and gardens on a weekly basis
- 60% of respondents to the resident survey stated they do not make use of the amenity greenspace provided in their area. Although 86% of respondents valued having amenity spaces close to where they live

- 36% of those who responded felt they had enough amenity space in their local area
- The most common reasons provided as a barrier to the use of Amenity Open Space were dog fouling, vandalism and anti-social behaviour

Standards:

Quantity

- 2.91** There are marked differences in the level of provision across the city and the perception from the public identified through the limited consultation response is that people think they have enough parks and open space in their local area. The standards have been set using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.

Standard for Parks

The quantity standard for parks should be 0.69 hectares per 1000 population

Standard for Open Space(Principal Open Space, Incidental Open Space, Ornamental Areas):

The combined quantity standard should be 2.44 hectares per 1000 population
Broken down as

Principal Open Space Provision standards should be 0.69 hectares per 1000 population

Incidental Open Space standards should be 1.79 hectare per 1000 population

Ornamental Areas standards should be 0.01 hectares per 1000 population

Quality

- 2.92** The quality of the city's premier park and country park should be to Green Flag Award Standards and needs to sustain the combined current quality rating of 74% Very Good. Coombe Abbey Country Park is a Green Flag Award winning Park. The Quality of area and neighbourhood parks should be to quality rating between 46% - 60%

Standard

The appropriate quality score for the Premier and Country Park should be to Green Flag Award Standard

The appropriate quality score for Area Parks and Neighbourhood Parks should be 50% and a quality rating of Good.

The standard for Open Space should be between 46%- 60%

Accessibility

- 2.93** The aim of an access standard is to ensure that local people have access to good quality spaces and ideally everyone should be within the catchment for each tier within the hierarchy

Standard

Parks above 20ha in size within a travel distance threshold of 2000m

Area Parks 2-20 ha in size within a travel distance threshold of 800m

Neighbourhood parks and Principal Open Space within a travel distance threshold of 400m

Incidental Open Space or an Ornamental Area within a travel distance threshold of 400m

Deficiencies:

Quantity

- 2.94** The standard has identified deficiencies of parks in the North West and South Neighbourhood Area and deficiencies of principal open space and incidental open space in the North East and North West Area. The deficiencies are most marked in the more rural North West Neighbourhood Area.

Quality

- 2.95** The city's Premier Park and Country Park have both been quality rated and found to be above the required quality standard for the Green Flag Award. Whilst the Green Flag Award judging process is not just a measure of quality the quality assessment result shows that in terms of the maintenance of the park it is achieving the standard.
- 2.96** The sites that fall below a 50% standard will need to be improved to ensure people have equal access to good quality facilities

Accessibility

- 2.97** The areas with the greatest accessibility issues for area and neighbourhood parks and principal or incidental open space are the rural areas of the North West Area with marked accessibility issues in Bablake Ward, and Woodlands Ward. The Counden Wedge and the wider rights of way network may serve to meet these deficiencies. There are also accessibility deficiencies in the North East Neighbourhood Area in Upper Stoke and Longford Ward and in the South Area in Westwood Ward and Earlsdon Ward. However these deficiencies are slightly reduced when adding the larger parks (Premier Park. Country Park and Area Parks over 20 ha) reducing the deficiency to Bablake Ward and Woodlands Ward in the North East and Upper Stoke Ward and Holbrook Ward in the North East.

Woodlands

Introduction

2.98 It is widely understood that sites of a natural or semi natural nature that are accessible enhance the quality of life for people. The wildlife and bio-diversity benefits that these sites also contribute are often neglected. Bio- diversity is important to the quality of the air that people breathe, to the richness in variety of species in an area and as an indicator of the health and quality of a local environment. These areas not only have benefits in terms of biodiversity they can also be valuable to local economies and as a tourist asset.

2.99 Over the last 50 years the UK has seen an unprecedented loss of species of both plants and animals.

Planning Policy.

2.100 One particular type of natural greenspace has been singled out within the hierarchy of greenspace in the city that being Woodland. Clearly other types of natural and semi natural greenspaces exist throughout the city and they are intrinsically linked to form part of other tiers within the hierarchy such as principal open space or incidental open space.

2.101 The reason Woodlands are a separate tier within the overall hierarchy is to ensure they are conserved and preserved for future generations. The Council aim to ensure a balance is struck between conservation of the natural environment and providing opportunities for recreation and relaxation.

Table 16 - Coventry Woodland Provision

Hierarchy	Site
Woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Binley Little Wood ● Cash's Spinney ● Coundon Community Woodland ● Hearsall Common Wood ● Kenilworth Road Woods ● Limbrick Wood ● Park Wood ● Pig Wood ● Plant Hill Wood ● Rectory Spinney ● Stivichall Common ● Ten Shilling Wood ● The Jordans Spinney ● Tile Hill Wood Nature Reserve ● Tocil Wood ● Wainbody Wood ● Willenhall Wood

2.102 The city Council own and actively manage the woodland sites within the city Boundary. Over 150 hectares of the identified woodlands are ancient or semi natural woodland or replanted ancient woodland sites. There many more other natural and semi natural greenspaces in the city and these form part of the principal open spaces and incidental open spaces

2.103 The majority of the woodlands are also designated Local Nature Reserves (LNR's) others such as Tile Hill Wood are also Sites of Special Scientific Interest(SSSI) due to it having a rich diversity of flora representing the local 'Arden' type woodland.

2.104 The table below identifies the distribution of identified woodlands across the city. There are 165.85ha of designated woodland sites identified

Table 17 – Quantity of Woodland

Neighbourhood Area	Population	Site Name	Total No. of Sites	Size in Ha	Total Ha
North East	103568	Cash's Spinney	1	0.55	0.55
North West	82008	Coundon Community Woodland Hearsall Common Wood Limbrick Avenue Wood Pig Wood The Jordans Spinney Tile Hill Wood Nature Reserve	6	3.38 8.04 9.46 5.66 0.24 29.51	56.29
South	113847	Binley Little Wood Kennilworth Road Spinney Park Wood Plants Hill Wood Stivichall Common Stonebridge Highway Spinney Ten Shilling Wood Tocil Wood Wainbody Wood Willenhall Wood	10	2.69 19.79 20.74 9.39 23.77 1.34 4.87 4.40 12.11 9.91	109.01
City Total	300848		17		165.85

2.105 The woodland sites provide 0.55ha per 1000 population.

2.106 The woodland provision is mostly located in the south or south west of the city and was formerly part of the large Stoneleigh Estate. Many were subsequently purchased by the city in the 1920's for the benefit of the people of the city.

Existing Policy

2.107 The Council Green Environment Strategy contained within the UDP recognises the importance of natural and semi natural greenspace. The policies are aimed at conservation and protection whilst allowing the resources to be accessible and enjoyed by local people. Policy GE11 Protection of Sites of Scientific Interest(SSSI), Local Nature Reserves and Coventry Nature Conservation Sites, GE 12 Protection of Other Sites of Nature Conservation Value, Policy GE 13 Species Protection, GE14 Protection of Landscape Features and Policy GE15 Designing New Development to Accommodate Wildlife:

- **GE11 Protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest**, Local Nature Reserves and Coventry Nature Conservation Sites. Proposals which would have an adverse impact on any of these sites will not be permitted.
- **GE 12: Protection of Other Sites of Nature Conservation Value**-Proposals for development on other sites having a significant nature conservation value, and not allocated or retained for development, will be permitted only if the benefits of the development on that site clearly outweigh the extent of ecological harm likely to be caused. In such cases developers will be required to reduce, offset or compensate for such harm to the fullest practicable extent compatible with the character of the development proposed.
- **GE 13: Species Protection Proposals**, which would have an adverse effect on protected species will not be permitted except where: the survival of the species can be ensured on the site; or adequate alternative habitats to sustain at least the current levels of populations are provided.
- **GE 14: Protection of Landscape** features important landscape features of value to the amenity or history of a locality, including mature woodlands, trees, hedgerows, ridge and furrow meadows and ponds, will be protected against unnecessary loss or damage
- **GE 15: Designing New Development to Accommodate Wildlife** -The design and maintenance of new development should preserve and enhance existing elements of nature conservation importance and add new habitat by :retaining important natural features and wildlife habitats as an integral part of the development; offsetting the removal of wildlife habitats; Incorporating new habitat features attractive to wildlife; incorporating a high proportion of appropriate native vegetation in any landscaping scheme, except where special requirements dictate otherwise; incorporating the maximum area of permeable ground surface; taking into account the nature conservation value of adjoining land; and protecting all retained natural features and wildlife habitats during construction work

Source The Coventry Development Plan 2001(The city of Coventry Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011)

2.108 The policies within the UDP refer to sites of differing ecological importance and value. The city has limited number of important geological or biological sites that are protected under legislation from the Secretary of State.

2.109 The sites in question are Tiles Hill Wood and Herald Way Marsh, both of which have been designated as biological SSSI's, Webster's Clay pit has been designated a geological SSSI. Coombe Abbey Country Park is also a designated SSSI.

2.110 The rich diversity of sites goes beyond the statutory sites, the city has a range of sites that support uncommon plants and animals or support important natural feature such as rivers or rock outcrops all of which help in safeguarding biodiversity. The city has identified 49 sites that are considered to be of sufficient value to be considered for the non statutory local designation Coventry Nature Conservation Site (CNCS). 45 of the sites have been fully classed as CNCS whilst four remain partially designated due to the potential value for development outweighing the nature conservation importance.

Quality: Woodlands

2.111 Quality inspections have been undertaken via a site visit and completion of a scored proforma. From the quantity audit above

Table 18 – Quality of Woodlands

Hierarchy	Quality Range	Average Quality	Quality Rating
Woodlands	21%-69%	39%	Average

2.112 The quality audit has revealed a significant variance in the quality of woodlands across the city and on an area basis.

Table 19 – Quality Range of Woodlands by Area

Neighbourhood Area	Quality Range	Average Quality	Quality Rating
North East	42%	42%	Average
North West	21%-69%	42%	Average
South	23%-60%	37%	Average

- The average quality across the city is 39% this gives the city's woodlands a quality line rating of 'Average'
- The City Quality range for woodlands varied from 21% (Poor) to 69% (Very Good)
- The site that rated highest in terms of quality is Coundon Community Woodland in Bablake Ward(North West Area)

2.113 Table 20 identifies the individual woodland site quality

2.114 The quality audit found that only four of the identified woodlands had information panels, only 2 sites had benches. Of the 17 identified sites 35% had no signage with the name of site, contact details or any information regarding ownership. These elements are important and do affect the overall quality score of sites. On a

positive note the site audit found the sites to be clean and free from litter despite the lack of litter bins.

2.115 In general the city should aspire to deliver sites that are to a ‘Good’ quality rating, this is important for this tier of the hierarchy of provision as many of the identified woodlands are also designated Local Nature Reserves. The Woodlands are managed and promoted to encourage wildlife and provide a valuable educational resource for local people.

Table 20 – Quality ratings of individual sites

Neighbourhood Area	Name	OS_Quality	Quality Rating
North East	Cash's Spinney	42%	Average
North West	Coundon Community Woodland	69%	Very Good
	Hearsall Common Wood	40%	Average
	Limbrick Avenue Wood	51%	Good
	Pig Wood	46%	Good
	The Jordans Spinney	21%	Poor
	Tile Hill Wood Nature Reserve	25%	Poor
South	Binley Little Wood	44%	Average
	Kennilworth Road Spinney	N/a	N/a
	Park Wood	60%	Good
	Plants Hill Wood	57%	Good
	Stivichall Common	24%	Poor
	Stonebridge Highway Spinney	23%	Poor
	Ten Shilling Wood	49%	Good
	Tocil Wood	34%	Average
	Wainbody Wood	42%	Average
	Willenhall Wood	42%	Average
City Average		39%	Average

2.116 When considering the quality of sites in this typology best practice dictates that these sites are tremendously beneficial to people and their well being as such they should as a minimal provide benches, bins and signage to enhance the visitors experience and to demonstrate ownership and management.

2.117 Generally minor improvements to the infrastructure of sites within this typology would make significant differences, better maintenance; regular painting programmes and quick response times to repairs would all change the overall visitor's impression.

Accessible Natural Greenspace

2.118 The last 50 years has seen an unprecedented loss of wild plants and animals throughout the UK. Planning Policy Statement PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological

Conservation sets out national policy for protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system. The key principles are to protect and enhance or to compensate for harm, whilst also preventing further fragmentation of these resources.

2.119 It is important to recognise that woodlands and Local Nature Reserves are not the only form of natural and semi natural greenspace in the city and that many sites are managed and maintained to promote wildlife and access to nature close to where people live. Many of these sites are classified within other tiers in the green space hierarchy such as principal open space or incidental open space.

2.120 The hierarchy of provision does not separate the natural greenspace sites out from the tiers of provision such as principal open space or incidental openspace. It was obvious from the quality audit that sites are managed to promote wildlife and provide local people with access to nature. The table below identifies the number and hectares of land categorised as principal or incidental open space that is maintained as accessible natural or semi natural greenspace.

Table 21 – Accessible Greenspace

Neighbourhood Area	Population	Number of Sites	Total Ha	Ha per 1000
North East	104993	10	33.49	0.31
North West	82008	20	41.63	0.50
South	113847	33	285.86	2.5
City Total	300848	63	360.98	1.19

2.121 The audit revealed that 63 sites (360.98 hectares) within the tiers of principal open space and incidental open space are managed as natural or semi natural greenspaces. If these are included with the 165.854ha of identified woodlands as being accessible natural greenspace then the city has a provision of natural and semi natural greenspaces that occupy 526.83 ha. This equates to a provision of 1.75 ha per 1000 population.

2.122 The quality of these sites is already covered within the audit findings for principal and incidental open space but to summarise the findings specifically for sites maintained as natural greenspaces

- The average quality of sites considered as accessible natural greenspace is 30% which equates to a rating of ‘Poor’
- 46% of sites were found to have no signage, 69% of sites have no bins, 83% have no bin
- Sites in the North East Area had a quality range between 30% (Poor) to 51%(Good) and an overall average of 34% (Average)
- Sites in the North West Area had a quality range between 19%(Poor) and 36%(Average) and an overall average of 28% (Poor)

- Sites in the South had a quality range between 11% (Very Poor) and 49% (Good) with an overall average of 29% (Poor)

Strategic Green Routes/ Connectivity of the Greenspace infrastructure

- 2.123** Green infrastructure is the physical environment between the city its towns and villages. It is a network of space that serves multi functional purpose and it includes the hierarchy of spaces identified it also includes public rights of way, waterways, street trees and open countryside. Green routes link residential areas to other urban areas as well as to the wider countryside.
- 2.124** It is important to emphasise that greenspaces are not single entities and that they form part of a much wider network of greenspaces. The benefits of linking spaces together are immense for people, wildlife and the sustainable image of the city.
- 2.125** Coventry has a wide and diverse range of public paths, canal towpath, parks and urban routes and Bridle path the city has:
- 400 public rights of way
 - Canal path
 - 86.2km of cycle routes
- 2.126** The city's walking and cycling strategies aim to improve the convenience and accessibility of walking and cycling. There are currently 39km of signed off road cycle paths, 14km of signed (directional signs only) routes on the carriageway, 7km of on road cycle lanes, 13.5km of bridleways (cycling permitted) and 12km of bus lanes (cycling permitted).
- 2.127** The city's public rights of way improvement plan recognises the importance of getting the basics right if the network is to prove a valuable asset. The improvement plan recognises the need to improve path surfaces.
- 2.128** The Council also undertook a Public Paths Survey which identified that 79% of the respondents use public pathways in parks and open space within Coventry, 52% use pathways in the Countryside (Public Rights of Way) and 39% use the path network to access parks and countryside sites in other counties. Only a small percentage of participants (3%) identified not using the public path network/ 47% stated they are satisfied with the level of provision of public pathways in Coventry.
- 2.129** Form the Consultation the following is relevant to gauging local opinion with regards to natural greenspace in Coventry:
- 32% of respondents will travel along public paths for 2-5 miles to access parks or countryside
 - 46% walk to the paths, 35% will drive 8% cycle,2% use the bus service, 2% ravel by motorbike1% travel by wheelchair or on horseback to the public paths they use

- 82% use the path network to access the countryside or woodland, 80% to visit parks and open space, 58% to gain access to nature, wildlife or simple enjoyment.
- 78% of respondents identified using the path network simply to go walking, 62% of respondents to keep fit, get exercise or for health walks

2.130 Local people were also asked to specify the quality, personal safety and barriers to use of paths in parks and open spaces:

- Quality- 53% of respondents believe the paths in parks and open spaces are in a poor condition and 54% of respondents believe the paths are poorly surfaced.
- Personal Safety- 46% of respondents stated they feel safe when using pathways in parks and open spaces
- 46% of respondents stated they are not put off from using paths in parks and open space due to motorbikes, 44% are not put off use because of gangs of young people
- 35% stated they would make more use of sites if there were more wardens, 59% stated that better lighting would mean that they personally would make more use of paths in parks and open spaces, 60% stated improved quality would equate to more use, 41% want to see more places to sit and rest

2.131 The green routes provide a number of benefits that include allowing people access to the wider network and variety of spaces across the city; they encourage walking and cycling opportunities and provide migratory passages for wildlife.

2.132 The city Council is currently pursuing and developing the following initiatives that all contribute to improving and developing the network of green routes:

- Safer routes to schools
- Green Infrastructure Plan
- Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Cycle and Walking network

2.133 The Green Infrastructure Plan is a separate Strategy being developed by the city Council in 2008 and it will ensure that the strategic green links are :

- Enhanced and protected
- Well maintained
- Improved in terms of links between cycleway, Rights of Way and the greenspace
- Properly signposted
- Easily accessible

2.134 It is important to recognise the importance of the Green links and green infrastructure within this Greenspace Strategy, however the city is developing a separate strategy and as such they are not considered further in this strategy.

Local Nature Reserves (LNR's)

2.135 In assessing natural and semi natural greenspace, consideration has been given to Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards. Natural England present a number of recommendations in relation to provision levels, specifically:

- No person should live more than 300m from their nearest area of natural greenspace of at least 2ha in size
- Provision of 1ha of Local Nature Reserve per 1000 population
- There should be one 20ha natural greenspace within 2km from peoples homes

2.136 LNR's in the city were all declared in 1987 as part of the city's improvement and management of the Sowe Valley. Natural England has identified 14 designated Local Nature Reserves across the city. The LNR'S occupy 202.42 ha of land, several are stand alone sites and other are an integral part of a larger site such as Stonebridge Meadows which forms part of the A444 open space and Stoke Floods which is part of the River Sowe open space. The majority of sites designated as LNR are the woodland sites discussed earlier.

2.137 Assessment against Natural England Standards of Provision (encompassing woodland, natural greenspace sites). Initial findings reveal that:

- There are shortfalls across Coventry against the standards set by Natural England.
- It is important to recognise that the Accessible Natural Greenspace standards are very much set for urban areas and do not consider the role the wider countryside plays in compensating for this deficiency. Bablake is primarily a rural area and as such people are overall surrounded by countryside. It is also important to recognise that other sites such as principal open spaces or sites classed as incidental open space provide elements of natural or semi natural greenspace within them.

2.138 The total area of Local Nature Reserves in the city is 202.24 ha. Natural England standards identify 1 ha of LNR per 1000 population, which equals a requirement of 300 ha for the city. Therefore the city has a shortfall of 100 ha of Local Nature Reserve provision. However it is important to recognise that the city also has Coombe Abbey Country Park which serves to provide the people of Coventry with a countryside experience, and although not designated as a LNR the park does host a wide and rich variety of habitat.

Accessibility

2.139 Accessibility has been assessed using a variety of techniques including mapping exercises and consultation. The key findings show that:

- Respondents to the residents survey stated that natural and semi natural greenspaces and Local Nature Reserves (95% of respondents), are important to them 93% of respondents stated that green corridors are important and 84% identified greenbelt land as important to them
- 59% of respondents believe that the level of provision of natural and semi natural greenspace is about right for where they live

- Most respondents identified using natural and semi natural greenspaces(39%), green corridors (42%), Local Nature Reserves(61%) and greenbelt land 38% on an occasional basis
- The average acceptable travel time to natural and semi natural greenspace is 14 minutes
- 48%% of the respondents to the survey visit natural green space sites and 54% identified that thy travel by car
- 47% of local people rate the quality of the site they visit most as being Good
- The most common reasons given as a barrier to use of greenspace in Coventry is vandalism, gangs of young people, anti social behaviour and not feeling safe

Standards:

Quantity

2.140 There are marked differences in the level of provision across the city of Woodlands and sites managed within parks and open space tiers as accessible natural greenspace. English Nature Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards have been recognised and adapted by the Council. The standards have been set using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.

Standard

1.75 Ha per 1000 population of accessible natural greenspace according to a system of tiers into which the different sizes will fit

A natural greenspace within 300 m of home
 One accessible 20 ha site within 2km of home
 One 100 ha site within 5 km of home

Quality

2.141 The quality of the natural greenspace sites across the city should be to a good standard as a minimum. It is important that these sites are maintained to a good standard to ensure their long term sustainability for future generations.

Standard

The standard for designated Local Nature Reserves should be between 46%-60% or Good
 The standard for accessible natural greenspace should be between 46% 60% or Good

Accessibility

- 2.142** The aim of an access standard is to ensure that local people have access to good quality spaces and ideally everyone should be within the catchment for each tier within the hierarchy

Standard

No Person should live more than 300 metres from their nearest natural greenspace

One accessible 20 ha site within 2km of home

One 100 ha site within 5 km of home

One 500ha site within 10km of home

Deficiencies:

Quantity

- 2.143** The standard has identified deficiencies of accessible natural greenspace in the North East and North West Neighbourhood Area and a significant surplus in the South Neighbourhood Area. The deficiencies are most marked in the more rural North East Neighbourhood Area however it is important to recognise that the public rights of way network may serve to provide people in the area with access to wider countryside.

Quality

- 2.144** The city's natural greenspaces including woodlands Local Nature Reserves and sites managed as naturalistic greenspace have been quality rated and found to be below the required quality standard for a Good quality rating.
- 2.145** The sites that fall below a 46% standard will need to be improved to ensure people have equal access to good quality facilities

Accessibility

- 2.146** The areas with the greatest accessibility issues are the rural areas of the North West Area with marked accessibility issues in Bablake Ward, and to a lesser extent in Woodlands Ward. The Counden Wedge and the wider rights of way network may serve to meet these deficiencies. The rest of the city is covered by the accessibility thresholds identified and the provision of parks where people will still have access to nature.

Provision for Children and Young People

Introduction

- 2.147** For the purposes of developing the 'Greenspace Strategy' provision for children and young people has concentrated the research on the fixed play provision within the city and consists of equipped play areas and other specialist provision such as multi use games areas and wheeled play provision or skate parks.
- 2.148** The provision facilities for children and young people are important in facilitating opportunities for physical activity and the development of movement and social skills. As such the results for quality audit for play provision are often much lower than expected as the audit considers not only the physical condition of the equipment it considers the range, play value and measures them against models that are considered best practice in terms of play provision
- 2.149** It is important to note that the provision dealt with in this section is not play it is an assessment of facilities provided for children and young people. Play is defined as 'what children and young people do when they follow their own ideas, in their own way and for their own reasons' (Big Lottery Planning For Play Guidance), This section is one part of that overall provision in that it considers fixed provision provided across the city

Existing Policies

- 2.150** In 2007 the City Council adopted a strategy for play provision for children and young people" Something To Do" the purpose and scope of the strategy is to help the City Council and its partners:
- Develop more and better local and inclusive play spaces and opportunities
 - Create a more child-friendly public realm
 - Improve understanding of the importance of children's play across the range of policy areas that have an impact on children's lives
 - Embed play within key strategic plans and initiatives
 - Make effective use of funding
- 2.151** The findings and recommendations from the strategy are incorporated into this Greenspace Strategy.
- 2.152** The strategic aims of the play strategy are:
- Widen the range of play experiences available to children and young people by increasing the opportunities for informal and natural play

- Identify, understand and work to remove the barriers to free, open access play
- Ensure City Council, partners and citizens understand and value the benefits that play can bring to children and young people
- Fully engage children and young people, parents and carers in the design, development and delivery of play opportunities in the city
- Improve co-ordination and management of the delivery of play across Council services and partners
- Address inequalities in play
- Encourage healthy play
- Ensure that play opportunities offer a balance between risk and challenge and safety
- Build on best practice and research innovation in play
- intergenerational play

2.153 The City Council do not have a formal fixed play policy and as such through the development of a play strategy the Council are striving to adhere to recognised best practice by adopting the seven Best Play objectives

- **Objective 1** Extend the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it
- **Objective 2** Recognise the child's need to test boundaries and responds positively to that need
- **Objective 3** Manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm
- **Objective 4** Maximise the range of play opportunities
- **Objective 5** Foster independence and self-esteem
- **Objective 6** Foster children's respect for others and offers opportunities for social interaction
- **Objective 7** Foster the child's well being, healthy growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn

(Source Best Play (Children's Play Council, 2000)

2.154 The key outcomes from the Play Strategy will be:

- **Outcome 1** More children and young people have access to informal natural and environmental play areas,

- **Outcome 2** More children have the opportunity to access parks and open spaces
- **Outcome 3** Increased awareness of the importance of play amongst City Council staff and Councillors, partner organisations, parents and residents
- **Outcome 4** More children and young people are actively involved in the design, development and delivery of play opportunities
- **Outcome 5** Better co-ordination and management of the delivery of play opportunities
- **Outcome 6** Fewer children and young people experiencing barriers to play
- **Outcome 7** More children leading healthy lifestyles
- **Outcome 8** More children and young people have the opportunity to experience 'safe risks'
- **Outcome 9** A wider range of better quality and constantly improving play opportunities for children and young people
- **Outcome 10** More opportunities for families to play together

[Source "Something to Do" A strategy to improve opportunities for Children and Young People 2007-2010]

2.155 The key provider of fixed play in the city are the Culture and Leisure Services Division (Community Services Directorate) other providers include Whitefriars Housing Group, Groundwork, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and individual local community centres. The City Council play areas are maintained by the City Services Directorate.

Consultation

2.156 Consultation undertaken as part of the development of the play strategy identified the following main issues:

- Parents fears over child safety
- Children frustrated at not being able to play out
- Concern regarding litter and broken glass
- Children not allowed to climb trees
- Lack of things for older children to do
- Vandalism
- Lack of provision for children with disabilities
- Lack of local provision

Financial Implications

- 2.157** The play strategy identifies that the City Council has started to reinvest in capital infrastructure for play, and it undertook the provision of 2 new play areas in 2006/2007 and have programmed a further two in 2007/2008 to address deficiencies in the local standards. The Council has also secured £750,000 funding from the big lottery to introduce more adventurous types of play into six areas and the consultation process for this is underway.
- 2.158** A key issue is the ongoing maintenance and repair to play areas that where originated some 15-20 years ago and are now coming to the end of their economic life. The cost of a standard NEAP Play area is in excess of £60,000 and the annual maintenance is in excess of £5,000 per site. The cost of vandalism and repair is a key factor and the budget for play areas must therefore reflect the maintenance cost and replacement cost as well as provide for new development.
- 2.159** A key issue is to improve the design and layout of play areas to introduce more natural features and to allow an increased element of risk, the most basic level is to provide signage with the site name, rules and contact detail. Best practice dictates that play equipment should be linked by paths and allow for provision for children with disabilities. Recent experience has indicated that the Council needs to change the way that it consults, and increasingly provide natural play opportunities for young people. Indeed residents near Lake View Park requested that play equipment not be installed, and that the investment in equipment be made elsewhere in the city.
- 2.160** The Council has recently completed a 15 year capital programme of investment in play provision, the audit would suggest that that programme needs to be continued to address the issues identified in the quality of provision. It is important that alongside any new provision that the Council incorporates less opportunity for vandalism and abuse of sites through increased liaison with local police, increase patrols of parks staff and more ownership from the community.

Current Standards

- 2.161** The approach to provision of fixed play by the Council has followed National Playing Field Association (NPFA) guidance and has strived to deliver a NEAP standard play area with 10 items of equipment within half a mile from home. The NPFA definitions for play are outlined below
- 2.162** The city strategy to provide NEAP standard play areas has been relatively successful in providing an increase in play provision across the city, however this need to be translated into viewing the whole area, and provision of natural and equipped play opportunities according to local consultation results.

Table 22 - NPFA Fixed Play Definitions

LAP (Local Area of Play)	1 minute walking time	Walking distance of 100m	100m ² in size	5m From the Nearest Dwelling (to the forward most part of dwelling that faces LAP)	Small low key games area that may include demonstrative play feature
LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play)	5 minute walking time	Walking distance of 400m	400m ² in size	10m from Activity zone to nearest dwelling(to property boundary)	5 types of play equipment, small games area
NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play)	15 minute walking time	walking distance of 1000m	1000m ² in size	30m from Activity Zone to nearest dwelling(to property boundary)	8 types of play equipment, opportunities for ball games or wheeled activity

Quantity

- 2.163** A digital (GIS) mapping exercise has taken place to identify fixed play provision across the city these include equipped play areas, Multi Use Games Areas and skate parks.
- 2.164** The audit undertaken has revealed that provision for children and young people, occupies 7.89 hectares. The provision is split between sites that are specifically provided for children and young people and provision within other typologies. Two sites are located outside the city boundaries in Coombe Abbey Country Park
- 2.165** It is important when considering the level of provision for children and young people that any quantity standards are based on the population of children and young people and not the total population. The population of children and young people aged 2- 19 has been applied to this provision. In some cases the figures have been rounded up.
- 2.166** With the exception of stand-alone sites it is important to note that the footprint of each play area has already been counted as part of the hierarchy they occupy.
- 2.167** Table 23 below provides a summary of provision for children and young people within Coventry City Council. The Figures illustrate the quantity of provision for those sites identified as stand-alone and the provision for children and young people within sites classified in other typologies.

Table 23 - Current Children’s Play Provision in Coventry City

Area	Area Population Aged 2-19	Total Number of Sites	Total Hectares	Ha per 1000	m2 per person
North East	27422	22	2.29	0.084	0.84
North West	17969	16	2.20	0.122	1.22
South	27073	22	3.28	0.120	1.20
City Total	72464	60	7.77	0.10	1.07
Outside City		2	0.14		
City Wide	72464	62	7.91	0.10	1.00

2.168 From the above Table it is important to recognise that the figures represent those sites that have been identified and sites provided for children and young people and as such the footprint is included within other sites as such there is an element of duplication in the provision figures. From the table

- South Area and the North East Area have equally the greatest number of sites classified as provision for children and young people at 22 sites in each area. The two areas both have 36% of the city total provision.
- The North West has the lowest level of provision at 16 sites or 26% of the total
- 2 sites outside the city represent 3% of the city total provision
- The city has a standard of 0.10 ha per 1000 population for children and young people The city wide provision equates to 1 site per 1169 children and young people
- However, it is the quality and accessibility of provision that is more important than the amount of provision, given the small area each site generally covers.

2.169 Provision for children and young people consists of equipped play areas and other specialist provision. The provision facilities for children and young people is important in facilitating opportunities for physical activity and the development of movement and social skills.

2.170 The play strategy identifies the following in terms of age range of facilities

Table 24 - Age Range of Provision

Equipped Play Facility	Number
4-7 years	12
8-12 years	1
4-8 and 8-12years (on the same site)	20
Teen Areas- Basket ball hoops and Shelters	15
Skate Parks	
Skate Parks	4
Multi Use Games Areas	
Existing MUGA's including double court areas	16
Proposed MUGA	1

2.171 In addition to fixed children’s play areas the city also has three main types of youth provision that have been identified, specifically skate park facilities (facilities for skateboarding, ball courts (MUGA)

Table 25 - Provision by Ward

Area	Area Population	No of Play Areas	Number of Mugas	Skate Parks	Total
North East	27422	17	12	3	32
North West	17969	13	6	0	19
South	27073	12	6	1	19
Outside City		2		0	2
Total	72646	44	24	4	72

2.172 The table shows the range of provision across the city for children and young people, the audit has identified 44 fixed play areas across the city and a further, 24 MUGAs, and 4 skate parks. From the table the:

- The city wide provision equates to 1 facility per 1008 children and young people
- North East Area has the greatest number of facilities serving the highest population of children and young people the provision identified equates to one facility per 857 children and young people
- The North West has no skate park provision and has a provision that equates to 1 facility per 1057 children and young people(slightly higher than the city wide average)
- The South Area has a provision equal to the North West with 19 facilities identified however the number of children and young people per facility is significantly higher at one facility per 1424 children and young people.
- It is important to note that many of the MUGAs identified are on school sites and as such may not necessarily be available for use out of schools hours, the play strategy identifies that the city has 16 MUGAs that are readily accessible with a further MUGA proposed.

2.173 Research into provision in other Local Authorities has revealed that many authorities are moving away from the minimum play provision of LAP’S identified in the NPFA Standards and are in a similar position to the city with regards to provision as identified in the table below

Table 26 – Comparison of Provision per 1,000 population with other local authorities

Local Authority	Provision for children and young people
Coventry City Council	0.10ha Per 1000 children and young people
Erewash Borough Council	0.16ha urban areas 0.32ha rural areas
South Northamptonshire	0.95ha for children 0.2 ha for teenagers
Northampton	0.12ha for children 0.12 ha for teenagers
Walsall	0.15ha
Sandwell	0.04ha

Quality: Provision for Children and Young People

2.174 A comprehensive audit of greenspace has been undertaken in the development of the Greenspace Strategy and as part of that audit the fixed play provision in the city was revisited. Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit to 44 of the sites within this typology and completion of a scored proforma. Visits have been undertaken to sites with equipment and play features. The quality assessment proforma for play areas has been based on the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) “Play Value Assessment” and looks at a variety of criteria including the overall appearance of the site, the ambience and the type of equipment by age range. The quality inspections consider the following when measuring the quality of provision

- Balancing
- Climbing
- Crawling
- Gliding
- Group Swinging
- Single Swinging
- Ball Play
- Jumping
- Rotating
- Sliding
- Rocking
- Agility Bridges
- Viewing Platform
- Wheeled Play

2.175 A copy of the proforma is contained within the appendix 3 to this report. It is important to note that play provision is not simply providing equipment it is also about the environment that equipment is situated in, the proforma considers elements that best practice play areas have been found to promote. These include diversity in textures, use of wildflowers, elements of water play and landscaping. In supporting the generation of a sense of place it considers whether the play area is locally related to reflect some local significance. This could be for example if the site is near a famous railway, then the play area’s design reflects this through themed equipment designed around trains and railways.

2.176 Site scores not only consider the condition of the equipment they also consider the play value of the entire designated play area. This includes consideration for the different types of activity that the play area allows including:

- Overall site features including access gates, whether the area is pollution and noise free, presence of shade, access for the disabled, appropriate signage, locally related features and seating
- Ambience including layout, visual appeal, presence of litter or graffiti
- Equipment for Toddlers, Juniors and Teenagers have been assessed as discrete elements within the overall play value assessment

2.177 The audit has some basic requirements to measure the quality of the site and does not focus solely on the condition of the equipment the basic requirements are:

- Maintenance
- Social Safety
- Site Safety
- Seating
- Access Paths
- Play Area General Surfacing

Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs)

2.178 24 MUGAs have been identified throughout the city.

2.179 The identified multi-use games areas have been assessed for quality. The quality ratings are shown below. The quality inspections consider the following factors:

- Surface quality
- Fencing
- Nets
- Line markings
- Correct size
- Information boards/contact details
- Posts
- Goals
- Secured entrance
- Floodlighting
- Vandalism

2.180 The quality audit provides an indicative rating of quality out of 100%. It is important to note that the quality score represents a “snapshot” in time and records the quality of the site at the time of the audit. The quality assessment ratings for all sites are shown overleaf:

Table 27 - Provision for Children and Young People Quality Rating

Area	MUGA Quality Range	Average & Rating	Play Quality Range	Average & Rating
North East	40%-82%	47% Average	17%-41%	29% Poor
North West	25%-69%	53% Average	15%-34%	27% Poor
South	15%-58%	34% Poor	28%-53%	36% Poor
Outside City	0		20%-41%	31% Poor
City Wide Range	34%-53%	41% Average	15%-53%	31% Poor/Average

2.181 Key findings relating to the overall quality of children's play areas include:

- The overall rating of play area sites city wide is 31% (Poor/Average),
- The overall quality range varied significantly across the city. The range of scores varied from 15%-53%
- The play areas with the highest overall quality rating are Memorial Park (53%), and Whitley Common 50%.
- Sites with low overall quality scores include Baker Lane Amenity in Whoberley Ward and the play area a Stoke Heath Sport Ground in Upper Stoke Ward
- The multi use games areas rated as 41% average across the city and at the area level the quality varied across the 3 areas and at the ward level. The North West had the highest average quality (53%) the South Area had the lowest average quality 34% poor.

2.182 The findings of the quality audit for play provision including MUGAs supports the findings in the city play strategy with regards to the quality of facilities. The play strategy recognised the condition of facilities to be a concern at the time 53% of facilities were rated as poor or average in terms of their condition

2.183 The play audit has revealed that 21 sites (48% of the total provision) had no signage, no site name or any rules and regulations with regard to the use of the play equipment, 9 sites (21%) had no form of seating for children or parents using the play equipment, 11 sites (25%) had no litter bins

2.184 Other factors such as mounding, shade opportunity, texture, opportunity for sand play, water play all have an influence on the play value of play areas and most sites were found to be lacking.

Accessibility

2.185 Accessibility has been assessed using a variety of techniques including mapping exercises and consultation. The key findings show that:

- 45% of the respondents to the consultation stated they do not believe there to be enough provision for children and young people
- 44% of the respondents stated provision for children and young people is important
- More people access children's' play areas on foot 29% than they do by car which perhaps reflects the type of usage and the nature of the provision. Whereas travel to skate parks is primarily by car
- Further consultation is needed with young people to ensure future provision is appropriate to meet their needs

- The City Council has adopted a standard of providing a NEAP standard of play area with 10 pieces of equipment and within 15 minutes walk this is the equivalent to 1000m

2.186 The NPFA standards are used widely across local authorities in UK. In recent times there has been a move more towards the upper two levels' of provision namely LEAPS and NEAP's for provision and accessibility and also to reduce the number of low value areas that are small and a potential drain on financial resources. The purpose of PPG17 is to move away from nationally based standards and to establish standards that best fit the local situation. In Coventry the City Council have realised that bigger play areas are less of a drain and provide more value.

Standards:

Quantity

2.187 The standard proposed is based on the population of children and young people aged 2-19 living within the city and the provision of fixed play. The standards have been set using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.

Standard

0.10 Ha per 1000 population of fixed play provision

2.188 Fixed play areas need to be maintained to a good standard to reduce the risk of personal injury and insurance liability to the City Council. As such the quality of all sites need to be above 60%

Standard

- Reasonably close to home and within sight of main travel routes across site
- Located with informal surveillance from surrounding property or other well used facilities or public spaces
- Sited in places identified in agreement with local children and young people
- Be seen as part of the local community infrastructure
- Provide the opportunity for risk through design and choice of equipment and landscaping
- Provide opportunities for children of all abilities

In addition all equipment should comply with recognised European standards BSEN 1176 for fixed equipment and BS EN 177 for Impact absorbing surfacing
Provision for Teenagers should provide variety of expectation and enable young people to sit or take exercise in a safe and clean environment.

All sites to be maintained to a good standard of 60% or above

Accessibility

2.189 The aim of an access standard is to ensure that children and young people can play and meet in areas designed specifically with them in mind and within a reasonable distance from home. The city has adopted a NEAP standard for fixed play based on the NPFA classification as such these should be provided within a 1000m distance threshold. It should be noted that this may be provided as "natural play" subject to local consultation. For informal play space (incidental open space or principal open space) the city has an accessibility standard of 400m

Standard

No child or young person should live more than 400m from space provided for informal and/or natural provision play

A NEAP standard play area within 1000m of home – this may be provided as "natural play" subject to local consultation

Deficiencies:

Quantity

2.190 The standard has identified deficiencies of fixed play provision in all three neighbourhood areas, and the rural areas of the North West having the greatest quantity deficiency.

Quality

2.191 At present the average quality score for fixed play across the city is 31% or average this is due to play areas more adventurous landscaping such as mounding, texture such as sand or water play or the more basic requirements such as seating, signage, provision for children with disabilities.

Accessibility

2.192 The areas with the greatest accessibility issues are the rural areas of the North West Area with marked accessibility issues in Bablake Ward. When considering accessibility the analysis has not only considered fixed play but also open space (principal and incidental) that provides for informal play. The noted deficiencies are mainly to wards that are border the city administrative boundaries such as Woodland Ward, Westwood Ward and Longford Ward where provision in neighbouring authorities may meet this deficiency.

Outdoor Sport

Introduction

2.193 This section considers the wide range of outdoor sports provision across the city. It includes specific sites developed within the hierarchy to focus resources and to promote sport and recreation these are the sports grounds, it considers the grass pitch provision across the city both public and private on dedicated sites or in other open spaces such as parks, it also considers other sports provision such as bowls, tennis and athletics that may also be on specific sites or in other spaces.

2.194 Outdoor sports facilities, for the purposes of the assessment have been sub-divided into the following facilities:

- Sports Grounds – Sites specifically developed to cater for sport often containing provision or facilities for more than one sport
- Grass Pitches – provision for Football, Cricket, Rugby and Hockey have been assessed using the prescribed methodology detailed within “Toward a Level Playing Field” It is important to note that the pitch Quality assessment auditing was undertaken during the summer months and as such pitches were not in regular use.
- Other Sports- Bowling Greens have been assessed separately as discrete sports facilities. Where they are present in parks, bowling greens have formed part of the overall quality score for the facility. Tennis Courts, as with bowling greens have been assessed as discrete sports facilities and where facilities are present in parks, have contributed to the overall score for the park/open space. Athletics have been assessed as part of this study in terms of quantity owing to tracks and pitches not being readily accessible at the time of the site auditing.

Quantity

2.195 This section considers outdoor sport as a whole as advocated by the PPG17 and the associated guidance. The Councils Playing pitch Strategy findings and web based information from Sport England’s Active Places Power website have also been incorporated. The quantity audit has revealed the following provision in accordance with the type and hierarchy.

2.196 The city has 409.80 ha of outdoor sports or a provision of 1.36 ha per 1000 population. This figure includes pitches on school sites but not the total school ground footprint.

Table 28 - Outdoor Sport Hierarchy¹

Provision type	Number of sites	Hectares	Provision per 1,000 population
City Sports Grounds	7	78.13	0.26 ha
Outdoor Sports Provision	79	331.67	1.10 ha
City Total	86	409.80	1.36 ha

Table 28a - Pitches by Type

Settlement Area	Population	Number of Pitches						
		Football			Cricket	Rugby	STP	Total
		Mini	Junior	Senior				
North East	104993	2	32	47	3	6	1	91
North West	82008	0	34	41	3	9	3	90
South	13847	7	52	87	7	27	9	189
TOTALS	300848	9	118	175	13	42	13	370

Existing Policy

2.197 The city has specific planning policies that apply to outdoor sport, these are policies GE1 (Coventry Greenspace Standard) , GE4 (Protection of Outdoor Sport Facilities) and policy GE8 (Control over Development in Urban Green space)and GE10(Proposals for new or expanded outdoor sport or recreational facilities in urban greenspace), the policies state the following:

- **Policy GE1** - Coventry Greenspace Standards, the City Council will employ the following minimum standard for physically accessible and publicly available outdoor playing space.. the standards set is based on the NPFA 6 acre standard and the relevant element for outdoor sport is the city will provide 1.6-1.8 ha per 1000 population of outdoor playing space for youth and adult use within 1200 metres of home.
- **PolicyGE4** - states proposals that would result in the loss of or a reduction in land used or last used for outdoor sport will not be permitted unless:
 - The developer can demonstrate that the Coventry Green Space Standards are being met in the locality following the development and that any requirement for quality and continued demand will be met.
 - The land is not capable of contributing to meeting the standard because of its physical characteristics

1. Please note: These figures are subject to change and are a snapshot in time which could contain inaccuracies. These are not viewed to significantly alter the assessment.

- In either case the land in question has no other significant greenspace value or the loss is outweighed by the overall enhancement of greenspace in the locality by the development or compensatory measures. Any replacement provision will provide an equivalent or greater community benefit in terms of recreational value accessibility and management
- **Policy GE8** - defines urban greenspace as any area of open land or water not designated as greenbelt with value for recreation , outdoor sport or amenity. The policy specifies that proposals that reduce urban greenspace or diminish its value will not be permitted unless:
 - They are in accordance with policies GE4, GE5 and GE10 or if the local urban greenspace would be enhanced overall by the development or compensatory measures
- **GE 10** - Proposals for new or expanded outdoor sport or recreation facilities in areas of Urban Green Space will be considered on the basis of:
 - The capability of the site and its location to accommodate a viable outdoor sports or recreational use
 - The compatibility of the activity with nearby uses
 - Any built development or structure being carefully contained and ancillary to outdoor sport
 - Maintenance of the predominant open character of the area
 - Impact on visual amenities and local distinctiveness of the area
 - A reasonable balance between the needs of the activity, nature conservation and landscape enhancement being achieved
 - Accessibility by a choice of means of transport
 - Compatibility with other plan policies

Sports Grounds

- 2.198** The city undertook a review of its pitch provision and established that it would be good practice to provide less pitch sites and in doing so improve the quality of provision on sites that remain. Sports grounds were established to ensure that pitch quality and changing facilities could be improved and to allow pitches to cater for two games per week

Quantity of Sports Grounds

2.199 The table below shows the distribution of the Council’s designated sports ground across the city. The single largest site being Coundon Hal and the smallest site being Jardine Crescent. The average size of sport ground is 11.16 ha and this should be used as guide for future provision

Table 29 – Quantity of Sports Ground Provision

Hierarchy	Area Name	Ward	Ground	Total
City Council Sports Ground	North East	Henley	Sowe Common Sports Ground	15.34
		Upper Stoke	Stoke Heath Sports Ground	9.93
	North West	Bablake	Coundon Hall Sports Ground	28.67
		Woodlands	Jardine Crescent Sports Ground	3.79
	South	Binley and Willenhall	Binley Recreation Ground	7.16
			Cheylesmore	Ashington Grove Sports Ground
Westwood			Floyds Field Sports Ground	7.61
City Total				78.13

2.200 In addition to the Council managed sites the city has a range of private facilities that cater for outdoor sport and that are accessible for communities to use either via pay and play or by membership. The table below identifies the number of private facilities that have been identified as a result of the audit.

Table 30 – Number of Sports Ground Sites by Area

Hierarchy	Neighbourhood Area	Number of sites	Total Hectares
Outdoor Sports Provision	North East	26	65.80
	North West	20	99.90
	South	33	165.97
Total		79	331.67

2.201 The provision of City Council sports grounds equates to 78.13 hectares or 0.25ha per1000 population. The private sports ground provision is approximately 155.47 hectares and the city wide provision is 331.67 hectares or 1.10 ha per 1000 population

2.202 The audit has identified that the certain elements of outdoor sport are incorporated as facilities within other typologies such as formal open space where parks may have pitches, courts or bowling green facilities, in these cases the footprint of the outdoor facility has been captured as part of size of the site it is contained within

and is therefore already reflected within the overall calculation for that typology. The data for the analysis of formal outdoor sport has been sourced from:

- Sport England Active Places Power
- Consultation with Sports Clubs and Leagues
- Consultation with The city's Schools and Colleges
- The City Council Draft Playing Pitch Strategy (2004)

Quality of Sports Grounds

2.203 The audit of provision has revealed that the quality of sports grounds varies significantly, the average quality of City Council provision is 44% (Average) where as the average quality of private provision is 50% or (Good) the audit also revealed:

- Quality varies between Council provision and private provision
- Quality varies across Council provision
- Quality varies by Neighbourhood Area

2.204 The table below identifies the quality findings for sports grounds across the city.

Table 31 – Quality of Sports Grounds

Hierarchy	Area Name	Name	Quality Range	Average	Quality Rating
Sports Ground	North East	City Council	46%-50%	48%	Good
		Private	30%-60%	48%	Good
	North West	City Council	28%-60%	44%	Average
		Private	33%-67%	53%	Good
	South	City Council	30%-48%	41%	Average
		Private	15%-73%	49%	Good

2.205 The quality scores were affected by lack of signage, benches, onsite information and parking. The private sites audited revealed that 4 sites had no information boards, 5 sites had no parking, 13 sites lacked seating and 4 sites had no signage. The Council sites all had signage but the quality of signage on 3 sites was found to be very poor in quality, 4 sites had no seating and only one site had an information board and the quality of the board was found to be very poor.

2.206 The City Council facilities should be provided to a good standard and as such the following sites fall below a rating of good

Table 32 – Quality ratings of Sports Grounds

Neighbourhood Area	Council Sports Ground	Quality Rating
North East	Facilities all rated as Good or above	Good
North West	Jardine Crescent	28% Poor
South	Binley Recreation Ground	30% Poor
	Floyds Field Sports Ground	45% Average

2.207 From the table Jardine Crescent and Binley Recreation Ground are somewhat below a good rating whereas Floyds Sports Field is on slightly below in a good rating and it will not take much to improve the sites rating. The audit also noted that Stoke Heath Sports Ground was rated at 46% which is therefore only just within the good rating

2.208 The audit also revealed that 8 private sites fell below a good rating and the Council should look to work with the private clubs to ensure that people do have equal access to good quality facilities. This can be difficult as they are in private ownership and may not wish to work with the Council, this was certainly apparent from a number of clubs at the time of the auditing who did not wish their facilities to be rated for quality.

Grass Pitches

2.209 It is important to note that Sport England recommend the use of the National best practice model ‘Towards a level Playing’ for calculating the supply and demand of outdoor grass pitches. The methodology involves consultation with all identified local clubs and teams that play or make use of pitches in the city.

2.210 The club and team response to consultation has been too limited, this is despite over 100+ questionnaires being sent to clubs and teams identified through consultation with the league secretaries. A further survey has now been completed to assess latent demand. This will allow supply and demand modeling in the future.

2.211 The latent demand is currently low for football, but high for cricket. Therefore the Greenspace Strategy analysis has been based currently on the total number of pitches and the number available for community use, with an indication of hectares per 1000 population to give an indication of supply in the future

Quantity of Grass Pitches

2.213 The land occupied by each of the formal outdoor sports facilities has been calculated using the guidance in the Sport England ‘Towards a level playing field’ electronic toolkit for pitch dimensions, track size etc. The following table show the overall number and type of grass pitches that have been identified

Table 33 - Number of Pitches (including private use provision)

Settlement Area	Population	Number of Pitches						
		Football			Cricket	Rugby	STP	Total
		Mini	Junior	Senior				
North East	104993	2	32	47	3	6	1	91
North West	82008	0	34	41	3	9	3	90
South 1	13847	7	52	87	7	27	9	189
TOTALS	300848	9	118	175	13	42	13	370

2.214 It is important to recognise that not all facilities have community use and as such the following table identifies the number and type of provision available for local people through organised community use.

Table 34 - Current Identified Provision with Community Use¹ (excluding private use provision)

Neighbourhood Area	Population	Pitch Type						
		Mini Soccer	Junior	Senior	Cricket	Rugby	Stp	Total No
North East	104993	2	19	33	3	5	1	63
North West	82008	0	16	22	3	4	3	48
South	113847	7	31	65	6	26	6	141
TOTALS	300848	9	66	120	12	35	10	252

2.215 From the table there is a significant variance in the type and range of facilities available both at the city wide and area level:

- 61% of the city's formal outdoor sports facilities are available for community use
- 100% of identified mini soccer pitches have community use
- 56% of junior pitch provision is available for community use
- 69% of senior pitches have community use
- 92% of cricket pitches and 83% of rugby pitches have community use
- 78% of synthetic pitches and 60% of the athletics tracks have community use

1. Community Use is defined as being available for hire as a one off or series of bookings by an individual or organisation other than the pitch/facility owner or operator, outside school time if on a school site.

- 75% of the golf courses in the city allow community use on a pay and play basis
- The South area has the greatest provision of facilities available for community use

2.216 Due to a latent lack of response from clubs and teams it has not been possible to identify the levels of demand that would dictate the amount of provision required therefore the standards recommended are a reflection of the current standards. Note that grass hockey pitches are no longer a necessary provision for community use as leagues and teams play hockey on synthetic turf pitches.

2.217 Figures in relation to latest demand have been received through surveys for over 150 clubs active in the city, demonstrating limited latent demand for pitches. This has not therefore increased the pitch calculations. With any additional growth in the city, this would need to be recalculated.

Quality of Grass Pitches

2.218 The table below identifies the provision across the city with regular community use. The table shows the number of pitch facilities and the hectares of provision.

Table 35 - Pitch Provision with Community Use in Coventry

Neighbourhood Area	Population	Community use												Total No of Facilities	pitches	pitch provision per1000
		Mini Soccer	hectares	Junior	hectares	Senior	Hectares	Cricket	hectares	Rugby	hectares	Stp	hectares			
North	104993	2	0.6	19	20	33	46.2	3	4.8	5	6	1	0.7	63	78.3	0.74
East																
North	82008	0	0	16	16.8	22	30.8	3	4.8	4	4.8	3	2.1	48	59.3	0.70
West																
South	113847	7	2.1	31	32.6	65	91	6	9.6	26	31	6	4.2	175	170.5	1.46
TOTALS	300848	9	2.7	66	69.4	120	168	12	19.2	35	41.8	10	7	252	308.1	1.02

Mini soccer principles and rules are similar to those in Association Football, but with side sizes from four-a-side for the youngest to seven-a-side for under 10s. The goal size is 3.6m by 1.8m for all ages. Junior football generally moves to eleven-a-side at under 12 ages, with pitches 80m x 50m for under 12s, 90m x 55m for under 13 and 14s and 100m x 60m for under 15 and 16s.

2.219 The above provision calculations have been made using Sport England pitch sizes these are:

- Mini soccer minimum size 0.30 ha
- Junior Football minimum size 1.05 ha
- Senior Football minimum size 1.40 ha
- Cricket minimum size 1.60 ha
- Rugby minimum size 1.20 ha

2.220 In using the above recommended minimum sizes for grass pitches the city has the following grass pitch provision with community use:

- Cricket pitches 0.06 ha per 1000 or 0.6m² per person
- Rugby pitches 0.13 ha per 1000 or 1.3m² per person
- Football Pitches 0.79 ha per 1000 or 7.9 m² per person

2.221 The table also identifies 10 synthetic turf pitches (STP) with community use, the Sport England recommended standard for synthetic turf pitches is 1 STP per 25,000 people. The city's current Standard is 1 per 30,000 people. Although a further 3 STP's are identified in the overall provision, at present they do not cater for community use.

2.222 Ideally the city should have its pitches on a limited number of sites to maximise the economies of scale in terms of development, management and maintenance costs. In particular the Council should not aspire to create any new pitches but will require developers to make contributions to off site provision on a city wide basis, using the pitch booking of Council pitches as the justification for this approach. This will enable the Council to aggregate the contributions and funding required improving facilities and making a worthwhile difference to priority sites (These figures do need to be treated with caution as they are a reflection of assumed community use based on the data contained within Sport England Active Places Power). Figures should be assessed for each development.

Other Outdoor Sports Facilities

2.223 The table below outlines other identified outdoor sport facilities across the city, this includes private clubs, provision in schools and provision in parks and open spaces. It is important to recognise that not all facilities are readily accessible to the community and therefore the opening of these facilities could be considered to address deficiencies in supply before considering new provision.

Table 36 - Other Outdoor Sport Facilities Identified in Coventry

Settlement Area		Number of Facilities				TOTAL
		Athletics Track	Bowling Green	Tennis Court	Golf	
North East	104993	1	5	16	0	22
North West	82008	0	6	10	2	18
South	113847	4	16	32	2	54
TOTALS	300848	5	27	58	4	94

2.224 The table shows the distribution across the city and whilst the city appears well served the distribution across the neighbourhood areas is uneven with the South Neighbourhood Area having 57% of the provision, the North West Neighbourhood Area is the least served by outdoor sport provision. This is a reflection of the rural nature of the North West Area

2.225 The table below shows a true reflection of the actual outdoor sport facilities that do have community use, the reality is that only 50% of the total provision across the city has community use. At the Neighbourhood Area level the North East and North West Areas have the lowest provision of community accessible outdoor sport provision

Table 37 - Additional outdoor sports provision

Settlement Area		Number of Facilities				TOTAL
		Athletics Track	Bowling Green	Tennis Court	Golf	
North East	104993	1	5	0	0	6
North West	82008	0	6	0	1	7
South	113847	2	16	14	2	34
TOTALS	300848	3	27	14	3	47

2.226 No further analysis is undertaken for Golf Courses as the courses are privately owned, with the exception of Allesley Hall The success of golf courses is very much dependent on the quality of the course. To include golf course in setting provision standards for outdoor sport would significantly affect provision calculations as they occupy large areas of land that is not necessarily publicly accessible.

2.227 The standards for the other outdoor sports types are based on national guidance (in the case of athletics tracks) or the actual number of sites that allow community use(bowling greens and tennis courts) based on the land they occupy. The standards are:

- Bowling Greens 0.01 ha per 1000 Or 0.1 m2 per person
- Tennis Courts 0.02ha per 1000 or 0.2 m2 per person

2.228 This works on the assumption of:

- Bowling green average size=0.16ha
- Tennis Courts are based on single courts equating to 0.06 hectares with adequate run outs

2.229 Sport England recommend a standard for athletics tracks of 1 track per 250, 000 population. The track is defined as a 6 lane track with floodlighting within 30 minutes drive or 45 minutes in rural areas. The city has 3 identified athletics tracks with pay and play community use. These tracks are located at educational sites namely Lyng Hall (6 lane track) and University of Warwick Westwood Campus (8 lane track) both in South Neighbourhood Management Area and Kennedy School and College (7 lane track)in the North East Neighbourhood Management Area.

Comparison with other authorities

2.230 Research into provision in other Local Authorities has revealed that many authorities have a variance in provision based on the former NPFA Standards as identified in the table below

Table 38 – Provision per 1,000 population

Local Authority	Per 1000 population
Coventry City Council	1.36 ha
Erewash Borough Council	1.25 ha
South Northamptonshire	1.69 ha
Newcastle City Council	1.10 ha
Northampton	1.88 ha
Walsall	0.35 ha
Sandwell	0.32 ha

2.231 The research also showed that the standards for bowls and tennis in most local authorities that had any information available reflect those identified for the city.

2.232 The table below compares the city ratio provision of grass pitches with other local authorities where information has been made available.

Table 39 – Pitch per person ratio

2.233 The pitch ratio for the city 1:976 closely reflects the average for England of 1:989

Local Authority	Pitch per person ratio
Coventry City Council	1:976
Bath and Somerset District	1:574
Portsmouth City Council	1:1100
Worcester City Council	1:1125
Canterbury	1:720
England Average	1:989

Quality

2.234 Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit and completion of a non-technical visual inspection. The pitch visit proforma provided as part of the Sport England Electronic Toolkit has been used. As well as an open space quality audit as undertaken on other typologies This will allow comparison with pitch quality findings in future years with other local authorities who have completed local assessments. The key qualitative aspects of provision include:

- Pitch Slope
- Pitch Evenness
- Grass Cover
- Condition of equipment
- Presence of ancillary facilities
- Presence of common problems
- Proximity to transport network
- Presence of training facilities

2.235 As identified earlier the playing pitch quality is measured against the quality value line as outlined below.

Quality Line – Playing Pitches				
0% - 30%	31% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 89%	90% +
Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent

Quality Line – Bowling Greens, Tennis Courts,				
0% - 19%	20% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 79%	80% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

2.236 For the purpose of the quality audit sites have been subcategorised into pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts, (no athletics tracks, rounder's or golf courses where assessed for quality) and outlined below is the quality rating by the classification given

Table 40 - Outdoor Sport Quality Rating by Type

Area	Sports Facility		
	Pitches	Bowling Green	Tennis Court
North East	35%-74%	48%-58%	56%-67%
Average	54%	54%	62%
North West	41%-64%	48%-70%	40%
Average	67%	59%	40%
South	23%-86%	36%-74%	54%-78%
Average	63%	60%	64%
City Wide Range	23%-86%	36%-74%	40%-78%
City Wide Average	65%	58%	61%

2.237 From the table above the average quality of sports facility provision varies from 58% (Average) for bowling greens to 65% (Good) for pitches when measured against the relevant value line. It is important to note that audits were taken out in the summer -months when pitch quality would be noticeably higher than a winter assessment as pitches are not used:

- The South Area Has The Largest Range In Quality Across All 3 Types Of Provision
- The North East Area Has A Fairly Consistent Quality Of Provision Across All Three Type Of Facilities
- The North West Has The Greatest Range In The Average Quality Of Facilities
- The North West Pitches Rated Highest At An Average Of 67% (Good) Whereas The Tennis Courts Rated The Lowest On Average When Compared To The Other Two Areas
- The Highest Quality Bowling Greens Are In The South Area The Poorest Quality Greens Are In The North East Area
- The Highest Quality Tennis Courts Are In The South Area
- The lowest quality bowling green was Memorial Park 36% poor the bowling green had no benches, notice boards, floodlighting or pavilion, the lowest quality tennis courts were at Coundon Court School (40%)
- Pitches Received The Highest Average Quality Rating 65% (Good) Bowling Greens rated the lowest in terms of quality with an average rating of 58%(Average)

2.238 The table below identifies the quality of pitch types across the city:

Table 41 - Grass Pitch Quality Findings

*STP's not rated using pitch proforma

Type of pitch	No of Pitches Audited	Quality Range	Average	Rating
Mini Football	6	35%-70%	57%	Average
Junior Football	24	38%-82%	55%	Average
Senior Football	64	23%-86%	66%	Good
Cricket Pitch	9	63%-78%	74%	Good
Rugby Pitch	23	58%-83%	72%	Good
TOTALS	126 pitches	23% - 86%	66%	Good

2.239 From the table the quality audit of pitches has revealed that:

- A total of 126 pitches were rated on 52 different sites
- Quality varies across sites with ratings varying from 23% (Average) through to 86% (Good)
- The range in Football pitch quality overall, is 23% poor to 86% good The average across all football pitches was 59% (Average) when measured against the quality value line.
- Cricket pitches rated varied from a score of 63% through to 78%. The average pitch score was 74% (Good) when measured against the quality value line
- Rugby Pitches rated varied from a score of 58% through to 83%. The average score was 72% (Good) when measured against the quality value line
- Overall Grass Pitch Provision The city wide average for pitch quality is 66% (Good) when measured against the quality value line

2.240 These ratings provide a comprehensive guide to the varying quality across the city, but need to be treated with caution for the following reasons:

- The inspections were non-technical, based on a visual assessment only
- The inspections are a snapshot view of provision – scores are recorded based on what is seen on site at one particular visit
- The presence of changing room facilities also boosts the score for a pitch. Although a significant number of the senior football pitches scored were rated as "Good" this was largely due to the existence of changing rooms, which took the scores for many pitches from an average rating to good.

Outdoor Sport Accessibility: Playing Pitches, Courts and Greens

2.241 Access to pitch provision is influenced by a number of factors and needs to be viewed differently to access factors for more general open space provision. The following factors need to be considered:

- The need for ancillary facilities, such as changing rooms and car parking to ensure that some league standards are met
- The level of fees and charges for use of the facility – playing pitches have been assessed from the perspective of being formal sports facilities
- The demand “unit” is different to that of other types of open space. A team may not necessarily comprise of residents from the same locality

2.242 From the Consultation 275 of respondents identified driving as the preferred mode of travel to this type of provision driving for 13 minutes or 4.33 miles(9.3km) to access outdoor sports provision (The equivalent when walking is 0.65miles(1.04 km) or 1040metres.

Standards:

Quantity

2.243 The standards have been set using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.

Standard

The standard for outdoor sport is 1.36 ha per 1000
With 0.26 ha provided as sports grounds and 1.10 ha per 1000 as grass pitches
0.01 ha per 1000 for bowls
0.02 ha per 1000 for tennis

Quality

2.244

Standard

Grass pitches to achieve a minimum standard of 66% or Good
This needs further consideration to incorporate the presence of changing and showering facilities
Sport Grounds need to adhere to the above

Accessibility

2.245 There is a small area of rural provision compared to urban, with good access to the urban fringe, therefore this standard concentrates on urban areas. The local plan identifies a distance threshold of 1200m to outdoor sport facilities as an urban standard.

Standard (urban)

No Person should live more than 1200 metres from their nearest outdoor sports facility

Deficiencies:

Quantity

2.246 Based on the quantitative standard for sports grounds the main deficiency is in the North West Neighbourhood Area. There is a good distribution of sports pitches across the city and the level of community use needs to be established to enable accurate supply and demand calculations to be established

Quality

2.247 The following City Council sports facilities fall below a 60% good quality rating:

- Sowe Common Sports Ground
- StokeHeath Sports Ground
- Coundon Hall Sports Ground
- Jardine Crescent Sports Ground
- Ashington Grove Sports Ground
- Binley Recreation Ground
- Floyds Field Sports Ground
- Whitley Common Open Space

2.248 The sites that fall below a 60% standard will need to be improved to ensure people have equal access to good quality facilities

Accessibility

2.249 The main areas of deficiency are the North West Bablake Ward, North East Wyken Ward and South Area Wainbody and Earlsdon Ward.

Allotments

Introduction

2.250 This section considers the provision of both public and private allotments across the city. The accessibility of greenspace varies greatly dependent upon the type of provision, and it is by their very nature that allotments are only accessible with restrictions in that you must be a tenant or plot holder. Allotments provide a key type of provision within the overall portfolio of open space, sport and recreation facilities. From the consultation undertaken, the value of allotments is significant, providing facilities for physical activity in addition to the promotion of healthy eating and educational value. The provision of allotments is a statutory function for local authorities under a number of legislative acts including the 1950 Allotment Act.

2.251 Allotments like other open space can provide a number of wider community benefits and hit a number of sustainability targets as well as the primary use of growing produce. These include:

- Conservation Allotments can be an important genetic resource for the conservation of rare species
- Recycling Allotments holders are encouraged to recycle and offer the potential for community composting sites
- Transport Home grown food means there is less transport (less air miles) and less packaging
- Employment and Training New skills and opportunities whether promotional, managerial or cultivation
- Education Links with schools, special needs and adult learning. Close contact with wildlife can lead to a lifelong interest
- Leisure Promoting local tourism - arts, crafts and volunteering
- Sustainable neighbourhoods - revitalising allotments and neighbourhoods
- Community Development Co-operation across ethnic age and other barriers. Allotment societies often play a wider role in community schemes, becoming involved with local schools as well as programmes for the mentally and physically ill or disabled providing people from differing cultural backgrounds the opportunity to meet and share experiences
- Health Increased consumption of fresh foods and more exercise and relief from stress, and therapy for those with mental health problems
- Providing opportunity for social inclusion and cohesion
- Creating opportunities for people to participate in recreation

Existing Policy

Local

2.252 The city has specific planning policy that applies to allotment gardens the policy is in addition to those identified earlier under the GE1 Planning policy. The policy specific to allotments is policy GE5 Protection of Allotment Gardens, the policy states that proposals to develop allotment gardens will not be permitted unless the applicant demonstrates that:

- The loss of the allotment will not result in unmet demand for allotments within a reasonable walking distance
- Local greenspace will be enhanced by the overall development or by compensatory measures.

2.253 The policy recognises the important role allotments play as greenspace within the city and the benefits they bring to the plot holders for local grown produce, healthy living as well as wider wildlife and nature conservation value. As such the nature conservation policies GE11 –GE14 are also applicable.

2.254 The policy states that if there would be no unmet demand, that all aspects of greenspace value would apply to the site including nature conservation and visual amenity. The policy is clear on any development to part of an allotment site must be beneficial to the remainder of the site or compensatory measures for sites nearby

National

2.255 It is important to recognise that allotments are potentially protected by legislation requiring approval from the Secretary of State. This protection is afforded to sites designated as statutory The Secretary of State's consent is not required for the disposal of non-statutory allotment sites.

2.256 The allotment legislation having originally been set up for the provision and protection of allotments has been so watered down over recent years by amending legislation or other, seemingly unrelated, legislation that it is now difficult, if not impossible, to work to.

2.257 The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 S 32 requires the proceeds of sale of statutory allotment land to be used initially for allotment purposes, but the Local Government and Housing Act now restricts the useable part to just 50 per cent. As the Council will be required under The Allotments Act 1925 to make alternative provision for displaced plot holders this limitation on expenditure could make it impossible for a Council to carry out this statutory obligation.

Consultation with Plot Holders

2.258 The bulk of the allotments are under a self management arrangement, under the umbrella of the Allotments Forum for the city, and as such things like water supply are organised through the societies that are managing the facilities. For many the sites are small and the cost of water or toilet provision appears cost prohibitive. From consultation with allotment societies the following has been identified

- Average no of plots per society is 56
- 30% have toilets
- 59% are secure
- Average rent is £14.70
- The key concern is underinvestment, a need for support, some sites no longer fit for purpose
- 44% of sites have water on site
- 41% have sheds
- 63% have plot watch scheme
- Price varies from £4.50- £32.00

2.259 Allotment provision across the city is split between the City Council provision and sites in private ownership unfortunately no plot information or waiting lists are available for the private sites. Outlined below is the City Council provision in terms of the number of plots and the waiting list

Quantity

2.260 The audit undertaken has revealed that there are 67 sites occupying 115.32 hectares and providing 0.38 ha per 1000 population or 3.8m² per person that are dedicated as allotment sites within Coventry

Table 42 - Allotment Provision across the City

Area	Population	Type of Sites	No	Total Ha	Ha Per 1000	M2 per Person
North East	104993	Allotments	23	28.48	0.27	2.7
North East Count			23	23.00	0.27	2.7
North West	82008	Allotments	25	44.35	0.54	5.4
North West Count			25	25.00	0.54	5.4
South	113847	Allotments	17	37.34	0.33	3.3
South Count			17	17.00	0.33	3.3
(Outside City)	0	Allotments	2	5.15		
Grand Total	300,848		67	115.3 2	0.38	3.8

2.261 From the above the city wide standard is 0.38ha per 1000 population.

2.262 The identified allotment provision covers 115.32 ha across the city. From this figure, a number of observations can be made:

- Allotment provision, has been identified in all 16 wards in the city, there are 67

sites identified across the city, 2 sites owned by the city are outside the city administrative boundaries, these sites occupy 5.15 ha

- The distribution of allotments varies significantly across each area:
 - North West Area has the largest amount of land occupied by allotments with 44.35 hectares or 38% of the total provision.
 - The smallest site is Elgar Road in Langford Ward (0.07ha) the largest site is London Road (13.87ha) in Cheylesmore Ward
 - The average size of allotments is 1.72ha

2.263 The City Council provide 44 allotment sites across the city (84.96ha)

2.264 From the table there is a significant variance in the distribution and number of plots available on an area by area basis:

- The North West Area has the greatest number of plots with 84% plots identified
- South Area has 687 plots 31% of the city total
- North East has 470 plots or 21% of the city total.
- Provision outside the city is on 2 sites providing 201 plots or 9% of the city total.
- The number of vacant plots across the city (on sites provided by the City Council) is 171 plots. The vacant plots are the equivalent to 8% of the total City Council provision.
- On an Area by Area basis the South Area has 15 sites (2% of the Area total) vacant, the North West Area has 90 plots (11% of the Area total) vacant and the North East has 66(14% of the Area total) vacant.
- Plot availability in terms of vacant plots vary considerably across the wards with 23 sites having no vacant plots, Woodway Park in Henley Ward is 80% vacant

2.265 The audit has revealed that a number of sites are semi derelict and before further provision is developed or sites are put up for disposal the City Council need to develop an allotment strategy that promotes and improves provision to ensure that hard to let sites are transformed into vibrant locally accessible sites that have full occupancy.

Comparison with other authorities

2.266 The Table below compares provision with other Local authorities and the city would appear to be fairly consistent in the level of provision when compared to other authorities.

Table 43 – Allotment Provision per 1,000 population compared to other local authority provision

Local Authority	Per 1000 population
Coventry City Council	0.38ha
Erewash Borough Council	0.31ha
South Northamptonshire	0.38ha
Redcar	0.40ha
Northampton	0.20ha
Solihull	0.30ha
Sandwell	0.31ha

Quality

2.267 Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit to 29 (66%) of the 44 sites within this typology and owned by the City Council. The quality assessment proforma is based on a number of key criteria specific to allotment sites. In summary, the scoring included the criteria of:

- Entrance areas
- The presence of water supply
- Whether the site is served by toilets
- Secure fencing around the site
- Signage to identify management, usage arrangements, special events and the availability of plots
- The presence of facilities such as composting bins, a shop and car parking.

2.268 Sites are given a score which is expressed as a percentage score and measured against the quality value line for allotments outlined below

Quality Line - Allotments				
0% - 19%	20% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 79%	80% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

2.269 Detail provide by the Secretary of the Allotment and Leisure Gardens identified the following in relation to the quality of the 44 City Council sites:

- 33 sites(75%) are secure
- 26sites(59% have water supply)
- 24 sites (55% have car parking)
- 14 sites (32% have toilet facilities)
- 27 sites(61%) have a shop facility

2.270 The quality audit provides an indicative rating of quality out of 100%. It is important to note that the quality score represents a “snapshot” in time and records the quality of the site at the time of the visit.

Table 44 - Allotment Quality Rating

Area	Typology	Quality range	Average Quality Score	Quality Rating
North East	Allotments	8%-61%	35%	Poor
North East Sum		8%-61%	35%	Poor
North West	Allotments	13%-57%	35%	Poor
North West Sum		13%-57%	35%	Poor
South	Allotments	18%-65%	48%	Average
South Sum		18%-65%	48%	Average
Outside City	Allotments	59%-68%	52%	Average
Outside City		59%-68%	52%	Average
Grand Total		8%-68%	40%	Average

2.271 The quality audit has revealed a significant variance in the quality of allotments across the city and on an area basis. The following has been identified from the quality audit:

- The average quality across the city is 40% this gives the city's allotment provision a quality line rating of 'Average'
- The city quality range for allotments varied from 8% (Very Poor) to 68% (Good)
- The site that rated highest in terms of quality is Westwood Health Leisure Gardens 68% (Good) these are located outside the city boundary, the highest rated site within the city boundary is Willenhall (62% Good)
- The site that was rated lowest is Woodway Park, Henley Ward in North East Area 8% (Very Poor)
- The North East Area has the greatest variance in quality range 8%-61%
- The quality of allotments in the South Area (48%) is above the citywide average(44%), whilst the sites in the North East Area (35%) and North West Area of the city fall below that of the citywide average
- In general the city should aspire to deliver sites that are to a 'Good' quality rating

2.272 City Wide- 52% of sites (15 out of 29 sites audited within this typology) falls below the city-wide average quality rating for this typology. The score reflects the quality of the infrastructure of the sites within this typology at a point in time, the City Council should aspire to deliver 'Good' quality services and facilities and at present the Allotments are failing to reach this level

2.273 When considering the quality of sites in this typology best practice dictates that these sites are tremendously beneficial to people and their well being as such they should as a minimal provide benches, bins and signage to enhance the visitors experience and to demonstrate ownership and management. Generally minor

improvements to the infrastructure of sites within this typology would make significant differences, better maintenance; regular painting programmes and quick response times to repairs would all change the overall visitor's impression.

Accessibility

2.274 Accessibility has been assessed using a variety of techniques including mapping exercises and consultation. The key findings show that:

- Only 1% of respondents to the residents survey use allotment
- A small percentage(7%) stated they would like to see more allotment provision in their area
- Almost 80% of respondents rated these sites as good or very good
- The most common reasons provided as a barrier to the use of allotments were lack of time, facilities or transport

Standards:

Quantity

2.275 A quantity standard derived from sites in use would be 0.38 hectares, however not all of the identified plots on sites are occupied in fact many sites both Council run and private have derelict and empty plots. The demand for allotments nationally is growing as people are seeking more healthy active lifestyles therefore it is suggested to sustain this standard until the Council develop a city wide allotment strategy. The standards have been set using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.

Standard

The standard for allotments is 0.38ha per 1000

Quality

Standard

The proposed standard for allotment is 60% minimum quality rating

Accessibility

2.276 The local plan does not identify accessibility thresholds for allotments however

research into best practice would indicate that a 1200m distance threshold would appear the norm when considering accessibility distance for allotments

Standard

No Person should live more than 1200 metres from their nearest allotment site

Deficiencies:

Quantity

2.277 Based on the quantitative standard for allotments there are deficiencies in the North West and South Neighbourhood Area. This needs to be considered with caution as from the audit a number of sites have vacant plots, some more than others that need to be brought back into use before new sites are established. Further discussion with private allotment sites needs to be undertaken to identify the number of vacant plots

Quality

2.278 The following City Council Allotment sites fall below a 60% good quality rating

- Eden Street
- Grange Road Leisure Gardens
- Henley Mill
- Holbrooks
- Woodway Park
- Allesley Old Road -Guphill
- Brownhill Green Road
- Charter House
- Donnington Avenue
- Glentworth Avenue
- Guphill Avenue
- Limbrick Avenue
- Radford Road
- Sadler Road
- The Scotch Hill
- Sherbourne Valley Allotments
- Ashington Grove
- Spring Estate

Accessibility

2.279 The main areas of deficiency are the North West Bablake Ward and South Area Wainbody Ward.

Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards

Introduction

Definition

“The primary purpose is for the burial of the dead and for quiet contemplation but also for the promotion of wildlife conservation and to enhance the ecological value of an area or provide a link to the past”

2.280 Cemeteries and closed churchyards can provide a valuable contribution to the portfolio of open space provision within an area. For many, they can provide a place for quiet contemplation in addition to their primary purpose as a final resting place. They often have wildlife conservation and bio-diversity value. In the context of this study, it is important to acknowledge that cemeteries are not created with the intention of providing informal or passive recreation opportunities.

2.281 Cemeteries and closed churchyards can make a significant contribution to the provision of urban green space sometimes providing a sanctuary for wildlife in urban areas devoid of greenspace. Although many have restricted access they still provide a useful resource for the local community. A wide variety of habitats can be often be found supporting the other open space types such as areas of semi-natural and natural areas.

2.282 Within urban areas, cemeteries and closed churchyards are often among the few areas of greenspace where the local community is able to have some contact with the natural world. Within rural communities they often provide a strong link to the past.

2.283 London Road Cemetery is an English Heritage park and garden and has listed structures and is a listed conservation area, as such it is a unique site within the city.

Quantity

2.284 There are no national or local standards for the quality of cemeteries. Increasingly though a number of local authorities have entered cemeteries for the Green Flag Award.

2.285 Large cemeteries and closed churchyards were identified by Council Officers and by GIS mapping. These sites are identified in Table38

Table 45 - Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards

Area	Population	Type	No of Sites	Total	Ha	Total Ha	Ha Per 1000	M2 Per Person
North East	104993	Cemetery	4	5	11.25	12.75	0.12	1.2
		Closed churchyard	1		1.50			
North East Sum			5	5		12.75	0.12	1.2
North West	82008	Cemetery	1	2	8.40	8.70	0.11	1.1
		Closed churchyard	1		0.30			
North West Sum			2	2		8.70	0.11	1.1
South	113847	Cemetery	2	2	22.96	22.96	0.20	2.0
South Sum			2	2		22.96	0.15	2.0
City wide	300,848		9	9		44.41	0.15	1.5

2.286 Key findings relating to cemeteries and closed churchyards include:

- Cemeteries and closed churchyards occupy 44.41 ha of land
- There is a provision of 0.15 ha per 1,000 population, this equates to a provision of 1.5m² per person,
- There is a variance in provision across the city with 52% of the provision located in the South Area
- The distribution of cemeteries and closed churchyards across Coventry varies significantly and no standards are to be set for future provision. However it is still important to consider the quality of provision that currently exists.

Quality

2.287 Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit and completion of a scored proforma. The quality was broadly based on the scoring system used for other accessible types of open space.

2.288 The key criteria include:

- Main entrance safety and cleanliness
- Signage
- Upkeep and safety of graves
- Quality of roads and pathways
- Provision of bins and seats

Quality Line - Cemetery					
0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent

2.289 It is important to consider wider facilities that could be developed further at some of the sites. These would include recycling facilities for visitors to dispose of flowers etc. The key findings of the quality assessments undertaken are provided in Table 39 below.

Table 46 - Summary of Quality Assessment Findings

Area	Typology	Type	Quality Range	Average Quality
North East	Cemetery & Churchyards	Cemetery	64%-76%	72%
		Closed churchyard	51%	51%
North East			51%-76%	67%
North West	Cemetery & Churchyards	Cemetery	52%	52%
		Closed churchyard	61%	61%
North West			52%-61%	56%
South	Cemetery & Churchyards	Cemetery	73%-89%	81%
South			73%-89%	81%
City Wide Total			51%-89%	68%

2.290 The results of the quality assessments can be summarised as:

- The average quality score across the city is 68% “Very Good”
- The variance in quality fluctuates from 51% (Good) to 89% (Excellent)
- The North West has the lowest average at 56% this still equates to a good rating
- The South has the highest quality and on average rated as excellent
- The highest rated site is Canley cemetery and crematorium rated as 89% excellent, two other sites Shilton lane and St Paul’s Church in Holbrook ward also rated as excellent

Accessibility

2.291 Accessibility has been assessed using a variety of techniques including mapping exercises and consultation. The key findings show that:

- Most people drive to cemeteries and closed churchyards(32%of respondents)

Standards:

Quantity

2.292 No assessment has been undertaken to survey the adequacy of cemetery

provision and availability of plots to meet demand. This is in keeping with other local authority greenspace strategies where research has shown that no reference is made to calculating future demand.

Standard

No quantitative Standard Set

Quality

- 2.293** The quality of cemeteries is of paramount importance as they are places where people come to grieve and remember lost loved ones. In a caring society these sites should be maintained to the highest possible standards

Standard

The proposed standard for Cemeteries is 76% plus or to an excellent standard

Accessibility

- 2.294** There is no appropriate accessibility standard for cemetery although it is important to take into consideration the needs of the elderly or more infirm members of local communities and to consider access to public transport when planning new sites and also to give consideration to distance and ensuring sites can be easily accessible for local people who wish to pay their respects.

Standard

No standard set

SECTION III

Resourcing the City's Greenspace



Introduction to Section III

- 3.1** The City Council has endeavoured whenever possible to invest in its greenspace provision and it is increasingly becoming difficult to maintain sites let alone develop them through significant improvement. Improved revenue funding with increased capital support from central Government is not likely and as such more creative financing methods including partnerships will be required to help continue to improve maintenance and greenspace improvement initiatives.

Revenue Funding

- 3.2** The City Council maintains its greenspaces within cash limited budgets and due to financial pressures faced by the Council year in year out, revenue funding for the city's greenspace has not increased for a number of years with parks budgets remaining static for some time. The qualitative audit data has revealed that rising maintenance costs and sustained lack of capital means that this is beginning to show in the condition of the city's greenspaces in particular the condition of the infrastructure including buildings, walls, fences, paths, benches, bins and playground equipment. The range and diversity of greenspace provided across the city means that it is essential that resourcing and financial planning follow a strategic framework. This strategy provides such a framework through the recommendations within the action plan. Coventry like many authorities across the country has its fair share of problems associated with its greenspaces, vandalism, illegal tipping and abuse are often difficult to predict and increasingly drain resources. Resources that could be best spent providing safer cleaner higher quality greenspace for local people.

Capital Funding

- 3.3** The capital required to improve the infrastructure within the city's greenspaces is not within the financial resources held by the Council, hence the need to maximise on the capital opportunities held outside by national governing bodies and government agencies. The Council needs to build on the work started with BIG Lottery for play, and more recently Playbuilder funding, the HLF funding for Memorial Park, Liveability funding, and work further to make further bids for capital improvements supported by revenue funding to other agencies, within this strategic framework.
- 3.4** CABE Space support the idea of a strategic framework, in the CABE manifesto they also identify that political support is essential, as is making the case for high quality greenspace both internally within the Council and externally with the city's many partners, regional bodies and national governing bodies. The key starting point for this Greenspace Strategy is to secure 'Buy In' across the Council. The development of a Parks Champion is increasingly seen as a means of driving forward the greenspace agenda and the Council will develop this initiative inviting interest from the elected members.

- 3.5** In order to deliver the vision for a network of good quality, accessible clean and safe greenspace across the city it is essential to gain financial support for future improvement to maintenance for new and existing provision.
- 3.6** The development of further partnerships will be fundamental to the delivery of good quality greenspace. The city has already made some inroads into partnership working in greenspace through the establishment of community initiatives such as Friends of Parks and the self management of the City Council's allotments through the Allotments Society and many others.
- 3.7** Partnership with the Private sector can also bring the benefits and funding to improve the city greenspace, other authorities such as Halton Borough Council have forged partnership with the private sector, Halton are the first local authority to have a Starbuck's coffee shop in Victoria Park rejuvenating day time and weekend use of the park and associated facilities and driving out the undesirable elements and anti social behaviour by packing the park with people. Oldham Borough Council have transformed former redundant bowls pavilions into vibrant community focussed café's by working in partnership with local business enabling reinvestment in tired and redundant buildings, revitalising the bowling greens and bringing people into the parks.
- 3.8** Wholesale commercial sponsorship is very difficult to obtain when requested by the City Council, however working in partnership with third parties may prove more attractive to local, regional or nationally recognised commercial sector investors.

Lottery Funding

- 3.9** The Council has already had relative success in securing available Lottery funding for a number of projects and from a number of Lottery funding streams, including £750,000 through BIG Lottery for 6 natural play areas, Playbuilder status bringing £1 million for refurbishment work to approximately 20 play areas in the city, and reaching stage 2 for £2+ million HLF funding for Memorial Park.
- 3.10** Lottery funds vary in grant size and funding criteria, possibly the most known for improving greenspace is the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). Funds are available for very specific projects if they include works carried out to sites or facilities of outstanding interest and importance to the national heritage. Funding is provided for complete projects in relation to parks or for conservation and restoration of park features, grants can vary from £50,000 to £5 million and securing the funding relies on sustainability, stakeholder involvement and demonstrate the heritage and value of the park funding is being sought for.

Big Lottery Fund

- 3.11** Initially developed from the combined resource of the Community Fund (providing funds for charities, community and voluntary sectors) and the New Opportunities Fund (funds environmental, health and education projects). The BLF provides funding opportunities in relation to Greenspace. A key funding source was the Children's Play Fund and the Council successfully secured £750,000 to improve play provision across the city as mentioned above. This funding is not just for outdoor play, the funding identified for outdoor play aims to provide more adventurous play space. Other BLF funding streams that are available are:
- 3.11.1 The Young People's Fund** - aimed at providing support to projects and initiatives that improve opportunities for young people in local communities. Funding is available to groups and community organisations to enable them to run and develop local initiatives with and for young people. Funding is also available for individuals to help make a difference in their local community.
- 3.11.2 Changing Spaces** – funding is available until 2009 to enable communities to undertake environmental improvements that include community space or improving accessibility to the natural environment. The parks programme focuses on the following objectives:
- To provide better more accessible parks that are relevant to the local community they cater for
 - To increase community and pride in parks through greater involvement
 - To improve safety in parks
 - To ensure the long term maintenance and management
 - To increase the number of skilled rangers conservation officers and volunteers
- 3.11.3 The well being fund-** to promote healthy lifestyle initiatives that increase participation in physical activity, educate communities about the benefits of healthy eating or develop early intervention programmes to common mental health programmes
- 3.12** The Council in partnership with local communities have secured lottery funding to develop two village greens in the city at Hawkesbury Green and Weavers Green in Hillfields to rejuvenate the local greenspace as a community focal point.

Lottery Small Grants Scheme

- 3.13** The Small Grants Scheme offers 'Awards for All' funding between £500-£10,000 for small scale projects and initiatives that involve local people in their community, these small scale projects can include park improvements or local environment work. The Council needs to work with its Friends Groups and other voluntary

sector groups active in parks and open spaces to secure these funds for smaller improvement projects. A voluntary sector support post is established in culture and leisure to support this approach.

Land Fill Tax Credit

3.14 Landfill operators can contribute 6.5% of their landfill tax liability to environmental bodies that are approved by ENTRUST. The funding projects include environmental, community and social initiatives that comply with a set of specified objectives such as the maintenance and provision of public amenity or the restoration and repair of buildings open to the public that have historical or architectural significance in a local environment. Initiatives have to be within a defined distance of landfill or extraction operations.

Barclay's Site Saver

3.15 A grant mechanism to transform derelict land through community based projects into leisure and recreational facilities, the funding available varies between £4000 and £10000 per project

The Esmee Fairburn Foundation

3.16 Funding is available for initiatives or projects that are primarily focussed on improving the quality of life of people who face disadvantage. Projects that are eligible include the enhancement or preservation of open space, good management of allotments, woodlands or gardens. The grants available appear to have no limits and the average grant size for environmental based initiatives in 2006 was £69,000.

Governing Bodies - Sport England

3.17 Sport England support two funding streams aimed at encouraging people to start, succeed or stay in sport, the funding sources available are national funding or community level.

- National Funding- £130 Million is being invested by Sport England in 30 key sports with 10 English priority sports identified, 10 UK/GB priority sports and 10 English development /world class sports.
- Community Investment Fund- Sport England are investing over £8million in the West Midlands over the next five years. Funding is linked to the Regional Plan for Sport with priority given to projects that deliver the best returns on investment through increased participation in sport on existing facilities and infrastructure, project need to have 65% partnership funding of the total cost.

Football Foundation

- Facilities Scheme- provides money to develop new or improve facilities for community benefit. These include changing rooms or clubhouses, grass or artificial pitches and multi-use games areas. Applicants in most cases are expected to provide 50% match funding in certain circumstance up to 90% funds are available
- Community Scheme-aims to create opportunities and build communities by funding projects that use football and sport as a force for social change. We fund projects that address social exclusion and inequalities in education and health.
- Goalpost Safety Scheme- provides grants for the replacement of unsafe goalposts
- Small Grants Scheme- for small projects that aim to increase participation by both players and volunteers in grass roots football by supporting the costs associated with providing new activity.

3.18 There is a range of funding streams available to develop and improve Greenspace across the city. Securing the funds is not easy and requires time and effort as well as robust evidence and reasoning for the investment. What is needed is a co-ordinated approach to securing these funds by the city, its partners and its communities. The appointment of a parks development officer and parks champion will improve communication regarding greenspace initiatives and opportunities.

Developer Contributions

3.19 An essential part of the success will be the internal commitment and buy in to initiatives such as Section 106 funding and developer contributions linked to the growth or regeneration aspirations for the city. Ensuring that appropriate revenue funding is in place to sustain capital investment in greenspace is a key long term management objective.

3.20 The research behind the Greenspace strategy provides the evidence with regards to the quantity quality and accessibility to greenspace across the city. The evidence needs to be used to strengthen existing planning policies and support the Local Development Framework through the development of Supplementary Planning documents and to use the evidence to generate clear and transparent negotiation with developers to generate significant investment. The greenspace strategy provides the evidence that will enable the City Council to move to the next stage and prioritise the need for investment through wider community consultation and stakeholder consultation at the local level.

3.21 When considering the implementation of planning policy that entails developer on or off site contributions it is worthwhile reviewing how other authorities determine when provision should be on or off site. Outlined below are examples of other local authority guidance.

- Fareham Borough Council- the Council favour on site contribution, it is dependent upon a number of factors that include- the size of the development site and if the site is in close proximity to existing good quality provision. The Council guidance also includes a matrix to identify when on/ off site contributions are appropriate in accordance with the number of dwellings and provision type
- Stockport MBC- The Council seek commuted sum payments for small scale developments, with the funds being held in an investment / interest earning account to accrue funds to enable improvements
- Harrogate Borough Council – The Council seek provision on site whenever possible, if provision falls below a specified size the Council seek off site contributions
- Worcester City Council- shortfalls in provision not accommodated on site are met through commuted sum payments that are then allocated and spent on identified projects

3.22 Maintenance sums are also an important consideration when dealing with developer contributions, research of other Council's has revealed that this varies significantly across local authorities.

- Fareham Borough Council – maintenance payments to the Council 12 months after a site or provision is transferred to the Council. Maintenance is calculated on the number of bed spaces the type of provision and is updated annually
- Stockport MBC – Maintenance payments to the Council 12 months after handover, maintenance sums are calculated using current rates with a multiplier and are for 15 years
- Harrogate Borough Council- the Council revise the maintenance payments required on an annual basis by adding 10% contingencies to the annual cost and multiplying by the number of years, maintenance is normally required for 5 years

3.23 The PPG17 Guidance identifies that the simplest way to express the requirements for future maintenance is to express it in terms of a sum per unit of provision such as £/ hectare or £/ sqm.

3.24 The general approach, which has been the norm for many local authorities, has been to multiply the typical cost of annually maintaining a facility by an agreed number of years. The guidance advocates that a fair way to negotiate with developers is to calculate the net present value of the anticipated revenue payments. The commuted sum payment is then based on:

- The estimated cost of annual maintenance- this needs to be established not so much on the current cost of maintenance but after consideration as to whether the current level of maintenance is adequate to maintain the provision to the standards required. This removes the opportunity to under price the commuted sum payment and transfer historic budgetary constraints or budget reductions onto new provision.

- It is good practice to work to a more appropriate cost with an assumed rate of inflation.
 - An agreed time period for which payment is to cover (research undertaken as part of this strategy has shown that the time period expected varies from 5-25 years)
- 3.25** The Council should ensure that developers with permission for new developments make contributions towards the capital expenditure that is initially required to provide and enhance provision(i.e. capital contribution), whilst also contributing to the ongoing revenue cost of maintaining the provision(i.e. revenue contribution).
- 3.26** The Council should use the audit findings as a means of identifying where provision and quality improvements require further investment.
- 3.27** Analysis of existing guidance on open space leads to the conclusion that:
- The Council should establish and set standards for the different types (typologies) of provision
 - The Council need to ensure that all new housing development contributes to open space provision, this includes development of single dwellings
 - The SPD should contain a list of priority projects and wherever possible contain costing detail which can be annually updated. The initial priorities are set in this strategy, and are linked to priorities identified in the audit to bring sites up to a good standard
- 3.28** The Council, through the planning policy, will ensure that the adopted standards demonstrate the principles of Best Value and the requirement to consult local people and communities. It will ensure that local people have access to a network of good quality facilities within their local area.
- 3.29** The Council should consider the development of a city Wide greenspace fund (pooled fund) especially for the more rural areas within the city boundaries, as there may be developments that are small in size and do not generate a contribution that is large enough for improvements, yet the development will still incur additional demand on existing facilities. This would be established to ensure contributions are always sought and create the means whereby funds could be used to enhance and improve existing provision or provide new provision to address deficiencies and need. This would prove useful especially in the rural areas and where insufficient funds are generated to provide anything of purpose
- 3.30** Policy test of Circular 05/2005 have identified that contributions from developers are only sought where they are directly related to the proposed development. This leads to pooled funds needing to be carefully administered and ring fenced within particular areas. Pooled funds can be based around the accessibility standards identified earlier within this strategy although this can be restrictive in rural areas. The same applies to off site contributions.

- 3.31** The improvements that can be provided to open space should be detailed within the SPD, this could relate to improvements to access to facilities. It has to be recognised that the exact improvements to provision may not have been identified at the outset and therefore may be more appropriate to use the parish level as the area to ring fence in more rural areas. In urban areas the accessibility thresholds can be applied.
- 3.32** The principle of the pooled fund would be to create a source of funding that could be utilised in planned way to secure additional investment into greenspace. This would either be by using monies direct from the fund to undertake improvements or as a source of match funding to secure greater levels of external investment. One of the valuable assets available to the city is land, some of which is not used to its maximum capacity. The City Council is naturally reluctant to release greenspace for disposal, however the benefits of reinvesting a substantial part of the proceeds from any sale are considerable and at present there are no real alternatives available to close the funding gap. A number of larger City Councils such as Bristol and Leeds are going down this route to enable them to improve the greenspace to a standard fit for local people.

SECTION IV

General Recomendations



General Recommendations

Design of Greenspace

- 4.1** The design of greenspace has a major role to play in the delivery of sustainable communities. Good design is recognised for developing a sense of local community and mutual responsibility. CABE Space has outlined the need for good design in a number of publications and guidance documents. It is possible to design and create greenspace that meet people's aspirations and in meeting aspirations people will take pride in their local area and help to preserve them for future generations.
- 4.2** The following design principles are taken from best practice and although not an exhaustive list they give an indication as to what works in ensuring the sustainability, value and management of greenspaces. Greenspace design should therefore.
- 1.** Maximise positive use by the community
 - 2.** Be easily accessible for all members of the community
 - 3.** Provide facilities that are accessible to all
 - 4.** Be part of a wider network that provide/allow traffic free routes through residential areas and links to other areas via bus stops and cycleways
 - 5.** Provide a sense of place for local people and reflect local history or culture
 - 6.** Facilitate high quality and effective management and maintenance
 - 7.** Facilitate local community's involvement in new or future provision
 - 8.** Minimise the opportunity for anti social behaviour and design out opportunities for crime
 - 9.** Have clear vistas and sight lines across the site, maximising personal safety and casual surveillance
 - 10.** Prevent any sense of isolation or insecurity through the use of appropriate lighting
 - 11.** Provide a setting for adjoining buildings, whilst minimising any detrimental effect on local amenity
 - 12.** Be designed and managed to benefit biodiversity, provide integrated habitat areas and support and allow the movement of wildlife, plants and animals. The site should provide an appropriate range of habitat types

- 13.** Have an appropriate mix of mown grass areas and indigenous planting with mown areas that are large enough to facilitate informal kick about and mini soccer
- 14.** Safeguard the integrity of any existing open space or space of heritage value and where appropriate enhance the setting of listed features and the natural landscape
- 15.** Wherever possible implement flood storage or sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) to negate flood risk
- 16.** Provide for local children, it is important that facilities provided match the age range of children and young people
- 17.** Provide surfaced tarmac paths that are at least 2 metres wide and concrete edged
- 18.** Provide adequate litter bins that are in keeping with the setting and bins are set into a concrete surface for ease of maintenance
- 19.** Provide adequate seating that is in keeping with the setting, seating in children's play areas should be set into appropriate safety surfacing. Seating in open space should have arm rests and be linked to paths, seating should be provided in both sunny and shaded areas and allow for wheelchairs and pushchairs to park alongside, off the path.
- 20.** All sites should have signage that informs people of the site name, ownership and contact details
- 21.** Larger sites or sites where people are expected to cross to get to nearby facilities such as schools or shops should have street lighting
- 22.** Sites in new housing should have housing fronting on to the site to allow for surveillance.
- 23.** The development of site specific management plans for larger sites, especially new provision

4.3 In order to identify the priorities a number of recommendations are made in relation to all sites and the assessment undertaken. These are concerned with the use of information gathered and the further development of the study in future years. The following recommendations are made:

- a.** Audit sport, leisure and open spaces on a regular basis (every two/three years) and publish findings. This will allow trend data to be collated and improvements to be tracked. It is important that findings are published to enable wider stakeholders to track progress.

- b.** Develop a central record of all open space to include the findings of the assessment undertaken. Currently many different sections of the Council hold this information; this information is not always consistent (sites listed by different names etc). The central record should include access to GIS mapping.
- c.** Establish a central consultation database for the Council, using the data and contacts gathered through this study. This information is held currently by a number of different sections/individuals in the Council.
- d.** Address the current fragmented responsibilities for the management, development and future provision of open space across the city through the establishment of a consultative Steering Group, involving representatives from both sport and leisure, and planning and grounds maintenance, to consider specific site development proposals relating to existing, former and proposed sport and leisure provision. This inter-departmental group should be established to share, and utilise the expertise of leisure and planning officers, to ensure that specific site development issues are fully considered, and the implications shared, before a planning decision is made.
- e.** Continue to develop the marketing information produced about the parks and open space facilities available, key activities accommodated and access arrangements. The Council should seek to work with key partners in future marketing, such as the local Primary Care Trust (PCT), the wider voluntary sector, education, the Youth Service etc to ensure that open space fulfils a valuable role in meeting wider social objectives (e.g. health improvement, increased active participation).
- f.** Develop an access standard regarding physical access for those users and potential users with a disability.
- g.** Review maintenance standards for open space, and agree with local people any changes. Report on performance annually. It is important to set quality standards for each of the open space categories.
- h.** Develop and fund a programme of signage installation. The absence of signage or the presence of outdated signage was found to be a key weakness of many sites audited. Develop a consistent approach to the provision of signage at all sites, through a rolling programme of installation and improvement. All sites should have a sign with site details, ownership and contact numbers. This can address a number of issues including helping with the reporting of vandalism and improving community safety.
- i.** Continue to work towards the reduction of the effects of crime and anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces.
- j.** Establish and implement a programme of action to address the actual, and perceived, issues of safety in parks and open spaces. This could take the form of installing CCTV at identified sites, or investing in park/open space infrastructure to encourage increased use, which in turn may have a positive impact on the fear of crime because more people are likely to be around.

Parks and Open Space

4.4 Management plans are needed for some of the major formal greenspaces; the city has achieved success at the Green Flag Award and needs to continue this success. However the success should not be at the expense of other sites and the city use the audit to improve all sites categorised as Parks and Gardens to a Good Standard, paying particular attention to sites classified as Local Parks. The recommendations detailed below form a response to the assessment undertaken and need to be viewed as complementary to any policies developed within The Green Space Strategy. This principle applies to all managed open space. The recommendations made in this report are focused on addressing facility deficiencies. On the basis of the assessment undertaken the following recommendations are made:

- a.** Build on the Green Space Strategy for the city utilising the results, issues and recommendations
- b.** Identified provision deficiencies are addressed as a priority in the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF).
- c.** Continue to develop and support Friends Groups for key parks and open spaces to increase local involvement and ownership
- d.** Continue to review, develop and improve site Management Plans and extend the practice of management planning to a greater range of parks and open spaces
- e.** Continue to test the quality and “performance” of formal spaces through entering externally judged competitions and quality recognition schemes (e.g. Green Flag/ Britain in Bloom)
- f.** Raise the standard by improving all sites to a ‘good’ standard in terms of the assessed criteria
- g.** Develop an asset register of the facilities within sites such as benches, bins, location, date installed, lifetime expectancy, replacement timeframe
- h.** Develop quality standards that are achievable and realistic
- i.** To provide ‘Good’ quality sites as a minimum
- j.** To continue to recognise the importance of the city Gateway sites as a means of raising the city image and address the quality issues identified
- k.** Ensure that future provision is well designed, serves a purpose and is appropriate in size (anything below 0.1 ha is not readily useable by children and young people without the potential for conflict with neighbours)

Woodlands / Natural Greenspace / Local Nature Reserves

- 4.5** A number of recommendations are made in response to the assessment findings. These are:
- a.** Identified provision deficiencies are addressed as a priority in the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF).
 - b.** Develop a greenspace databases and consider utilising the results, issues and recommendations
 - c.** Work to develop a rolling programme of renewal and improvements, e.g. bins, signage and seating.
 - d.** Develop a Walking Strategy to set out how the city's existing walking networks link together.
 - e.** Further develop the city's footpath network and link into wider footpath networks outside of the city through the Green Infrastructure Plan
 - f.** Increase awareness of the opportunities for walking in the city
 - g.** Link the use of both open space and sport and recreation facilities with travel awareness initiatives
 - h.** Take a strategic approach to the development and provision of cycling routes across the city given the importance and health benefits of this mode of transport in a congested area
 - i.** Further develop the Biodiversity Action Plan for the City
 - j.** Adopt appropriate management and maintenance programmes for the Nature Conservation sites to reflect their natural characteristics, and thereby preserving their special characteristics
 - k.** Develop an education/resource centre to develop better local awareness and understanding of open space, and in particular nature conservation sites
 - l.** Protect all existing nature conservation sites
 - m.** Develop a Green Infrastructure plan for the city

Provision for Children and Young People

- 4.6** The following recommendations are made in relation to provision for children and young people:
- a.** To provide 'Good' quality sites as a minimum
 - b.** Improve the security of play areas through introduction of CCTV or staff presence

- c. Expand signage on all sites with site details and contact numbers
- d. Develop equipment that caters for children and young people with disabilities
- e. Involve young people in the design and choice of provision
- f. Aspire to deliver the hierarchy of provision and continue to address the Surplus/ deficiency imbalance across the city
- g. Consider moving away from providing fixed play equipment as a means to catering for children and young people towards natural play
- h. Improve provision for Young People, especially Teenagers and Toddlers, through the Hierarchy and also by making the provision within the city's main parks more adventurous and bigger in terms of the range of equipment and the element of risk
- i. Ensure that the recommended accessibility thresholds are implemented

Outdoor Sports Facilities

4.7 Playing Pitches. The following recommendations are made in response to the findings of the Playing Pitch Assessment. These are:

Playing Pitches

- a. Develop a priority list for the development/improvement of changing room facilities, which reflect the type of pitch usage e.g. competitive, or Sunday pub team
- b. Establish a policy to ensure that all multi-pitch sites are served by good quality changing facilities, to ensure that all sports and participants, irrespective of gender, can be accommodated
- c. Improve pitch quality across sites where there is regular community use
- d. Work with Private Clubs to ensure pitch quality is maintained, particularly in relation to cricket and rugby provision
- e. Re-assess pitch provision using the 'Towards a Level Playing Field' methodology in 2009 and on a rolling 5 year cycle to ensure that changes in demand and supply are considered
- f. Work with local clubs and schools in areas of deficiency or poor quality to provide alternatives during poor weather or high demand

Bowling Greens

- a. Work with the local Bowls Clubs to improve the quality of both existing Greens and ancillary facilities
- b. Priority should be given to the improvement of 'below average' sites.
- c. Work with the local Bowls Clubs to promote the sport in the city, and encourage participation by younger people
- d. Review security measures at greens located in parks, in light of the reduction in staff presence on some sites
- e. Improve the publishing of information at parks about opportunities to play bowls

Tennis Courts

- a. Retain the current provision of tennis courts and work with key partners and private clubs to maintain quality and improve access for potential new participants
- b. Develop a programme of court improvement in the city Parks
- c. Ensure public courts have appropriate quality nets and equipment

Allotments

4.8 The following recommendations are made in relation to allotment provision and the establishment of a working group between the city and the Parishes:

- a. Measures need to be put in place to work alongside current chair of city's allotments as Knowledge and expertise will be hard to replace
- b. A programme of facility development with a focus on toilet provision needs to be established and prioritised
- c. Facilities for users/potential users with a disability need to be further developed
- d. Review the mechanism for the allocation of vacant plots to reduce the number of empty plots, and address the local demand for allotments
- e. Work with Allotment Societies to develop, improve and enhance the existing allotment provision
- f. Develop partnerships to increase the value and accessibility of allotments. Partnerships could include, schools (where sites are close enough) and the further development of health-related projects

SECTION V

Action Plan



Action Plan

Objective 1 - Developing Green Space

Following the principles of PPG17 to develop a network of accessible greenspace across the city and to adopt a comprehensive approach to the provision and management of green space as a network of parks and open space, woodlands, outdoor sport, allotments and churchyards and cemeteries that brings many, economic, social and environmental benefits to people that live, work or visit the city

Aims

To provide a focus and setting for economic regeneration across the city

To create a strategic framework that contributes to improved biodiversity , water quality, air quality and sustainable living

Create a focus for social inclusion, education, training, health and well-being

To ensure the Greenspace resource meets local need at the local level

Reinforce and enhance landscape character and local distinctiveness

Encourage and develop partnership working both internally within the city Council and externally with a wide range of agencies and interest groups

Measures of Success

The integration of the Greenspace Strategy within the aims and objectives of the developing Local Development Framework the Core Strategy and other strategies

The benefits of green space contributing to wider agendas such as:

- Social inclusion,
- healthy environments,
- lifelong learning,
- improving local neighbourhoods,
- safer communities
- economic regeneration
- promoting independence,

Key Targets

Preparation of a comprehensive green infrastructure base plan and schedule to inform all strategies and subsequent monitoring

Objective 2 - Working In Partnership

To work in partnership with the community, governing bodies and stakeholders to develop, manage and promote the green space resource to ensure it meets the needs of local people and local communities

Aims

To fully understand the needs of local people and local communities

To promote and encourage active involvement by local communities in the future management and maintenance of the greenspace resource

To work in partnership to enhance and promote the green space

To proactively improve community enjoyment, sense of ownership and awareness of the greenspace resource

Measures of Success

Promotion of a greenspace network

Increased level of customer satisfaction with greenspace

To promote the development of 'Friends' group or a greenspace 'Focus' group in each ward

To develop a local recognition award for community involvement

To promote greenspace opportunities through a wide availability of information and promotional materials

Achievement of National/Regional Awards

Key Targets

To expand the number of community led events in greenspace

To monitor public satisfaction

To develop new friends groups

To support existing Friends Groups and to establish a Friends Forum

To increase the level of community involvement

Develop a green space awards scheme

To develop a green space website and increase promotional material available

To build on existing partnership, to create new partnerships and strengthen working relationships

Submit applications to appropriate award schemes

Work with the District Cricket Board to establish more cricket pitches in the city

Objective 3 - Improving Accessibility

To ensure the greenspace network is protected and improved to meet identified local needs.

Aims

To protect and improve the City's greenspace network

To protect links between green spaces, surrounding countryside and the Rights of Way network

To improve communication particularly with user groups

Measures of Success

To ensure the City provides a balanced green space provision that is comparative with national and local standards

The amount of valuable green space protected through planning policies

The creation of additional facilities and the number of existing sites improved

Completion and Implementation of the Playing Pitch Strategy

Implementation of the Play Strategy

The development of an Allotment Strategy

Produce the Statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Development of a cycleway network

Key Targets

Maintain the open space audit in line with PPG 17 Government Guidance Note

Replace the Unitary Development Plan with the Local Development Framework

Develop and improve existing outdoor sports facilities such as:

- pitch drainage,
- changing rooms - initially at Coundon Hall Park, Sowe Valley and Holbrooks Park
- car parking facilities

in accordance with Sport England's standards where appropriate

Improve children's and young people's play and activity areas

Work with local clubs and schools to develop and improve their facilities

Develop and implement parks improvements

Objective 4 - Improving Quality

To raise and improve the quality standards of greenspace across the City

Aims

To secure the Green Flag Award

To develop a Coventry Parks and Open Space Standard

To reduce the level of anti-social behaviour throughout the green space

To improve the visual impact of the green space

To improve the quality of green space and facilities

To increase the staffing presence in the green space

Measures of Success

Achievement of Green Flag Awards

Reduction in the number of successful third party insurance claims against the council

Reduction in dog fouling and vandalism

Increase in number of green space sites with live Management Plans

To monitor the quality of greenspace on a regular basis

To improve the first impression of sites by visitors through improvements to site infrastructure

Key Targets

To sustain the Green Flag Award for Coombe Abbey and to secure the Award for War Memorial Park and four other key parks

All key sites managed in line with Green Flag criteria and maintained to the Coventry Standard

The development of a robust safety inspection system for the green space

Maintain the baseline quality assessment of green space against green flag criteria

Produce management plans covering maintenance for the key sites

Introduce revised byelaws for the green space

Introduce a park watch scheme and increase the number of Park Watch Schemes by two per year

Increase number of dog waste bins

Bring all children's play areas up to current standards

Expand the annual tree, shrub, bulb and flower planting programme

Participate in Britain in Bloom campaign and Britain in Bloom Neighbourhood Award

} Subject to revenue levels

Objective 5 - Increasing Public Awareness

to Increase awareness of and access to the green space resource by all members of the community.

Aims

To develop a parks champion from the elected members

To publicise the availability and access to the green space

To raise public awareness to the variety of opportunities and various green space functions

To work towards ensuring greenspaces are as accessible as physically possible

To develop the green space as a learning resource

To work towards access for all

Measures of Success

Political awareness of the importance of greenspace and the need for investment

To enhance the green space information currently available on the website through a more informative greenspace web site

To develop Education Packs available for key green space sites

Increased educational use of the green space

Number of sites fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act

Increased attendances at Rangers events

Improved access and provision of fixed play equipment for children with disabilities

Increase in successful projects run by community groups

Key Targets

A comprehensive easy accessible green space website

Produce education packs for Green Flag Award sites and main parks and open spaces

Consultation with colleges and schools to identify how the green space resource can assist in meeting their curriculum requirements

At least one site per Ward achieving school visits

Improved access to parks buildings and facilities

Improve and increase signage in greenspace

Assist in the provision of allotments for people with disabilities

Achievement of national, regional and local awards

Annual events programme for the green space

Number of items of play equipment fully accessible to all children

Assist community groups in the development of projects

Objective 6 - Sustainability

Ensure the Strategy is sustainable in terms of the use, management and maintenance of the green space network

Aims

To promote sustainable principles in the management of the green space resource.

Measures of Success

Increased levels of green waste recycling

Reduction in the use of pesticides in green space maintenance

Increased procurement from sustainable resources

To work towards only purchasing plants from suppliers grown in peat alternative composts

Promotion of energy conservation

Key Targets

Implement green procurement strategy

Re-use materials on site whenever possible especially timber from woodland management operations for timber and woodfuel

Introduce alternatives to pesticide use whenever possible

Objective 7 - Woodland Resource Management

To Protect, increase and manage the woodland resource

Aims

The management of trees and woodlands and associated non woodland habitats

Involving local people in the creation and management of the Woodland Resource

Facilitating the use and enjoyment of woodland sites by local people Increasing the economic viability of woodlands

Measures of Success

Increase the area of woodland in the City

Increase the number of people actively visiting sites

The number of Friends of Woodland groups established

The number of sites with site specific management plans

Key Targets

Implement the City Woodland Strategy

Develop Management Plans for each of the key woodlands and Local Nature Reserves

Objective 8 - Resource and Funding

to make the most effective use of existing resources and to actively seek new funding sources and resources to secure improvement in the delivery and maintenance of green space.

Aims

To make the most effective use of existing resources to provide the quantity and quality of green space to best meet the needs of the Community

To maximise the investment in the green space resource from new developments via planning developments

To review and maximise external funding opportunities

To maximise voluntary sector involvement in the management and maintenance of the green space

To enable colleges, schools and outside agencies to use the green space as a resource for educational purposes

Measures of Success

Number of new or improved facilities funded from planning contributions

Number and value of external funding awards

The development of an annual work programme implemented by volunteers, outside agencies, schools and colleges

Number and value of external funding secured

3 yearly review of fees and charges

Key Targets

To review the calculation formula for developer contribution and commuted sum payments

The number of volunteers and outside agencies engaged in the management of the greenspace resource

Minimum of one lottery bid for each appropriate programme of funding

identify the revenue implications for the maintenance of all key sites

Objective 9 - Biodiversity

Biodiversity - to Safeguard, enhance and increase enjoyment of the wildlife resource.

Aims

To protect and enhance habitats and species

To raise awareness of and improve accessibility to nature

To manage land for the benefit of biodiversity to control harmful exotic species

To increase training for biodiversity enhancement

Measures of Success

Increased area designated as Local Nature Reserves

Increase in the area of land positively managed for biodiversity including improved connectivity of sites

Reduction in the number and area of sites affected by harmful exotic species

Key Targets

Implementation of the Policy for Nature Action Plan

Coventry Proposed Quantity Standards

Typology	Quantity Standards	Accessibility Standards	Comment
Parks and openspace	The standards have been set using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.	Standard Parks above 20ha in size within a travel distance threshold of 2000m. Area Parks 2-20 ha in size within a travel distance threshold of 800m. Neighbourhood parks and Principal Open Space within a travel distance threshold of 400m. Incidental Open Space or an Ornamental Area within a travel distance threshold of 400m.	These standards are a combination of Natural England' ANGST standards and existing thresholds identified in the Local Plan.
Accessible Greenspace	The standards have been set acknowledging the Natural England Accessible Greenspace Standards and using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.	Standard No Person should live more than 400 metres from their nearest natural greenspace. One accessible 20 ha site within 2km of home. One 100 ha site within 5 km of home.	These are taken from Natural England's ANGST Standards
Outdoor sport	The standards have been set recognising the accessibility thresholds identified by Sport England the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.(Local accessibility thresholds could not be set due to local clubs not responding to consultation.	Standard No Person should live more than 1200 metres from their nearest outdoor sports facility.	These standards are a combination of Sport England recommended threshold standards and existing thresholds identified in the Local Plan.
Provision for children and young people	The standards have been set acknowledging the Councils use of the NPFA recommended standards and using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.	Standard No child or young person should live more than 400m from space provided for informal play. A NEAP standard play area within 1000m of home.	These standards are a combination of Natural England' ANGST standards the NPFA recommended thresholds for play and existing thresholds identified in the Local Plan.
Allotments	The standards have been set using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.	Standard No Person should live more than 1200 metres from their nearest allotment site.	These are based on best practice and research into provision thresholds in other authorities similar to Coventry.
Cemeteries and Churchyards	No standards are set.	No standards are set.	No standards are set.

Area Action Plan - North East Area

Population 104,993 Total Area 2,545ha Total Open Space 338.7ha (13.3% of total area)

Greenspace Type	Current Proposed Standard	Current Provision	Comparison to Proposed Standard	Actions
Parks and openspace	3.1ha per 1000	2.27 ha per 1000	There is a deficiency of formal parks and open space in the North East Area	The Council will work in partnership to improve the quality of existing open space to the recognized quality standard. The Council will also protect open space particularly larger sites for the benefit of local people
Natural Greenspace	1.72ha per 1000	0.32ha per 1000	There is a significant deficiency of accessible natural greenspace although residents are most likely to make use of Coombe Abbey Country Park which is a City Council Facility located outside the City Council administrative boundaries.	It is not likely that new provision of natural greenspace will be made and therefore the Council will in consultation with local people introduce more naturalistic areas into local parks and open spaces. To provide as a minimum 1 ha per 1000 head of population of Land designated as Local Nature Reserve
Provision for children and young people	0.10 ha per 1000 (aged 2-19 years)	0.08 ha per 1000	There are accessibility deficiencies on the boundaries of the neighbourhood area particularly at the city boundary perimeters	Upgrade play provision to the recognized NEAP standard. Ensure that children and young people have access to a NEAP standard play area within 1000m of home and to good quality informal play space within 400m of where they live
Grass Pitches	1.02 ha per Overall	0.74 ha per 1000	There is a slight deficiency in pitches when compared to the minimum City Standard.	Pitches are a demand led facility and as such the City Council will work with local clubs and teams to ensure pitches are playable through out the Season. If demand increases the Council will work with Schools and private providers to secure community use. The Council will strive to ensure an over provision of at least 10% will be maintained in order to provide flexibility and to respond to fluctuations in demand
Other Outdoor Sport	Standards have not been set in order for the City to provide a range of accessible facilities within a reasonable distance		The City Council will ensure that a full range of adult and youth facilities for outdoor sport will be available within each Neighbourhood Area. These will include, bowling greens, tennis courts, all weather pitches, skate park or wheeled play facility, an athletics track or fitness circuit, a multi use games area, basket ball court and youth shelter	The approach advocated is to ensure that people in each Neighbourhood Area has a full range of provision. This may require people to travel outside their immediate settlement area for certain facilities but will ensure that facilities are within a reasonable distance and often within easy walkable distance.
Allotments	0.38ha per 1000	0.27 ha per 1000	The Area falls short of the proposed standards. There are currently in excess of 60 vacant plots across the area	The Council will work with allotment holders to ensure vacant plots and waiting lists are kept to a minimum. Private allotment sites need further research to establish an overall picture of vacant plots

Area Action Plan - North West Area

Population 82,008 Total Area 3,613ha Total Open Space approx 358.3ha (9.9% of total area)

Greenspace Type	Current Proposed Standard	Current Provision	Comparison to Proposed Standard	Actions
Parks and openspace	3.1ha per 1000	2.27 ha per 1000	There is a deficiency of formal parks and open space in the North East Area	The Council will work in partnership to improve the quality of existing open space to the recognized quality standard. The Council will also protect open space particularly larger sites for the benefit of local people
Natural Greenspace	1.72ha per 1000	0.32ha per 1000	There is a significant deficiency of accessible natural greenspace although residents are most likely to make use of Coombe Abbey Country Park which is a City Council Facility located outside the City Council administrative boundaries.	It is not likely that new provision of natural greenspace will be made and therefore the Council will in consultation with local people introduce more naturalistic areas into local parks and open spaces. To provide as a minimum 1 ha per 1000 of Land designated as Local Nature Reserve
Provision for children and young people	0.10 ha per 1000 (aged 2-19 years)	0.08 ha per 1000	There are accessibility deficiencies on the boundaries of the neighbourhood area particularly at the city boundary perimeters	Upgrade play provision to the recognized NEAP standard. Ensure that children and young people have access to a NEAP standard play area within 1000m of home and to good quality informal play space within 400m of where they live
Grass Pitches	1.02 ha per Overall	0.74 ha per 1000	There is a slight deficiency in pitches when compared to the minimum City Standard. The standard of 0.74 ha per 1000 should be the minimum standard for the North East.	Pitches are a demand led facility and as such the City Council will work with local clubs and teams to ensure pitches are playable through out the Season. If demand increases the Council will work with Schools and private providers to secure community use. The Council will strive to ensure an over provision of at least 10% will be maintained in order to provide flexibility and to respond to fluctuations in demand
Other Outdoor Sport	Standards have not been set in order for the City to provide a range of accessible facilities within a reasonable distance		The City Council will ensure that a full range of adult and youth facilities for outdoor sport will be available within each Neighbourhood Area. These will include, bowling greens, tennis courts, all weather pitches, skate park or wheeled play facility, an athletics track or fitness circuit, a multi use games area, basket ball court and youth shelter	The approach advocated is to ensure that people in each Neighbourhood Area has a full range of provision. This may require people to travel outside their immediate settlement area for certain facilities but will ensure that facilities are within a reasonable distance and often within easy walkable distance.
Allotments	0.38ha per 1000	0.27 ha per 1000	The Area falls short of the proposed standards. There are currently in excess of 60 vacant plots across the area	The Council will work with allotment holders to ensure vacant plots and waiting lists are kept to a minimum. Private allotment sites need further research to establish an overall picture of vacant plots

Area Action Plan - South

Population 113,847 Total Area 3,706ha Total Open Space approx 791.7ha (21% of total area)

Greenspace Type	Current Proposed Standard	Current Provision	Comparison to Proposed Standard	Actions
Parks and openspace	3.1ha per 1000	5.54	There is a surplus of provision of both parks and open space in this area, although there may be accessibility deficiencies in Earlsdon and Wainbody Wards. It is important to recognize that Memorial Park is a large site that skews the provision in the South Area. The park is very much a site that serves the whole City.	The Council will work closely with the local community to prioritise improvements to site that fall below a good standard.
Natural Greenspace	1.72ha per 1000	3.4	There is a surplus of accessible natural greenspace when measured against the Citywide standards.	The Council will work to improve the quality of existing spaces to provide people with good quality sites. To provide as a minimum 1 ha per 1000 of Land designated as Local Nature Reserve
Provision for children and young people	0.10 ha per 1000 (aged 2-19 years)	0.11	The current level of provision in the south are reflects the minimum standard set for the City although sites need to be upgraded to the necessary NEAP standards	Upgrade play provision to the recognized NEAP standard. Ensure that children and young people have access to a NEAP standard play area within 1000m of home and to good quality informal play space within 400m of where they live.
Grass Pitches	1.02 ha per	1.46	There is an over provision of pitches when measured against the city wide standards. The Standard of 1.46 ha per 1000 is the minimum standard for provision in the South Area	The Council will strive to ensure an over provision of at least 10% will be maintained in order to provide flexibility and to respond to fluctuations in demand
Other Outdoor Sport	Overall Standards have not been set in order for the City to provide a range of accessible facilities within a reasonable distance		The City Council will ensure that a full range of adult and youth facilities for outdoor sport will be available within each Neighbourhood Area. These will include, bowling greens, tennis courts, all weather pitches, skate park or wheeled play facility, an athletics track or fitness circuit, a multi use games area, basket ball court and youth shelter	The approach advocated is to ensure that people in each Neighbourhood Area has a full range of provision. This may require people to travel outside their immediate settlement area for certain facilities but will ensure that facilities are within a reasonable distance and often within easy walkable distance.
Allotments	0.38ha per 1000	0.33	There is a slight deficiency of allotments when measured against the City standards	The Council will work with allotment holders to ensure vacant plots and waiting lists are kept to a minimum. Private allotment sites need further research to establish an overall picture of vacant plots

Ward Based Provision Assessment Against Standards

Ward based provision per 1000 population

Area	Area Pop'n	Ward	Ward Pop'n	Parks and openspace	Accessible Natural	Outdoor Sport Grass Pitches	Provision per 1000 children and Young People	Allotments	
City Minimum Standard per 1000				3.1	1.72	1.02	0.10	0.38	
North East	104,993	Foleshill Ward	17968	0.85	0.03	0.23	0.11	0.09	There is a deficiency across all typologies
		Henley Ward	17027	4.91	0.84	1.23	0.06	0.20	High provision of parks and open space, under provision of natural greenspace, under provision of children and young people and allotments
		Holbrook Ward	18427	1.25	0	2.00	0.09	0.27	Under provision of parks and open space and allotments, high provision of grass pitches
		Longford Ward	17601	5.56	1.11	0.70	0.05	0.39	High provision of parks and open space under provision of natural greenspace, grass pitches and provision for children and young people
		Radford Ward	16901	0.71	0.00	0.20	0.02	0.03	There is a deficiency across all typologies
		Upper Stoke Ward	17069	0.41					

Ward Based Provision Assessment Against Standards

Ward based provision per 1000 population

Area	Area Pop'n	Ward	Ward Pop'n	Parks and openspace	Accessible Natural	Outdoor Sport Grass Pitches	Provision for children and Young People	Allotments	
City Minimum Standard per 1000			3.1	1.72	1.02	0.10	0.38		
North West	82,008	Bablake Ward	15041	2.17	2.15	4.40	0.13	0.98	Below standard provision of parks and open space, high provision of natural greenspace, grass pitches and allotments
		Sherborne Ward	16531	2.21	0.32	0.06	0.13	1.01	High provision of allotments Below standard provision of parks and open space, grass pitches, natural greenspace
		St. Michael's Ward	15413	0.88	0.00	0.30	0.09	0.24	There is a deficiency across all typologies except provision for children and young people where the deficiency is negligible
		Whoberley Ward	16537	4.00	0.55	0.06	0.13	0.48	High provision of parks and open space, above city standard provision for children and young people and allotments, under provision of natural greenspace and grass pitches
		Woodlands Ward	18486	1.18	2.78	0.47	0.08	0.08	High provision of natural greenspace under provision across all other typologies

Ward Based Provision Assessment Against Standards

Ward based provision per 1000 population

Area	Area Pop'n	Ward	Ward Pop'n	Parks and openspace	Accessible Natural	Outdoor Sport Grass Pitches	Provision per 1000 children and Young People	Allotments
City Minimum Standard per 1000				3.1	1.72	1.02	0.10	0.38
South	113,847	Binley and Willenhall	18296	5.16	4.63	0.35	0.05	0.00
		Cheylesmore Ward	13983	7.80	5.29	2.00	0.18	1.52
		Earlsdon Ward	16543	4.11	1.84	1.30	0.13	0.52
		Lower Stoke Ward	15778	1.38	0.12	0.79	0.07	0.03
		Wainbody Ward	16306	4.08	4.34	1.69	0.03	0.00
		Westwood Ward	14983	4.76	4.67	0.97	0.27	0.13
		Wyken Ward	17958	5.03	3.01	2.38	0.09	0.28

SECTION VI

Implementation Plan



Appendices



List of Consultees

1. External Consultees

Allesley Park Friends Group
British Orienteering Federation
CABE Space
Caludon Castle Friends Group
CEMAP
Countryside Agency
County FA
County Hockey Association
Coventry District Cricket Board
Coventry Empowerment Network
Coventry Green Party
Coventry Youth Council
England & Wales Cricket Board
Environment Thematic Group
Friends of Parks – War Memorial Park
Groundwork Coventry and Warwickshire
Lawn Tennis Association
Longford CAN
Natural England
RFU
Sport England
Warwickshire Cricket Board – Edgbaston Birmingham
Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

2. Sports Organisations

Alan Higgs Centre
Ackers Adventurous Activities
Active Kidz/Active Teens
Adult Education Service
Adventure Activities for All Abilities (4As)
Allesley School of Dancing
Ansty Hill Walkers
Arden Basketball Club
Association of Traditional Martial Arts
AT7 Youth
Atomic Black Belt Academy
Avenue Bowling Club
Bablake Old Boys Cricket Club
Balsall & Berkswell Football Club
Barkers Butts Badminton Club
Beechwood Lawn Tennis Club

Bell Green Community Centre
Birmingham Ryukyu Kobujustu
Brandon Wood Golf Club
Broadstreet RFC Mini & Junior Section
Broadstreet Rugby Football Club
Bromwell Academy of Dance & Drama
Caludon Castle School Sports Centre
Canley Sports & Social Football Club
Cassidy Coventry Blaze Ice Hockey Club & Juniors
Cee-Jay Sequence Dance Club
Central Galaxy Trampoline Club
Centre AT7
Ceroc Modern Jive Dancing
Chapelfields Colts JFC
Chater Dance Academy
Cheerleading Factory
Cheylesmore Community Centre
City Of Coventry Indoor Bowls Club
City of Coventry Swimming Club
Clifford Bridge Fitness
Copsewood (Coventry) Sports & Social Club
Copsewood Diamonds Netball Club
Copsewood RFC
Cosford Shooting Ground
Coundon Court Football Club
Coventrians RFC
Coventrians Rugby Football Club
Coventry & North Warwick Sports Club
Coventry & Central Warwicks Sunday Football League
Coventry & District Table Tennis Association
Coventry Aikido
Coventry and North Warwickshire Sports Club
Coventry and Warwickshire Dragon Boat Club
Coventry Archery Club
Coventry Blaze Ice Hockey Team
Coventry C H A Rambling Club
Coventry Chaos Ice Hockey Team
Coventry City Community Scheme
Coventry City Ladies Football Club
Coventry Community Circus
Coventry Crusaders Basketball Club
Coventry Crusaders Wheelchair Basketball Club
Coventry CTC
Coventry & District Cricket Board
Coventry Fusion
Coventry Judo Club
Coventry Ki Society
Coventry Ladies Harmony Club
Coventry NDC (New Deal for Communities)
Coventry Phoenix Womens Ice Hockey Club

Coventry Scuba School
Coventry Sea Cadets
Coventry Sphinx Cricket Club
Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre
Coventry Tech Rugby Football Club
Coventry Triathletes
Coventry University Sport and Recreation
Coventry Wu Style Tai Chi Chuan
Covkartsport Championship Racing
Crusader Foundation
Different Strokes
Dive2day
DJMFitness
Dodge City Line Dancing
Dog Friendly Ramblers
Earlsdon Mini and Junior Rugby
Earlsdon Rugby Club
Edgehill FC
Edgwick Sports Project
Erw Fawr Outdoor Pursuits Club
Essential TaeKwon-Do Black Belt Academies
Fit N Fun Kids
Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre
Folk Annexe Folk Dance Club
Funky Fitness
Garlands Off Road & Corporate Leisure
G-GNP Football Club
Green Lane Football Club
Griff & Coton Netball Club
Haragei Fighting Arts Academy
Healthy Walks (Coventry City Council)
Heart of England Taekwondo
Henley College
Highway Cricket Club
Highway Netball Club
Inspire School of Dance
Ireland's Riding Stables
Italia UK
Jaguar Coventry Hockey Club
Jardine Crescent Young Peoples Centre
Jenna Pogue Line Dance Club
John White Community Centre
Jubilee Juniors Badminton Club
Kenilworth Lawn Tennis and Squash Club (KLT&SC)
Lavender Hall Fishery
Leamington and Warwick Academy of Dance
Line Dance with Darren
LoveBallet Dance Company
LS Aerobics
Massey Ferguson Cricket Club

Meditation (Sahaja)
Mercia Canoe Club
Mercian Ice Dance Club
Midland Adventure
Midland Hillwalkers
Midland Ski Club
Midland Sports Centre
Mixed Dance Company
Music Generation
Northbrook Athletic Club
Nuneaton RFC Limited
Nuneaton Rugby Football Club Limited
Old Coventrians RFC
One Body One Life
Performing Arts Service
Perspire
Phantom Coach Football Club
Phoenix Table Tennis Club
Pilates
Pinley Football Club
Positive Futures
Power for Life Gym
Powerleague
Pro Santos Football Club & Academy
Qigong Class, East West Club
Rhapsody Academy Of Dance
Roger Casements GAA Club
Royal Hotel (Sunday) Football Club
Rugby Swimming Club Synchronised Swimming
Salle Ursa Fencing Club
SalsaDelic
Saracens Running Club
Seibudo All Styles
Serendipity Fitness
Simply Soccer/The Arsenal Soccer Schools
Singing for the Terrified
Solihull Amateur Boxing Club
Solihull Area Tennis
Solihull Indoor Golf & Conference Centre
Sphinx Club
Spirit Health Club Coventry
Spirit Salsa Dance Class
St Augustines Sports Centre
Standard Crown Green Bowls Club
Standard Triumph Cricket Club
Standard Triumph Modern Dance
Star Gymnastics
Stardust Dance Academy
Stoke Old Boys Rugby Football Club
Susan West School of Dance

Taoist Cultural Arts Association
Tetsudo Karate Martial Art
The Phoenix Aikido & Fitness Club
The Positive Development Soccer Club
The Way of the Spiritual Warrior Martial Arts
Timms School of Dance
TST Martial Arts Academy
Urban Rangers
Varsity Badminton Club
Warwick International School of Riding
Warwickshire - Esporta Health and Fitness Club
West Midlands Golf Club
Westwood Sporting Football Club
Westwood United Football Club
Woodlands Sports College
WorldSong
Yoga with Fay
Yogafun

3. CITY COUNCIL OFFICERS representing:

Advisor for PE
Allotments
Asset Management
Bereavement Services
Children, Learning and Young Peoples Directorate
Citizens Panel
City Development
City Parks and Open Spaces
City Planning
City Services
City Services – Grounds
Community Services
Coombe Country Park
Corporate Geographic Information Systems & Acting Data Standards
Corporate Policy
Culture, Leisure and Libraries
Development Control
Education
Grounds and Cleansing
Healthy Walks
Inclusion
Local Agenda 21
Local Strategic Partnership
Marketing and Communications
Neighbourhood management
Planning Policy

Green Space in Coventry

Portfolio Holders for City Services, City Development and
Culture, Leisure and Libraries
Regeneration
Safety Officer
Senior Landscape Architects
Sport and Physical Activity
Sports Development
Strategic Leisure
Youth Community
Youth Service MGR Sports

Quality Audit Key and Sub Criteria

KEY CRITERIA	Sub Criteria									
	Easy to Find	Obvious	Safe	Clean	Well Maintained	Litter Bin/Dog Bin	Well Maintained	Information	Well Maintained	Opening Closing Times
MAIN ENTRANCE										
SIDE ENTRANCE	Safe	Clean	Well Maintained							
SIGNAGE	Welcoming	Contact Detail	Name of Site	Site Map	Information	Well Maintained			Opening Closing Times	
BOUNDARY/ HEDGES / GATES/ FENCES	Well Maintained	Clearly Defined								
ROADS / PATHWAYS/ CYCLEWAYS/ ACCESSES	Suitable Materials	Level/Safe for use	Disabled Access	Well Defined Edges	Surface Clean	Weed Free				
FLOWER BEDS	Suitable use of plants	Weed Free	Edged	Well Maintained						
SHRUB BEDS	Suitable use of plants	Weed Free	Edged	Well Maintained						
YOUNG TREES	Appropriate mix	Well Maintained	Tree Ties Maintained	Trees Tagged						
MATURE TREES	Well Maintained	Adequate crown lifting	Trees Tagged							
CLOSE-MOWN GRASS AREAS	Full Grass Cover	Cleanly Cut	No Weed	No Clippings						
NATURALISTIC GRASS AREAS	Litter Free	Adequate Mowing Margins								
BIINS	Numerous	Well Maintained	Emptied Regularly	Surfaced						
SEATS	Numerous	Well Maintained	Ease of Access	Provision for Disabled	Litter Bin Nearby					
TOILETS	Easy Access	Well Maintained	Good Condition	Safe to Use	Visible	Well Signed			Provision for Disabled	

QUALITY AUDIT KEY AND SUB CRITERIA- continued

	Adequate Spaces	Clean and Tidy	Good Condition	Well Signed	Safe to Use	Surface Markings	
PARKING							
LIGHTING	Good Lighting	Well Maintained					
INFORMATION BOARDS	Site Name	Adequate and up to date					
PLAY PROVISION	Signed	Rules	Safe	Well Maintained	Fence	Self Closing Gate	Bin
CLEANLINESS	Litter	Dog Fouling	Graffiti	Chewing Gum			
CEMETERY	Upright Graves	Vandalism	Tidy	Overgrown			
TENNIS COURTS	Surfacing	Fence	Posts	Nets	Line Marking	Secure Entrance	Adequate runoff
BOWLING GREENS	Bench	Clean Gullies	Backboards	Turf	Fenced	Club House	Floodlight
MUGA	Surfacing	Fence	Goals / Posts	Nets	Line Marking	Secure Entrance	Adequate runoff
ALLOTMENTS	Water Supply	Condition of Plots	Disabled Access	Meeting Point	Composting		

Pitch Quality Audit

Site Name:		
Site ID		
Pitch Number		
Typology		
Number of Games per Season		
Number Cancelled		
Date of survey:		
Weather Conditions:		
Surveyed by:		
Pitch	Rating	Rating (x)
GRASS COVER	> 94%	
	85% - 94%	
	70% - 84%	
	60% - 69%	
	< 60%	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
LENGTH OF GRASS	Excellent	
	Good	
	Poor	
	Very Poor	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
SIZE OF PITCH / CRICKET FIELD	Yes - Full Size	
	No - Adequate Size	
	No - Not Adequate Size	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
ADEQUATE SAFETY MARGINS	Yes - Full	
	No - Adequate Margins	
	No - Not Adequate Margins	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
SLOPE OF PITCH / CRICKET OUTFIELD (GRADIENT AND CROSS FALL)	Flat	
	Slight	
	Gentle	
	Moderate	
	Severe	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00

Pitch Quality Audit - continued

EVENNESS OF PITCH / CRICKET FIELD	Excellent	
	Good	
	Poor	
	Very Poor	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
PROBLEM AREAS: EVIDENCE OF DOG FOULING	None	
	Yes - Some	
	Yes - Lots	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
PROBLEM AREAS: EVIDENCE OF GLASS / STONES / LITTER	None	
	Yes - Some	
	Yes - Lots	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
PROBLEM AREAS: EVIDENCE OF UNOFFICIAL USE	None	
	Yes - Some	
	Yes - Lots	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
PROBLEM AREAS: EVIDENCE OF DAMAGE TO SURFACE	None	
	Yes - Some	
	Yes - Lots	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
NUMBER OF HOURS TRAINING	0	
	1 to 2	
	2 to 4	
	4+	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
CHANGING ACCOMODATION	Yes	
	No	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
PITCH SCORE	0.00	OUT OF

Pitch Quality Audit - continued

Equipment	Rating	Rating (x)
WINTER SPORTS ONLY - GOAL POSTS - QUALITY	Excellent	
	Good	
	Poor	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
CRICKET ONLY - IS THE WICKET PROTECTED	Yes	
	No	
	Other	
	SCORE	
LINE MARKINGS - QUALITY	Excellent	
	Good	
	Poor	
	Other	
SCORE		0.00
TRAINING AREA	Yes	
	No	
	Other	
	SCORE	
EQUIPMENT SCORE	0.00	OUT OF
OVERALL	0.00	OUT OF
TOTAL SCORE	0%	

Map of the City with Greensapce Provision



If you need this information in another format or language
please contact us

Telephone 024 7683 2368

If you would like to give feedback or comment on the
Greenspace Strategy please contact:
Head of Parks, Telephone: 024 7683 2380 or
Head of Forward Planning, Telephone: 024 7683 1292

Greenspace Strategy

Executive Summary and Standards

2008 - 2018



Coventry City Council

www.coventry.gov.uk/parks

Introduction

The Greenspace Strategy has been developed to provide a strategic framework for the future management of Coventry City's parks and green spaces whilst also addressing the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17(PPG17), which sets out government guidance in relation to the development of clear and transparent planning policies for parks, open spaces, outdoor sports and recreational facilities.

The guidance calls for local authorities to set standards for parks and open spaces that recognise both the present level of provision, and local people's views and aspirations regarding the present and future provision. It therefore has a requirement for local authorities to undertake two main pieces of work:

An audit of current provision, examining:

- **Quantity** – what type of space is it, how much of each type is there and what is the primary purpose?
- **Quality** – how well does this provision meet the purpose for which it is intended when measured against best practice?
- **Accessibility** – is the space provided actually in the places where it is needed, are there communities that are not well served by existing provision and how far do people have to travel to get to the different facilities and provision?

Consultation has been carried out with local people to establish what use is made of different types of space, what barriers prevent people from using space, and how well existing provision meets people's needs and aspirations.

The outcome is a robust local assessment of provision at both a city wide and local level.

There are four guiding principles for local assessments:

- Local needs
- The delivery of a network of high quality, sustainable open spaces and sport and recreation facilities
- The improvement and enhancement of the accessibility and quality of existing provision
- The value of open spaces or sport and recreation facilities – local needs and wider benefits such as biodiversity and health and well being for people.

This work was undertaken in mid 2007 and examined provision of parks and open spaces, children's play, natural green space, allotments, cemeteries and churchyards, outdoor sports facilities etc. Each site was assessed and evaluated against agreed criteria, and the results were then compared with the feedback from a limited response to an extensive public consultation (including consultation with stakeholder groups, and with young people) to determine what standards of provision should be.

The desired outcome is to provide a Greenspace Strategy for the city that is based on a robust assessment of local need and helps :

- To meet the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 17(PPG17): Planning for open space, sport and recreation through the development of local standards of provision relating to each different type of greenspace. PPG17 advocates that standards need to be set in relation quantity, quality and accessibility that are based on local need.
- To provide high quality networks of accessible greenspace and outdoor recreational facilities that are valued by the local community and cater for local need in both urban and rural areas.
- To provide fit for purpose provision that is economically and environmentally sustainable.
- To ensure that the city provides an appropriate balance between new provision and ensures that existing provision is improved and enhanced
- To provide clarity for developers and land owners with regards to what the Council expects from development proposals in relation to greenspace provision.
- To provide a clear framework of investment that balances increased accessibility, enhancement and improvement to existing provision, and new provision.
- To deliver a consistent approach through relevant strategies that supports the emerging Local Development Framework.



The Greenspace Strategy provides a clear framework and approach that determines the priorities for investment, guides policy and identifies opportunities for the city and its partners in relation to the city's greenspaces.

In developing the Greenspace Strategy the city has been subdivided into three core areas, these are the existing Neighbourhood Management Areas currently utilised by the city. Using the neighbourhood areas enables the city to identify the priorities for each area of the city in relation to the emerging Local Development Framework. Priorities may also be drilled down to the ward level.

The Greenspace Strategy has been developed following the stages as outlined in the companion guide to PPG17 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' as published by the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2002). This has included the following:

- A comprehensive review of existing strategies, corporate documents and policies that may influence greenspace (this includes planning policy)
- Identification of all existing greenspace and the associated facilities such as outdoor sport or recreation
- The establishment of a steering group and project board of internal and external stakeholders to oversee the development of the Greenspace Strategy
- Consultation with key stakeholders within the City Council, Local, Regional and National Governing bodies
- A digital mapping exercise firstly to identify provision by type and secondly to transfer the findings for quality, quantity and accessibility into a computer based mapping management tool (GIS). This will enable informed management decisions to be made in the future
- Utilising the GIS data to establish and to test local standards of provision at the city and Neighbourhood Area level
- The development of an Action Plan to guide future management and planning decision in relation to greenspace

In order for the city to achieve the network of accessible good quality greenspace of the right type, in the right place for the right needs will require investment and as such will greatly depend on the availability of funding both capital and revenue. The Capital funding will be required to improve quality and accessibility of existing space and to design and provide new space where required. The revenue funding will ensure long term sustainability of sites.

The Vision

The vision of Coventry City Council for greenspace is:

"To provide attractive, high quality accessible greenspaces that are well maintained, safe, clean and are important to local people. This will be achieved through clear, open and robust planning policies that ensure that green space contributes to local character and plays an important role in everyday life of residents whilst supporting the regeneration of the city."



Green Space in Coventry

Methodology

Definition of Greenspace

For the purpose of this strategy 'greenspace' is a collective term that refers to the city's provision of parks and public gardens, children's play areas, outdoor sports facilities such as playing pitches and sports grounds, woodlands, nature reserves, allotments, cemeteries and linear open space.

PPG17 guidance advocates the development of a local typology for the different types of greenspace within the city. For this strategy we are referring to the range of green areas that are used by the public and are in the main managed by Coventry City Council.

The Greenspace Strategy considers core typologies of provision in Coventry, as well as setting out plans and policies for each of the typologies. The strategy proposes provision standards to ensure that people have equal access to the range of typologies regardless of where they live.



Table 1 - City of Coventry Typology - part 1

Coventry City Typology	Hierarchy of Provision	Primary Purpose and Vision
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg); font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">Parks and Open Space</p>	<p>Premier Park</p>	<p>The city has identified War Memorial Parks as the Premier Park using the following justification: Significant numbers of people visiting the park from all over the city. The park is easily accessible by public transport and is close to the city centre. The park includes many attractive features and is of a scale that provides a rich variety of opportunities. An improvement plan has been developed for the park.</p>
	<p>Area Park</p>	<p>The city has identified 4 sites - Allesley, Holbrooks, Longford and Caludon that have been selected as having the potential to become area parks. These parks provide a broad range of opportunities for local people. In developing the parks the emphasis will be placed on community involvement. The parks are well located and development plans for each site will include a varied range of activities.</p>
	<p>Neighbourhood Park</p>	<p>These are the large areas of open space that are not of significant scale to warrant development as area parks, these sites are strategically placed to serve smaller local communities around the city.</p>
	<p>Principal Open Space</p>	<p>Large open space areas where development is restricted due to the nature of the site, such as they form part of the flood plain or have had a history of previous tipping, some sites being important and are designated as open space, others are protected as sites important to nature conservation.</p>
	<p>Incidental Open Space</p>	<p>Small pockets of amenity space in residential areas maintained to minimum requirements, clean and safe to use.</p>
	<p>Ornamental Areas</p>	<p>Important heritage landmarks in the city that help to enhance the quality of the city as a tourist venue. Horticultural elements include shrub beds and bedding plants providing colour and interest.</p>
	<p>Country Park</p>	<p>The aim is to realise the potential which the park offers for social, educational and community development for the people of Coventry.</p>

Table 1 - City of Coventry Typology - part 2

Coventry City Typology	Hierarchy of Provision	Primary Purpose and Vision
<i>Outdoor Sport</i>	Sports Grounds	Sites specifically intended to meet demand for formal participation in sport.
	Grass Pitches	Grass pitches for football, cricket and rugby.
	Other Outdoor Sport Provision	Participation in outdoor sports such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls and athletics.
<i>Natural Greenspace</i>	Woodland	Sites that promote respect and understanding of woodlands through programmes of interpretation, conservation and management. These sites will also provide for recreation and wildlife.
<i>Provision for Children and Young People</i>	Equipped Play Areas	Accessible, safe, clean and well maintained areas designed for or including facilities primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people.
<i>Allotments</i>	Allotments	Opportunities for those people who wish to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
<i>Cemeteries and Churchyards</i>	Cemeteries and Churchyards	Areas for quiet contemplation to remember the deceased.

The Approach

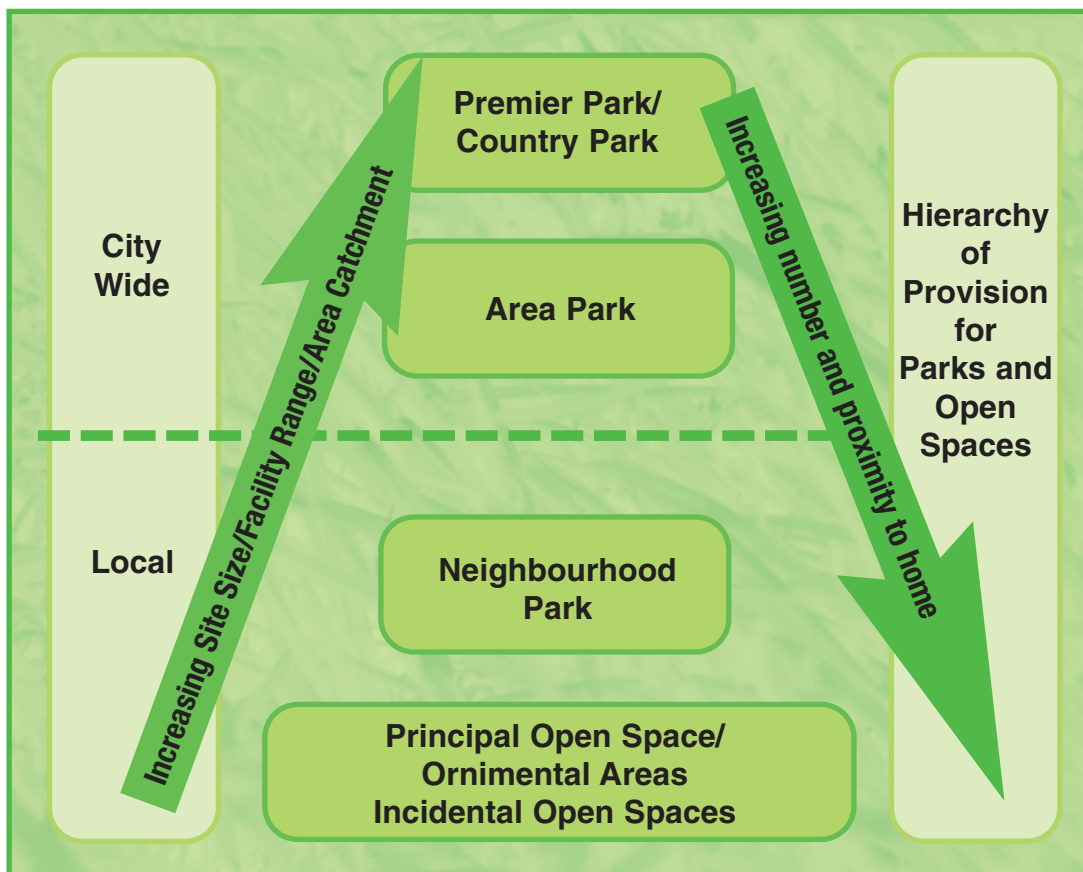
The Strategy covers all greenspaces where there is legitimate public access. The Council owns and manages much of the provision but there are areas under private control or that are not fully publicly accessible such as school grounds.

The following greenspace types are not considered in any great depth as part of this strategy:

- Private land including domestic gardens
- countryside
- the public rights of way network
- private sports grounds or school grounds with no community use.

The geographical scope of the Strategy conforms to the administrative boundary of Coventry City Council. However, it is important to recognise that several sites belonging to the city fall outside the City Council boundary namely Coombe Abbey Country Park, Westwood Heath Allotment Leisure Gardens, Bagington Mill Allotment Leisure Gardens. These sites are included within the Greenspace Strategy as they are City Council assets.

Table 1a - Coventry Parks and Open Space Hierarchy



A review of existing policies and plans

In order to develop a Greenspace Strategy for the city it has been necessary to consider and review the existing large number of plans, policies and strategies produced by the city and its partners that have an influence on greenspace across the city. These existing documents have to be considered as they provide an important source of information, background and context with regards to provision and policy that has shaped the current provision of greenspace across the city.

National Standards

Greenspace policy in Coventry has been influenced by national standards that have been produced by national bodies. The most influential has been the standards set through the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) and Sport England. Other national bodies such as Natural England (formerly English Nature), the Lawn Tennis Association and to a lesser degree the Association of Leisure and Allotment Gardens have all promoted standards of provision. These have all been considered and applied where relevant or possible and are discussed within the relevant sections of the Greenspace Strategy.

PPG17 guidance advocates the development of locally determined provision standards based on local needs that are sustainable and more importantly reflect local circumstance.

Audit and Digital Mapping

The study adheres to the guidance detailed in “Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17” providing guidance on undertaking local assessments of open space, sport and recreation provision. The Council already hold large amounts of information in relation to greenspace. This information is spread through different departments and divisions within the Council and external bodies. This has resulted in part to an inconsistent approach to the provision of greenspace. The Council is not alone in this as many other authorities are finding they are in a similar position as they also undertake the required PPG17 assessments.

A key stage in developing the strategy was to pull together the information currently held by the Council and governing bodies into a digital data base. The database has pulled together the threads of information and has

captured sites by creating digital layers for each of the different typologies. The database has been created to enable the Council to regularly update the information and to use the information as a management tool to guide future decisions for planning and management of greenspace.

In developing the Greenspace Strategy a comprehensive qualitative audit of open space, sport and recreational facilities in terms of quality and accessibility has been undertaken to support the quantitative data captured as part of the digital mapping. The audit has assessed each site against best practice in terms of the physical condition of the site and the infrastructure within them.

Digital maps have been produced from the data base and are an important element in providing the information that has guided the development of this Greenspace Strategy.



Assessing Needs

Consultation has taken the form of questionnaire surveys to the public and user groups, face to face consultation, telephone and questionnaire surveys of key stakeholders, National Governing Bodies and other interested bodies.

Public and Staff Consultation

The Council undertook consultation with the residents and City Council staff living within Coventry. The Consultation was through a standard questionnaire approach as follows:

- **Questionnaire on Web Site** - this went 'live' in June 2007 and was made available to local people until September 2007. The survey was advertised 4 times in the local press and was advertised on the Council Web Site
- **Questionnaire to other places** - A hard copy of the questionnaire was available in libraries, community centres and key reception areas. The survey was advertised in Council buildings via a poster campaign. The survey was also promoted at large Council events such as the Godiva Festival
- **Staff Questionnaire** - Staff in three core departments who live and work in the City Council were notified of the opportunity to have their say via a note attached to their pay slips pointing them to the questionnaire on the web site and via an individual email
- **Other media** - An article was placed in City Vision on two occasions (the free news letter delivered to all homes in the city)

Consultation with the public has attempted to identify local needs and aspirations and importantly to identify the issues at the local level to enable informed decisions about the future management and provision of greenspace to be developed. In order to develop a strategy and set local policies from it, it is essential to consult with the local community to gain an insight into local needs and aspirations. It is also important to ascertain the views of local communities as part of the Best Value and community planning process.

It has to be stated that the response from the public consultation outlined has been limited and as a result evidence gathered from other Council initiated consultation has been used to strengthen the development of this strategy. In addition extensive consultation on the standards and draft strategy with the executive summary is being undertaken in May – June 2008.

Previous consultation with organisations clubs and groups held by the city has been reviewed along with a resident and staff survey. The questionnaire responses have been analysed, and a database has been established that

will provide the Council with detailed analysis for types of open space and areas of residence.

The survey was designed to assess views of residents, their attitude and aspirations with regard to open space, outdoor sport and recreational facilities across the city. In particular the survey set out to identify and establish the following:

- The usage of open space, sport and community recreational facilities by residents within the city
- The value local people attach to open space, sport and community recreational facilities
- The attitude of local residents towards open space, sport and community recreation facilities
- Attitudes to the level of existing provision and facilities
- The frequency of use by local residents to the differing types of provision
- Main mode of transport local resident use to access open space, sport and community recreational facilities
- The views of residents to the accessibility of open space, sport and community recreational facilities
- The barriers that prevent or reduce local use of open space, sport and community recreational facilities
- Local needs and expectations

Key Stakeholders

50+ individuals and regional governing bodies were consulted either by face to face interviews, telephone interview or via an email survey. The key stakeholders were identified by the City Council as people with an influence or interest in greenspace across the city.

Local Groups and Schools

Questionnaire surveys were sent to Friends of Parks Groups, Allotment Societies, Schools, Football Clubs, Cricket Clubs, Bowls Clubs, Tennis Clubs, and Athletics Clubs.

Young People

The City Council has recently completed a Play Strategy for Children and Young People and the evidence collated is incorporated into the greenspace strategy.

Neighbourhood Management Areas

In order for the Greenspace Strategy to reflect the differences in provision and spatial distribution of facilities within local communities the city strategy has considered provision on two levels. Firstly the quantity, quality and accessibility of greenspace at a citywide provision level and secondly using the city's existing Neighbourhood Management Areas. Neighbourhood Management is the way in which the council works to reflect needs and preferences in local neighbourhoods to improve its services and the quality of life of local people.

By making use of the Neighbourhood Management Areas the Greenspace Strategy can support the Councils three key roles for Neighbourhood Management:

- Problem solving – working with local partners and residents to find local solutions to local problems
- Community involvement and consultation – making sure that local residents and community groups have the opportunity, skills and confidence to take part in deciding how local services are delivered
- Planning to deliver better services – making sure that neighbourhood priorities are included in future plans for your neighbourhood

The use of Neighbourhood Management Areas will also enable:

- A comparison to be made between the different areas of the city
- Identify the spatial distribution and accessibility of facilities within the Neighbourhood Areas compared to the city overall
- Provide an insight into the what facilities or provision need investment, replacement or new provision when negotiating financial contributions with developers

The data collected in developing the Greenspace Strategy has been developed in such a way as to enable the Council to drill down further and to undertake analysis if needed at the ward level.

In developing the Greenspace Strategy the city has been subdivided into the three core Neighbourhood Management Areas:

- North East
- North West
- South

For the purpose of this Greenspace Strategy the following definitions are relevant;

- **City wide** - everything within the administrative footprint of the City of Coventry
- **Area** - the administrative division within the city
- **Neighbourhoods** - the places where the communities live and identify with
- **Wards** - the electoral boundaries that elected members represent.

Comparison with other local authorities

It is useful to gauge the city provision against other similar local authorities and as such the findings and standard from other authorities PPG17 assessments would be a valuable point of comparison. The use of this information is dependent upon its availability and accessibility. The provision within the city is compared with other local authorities of a similar size where possible.

PPG17 advocates local authorities move away from the use of national provision standards in order to develop local standards that best fit the city and local need. The use of benchmarking with other city's is useful to ensure the people of Coventry are provided with a good level of facilities and provision.



Management Issues and Financial Implications

Ownership and management of greenspace and the associated facilities across the city is subject to different regimes. The regimes are linked to the function and type of provision dependent upon ownership. Therefore sites of the same type may well be subjected to differing maintenance and management practices.

A key issue for the greenspace strategy is to raise awareness of both the capital and revenue funding required to maintain and manage the city's greenspace facilities. People are often aware of the cost of built facilities such as sports halls and swimming pools, but tend to be less aware that the footpaths in the local park have a predicted lifespan and will need resurfacing in a similar way that the roads and public footpaths need re surfacing, purely and simply because after so many years they wear out. The cost of resurfacing the paths for example in one of the city's larger parks such as Allesley Park would cost hundreds of thousand pounds and considering the city has 20+ other parks the cost runs into millions.

Another issue is the fact that much of the city's greenspace is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week and as such is often unprotected and therefore exposed to the more undesirable activities such as vandalism and abuse. However if something is damaged or broken it has to be repaired or made safe in order to reduce the insurance liability and risk to the people using the site. This is very much dependent upon factors such as location, community involvement or the more difficult to predict the long term unexpected costs such as vandalism, abuse, cost of keeping building and facilities secure through staffing, policing and ongoing repair.

The Greenspace Strategy will provide a framework for the city to achieve key objectives over the next 10 years. The strategy identifies the issues that will need to be addressed and will form a key planning and management document for the future provision across the city by setting out the future vision for enhancing, improving, preserving and managing the city's greenspaces.

The results of this work served two purposes. They guide the authority in the development of a strategy for future development of different types of green space, and they also serve as evidence to support the Council's requirements for contributions from developers where planned developments create an additional demand for different types of space.



Green Space in Coventry

Setting Provision Standards

The Standards set out the provision standards for the various categories of open space looking at quantity, quality and accessibility.

The standards plus supporting information is given in the main report appendices. There is also a set of quality standards for each of the provision standard categories. The standards devised reflect the information received from the various needs surveys and the audit information. This is a summary of a very much longer detailed and carefully argued report which can be accessed separately.

The results were these:

Parks

The city has identified a hierarchy of provision for its parks and open spaces. Within that hierarchy the sites defined as parks and open space (Premier Park, Area Park, Neighbourhood Park, Country Park, Principal Open Space, Incidental Open Space and Ornamental Areas) are important elements of the city's Greenspace. They provide a sense of place for the local community and provide landscape quality to particular densely populated urban areas of the city.



The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<p>Standard for Parks The quantity standard for parks should be 0.69 hectares per 1000 population</p> <p>Standard for Open Space (Principal Open Space, Incidental Open Space, Ornamental Areas): The combined quantity standard should be 2.44 hectares per 1000 population Broken down as: Principal Open Space Provision standards should be 0.69 hectares per 1000 population. Incidental Open Space standards should be 1.79 hectare per 1000 population. Ornamental Areas standards should be 0.01 hectares per 1000 population.</p>	<p>Standard The appropriate quality score for the Premier and Country Park should be to Green Flag Award Standard.</p> <p>5 other parks should also meet Green Flag Award Standard</p> <p>The appropriate quality score for Area Parks and Neighbourhood Parks should be 50% and a quality rating of Good.</p> <p>The standard for Open Space should be between 46%- 60%</p>	<p>Standard Parks above 20ha in size within a travel distance threshold of 2000m.</p> <p>Area Parks 2-20 ha in size within a travel distance threshold of 800m.</p> <p>Neighbourhood parks and Principal Open Space within a travel distance threshold of 400m.</p> <p>Incidental Open Space or an Ornamental Area within a travel distance threshold of 400m.</p>
<p>The standard has identified deficiencies of parks in the North West and South Neighbourhood Area and deficiencies of principal open space and incidental open space in the North East and North West Area. The deficiencies are most marked in the more rural North West Neighbourhood Area.</p>		



Accessible Natural Green Space

It is widely understood that sites of a natural or semi natural nature that are accessible enhance the quality of life for people. The wildlife and bio-diversity benefits that these sites also contribute are often neglected. Bio-diversity is important to the quality of the air that people breathe, to the richness in variety of species in an area and as an indicator of the health and quality of a local environment. These areas not only have benefits in terms of biodiversity they can also be valuable to local economies and as a tourist asset.

The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<p>Standard 1.75 Ha per 1000 population of accessible natural greenspace according to a system of tiers into which the different sizes will fit.</p> <p>A natural greenspace within 400 m of home One accessible 20 ha site within 2km of home.</p> <p>One 100 ha site within 10 km of home .</p>	<p>Standard The standard for designated Local Nature Reserves should be between 46%- 60% or Good.</p> <p>The standard for accessible natural greenspace should be between 46% 60% or Good</p>	<p>Standard No Person should live more than 400 metres from their nearest natural greenspace.</p> <p>One accessible 20 ha site within 2km of home.</p> <p>One 100 ha site within 10 km of home</p>
<p>The standard has identified deficiencies of accessible natural greenspace in the North East and North West Neighbourhood Area and a significant surplus in the South Neighbourhood Area The deficiencies are most marked in the more rural North East Neighbourhood Area however it is important to recognise that the public rights of way network may serve to provide people in the area with access to wider countryside.</p>		

Provision for Children and Young People

For the purposes of developing the ‘Greenspace Strategy’ provision for children and young people has concentrated the research on the fixed play provision within the city and consists of equipped play areas and other specialist provision such as multi use games areas and wheeled play provision or skate parks.

The provision facilities for children and young people are important in facilitating opportunities for physical activity and the development of movement and social skills. As such the results for quality audit for play provision are often much lower than expected as the audit considers not only the physical condition of the equipment it considers the range, play value and measures them against models that are considered best practice in terms of play provision

This section of the report examines space designated for children’s play, but recognises that children play in a wide variety of other spaces as well.

The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<p>Standard 0.10 Ha per 1000 population of fixed and natural play provision.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>The standard has identified deficiencies of fixed play provision in all three neighbourhood areas. However it is recognised there are opportunities for natural play.</p> </div>	<p>Standard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reasonably close to home and within sight of main travel routes across site ● Located with informal surveillance from surrounding property or other well used facilities or public spaces ● Sited in places identified in agreement with local children and young people ● Be seen as part of the local community infrastructure ● Provide the opportunity for risk through design and choice of equipment and landscaping ● Provide opportunities for children of all abilities <p>In addition all equipment should comply with recognised European standards BSEN 1176 for fixed equipment and BS EN 177 for Impact absorbing surfacing.</p> <p>Provision for Teenagers should provide variety of expectation and enable young people to sit or take exercise in a safe and clean environment.</p> <p>All sites to be maintained to a good standard of 60% or above.</p>	<p>Standard</p> <p>Parks above 20ha in size within a travel distance threshold of 2000m.</p> <p>Area Parks 2-20 ha in size within a travel distance threshold of 800m.</p> <p>Neighbourhood parks and Principal Open Space within a travel distance threshold of 400m.</p> <p>Incidental Open Space or an Ornamental Area within a travel distance threshold of 400m.</p>



Outdoor Sports

This section considers the wide range of outdoor sports provision across the city. It includes specific sites developed within the hierarchy to focus resources and to promote sport and recreation, these are the sports grounds. It considers the grass pitch provision across the city both public and private on dedicated sites or in other open spaces such as parks, it also considers other sports provision such as bowls, tennis and athletics that may also be on specific sites or in other spaces.

Outdoor sports facilities, for the purposes of the assessment have been sub-divided into the following facilities:

- Sports Grounds – Sites specifically developed to cater for sport often containing provision or facilities for more than one sport .
- Grass Pitches – provision for Football, Cricket, Rugby and Hockey have been assessed using the prescribed methodology detailed within “Towards a Level Playing Field” It is important to note that the pitch Quality Assessment auditing was undertaken during the summer months and as such pitches were not in regular use.
- Other Sports- Bowling Greens have been assessed separately as discrete sports facilities. Where they are present in parks, bowling greens have formed part of the overall quality score for the facility. Tennis Courts, as with bowling greens have been assessed as discrete sports facilities and where facilities are present in parks, have contributed to the overall score for the park/open space. Athletics have been assessed as part of this study in terms of quantity owing to tracks and pitches not being readily accessible at the time of the site auditing.

The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<p>Standard The standard for outdoor sport is 1.80 ha per 1000.</p> <p>With 0.77 ha provided as sports grounds and 1.0 ha per 1000 as grass pitches and 0.01ha per 1000 for bowls 0.02ha per 1000 for tennis.</p>	<p>Standard Grass pitches to achieve a minimum standard of 66% or Good.</p> <p>This needs further consideration to incorporate the presence of changing and showering facilities.</p> <p>Sport Grounds need to adhere to the above.</p>	<p>Standard No Person should live more than 1200 metres from their nearest outdoor sports facility.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Based on the quantitative standard for sports grounds the main deficiency is in the North West Neighbourhood Area. There is a good distribution of sports pitches across the City and the level of community use needs to be established to enable accurate supply and demand calculations to be established.</p> </div>

Allotments

This section considers the provision of both public and private allotments across the city. The accessibility of greenspace varies greatly dependent upon the type of provision, and it is by their very nature that allotments are only accessible with restrictions in that you must be a tenant or plot holder. Allotments provide a key type of provision within the overall portfolio of open space, sport and recreation facilities. From the consultation undertaken, the value of allotments is significant, providing facilities for physical activity in addition to the promotion of healthy eating and educational value. The provision of allotments is a statutory function for local authorities under a number of legislative acts including the 1950 Allotment Act.

The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<p>Standard The standard for allotments is 0.38ha per 1000.</p>	<p>Standard The proposed standard for allotment is 60% minimum quality rating.</p>	<p>Standard No Person should live more than 1200 metres from their nearest allotment site.</p>
<p>Based on the quantitative standard for allotments there are deficiencies in the North West and South Neighbourhood Area. This needs to be considered with caution as from the audit a number of sites have vacant plots, some more than others that need to be brought back into use before new sites are established. Further discussion with private allotment sites needs to be undertaken to identify the number of vacant plots</p>		

Churchyards and Cemeteries

Cemeteries and closed churchyards can provide a valuable contribution to the portfolio of open space provision within an area. For many, they can provide a place for quiet contemplation in addition to their primary purpose as a final resting place. They often have wildlife conservation and bio-diversity value. In the context of this study, it is important to acknowledge that cemeteries are not created with the intention of providing informal or passive recreation opportunities.

The recommended minimum standards are:

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<p>Standard No quantitative Standard Set.</p>	<p>Standard The proposed standard for Cemeteries is 76% plus or to an excellent standard.</p>	<p>Standard No standard set.</p>

The council subscribes to the Charter for the Bereaved.



Coventry Proposed Quantity Standards

Typology	Quantity Standards	Accessibility Standards	Comment
Parks and openspace	The standards have been set using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.	Standard Parks above 20ha in size within a travel distance threshold of 2000m. Area Parks 2-20 ha in size within a travel distance threshold of 800m. Neighbourhood parks and Principal Open Space within a travel distance threshold of 400m. Incidental Open Space or an Ornamental Area within a travel distance threshold of 400m.	These standards are a combination of Natural England' ANGST standards and existing thresholds identified in the Local Plan.
Accessible Greenspace	The standards have been set acknowledging the Natural England Accessible Greenspace Standards and using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.	Standard No Person should live more than 400 metres from their nearest natural greenspace. One accessible 20 ha site within 2km of home. One 100 ha site within 5 km of home.	These are taken from Natural England's ANGST Standards
Outdoor sport	The standards have been set recognising the accessibility thresholds identified by Sport England the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.(Local accessibility thresholds could not be set due to local clubs not responding to consultation.	Standard No Person should live more than 1200 metres from their nearest outdoor sports facility.	These standards are a combination of Sport England recommended threshold standards and existing thresholds identified in the Local Plan.
Provision for children and young people	The standards have been set acknowledging the Councils use of the NPFA recommended standards and using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future. Also recognising the value of natural playspace	Standard No child or young person should live more than 400m from space provided for informal play. A NEAP standard play area within 1000m of home.	These standards are a combination of Natural England' ANGST standards the NPFA recommended thresholds for play and existing thresholds identified in the Local Plan.
Allotments	The standards have been set using the current provision as the baseline to guide the development of standards for the future.	Standard No Person should live more than 1200 metres from their nearest allotment site.	These are based on best practice and research into provision thresholds in other authorities similar to Coventry.
Cemeteries and Churchyards	No standards are set.	No standards are set.	No standards are set.

General Recommendations

Design of Greenspace

The design of greenspace has a major role to play in the delivery of sustainable communities. Good design is recognised for developing a sense of local community and mutual responsibility. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE Space) has outlined the need for good design in a number of publications and guidance documents. It is possible to design and create greenspace that meet people's aspirations and in meeting aspirations people will take pride in their local area and help preserve them for future generations.

The following design principles are taken from best practice and although not an exhaustive list they give an indication as to what works in ensuring the sustainability, value and management of greenspaces. Greenspace design should therefore.

- Maximise positive use by the community
- Be easily accessible for all members of the community
- Provide facilities that are accessible to all
- Be part of a wider network that provide/allow traffic free routes through residential areas and links to other areas via bus stops and cycleways
- Provide a sense of place for local people and reflect local history or culture
- Facilitate high quality and effective management and maintenance
- Facilitate local communities involvement in new or future provision
- Minimise the opportunity for anti social behaviour and design out opportunities for crime
- Have clear vistas and sight lines across the site, maximising personal safety and casual surveillance
- Prevent any sense of isolation or insecurity through the use of appropriate lighting

- Provide a setting for adjoining buildings, whilst minimising any detrimental effect on local amenity
- Be designed and managed to benefit wildlife, provide integrated habitat areas and support and allow the movement of wildlife, plants and animals. The site should provide a range of habitat type
- Have an appropriate mix of mown grass areas and indigenous planting with mown areas that are large enough to facilitate informal kick about and mini soccer
- Safeguard the integrity of any existing open space or space of heritage value and where appropriate enhance the setting of listed features
- Wherever possible implement flood storage or sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) to negate flood risk
- Provide for local children, it is important that facilities provided match the age range of children and young people
- Provide surfaced tarmac paths that are at least 2metres wide and concrete edged
- Provide adequate litter bins that are in keeping and bins are set into a concrete surface for ease of maintenance
- Provide adequate seating that is in keeping, seating in children's play areas should be set into appropriate safety surfacing. Seating in open space should have arm rests and be linked to paths, seating should be provided in both sunny and shaded areas and allow for wheelchairs and pushchairs to park alongside, off the path.
- All sites should have signage that informs people of the site name, ownership and contact details
- Larger sites or sites where people are expected to cross to get to nearby facilities such as schools or shops should have street lighting
- Sites in new housing should have housing fronting on to the site to allow for surveillance.
- The development of site specific management plans for larger sites, especially new provision

In order to start to meet the standards a number of recommendations are made in relation to all sites and the assessment undertaken. These are concerned with the use of information gathered and the further development of the study in future years. The following recommendations are made:

- a.** Audit sport, leisure and open spaces on a regular basis (every two/three years) and publish findings. This will allow trend data to be collated and improvements to be tracked. It is important that findings are published to enable wider stakeholders to track progress.
- b.** Develop a central record of all open space to include the findings of the assessment undertaken. Currently many different sections of the Council hold this information; this information is not always consistent (sites listed by different names etc). The central record should include access to GIS mapping.
- c.** Establish a central consultation database for the Council, using the data and contacts gathered through this study. This information is held currently by a number of different sections/individuals in the Council; in the course of this study, a number of inaccuracies/wrong contact details etc have been identified; establishing a central database, which is regularly updated, will address these issues for the future.
- d.** Address the current fragmented responsibilities for the management, development and future provision of open space across the city through the establishment of a consultative Steering Group, involving representatives from both sport and leisure, and planning and grounds maintenance, to consider specific site development proposals relating to existing, former and proposed sport and leisure provision. This inter-departmental group should be established to share, and utilise the expertise of leisure and planning officers, to ensure that specific site development issues are fully considered, and the implications shared, before a planning decision is made.
- e.** Continue to develop the marketing information produced about the parks and open space facilities available, key activities accommodated and access arrangements. The Council should seek to work with key partners in future marketing, such as the local Primary Care Trust (PCT), the wider voluntary sector, education, the Youth Service etc to ensure that open space fulfils a valuable role in meeting wider social objectives (e.g. health improvement, increased active participation).
- f.** Develop an access standard regarding physical access for those users and potential users with a disability.
- g.** Review maintenance standards for open space, and agree with local people any changes. Report on performance annually. It is important to set quality standards for each of the open space categories.

- h.** Develop and fund a programme of signage installation. The absence of signage or the presence of outdated signage was found to be a key weakness of many sites audited. Develop a consistent approach to the provision of signage at all sites, through a rolling programme of installation and improvement. All sites should have a sign with site details, ownership and contact numbers. This can address a number of issues including helping with the reporting of vandalism and improving community safety.
- i.** Continue to work towards the reduction of the effects of crime and anti-social behaviour in parks and open spaces.
- j.** Establish and implement a programme of action to address the actual, and perceived, issues of safety in parks and open spaces. This could take the form of installing CCTV at identified sites, or investing in park/open space infrastructure to encourage increased use, which in turn may have a positive impact on the fear of crime because more people are likely to be around.

Parks and Open Space

Management plans are needed for some of the major formal greenspaces; the city has achieved success at the Green Flag Award and needs to continue this success. However the success should not be at the expense of other sites and the city use the audit to improve all sites categorised as Parks and Gardens to a Good Standard, paying particular attention to sites classified as Local Parks. The recommendations detailed below form a response to the assessment undertaken and need to be viewed as complementary to any policies developed within The Green Space Strategy. This principle applies to all managed open space. The recommendations made in this report are focused on addressing facility deficiencies. On the basis of the assessment undertaken the following recommendations are made:

- a.** Build on the Green Space Strategy for the city utilising the results, issues and recommendations
- b.** Identified provision deficiencies are addressed as a priority in the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF)
- c.** Continue to develop and support Friends Groups for key parks and open spaces to increase local involvement and ownership
- d.** Continue to review, develop and improve site Management Plans and extend the practice of management planning to a greater range of parks and open spaces

- e.** Continue to test the quality and “performance” of formal spaces through entering externally judged competitions and quality recognition schemes (e.g. Green Flag/ Britain in Bloom).
- f.** Raise the standard by improving all sites to a good standard
- g.** Develop an asset register of the facilities within sites such as benches, bins, location, date installed, lifetime expectancy, replacement timeframe
- h.** Develop quality standards that are achievable and realistic
- i.** To provide ‘Good’ quality sites as a minimum
- j.** To continue to recognise the importance of the city Gateway sites as a means of raising the city image and address the quality issues identified
- k.** Ensure that future provision is well designed, serves a purpose and is appropriate in size (anything below 0.1 ha is not readily useable by children and young people without the potential for conflict with neighbours)

Woodlands / Natural / Semi-natural greenspace

A number of recommendations are made in response to the assessment findings. These are:

- a.** Identified provision deficiencies are addressed as a priority in the production of a Local Development Framework (LDF)
- b.** Develop a greenspace databases and consider utilising the results, issues and recommendations
- c.** Work to develop a rolling programme of renewal and improvements, e.g. bins, signage and seating
- d.** Develop a walking strategy to set out how the city’s existing walking networks link together
- e.** Further develop the city’s footpath network and link into wider footpath networks outside of the city
- f.** Increase awareness of the opportunities for walking in the city

- g.** Link the use of both open space and sport and recreation facilities with travel awareness initiatives
- h.** Continue to develop the strategic approach to the development and provision of cycling routes across the city given the importance and health benefits of this mode of transport in a congested area, through the Local Transport Plan
- i.** Develop the Biodiversity Action Plan for the city
- j.** Adopt appropriate management and maintenance programmes for the Nature Conservation sites to reflect their natural characteristics, and thereby preserving their special characteristics
- k.** Develop an education/resource centre to develop better local awareness and understanding of open space, and in particular nature conservation sites
- l.** Protect all existing nature conservation sites
- m.** Develop a Green Infrastructure plan for the city

Provision for Children and Young People

The following recommendations are made in relation to provision for children and young people:

- a.** To provide 'Good' quality sites as a minimum
- b.** Improve the security of play areas through improved staff presence
- c.** Expand signage on all sites with site details and contact numbers
- d.** Develop equipment that caters for children and young people with disabilities
- e.** Involve young people in the design and choice of provision
- f.** Aspire to deliver the Hierarchy of provision and continue to address the Surplus/ deficiency imbalance across the city
- g.** Consider moving away from providing fixed play equipment as a means to catering for children and young people

- h.** Improve provision for Young People, especially Teenagers and Toddlers, through the Hierarchy and also by making the provision within the city's main parks more adventurous and bigger in terms of the range of equipment and the element of risk
- i.** Ensure that the recommended accessibility thresholds are implemented

Outdoor Sports Facilities

Playing Pitches. The following recommendations are made in response to the findings of the Playing Pitch Assessment. These are:

Playing Pitches

- a.** Develop a priority list for the development/improvement of changing room facilities, which reflect the type of pitch usage e.g. competitive, or Sunday pub team
- b.** Establish a policy to ensure that all multi-pitch sites are served by good quality changing facilities, to ensure that all sports and participants, irrespective of gender, can be accommodated
- c.** Improve pitch quality across sites where there is regular community use
- d.** Work with Private Clubs to ensure pitch quality is maintained, particularly in relation to cricket and rugby provision
- e.** Re-assess pitch provision using the 'Towards a Level Playing Field' methodology in 2009 and on a rolling 5 year cycle to ensure that changes in demand and supply are considered
- f.** Work with local clubs and schools in areas of deficiency or poor quality to provide alternatives during poor weather or high demand

Bowling Greens

- a.** Work with the Grounds Maintenance division and local Bowls Clubs to improve the quality of both existing Greens and ancillary facilities
- b.** Priority should be given to the improvement of 'below average' sites
- c.** Work with the local Bowls Clubs to promote the sport in the city, and encourage participation by younger people

- d.** Review security measures at greens located in parks, in light of the reduction in staff presence on some sites
- e.** Improve the publishing of information at parks about opportunities to play bowls

Tennis Courts

- a.** Retain the current provision of tennis courts and work with key partners and private clubs to maintain quality and improve access for potential new participants
- b.** Develop a programme of court improvement in the city Parks
- c.** Ensure public courts have appropriate quality nets and equipment

Allotments

The following recommendations are made in relation to allotment provision and the establishment of a working group between the city and the Parishes:

- a.** Measures need to be put in place to work alongside current chair of city's allotments as knowledge and expertise will be hard to replace
- b.** A programme of facility development with a focus on toilet provision needs to be established and prioritised, where appropriate
- c.** Facilities for users/potential users with a disability need to be further developed
- d.** Review the mechanism for the allocation of vacant plots to reduce the number of empty plots, and address the local demand for allotments
- e.** Work with Allotment Societies to develop, improve and enhance the existing allotment provision
- f.** Develop partnerships to increase the value and accessibility of allotments. Partnerships could include, schools (where sites are close enough) and the further development of health-related projects

Action Plans



Green Space in Coventry

Objective 1

Following the principles of PPG17 to develop a network of accessible greenspace across the city and to adopt a comprehensive approach to the provision and management of green space as a network of parks and open space, woodlands, outdoor sport, allotments and churchyards and cemeteries that brings many, economic, social and environmental benefits to people that live, work or visit the city

Aims

To provide a focus and setting for economic regeneration across the city

To create a strategic framework that contributes to improved biodiversity, water quality, air quality and sustainable living

Create a focus for social inclusion, education, training, health and well-being

To ensure the Greenspace resource meets local need at the local level

Reinforce and enhance landscape character and local distinctiveness

Encourage and develop partnership working both internally within the City Council and externally with a wide range of agencies and interest groups

Measures of Success

The integration of the Greenspace Strategy within the aims and objectives of the developing Local Framework and other core strategies

The benefits of green space contributing to wider agendas such as:

- Social inclusion,
- healthy environments,
- lifelong learning,
- improving local neighbourhoods,
- safer communities
- economic regeneration
- promoting independence,

Key Targets

Preparation of a comprehensive green infrastructure base plan and schedule to inform all strategies and subsequent monitoring

Objective 2

To work in partnership with the community, governing bodies and stakeholders to develop, manage and promote the green space resource to ensure it meets the needs of local people and local communities

Aims

To fully understand the needs of local people and local communities

To promote and encourage active involvement by local communities in the future management of the greenspace resource

To work in partnership to enhance and promote the green space

To proactively improve community enjoyment, sense of ownership and awareness of the greenspace resource

Measures of Success

Promotion of a greenspace network

Increased level of customer satisfaction with greenspace

To promote the development of 'Friends' group or a greenspace 'Focus' group in each ward

To develop a local recognition award for community involvement

To promote greenspace opportunities through a wide availability of information and promotional materials

Achievement of National/Regional Awards

Key Targets

To expand the number of community led events in greenspace

To monitor public satisfaction

To develop new friends groups

To support existing friends groups and to establish a friends forum

To increase the level of community involvement

Develop a green space awards scheme

To develop a green space website and increase promotional material available

To build on existing partnership, to create new partnerships and strengthen working relationships

Submit applications to appropriate award schemes

Objective 3

To ensure the greenspace network is protected and improved to meet identified local needs.

Aims

To protect and improve the City's greenspace network

To protect links between green spaces, surrounding countryside and the Rights of Way network

Measures of Success

To ensure the City provides a balanced green space provision that is comparative with national and local standards

The amount of valuable green space protected through planning policies

The creation of additional facilities and the number of existing sites improved

Completion and Implementation of the Playing Pitch Strategy

Implementation of the Play Strategy

The development of an Allotment Strategy

Produce the Statutory Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Development of a cycleway network

Key Targets

Maintain the open space audit in line with PPG 17 Government Guidance Note

Replace the Unitary Development Plan with the Local Development Framework

Develop and improve existing outdoor sports facilities such as:

- pitch drainage,
- changing rooms
- car parking facilities

in accordance with Sport England's standards

Improve children's and young peoples play and activity areas

Work with local clubs and schools to develop and improve their facilities

Develop and implement parks improvements

Objective 4

To raise and improve the quality standards of greenspace across the City

Aims

- To secure the Green Flag Award
- To develop a Coventry Parks and Open Space Standard
- To reduce the level of anti-social behaviour throughout the green space
- To improve the visual impact of the green space
- To improve the quality of green space and facilities
- To increase the staffing presence in the green space

Measures of Success

- Achievement of Green Flag Awards
- Reduction in the number of successful third party insurance claims against the council
- Reduction in dog fouling and vandalism
- Increase in number of green space sites with live management plans
- To monitor the quality of greenspace on a regular basis
- To improve the first impression of sites by visitors through improvements to site infrastructure

Key Targets

- To sustain the Green Flag Award for Coombe Abbey and to secure the Award for War Memorial Park and four other key parks
- All key sites managed in line with Green Flag criteria and maintained to the Coventry Standard
- The development of a robust safety inspection system for the green space
- Maintain the baseline quality assessment of green space against green flag criteria
- Produce management plans for the key sites
- Introduce revised byelaws for the green space
- Introduce a park watch scheme and increase the number of Park Watch Schemes by two per year
- Increase number of dog waste bins
- Bring all children's play areas up to current standards
- Expand the annual tree, shrub, bulb and flower planting programme

Subject to revenue levels

Objective 5

to Increase awareness of and access to the green space resource by all members of the community.

Aims

To develop a parks champion from the elected members

To publicise the availability and access to the green space

To raise public awareness to the variety of opportunities and various green space functions

To work towards ensuring greenspaces are as accessible as physically possible

To develop the green space as a learning resource

To work towards access for all

Measures of Success

Political awareness of the importance of greenspace and the need for investment

To enhance the green space information currently available on the website through a more informative greenspace web site

To develop Education packs available for key green space sites

Increased educational use of the green space

Number of sites fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act

Increased attendances at Rangers events

Improved access and provision of fixed play equipment for children with disabilities

Key Targets

A comprehensive easy accessible green space website

Produce education packs for Green Flag Award sites and main parks and open spaces

Consultation with colleges and schools to identify how the green space resource can assist in meeting their curriculum requirements

At least one site per ward achieving school visits

Improved access to parks buildings and facilities

Improve and increase signage in greenspace

Assist in the provision of allotments for people with disabilities

Achievement of national, regional and local awards

Annual events programme for the green space

Number of items of play equipment fully accessible to all children

Objective 6

Ensure the strategy is sustainable in terms of the use, management and maintenance of the green space network

Aims

To promote sustainable principles in the management of the green space resource.

Measures of Success

Increased levels of green waste recycling

Reduction in the use of pesticides in green space maintenance

Increased procurement from sustainable resources

To work towards only purchasing plants from suppliers grown in peat alternative composts

Promotion of energy conservation

Key Targets

Implement green procurement strategy

Re-use materials on site whenever possible especially timber from woodland management operations for timber and woodfuel

Introduce alternatives to pesticide use whenever possible



Objective 7

To Protect, increase and manage the woodland resource

Aims

The management of trees and woodlands and associated non woodland habitats

Involving local people in the creation and management of the Woodland Resource

Facilitating the use and enjoyment of woodland sites by local people
Increasing the economic viability of woodlands

Measures of Success

Increase the area of woodland in the City

Increase the number of people actively visiting sites

The number of friends of woodland groups established

The number of sites with site specific management plans

Key Targets

Implement the City Woodland Strategy

Develop management plans for each of the key woodlands and Local Nature Reserves



Objective 8

to make the most effective use of existing resources and to actively seek new funding sources and resources to secure improvement in the delivery and maintenance of green space.

Aims

To make the most effective use of existing resources to provide the quantity and quality of green space to best meet the needs of the Community

To maximise the investment in the green space resource from new developments via planning developments

To review and maximise external funding opportunities

To maximise voluntary sector involvement in the management and maintenance of the green space

To enable colleges, schools and outside agencies to use the green space as a resource for educational purposes

Measures of Success

Number of new or improved facilities funded from planning contributions

Number and value of external funding awards

The development of an annual work programme implemented by volunteers, outside agencies, schools and colleges

Number and value of external funding secured

3 yearly review of fees and charges

Key Targets

To review the calculation formula for developer contribution and commuted sum payments

The number of volunteers and outside agencies engaged in the management of the greenspace resource

Minimum of one lottery bid for each appropriate programme of funding

identify the revenue implications for the maintenance of all key sites

Objective 9

Biodiversity -to Safeguard, enhance and increase enjoyment of the wildlife resource.

Aims

To protect and enhance habitats and species

To raise awareness of and improve accessibility to nature

To manage land for the benefit of biodiversity to control harmful exotic species

To increase training to increase biodiversity

Measures of Success

Increased area designated as Local Nature Reserves

Increase in the area of land positively managed for biodiversity including improved connectivity of sites

Reduction in the number and area of sites affected by harmful exotic species

Key Targets

Implementation of the Policy for Nature Action Plan



Area Action Plan

North East Area

Population 104,993

Total Area 2,545ha

Total Open Space 338.7ha (13.3% of total area)



Green Space in Coventry

N.E. Area Comparison to Standards

Greenspace Type	Current Proposed Standard	Current Provision	Comparison to Proposed Standard	Actions
Parks and openspace	3.1ha per 1000	2.27 ha per 1000	There is a deficiency of formal parks and open space in the North East Area	The Council will work in partnership to improve the quality of existing open space to the recognized quality standard. The Council will also protect open space particularly larger sites for the benefit of local people
Natural Greenspace	1.72ha per 1000	0.32ha per 1000	There is a significant deficiency of accessible natural greenspace although residents are most likely to make use of Coombe Abbey Country Park which is a City Council Facility located outside the City Council administrative boundaries.	It is not likely that new provision of natural greenspace will be made and therefore the Council will in consultation with local people introduce more naturalistic areas into local parks and open spaces. To provide as a minimum 1 ha per 1000 of Land designated as Local Nature Reserve
Provision for children and young people	0.10 ha per 1000 (aged 2-19 years)	0.08 ha per 1000	There are accessibility deficiencies on the boundaries of the neighbourhood area particularly at the city boundary perimeters	Upgrade play provision to the recognized NEAP standard or natural play provision. Ensure that children and young people have access to a NEAP standard play area or natural play provision within 1000m of home and to good quality informal play space within 400m of where they live
Grass Pitches	1.02 ha per Overall	0.74 ha per 1000	There is a slight deficiency in pitches when compared to the minimum City Standard. The standard of 0.74 ha per 1000 should be the minimum standard for the North East.	Pitches are a demand led facility and as such the City Council will work with local clubs and teams to ensure pitches are playable through out the Season. If demand increases the Council will work with Schools and private providers to secure community use. The Council will strive to ensure an over provision of at least 10% will be maintained in order to provide flexibility and to respond to fluctuations in demand
Other Outdoor Sport	Standards have not been set in order for the City to provide a range of accessible facilities within a reasonable distance		The City Council will ensure that a full range of adult and youth facilities for outdoor sport will be available within each Neighbourhood Area. These will include, bowling greens, tennis courts, all weather pitches, skate park or wheeled play facility, an athletics track or fitness circuit, a multi use games area, basket ball court and youth shelter	The approach advocated is to ensure that people in each Neighbourhood Area has a full range of provision. This may require people to travel outside their immediate settlement area for certain facilities but will ensure that facilities are within a reasonable distance and often within easy walkable distance.
Allotments	0.38ha per 1000	0.27 ha per 1000	The Area falls short of the proposed standards. There are currently in excess of 60 vacant plots across the area	The Council will work with allotment holders to ensure vacant plots and waiting lists are kept to a minimum. Private allotment sites need further research to establish an overall picture of vacant plots

Area Action Plan

North West Area

Population 82,008

Total Area 3,613ha

Total Open Space approx 358.3ha (9.9% of total area)



Green Space in Coventry

N.W. Area Comparison to Standards

Greenspace Type	Current Proposed Standard	Current Provision	Comparison to Proposed Standard	Actions
Parks and openspace	3.1ha per 1000	2.77 ha per 1000	There is a deficiency of formal parks and open space in the North East Area	The Council will work in partnership to improve the quality of existing open space to the recognized quality standard. It is generally accepted that people living in rural areas do not expect to have the same level of provision in terms of the actual number of sites available
Natural Greenspace	1.72ha per 1000	1.19ha per 1000	There is a significant deficiency of accessible natural greenspace in this area	It is important to recognize the role the wider countryside plays in meeting the needs of people that live in rural areas. The Council will work to improve the quality of existing spaces to provide people with good quality sites. To provide as a minimum 1 ha per 1000 of Land designated as Local Nature Reserve
Provision for children and young people	0.10 ha per 1000 (aged 2-19 years)	0.07 ha per 1000	There are accessibility deficiencies on the boundaries of the neighbourhood area particularly at the city boundary perimeters Comparison to Proposed Standard	Upgrade play provision to the recognized NEAP standard. Ensure that children and young people have access to a NEAP standard play area within 1000m of home and to good quality informal play space within 400m of where they live. Actions
Grass Pitches	1.02 ha per	Current Provision 0.74 ha per 1000	There is a slight deficiency in pitches when compared to the minimum City Standard. For the North West Area the 0.74 ha per 1000 is the minimum standard of provision	The Council will strive to ensure an over provision of at least 10% will be maintained in order to provide flexibility and to respond to fluctuations in demand
Other Outdoor Sport	Overall Standards have not been set in order for the City to provide a range of accessible facilities within a reasonable distance.		The City Council will ensure that a full range of adult and youth facilities for outdoor sport will be available within each Neighbourhood Area. These will include, bowling greens, tennis courts, all weather pitches, skate park or wheeled play facility, an athletics track or fitness circuit, a multi use games area, basket ball court and youth shelter	The approach advocated is to ensure that people in each Neighbourhood Area has a full range of provision. This may require people to travel outside their immediate settlement area for certain facilities but will ensure that facilities are within a reasonable distance and often within easy walkable distance.
Allotments	0.38ha per 1000	0.54 ha per 1000	There is an identified surplus of provision when compared to the City Wide Standard	The Council will work with allotment holders to ensure vacant plots and waiting lists are kept to a minimum. Private allotment sites need further research to establish an overall picture of vacant plots

Area Action Plan

South

Population 113,847

Total Area 3,706ha

Total Open Space approx 791.7ha (21% of total area)



Green Space in Coventry

South Area Comparison to Standards

Greenspace Type	Current Proposed Standard	Current Provision	Comparison to Proposed Standard	Actions
Parks and openspace	3.1ha per 1000	5.54	There is a surplus of provision of both parks and open space in this area, although there may be accessibility deficiencies in Earlsdon and Wainbody Wards. It is important to recognize that Memorial Park is a large site that skews the provision in the South Area. The park is very much a site that serves the whole City.	The Council will work closely with the local community to prioritise improvements to site that fall below a good standard.
Natural Greenspace	1.72ha per 1000	3.4	There is a surplus of accessible natural greenspace when measured against the Citywide standards.	The Council will work to improve the quality of existing spaces to provide people with good quality sites. To provide as a minimum 1 ha per 1000 of Land designated as Local Nature Reserve
Provision for children and young people	0.10 ha per 1000 (aged 2-19 years)	0.11	The current level of provision in the south are reflects the minimum standard set for the City although sites need to be upgraded to the necessary NEAP standards	Upgrade play provision to the recognized NEAP standard. Ensure that children and young people have access to a NEAP standard play area within 1000m of home and to good quality informal play space within 400m of where they live.
Grass Pitches	1.02 ha per	1.46	There is an over provision of pitches when measured against the city wide standards. The Standard of 1.46 ha per 1000 is the minimum standard for provision in the South Area	The Council will strive to ensure an over provision of at least 10% will be maintained in order to provide flexibility and to respond to fluctuations in demand
Other Outdoor Sport	Overall Standards have not been set in order for the City to provide a range of accessible facilities within a reasonable distance		The City Council will ensure that a full range of adult and youth facilities for outdoor sport will be available within each Neighbourhood Area. These will include, bowling greens, tennis courts, all weather pitches, skate park or wheeled play facility, an athletics track or fitness circuit, a multi use games area, basket ball court and youth shelter	The approach advocated is to ensure that people in each Neighbourhood Area has a full range of provision. This may require people to travel outside their immediate settlement area for certain facilities but will ensure that facilities are within a reasonable distance and often within easy walkable distance.
Allotments	0.38ha per 1000	0.33	There is a slight deficiency of allotments when measured against the City standards	The Council will work with allotment holders to ensure vacant plots and waiting lists are kept to a minimum. Private allotment sites need further research to establish an overall picture of vacant plots

Ward Based Provision Assessment Against Standards



Green Space in Coventry

Ward Based Provision Assessment Against Standards

Ward based provision per 1000 population

Area	Area Pop'n	Ward	Ward Pop'n	Parks and openspace	Accessible Natural	Outdoor Sport Grass Pitches	Provision for children and Young People	Allotments	
City Minimum Standard per 1000				3.1	1.72	1.02	0.10	0.38	
North East	104,993	Foleshill Ward	17968	0.85	0.03	0.23	0.11	0.09	There is a deficiency across all typologies
		Henley Ward	17027	4.91	0.84	1.23	0.06	0.20	High provision of parks and open space, under provision of natural greenspace, under provision of children and young people and allotments
		Holbrook Ward	18427	1.25	0	2.00	0.09	0.27	Under provision of parks and open space and allotments, high provision of grass pitches
		Longford Ward	17601	5.56	1.11	0.70	0.05	0.39	High provision of parks and open space under provision of natural greenspace, grass pitches and provision for children and young people
		Radford Ward	16901	0.71	0.00	0.20	0.02	0.03	There is a deficiency across all typologies
		Upper Stoke Ward	17069	0.41	0.00	0.40	0.10	0.65	Under provision of parks and open space, natural greenspace and grass pitches, high provision of allotments

Ward Based Provision Assessment Against Standards

Ward based provision per 1000 population

Area	Area Pop'n	Ward	Ward Pop'n	Parks and openspace	Accessible Natural	Outdoor Sport Grass Pitches	Provision for children and Young People	Allotments	
City Minimum Standard per 1000				3.1	1.72	1.02	0.10	0.38	
North West	82,008	Bablake Ward	15041	2.17	2.15	4.40	0.13	0.98	Below standard provision of parks and open space, high provision of natural greenspace, grass pitches and allotments
		Sherbourne Ward	16531	2.21	0.32	0.06	0.13	1.01	High provision of allotments Below standard provision of parks and open space, grass pitches, natural greenspace
		St. Michael's Ward	15413	0.88	0.00	0.30	0.09	0.24	There is a deficiency across all typologies except provision for children and young people where the deficiency is negligible
		Whoberley Ward	16537	4.00	0.55	0.06	0.13	0.48	High provision of parks and open space, above city standard provision for children and young people and allotments, under provision of natural greenspace and grass pitches
		Woodlands Ward	18486	1.18	2.78	0.47	0.08	0.08	High provision of natural greenspace under provision across all other typologies

Ward Based Provision Assessment Against Standards

Ward based provision per 1000 population

Area	Area Pop'n	Ward	Ward Pop'n	Parks and openspace	Accessible Natural	Outdoor Sport Grass Pitches	Provision for children and Young People	Allotments
City Minimum Standard per 1000				3.1	1.72	1.02	0.10	0.38
South	113,847	Binley and Willenhall	18296	5.16	4.63	0.35	0.05	0.00
		Cheylesmore Ward	13983	7.80	5.29	2.00	0.18	1.52
		Earlson Ward	16543	4.11	1.84	1.30	0.13	0.52
		Lower Stoke Ward	15778	1.38	0.12	0.79	0.07	0.03
		Wainbody Ward	16306	4.08	4.34	1.69	0.03	0.00
		Westwood Ward	14983	4.76	4.67	0.97	0.27	0.13
		Wyken Ward	17958	5.03	3.01	2.38	0.09	0.28
<p>High provision of parks and open space and accessible natural greenspace, under provision across all other typologies</p> <p>Above City standards across all typologies</p> <p>Above City standards across all typologies</p> <p>There is a deficiency across all typologies</p> <p>High provision of parks and open space and accessible natural greenspace and grass pitches under provision across all other typologies</p> <p>High provision of parks and open space and accessible natural greenspace and provision for children and young people under provision across all other typologies</p> <p>High provision of parks and open space and accessible natural greenspace and grass pitches slight under provision of allotments</p>								

The Next Steps

The Draft Strategy and Executive Summary documents are being circulated for wider stakeholder and public consultation from May to June 2008.

The results from this consultation will be compiled, strategy documents redrafted, and brought forward to the council's Cabinet in late July/August 2008.

The strategy will be available on the Council's website, and in hard copy, and will be reviewed in 2013.



