

Green Infrastructure Strategy for North Devon and Torrington District Councils



2013 - 2031

Part 2 of 3: Green Infrastructure Strategy
Final Report



Green Infrastructure Strategy for North Devon & Torridge

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Appendix 1 North Devon and Torridge GI Strategy: Mapping & Analysis Report, October 2013

Glossary of Terms

Term	What it means
AGP	Artificial Grass Pitch
ANGSt	Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard
CIL	Community Infrastructure Levy
DPD	Development Plan Document
FIT	Fields In Trust (originally known as the ‘National Playing Fields Association’)
GI	Green Infrastructure
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
LAP	Local Area for Play
LDD	Local Development Document
LDF	Local Development Framework (a component of the revised statutory land use planning system)
LEAP	Local Equipped Area for Play
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NEAP	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play
NGB	National Governing Body
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
STP	Synthetic Turf Pitch

Acknowledgments

Many individuals, groups and organisations have provided information, views and support in preparing this study. Input from these stakeholders is fundamental to the report, and provides the basis for the evidence in supporting the standards, options and recommendations in relation to open space, sport and recreation facilities. The study has been carried out by David Wilson Partnership in conjunction with JPC Strategic Planning & Leisure and Leisure and the Environment.

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

This report is part 2 of 3 of the Green Infrastructure Strategy for North Devon and Torridge. The study has been undertaken jointly by David Wilson partnership, with JPC Strategic Planning & Leisure and Leisure and the Environment. The study covers the period up to 2031, which is the current timescale for the local plan.

For the purpose of this study, Green Infrastructure (GI) is defined as:

‘The network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect villages, towns and cities. It is a natural, service-providing infrastructure that is often more cost-effective, more resilient and more capable of meeting social, environmental and economic objectives than ‘grey’ infrastructure’.

The study incorporates an assessment of GI, with a focus on the provision of open space, which has been carried out in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Since the adoption of the NPPF, there have been major changes to national planning policy. Open space assessment has primarily been affected by the omission of PPG17 from the new national policy framework. However, there is still a clear reference made in the new guidance to the principles and ideology established within PPG17 and as such the underlying principles of this study have been informed by the former guidance provided in ‘*Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation*’ (PPG17), and its Companion Guide ‘*Assessing Needs and Opportunities*’.

The study has been written to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the methodology set out in the PPG17 Companion Guide.

1.2 Scope and Objectives of the Study

1.2.1 Overall purpose of the study

To prepare a green Infrastructure assessment which will provide up-to-date quantitative and qualitative assessment of existing assets as well as identifying future needs and opportunities.

1.2.2 Scope of Study and Objectives

- The study should identify relevant types of green infrastructure for which local standards are required, and prepare local standards for their provision. The study should explore opportunities to integrate standards for recreational open space and other forms of green infrastructure, as well as helping to deliver ecosystem services through the design, delivery and management of public open spaces. The study will identify existing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies for different localities in the two districts against these standards to reflect current populations, as well as identifying future needs.

- The study should consider the different roles and requirements between urban and rural areas within the two districts in terms of accessibility to and delivery of green infrastructure. It should also consider both strategic and local requirements for green infrastructure.
- The study should identify opportunities for green infrastructure assets to contribute towards ‘quality of life’ indicators and ecosystem services. The Government’s Natural Environment White Paper (The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature) recognises the importance of ecosystem services from which people derive benefits including goods and services. Cultural Services include recreation from accessible green spaces. The study should recommend policy approaches towards safeguarding and enhancing the contribution of undesignated green infrastructure assets towards delivering a range of ecosystem services.
- The extent of the study area will be the boundaries of North Devon and Torridge District Councils, excluding the parts of Exmoor National Park within North Devon district that are outside the scope of the districts’ joint Local Plan. However, there is a requirement for the study to plan across boundaries to fulfil the Councils’ duty to cooperate. Existing provision outside the two districts to which North Devon and Torridge residents have access and use will need to be considered, especially in terms of larger accessible natural green spaces and sports facilities.
- The National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 117) identifies the need to plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries. Consequently, the study should reflect accessibility to green infrastructure networks, including strategic recreational open spaces and ecosystem services outside the two districts’ boundaries, as well as complementing existing biodiversity and green infrastructure strategies within adjoining districts (including Exmoor National Park). It should also incorporate local interpretation of and broad consistency with the emerging Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy and be integrated in terms of its application across sectors and scales informing linkages and dependencies.

1.3 Key stages

The study follows 6 key stages as summarised below:

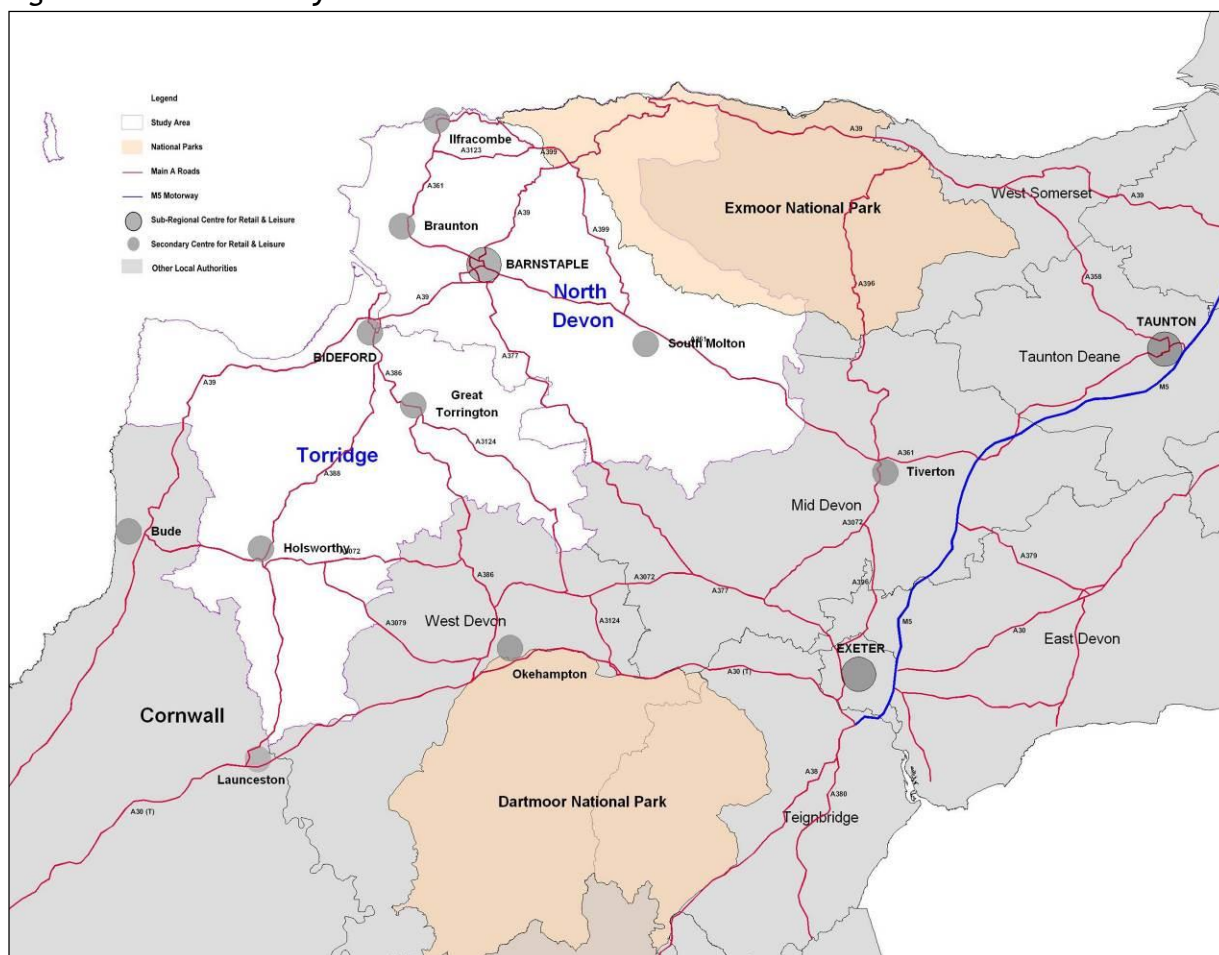
- Step 1 - Identifying Local Needs
- Step 2 - Audit of Existing Green Infrastructure Assets
- Step 3 - Setting Local Standards
- Step 4 - Applying Local Standards
- Step 5 - Identifying Local Opportunities
- Step 6 - Drafting Policy Recommendations

1.4 The study area

1.4.1 General approach

The extent of the study area is the boundaries of North Devon and Torridge District Councils, excluding the parts of Exmoor National Park within North Devon district that are outside the scope of the districts' joint Local Plan, as shown on figure 1.

Figure 1 The study area



Throughout this study, population figures have drawn on the 2011 census data (ref: QS102EW - Population density).

1.4.2 Urban and Rural approach

North Devon and Torridge is made up of 127 parishes, the largest in Barnstaple (population of 24,033) to rural parishes with populations of less than 100 such as Twitchen and Hollacombe. The draft Local Plan for North Devon and Torridge defines Local Centres and Villages, as shown in figure 2.

Figure 2 Local centres and villages

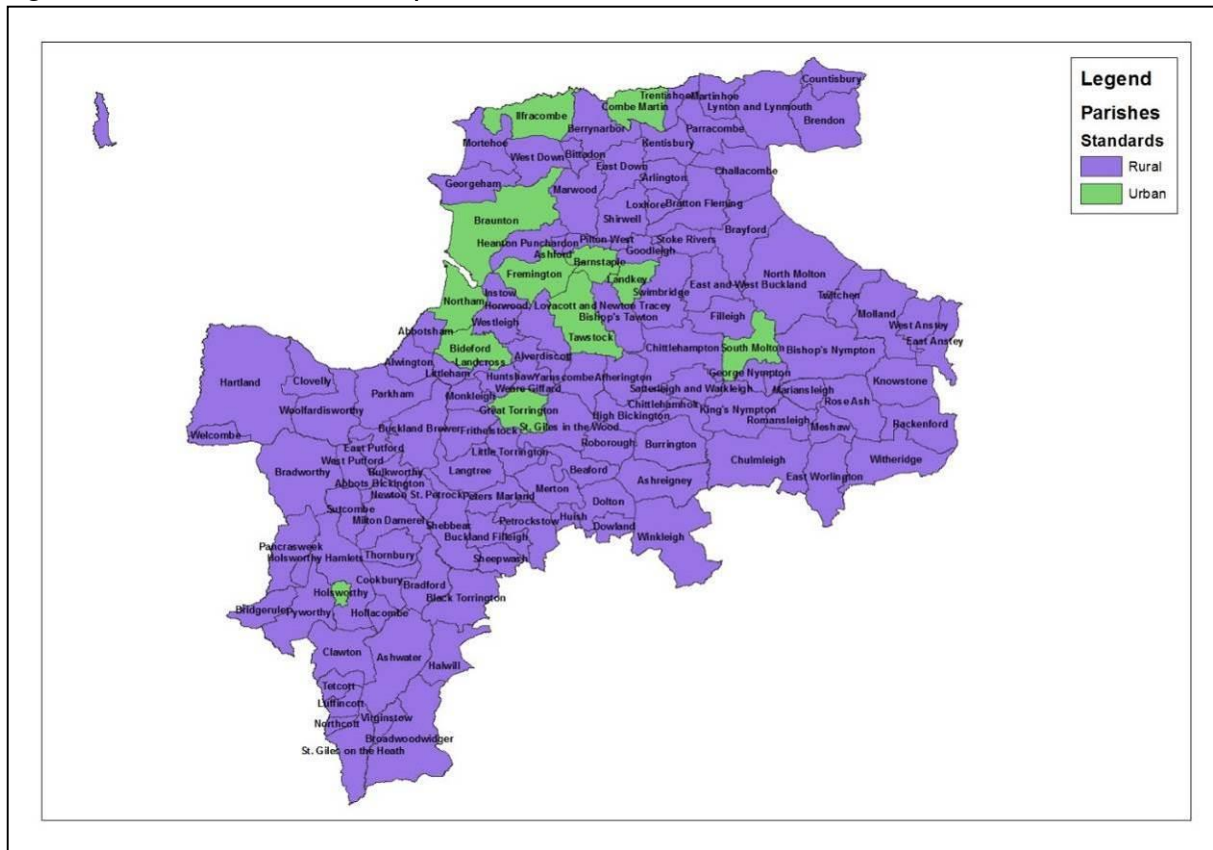


For the purpose of this study, the principles below have been used as the basis for defining urban and rural areas. Urban areas include:

- Sub regional centre (Barnstaple);
- Strategic Centre (Bideford);
- Main Centres (Braunton and Wrafton, Northam, Great Torrington, Holsworthy, Ilfracombe and South Molton);
- Parishes with a population greater than 2,000.

A map showing the urban and rural parishes is shown in figure 3. A further level of refinement is made for a number of the parishes within North Devon areas due to the nature of the settlement and parish boundaries. This refinement has been used to define analysis boundaries, which is explained in the following section.

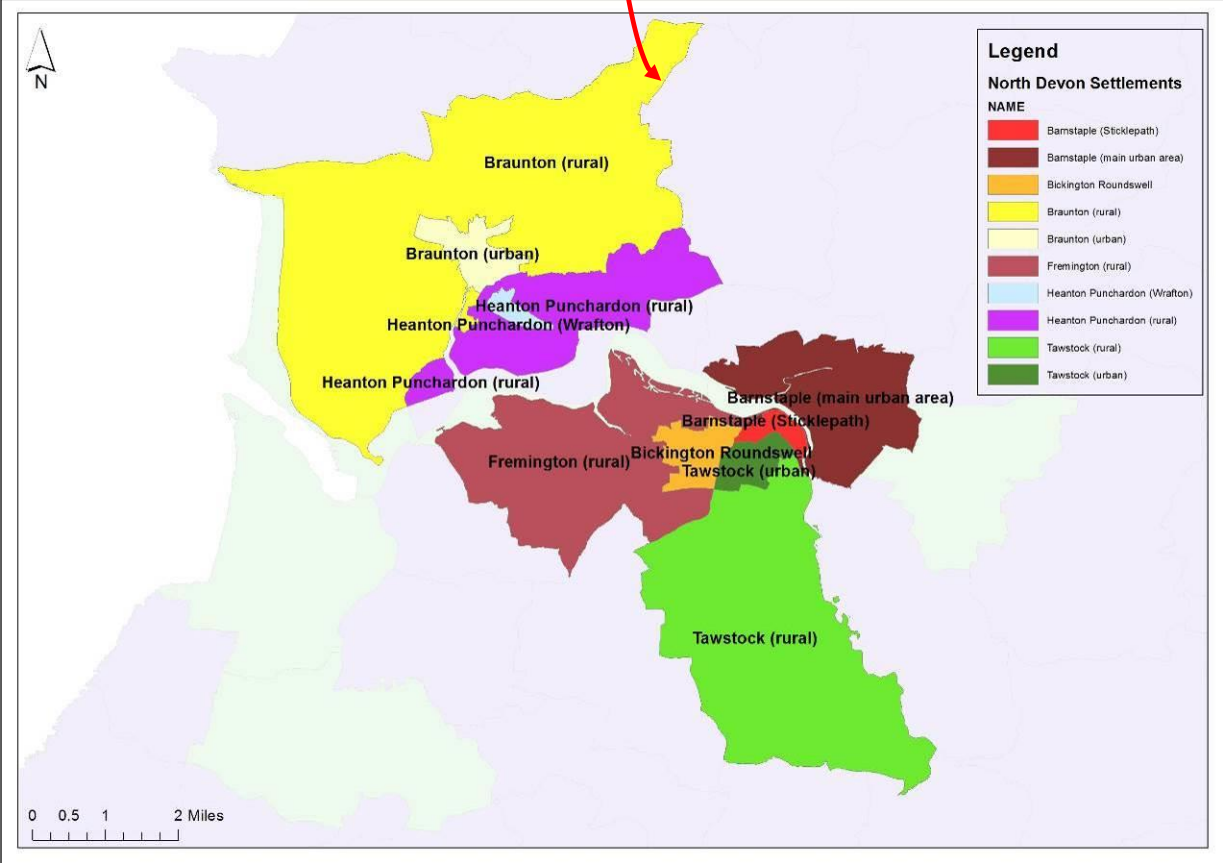
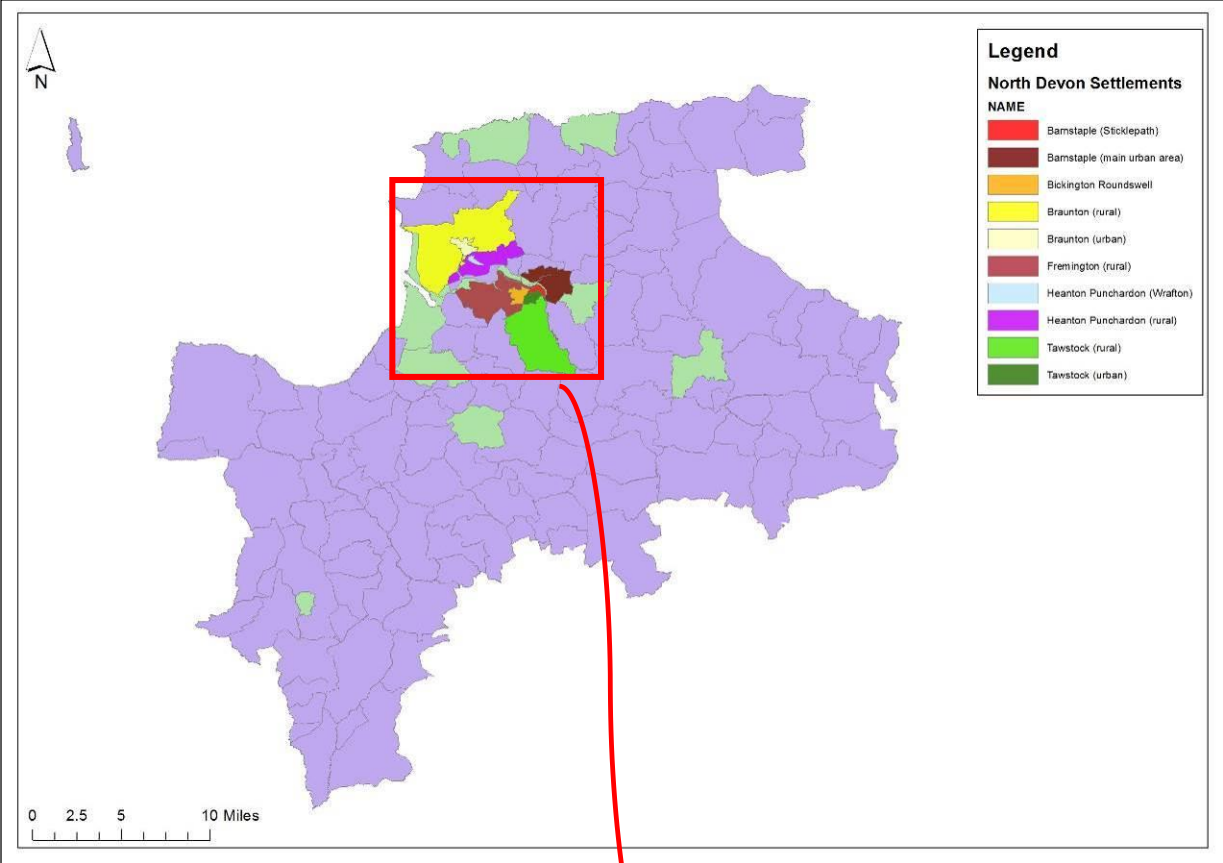
Figure 3 Urban and rural parishes



1.4.3 Analysis boundaries

Whilst the urban/rural split of parishes works well for most areas within the study, there are a number of settlements which require a more bespoke approach. These are located within North Devon District and illustrated on figure 4. The definition of the urban and rural parts of the parish boundaries are used throughout the assessment within this study.

Figure 4 North Devon rural/urban split



1.4.4 Population

The population of the defined study areas as described above is listed in table 1. The data has drawn on census data from 2011 using *QS102EW - Population density*, Office for National Statistics. These current population figures are throughout the study.

Table 1: Population data of study area for North Devon District

Ashford	267
Atherington	402
Barnstaple (parish)	24,033
- <i>Barnstaple (main urban area)</i>	22,952
- <i>Barnstaple (sticklepath)</i>	1,081
Berrynarbor	802
Bishop's Nympton	955
Bishop's Tawton	1,256
Bratton Fleming	1,069
Braunton	8,128
- <i>Braunton (rural)</i>	2,994
- <i>Braunton (urban)</i>	5,134
Brayford	413
Burrington	538
Challacombe *	141
Chittlehamholt	169
Chittlehampton	843
Chulmleigh	1,323
Combe Martin	2,687
Countisbury *	206
East Anstey	231
East Down	222
East Worlington	220
East and West Buckland	444
Filleigh	268
Fremington (Parish)	10,529
<i>Fremington (rural)</i>	5,230
<i>Bickington Roundswell</i>	5,299
George Nympton	175
Georgeham	1,440
Goodleigh	450
Heanton Punchardon (Parish)	2,406
- <i>Heanton Punchardon (rural)</i>	1,750
- <i>Heanton Punchardon (Wrafton)</i>	656
Horwood, Lovacott and Newton Tracey	487
Ilfracombe	11,509
Instow	706
Kentisbury	299
King's Nympton	403
Knowstone	226
Landkey	1,955
Loxhore	304
Lynton and Lynmouth *	1,441
Mariansleigh	161
Martinhoe*	159
Marwood	801
Meshaw	275

Molland	255
Mortehoe	1,637
North Molton	1,094
Parracombe *	293
Pilton West	153
Rackenford	330
Rose Ash	298
Satterleigh and Warkleigh	170
Shirwell	404
South Molton	4,875
Stoke Rivers	153
Swimbridge	1,005
Tawstock	2,105
- Tawstock (rural)	741
- Tawstock (urban)	1,364
West Anstey	163
West Down	671
Westleigh	308
Witheridge	1,410

**parishes wholly within Exmoor National Park and outside the study area*

Table 2: Population data of study area for Torrridge District

Abbotsham	489
Alverdiscott	286
Alwington	400
Ashreigney	446
Ashwater	673
Beaford	447
Bideford	16,610
Black Torrington	483
Bradford	369
Bradworthy	1,108
Bridgerule	736
Broadwoodwidge	570
Buckland Brewer	794
Buckland Filleigh	157
Bulkworthy	115
Clawton	311
Clovelly	443
Cookbury	155
Dolton	687
Dowland	266
Frithelstock	353
Great Torrington	5,714
Halwill	930
Hartland	1,724
High Bickington	837
Holsworthy	2,641
Holsworthy Hamlets	959
Huntshaw	134
Langtree	788
Little Torrington	376
Littleham	446
Merton	349
Milton Damerel	449
Monkleigh	379
Newton St. Petrock	195
Northam	12,062
Pancrasweek	229
Parkham	800
Peters Marland	229
Petrockstow	426
Pyworthy	769
Roborough	243
Shebbear	1,016
Sheepwash	242
St. Giles in the Wood	538
St. Giles on the Heath	604
Sutcombe	347
Tetcott	165
Thornbury	285
Virginstow	113
Weare Giffard	345
Welcombe	187
West Putford	321
Winkleigh	1,622
Woolfardisworthy	1,184
Yarnscombe	293

1.5 Report Structure

The report is split into three main parts:

Part 1: Local Needs Assessment

This includes the detailed methodology and findings from the local needs assessment. This assessment forms the basis for many of the findings and policy recommendations in parts 2 and 3 of the report. This part of the report covers ‘step 1 - identifying local needs’, and has been presented as a standalone report so that it can be used to inform other studies/strategies as required. A summary of the key findings of the local needs assessment is presented in parts 2 and 3 of the reports.

Part 2: Green Infrastructure Strategy

This is the main report and presents the methodology, findings and recommendations related to the current and future provision of green infrastructure for North Devon and Torridge. This part of the reports covers steps 2 - 6 as outlined in section 1.3.

Part 3: Built facilities

This is the main report and presents the methodology, findings and recommendations related to the current and future provision of built facilities for North Devon and Torridge. This report is presented as a standalone report, as the analysis methodology, issues and recommendations are very different from those of the green infrastructure strategy, and as such the report has a different structure.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

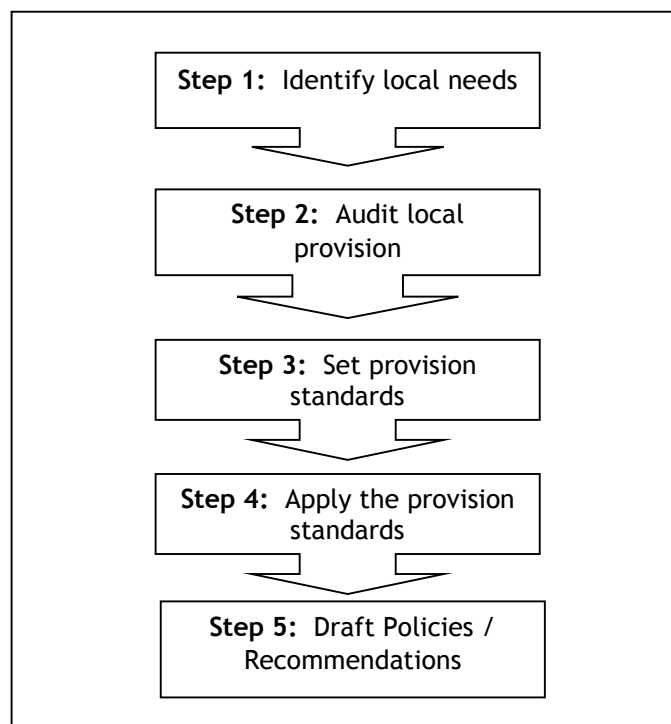
2.1 General

The starting point for this study has been the new guidance in Section 8 of the NPPF, which adheres to but has superseded PPG17. The new policy gives clear recommendations for the protection of and appropriate provision for open space, however it does not provide any detailed guidance on how to conduct an open space assessment. It is therefore both logical and acceptable to reference the guidance for assessment provided in the former PPG17 and its Companion Guide.

PPG17 placed a requirement on local authorities to undertake assessments and audits of open space, sports and recreational facilities in order to:

- identify the needs of the population;
- identify the potential for increased use;
- establish an effective strategy for open space/sports/recreational facilities at the local level.

The Companion Guide to PPG17 recommended an overall approach to this kind of study as summarised below:



Within this overall approach the Companion Guide suggests a range of methods and techniques that might be adopted in helping the assessment process and these have been used as appropriate. These methods and techniques, where they have been used, are explained at appropriate points in this report. However, they are summarised in the following paragraphs.

2.2 Identifying Local Need (Step 1)

This report examines identified local need for various types of open space, sports and recreation opportunity. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques as well as a detailed review of existing consultation data and other relevant documentation. The report details the community consultation and research process that has been undertaken as part of the study as well as the main findings. The findings of this assessment are presented in part 1 of the study.

2.3 Audit of Existing Green Infrastructure Assets (Step 2)

2.3.1 Defining the scope of the audit

In order to build up an accurate picture of the current provision of GI, an audit of assets was carried out, this included:

- Analysis of existing GIS data held by North Devon and Torridge District Councils;
- Desktop mapping of open space from aerial photography;
- Questionnaires to town and parish councils.

This was used as the basis for selecting sites to be visited to gather data on quality. The resources available for the study allowed for 500 sites to be included within the quality audit. A number of sites mapped on GIS were excluded from quality assessment based on the following criteria:

- Private or inaccessible sites;
- Education sites;
- Amenity Green Spaces smaller than 0.2 hectares;
- Churchyards;
- Civic Spaces.

This allowed the available resources to be directed to auditing those sites which are most likely to benefit from future improvements or have the potential to provide alternative uses. Sites visited were representative spatially, by size and by type.

2.3.2 Approach to mapping

During the site visits, the range and types of facilities within each open space was recorded and mapped. Sites were mapped into their different functions a multi-functional approach to mapping. The advantage of the multi-functional approach is that it gives a much more accurate picture of the provision of open space. This is more advantageous than the primary typology approach which tends to result in an over assessment of provision, which can significantly impact decisions on quantity standards. The differences in approach are demonstrated in figures 5 and 6:

2.3.3 Quality audit criteria

The quality audit of sites included an assessment of the existing quality and ‘potential for improvement’ of sites against a number of set criteria (based on the national green flag assessment criteria):

- Welcoming;
- Access;
- Design;
- Management and maintenance;
- Safety and Security;
- Community Involvement.

Each criterion was scored from 1 - 5, where 1 is ‘very poor’ and 5 is ‘very good’. A score for the sites potential was also made on the same score scale. The total of the scores was used to provide a total existing score and a total potential score. This has been used to assess those sites with different priorities for future retention and investment. The details of the quality audit are held within the quality database.

A summary of the quality audit is provided in the area profiles (part 2 of this report). Within these area profiles each site that was assessed is listed and the following provided:

- Site name;
- A brief description of the site;
- Typology;
- Parish;
- Existing score/rank;
- Potential score rank

Existing score/rank

A rank from A - D has been given for the average existing total score as follows:

- The existing quality score of the site is totalled;
- This is divided by the number of criteria for which a score was given to give an average total score;
- The scores are ranked from A - D, where sites with rank ‘A’ are within the top 25% of quality, and sites with rank ‘D’ are in the bottom 25% of quality - i.e. sites with rank ‘A’ have the best existing quality, and sites with rank ‘D’ have the poorest quality.

Potential score/rank

A rank from A - D has been given for the average gap/potential score as follows:

- The potential quality score of the site is totalled;
- This is divided by the number of criteria for which a score was given to give an average potential score;

- The scores are ranked from A - D, where sites with rank 'A' are within the top 25% of potential improvement and sites with rank 'D' are in the bottom 25% of potential improvement - i.e. sites with rank 'A' have the most potential to be improved, and sites with rank 'D' have the poorest potential to improve.

Using this data

The quality data can be used to identify differences in the quality of sites, and to inform future plans for open space in the sub area. Within this section, the scores and ranks for quality of sites have been used to draw out sites where quality is poor (rank C or D), and potential for improvement is high (rank A or B). These should be the priority sites for improvement/investment.

2.4 Set and apply provision standards (Steps 3 and 4)

Local provision standards have been set, with three components, embracing:

- Quantity
- Accessibility
- Quality

Quantity

The GIS database and mapping has been used to assess the existing provision of open space by neighbourhood. The existing levels of provision are considered alongside findings of previous studies, the local needs assessment and consideration of existing and national standards or benchmarks. The key to developing robust local quantity standards is that they are locally derived, based on evidence and most importantly achievable. Typically standards are expressed as hectares per 1000 people. The recommended standards are then used to assess the supply of each type of open space by neighbourhood.

Access

Evidence from previous studies, the needs assessment and consideration of national benchmarks are used to develop access standards for open space. Typically standards are expressed as straight line walk times. A series of maps assessing access for different typologies are presented in the report.

Quality

Quality standards have been developed drawing on previous studies, national benchmarks and good practice, evidence from the needs assessment and the findings of the quality audits. The quality standards also include recommended policies to guide the provision of new open space through development in the future.

2.5 Identifying Local Opportunities (Step 5)

After local standards have been applied and quantitative and qualitative deficiencies have been identified (Step 4), this section identifies opportunities or areas of search to enhance and fill gaps in the existing green infrastructure network towards meeting these local standards, based on analysis of the distribution of existing green infrastructure networks and the hierarchy of designated sites and routes.

In particular, opportunities to enhance existing green infrastructure networks and accessibility to them are sought at a strategic scale and should complement proposals and areas of search identified by the draft Devon green infrastructure strategy, as well as strategic green infrastructure and ecological networks identified by other adjoining districts (including Exmoor National Park). Local opportunities are also sought to address existing gaps in the green infrastructure network and improvement of existing assets at a local scale, especially where they reflect the identified needs and aspirations of local communities (Step 1).

In addition to opportunities to overcome existing deficiencies, identification is required of future opportunities to enhance and expand existing green infrastructure networks to meet the growing and changing needs of an expanding and ageing population over the next 20 years. These opportunities will help inform a future green infrastructure strategy for North Devon and Torridge.

Local opportunities are also sought for ecosystem services to be fully integrated within the delivery of new and improvement of existing green infrastructure assets and networks.

2.6 Drafting Policy Recommendations (Step 6)

The key outputs from this study will include the following recommendations:

- a) Local standards for green infrastructure, including built recreational facilities, informed by local evidence;
- b) Identified qualitative and quantitative deficiencies of existing green infrastructure and facilities against local standards at both local and strategic levels;
- c) Identified opportunities to fill gaps in the existing green infrastructure network and improve accessibility to it based on an audit of existing green infrastructure against these standards;
- d) Identified key assets to be protected and opportunities for enhancement;
- e) How to deliver ecosystem services through the design, delivery and management of green infrastructure;
- f) Normalised unit costs of provision for different types of green infrastructure.

Identified local standards for green infrastructure provision and identified deficiencies will form the basis for policy formulation on:

- a) Developer contributions towards the provision of new and improvement of existing facilities;
- b) The retention of important green infrastructure assets, enhancement of sub-standard provision as well as reuse of any surplus provision;
- c) Suitable and strategically preferable locations and opportunities for new provision;
- d) Contribution of green infrastructure towards delivering ecosystem services and incorporating an ecosystem approach into delivery of green infrastructure.

The study should identify local and strategic priorities for Council and community led projects to deliver new and improved green infrastructure networks and facilities under the Councils' own Capital Programmes and through developer contributions, including the identification of appropriate locations.

The study will make recommendations on appropriate policy and thresholds for developer contributions based on normalised unit costs of provision for different types of green infrastructure. Recommendations should also include the identification of external sources of funding that the Councils could realistically utilise in conjunction with developer contributions to maximise leverage on investment for any identified schemes.

3.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This section sets out a brief review of the most relevant national, regional and local policies related to the study, which have been considered in developing the methodology and findings of the study. Policies and strategies are subject to regular change, therefore the summary provided in this section was correct at the time of writing. North Devon and Torrington District Council's reserve the right to change and update this section as policies change.

3.1 Introduction

We are mindful that during the transition period to incorporate the new NPPF into local policy, there will be some disparity between the old policy and the new. Therefore, within the strategy document, we will look to map any changes within the new policy framework and use examples to demonstrate the implications of any relevant policy amendments. The policy overview will include analysis of the councils' existing policy and the forthcoming development documents to ensure clarity and consistency with the new national policy as outlined in the strategy brief.

We will also review other strategies of relevance at national, regional and local levels and assess their implications for the provision of open space, sport and recreation opportunities. In addition, we will explain the important relationship between the proposed study and other relevant council strategies and initiatives.

The PPG17 companion guide identified the importance of understanding the implications of existing strategies on the study. Specifically, before initiating local consultation, there should be a review of existing national, regional and local plans and strategies, and an assessment of the implementation and effectiveness of existing planning policies and provision standards.

3.2 National Strategic Context

3.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

On 27th March 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published and replaced Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) notes. Therefore, the NPPF supersedes the former PPG17 - Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation and Companion Guide (2nd July 2002).

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they should be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The NPPF contains the following references that relate to green infrastructure and open spaces:

Achieving Sustainable Development - Core Planning Principles: Para 17: Within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play, a set of core land-use

planning principles should underpin both plan-making and decision-taking these 12 principles include:

- promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);
- actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and
- take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural well-being for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

Para 58 - Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:

- optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks.
- create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and
- are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.

Para 73 - Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.

Para 75 - Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including National Trails.

Para 99 - Local Plans should take account of climate change over the longer term, including factors such as flood risk, coastal change, water supply and changes to biodiversity and landscape. New development should be planned to avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.

Para 109 - The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services;
- minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures

Para 114 - Local planning authorities should:

- Set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure; and
- Maintain the character of the undeveloped coast, protecting and enhancing its distinctive landscapes, particularly in areas defined as Heritage Coast, and improve public access to and enjoyment of the coast

3.2.2 The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature (2011)

The white paper¹ recognised that a healthy natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It sets out how the value of nature can be mainstreamed across our society by facilitating local action; strengthening the connections between people and nature; creating a green economy and showing leadership in the EU and internationally. It set out 92 specific commitments for action. The white paper recognises the benefits of green infrastructure and encourages local action, including:

- The establishment of a green infrastructure partnership and support for the development of Local Nature Partnerships
- The creation of Nature Improvement Areas aimed at reversing the decline and fragmentation of wildlife habitats
- The establishment of a new Green Areas Designation to protect local green spaces
- Recognising the value of ecosystem services at a landscape scale

3.2.3 Sport England Strategy 2012-17 (creating a sporting habit for life)

The 2012-17 Youth and Community Strategy for Sport England was launched in January 2012². It describes how Sport England will invest over £1 billion of National Lottery and Exchequer funding over five years into four main areas of work;

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/228842/8082.pdf

² <http://www.sportengland.org/>

- 1) National Governing Body (NGB) 2013-17 funding;
- 2) facilities;
- 3) local investment; and
- 4) the 'School Games'.

The overall ambition is to increase the number of people who play sports regularly and reduce the number of young people who stop playing when they finish school. Funding for governing bodies will be tied to their own specific participation targets. Goals for 2012-17 include:

- all of the 4,000 secondary schools in England will be offered a community sport club on its site with a direct link to one or more NGBs, depending on the local clubs in its area;
- county sports partnerships will be given new resources to create effective links locally between schools and sport in the community;
- all secondary schools who wish to do so will be helped to open up, or keep open, their sports facilities for local community use and at least a third of these will receive additional funding to make this happen;
- at least 150 further education colleges will benefit from full-time sports professional who will act as a 'College Sport Maker';
- three quarters of university students aged 18-24 will get the chance to take up a new sport or continue playing a sport they played at school or college;
- 1000 of the most disadvantaged local communities will get a 'Door Step Club';
- a minimum of 30 sports will have enhanced 'England Talent Pathways' to ensure young people and others fulfil their potential;
- 2000 young people on the margins of society will be encouraged by the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust into sport, gaining new life skills at the same time; and
- building on the early success of 'Places People Play', a further £100m will be invested in facilities for the most popular sports, for example new artificial pitches and upgrading local swimming pools.

3.2.4 Defining Green Infrastructure (Natural England)

Natural England define Green Infrastructure as:

'a network of high quality green and blue spaces and other environmental features. It needs to be planned and delivered at all spatial scales from national to neighbourhood levels. The greatest benefits will be gained when it is designed and managed as a multifunctional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits (ecosystem services) for local communities. Green Infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, wetlands, grasslands, river and canal corridors, allotments and private gardens'.

The range of benefits that green infrastructure can deliver are summarised as:

- supporting healthy lifestyles and thriving communities
- providing active access to the outdoors

- enhancing landscape character and built heritage
- enhancing biodiversity
- supporting healthy ecosystems
- providing climate change solutions
- invigorating the local economy and natural tourism
- enhancing sense of place

3.2.5 Conclusion

To reflect and meet the obligations of the National Policy Context for green infrastructure, the adoption of this document and the strategic framework it provides will enable a consistent policy approach for green infrastructure planning and investment to be applied in Torridge and North Devon, ensuring that opportunities are not missed. In addition, as a strategic green infrastructure framework, this document can, by setting out local green infrastructure intentions, provide a single point of reference to evidence conformity with existing and emerging national policies.

3.3 Local and Regional Context

3.3.1 Green Infrastructure Strategy

A draft Green Infrastructure Strategy was prepared by North Devon Council as part of the development of the Joint Core Strategy to 2026. The purpose of the GI Strategy is set out as follows:

“The GI strategy will build upon existing environmental quality, both formally designated and undesignated sites, to strengthen the existing network of habitats and other accessible natural green spaces that contribute to the high quality environment within North Devon. The strategy will make the identification and delivery of an enhanced GI network a central element in the future development and conservation of the district.”

The strategic objectives that underpin and inform the direction of the GI Strategy are outlined:

(a) Multi-functionality

Wherever possible greenspaces in and around settlements should be multi- functional, balancing various uses such as agriculture, access, recreation and biodiversity *within the local context*.

(b) Connectivity of habitats

The provision of improved linkages between existing and proposed GI resources, particularly to biodiversity corridors and habitats, is key to the success of the strategy.

(c) Extended Access and Recreation

Enhanced access for all and by sustainable means of travel is fundamental, including walking and cycling to promote a healthier lifestyle. The existing network of public rights of way and strategic routes will form the backbone of the network.

(d) Landscape Enhancement

The strategy should reflect the distinctive patterns of the North Devon landscape, in terms of its natural, historical and cultural landscapes.

(e) Biodiversity Enhancement

The strategy should reflect local biodiversity resources and enhance the distinct natural environments in the district.

(f) Landmark Projects

The GI strategy will provide a focus for mitigating any impacts on the Biosphere Reserve through the provision of alternative accessible natural greenspace. To that end, one of the alternatives being considered is the creation of a new country park adjoining Barnstaple, which provides the opportunity for a strategic accessible natural greenspace.

These issues are considered as part of the current study and the preparation of standards.

3.3.2 North Devon AONB Management Plan

The coast of northern Devon is recognised as an important resource of accessible natural greenspace. The South West Coast Path (SWCP) is a well used national trail that links coastal facilities such as beaches, estuary towns and coastal villages. The North Devon Coast Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty designation covers most of the coastal landscapes between the Cornish border and Exmoor National Park, and encompasses all aspects of sustainable coastal communities and wildlife, as well as promoting the economy, tourism, agriculture, fisheries, recreation, culture and heritage of the area.

The new five-year Management Plan³ establishes a sustainable vision and strategy for the future of the AONB, its preparation involved a statutory review of the previous Plan, together with a process of public consultation. A number of objectives contained within the Draft Management Plan reflect the issues raised in the Green Infrastructure Strategy, namely:

³ www.engagespace.co.uk/devon/northdevon/consultation_Dtl.aspx?consult_Id=1604&status=2&criteria=l

- I1 Facilitate the development of green infrastructure within the AONB;
- H1 To promote access to the natural environment celebrating the natural, historic, inspirational and tranquil places to all;
- H2 To increase sustainable and sensitive access to the AONB;
- H3 To enhance the environment along the SWCP and increase access and interpretation;
- H4 To reduce barriers to participation in countryside recreation;
- H5 To maximise opportunities for countryside recreation in the AONB;
- H6 To maximise health-linked recreation in the AONB.

3.3.3 North Devon Biosphere Strategy

The Biosphere Reserve covers all of North Devon and much of Torridge districts. The reserve is divided into the core area, centred around Braunton Burrows, a buffer zone around the core area and the wider transition area, covering the water catchment area for the estuary. The vision for the reserve is stated in the Biosphere Strategy ⁴. The strategy for the Biosphere Reserve is currently being reviewed.

The Core Area: The Core area of Braunton Burrows and its part of the estuary will be managed and maintained as a world-class exemplary mix of dynamic coastal habitat features. The core area will be used as a study area for conservation of these types of habitats and activities that positively promote their conservation.

The Buffer Zone: This will be an area where the careful management of natural and cultural resources ensure that the communities can enjoy access to the natural environment and a cultural landscape maintained by local people.

The Transition Area: Northern Devon will be an area where the community thrives through effective participation in developing sustainable lifestyles that are reflected in the enhancement of the environment in which they live and work.

The Biosphere Reserve has been identified by DEFRA as a biodiversity offset pilot area. These offsets are conservation activities that are designed to give biodiversity benefits to compensate for losses - ensuring that when a development damages nature (and this damage cannot be avoided) new, bigger or better nature sites will be created. They are different from other types of ecological compensation as they need to show measurable outcomes that are sustained over time. There are potential crossover benefits in the creation of managed accessible greenspace as a result of biodiversity offsets⁵.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/biodiversity-offsetting>

3.3.4 North Devon and Torridge Local Plan

North Devon and Torridge are preparing a joint local plan for the period to 2031, currently published as a Consultation Draft⁶. It is programmed to be adopted in 2015.

The principal aim of the draft Plan is “to enable the transformation of the socio-economic landscape of northern Devon, to realise its potential for sustainable development, while supporting the world-class environment of the Biosphere Reserve”. The importance of natural greenspace and the environment is therefore explicitly stated in the overall aim of the plan. The importance of environment and natural greenspace runs through the strategic, development management and neighbourhood planning policies.

The plan projects population growth over the plan period, driven mostly by in migration and the concentration of development on the main urban centres. Over the plan period, there is expected to be disproportionate growth in the number of older people living in the 2 districts. Table 3 below shows figures for North Devon and Torridge combined (figures are due to be amended in the next version of the local plan). The last column demonstrates the predicted percentage change in populations per age group.

Table 3 Changes in population by age group

Age Cohort (years)	2011	2021	2031	No	2011-2031
	Population	Population	Population		% change
0-14	25,200	27,400	26,800	1.6	6.35
15-24	16,500	14,500	16,400	-0.1	-0.61
25-34	14,000	15,700	14,200	0.2	1.43
35-44	19,500	16,800	18,900	-0.6	-3.08
45-54	22,700	21,200	18,900	-3.8	-16.74
55-64	23,700	25,100	24,100	0.4	1.69
65-74	19,800	23,700	25,800	6.0	30.30
75-84	11,800	16,100	19,700	7.9	66.95
85+	5,000	6,800	10,700	5.7	114.00
All ages	158,300	167,300	175,600	17.3	10.93

Source: Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Torridge & North Devon (2012)

⁶ <http://www.northdevon.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/local-plan/>

1) Spatial Development

Spatial development strategy is detailed in draft policies ST06 and ST07. A sub regional centre is identified (Barnstaple), where significant levels of growth are anticipated to secure its self-containment to meet its own needs and those of surrounding areas.

Bideford is identified as a strategic centre, with sustainable levels of development to enable the town to meet its own needs and those of the surrounding areas.

Six main centres are identified across the two districts where their capacity to meet their own needs will be met. A further 2,200 homes are planned for villages and rural centres.

Approximately 16,000 new dwellings are planned for the period 2011 to 2031 cross North Devon and Torrington. It is anticipated that major sports and recreation facilities will be based at Barnstaple, Bideford or in the main centres.

Draft Policy ST15 outlines how services will be balanced across the centres. Decisions on the location of new sports and leisure facilities will be informed by this hierarchy:

- Barnstaple: services which serve a much wider catchment than the local population;
- Bideford: reduced range of services than Barnstaple, but remaining significant to an extended local population;
- Braunton & Wrafton, Great Torrington, Holsworthy, Ilfracombe, South Molton: services primarily serving local catchments;
- Appledore, Northam with Westward Ho!: limited services for day to day needs within urban neighbourhoods (related primarily to retail).

Draft Policy ST03 recognises the importance of protecting and integrating green infrastructure into urban areas in improving access to natural and managed green space and adapting to climate change.

2) A World Class Environment

The draft Local Plan contains policies intended mainly to conserve and enhance the districts' coastal, heritage and environmental assets. However, there are implications for green infrastructure and accessible natural greenspace contained within them.

Draft Policy ST11 (Enhancing Environmental Assets), requires that "the natural environment will be protected and enhanced by providing a net gain in biodiversity, through positive management of an enhanced network of designated sites and green infrastructure" and, crucially, by "increasing opportunities for access, education and appreciation of northern Devon's environment for all sections of the community". Both districts are home to nationally protected landscapes and to the UK's first biosphere reserve. The local plan recognises the recreational resource that these areas can provide.

Draft Policy ST09 details policies for protection and enhancement of the coast and estuary. Within this zone:

- *“... Tourism attractions and leisure developments within and adjoining northern Devon coastal resorts and developed coast will be supported where they enhance the quality or diversity of the local tourism offer and will not detract from the character of protected landscapes...”*
- *The connectivity of the South West Coast Path and the Tarka Trail will be protected and a network of connecting routes will be improved. Improvements to coastal and estuarine access will be sought where rundown waterfront areas are regenerated. The Tarka Trail link between Ilfracombe and Braunton will be completed.”*

Open access to the coast is an important resource in northern Devon, where there may otherwise be a shortage of accessible natural greenspace. The difficulties and cost of car parking on the coast has been identified in this study and the need for sustainable transport links to the coast are recognised.

3) Community Facilities and Infrastructure

Policies set the criteria for the development of infrastructure, including green infrastructure (ST22) and for siting community facilities, including recreation and amenity space, allotments and community gardens, green infrastructure and sport (ST21).

The local plan is clear that the most appropriate location for community facilities is within or adjacent to a settlement where they will be accessible by the populations they serve. They should be *“in accessible locations to minimise the need to travel, facilitate social inclusion, increase self-containment and minimise environmental impact”*. Neighbourhood Plans identify local needs in the regional, strategic, main and other centres.

The plan requires facilities and infrastructure to be provided in a timely manner, as the development they are intended to serve progresses. The plan states that *“North Devon and Torridge District Councils will produce an Infrastructure Delivery Plan to identify the need for infrastructure to be delivered in step with development proposals.”*

The plan makes provision for infrastructure, including green infrastructure, to be provided of site: *“Where on-site infrastructure provision is either not feasible or not desirable, then off-site provision or developer contributions will be sought to secure delivery of the necessary infrastructure, through methods such as planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy”*.

4) Development Management Policies

The draft local plan contains policies that support green infrastructure and determine how a green infrastructure policy would be implemented through development.

Draft Policy DM05 sets out design principles for new development. The policy recognises the need for public space to be well designed and seeks to avoid areas of useless green space:

“Development will be supported where they:

provide public and private spaces that are well designed, safe, attractive and complement the built form, designed to minimise anti-social and criminal behaviour; ... optimise the efficient use of land, and provide well-designed adaptable street patterns and minimise functionless open spaces;”

Draft Policy DM07 requires the safeguarding of open space and green infrastructure. The policy allows for loss of open space and green infrastructure only if that loss is balanced against an improvement in facilities. The policy also expects all development to result in a net gain in biodiversity, either onsite (which would be preferable) or off site through the biodiversity offsetting programme.

Draft Policy DM08 details the requirement for new development either to provide new open space and green infrastructure or to contribute to existing facilities and networks. Larger developments will be expected to provide open space contributions on site, with the assumption that in smaller sites, contribution to accessible off site facilities would be acceptable. The policy will be informed by the results and recommendations of this study.

The policy states that neither council will normally adopt new areas of open space and that small parcels of open space (the *“functionless open spaces”* identified in DM05) will not be acceptable in defined circumstances.

5) Area Policies

At the time of preparation of this report, the Neighbourhood Plans section of the Draft Local Plan had not been completed. However, strategic policies for Barnstaple, Bideford, Fremington/Yelland and the six main centres have been outlined. The headline features as they affect green infrastructure strategy are outlined below. For each development site, a number of site specific development principles are identified. The larger sites are generally required to integrate strategic landscaping and green infrastructure into their layout, including the provision of public open space, cycle and pedestrian links.

[The information for each of the towns below is no longer up to date and may be too detailed. Can it be simplified? Perhaps identify overarching strategic principles such as enhancing and completing the strategic cycle and footpath network, providing new local green spaces and delivering new sports hubs.]

Barnstaple

Over the plan period, Barnstaple will provide around 4,000 new dwellings, 1,900 in strategic extensions to the south and south east of town.

A strategic public open space is proposed on either side of the river Taw at Fremington and Bradiford Water, with links to the Tarka Trail. Development of a local nature reserve at Whiddon and Yeo Valley community woodlands would be supported.

Elsewhere, the plan recognises that Barnstaple has a deficiency of most types of public open space. Provision will be made for additional equipped play areas within each housing allocation. New sports pitches will be provided as part of the strategic extensions to the south of town.

Other developments will be required to contribute to new sports facilities as part of site BAR15 (south of Braunton Road). The existing cluster of football and rugby facilities will be redeveloped to provide a sports hub for the town.

Links to the existing sports hub at Seven Brethren will be improved and the plan allows for improvements to existing facilities in this area, subject to satisfactory flood alleviation.

Bideford

Over the plan period, Bideford will provide around 3,800 dwellings, the majority of which (2,100) will be in urban extensions to the west of Bideford and to the south of East The Water. (BID01 and BID02 - BID04). Other strategic allocations are identified on the proposals map for the town.

The local plan identifies the provision of maintained formal recreation facilities at Moreton Park (south of Abbotsham Rd, BID05). This will include a floodlit athletics track, adult and junior football pitches.

A new hill top park is proposed as a boundary to the East The Water developments (BID04). Other sites in East The Water would provide a new community centre, with a focus on facilities for young people (BID02) and a site for and contribution towards the cost of built sport facilities to serve the area (BID03).

Elsewhere, the development of a cycle link between Northam Road and Westward Ho! On the old Bideford to Appledore railway is supported. (BID09)

Braunton and Wrafton

Braunton and Wrafton are considered together. They are identified as a main centre in policy ST07. Development here would be required to meet the needs of the local community and the surrounding area.

340 additional dwellings are planned for over the local plan period, the majority in an extension to the north west of Wrafton (BRA01 and BRA02). These developments will provide strategic landscaping and green infrastructure, including new access links to the Tarka Trail. The developments will also be required to make a financial contribution towards additional green infrastructure and facilities within the town.

The land between Braunton and Wrafton is identified as a local green space (BRA03). New or improved sport and recreation facilities would be supported in this area, with

an emphasis on sharing and improving facilities at the community college or the athletics track rather than the construction of new buildings.

The value of Braunton Great Field is identified and its inclusion within the AONB would be supported.

The completion of the Tarka Trail cycle path between Knowle and Willingcott is identified as an aspiration in the local plan. Other cycle links connecting Braunton to Saunton beach would also be supported.

No policies specifically identify measures to develop the towns place as a centre for water based recreation in North Devon, although the overarching policy (BRA) supports the development of economic and tourist activity in Braunton.

Fremington and Yelland

370 new dwellings are proposed at Fremington, 275 of them at the old Fremington army camp (FRE01). This development will deliver a multi-use games area and sports pitches for the village, as well as a link to the Tarka Trail.

A local green space has been identified to the north of Fremington that will enhance local green infrastructure and provide links to the Tarka Trail.

The development of employment land at Yelland Quay (FRE02) is identified as providing a car park for users of the Tarka Trail.

Great Torrington

Provision is made in the plan for 474 new dwellings in the period 2011 - 2031, mostly though modest urban extension to the east of Torrington and on existing sites within the town centre.

The disused Dairy Crest Creamery to the west of the town is identified for leisure and recreation uses, linked to the Tarka Trail and the river Torridge.

The value of the Commons to the town in terms of recreation, landscape, nature conservation and general amenity is reflected by their exclusion from the development boundary and the inclusion of a specific policy relating to them (GTT06). Torrington will be retained as accessible green open space.

Policy GTT06: Local Green Space: Great Torrington Commons and Conservator Lands, as shown on the Policies Map, is identified as Local Green Space where development will be permissible only where necessary: to preserve the Common; or to enhance the area's contribution to the local biodiversity network; or to enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Holsworthy

Provision is made for 650 new dwellings during the plan period, on the northern and southern edge of the town. The town will offer improved recreational opportunities, principally through the enhancement of existing facilities rather than through the

provision of new, with Stanhope Park, bolstered by the extension to the north which offers additional quality playing pitch provision, fulfilling its potential and becoming a recreational hub for the town.

The old railway line to the east of the town will be retained for the provision of a foot / cycleway as a link to the Ruby Way.

Ilfracombe

1,550 new dwellings are proposed over the plan period, including a 1,000 dwelling strategic extension to the south of the town (ILF01). The southern extension will include formal and informal sports and recreation facilities and a southern expansion of the cemetery.

The plan identifies that Ilfracombe has a deficiency of existing sports facilities within the town. Provision will be made for additional sports facilities through a new sports hub at Larkstone / Brimlands (Policy ILF05) and within the southern extension (Policy ILF01). Development of an artificial grass pitch for community use and associated infrastructure at Ilfracombe Community College will also be supported through the enhancement of existing sports facilities on the site.

Improvements will be made to the green infrastructure networks within and around the town including the creation of a new footpath and cycle route to the south of the town within the Southern Extension (Policy ILF01). The gap in the Tarka Trail and strategic cycle network between Ilfracombe and Knowle should be filled to improve tourism and recreational opportunities for cycling to and from Ilfracombe.

Northam

The plan covers the settlements of Northam, Westward Ho! And Appledore. 1,555 new dwellings are proposed over the plan period. Services and facilities within the three settlements will meet the needs of the local community. Residents will travel for higher order services.

New adult and junior football pitches, with associated facilities, are proposed as part of the Tadworthy Road development (NOR04) in Northam.

Westward Ho! Is to develop its year round tourism and recreation offer, including improvements to green infrastructure and access improvements. These include Westward Ho! Village Green, in the centre of the village and enhancements to the Pebbleridge Terrace Car Park area.

South Molton

1,100 dwellings are proposed, including an urban extension of 665 dwellings to the west of the town. The extension will contribute to the development of a green infrastructure network that will surround the town and include an orbital foot / cycle and bridle path.

The plan identifies a deficiency in equipped play areas and informal public open space. The western expansion (SM01) will provide green infrastructure, formal and informal recreational facilities.

Policy SM02 proposes a sports hub adjacent to the community college on the southern edge of the town. The sports hub will:

- provide sports pitches;
- include a sports pavilion incorporating changing rooms in a single building, which is designed and sited to minimise its landscape impact;
- provide connections to the existing footpaths along Trigley Lane and through the Sheep Fair Field, and enhancement of biodiversity networks within and around the site;
- safeguard the dark skies over Exmoor National Park if flood lighting is provided; and improves the width of Alswear Old Road.

3.3.5 Neighbouring Local Authorities (see figure 1)

1) Cornwall

Cornwall Council follows the western boundary of Torridge District.

Local Plan

The Cornwall Local Plan⁷ is at consultation draft stage. The draft plan contains policies in relation to green infrastructure (Policy 25) that requires new development to protect and enhance a diverse, connected and functional network of open spaces and waterscapes. A number of criteria are set out to guide development in meeting this policy test.

The Plan contains a number of place based policies. Of relevance to this study are policies for Bude, whose facilities are used by residents in the south west of Torridge. PP13 (Bude) includes a number of specific objectives to be addressed in planning for the area, objective 3 is to “*support the needs of communities in the rural hinterland through appropriate local needs development and the maintenance of community facilities... Fundamental to the delivery of the strategy will be the enhancement of Bude, Stratton, Flexbury and Poughill’s infrastructure, including...; green space (and) leisure facilities*”.

Green Infrastructure Strategy

Cornwall adopted a Green Infrastructure Strategy⁸ in July 2013. The purpose of the Strategy is to guide and shape the planning and delivery of Cornwall’s green infrastructure up to 2030. The plan addresses a number of themes at the strategic, rather than the detailed level. The themes covered are:

⁷ <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-policy/cornwall-local-plan/cornwall-local-plan>

⁸ <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/green-infrastructure-strategy/?page=32240>

- *Health and Well Being;*
- *Economy;*
- *Adaptation to and mitigation of climate change;*
- *Education;*
- *Environmental Quality.*

Delivery plans will be based on river catchment areas, to enable green infrastructure benefits to be delivered by ecosystem services. In urban areas, delivery of the plan will be mainly through the development of Town Framework Plans for the identified growth areas (including Bude).

2) West Devon

West Devon lies to the south of Torridge District, between Mid Devon District and Cornwall.

Open Spaces Strategy

An Open Spaces Strategy⁹ was adopted in 2007, no particular cross border issues are identified with North Devon or Torridge. The standards applied in the OSS are as follows:

- *Parks and gardens: 0.43ha/1,000 population;*
- *Outdoor sports: 1.1ha/1,000 population, within 1.2km from all residents in classified settlements;*
- *Children's play: 0.4ha/1,000 population, within 800m from all residents in classified settlements;*

The Local Development Framework

The local development framework (2006 - 2026) was adopted in 2011. Strategic Policy 13 supports the development and enhancement of open space and recreation facilities. A new local plan is at the early stages of development

Strategic Priorities

South West Devon Connecting Communities brings together a number of partners, including West Devon and South Hams, to share a number of services including strategic planning. This organisation has published a number of strategic priority documents, including one on The Environment. While strategic rather than detailed in nature, the document recognises the importance of Green Infrastructure and, in its delivery plan, considers opportunities for local green infrastructure plans.

The northern parts of West Devon are, much like the bordering parts of Torridge, predominantly rural in nature with the accompanying issues of lack of access to facilities and accessible greenspace. Dartmoor National Park, in the east of the district, is a large resource of Open Access Land.

⁹ <http://www.westdevon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=2186&p=0>

3) *Mid Devon*

Mid Devon District abuts both North Devon and Torridge to the East and South.

Local Plan

The Mid Devon Local Plan¹⁰ was adopted, in three stages, between 2007 and 2013. Policy COR1 requires new development to deliver green infrastructure and DM25 supports the development of community facilities, including open space and recreation.

The standards for open space and play provision were published in 2006¹¹ and are as follows:

- Children's play areas: 1 toddler area settlements of 100 people and over, and thereafter 1 (0.01 ha) per 500, 300m distance in urban areas, 500m in rural areas; 1 junior area settlements of 100 people and over, and thereon after 1 (0.04ha) per 500 people, 600m maximum distance; youth areas 1 (0.1 ha) per 1000 people, maximum 900m distance.
- Playing fields: 1.58 ha per 1000 people, maximum 1000m distance.
- Local Parks Urban: Straight line 300 metres (6 minutes' walk). Rural: Straight line 500 metres (10 minutes' walk).
- Neighbourhood Parks: Urban: Straight line of 900 metres (20 minutes' walk).
- Green Infrastructure Strategy.

A Green Infrastructure Plan¹² has been prepared as a draft SPD by Mid Devon Council. The Plan recognises that there are shortages of accessible natural greenspace in the west of the district (on the North Devon boundary) and has recognised that these shortages may be met by developments in neighbouring authorities. Policy GI/1 states:

"Delivery of Green Infrastructure

The Council will work in partnership with neighbouring authorities, local communities and other stakeholders to deliver enhancements to the green infrastructure network, including:

- a) Habitat restoration and creation to reduce habitat fragmentation
- b) Provision of public open space and allotments
- c) Public access to natural green space and woodland
- d) Flood attenuation
- e) Environmentally sustainable food and fuel production

There are several agencies specialising in aspects of the GI network, including Natural England, the Environment Agency, English Heritage, Devon Wildlife Trust and Devon County Council. The Council must engage with all these partners to achieve genuine

¹⁰ <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2605>

¹¹ <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=5133>

¹² <http://www.middevon.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=16633&p=0>

and holistic GI enhancement, as well as community and interest groups, allotment associations, parish councils and landowners. The Council may not always be the lead organisation but will play an active role in supporting local communities and bringing projects to fruition, including those which fall outside the Mid Devon boundary but bring a demonstrable benefit to Mid Devon residents.”

The Strategy identifies areas in North Devon District as serving the population of Mid Devon. These areas are:

- Hares Down Open Access Area
- Witheridge Moor Open Access Area
- Strategic Nature Areas: North of Hares Down; Moorland between Huntacott Water and Little Dart rivers, east of Chulmleigh.

4) Exmoor National Park

The National Park is contained partly within North Devon District, to the north and east of the district.

Green Infrastructure Issues

Exmoor contains a large reserve of accessible natural greenspace that is relatively easily accessible to residents of North Devon. Much of the area is classed as open access land.

Long distance trails connect North Devon and Exmoor, including the National Cycle Network, Macmillan Way and South West Coast Path.

Partnership Plan

The National Park’s Partnership Plan (2012 - 2017)¹³ sets out the Park Authority’s priorities for action over the next 5 years. These cover three programmes:

- A - A Thriving, Living Landscape;
- B - Connecting People and Places;
- C - Towards a Sustainable Future.

Under programme A, the National Park aim to “Maintain the open character of moorland and the range of public benefits that moorland landscapes deliver” (Priority A2).

Programme B covers the following priorities:

- Priority B1 Promote Exmoor National Park as a special destination and develop the Exmoor brand;
- Priority B2 Maintain high quality rights of way, services and facilities to enable people to explore and experience the special qualities of the National Park;
- Priority B3 Inform, inspire and engage people about Exmoor’s special qualities.

¹³ <http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk/?a=260857>

Local Plan

The emerging ENP Local Plan is at draft consultation stage at the time of preparation of this report. The plan is intended to be read in conjunction with the Partnership Plan and has, at its heart, 8 visions for Exmoor, of which one relating to green infrastructure and accessible open space for the residents of northern Devon:

There is increased public awareness and enjoyment of the National Park, a warm welcome and high quality experience for everyone seeking inspiration, tranquility and active outdoor recreation, leading to greater understanding of Exmoor and its way of life and a wider appreciation of the contribution that National Parks make to quality of life.

Policy RT-S1, Recreation and Tourism, supports opportunities to provide a high quality visitor experience on Exmoor through a diverse range of recreation, tourism and environmental education facilities.

5) Devon County Council

The County is currently revising their Green Infrastructure Strategy (GIS) turning it into a web based resource rather than a single document. The GIS does not include formal outdoor recreation or Sports themes, but sets a series of principles and priorities that are to be considered by districts preparing their own green infrastructure strategies. These are:

- Generating income and encouraging investment
- Water resilience and flood risk management
- Enhancing biodiversity and geo diversity
- Connecting people and places through landscape and heritage
- Health, wellbeing and access to nature
- Securing local food supply
- Climate change - adaptation and mitigation.

The Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 includes proposals for new strategic walking and cycling routes between Barnstaple and Tiverton via South Molton, and from Halwill Junction to Dartmoor National Park. These routes will develop the walking and cycling network as a place to be naturally active.

STEP 1: ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL NEED

4.0 LOCAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

4.1 Introduction

This section summarises the findings from stakeholder and community consultation report (part 1 of the study report). The report examined identified local need for green infrastructure for the various types of open space, sports and recreation provision. It drew upon a range of survey and analytical techniques including a review of consultation findings from relevant health, leisure and open space strategies. The report details the community consultation and research process that was undertaken as part of the study as well as the detailed findings. The extent of the research reflected the breadth and diversity of the study and a consequent need to engage with as wide a cross section of the community and stakeholders as possible¹⁴.

Questionnaire surveys were undertaken as below:

- A general household survey
- A survey of town and parish Councils
- Survey of local groups and organisations
- Survey of sports national governing bodies; league secretaries and local clubs.

In addition to the above an extensive programme of stakeholder interviews and workshop/focus groups was undertaken.

The result of this consultation and other analyses will help amongst other things to inform the content of the recommended local standards. Crucially it has also helped the study to understand local people's appreciation of open space, sport and recreation facilities, and the wider green infrastructure and the values attached by the community to the various forms of open spaces and facilities. This appreciation will have clear implications for the way in which green infrastructure, open spaces and sports facilities are treated and designated in the North Devon and Torridge Local Plan.

4.2 Overview of findings

The survey work, stakeholder consultation, desk-based research and group sessions highlighted a wide range of issues of value to the wider Green Infrastructure study. There is a strong degree of consistency across the various sources on key areas of local need and aspiration from which we can be confident that the findings are robust and reliable, providing a strong evidence base to be combined with the detailed facilities audit.

¹⁴ It should be noted that the report provides consultation evidence in the form of the observations and views/opinions sourced from many different organisations, individuals and studies. On occasion the views and observations expressed may not be consistent with each other, nor are such individual contributions necessarily accurate or wholly up to date.

4.2.1 Outdoor Green Infrastructure and Open Spaces

Some overall points of interest relating to green infrastructure and open spaces include:

- The extent to which natural green spaces are valued by local people, including children and young people, as key recreational assets.
- The extent to which open spaces are valued in relation to their contribution to biodiversity, for example, over 80% of the town and parish councils say that having multi-functional open space to support biodiversity etc. is either important or very important (of which 58% think it is very important).
- It is the area's seaside coast and beaches that are most commonly used by most households on regular monthly basis (76%). Footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths; and country parks/countryside and woodlands are also accessed at least monthly by over 70% of households.
- Other than for footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths a majority of households reported that there were currently enough of all of the various typologies of outdoor green infrastructure.
- A majority of residents think there is a need for more footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths; and 50% thought that there should be more wildlife areas/nature reserves. Nearly half of the households highlighted a need for more outdoor facilities for teenagers.
- Other aspects where there was a significant view of there being a shortfall were parks and play areas; and good access to the sea, coast and beaches.
- Most individuals and groups report that in general the quality of public open spaces across the study area is satisfactory. Outdoor facilities for teenagers are a notable exception in this general view.
- The importance placed by local people on measures to improve safety and security, maintaining spaces to a decent standard and the need for easy access to and within open spaces and facilities.
- Common areas of concern for many parish councils included: not enough multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and areas for teenagers; not enough allotments; and the poor quality of playing pitches.
- As regards sports pitch and courts provision it is important to consider the supply and demand in relation to the needs of the individual sports. Many sources suggest a particular shortage of football and rugby pitches.
- Respondents highlight that the quality of sports pitches and outdoor courts is very variable across the study area.
- There is great variance in respondents' apparent willingness to spend time travelling to different types of opportunity and the preferred mode of transport appropriate for each. In drawing up the "access" element of specific local standards for different kinds of open space/facility it is clearly very important to take careful note of all of these findings.
- The rural nature of much of the area and related transport difficulties means that as much as possible needs to be provided locally or opportunities provided to access facilities and activities more readily.
- Problems faced in accessing facilities and opportunities for people with disabilities and limited mobility.
- There is a need to promote initiatives to enable improved community access to

and use of the coastal area in an appropriate way.

Some other important factors that have been highlighted consistently through the consultation exercise include:

- The need for improved provision in terms of both quantity and quality for children and young people, in particular for the older age range.
- The demand for a full sized 3G artificial turf pitch that can be used for both football and rugby.
- The potential for more and better cycling, and footpath links within the study area e.g. additional links to the Tarka Trail.
- The need for improving accessibility in both physical and cost terms.
- The potential for greater community use of school facilities.

4.2.2 Built Facilities

Some overall points of interest relating to built facilities include:

- Indoor swimming pools are used regularly by significant numbers (49% of households report using them at least monthly) as are the area's village/community halls (42%). Over 30% of households also visit sports/leisure centres at least monthly.
- The most frequently built facilities visited by users (at least weekly) are the swimming pools (41% - of which 5% visit almost every day); and sports/leisure centres (34% - of which 4% visit nearly every day). Demand from clubs for pool space is also very high and in addition to local community use of pools there is significant seasonal tourism demand.
- A significant number of households and organisations highlighted a shortage of swimming pool space across the study area. In relation to indoor facilities the priority highlighted by the largest number of households for new/improved provision was pools.
- There appears to be a demand for various indoor sports training facilities specific to individual sports.
- There is a fairly good distribution of village/community halls across the study area but the quality and adequacy of the facilities to meet local need is very varied.
- Consultation indicates a shortage of indoor facilities for children and youth - there are a limited number of dedicated youth centres and opening times do not meet local demand. Many community/village halls do not provide youth clubs.
- Views on the quality of sports halls and swimming pools is quite varied with nearly 37% deeming them good or very good but over 16% saying quality is poor or very poor.
- Residents are more likely than not to drive to swimming pools, sports/leisure centres and specialist sports facilities.
- More than 50% of residents would not wish to travel more than 15 minutes to use a swimming pool or sports hall. Only 28% would be happy to travel more than 20 minutes to access a swimming pool.

- Colleges and local secondary schools are key providers in relation to publicly accessible indoor sports and leisure opportunities.
- There is potential for greater community use of these facilities and some schools and the fees charged by some are prohibitive to many groups.

4.3 Summary of key findings

This section contains a summary of the findings from the 5 main sections of the full Stakeholder and Community Consultation report.

4.3.1 General Community - Key Findings

Use of open space and sports/leisure facilities

- It is the area's seaside coast and beaches that are most commonly used by most households on regular monthly basis (76%). Footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths; and country parks/countryside and woodlands are also accessed at least monthly by over 70% of households.
- Footpaths, bridleways etc. are also by far the most frequently used facility with over 30% of households reporting using them almost every day. Other spaces used on an almost daily basis by at least 15% of households are local parks/recreation grounds, country parks/countryside and woodlands and "other open spaces" e.g. grassed areas for dog-walking, informal games, picnics etc.
- Play areas, playing fields and areas for water recreation/sports are also fairly frequently used but with fewer households (at least 27%) using them on a regular basis (at least monthly). This is not surprising given the more specific purposes of these facilities.
- Indoor swimming pools are used regularly by significant numbers (49% of households report using them at least monthly) as are the area's village/community halls (42%). Over 30% of household visit sports and leisure centres at least monthly.

Quantity

- Other than for footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths a majority of households reported that there were currently enough of all of the various typologies of green infrastructure and leisure facilities.
- A majority (52%) of residents think there is a need for more footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths; and 50% thought that there should be more wildlife areas/nature reserves.
- Nearly half of the households (48%) highlighted a need for more outdoor facilities for teenagers.
- Following this, the other aspects where there was a significant view of there being a shortfall were parks and play areas; access to the sea, coast and beaches; and indoor swimming pools (40% or over indicating a need for more of such facilities).
- More than 12% of respondents thought there were more than enough golf courses and areas for specialist outdoor sports to meet local need.

Quality

- Nearly 40% households highlighted outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor and over 25% said the same in relation to specialist sports facilities.
- Around 25% thought that the quality of allotments in the study area was poor or very poor. Other facilities rated as poor or very poor by significant numbers of households (15% or over) were the indoor swimming pools and sports/leisure centres.
- Facilities where the quality is rated good or very good by around 60% of households include parks and recreation grounds; footpaths etc; country parks, countryside and woodlands; the sea, coast and beaches; and golf courses (and at least 10% rated them as very good).

Access

- The majority of users are prepared to travel more than 20 minutes to use some facilities such the seaside, coast and beaches; areas for water recreation; wildlife areas and country parks; and specialist outdoor sports facilities e.g. ice rinks, indoor tennis and bowls centres.
- In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, allotments, play areas, astro-turf pitches and churchyards/ cemeteries).
- There is great variance in respondents' apparent willingness to spend time travelling to different types of opportunity. In drawing up the "access" element of specific local standards for different kinds of open space/facility it is clearly very important to take careful note of all of these findings.
- The general pattern observed in the study area is very much in line with findings nationally with the exception of astro-turf pitches which in many other areas, acceptable access times are slightly longer.
- Residents are more likely than not to drive to many facilities including specialist sports facilities; sports/leisure centres and swimming pools; countryside sites, wildlife areas/nature reserves; and the seaside and water recreation.
- Walking and cycling are the norm for facilities such as parks, play areas, outdoor teenage facilities, playing fields foot/cyclepaths, and allotments.
- For a small but significant minority access by bus is important, particularly for the seaside/coast and water recreation; and countryside sites, wildlife areas and nature reserves.

Priorities and other issues

- The most common typology highlighted as a high priority for potential improvement or new provision was for improved access to seaside, coast and beaches, followed by local recreation grounds and parks; and better footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths.
- Other notable priorities for improvement highlighted by significant numbers were children's play areas, country parks, countryside, woodlands and wildlife area/nature reserves; and outdoor facilities for teenagers.

- In relation to indoor facilities the priority highlighted by the largest number of households for new/improved provision was swimming pools (by a significant margin) followed by sports and leisure centres.
- For some categories the most common kind of priority need suggested is for **more** open space or facilities e.g. outdoor facilities for teenagers; wildlife areas and nature reserves; footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths; and country parks and woodlands.
- For others **quality improvements** to existing levels of provision is the more common kind of improvement suggested e.g. recreation grounds and parks; children's play areas; swimming pools; and access to the seaside, coast and beaches.
- **Improved access** is particularly significant for some categories e.g. access to the seaside; country parks, woodland etc; and wildlife areas and nature reserves.
- In other cases the choice between additional facilities or quality improvements to current facilities is fairly evenly split e.g. sports and leisure centres; and country parks, woodlands etc
- The issues and concerns of the rural areas of the study area are often quite different from those of the main towns and service centres. This will need to be addressed when considering the development of local standards.
- Provision of and access to open space, sport and recreation opportunities is regarded by the Devon Director of Public Health as an extremely important factor in terms of maintaining health and wellbeing for local residents.
- Some sectors of the community face particular barriers to access such as disabled people; children and young people; households in the more isolated rural areas and those in the more deprived urban wards of the study area.

4.3.2 Town and Parish Councils - Key Findings

Quantity

- 78% reported that there was a need for improved open space, play and recreation provision within their Town or Parish.
- The sector of the community most commonly identified as being poorly served in relation to their needs were young people/teenagers.
- Many parishes report a shortage of MUGAs and tennis/netball courts.
- A significant number of towns and parishes report a lack of football pitches in relation to local demand.
- Many parishes report a need for more allotments.

Quality

- As regards quality the key factors most commonly identified as important re local open space, sport and recreation facilities were that equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained; and that they should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.
- Many parishes highlighted the importance of ensuring open space and facilities should be safe and secure for those using them.
- Dog fouling of open spaces and play areas is seen as a significant problem.

- Many towns and parishes specifically reported that that playing pitches and associated facilities were often of poor quality.
- Very few parishes reported issues concerning the quality of existing allotments, bowling greens or short matt bowls facilities.

Access

- 40% of parishes thought that there was scope for greater community use of local school sports facilities.
- As regards access it was highlighted that it is of great importance that open space and facilities should be easy to get to for all members of the community; and be easy to get around by all members of the community.
- The rural nature of much of the study area and related transport difficulties means that as much as possible needs to be provided locally or that opportunities are made available to access city and town facilities and activities more readily.

Other issues and observations

- Over 73% of the councils were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and facilities.
- 80% of the local councils say that having multi-functional open space to support biodiversity etc. is either important or very important (of which 58% think it is very important). Only 2% thought this consideration was "not important".
- The individual parishes are very different in relation to size, demographics, geography, needs and demand/aspirations. It is very important that local standards take this into account.

4.3.3 Sports and Leisure - Key Findings

Football

- In adult football, major trends are a reduction in Sunday 11v11 football and a slight drop in Saturday 11v11 football.
- Over recent years the study area has seen a growth in children's and youth football and there is a general shortage of junior and mini-soccer pitches.
- The implementation of The FA Youth Development Review will see the mandatory introduction of 9 v 9 football, at U11 & U12 in 2013/14, more pitches and goalposts, of the required sizes, will need to be provided to enable young players to participate.
- In general terms Bideford and Ilfracombe are 2 areas of major concern in relation to a shortage of pitches to meet demand, though many other towns and parishes also indicate an overall shortage.
- Recommended FA full size 3G FTP: Bideford College is the only full size 3G FTP but this does not meet the minimum FA dimensions for adult football. The FA advise that the best location for this kind of facility would be in the Barnstaple area.

- Overall the quality of pitches is very variable with some being very poor e.g. drainage issues; and various sites suffer from poor quality changing facilities. Many parish councils highlight these issues also.
- There is potential to develop girls' and women's participation in football - this has been strong in the study area but is quite low currently due to the loss of key volunteers. Work is underway to build this back up.
- Disability football is well-established and growing. The rural nature of North Devon makes this aspect of football hard to provide for due to the demands placed on carers.
- The main barriers to club development are a shortage of grass pitches; a shortage of AGPs for matches and training (as well as a shortage of indoor facilities for training); the cost of hiring pitches and a lack of external funding for improvements.

Cricket

- Demand appears to be stable/increasing slightly. Opportunities to play cricket are also increasing due to a good club structure and some useful school links.
- There are a number of strong well established and successful clubs across the study area in both the towns and villages. Most of the cricket provision is supplied via small clubs who look after their own facilities.
- Many of the clubs have thriving junior sections.
- In general, other than at Ilfracombe and Bideford, the supply of cricket grounds/pitches appears to be sufficient to meet demand.
- Quality is an issue at various grounds (in particular pavilions and changing facilities).
- The most common barriers to club development are the cost of insurance, restrictions on development from planning or other legislation, a shortage of volunteers and problems in travelling to compete and train.

Rugby

- Rugby is a historically important sport to the communities of North Devon/Torrige and as such there is a strong rugby presence here. There are 5 rugby clubs in the study area.
- The RFU report having seen "a massive growth" in the number people participating in rugby in the past 12 months. There have been two new girls sections starting: Barnstaple U13 and U15 age groups and Bideford U18 and Ladies. Further growth in demand is anticipated and demand is outgrowing clubs' capacity.
- The RFU identify Barnstaple and Bideford as being in particular need of additional pitches.
- Many of the individual clubs all have plans to improve the quality of their pitches and associated facilities.
- The most common barriers to club development are a shortage of pitches (junior in particular) and a shortage of AGPs (primarily for training). Other common issues were a lack of indoor training facilities, restrictions on development from planning or other legislation and a shortage of external funding.

Hockey

- The England Hockey view is that currently there is adequate AGP provision for hockey within the North Devon and Torridge districts.
- There are currently two EHB affiliated hockey clubs in the North Devon area. There is currently no community hockey club based in the Torridge area. In the main players from this district travel to Barnstaple, Bude or Okehampton to participate in club hockey.
- Demand appears to be shrinking slightly based upon club statistics of active playing members.
- Both North Devon MHC and Taw Valley LHC have the capacity to grow levels of participation. The clubs work together to develop and run the junior section.
- There is only one hockey suitable playing AGP in the area.
- England Hockey emphasise that it is essential that this AGP site at The Park Community School, with good community access, remains hockey compliant as this can enable both clubs to develop and grow participation in the sport, especially with junior and ladies hockey.

Tennis

- Overall there appear to be sufficient Tennis facilities in the study area to meet demand.
- The LTA note that tennis has always been relatively strong in North Devon and Torridge.
- There has been a decline in the Club set up but dominant Clubs have continued to flourish. Small clubs have been struggling with regard to membership and the ability to maintain courts to a standard.
- The Tarka tennis centre was completed in 2002 and is now the hub for North Devon Tennis. The other main facilities are Ilfracombe Tennis Club, Westward Ho! Tennis Club, Braunton Tennis Club and Chulmleigh Tennis Club
- Tarka has boosted all year round participation and generally the standard of tennis in the area.
- Schools tennis has been improved and becoming a core sport.
- There are plans for another indoor centre in Bideford as part of Westward Ho! TC
- There is the potential for better work with low income families

Other Sports - non-pitch

- There is a good indoor bowls facility at North Devon Leisure Centre, Barnstaple and various outdoor greens in town and village locations. There are also a lot of indoor short mat bowls clubs based at village halls.
- In general bowls clubs in the study area are independent and self-supporting.
- There is no evidence of a shortfall of bowls facilities to meet demand but clubs express concern about the potential loss of the indoor green at the Leisure Centre should that need to close.
- Membership levels of non-pitch sports clubs responding to the survey range from over 275 (Southbourne Gymnastics Club) to smaller clubs such as Judo and

Softball who have 20- 50 members. Other clubs have even larger memberships, notably Falcons Gym Club who have around 950 members.

- Most clubs report an increasing membership base over the last three years with only one club reporting a decline.
- A majority of the clubs have or have tried to have links with schools with varying degrees of success and would like to develop those links further. Most see that engagement with schools is fundamental to developing and growing their sport.
- The main barriers preventing further expansion of club activities are: a shortage of good quality indoor facilities; a lack of, or poor quality, changing facilities; a shortage of playing members and a shortage of volunteers to run/coach teams and/or administer the club.

Other issues and observations

- Playing pitch studies were completed by Devon County Council in 2010 for both North Devon and Torridge District areas. Both of these studies appear to be robust and well evidenced; and they adhere to all aspects of the Sport England guidance available at the time.
- Our consultation with District Leisure Officers and the sports' governing bodies indicate little significant overall change in the position since 2010.
- This study does not include a new formal playing pitch study using the full Sport England methodology and Sport England suggest that such a study may need to be completed in the future, particularly in the light of new guidance which is anticipated to be published soon.
- Indoor swimming pools are used regularly by significant numbers. The household survey indicated that 49% of households visit a pool at least monthly. Other well used indoor facilities are the area's village/community halls (42%) and over 30% of household also visit sports/leisure centres at least monthly.
- In the household survey a significant proportion of households (40%) suggested an overall shortfall in swimming pool provision across the study area.
- In relation to indoor facilities the priority for improvement highlighted by the largest number of households for improved provision was also swimming pools (by a significant margin). A supplementary question indicated that the primary concern in this respect was in terms of improvements to existing facilities.
- Squash: there are 3 squash courts at North Devon Leisure Centre but no public squash facilities in Torridge District. Some demand has been expressed for squash locally and the new tennis centre planned for Bideford may be a suitable location. Torridge Council have a mobile squash court that can be erected and dismantled quickly and are planning a programme of squash taster sessions to help test potential demand.
- There is specific concern over the long-term viability of North Devon Leisure Centre and options to maintain provision for swimming, indoor bowls, sport hall use, and squash should this facility face closure.
- Park School - Sports hall and ATP - with the current contract ending in 2017 it is important to maintain the level of community use after this date.

4.3.4 Parks, Green Spaces and Rights of Way - Key Findings

Use

- It is the area's seaside coast and beaches that are most commonly used by most households on regular monthly basis. Footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths; and country parks/countryside and woodlands are also accessed at least monthly by over 70% of households.
- Footpaths, bridleways etc. are also by far the most frequently used facility with over 30% of households reporting using them almost every day.
- Other spaces used on an almost daily basis by at least 15% of households are local parks/recreation grounds, country parks/countryside and woodlands and "other open spaces" e.g. grassed areas for dog-walking, informal games, picnics etc. It is therefore the informal recreation opportunities that figure most frequently in respondents' replies.
- 59% of allotment users visit at least weekly (of which over 25% visit almost every day).

Quantity

- Parks officers from both Torridge and North Devon suggest that overall, in terms of parks and green spaces provision there is no significant shortfall in the quantity of provision but quality is very variable - need for improvement in many areas.
- A majority of residents think there is a need for more footpaths, bridleways, cyclepaths etc.
- Half of residents thought that there should be more wildlife areas/nature reserves.
- Nearly half highlighted a need for more outdoor facilities for teenagers and the focus groups indicated that this should include access to natural green spaces.
- Following this, the other aspects where there was a significant view of there being a shortfall were parks and play areas; access to the sea, coast and beaches.
- A number of Town and Parish Councils highlight a shortfall in allotment space.

Quality

- Parks officers from both authorities stated that their priorities for open space improvements as a result of development would be to improve existing facilities rather than the provision of new ones.
- In the household survey, all facilities are rated average or better by a majority of households. Nearly 40% households highlighted outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor.
- Facilities where the quality is rated good or very well by around 60% of households include parks/recreation grounds; footpaths etc; country parks/countryside/ woodlands; sea, coast and beaches.

Access

- There are numerous barriers to access to open countryside, including poor signage of PROWs, public transport network, attitudes of landowners adjacent to rural areas. There is a sense that some rural market towns and villages are

- landlocked, with little accessible natural greenspace around them.
- Access to the coast was identified as a problem, cost of car parking and lack of reasonable public transport were cited as issues.
 - However, there are good bus routes from the main urban centres to the main beaches at Croyde, Woolacombe, Westward Ho! and Saunton.
 - Where households make use of the opportunities identified, the majority of users are prepared to travel more than 20 minutes to use some facilities such the seaside/coast/beaches, areas for water recreation, wildlife areas, country parks. However, residents are unwilling to travel more than 10 minutes to visit allotments or play areas. A significant minority would not travel further than 5 minutes to these facilities.
 - Nearly three quarters of households said that they would walk or travel by bike more often to facilities if the quality of foot / cycle paths were improved. The same proportion said that they would use open space facilities more often if access by foot or cycle were improved.

Priorities/Other Issues

- The category highlighted by the largest number of households for potential improvement/new provision was for improved access to seaside, coast and beaches, followed by local recreation grounds/parks; and better footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths.
- Other notable priorities for improvement highlighted by significant numbers were children's play areas, country parks/countryside/woodlands and wildlife area/nature reserves; and outdoor facilities for teenagers.
- The priorities identified for outdoor facilities for teenagers; wildlife areas/nature reserves; footpaths/ bridleways/cyclepaths; country parks/woodlands is for an increase in the **quantity** of these facilities.
- For others **quality** improvements to existing levels of provision is the more common kind of improvement suggested e.g. recreation grounds/parks; children's play areas; and access to the seaside, coast and beaches.
- Improved **access** is particularly significant for some categories e.g. access to the seaside; country parks, woodland etc; and wildlife areas/nature reserves.
- The Rights of Way Improvement Plan highlights many priorities for footpaths, cycle routes and bridleways.
- Natural England stress the need to take into account the ANGSt standard as a starting point for developing a standard for natural and semi-natural green space. Variation from this standard should be justified. The Woodland Trust also have a standard for woodlands endorsed by Natural England.
- There is potential to improve access to the countryside and biodiversity through the Biodiversity Offsetting Project.
- It is important to promote the value of walking and cycling and the use of open spaces and rights of way in relation to their benefits to health, and to encourage community involvement.

4.3.5 Children, Young People and Colleges/Schools - Key Findings

Quantity

- The need for more outdoor facilities for teenagers is one of the most frequently highlighted by households (48% report that there are not enough of such facilities).
- Well over a third (40%) of households also think there are not enough play areas.
- The provision of play and youth facilities in the parishes is very varied and many parishes report a shortage of such facilities.

Quality

- Nearly a half of households rate the quality of play areas overall as good or very good compared to only 20% for outdoor youth facilities.
- Nearly 40% rate the quality of youth facilities as poor or very poor compared to only 12% for play areas.
- A number of parishes highlight the need to improve the quality of local play and youth facilities.
- Broadly speaking, the majority view from the community and youth organisations on the quality of facilities for play and youth across the study area was that in general the quality of parks and play areas is regarded as good in contrast to facilities for teenagers which many regard as poor.
- Young people express a wish to have improved access to wilder natural green spaces, the coast, beaches etc. Young people liked wild, not sterile spaces.
- There is a need for play spaces to provide more challenging and “risky” play opportunities, particularly for older children.
- There is need to ensure that the design of play and youth facilities is inclusive as regards use by disabled children and young people.
- Young people say that many activities are too far away, are too expensive and are too few and far between.
- Many young people simply wanted safe places to meet their friends without being moved on.
- There was specific interest in developing more skate parks, youth zones and areas to ride bikes over rough, bump terrain, jumps etc.
- Youth shelters tend to be unattractive places. They are often in out of the way places, they need to be nearer to town. Bandstands are good, as are funky, organic designs. New modern shelters are not much liked.
- Young people value youth centres but they are not open enough.

Access

- The normal mode of access to a play areas and youth facilities is by foot or bicycle. Nearly a quarter of households would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes to access a local play area and for youth facilities no more than 10 minutes.

- It is important that younger children have access to some kind of play space within easy walking distance from home and that teenagers have access to spaces to hang out independently with friends.
- It appears that children and young people will walk and cycle further to access more interesting sites and these will therefore have a larger “catchment”. Young people will walk further than younger children to access such sites.
- Disability - need for a mix of greater inclusivity re all play facilities and schemes; and special provision at the request/preference of the children/young people.
- The need for improved transport to facilities for children and young people (particularly in the rural areas) and safe walking and cycling routes to play opportunities.
- Cost is a barrier to using some facilities that young people think should be free e.g. MUGAs.
- Young people in the rural areas point out that many local farmers do not allow access into the countryside and that they cannot access such open space.

Colleges and Schools

- Local secondary schools and colleges are key providers in relation to publicly accessible sports and leisure opportunities.
- There is potential for greater community use of these facilities. The extent of such use is extremely varied between different schools. Much community use is fairly ad hoc and changeable from year to year.
- The cost of accessing community use of schools is also very varied and many are prohibitive.
- Most of the schools in North Devon/ Torridge have enough facilities to meet their needs though some of the smaller primary schools have limited facilities and many would benefit from improvement.
- Bideford College is fairly recently opened and all its facilities are of a high quality. Access for community use is limited however because of high hire costs.
- The quality of sports facilities at all the secondary schools is quite good, with no obvious priority needs for improvement/refurbishment. The new ATP at Ilfracombe will mean all the secondary schools have an ATP (some half-size).

Other Issues and priorities

- While both youth facilities and play areas feature high in households’ list of priorities for improvement, it is clear that while the priority need for youth facilities is to provide more of such facilities, the priority for play areas is for improvements to the quality of what currently exists.
- Children and teenagers play and hang out regularly “on the street”, near local shops, etc as well as on spaces planned for play and recreation. The study should therefore highlight planning related issues aimed at making the wider residential environment more child-friendly.
- A key barrier to teenagers’ use of “public” open space is that they are often moved on by nearby residents and authorities such as the police. They need more tolerance and places recognised as “theirs”.

- Play England provide excellent guidance on play and spatial planning; play space design; a Quality Assessment Tool for play spaces; and managing risk in play. Some of these could be adopted as guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents.
- There is potential for more community (extended) use of school facilities for play (after school, weekends and during holidays).

STEP 2: AUDIT OF EXISTING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS

5.0 AUDIT OF EXISTING GI ASSETS

5.1 General approach

Due to the varied geography of the study area and the large differences in GI assets (ranging from beaches, headlands, farmland, parks and sports pitches) this study has adopted a bespoke approach to auditing and analysing the GI asset. The first distinction is made between urban and rural areas, and the differences in the nature of provision in these areas. This distinction is referred to as ‘urban’ and ‘rural’ typologies. Urban areas are defined in paragraph 1.4.2.

Secondly, due to the vast resource of natural greenspace, coast line, headlands and the North Devon Biosphere Reserve, the approach to auditing and analysing the natural resource is undertaken separately from the more formal facilities. To distinguish between this natural resource and more formal facilities, a second level of classification is made between ‘formal provision’ and ‘natural provision’.

5.2 Urban typologies (formal provision)

This section sets out the proposed typologies which will have standards developed or have been included within the quantitative or access analysis. The following is proposed:

Typologies with standards	Typologies mapped but no standards ¹⁵
Formal provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amenity Greenspace• Allotments• Park, Sport and Recreation Grounds:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Park and Recreation Ground- Outdoor sports space (Pitches)- Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed)- Outdoor Sports Space (Limited Access)• Play Space (Children)• Play Space (Youth)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education• Churchyards• Statutory sites• Common land• Greenways and corridors

¹⁵ An explanation for not developing standards for these typologies is outlined in the following sections

5.2.1 Allotments



Allotments provide areas for people to grow their own produce and plants. It is important to be clear about what is meant by the term ‘Allotment’. The Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 obliged local authorities to provide sufficient allotments and to let them to persons living in their areas where they considered there was a demand.

The Allotment Act of 1922 defines the term ‘allotment garden’ as:

“an allotment not exceeding 40 poles in extent which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of vegetable or fruit crops for consumption by himself or his family”

(n.b. 40 Poles equals 1,210 square yards or 1,012 square metres. A Pole can also be known as a Rod or Perch.)

The Allotments Act of 1925 gives protection to land acquired specifically for use as allotments, so called Statutory Allotment Sites, by the requirement for the need for the approval of Secretary of State in event of sale or disposal. Some allotment sites may not specifically have been acquired for this purpose. Such allotment sites are known as “temporary” (even if they have been in use for decades) and are not protected by the 1925 legislation.

Throughout the audit, all identified allotments were visited, however, in many cases access to the sites was not possible, therefore limited information may have been recorded at some sites.

5.2.2 Amenity Green Space



The category is considered to include those spaces open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out nor managed for a specific function such as a park, public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat. These areas of open space will be of varied size, but are likely to share the following characteristics:

- Unlikely to be physically demarcated by walls or fences.
- Predominantly laid down to (mown) grass.
- Unlikely to have identifiable entrance points (unlike parks).
- They may have shrub and tree planting, and occasionally formal planted flower beds.
- They may occasionally have other recreational facilities and fixtures (such as play equipment or ball courts).

Examples might include both small and larger informal grassed areas in housing estates and general recreation spaces. They can serve a variety of functions dependent on their size, shape, location and topography. Some may be used for informal recreation activities, whilst others by themselves, or else collectively, contribute to the overall visual amenity of an area. For the purpose of this study, amenity spaces below 0.15 hectares in size have been excluded from the quantity analysis, and have been classified as 'visual amenity space' - typically consisting of roadside verges, roundabouts and incidental areas of grass.

5.2.3 Parks and Recreation Grounds

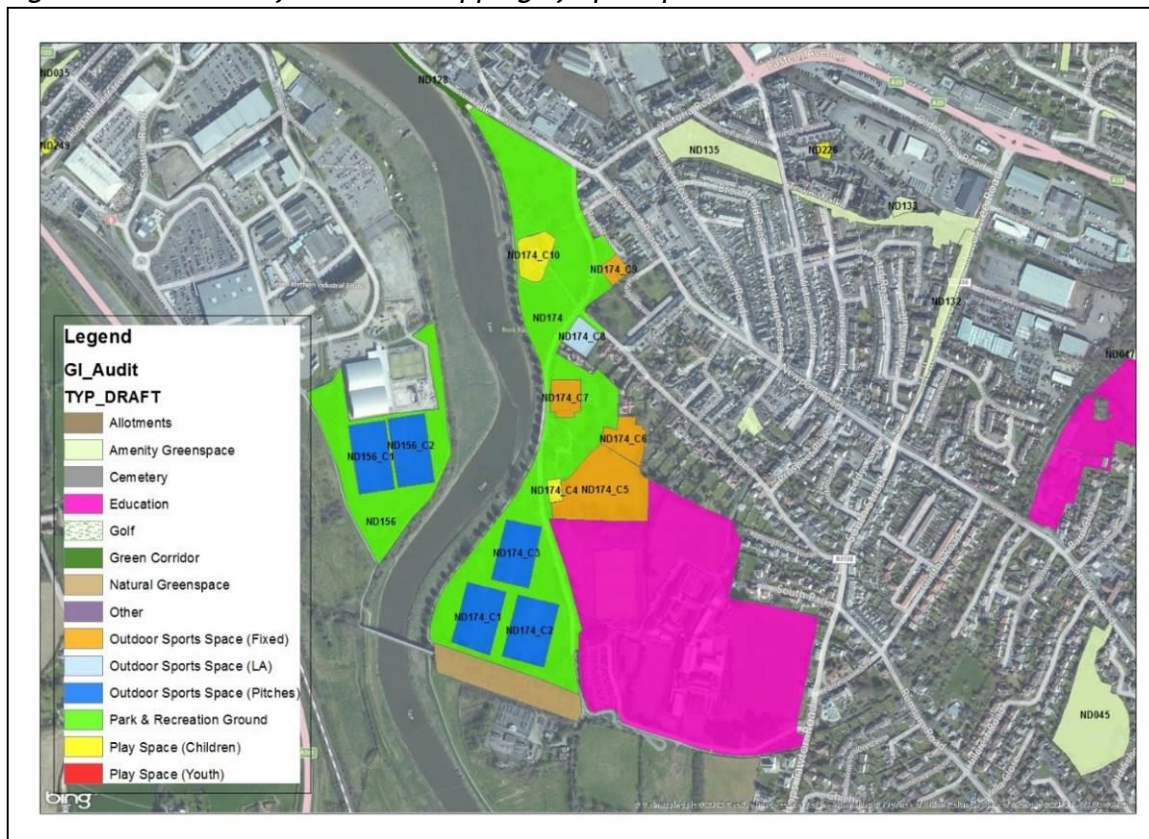


This typology brings together the function of Parks and Recreation grounds and Outdoor Sports Space as identified in the former PPG17 typology. The distinction between the two typologies in the study area is blurred, with very few formal gardens and many parks and/or outdoor sports space having multi-functions used for both informal and formal recreation. The consultation undertaken indicated that people refer to their local park or rec, and communities do not make a distinction between outdoor sports space and parks and recreation grounds. Therefore, for the study an overarching typology for Parks and Recreation Grounds has been used. The typology takes on many forms, and may embrace a wide range of functions including:

- Play space of many kinds
- Provision for a range of formal pitch and fixed sports
- Informal recreation and sport
- Providing attractive walks and cycle routes to work
- Offering landscape and amenity features
- Areas of formal planting
- Providing areas for 'events'
- Providing habitats for wildlife
- Dog walking

The multi-functional approach to mapping has provided detail to the range of functions that exist within parks and recreation grounds, with all outdoor sport and play facilities being mapped. This has meant that more accurate assessment of these facilities can be undertaken. This is illustrated on figure 7 below:

Figure 7 Multi-functional mapping of open space



5.2.4 Play Space



It is important to establish the scope of the study in terms of this kind of space. Children and young people will play/’hang out’ in almost all publicly accessible “space” ranging from the street, town centres and squares, parks, playing fields, “amenity” grassed areas etc. as well as the more recognisable play and youth facility areas such as equipped playgrounds, youth shelters, BMX and skateboard parks, Multi-use Games Areas etc. Clearly many of the other types of open space covered by this study will therefore provide informal play opportunities.

To a child, the whole world is a potential playground: where an adult sees a low wall, a railing, kerb or street bench, a child might see a mini adventure playground or a

challenging skateboard obstacle. Play should not be restricted to designated 'reservations' and planning and urban design principles should reflect these considerations.

However, there are a number of recognised types of play area including Local Areas for Play (LAPs), Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs), Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs), School Playgrounds, informal ball courts, and 'hang out' areas.

The study has recorded the following:

- Equipped children's space (for pre-teens and toddlers).
- Provision for teenagers.

The former comprises equipped areas of play that cater for the needs of children up to and around 12 years. The latter comprises informal recreation opportunities for, broadly, the 13 to 16/17 age group, and which might include facilities like skateboard parks, basketball courts and 'free access' Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs). In practice, there will always be some blurring around the edges in terms of younger children using equipment aimed for youths and vice versa.

Play space - Children

Play Areas are an essential way of creating safe but adventurous places for children of varying ages to play and learn. The emphasis in play area management is shifting away from straightforward and formal equipment such as slides and swings towards creating areas where imagination and natural learning can flourish through the use of landscaping and natural building materials and the creation of areas that need exploring.

Play Space - Youth

This category includes skate parks/BMX tracks and Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA) for ease, as most of these are predominantly used by young people and have been installed with this key client group in mind.

Teenagers should not be ignored, it is important to create areas for 'hanging out' and providing them with things to do such as shelters. Currently recognisable provision for teenagers is few and far between.

5.2.5 Outdoor Sport (Limited Access)

Outdoor sports space with limited public access (e.g. private sports grounds), have also been recorded and mapped where known. Throughout the audit, it was not always possible to gain access to private sites. As such, limited information may have been collected at some sites. Private sport space makes up an important part of outdoor sports provision across the District, and forms an important part of the community facilities. The private sports spaces have been mapped separately to publicly accessible sites, to determine exact provision of the different types of provision.

5.2.6 Churchyards

The District has many churches and cemeteries and these provide significant aesthetic value and space for informal recreation such as walking and relaxing. Many are also important in terms of biodiversity. Their importance for informal recreation, aesthetic value and contribution towards biodiversity must be acknowledged, and as such, investment in their upkeep, maintenance and quality is an important factor. Churchyards and Cemeteries have been identified and mapped where known, however, no quantity or access standard for provision have been set, as it is outside the scope of this study to make recommendations related to requirements for new provision.

However, the quality of churchyards can be influenced by this study, particularly closed churchyards which have become the responsibility of the Local Authority. This reflects the priorities established through consultation, which identifies the need to provide and improve open spaces. Churchyards can provide important open space, particularly closed churchyards, where the ownership is often transferred to the local authority to manage and maintain.

5.2.7 Education

Many schools and colleges have open space and sports facilities within their grounds. This may range from a small playground to large playing fields with several sports pitches. More often than not, public access to these spaces is restricted and in many cases forbidden. Nevertheless, many of the sports facilities are used by local people on both an informal and formal basis.

Sports clubs may have local informal arrangements with a school to use their pitches, and in some cases more formal 'dual-use' agreements may be in place. School grounds can also contribute towards the green infrastructure and biodiversity of an area.

Quantity and access standards have not been proposed for education sites. This is because they are not openly accessible to the public and whilst important to the local community, there is less opportunity for the District Council to influence their provision and management. However, their existence is still an important factor of local provision, and as such they will be subject to the same policy considerations as publicly accessible space.

5.3 Rural typologies (formal provision)

Typologies with standards	Typologies mapped but no standards
Formal provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allotments • Recreation Space • Recreation Space (Limited Access) • Play Space Natural provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible Natural Greenspace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Churchyards • Statutory sites • Common land • Forestry Commission land • Greenways and corridors • Natural Green Space (Limited Access)

For the rural areas, a different approach is proposed, as these areas do not have the range of types of open space found in the urban areas. The following is proposed:

- Allotments are analysed in the same way as urban areas;
- Spaces for formal recreation which cover amenity greenspace and parks and recreation grounds have been grouped as ‘Recreation Space’;
- Similarly private sports grounds and spaces with limited access are mapped as ‘Recreation Grounds (Limited Access)’;
- Play space groups together children and youth space due to the limited provision of youth space in rural areas;

5.4 Natural/Semi-Natural Green Space

Typologies with standards	Typologies mapped but no standards
Natural provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible Natural Greenspace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Greenspace (Limited Access)



For the purpose of this study, natural and semi-natural green space covers a variety of partly or wholly accessible spaces including meadows, woodland and copses all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and wildlife value, but which are also open to public use and enjoyment.

Research elsewhere (Natural England) and the local consultation for this study have identified the value attached to such space for recreation and emotional well-being. A sense of 'closeness to nature' with its attendant benefits for people is something that is all too easily lost in urban areas. Natural Green spaces can make important contributions towards local Biodiversity Action Plan targets and can also raise awareness of biodiversity values and issues.

Some sites will have statutory rights or permissive codes allowing the public to wander in these sites. Others may have defined Rights of Way or permissive routes running through them. For the remainder of sites there may be some access on a managed basis. Many natural spaces may not be 'accessible' in the sense that they cannot be entered and used by the general community, but they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity. Although such spaces are not covered by this study, their value is recognised. Although such spaces are not the subject of standards developed by this study, their value is recognised. This distinction is reflected here by use of the terms Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANG); and, Private Natural Greenspace (PNG).

5.5 Existing provision of open space (formal provision)

5.5.1 Existing provision in urban areas

The GIS mapping of open space has been used to assess the existing quantity of open space by neighbourhood. A summary of existing provision is shown in tables 3 and 4.

Table 4 Existing provision of open space (hectares)

Area	Pop	Amenity Green Space	Allotments	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground (accessible)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches)	Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed)	Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Barnstaple main urban area*	22952	15.25	4.61	21.57	17.25	2.35	1.97	7.65	0.9	0.06
Barnstaple Sticklepath*	1081	0.26	0	3.05	1.97	1.08	0	0	0.03	0
Bideford	16,610	10.2	1.48	8.82	5.96	2.17	0.69	7.63	1.47	0.49
Braunton urban	5134	1.74	0.17	1.46	0.89	0.57	0	0	0.21	0.05
Combe Martin	2,687	1.18	0	5.61	4.78	0.62	0.21	0	0	0
Bickington Roundswell*	5299	5.81	0	4.72	4.72	0	0	0	0.11	0
Great Torrington	5,714	2.43	0	0.72	0.27	0	0.45	6.15	0.45	0.03
Heanton Punchardon Wrafton	656	0.24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0
Holsworthy	2,641	0.12	0	2.92	2.32	0.42	0.18	0.84	0.42	0
Ilfracombe	11,509	11.19	2.12	5.72	3.64	1.19	0.89	0	0.53	0
Landkey	1,955	0.43	0	4.4	3.4	1	0	0	0.12	0
Northam	12,062	8.82	1.89	3.62	1.37	1.32	0.93	3.11	0.59	0.03
South Molton	4,875	2.52	0.89	3.82	3.29	0.53	0	4.14	0.07	0.03
Tawstock urban*	1364	0.65	0	0.83	0.83	0	0	0	0	0
Total	94539	60.84	11.16	67.26	50.69	11.25	5.32	29.52	5.00	0.69
* Barnstaple sub-regional area	30696	21.97	4.61	30.17	24.77	3.43	1.97	7.65	1.04	0.06

* Areas marked with (*) make up the Barnstaple sub-regional area. As this is the main area of proposed growth and the regional centre, figures for this area have also been provided within tables 4 and 5.

Table 5 Existing provision of open space (ha/ 1000)

Area	Pop	Amenity Greenspace	Allotments	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground (accessible)	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches)	Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed)	Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Barnstaple main urban area*	22952	0.66	0.20	0.98	0.75	0.10	0.09	0.33	0.04	0.00
Barnstaple Sticklepath*	1081	0.24	0.00	5.43	1.82	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.00
Bideford	16610	0.61	0.09	0.56	0.36	0.13	0.04	0.46	0.09	0.03
Braunton urban	5134	0.34	0.03	0.34	0.17	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.04	0.01
Combe Martin	2687	0.44	0.00	2.84	1.78	0.23	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bickington Roundswell*	5299	1.10	0.00	1.06	0.89	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.02	0.00
Great Torrington	5714	0.43	0.00	0.13	0.05	0.00	0.08	1.08	0.08	0.01
Heanton Punchardon Wrafton	656	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.15	0.00
Holsworthy	2641	0.05	0.00	1.50	0.88	0.16	0.07	0.32	0.16	0.00
Ilfracombe	11509	0.97	0.18	0.53	0.32	0.10	0.08	0.00	0.05	0.00
Landkey	1955	0.22	0.00	3.40	1.74	0.51	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.00
Northam	12062	0.73	0.16	0.32	0.11	0.11	0.08	0.26	0.05	0.00
South Molton	4875	0.52	0.18	0.94	0.67	0.11	0.00	0.85	0.01	0.01
Tawstock urban*	1364	0.48	0.00	1.05	0.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Average (Ha/1000)		0.64	0.12	0.71	0.54	0.12	0.06	0.31	0.05	0.01
* Barnstaple sub-regional area	30696	2.48	0.2	8.52	4.07	1.1	0.09	0.33	0.09	0

5.5.2 Existing provision in rural areas

Details of provision for each of the parishes is provide in appendix 2. A summary table of the totals is shown below:

Table 6 Summary of provision of open space

	Allotments	Recreation Space	Recreation Space (Limited Access)	Play Space	Education
Total	6.57	55.77	32.69	4.03	63.74
Av (ha/1000)	0.12	1.02	0.60	0.07	1.16

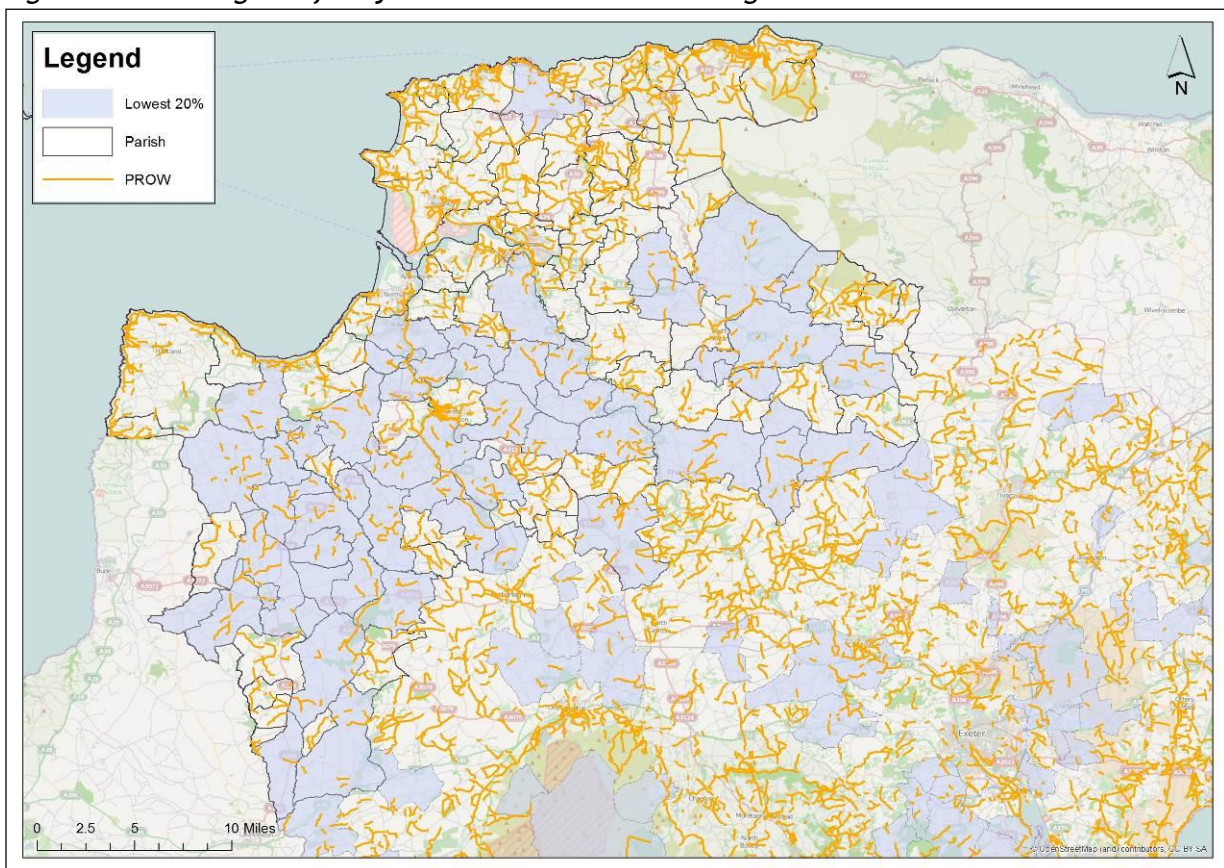
5.6 Existing provision of natural green space

Devon County Council have undertaken considerable amounts of work on their draft 'Devon Green Infrastructure Strategy'. Of particular value to this study is the mapping and analysis report, October 2013 (appendix 1). This includes the following assessments:

5.6.1 Public Rights of Way

The density of rights of way per square kilometre have been mapped across Devon. This has then been applied to parishes to identify which parishes had a high density of public rights of way, and which had a low density. The results are shown in figure 8. This has then been used to extract 20% of parishes that have the lowest density of public rights of way. The strategy also provides guidance to local communities on how they can improve their local rights of way¹⁶.

Figure 8 Public Rights of Way in North Devon and Torridge



¹⁶ <http://www.devon.gov.uk/communitypaths.pdf>

5.6.2 Areas of Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANG)

The mapping has drawn on data provided by Devon County Council as a merged layer. The following is included:

- Beaches - This shows the publicly accessible beaches around Devon. This information was only available for the area of Devon, including the Unitary Authorities of Plymouth and Torbay.
- Village Greens - Shows the boundaries of registered village greens. These are only available within the County of Devon including Torbay and Plymouth.
- Nature Reserves - Including nationally and locally designated nature reserves. Information provided by Natural England.
- RSPB Reserves - Sites owned by the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) which are generally accessible to the public, although in some cases this access may be restricted to marked paths only. This information has been provided by the RSPB.
- Devon Wildlife Trust Reserves - Wildlife reserves owned by the Devon Wildlife Trust. Importantly, the reserves that are only accessible using permits, including Exe Reed Beds, Higher Kiln Quarry, Mill Bottom and Sourton Quarry have been removed from the analysis. This information has been provided by the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (DBRC).
- National Trust Accessible Land - Sites owned by the National Trust that are considered by them to be either “Always Open” or of “Limited Access”, therefore showing sites that are generally accessible to the public, although perhaps not at all times. This information has been provided by the National Trust.
- Accessible Woodland - The Woodland Trust’s ‘Space for People’ analysis of woodland where there is permissive access to woodland has been used in this analysis. The layer includes community woodlands. This information has been provided by the Woodland Trust.
- CROW Act Open Countryside - Open country is defined in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 as mountain, moor, heath and down land which is accessible to the general public (subject to the disclaimers above). This information has been provided by Natural England.
- CROW Act Registered Common Land - This dataset contains parcels of land designated as Registered Common Land under the CROW Act. This information has been provided by Natural England.
- CROW Act Section 15 Land - Section 15 of the CROW Act identifies land which is publicly accessible, and was so before the Act came into being. This information has been provided by Natural England.

- CROW Act Section 16 Land - Section 16 of the CROW Act allows landowners and long leaseholders to voluntarily dedicate land for public access. This can give a legal public right of access to land that would not otherwise be covered by the CROW Act. Some areas of land have been identified under Section 16 within Devon. This information has been provided by Natural England.
- Country Parks - These are sites that were established as a result of the 1968 Countryside Act, they are recognised by Natural England as significant places that contribute to England's accessible natural greenspace with many located near towns and cities and may be subject to opening times. This information has been provided by Natural England.
- Coast Path - The South West Coast Path has been included, based on Ordnance Survey maps. The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 sets out the framework for public access to the coast.

The mapping provided by Devon County Council is considered to be appropriate for analysis of provision within North Devon and Torridge. By using this data, it also ensures this is consistency between the County GI Strategy and the North Devon and Torridge Strategy. It also means that data can be updated as and when the county data is updated. However, the data provided does have some limitations:

- The County were unable to provide the data as individual typologies (due to licensing restrictions), therefore the data is merged;
- The data does not include strategic footpaths and cycleways (e.g. Tarka Trail and The Two Moors Way).

Figure 9 shows the provision of this accessible natural green space as a merged layer. The data for the whole county is shown in figure 10. Analysis of provision is made in section 7.3.

Figure 9 Provision of Accessible Natural Greenspace (Study Area)

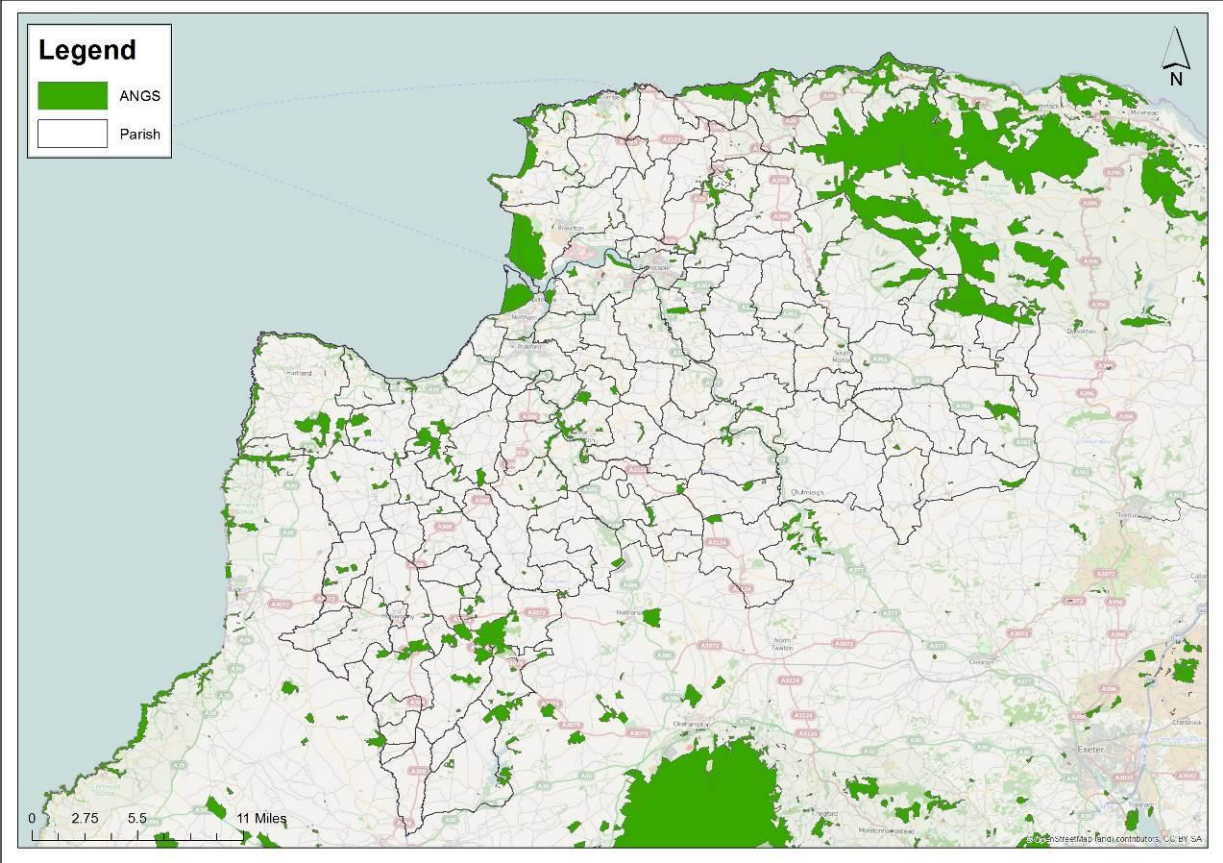
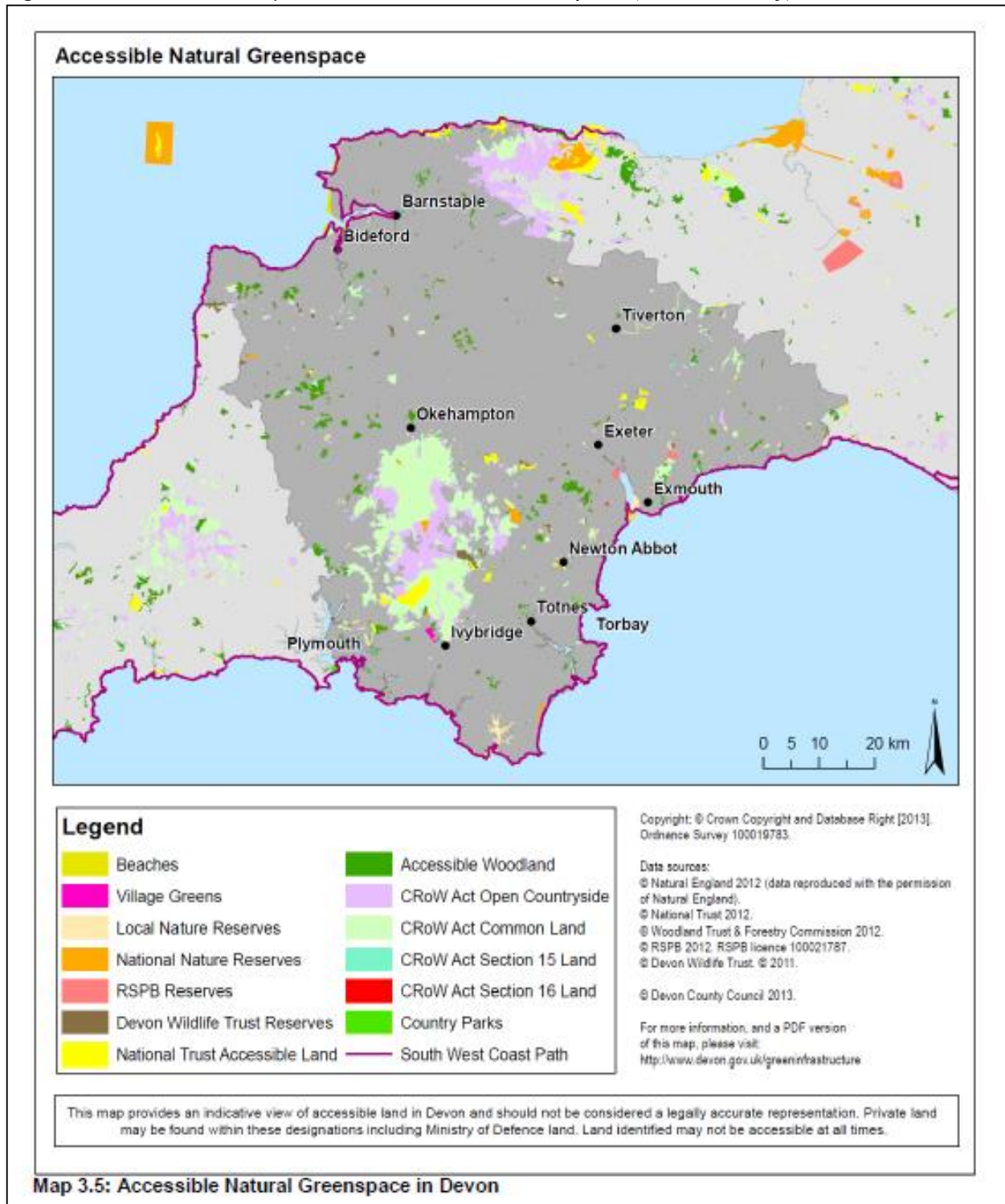


Figure 10 Provision of Accessible Natural Green Space (Devon County)



STEP 3: SETTING LOCAL STANDARDS

6.0 SETTING LOCAL STANDARDS

6.1 The development of Standards

Following the completion of the assessment of local needs and the audit of provision (the first two steps of this study), new standards of provision for open space are proposed below. This section explains how the standards for North Devon and Torridge have been developed, and provides specific information and justification for each of the typologies where standards have been proposed.

The standards for open space have been developed in-line with the new NPPF. Standards comprise the following components:

- **Quantity standards:** These are determined by the analysis of existing quantity, consideration of existing local and national standards and benchmarks and evidence gathered from the local needs assessment. It is important that quantity standards are locally derived and are realistic and achievable. The recommended standards need to be robust, evidence based and deliverable through new development and future mechanisms of contributions through section 106 and/or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- **Accessibility standards:** These reflect the needs of potential users. Spaces likely to be used on a frequent and regular basis need to be within easy walking distance and to have safe access. Other facilities where visits are longer but perhaps less frequent, for example country parks, can be further away. Consideration is also given to existing local or national standards and benchmarks.
- **Quality standards:** The standards for each form of provision are derived from the quality audit, existing good practice and from the views of the community and those that use the spaces. Again, quality standards should be achievable and reflect the priorities that emerge through consultation.

The standards that have been proposed are for minimum guidance levels of provision. So, just because geographical areas may enjoy levels of provision exceeding minimum standards does not mean there is a surplus, as all such provision may be well used.

6.2 Recommended standards (formal provision)

6.2.1 Allotments

Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.15 ha/1000 population	480m (10 minutes straight line walk time) in urban area 600m (12-13 minutes) in rural area

Existing national or local standards

National standards for allotments and other such open spaces are difficult to find. The closest thing to such standards appears to be those set out by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). These are as follows:

- Standard Plot Size = 330 sq yards (250sqm)
- Paths = 1.4m wide for disabled access
- Haulage ways = 3m wide
- Plot holders shed = 12sqm
- Greenhouse = 15sqm
- Polytunnel = 30sqm

Quantity standard for allotments

Quantity:

- Existing average level of provision in both urban and rural areas is 0.12 ha/1000 population;
- Provision varies massively across areas;
- Household survey identified 26% of people felt there should be more, and around 70% of people felt there were enough;
- Recommended standards are slightly higher than average standards, and although there is no strong community identification for this, it is recommended that with the propensity for new housing to have high density levels, and hence smaller gardens, there should be an increased provision for allotments.

Access standard for allotments

- Just under 50% of people want allotments close to home (up to 10 mins).
- Just over 50% of people walk to their allotments;
- Proposed standard of 480 metres (10 mins) in urban areas and 600 metres (12-13 mins) in rural areas.

Quality standards for allotments

Few comments were received in relation to the quality of allotments, furthermore the information gathered in relation to allotments is more difficult to assess in comparison to other types of open space. The reason for this is twofold: Firstly, the number of people who actually use allotments is very low compared to the numbers who use other types of open space and, therefore specific comments related to the quality of allotments are less frequent; Secondly, the majority of allotments sites are locked, and the quality audit only allows for assessment against key criteria such as the level of cultivation and general maintenance, which is less comprehensive than the assessments of other open space.

For allotments, a number of general recommendations are made in relation to quality, which should include the following:

- Well-drained soil which is capable of cultivation to a reasonable standard.
- A sunny, open aspect preferably on a southern facing slope.
- Limited overhang from trees and buildings either bounding or within the site.
- Adequate lockable storage facilities, and a good water supply within easy walking distance of individual plots.
- Provision for composting facilities.
- Secure boundary fencing.
- Good access within the site both for pedestrians and vehicles.
- Good vehicular access into the site and adequate parking and manoeuvring space.
- Disabled access.
- Toilets.
- Notice boards.

6.2.2 Amenity Greenspace (Urban standard)

Summary of quantity and access standard

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
0.70 ha/1000 population from sites > 0.2ha	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk

Existing national or local standards

There is no national guidance suggesting a standard for the provision of Amenity green space. The Fields in Trust (FIT) 'Six Acre Standard' proposes casual or informal playing space should be provided within housing areas as part of the overall standard. This is equivalent to 0.4 - 0.5 ha/1000 population of informal space for play.

Quantity standard for Amenity green space

- Existing average level of provision in urban areas is 0.64 ha/1000 population;
- No specific questions asked in relation to amenity greenspace, just over 50% of people identified they were satisfied with current levels of provision of ‘other open space’;
- Provision varies greatly with some areas falling well below the average, and others far exceeding it;
- There is no strong need or justification for increasing current levels of provision, so 0.7 ha/1000 population is proposed;
- For new provision, it is acknowledged that there is a blurring between amenity greenspace and natural greenspace, with them often functioning in similar ways. Therefore, for new provision a combined standard with natural greenspace is recommended. This is proposed at 2.0 ha/1000 population;
- The minimum size of a space that will be considered acceptable and count towards open space provision is recommended to be 0.2 ha in size (about the size of a mini football pitch). This will avoid a proliferation of small amenity spaces which have no real recreation function. Any spaces below this size will be acceptable in terms of their visual amenity, but would not count towards the required level of provision.

Access standard for amenity green space

- Consultation identified people want spaces close to home, and that these are accessed by foot;
- Proposed standard in urban areas of 480 metres (10 mins).

Quality standards for amenity green space

The audit of provision as well as the consultation has identified the importance attached by local people to open space close to home. The value of ‘amenity green space’ must be recognised especially within housing areas, where it can provide important local opportunities for play, exercise and visual amenity that are almost immediately accessible. On the other hand open space can be expensive to maintain and it is very important to strike the correct balance between having sufficient space to meet the needs of the community for accessible and attractive space, and having too much which would be impossible to manage properly and therefore a potential liability and source of nuisance. It is important that amenity green space should be capable of use for at least some forms of public recreation activity.

It is therefore recommended that in addition to the minimum size threshold identified above, that all amenity green space should be subject to landscape design, ensuring the following quality principles:

- Capable of supporting informal recreation such as a kickabout, space for dog walking or space to sit and relax;
- Include high quality planting of trees and/or shrubs to create landscape structure and biodiversity value;
- Include paths along main desire lines (lit where appropriate);

- Be designed to ensure easy maintenance.

6.2.3 Parks, Sport and Recreation grounds (Urban standard)

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.30 ha/1000 population for public and private provision	600 metres (12-13 minutes straight line walk time)

Existing national and local policies

Fields in Trust (FIT), previously known as the National Playing Fields Association promoted the Six Acre Standard of 2.4 hectares (6 acres) per 1000 persons, but with a specific provision of 1.6-1.8 hectares per 1000 persons of outdoor sports space (and 0.8 hectares per 1000 people for children’s play of which around 0.3 hectares should be equipped provision). The new FIT ‘Benchmark Standards for Outdoor Sport and Play’ also suggest similar overall levels of provision as a guide to local authorities, although FIT does accept the importance of developing locally researched standards.

Quantity of parks, sport and recreation grounds

- Existing average level of provision in urban areas is 0.71 ha/1000 population, with an additional 0.31 ha/1000 population of private sports space available;
- Sport England are keen on the FIT standards (which proposes 1.6 ha/1000 population);
- The household survey identified the following in relation to this typology:
 - Just over 40% felt there should be more local recreation grounds or parks, nearly 60% felt there was enough;
 - Similarly just over 60% of people felt there are enough playing fields;
 - In terms of more formal provision such as bowls and tennis, again just over 60% felt there is enough;
- A number of facilities have limited access (e.g. private sports grounds), nevertheless they are important community facilities, and as such it is recommended that the standard includes these sites and affords them suitable protection/due consideration in the planning process;
- A proposed standard of 1.3 ha/1000 population is proposed for both public and private space. Although this is higher than the current average, it also falls below the FIT standards. As there is no strong justification for a higher standard, it is not felt the FIT standards are justified or deliverable. However, a standard which shows an aspiration to provide these types of space at a slightly higher level than the overall average (1.3 is also the current level of provision in Barnstaple main urban area!) is deemed to be appropriate.

Access standard for parks, sport and recreation grounds

- Around 55% of people are willing to travel up to 15 mins to local recreation grounds and parks;
- For playing fields and tennis, bowls etc., a similar figure is found;
- Over 60% of people walk to these facilities;
- A recommended standard of 600 metres (12-13 minutes' walk time) is recommended.

Quality standards for parks, sport and recreation grounds

Satisfaction levels with the quality of facilities such as sports pitches were average, with the vast majority of people scoring quality at 5 or 6 out of 10.

National guidance relevant to this typology is provided in the 'Green Flag' quality standard for parks which sets out benchmark criteria for quality open spaces. For outdoor sports space, Sport England have produced a wealth of useful documents outlining the quality standards for facilities such as playing pitches, changing rooms, MUGAS and tennis courts plus associated ancillary facilities. The Rugby Football Union have provided guidance on the quality and standard of provision of facilities for rugby, and the England and Wales Cricket Board have provided guidance for cricket facilities. It is recommended that the guidance provided in these documents is adopted by the District councils, and that all new and improved provision seeks to meet these guidelines.

6.2.4 Recreation Space (Rural standard)

Quantity Standard	Access Standard
1.3 ha/1000 population	600 metres (12-13 minutes straight line walk time)

Quantity

- The current average level of provision is 1.02 ha/1000 population with an additional 0.60 ha/1000 of private space;
- The findings outlined above show people are generally happy with current levels of provision;
- Again it is felt that a standard of 1.3 ha/1000 population is deliverable and appropriate for rural areas.

Access

- The same standard proposed for urban areas i.e. 600 metres (12-13 minutes' walk). The dispersed nature of rural areas will make it unachievable anywhere outside the main villages.

6.2.5 Play Space

Summary of quantity and access standards

Typology	Quantity Standard	Access Standard
Play Space (Children)	0.05 ha/1000 population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Junior Provision - 480m (10 minutes straight line walk time) urban- 600m (12-13 minutes walk time) rural
Play Space (Youth)	0.02 ha/1000 population	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Youth Provision - 600 m (12-13 minutes straight line walk time)

Existing National and Local Policies

The FIT guidance (see 5.3.6) recommends provision of 0.8 hectares per 1000 people for children's play of which around 0.3 hectares should be equipped provision. These standards have been criticised in recent years because they are often seen as undeliverable, and can result in a proliferation of play areas that can be difficult to maintain, as well as setting unrealistic aspirations in urban areas where insufficient land is available to provide facilities, especially higher density development on brownfield sites. An additional problem is that the current FIT guidance does not specifically cover the needs of most teenagers within the 'Standard Youth Provision'.

Quantity standards for play

- In urban areas, current level of provision of children's facilities is 0.05 ha/1000 population, for youth space this is 0.01 ha/1000 population;
- In rural areas the combined provision of play space is 0.07 ha/1000 population;
- 40% of people felt there should be more children's facilities, and around 56% felt there are enough;
- For youth facilities, nearly 50% felt there should be more and about the same felt there was enough;
- It is felt that there is some demand for increased levels of provision, particularly for youth provision, therefore a standard of 0.05 ha/1000 population for children and 0.02 ha/1000 population for youth is proposed in urban areas;
- In rural areas, the combined level of provision of 0.7 ha/1000 population is about right.

Access standards for play

- For children's play space around 22% of people want facilities within 5 minutes, and a further 30% within 10 minutes. However, nearly 30% also said they were willing to travel more than 20 minutes. Further analysis of this suggests that these comments come from more rural parishes, where people are perhaps used to having to travel further to such facilities.
- For youth play space, only around 18% of people expected facilities within 10 minutes of home, around 30% said around 11-15 minutes was acceptable and a further 30% identified they were willing to travel more than 20 minutes.

In light of these findings, the following access standards are recommended:

- Children's provision - 480m for urban areas (10 minutes straight line walk time) and 600 metres for rural areas (12-13 minutes' walk time)
- Youth Provision - 600 m (12-13 minutes straight line walk time) for both urban and rural areas.

Quality standards for play

Play England are keen to see a range of play spaces in all urban environments:

A Door-step spaces close to home

B Local play spaces - larger areas within easy walking distance

C Neighbourhood spaces for play - larger spaces within walking distance

D Destination/family sites - accessible by bicycle, public transport and with car parking.

Moving forward, Play England would like their new Design Guide; '*Design for Play*' to be referenced and added as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in standard configuration. Play England have also developed a '*Quality Assessment Tool*' which can be used to judge the quality of individual play spaces. It has been recommended that both Council's consider adopting this as a means of assessing the quality of play spaces in their District. Play England also highlight a potential need for standards for smaller settlements and rural areas where the doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination hierarchy is unlikely to be appropriate.

Disability access is also an important issue for Play England and they would like local authorities to adopt the KIDS¹⁷ publication; '*Inclusion by Design*' as an SPD. Their most recent guidance document, '*Better Places to Play through Planning*' gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space and is considered as a background context for the standards suggested in this study.

¹⁷ KIDS, is a charity which in its 40 years, has pioneered a number of approaches and programmes for disabled children and young people. KIDS was established in 1970 and in 2003, KIDS merged with KIDSACTIVE, previously known as the Handicapped Adventure Play Association.

6.2.6 Summary: Urban standards

Table 7 Urban standards of formal provision

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)		Access standard
	For assessing current and future provision	Requirement from new development	
Allotments	0.15	0.15	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Amenity greenspace	0.70	2.0 (including natural greenspace)	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Parks, Sport and Recreation Grounds	1.30 to include both public and private grounds (excluding education sites)	1.30 of publicly accessible provision	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Children)	0.05	0.05	480 metres or 10 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Youth)	0.02	0.02	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time

6.2.7 Summary: Rural standards

Table 8 Rural standards of formal provision

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)		Access standard
	For assessing current and future provision	Requirement from new development	
Allotments	0.10	0.15	600 metres or 12 - 13 minutes' walk time
Recreation Space	1.30 to include both public and private grounds (excluding education sites)	1.30	600 metres or 12 - 13 minutes' walk time
Play Space (Children and Youth)	0.07	0.07	600 metres or 12-13 minutes' walk time

For the rural standards, it is particularly important to apply these standards to the main settlement areas only, as many of the rural parishes have large areas of land where there is no residential occupancy.

6.3 Recommended Standards (natural provision)

The standards for natural green space have drawn on the analysis that has been undertaken as part of the draft Devon GI Strategy, which themselves have drawn on national standards recommended by Natural England and the Woodland Trust, which are summarised below.

6.3.1 Natural England Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt)

- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometre of home;
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home.

6.3.2 Woodland Trust Access Standards

The Woodland Trust also produced access standards:

- that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size;
- that there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people's homes.

6.3.3 Local standards

For this purpose of this study, it is recommended that the analysis should include both the Natural England ANGSt and the Woodland Trust standards to identify current levels of provision and gaps. It is also recommended that local standards are adopted for providing new levels of provision through development. This is summarised below:

Table 9 Summary of natural provision standards

Typology	Quantity standards (ha/1000 population)		Access standard
	For assessing current and future provision	Requirement from new development	
Natural Green Space	ANGSt and Woodland Trust	2.00 to include natural and amenity green space	ANGSt and Woodland Trust

6.3.4 Quality of natural and semi-natural green space

Satisfaction levels with the quality of natural green space are above average, with over 60% of people in the household sample survey rating their quality as good or very good. Consultation results also highlight the value attached to certain attributes of open space, in particular:

- Good maintenance and cleanliness
- Ease of access
- Lack of antisocial behaviour, noise etc.

This suggests that the provision of new or improved open space cannot be considered in isolation from the means of maintaining such space, perceptions of antisocial behaviour, and ease of access from within the surrounding environment.

The shape and size of space provided should allow for meaningful and safe recreation. Provision might be expected to include (as appropriate) elements of woodland, wetland, heathland and meadow, and could also be made for informal public access through recreation corridors. For larger areas, where car borne visits might be anticipated, some parking provision will be required. The larger the area the more valuable sites will tend to be in terms of their potential for enhancing local conservation interest and biodiversity. Wherever possible these sites should be linked to help improve wildlife value as part of a network.

In areas where it may be impossible or inappropriate to provide additional natural green space consistent with the standard, other approaches should be pursued which could include (for example):

- Changing the management of marginal space on playing fields and parks to enhance biodiversity.
- Encouraging living green roofs as part of new development/ redevelopment.
- Encouraging the creation of mixed species hedgerows.
- Additional use of long grass management regimes.
- Improvements to watercourses and water bodies.
- Innovative use of new drainage schemes / Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).
- Use of native trees and plants with biodiversity value in high quality soft landscaping of new developments.

The above should in any event be principles to be pursued and encouraged at all times. Further guidance in this regard should be included in appropriate SPDs.

STEP 4: APPLYING LOCAL STANDARDS

7.0 APPLYING LOCAL STANDARDS

7.1 Introduction

This part of the report uses the recommended standards to analyse provision across the study area. Information is presented by typology, considering quantity by parish and urban settlement area, and access at a district level and an overall quality assessment.

Quantity analysis

The quantity of provision is assessed using the recommended quantity standards for each of the typologies where a quantity standard has been developed. Recommended standards are expressed as hectares of open space per 1000 people.

The quantity assessment looks at the existing levels of provision, then uses the recommended standard to assess the required level of provision. From this a calculation is made of the supply, which will either be sufficient or insufficient. Within this section, levels of provision are provided by parish or urban settlement area.

For each typology, a table showing quantity analysis is shown, it provides:

- Existing provision (hectares);
- Required provision against the standards (hectares);
- Surplus of deficiency of Supply (hectares);

Access analysis

This section of the report provides analysis of the recommended access standards for each typology at a district wide level. The maps and analysis in this section are intended to be indicative, providing an overall picture of provision and highlighting any key issues across the study area.

However, the key to access analysis, is understanding the picture at a more localised level, therefore, maps showing local access provision are provided as an electronic appendix available from each of the councils.

Quality analysis

This section of the report makes analysis of each typology at a district wide level - it highlights any common themes or issues that have arisen from the quality audit.

7.2 Application of standards (formal provision)

7.2.1 Quantity analysis (urban areas)

Table 10 shows the existing provision of open space in hectares for each typology for each of the urban settlement areas. The figures for ‘Park, Sport & Recreation Grounds’ include a combination of the following four typologies:

- Park and Recreation Ground;
- Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches);
- Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed);
- Outdoor Sports Space (LA).

Table 10 shows the required level of provision (in hectares), against the recommended standards. Within this table, the figures for ‘park, sport and recreation ground’ include both public and private facilities as outlined above.

Table 11 shows the supply of open space against the recommended standards. This is expressed in hectares and shows where there supply is sufficient or deficient.

Table 10 Existing provision of open space (hectares)

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Greenspace	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground	Park and Recreation Ground	Outdoor Sports Space (Pitches)	Outdoor Sports Space (Fixed)	Outdoor Sports Space (LA)	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)	Education
Barnstaple main urban area*	4.61	15.25	29.22	17.25	2.35	1.97	7.65	0.9	0.06	32.15
Barnstaple sticklepath*	0	0.26	3.05	1.97	1.08	0	0	0.03	0	0
Bideford	1.48	8.54	16.17	5.96	2.17	0.41	7.63	1.47	0.49	16.08
Braunton urban	0.17	1.74	1.46	0.89	0.57	0	0	0.21	0.05	6.94
Combe Martin	0	0.83	5.4	4.78	0.62	0	0	0	0	0.61
Bickington Roundswell*	0	5.81	4.72	4.72	0	0	0	0.11	0	2.58
Great Torrington	0	1.85	6.42	0.27	0	0	6.15	0.45	0.03	5.31
Heanton Punchardon wrafton	0	0.24	0	0	0	0	0	0.1	0	0
Holsworthy	0	0	3.76	2.32	0.42	0.18	0.84	0.42	0	3.97
Ilfracombe	2.12	10.61	5.15	3.64	1.19	0.32	0	0.53	0	9.11
Landkey	0	0.16	4.4	3.4	1	0	0	0.12	0	0.75
Northam	1.89	7.4	6.26	1.37	1.32	0.46	3.11	0.59	0.03	1.47
South Molton	0.89	2.01	7.96	3.29	0.53	0	4.14	0.07	0.03	6.55
Tawstock urban*	0	0.65	0.83	0.83	0	0	0	0	0	3.27
*Barnstaple sub-regional area	4.61	21.97	37.82	24.77	3.43	1.97	7.65	1.04	0.06	38

* Areas that make up the Barnstaple sub-regional area

Table 11 Required provision of open space against recommended standards (hectares)

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Greenspace	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Barnstaple main urban area	3.44	16.07	29.84	1.15	0.46
Barnstaple sticklepath	0.16	0.76	1.41	0.05	0.02
Bideford	2.49	11.63	21.59	0.83	0.33
Braunton urban	0.77	3.59	6.67	0.26	0.1
Combe Martin	0.4	1.88	3.49	0.13	0.05
Bickington Roundswell	0.79	3.71	6.89	0.26	0.11
Great Torrington	0.86	4	7.43	0.29	0.11
Heanton Punchardon wrafton	0.1	0.46	0.85	0.03	0.01
Holsworthy	0.4	1.85	3.43	0.13	0.05
Ilfracombe	1.73	8.06	14.96	0.58	0.23
Landkey	0.29	1.37	2.54	0.1	0.04
Northam	1.81	8.44	15.68	0.6	0.24
South Molton	0.73	3.41	6.34	0.24	0.1
Tawstock urban	0.2	0.95	1.77	0.07	0.03
*Barnstaple sub-regional area	4.59	21.49	39.91	1.53	0.62

Table 12 Required provision of open space against recommended standards (hectares)

PARISH	Allotments	Amenity Greenspace	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Barnstaple main urban area	1.17	-0.82	-0.62	-0.25	-0.40
Barnstaple sticklepath	-0.16	-0.50	1.64	-0.02	-0.02
Bideford	-1.01	-3.09	-5.42	0.64	0.16
Braunton urban	-0.60	-1.85	-5.21	-0.05	-0.05
Combe Martin	-0.40	-1.05	1.91	-0.13	-0.05
Bickington Roundswell	-0.79	2.10	-2.17	-0.15	-0.11
Great Torrington	-0.86	-2.15	-1.01	0.16	-0.08
Heanton Punchardon wrafton	-0.10	-0.22	-0.85	0.07	-0.01
Holsworthy	-0.40	-1.85	0.33	0.29	-0.05
Ilfracombe	0.39	2.55	-9.81	-0.05	-0.23
Landkey	-0.29	-1.21	1.86	0.02	-0.04
Northam	0.08	-1.04	-9.42	-0.01	-0.21
South Molton	0.16	-1.40	1.62	-0.17	-0.07
Tawstock urban	-0.20	-0.30	-0.94	-0.07	-0.03
*Barnstaple sub-regional area	0.02	0.48	-2.09	-0.49	-0.56

NB: positive figures indicate surplus; negative figures indicate deficiency

7.2.2 Quantity analysis (rural areas)

Table 13 Existing provision of open space (hectares)

PARISH	Allotments	Recreation Space	Recreation Space (LA)	Play Space	Education
Abbots Bickington	0	0	0	0	0
Abbotsham	1.3	0.16	0	0.05	0.07
Alverdiscott	0	0	0	0	0
Alwington	0	0	0	0	0
Arlington	0	0	0	0	0
Ashford	0	0	0	0	0
Ashreigney	0	0	0	0	0
Ashwater	0	0	0	0	0.15
Atherington	0	0.64	0	0.1	0
Beaford	0	1.99	1.66	0.03	0.47
Berrynarbor	0	0.45	0	0	0.04
Bishops Nympton	0	0	0	0.07	0.75
Bishops Tawton	1.04	0.6	0	0.02	0.49
Bittadon	0	0	0	0	0
Black Torrington	0	0.75	0	0.13	0.02
Bradford	0	0	0	0	0.66
Bradworthy	0	0.7	0	0.13	0.09
Bratton Fleming	0.12	6.49	0	0.04	0.65
Braunton (rural)	0.12	2.81	1.49	0.06	0
Brayford	0	0	0	0	0.36
Brendon	0	0	0	0	0
Bridgerule	0	0.93	0	0.04	0.14
Broadwoodwidge	0	0.31	0	0	0.42
Buckland Brewer	0.45	1.33	0	0.04	0.44
Buckland Filleigh	0	0	0	0	0
Bulkworthy	0	0	0	0	0
Burrington	0	0	0	0.1	0.73
Challacombe	0	0	0	0	0
Chittlehamholt	0	1.25	0	0.04	0
Chittlehampton	0.31	1.19	2.2	0.03	0.73
Chulmleigh	0.09	2.99	0.88	0.14	7.82
Clawton	0	0	0	0	0.68
Clovelly	0	0.89	0	0.04	0.07
Cookbury	0	0	0	0	0
Countisbury	0	0	0	0	0
Dolton	0	0.78	0	0.39	0.02
Dowland	0	0	0	0	0
East and West Buckland	0	0	0	0	31.98
East Anstey	0	0.4	0	0	0.37
East Down	0	0	0	0	0
East Putford	0	0	0	0	0
East Worlington	0	0	0	0	0
Filleigh	0	0	9.73	0	0.39
Fremington (rural)	0.48	3.26	0	0.23	1.2
Frithelstock	0	0.6	0	0.1	0
Georgeham	0.21	2.28	0	0.47	0.52
George Nympton	0	0	0	0	0
Goodleigh	0	0.53	0	0.02	0.12
Halwill	0	1.15	0	0.08	0.81
Hartland	0	0.88	0	0.04	0.41
Heanton Punchardon (rural)	0	0	6.33	0	0.92
High Bickington	0	1.55	0	0	0.04
Hollacombe	0	0	0	0	0
Holsworthy Hamlets	0	0.39	0	0.11	0
Horwood Lovacott and Newton Tracey	0	0	1.23	0	0.05
Huish	0	0	0	0	0
Huntshaw	0	0	0	0	0
Instow	0.31	0	2.42	0	0.29
Kentisbury	0	0	0	0	0

PARISH	Allotments	Recreation Space	Recreation Space (LA)	Play Space	Education
Kings Nympton	0	0.39	0	0.01	0.31
Knowstone	0	0	0	0	0
Landcross	0	0	0	0	0
Langtree	0	0.39	0	0.01	0.26
Littleham	0	0.78	0	0.01	0
Little Torrington	0	0	0	0	0
Loxhore	0	0.89	0	0	0
Luffincott	0	0	0	0	0
Lundy	0	0	0	0	0
Lynton and Lynmouth	0.56	0	0	0	0
Mariansleigh	0	0	0	0	0
Martinhoe	0	0	0	0	0
Marwood	0	0	0	0	0.28
Merton	0	1	0	0.11	0
Meshaw	0	0	0	0	0
Milton Damerel	0	0	0	0	0
Molland	0	0	0	0	0
Monkleigh	0	0	0	0	0.42
Mortehoe	1.28	5.29	0	0.17	0.39
Newton St Petrock	0	0	0	0	0
Northcott	0	0	0	0	0
North Molton	0.16	0	3.92	0	0.52
Pancrasweek	0	0	0	0	0
Parkham	0	0.66	0	0.03	0.07
Parracombe	0	0	0	0	0
Peters Marland	0	0	0	0	0.38
Petrockstow	0	3.25	0	0.02	0
Pilton West	0	0	0	0	0
Pyworthy	0	0.48	0	0.18	0.01
Queens Nympton	0	0	0	0	0
Rackenford	0	0.31	0	0.04	0.1
Roborough	0	0.3	0	0.07	0
Romansleigh	0	0	0	0	0
Rose Ash	0	0.31	0	0	0
Satterleigh and Warkleigh	0	0	0	0	0
Shebbear	0	0.28	1.3	0.16	6.43
Sheepwash	0	0	0	0	0
Shirwell	0	0.07	0	0	0.14
St Giles in the Wood	0	1.18	0	0.11	0
St Giles on the Heath	0	0.33	0	0.08	0.34
StokeRivers	0	0	0	0	0
Sutcombe	0	0	0	0.05	0.19
Swimbridge	0.18	2.22	0	0	0.71
Tawstock (rural)	0	0	0	0	5.09
Tetcott	0	0	0	0	0
Thornbury	0	0	0	0	0
Trentishoe	0	0	0	0	0
Twitchen	0	0	0	0	0
Virginstow	0	0	0	0	0
Weare Giffard	0	0.86	0	0.09	0
Welcombe	0	0	0	0.03	0
West Anstey	0	0	0	0	0
West Down	0	0	0	0	0.5
Westleigh	0	0	0.83	0	0
West Putford	0	0	0	0	0.09
Winkleigh	0.49	4.65	0	0.12	0.58
Witheridge	0.07	0.57	2.19	0.37	0.51
Woolfardisworthy	0	1.73	0	0.13	0.81
Yarnscombe	0	0.6	0	0.03	0

Table 14 Required provision of open space against recommended standards (hectares)

PARISH	Allotments	Recreation Space	Play Space
Abbots Bickington	0	0.01	0.01
Abbotsham	0.05	0.64	0.34
Alverdiscott	0.03	0.37	0.2
Alwington	0.04	0.52	0.28
Arlington	0	0.01	0.01
Ashford	0.03	0.35	0.19
Ashreigney	0.04	0.58	0.31
Ashwater	0.07	0.87	0.47
Atherington	0.04	0.52	0.28
Beaford	0.04	0.58	0.31
Berrynarbor	0.08	1.04	0.56
Bishops Nympton	0.1	1.24	0.67
Bishops Tawton	0.13	1.63	0.88
Bittadon	0	0.01	0.01
Black Torrington	0.05	0.63	0.34
Bradford	0.04	0.48	0.26
Bradworthy	0.11	1.44	0.78
Bratton Fleming	0.11	1.39	0.75
Braunton (rural)	0.3	3.89	2.1
Brayford	0.04	0.54	0.29
Brendon	0	0.01	0.01
Bridgerule	0.07	0.96	0.52
Broadwoodwidge	0.06	0.74	0.4
Buckland Brewer	0.08	1.03	0.56
Buckland Filleigh	0.02	0.2	0.11
Bulkworthy	0.01	0.15	0.08
Burrington	0.05	0.7	0.38
Challacombe	0.01	0.18	0.1
Chittlehamholt	0.02	0.22	0.12
Chittlehampton	0.08	1.1	0.59
Chulmleigh	0.13	1.72	0.93
Clawton	0.03	0.4	0.22
Clovelly	0.04	0.58	0.31
Cookbury	0.02	0.2	0.11
Countisbury	0.02	0.27	0.14
Dolton	0.07	0.89	0.48
Dowland	0.03	0.35	0.19
East and West Buckland	0.04	0.58	0.31
East Anstey	0.02	0.3	0.16
East Down	0.02	0.29	0.16
East Putford	0	0.01	0.01
East Worlington	0.02	0.29	0.15
Filleigh	0.03	0.35	0.19
Fremington (rural)	0.52	6.8	3.66
Frithelstock	0.04	0.46	0.25
Georgeham	0.14	1.87	1.01
George Nympton	0.02	0.23	0.12
Goodleigh	0.04	0.58	0.32
Halwill	0.09	1.21	0.65
Hartland	0.17	2.24	1.21
Heanton Punchardon (rural)	0.18	2.28	1.23
High Bickington	0.08	1.09	0.59
Hollacombe	0	0.01	0.01
Holsworthy Hamlets	0.1	1.25	0.67
Horwood Lovacott and Newton Tracey	0.05	0.63	0.34
Huish	0	0.01	0.01
Huntshaw	0.01	0.17	0.09
Instow	0.07	0.92	0.49
Kentisbury	0.03	0.39	0.21

PARISH	Allotments	Recreation Space	Play Space
Kings Nympton	0.04	0.52	0.28
Knowstone	0.02	0.29	0.16
Landcross	0	0.01	0.01
Langtree	0.08	1.02	0.55
Littleham	0.04	0.58	0.31
Little Torrington	0.04	0.49	0.26
Loxhore	0.03	0.4	0.21
Luffincott	0	0.01	0.01
Lundy	0	0.01	0.01
Lynton and Lynmouth	0.14	1.87	1.01
Mariansleigh	0.02	0.21	0.11
Martinhoe	0.02	0.21	0.11
Marwood	0.08	1.04	0.56
Merton	0.03	0.45	0.24
Meshaw	0.03	0.36	0.19
Milton Damerel	0.04	0.58	0.31
Molland	0.03	0.33	0.18
Monkleigh	0.04	0.49	0.27
Mortehoe	0.16	2.13	1.15
Newton St Petrock	0.02	0.25	0.14
Northcott	0	0.01	0.01
North Molton	0.11	1.42	0.77
Pancrasweek	0.02	0.3	0.16
Parkham	0.08	1.04	0.56
Parracombe	0.03	0.38	0.21
Peters Marland	0.02	0.3	0.16
Petrockstow	0.04	0.55	0.3
Pilton West	0.02	0.2	0.11
Pyworthy	0.08	1	0.54
Queens Nympton	0	0.01	0.01
Rackenford	0.03	0.43	0.23
Roborough	0.02	0.32	0.17
Romansleigh	0	0.01	0.01
Rose Ash	0.03	0.39	0.21
Satterleigh and Warkleigh	0.02	0.22	0.12
Shebbear	0.1	1.32	0.71
Sheepwash	0.02	0.31	0.17
Shirwell	0.04	0.53	0.28
St Giles in the Wood	0.05	0.7	0.38
St Giles on the Heath	0.06	0.79	0.42
StokeRivers	0.02	0.2	0.11
Sutcombe	0.03	0.45	0.24
Swimbridge	0.1	1.31	0.7
Tawstock (rural)	0.07	0.96	0.52
Tetcott	0.02	0.21	0.12
Thornbury	0.03	0.37	0.2
Trentishoe	0	0.01	0.01
Twitchen	0	0.01	0.01
Virginstow	0.01	0.15	0.08
Weare Giffard	0.03	0.45	0.24
Welcombe	0.02	0.24	0.13
West Anstey	0.02	0.21	0.11
West Down	0.07	0.87	0.47
Westleigh	0.03	0.4	0.22
West Putford	0.03	0.42	0.22
Winkleigh	0.16	2.11	1.14
Witheridge	0.14	1.83	0.99
Woolfardisworthy	0.12	1.54	0.83
Yarnscombe	0.03	0.38	0.21

Table 15 Required provision of open space against recommended standards (hectares)

PARISH	Allotments	Recreation Space	Play Space
Abbots Bickington	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Abbotsham	1.25	-0.48	-0.29
Alverdiscott	-0.03	-0.37	-0.20
Alwington	-0.04	-0.52	-0.28
Arlington	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Ashford	-0.03	-0.35	-0.19
Ashreigney	-0.04	-0.58	-0.31
Ashwater	-0.07	-0.87	-0.47
Atherington	-0.04	0.12	-0.18
Beaford	-0.04	1.41	-0.28
Berrynarbor	-0.08	-0.59	-0.56
Bishops Nympton	-0.10	-1.24	-0.60
Bishops Tawton	0.91	-1.03	-0.86
Bittadon	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Black Torrington	-0.05	0.12	-0.21
Bradford	-0.04	-0.48	-0.26
Bradworthy	-0.11	-0.74	-0.65
Bratton Fleming	0.01	5.10	-0.71
Braunton (rural)	-0.18	-1.08	-2.04
Brayford	-0.04	-0.54	-0.29
Brendon	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Bridgerule	-0.07	-0.03	-0.48
Broadwoodwidge	-0.06	-0.43	-0.40
Buckland Brewer	0.37	0.30	-0.52
Buckland Filleigh	-0.02	-0.20	-0.11
Bulkworthy	-0.01	-0.15	-0.08
Burrington	-0.05	-0.70	-0.28
Challacombe	-0.01	-0.18	-0.10
Chittlehamholt	-0.02	1.03	-0.08
Chittlehampton	0.23	0.09	-0.56
Chulmleigh	-0.04	1.27	-0.79
Clawton	-0.03	-0.40	-0.22
Clovelly	-0.04	0.31	-0.27
Cookbury	-0.02	-0.20	-0.11
Countisbury	-0.02	-0.27	-0.14
Dolton	-0.07	-0.11	-0.09
Dowland	-0.03	-0.35	-0.19
East and West Buckland	-0.04	-0.58	-0.31
East Anstey	-0.02	0.10	-0.16
East Down	-0.02	-0.29	-0.16
East Putford	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
East Worlington	-0.02	-0.29	-0.15
Filleigh	-0.03	-0.35	-0.19
Fremington (rural)	-0.04	-3.54	-3.43
Frithelstock	-0.04	0.14	-0.15
Georgeham	0.07	0.41	-0.54
George Nympton	-0.02	-0.23	-0.12
Goodleigh	-0.04	-0.05	-0.30
Halwill	-0.09	-0.06	-0.57
Hartland	-0.17	-1.36	-1.17
Heanton Punchardon (rural)	-0.18	-2.28	-1.23
High Bickington	-0.08	0.46	-0.59
Hollacombe	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Holworthy Hamlets	-0.10	-0.86	-0.56
Horwood Lovacott and Newton Tracey	-0.05	-0.63	-0.34
Huish	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Huntshaw	-0.01	-0.17	-0.09
Instow	0.24	-0.92	-0.49
Kentisbury	-0.03	-0.39	-0.21
Kings Nympton	-0.04	-0.13	-0.27

PARISH	Allotments	Recreation Space	Play Space
Knowstone	-0.02	-0.29	-0.16
Landcross	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Langtree	-0.08	-0.63	-0.54
Littleham	-0.04	0.20	-0.30
Little Torrington	-0.04	-0.49	-0.26
Loxhore	-0.03	0.49	-0.21
Luffincott	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Lundy	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Lynton and Lynmouth	0.42	-1.87	-1.01
Mariansleigh	-0.02	-0.21	-0.11
Martinhoe	-0.02	-0.21	-0.11
Marwood	-0.08	-1.04	-0.56
Merton	-0.03	0.55	-0.13
Meshaw	-0.03	-0.36	-0.19
Milton Damerel	-0.04	-0.58	-0.31
Molland	-0.03	-0.33	-0.18
Monkleigh	-0.04	-0.49	-0.27
Mortehoe	1.12	3.16	-0.98
Newton St Petrock	-0.02	-0.25	-0.14
Northcott	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
North Molton	0.05	-1.42	-0.77
Pancrasweek	-0.02	-0.30	-0.16
Parkham	-0.08	-0.38	-0.53
Parracombe	-0.03	-0.38	-0.21
Peters Marland	-0.02	-0.30	-0.16
Petrockstow	-0.04	2.70	-0.28
Pilton West	-0.02	-0.20	-0.11
Pyworthy	-0.08	-0.52	-0.36
Queens Nympton	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Rackenford	-0.03	-0.12	-0.19
Roborough	-0.02	-0.02	-0.10
Romansleigh	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Rose Ash	-0.03	-0.08	-0.21
Satterleigh and Warkleigh	-0.02	-0.22	-0.12
Shebbear	-0.10	-1.04	-0.55
Sheepwash	-0.02	-0.31	-0.17
Shirwell	-0.04	-0.46	-0.28
St Giles in the Wood	-0.05	0.48	-0.27
St Giles on the Heath	-0.06	-0.46	-0.34
StokeRivers	-0.02	-0.20	-0.11
Sutcombe	-0.03	-0.45	-0.19
Swimbridge	0.08	0.91	-0.70
Tawstock (rural)	-0.07	-0.96	-0.52
Tetcott	-0.02	-0.21	-0.12
Thornbury	-0.03	-0.37	-0.20
Trentishoe	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Twitchen	0.00	-0.01	-0.01
Virginstow	-0.01	-0.15	-0.08
Weare Giffard	-0.03	0.41	-0.15
Welcombe	-0.02	-0.24	-0.10
West Anstey	-0.02	-0.21	-0.11
West Down	-0.07	-0.87	-0.47
Westleigh	-0.03	-0.40	-0.22
West Putford	-0.03	-0.42	-0.22
Winkleigh	0.33	2.54	-1.02
Witheridge	-0.07	-1.26	-0.62
Woolfardisworthy	-0.12	0.19	-0.70
Yarnscombe	-0.03	0.22	-0.18

7.2.3 Access analysis (urban areas)

The following maps use the recommended access standards for each type of open space and apply 'access buffers'. Access buffers are shown as straight line walking times and are represented as circular distances measured in metres. Areas that fall within a buffer meet the access standard, those that fall outside of the buffer do not. Figure 11 shows the urban access analysis areas. For each of the areas, a sub map is produced which shows access to each type of open space. The maps are intended to be indicative, and have also been provided at a larger scale and as a GIS layer for local analysis. For each typology the access buffers are applied which shows where there may be gaps in access. Following all the maps provided, a brief analysis of the key access issues for each area is also provided.

Figure 11 Urban access analysis areas

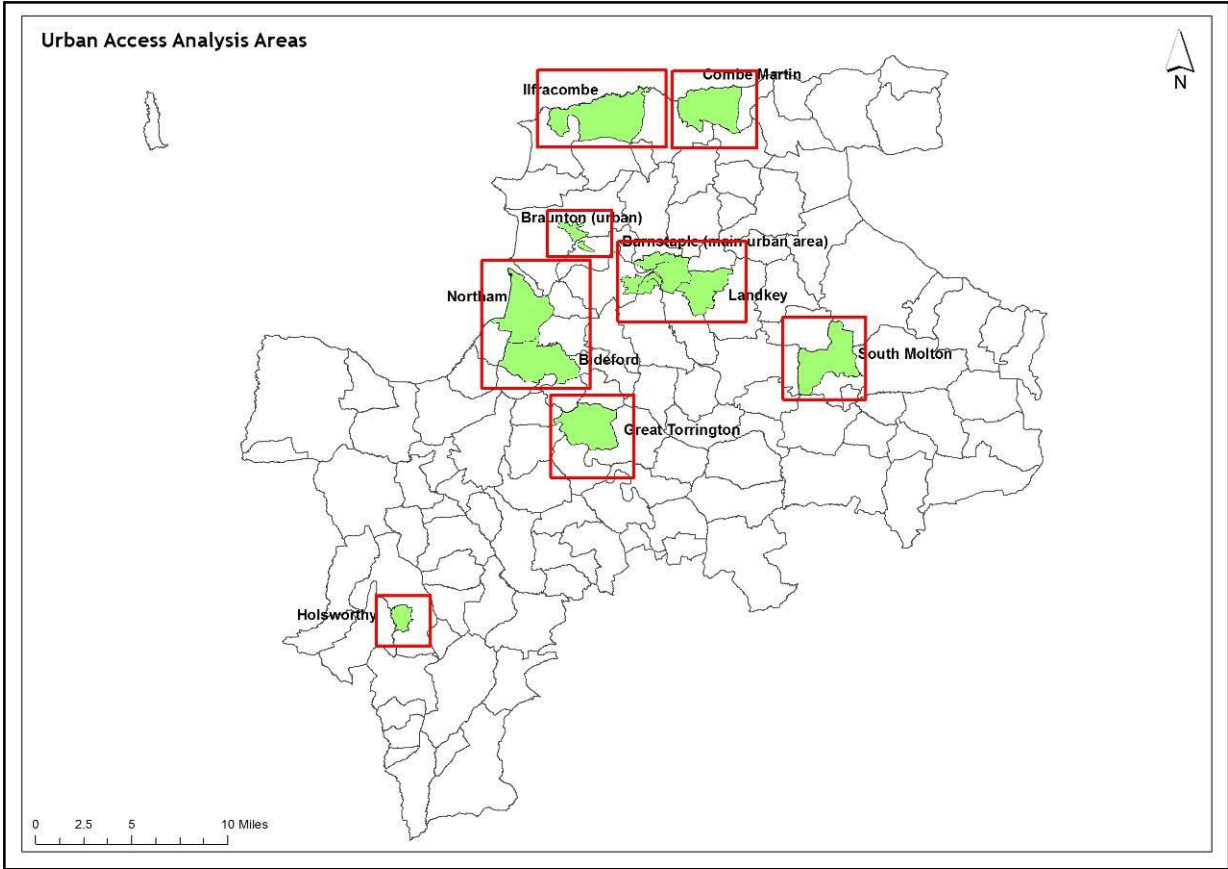
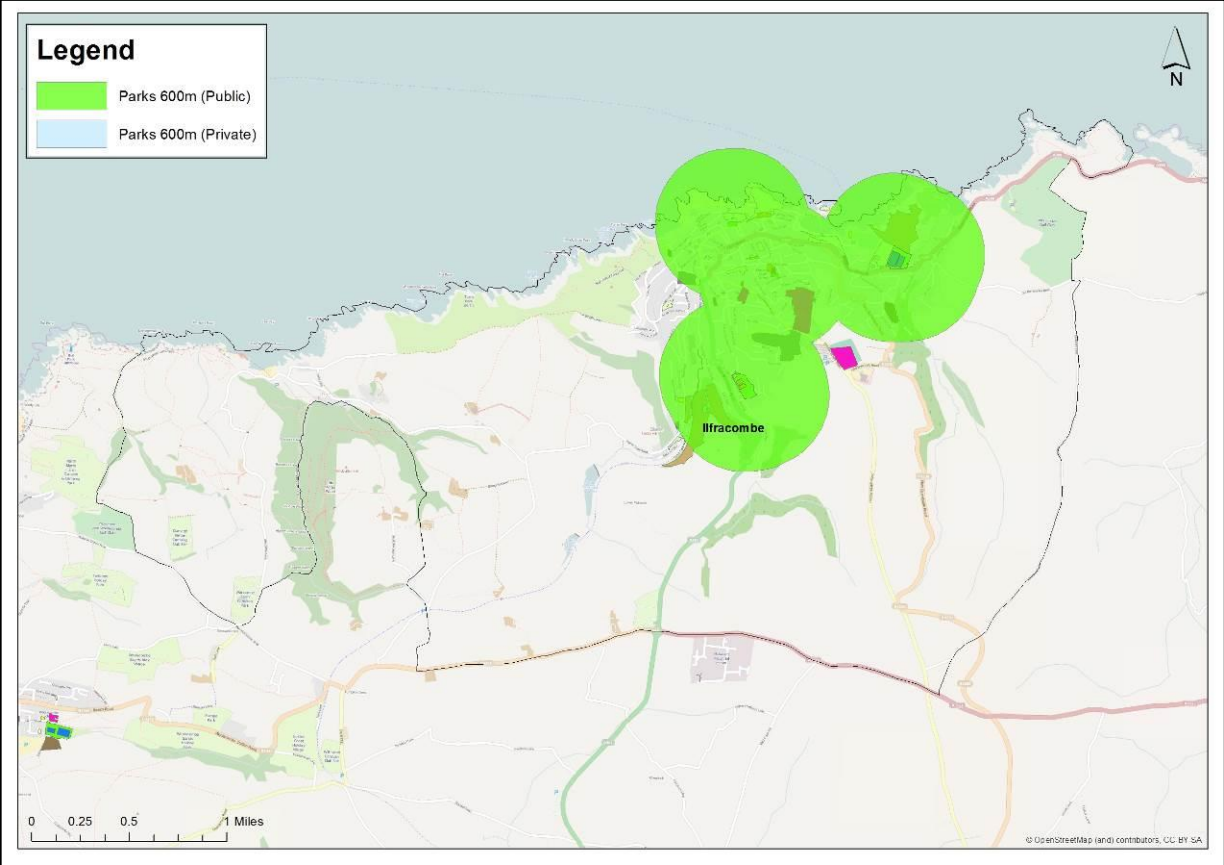
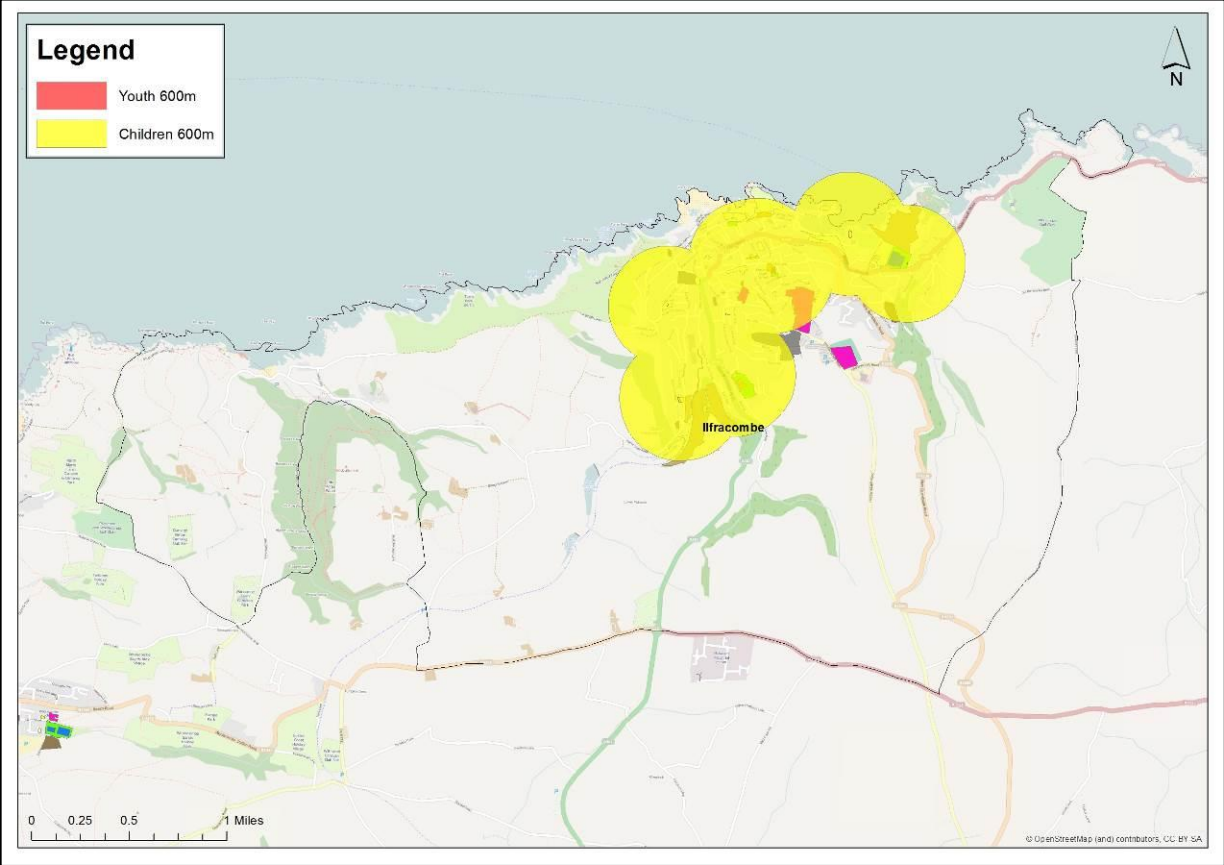


Figure 12 Access to open space in Ilfracombe



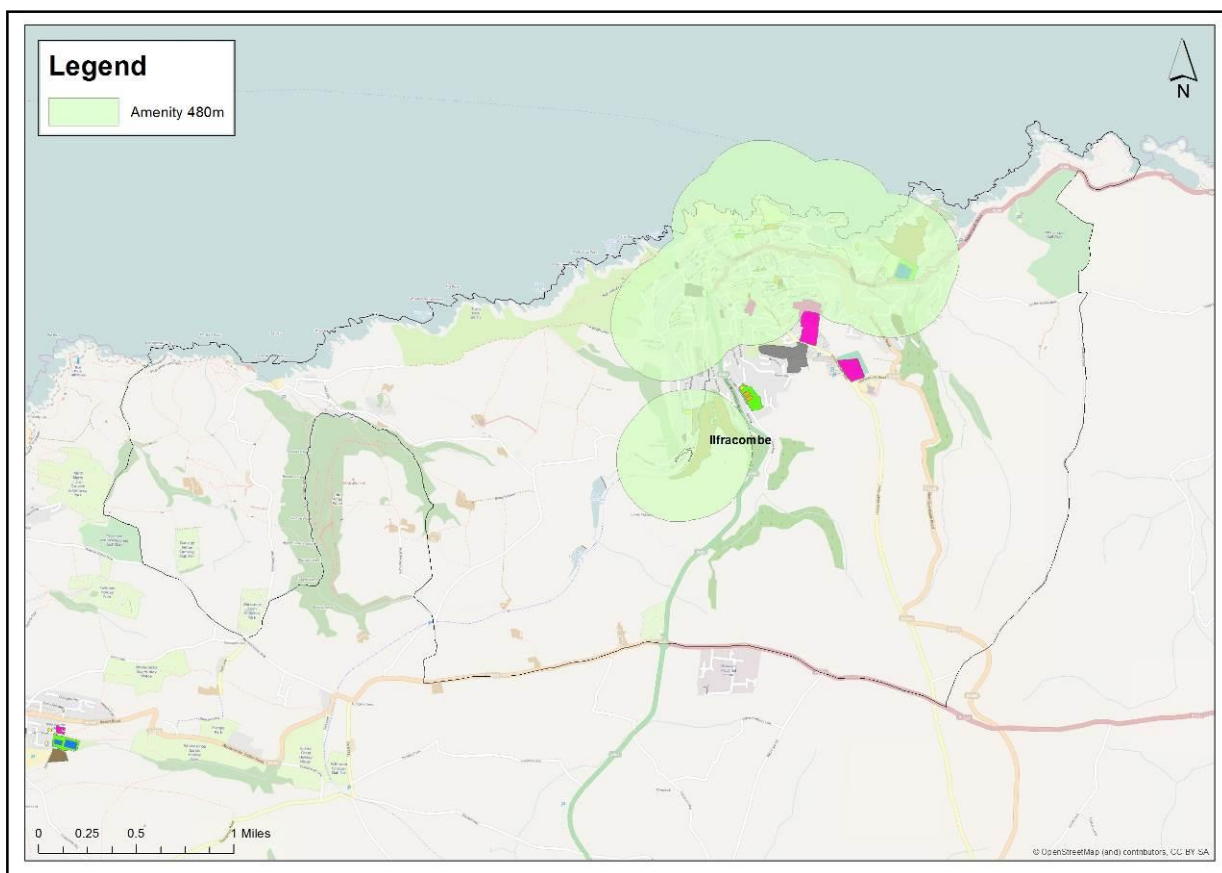
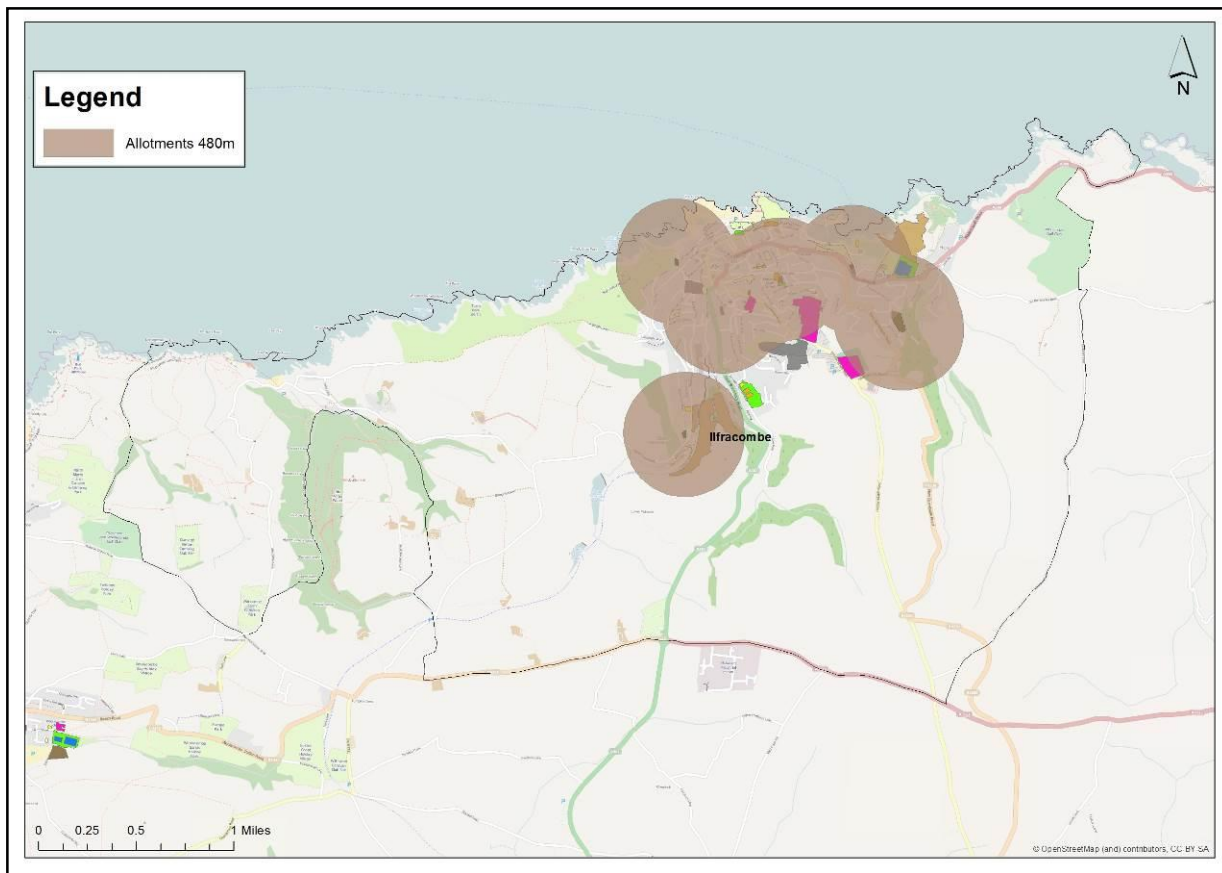


Figure 13 Access to open space provision in Combe Martin

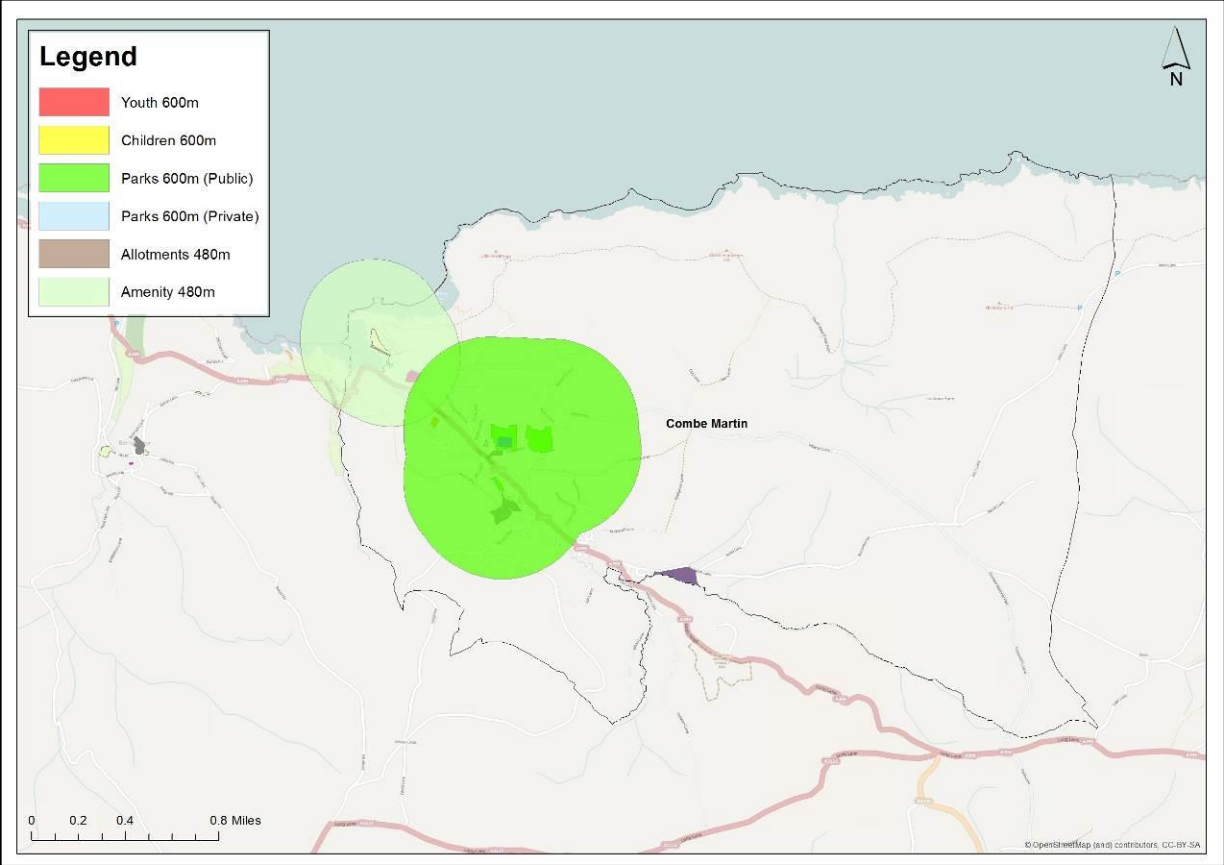
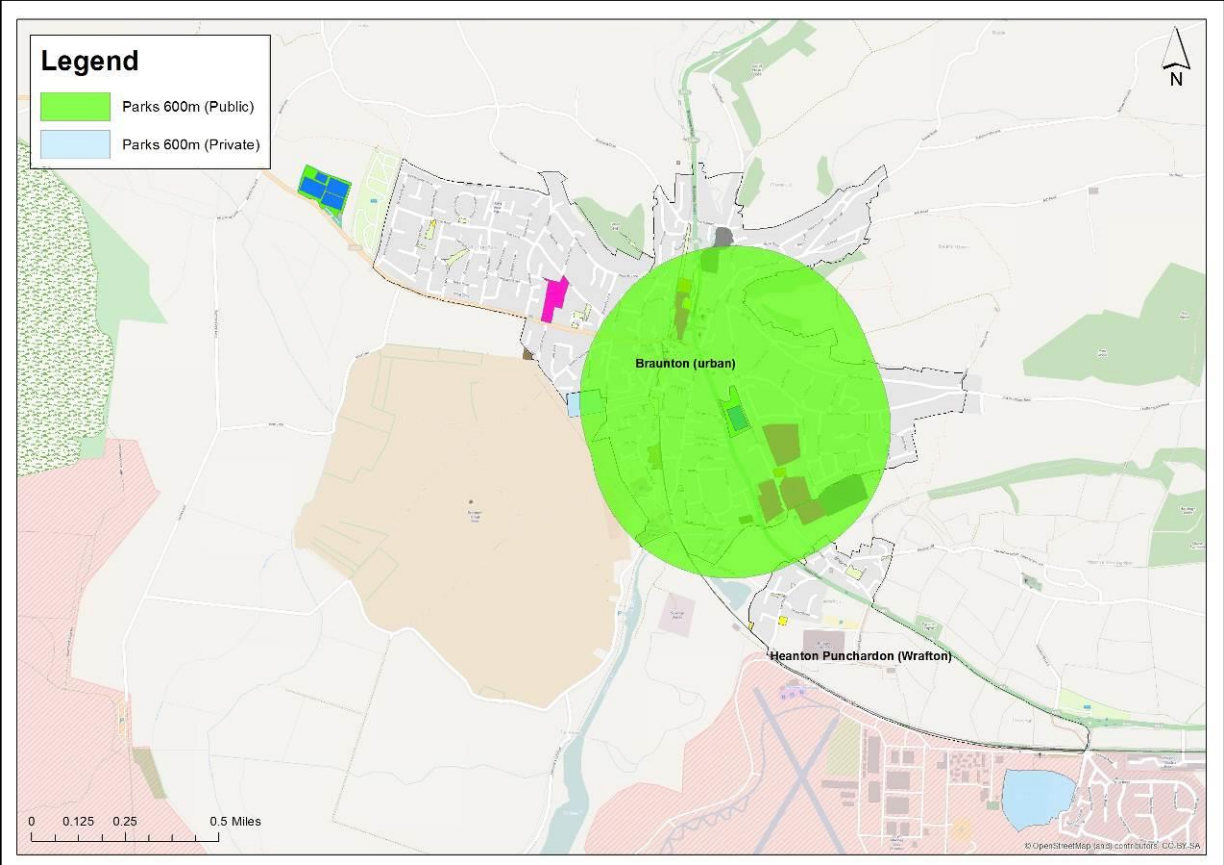
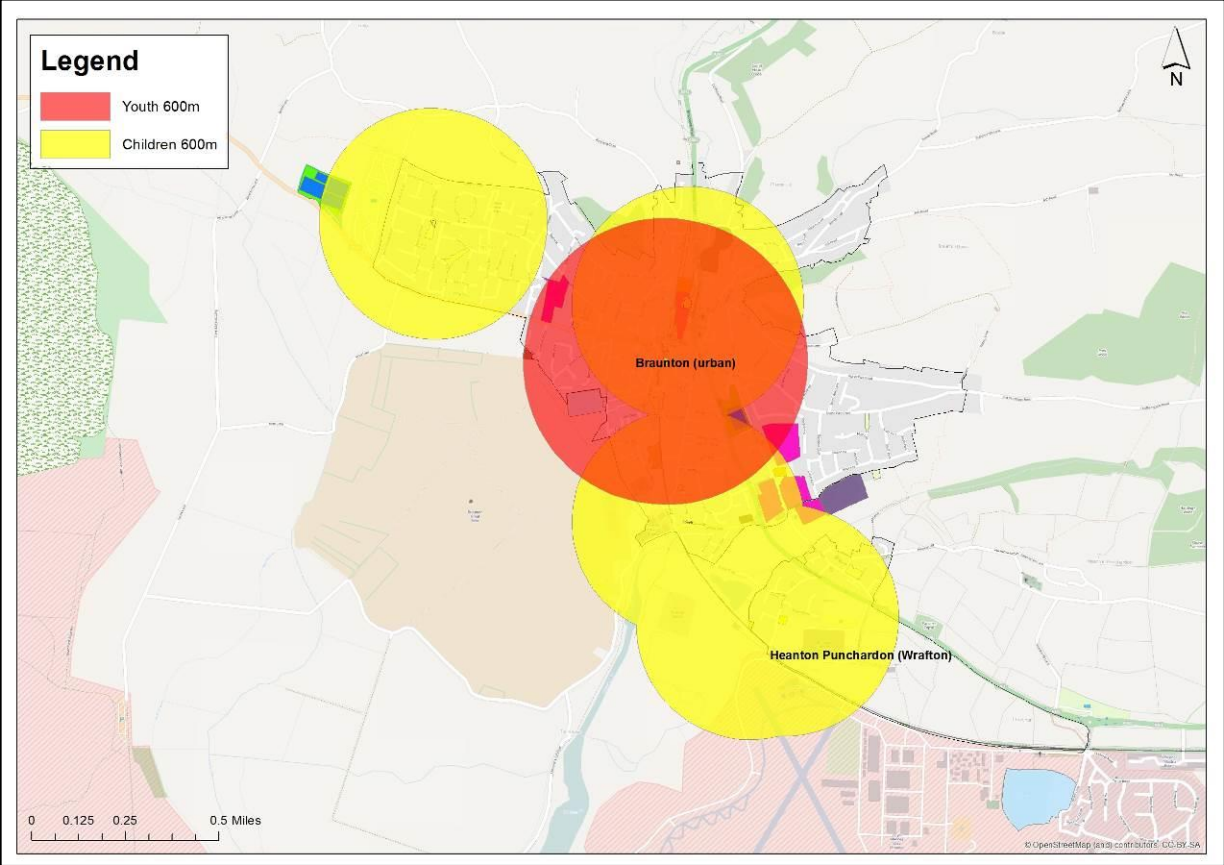


Figure 14 Access to open space provision in Braunton and Wrafton



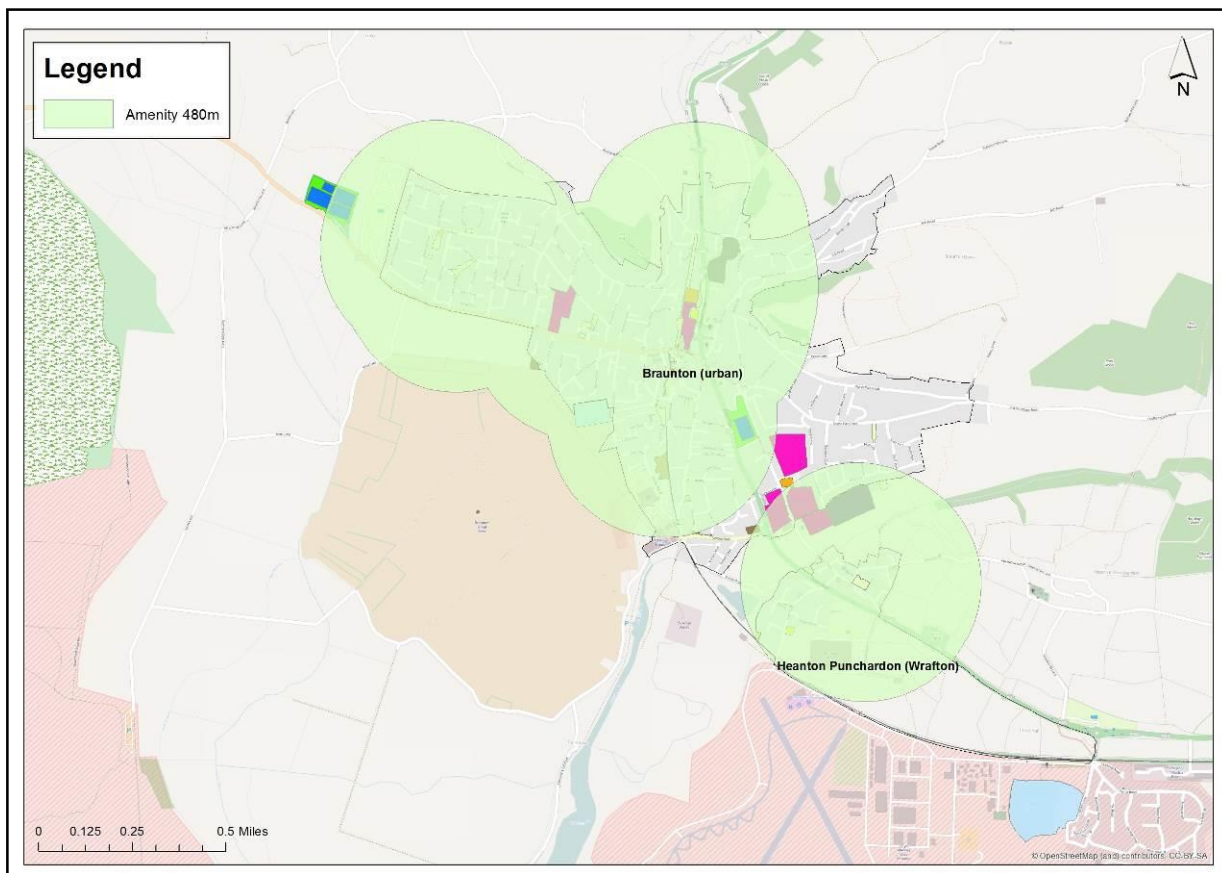
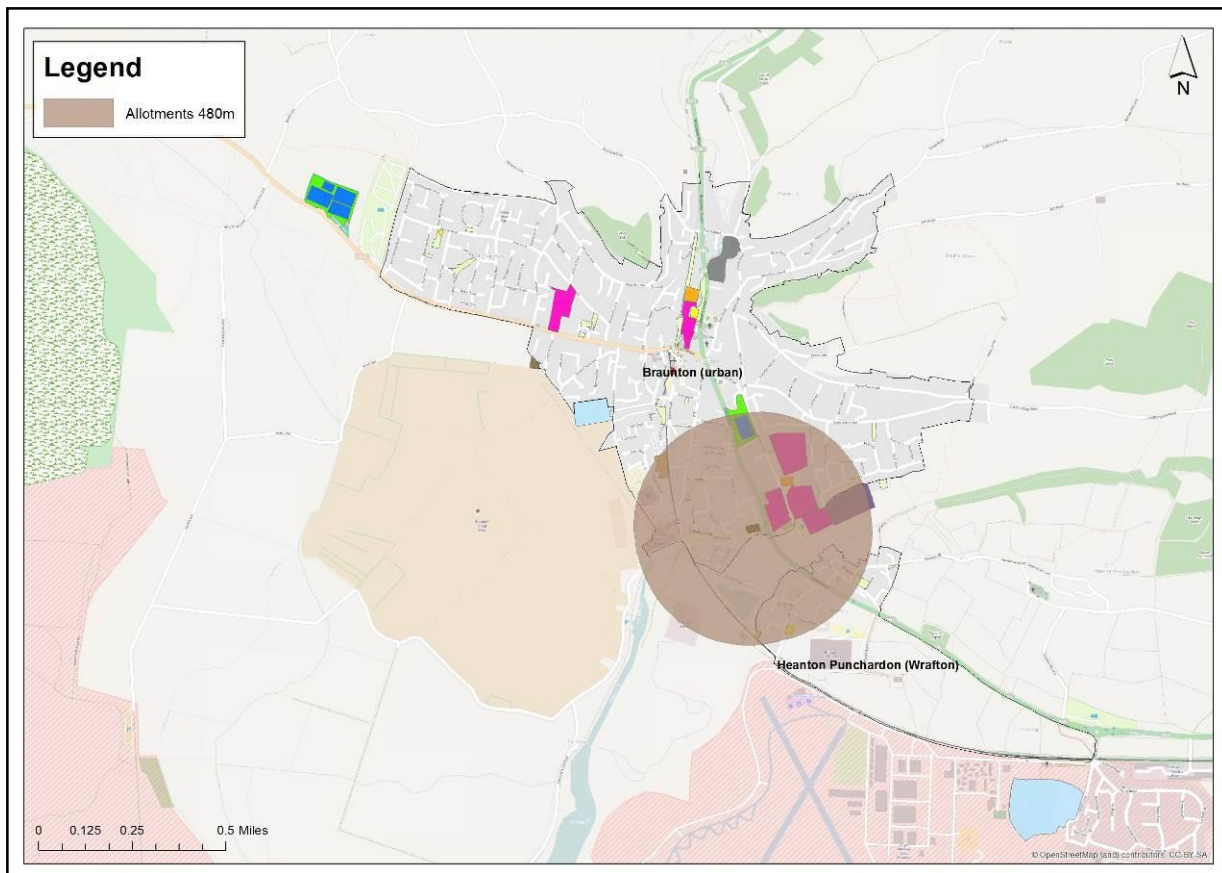
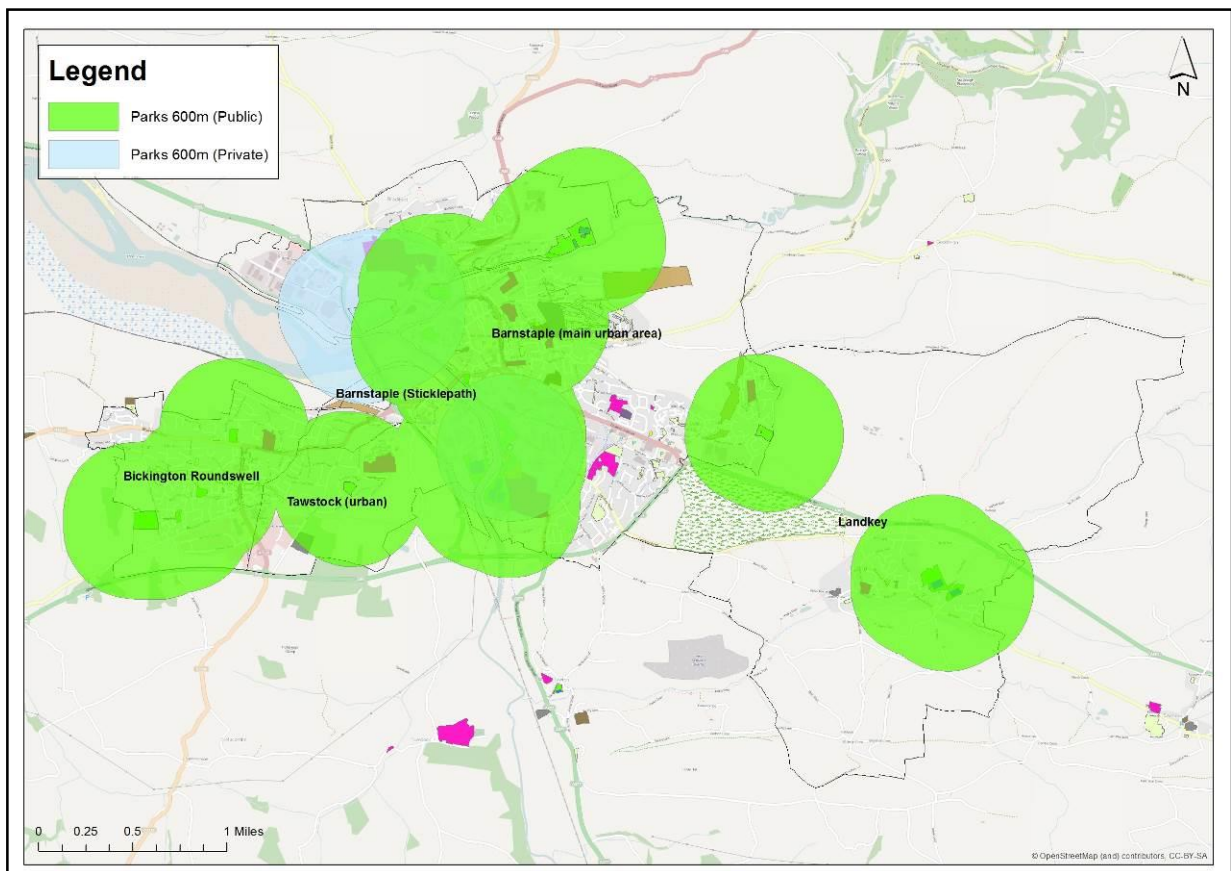
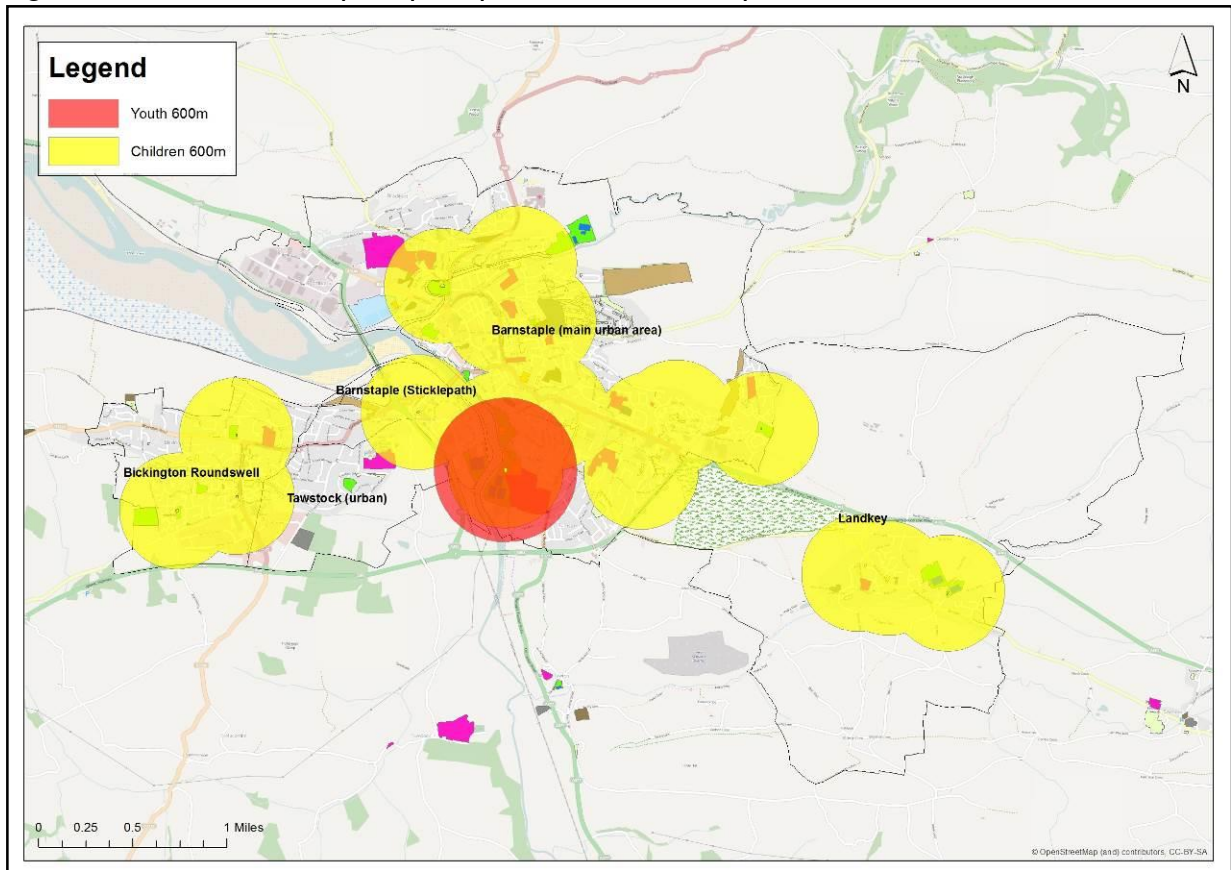


Figure 15 Access to open space provision in Barnstaple



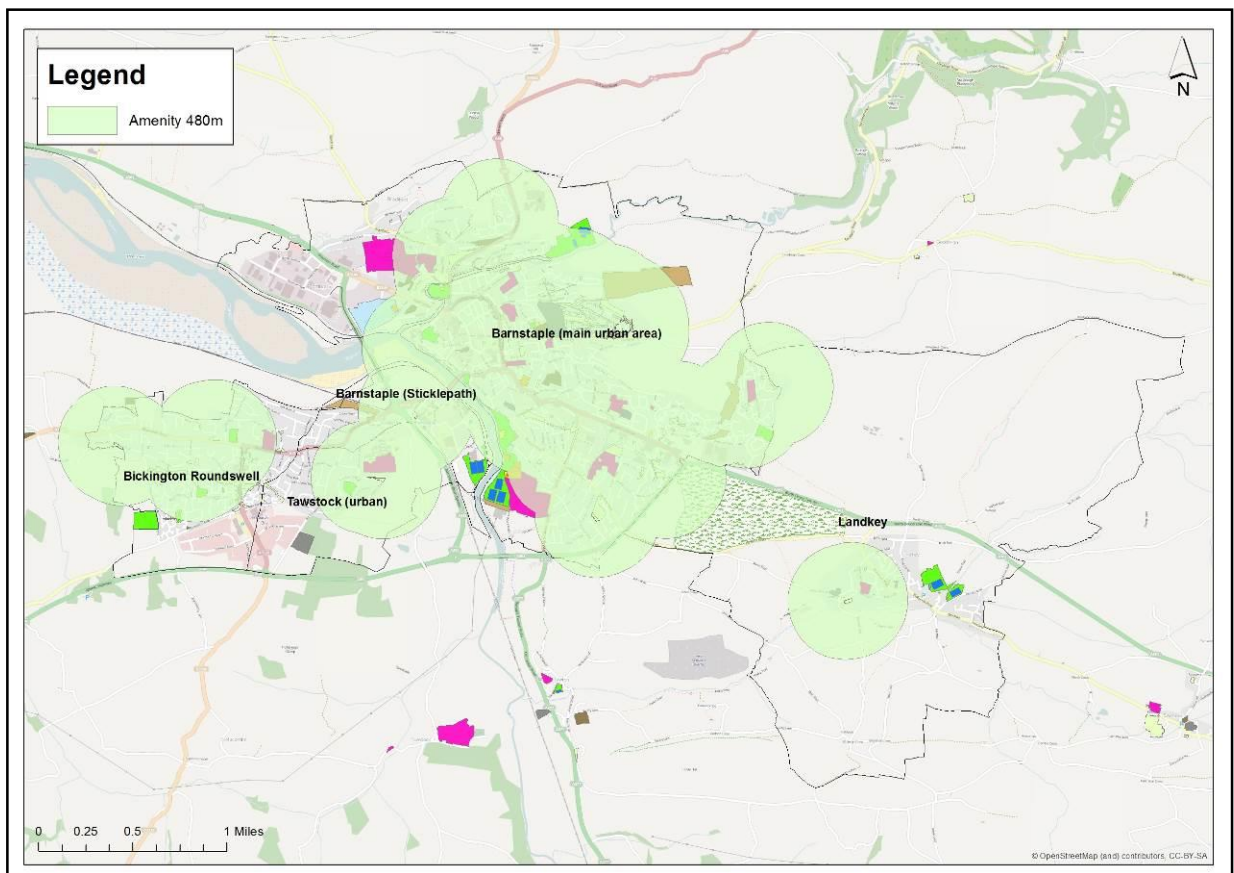
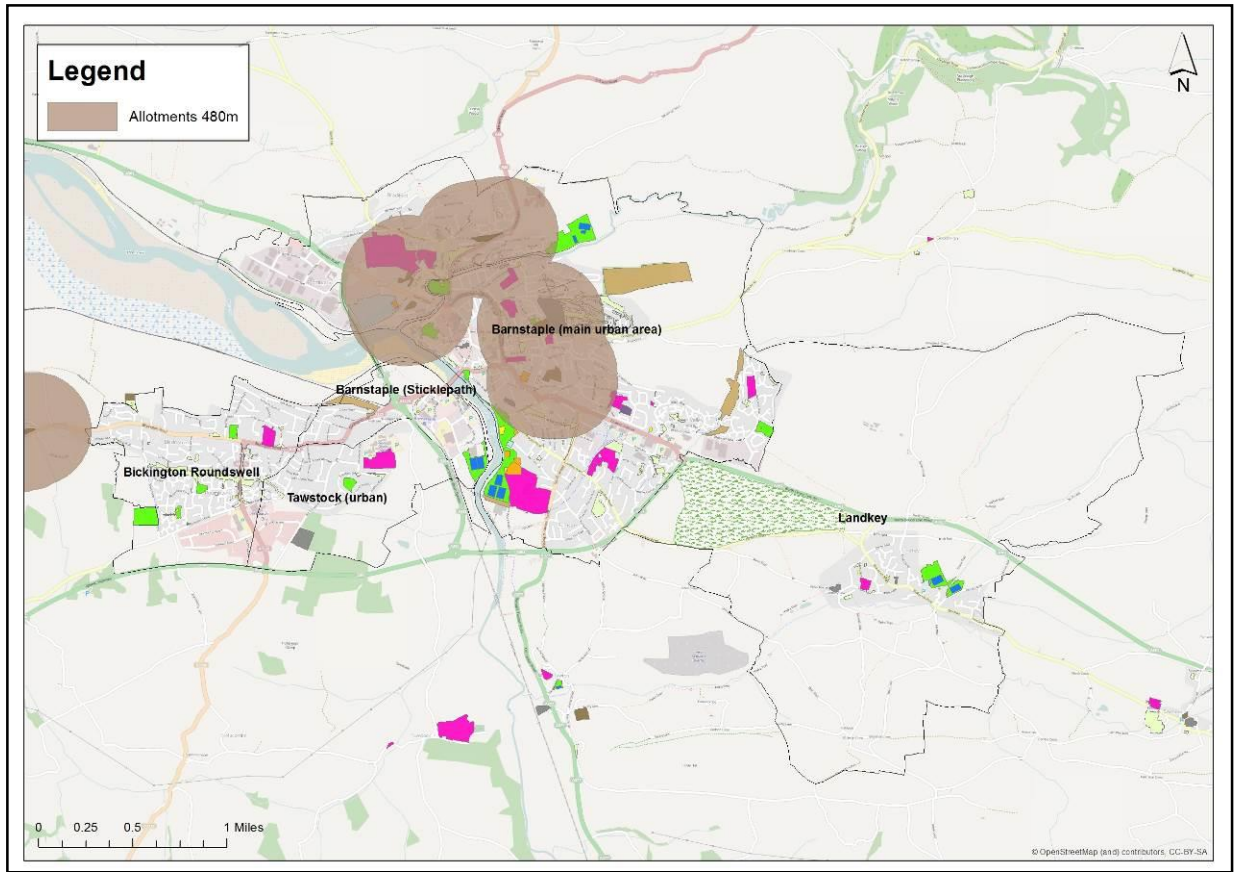
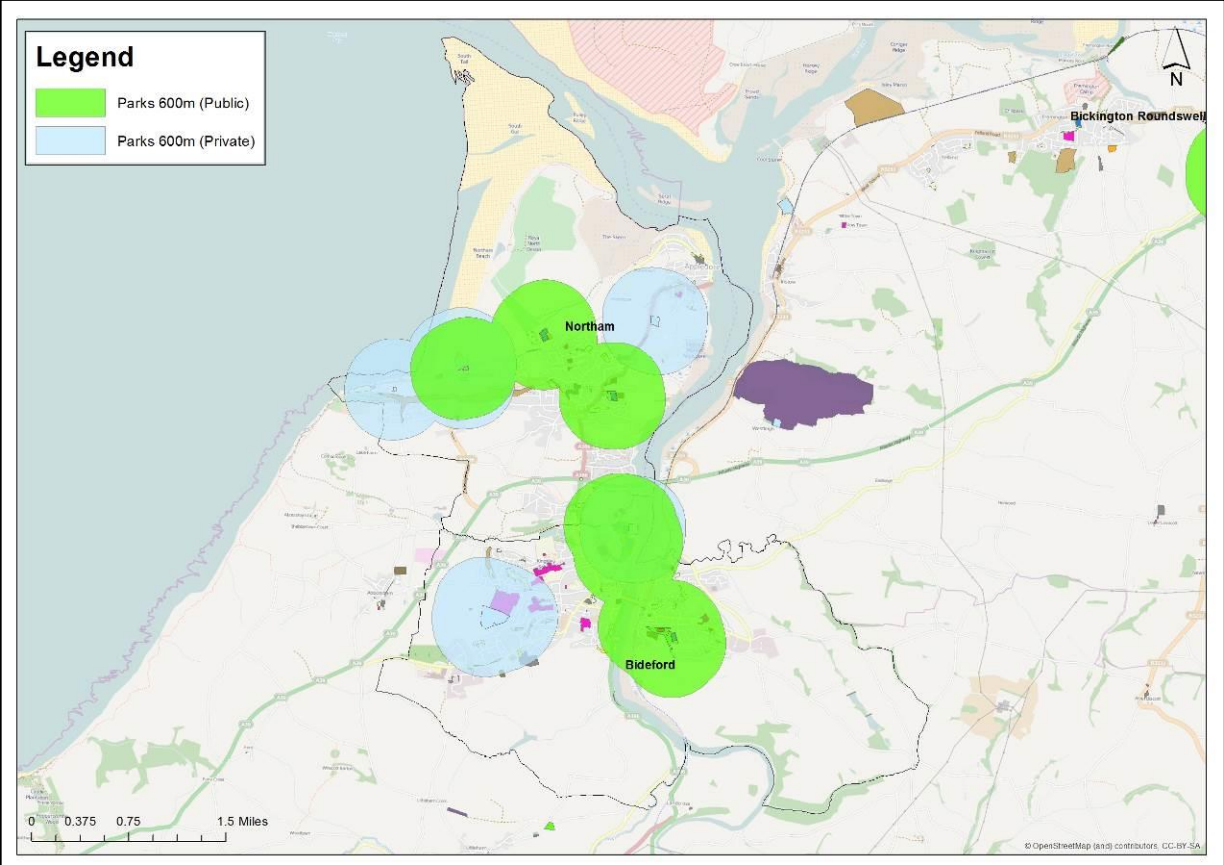
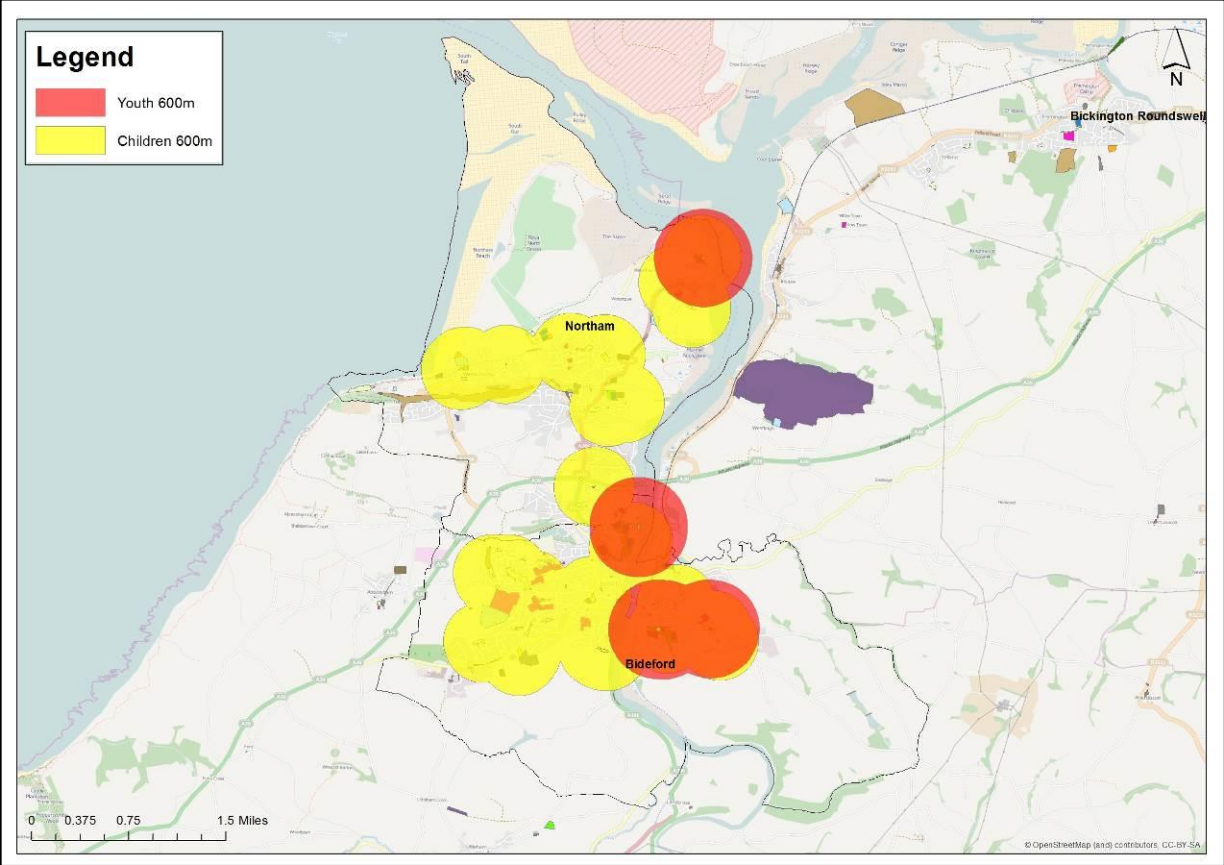


Figure 16 Access to open space provision in Northam and Bideford



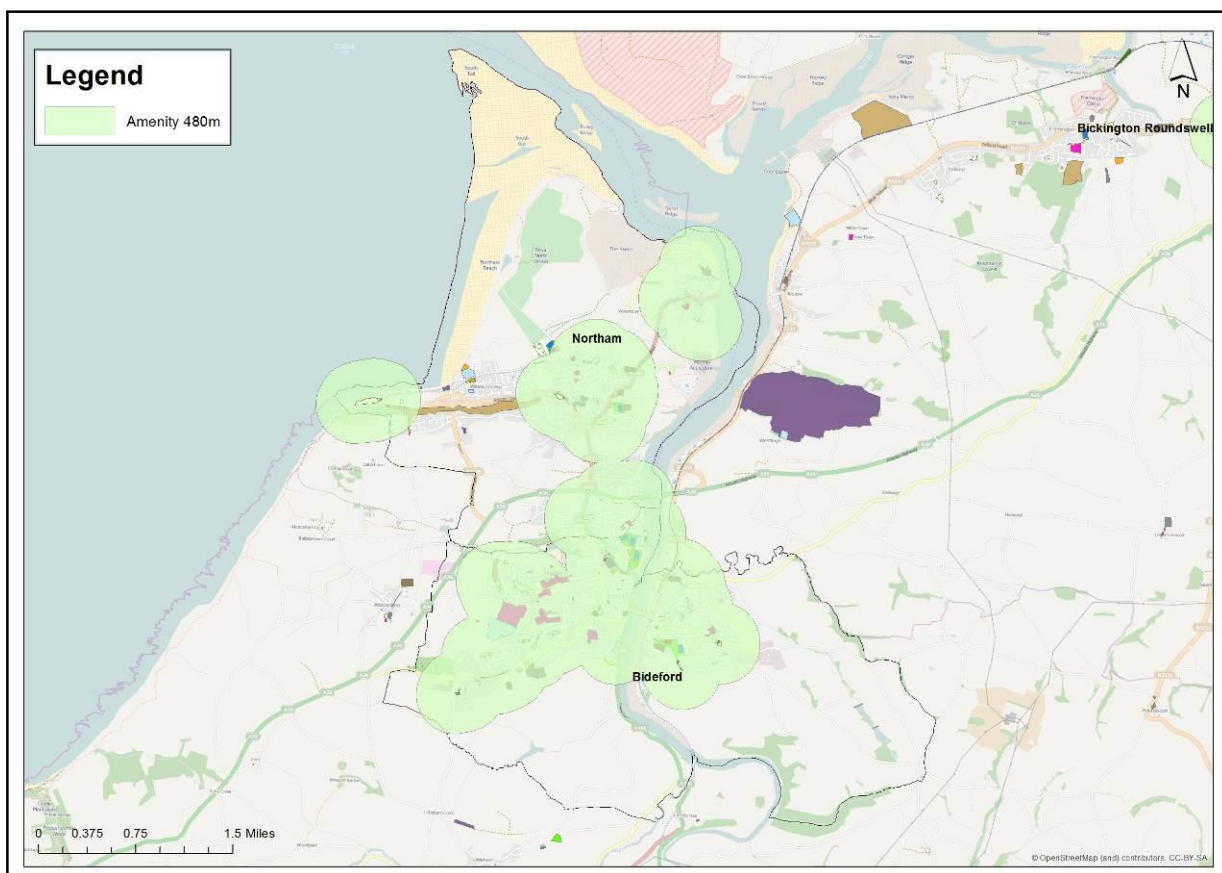
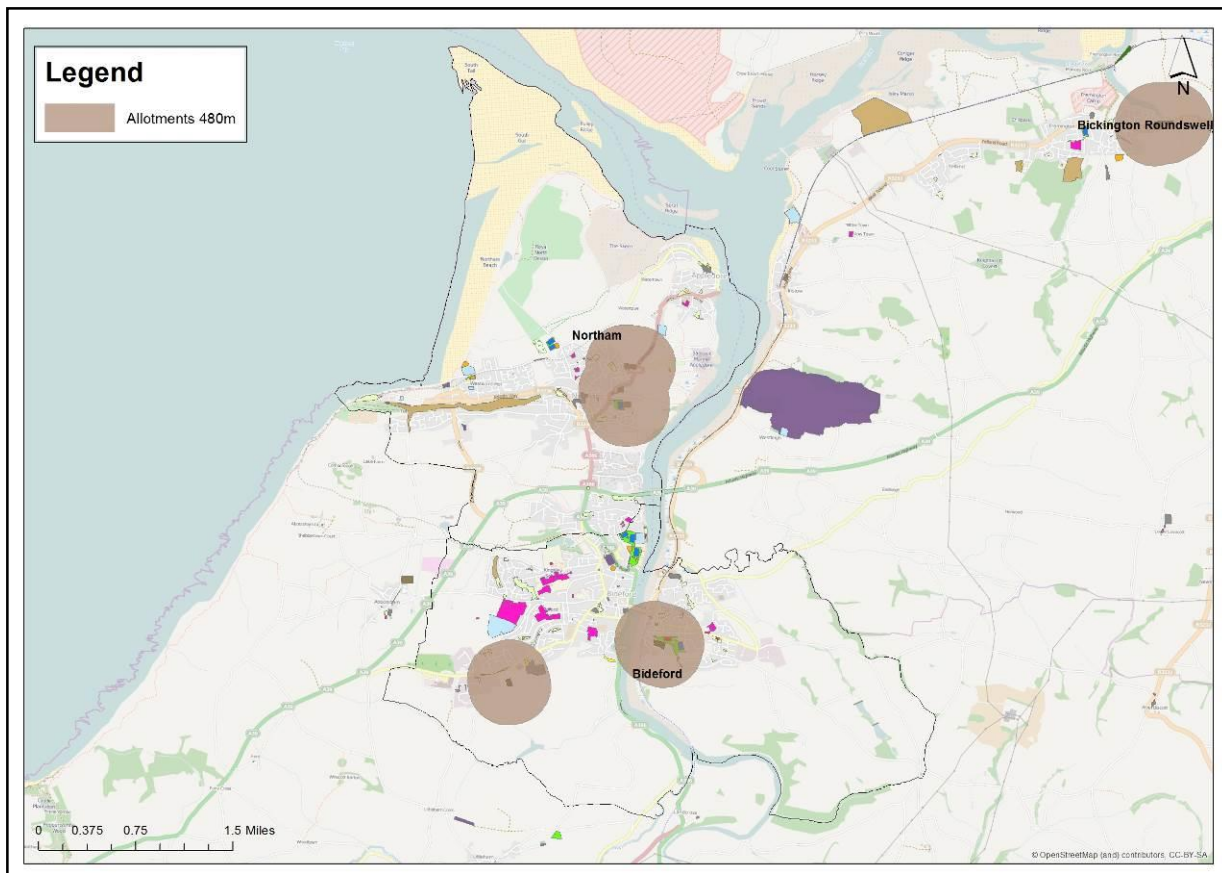
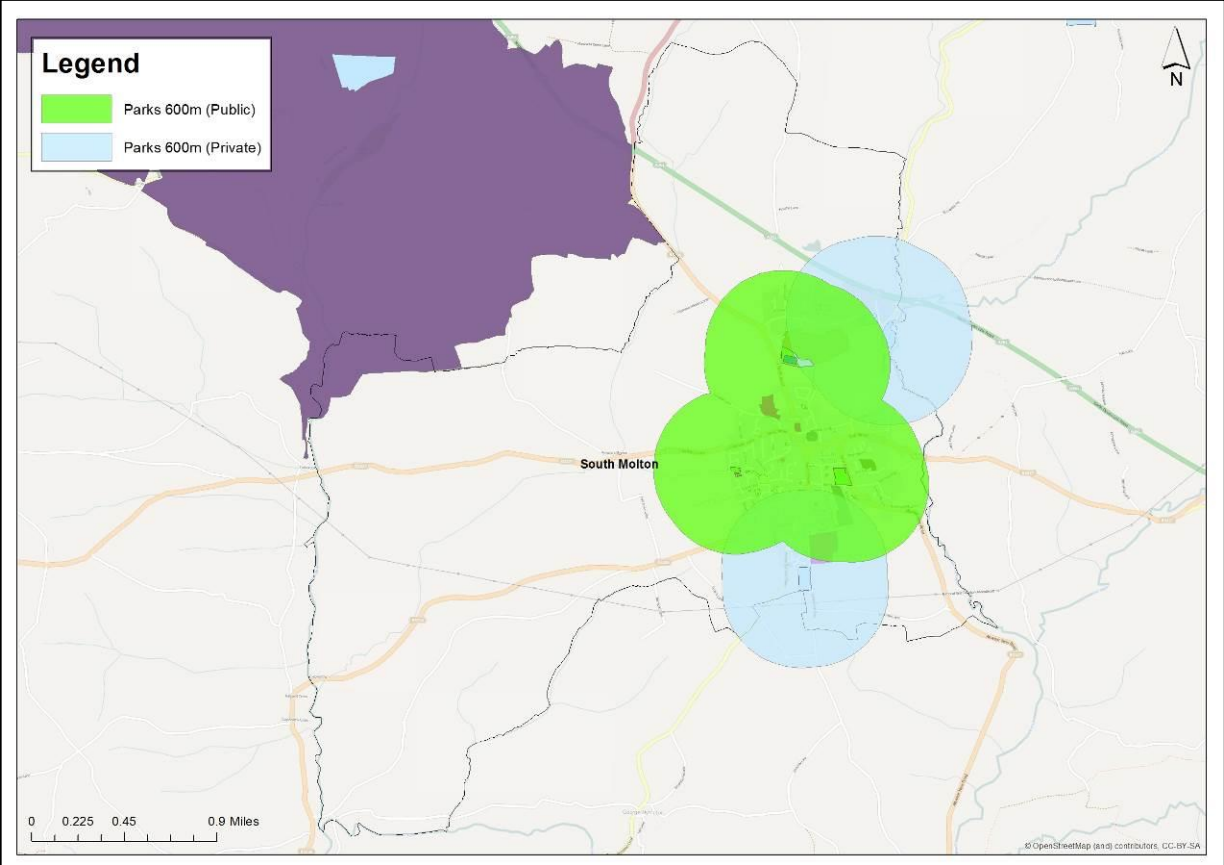
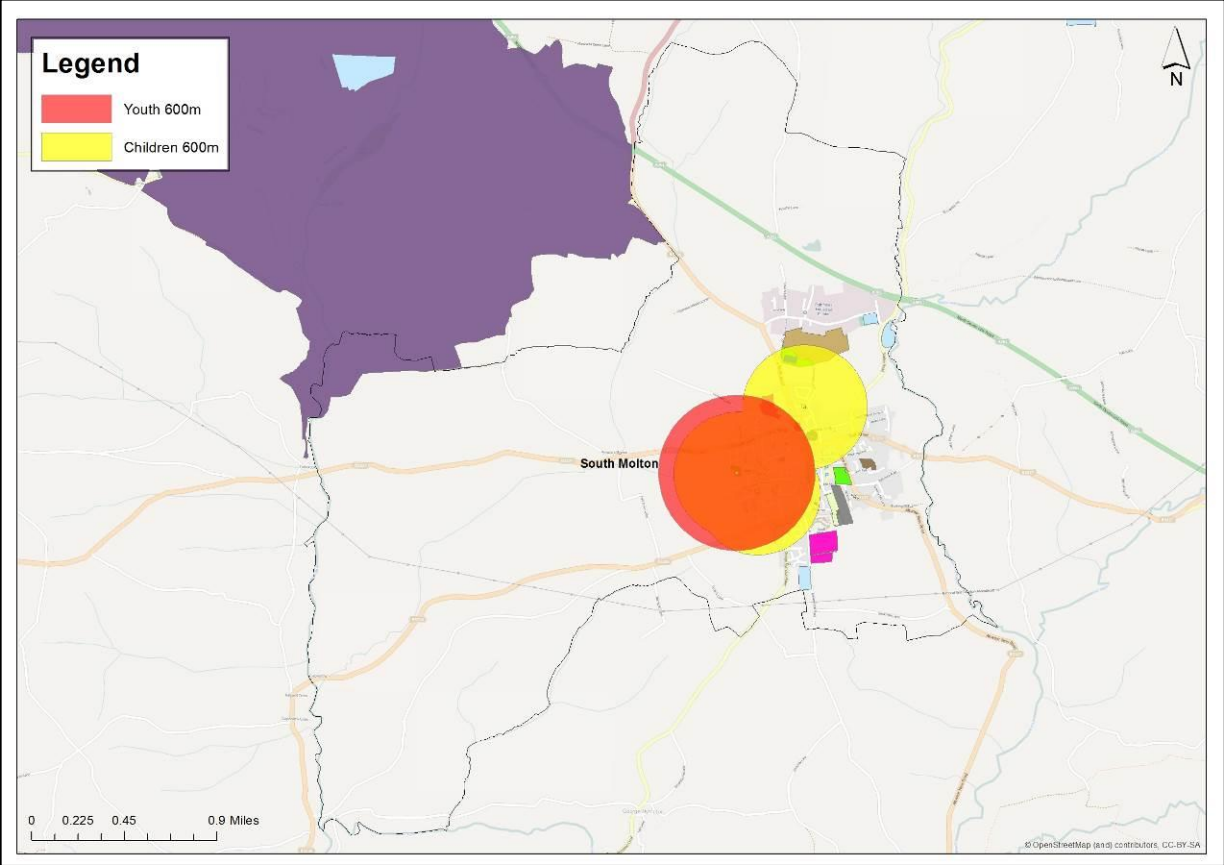


Figure 17 Access to open space provision in South Molton



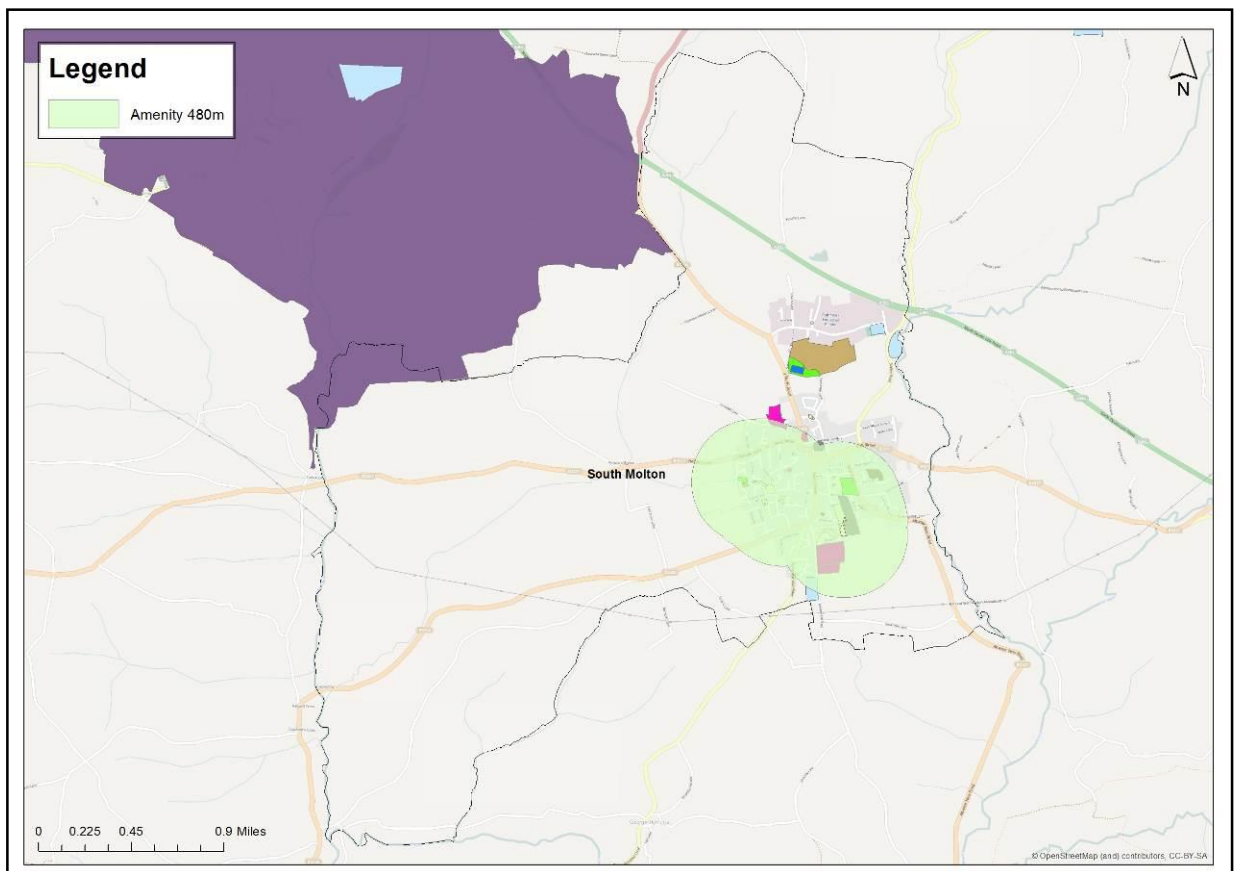
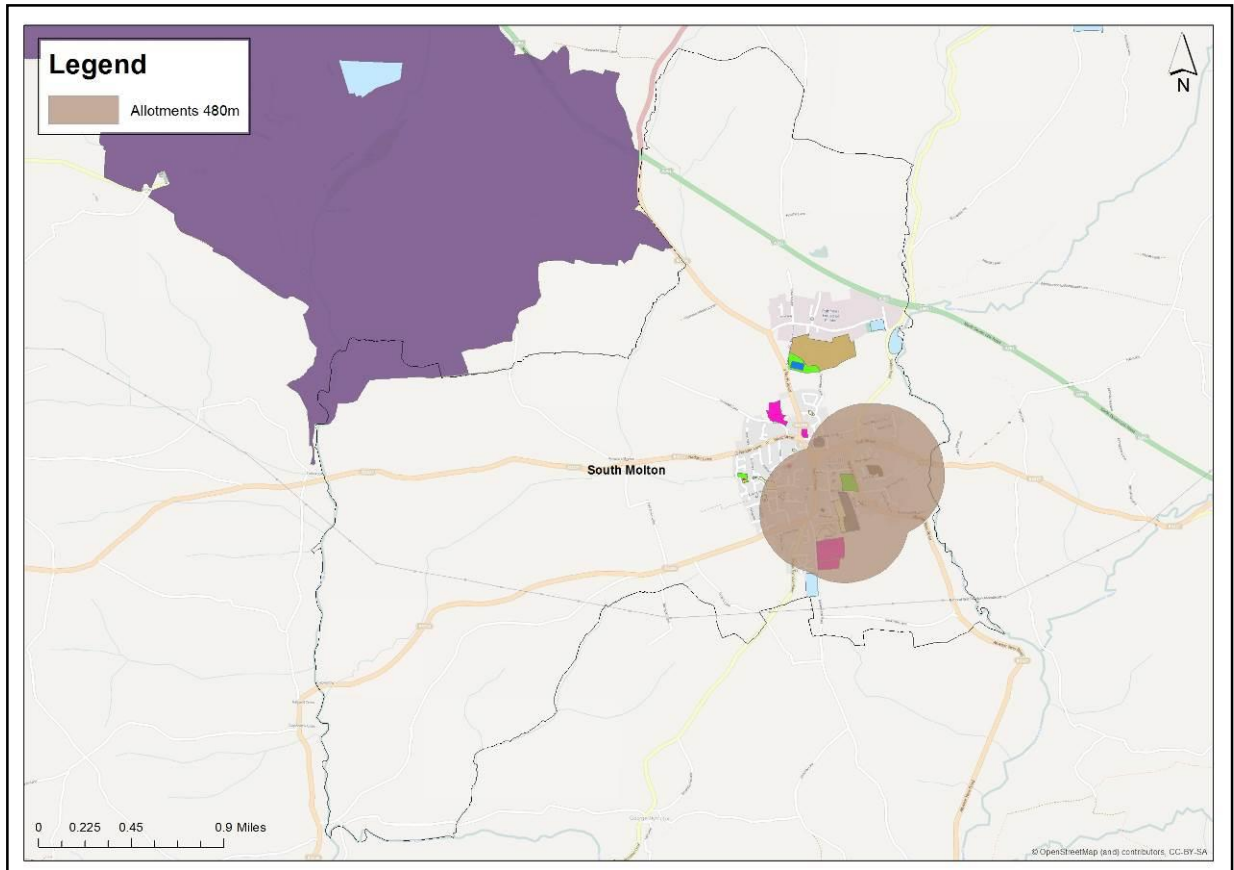
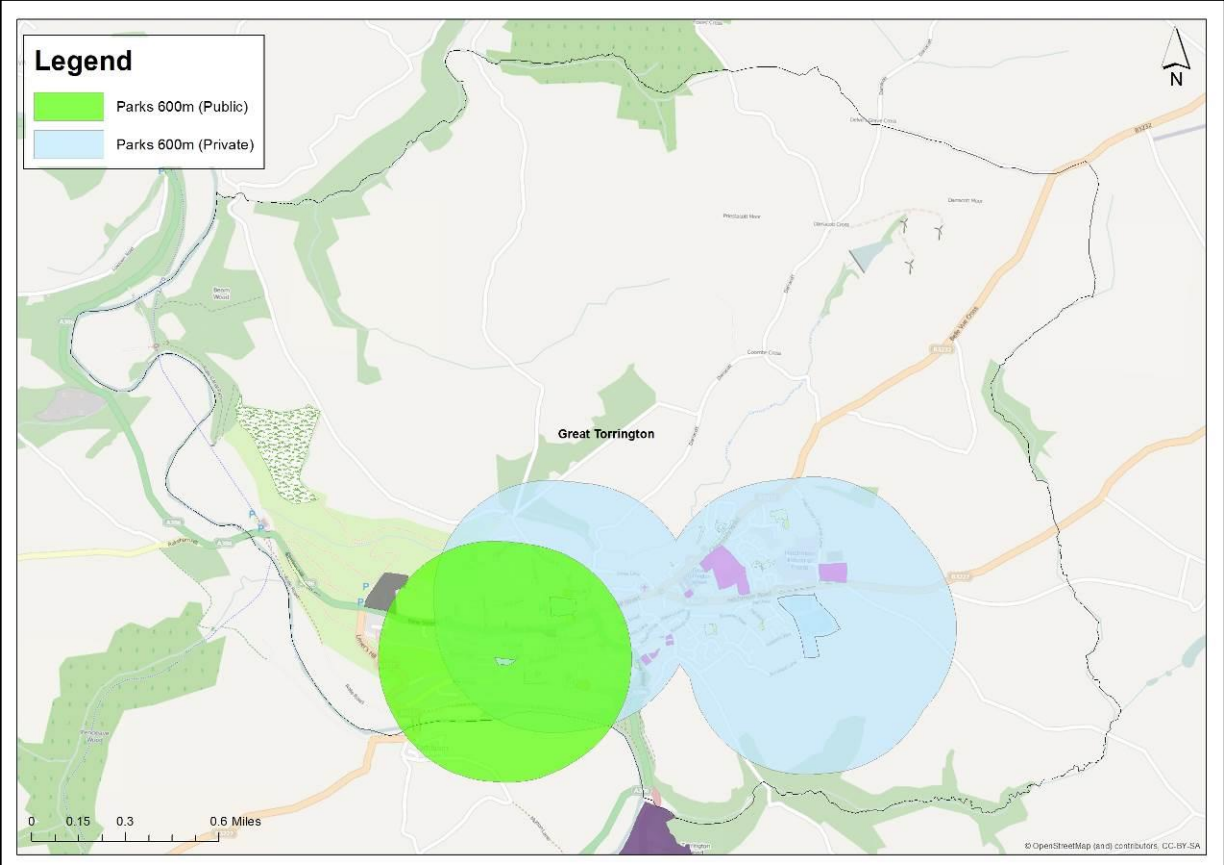
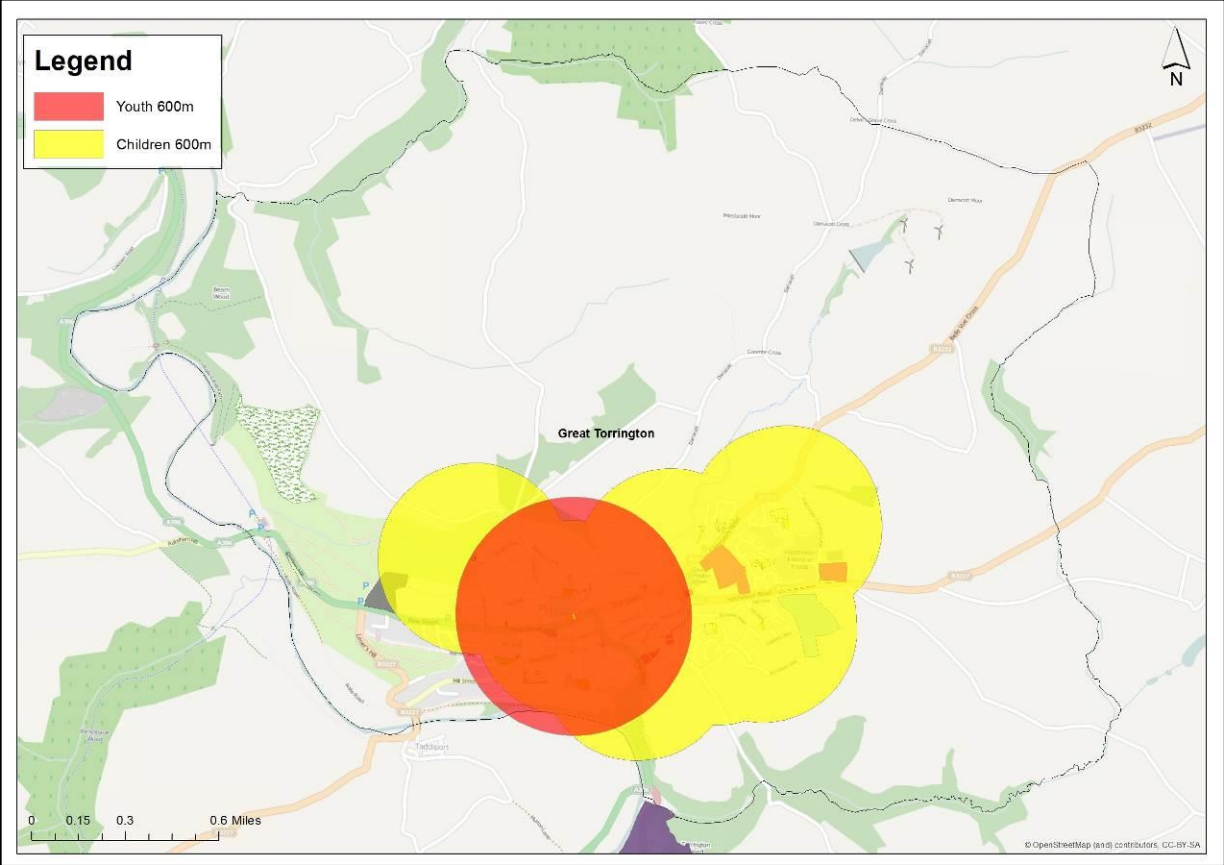


Figure 18 Access to open space provision in Great Torrington



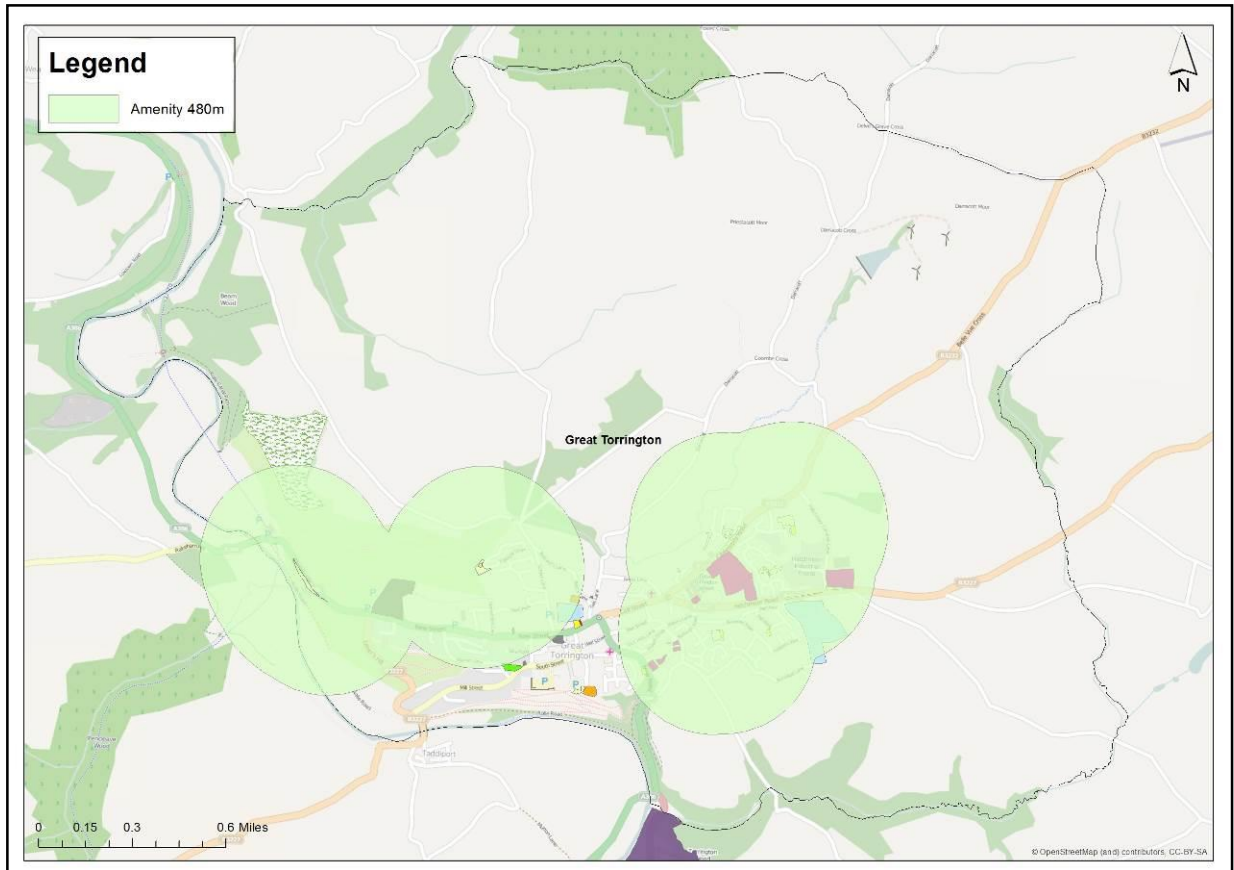


Figure 19 Access to open space provision in Holsworthy

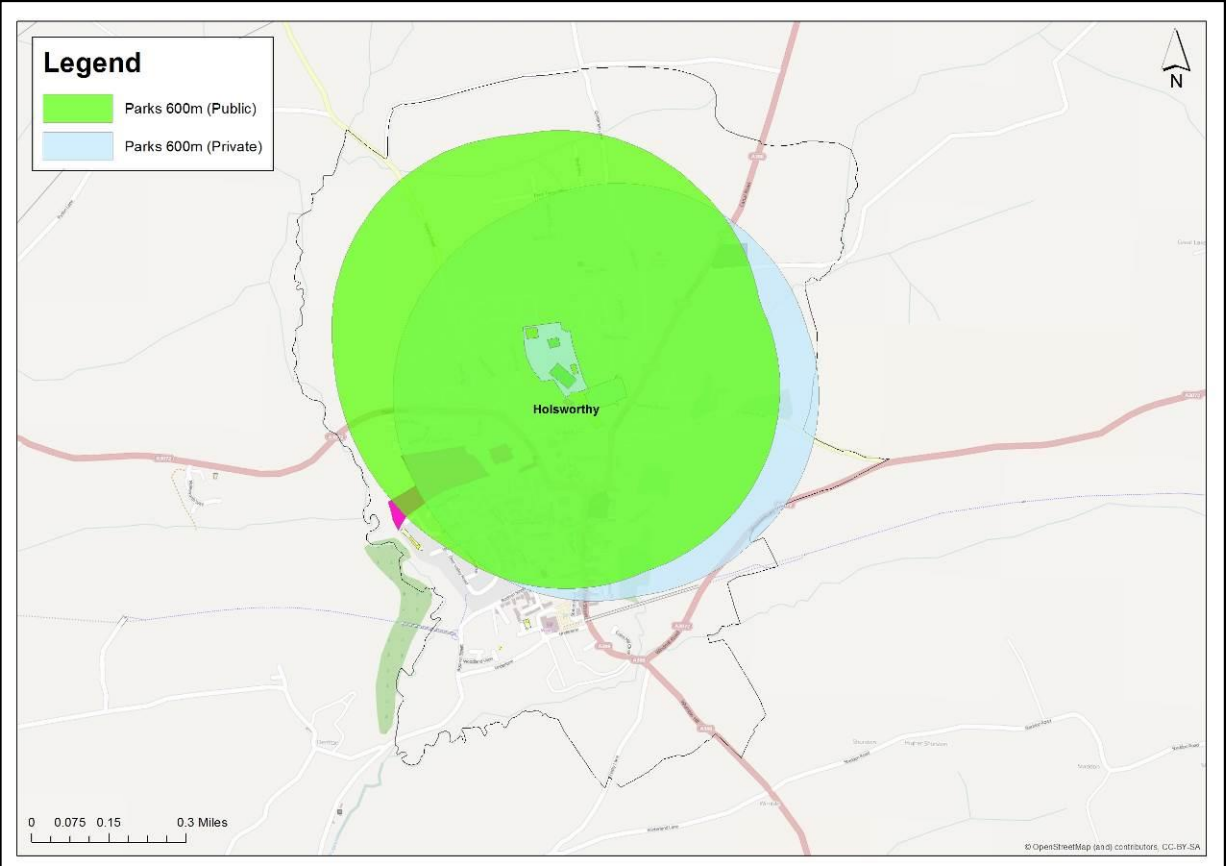
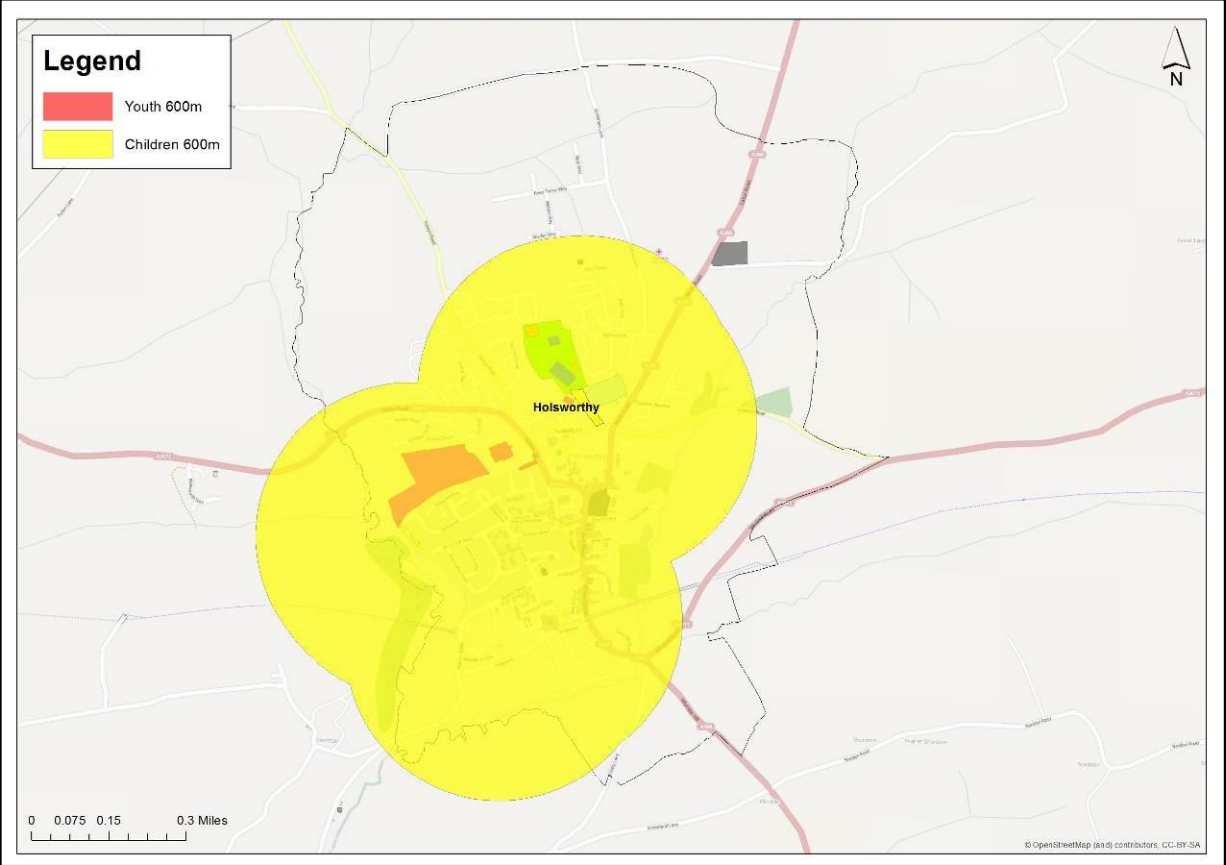


Table 16 *Summary of access issues in urban areas*

Area	Play	Parks	Allotments	Amenity Green Space
Ilfracombe	Good access to children's play space Poor access to Youth Space	Good access	Good access	Good access
Combe Martin	Gaps in provision for children and youth	Good access	No access	Gaps across much of settlement area
Braunton & Wrafton	Good access to children's provision Gaps in north and south to youth provision	Gap in south and north of area	Access restricted to south of area	Good access
Barnstaple	Good access to children's provision Several gaps in access to youth provision	Good access	Gaps in Bickington Roundswell, Tawstock and Landkey areas	Good access
Northam and Bideford	Good access to children's provision Gaps in both areas of youth provision	Gaps to west of Bideford (although there are private facilities in that location)	Gaps in all areas	Good access
South Molton	Good access to children and youth provision	Good access	Small gap in north	Small gap in north
Great Torrington	Good access	Gap in east (although there are private facilities in that location)	No access	Good access
Holsworthy	Good access to children's play space Poor access to Youth Space	Good access	No access	No access

7.2.4 Access analysis (rural areas)

Figure 20 Access to allotments in rural areas

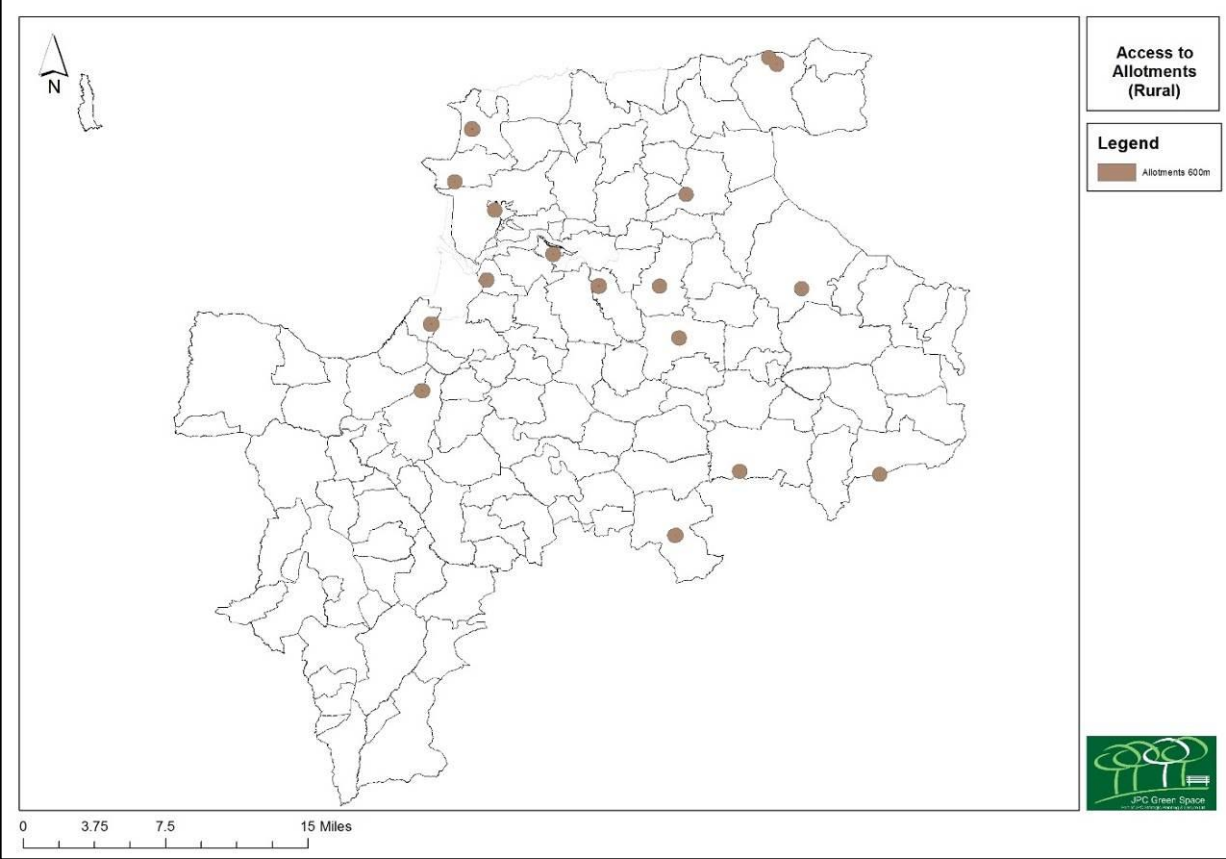


Figure 21 Access to Recreation Space (Public and Private)

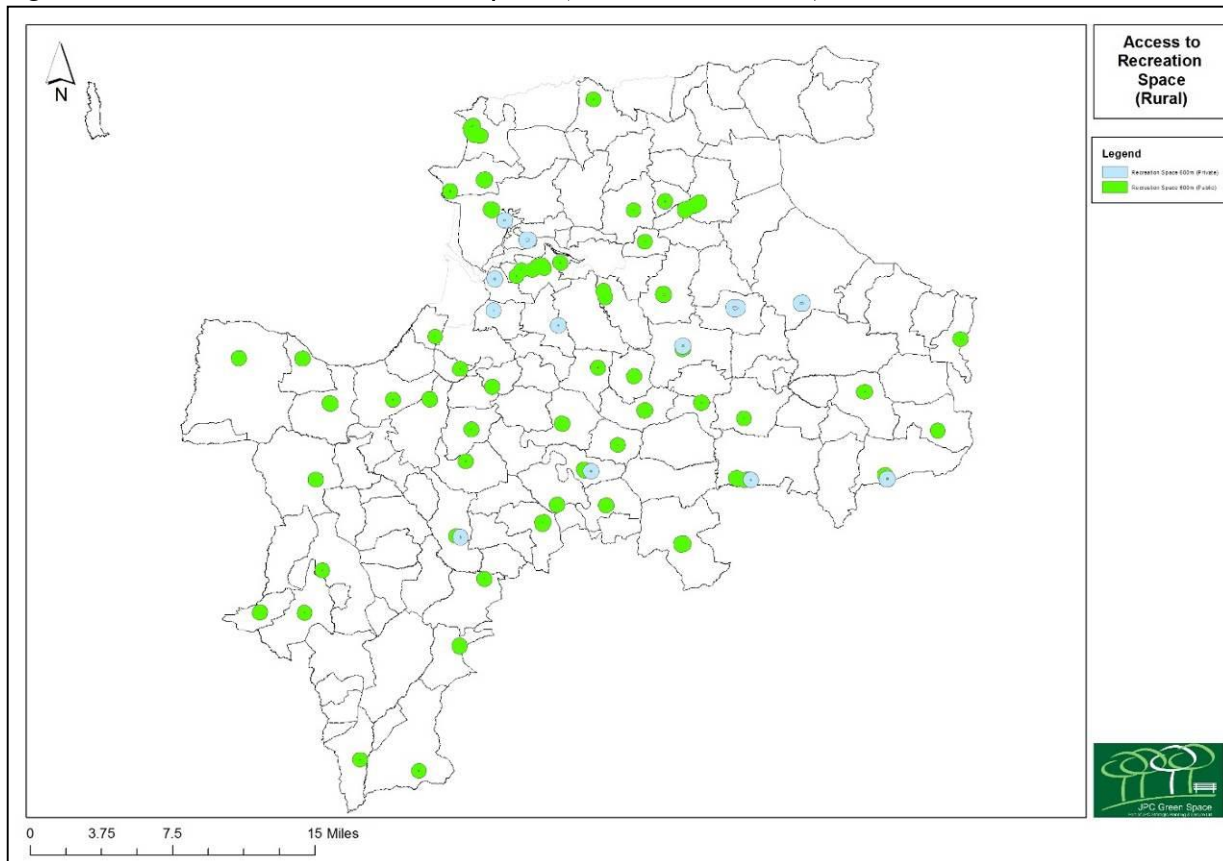
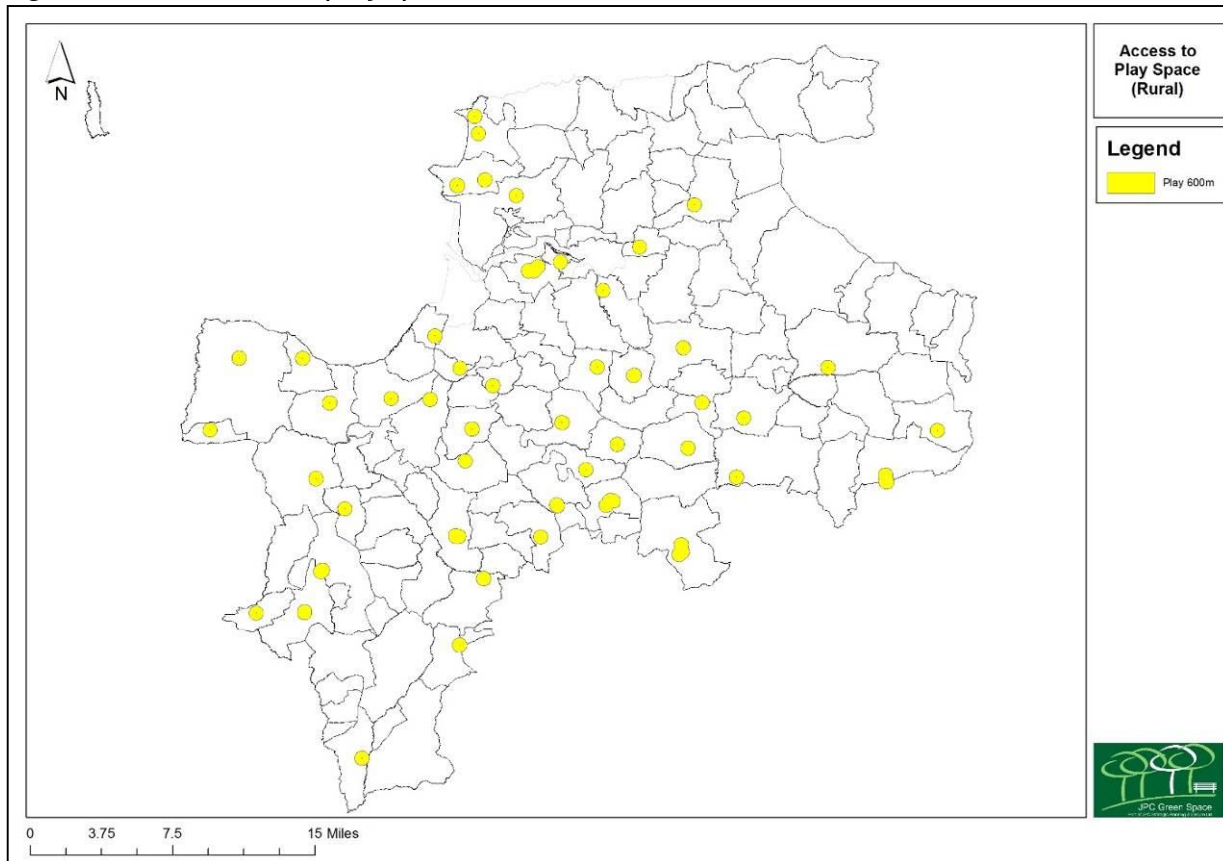


Figure 22 Access to play space



7.3 Application of standards (natural provision)

This section looks at the application of standards for natural greenspace, and also considers the provision of rights of way and recreation routes.

7.3.1 Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGST)

The ANGST are:

- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometre of home;
- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home;

Figure 23 Deficiencies in access to 20 ha site within 2km

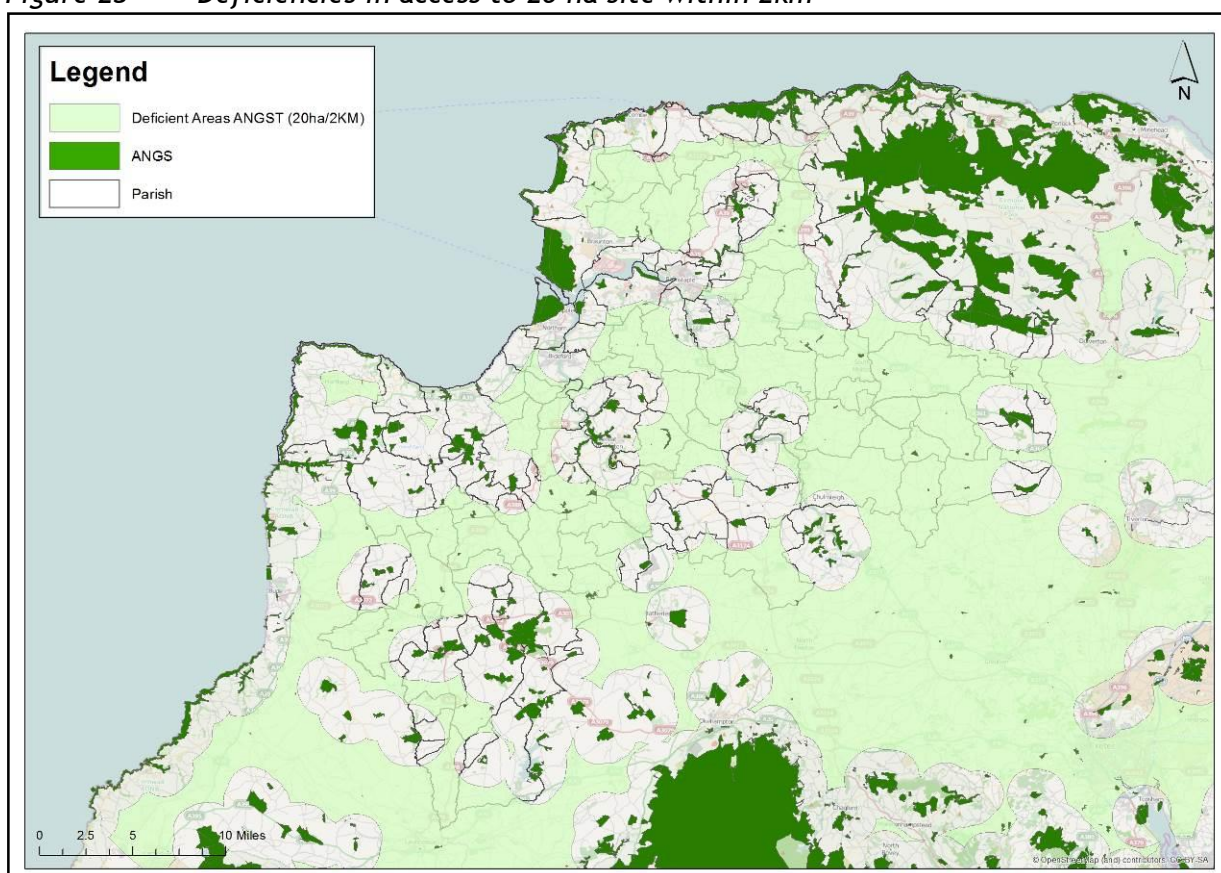


Figure 24 Deficiencies in access to 100 ha site within 5 km

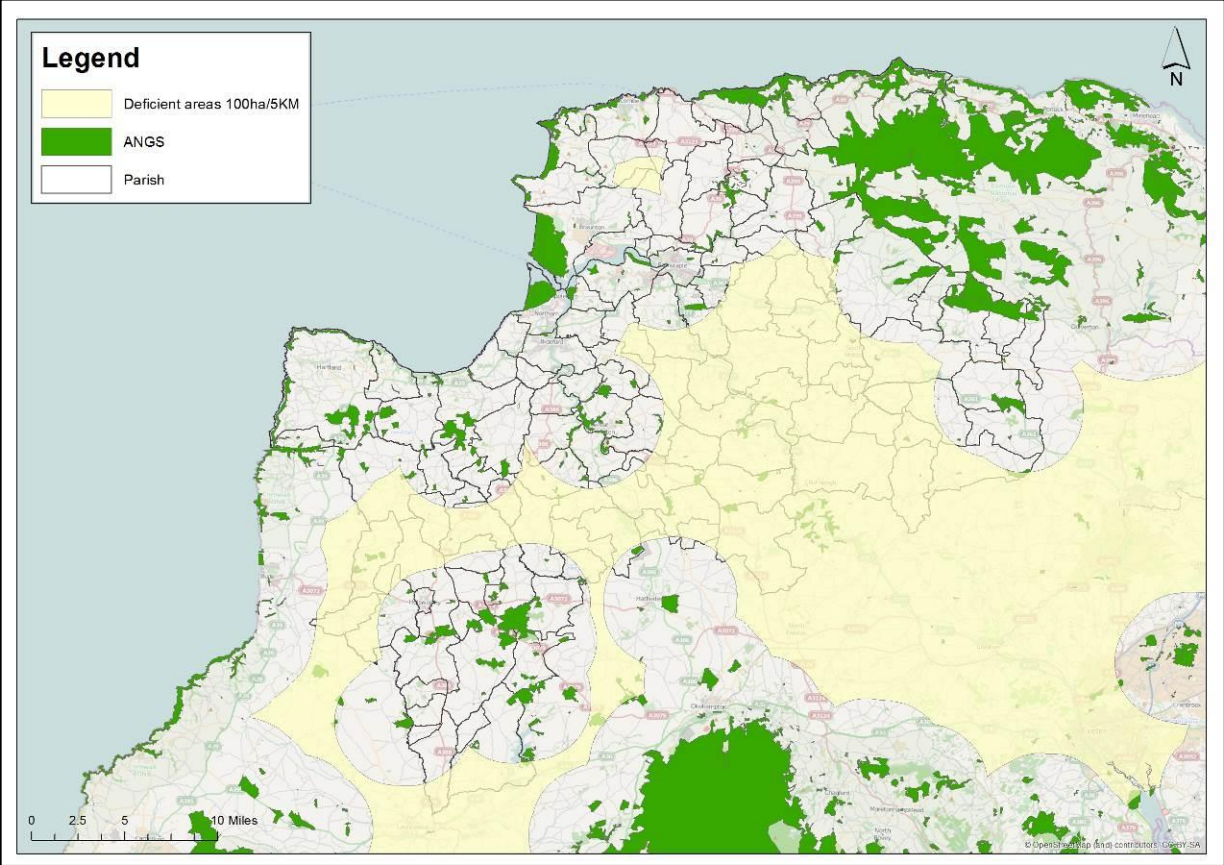


Figure 25 Deficiencies in access to 500 ha site within 10 km

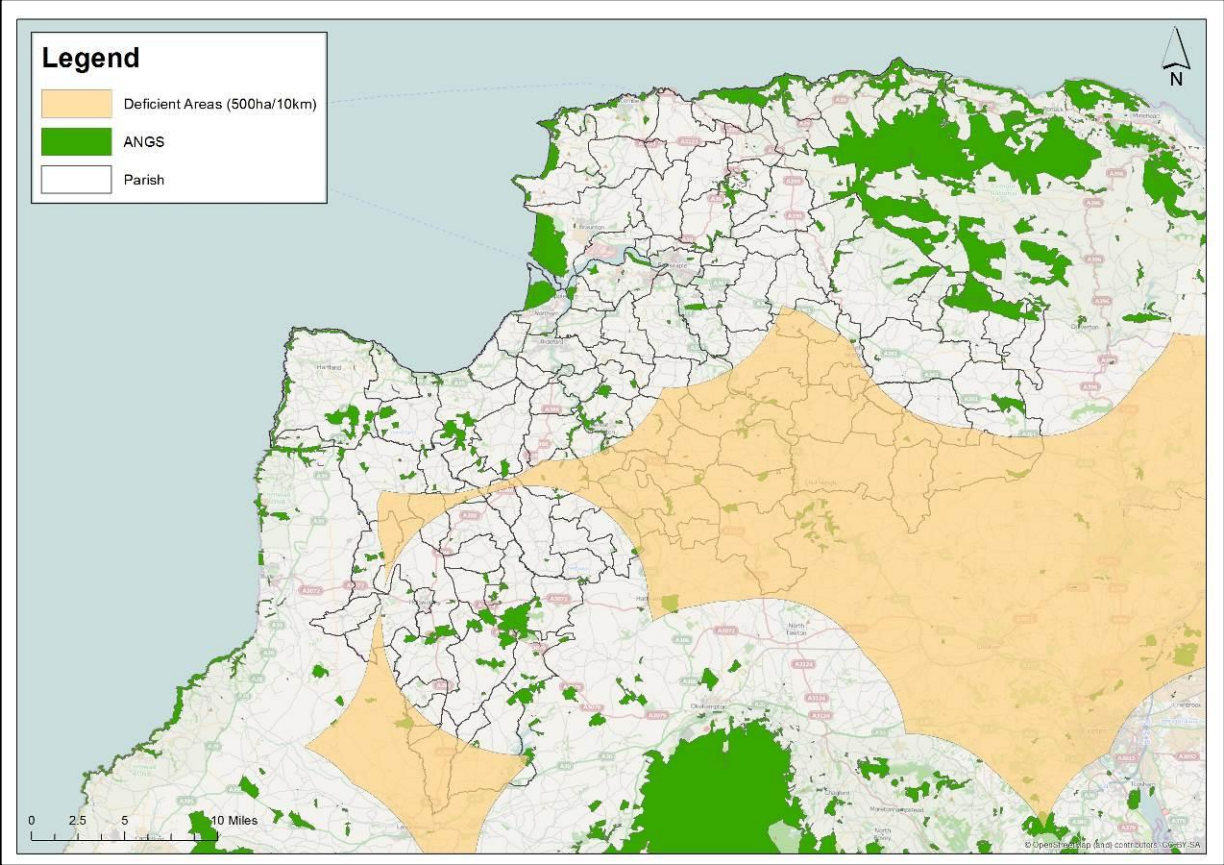
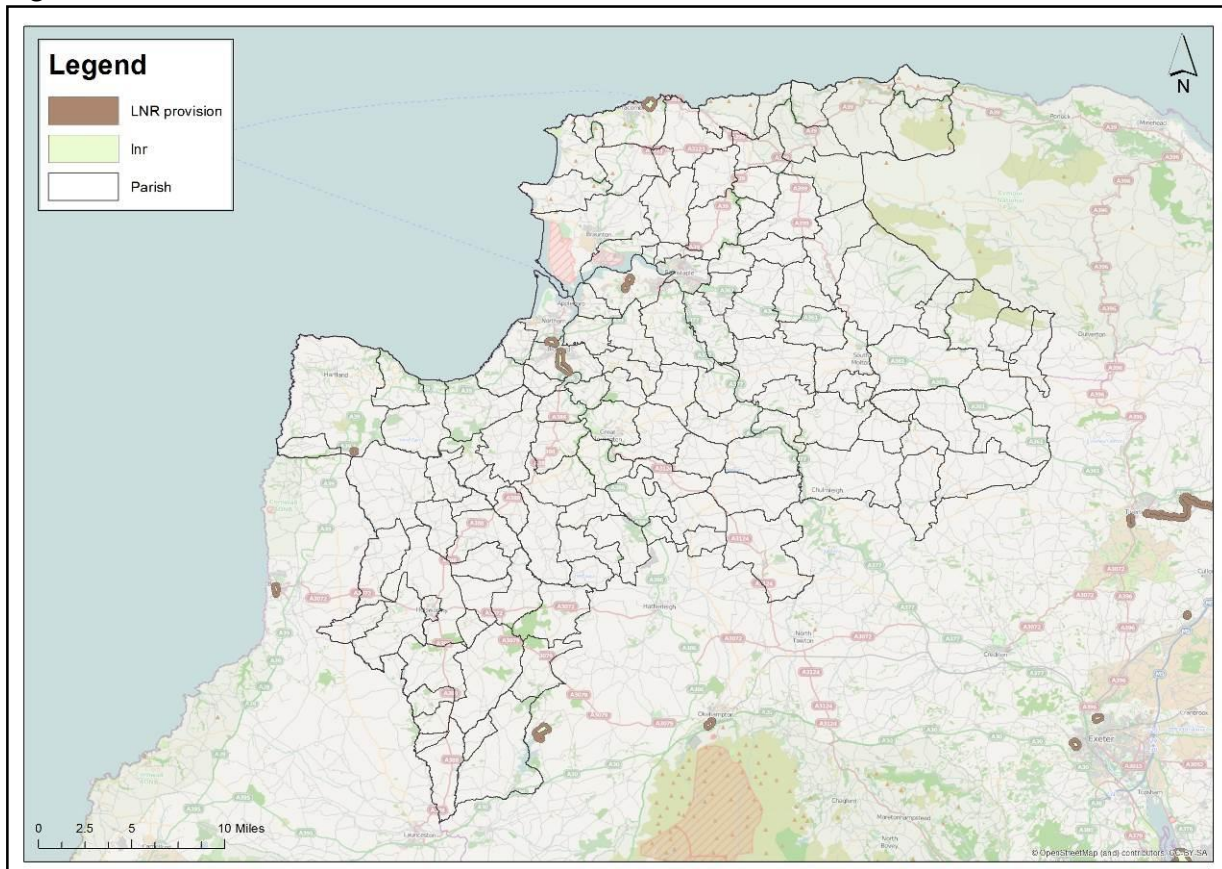


Figure 26 Access to Local Nature Reserves



As there are so few Local nature Reserves in the study area, figure 26 shows the location of each LNR with a buffer of 300 metres. As the map illustrates, there are significant deficiencies in attaining this standards across the study area.

7.3.2 Woodland Trust Access Standards

The woodland trust access standards are:

- that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size;
- that there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people's homes.

Figure 27 Access to woodland 2ha in size at 500 metres

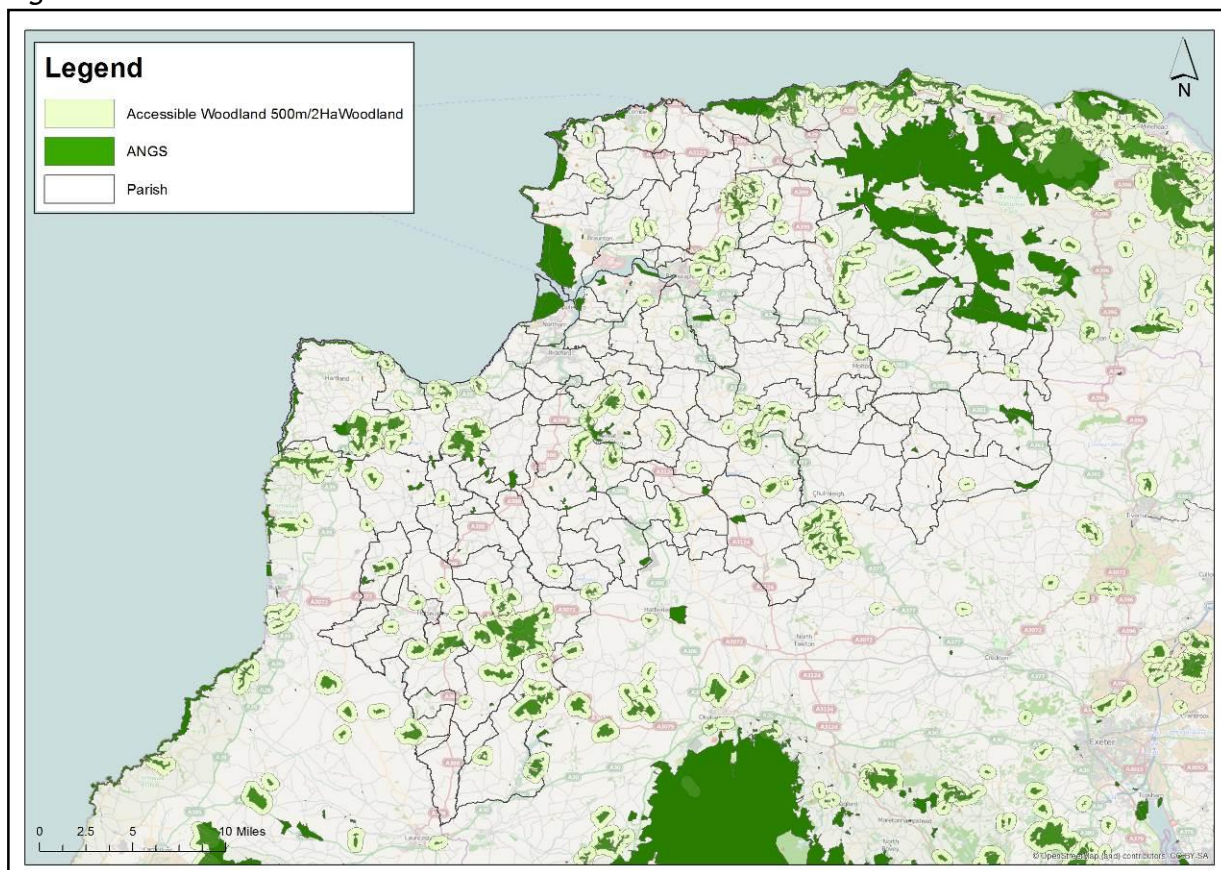


Figure 28 Access to woodland 20ha in size at 4km

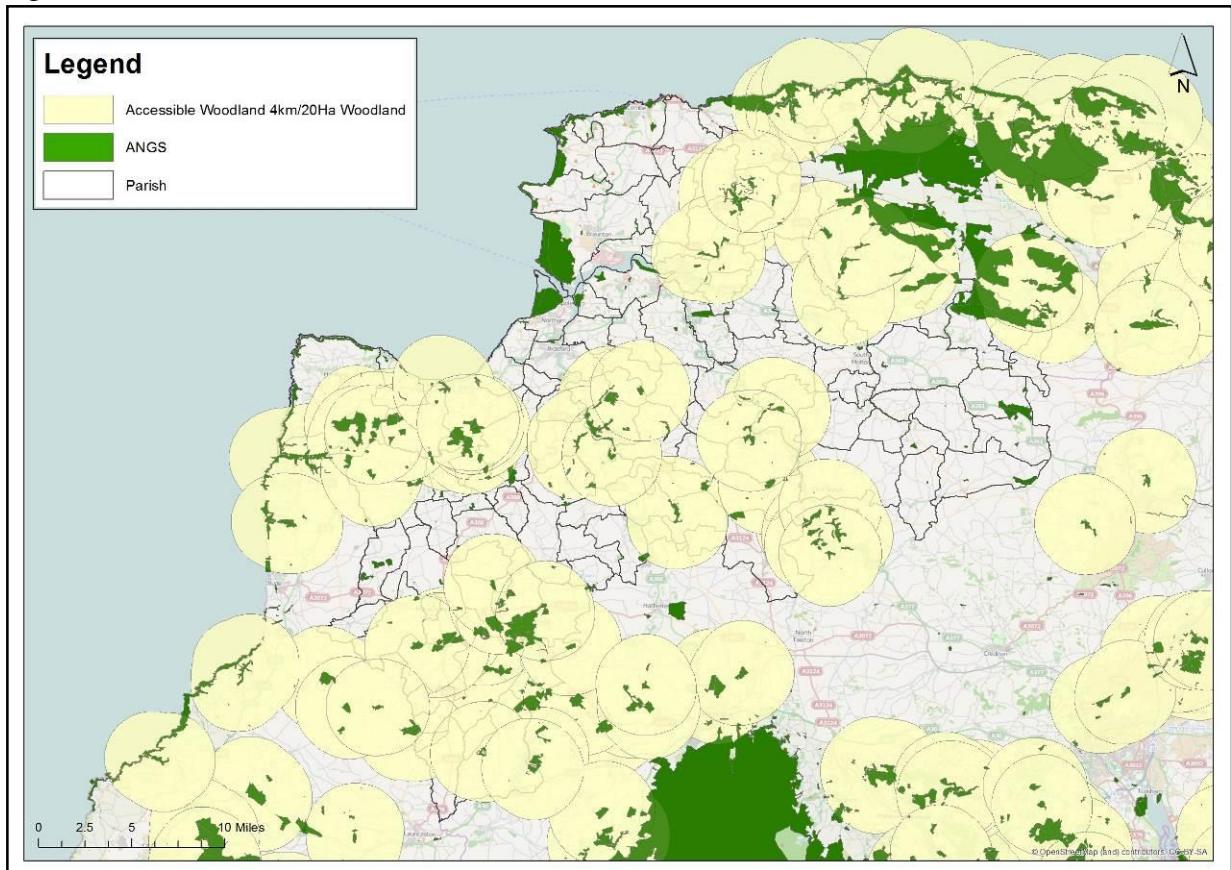
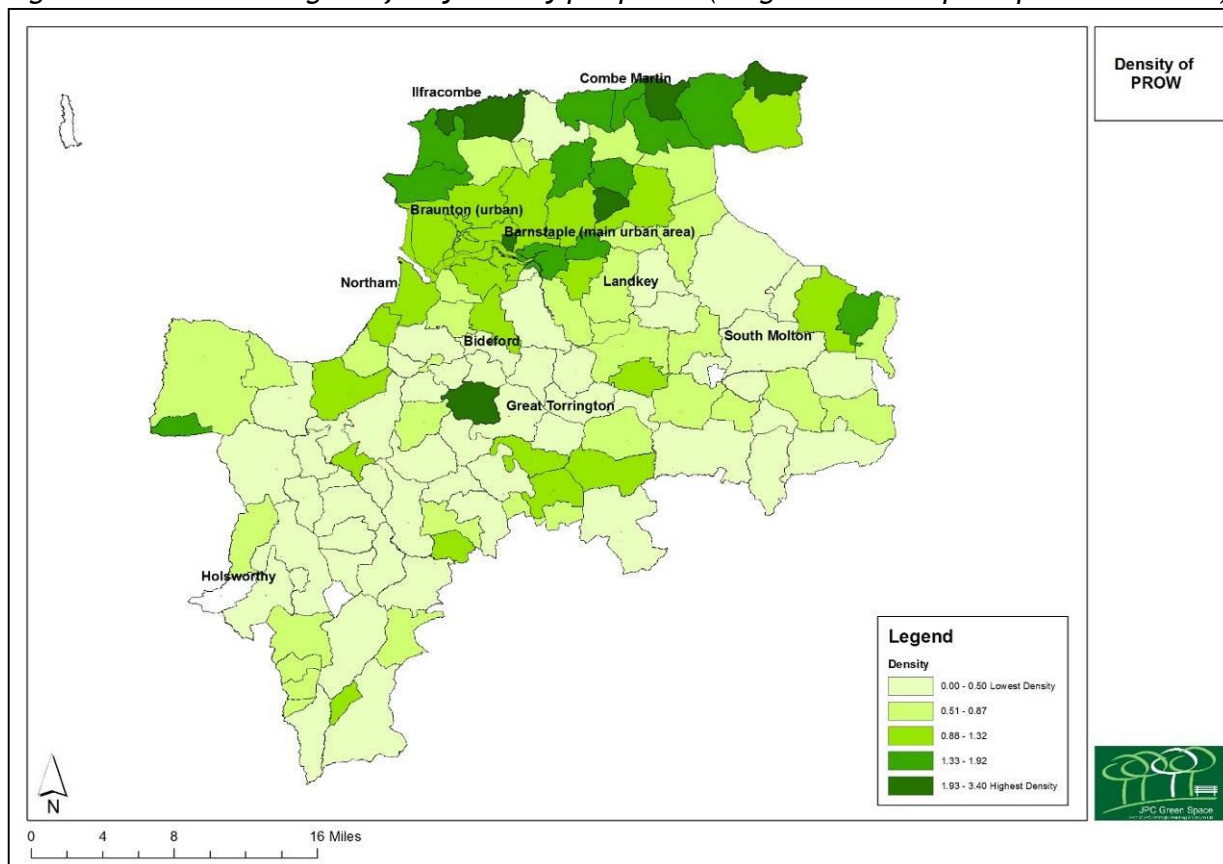


Table 17 Summary of access issues for natural greenspace

Standard	Key access Issues
ANGST:	
at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometre of home	Generally good provision around main urban areas with the exception of South Molton where there is no provision (although South Molton Community Woodland is approximately 15ha and is an important local facility).
one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home	Generally good provision around main urban areas with the exception of South Molton where there is no provision
one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home	Generally good provision around main urban areas with the exception of South Molton where there is no provision
a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home	Poor provision across the study area. Provision restricted to Ilfracombe, Bideford, Fremington and Hartland. Provision falls hugely below the standard and would be a huge challenge to achieve the standard.
Woodland Trust:	
that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size	Significant gaps around the whole study area. Achieving the standard may be unrealistic across much of the area.
that there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people's homes	Provision is good in many parts, main gaps in Ilfracombe, Bideford, Fremington, Hartland

7.3.3 Density of public rights of Way

Figure 29 Public rights of way density per parish (length in metres per square kilometre)



*including Public Rights of Way (PROWs) & unclassified unsurfaced County Roads (uUCRs)

7.3.4 Promoted Walking Trails

Figure 30 Promoted walking trails



IDENTIFYING LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES (STEP 5)

8.0 IDENTIFYING LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES

8.1 Introduction

After local standards have been applied and quantitative and qualitative deficiencies have been identified, the information has been used to identify opportunities or areas of search to enhance and fill gaps in the existing green infrastructure network towards meeting these local standards. The following is included:

- Opportunities to enhance existing green infrastructure networks and accessibility to them at a strategic scale (including links to the draft Devon green infrastructure strategy, as well as strategic green infrastructure and ecological networks identified by other adjoining districts, including Exmoor National Park);
- Local opportunities to address existing gaps in the green infrastructure network and improvement of existing assets at a local scale, especially where they reflect the identified needs and aspirations of local communities;
- Future opportunities to enhance and expand existing green infrastructure networks to meet the growing and changing needs of an expanding population over the next 20 years;
- Local opportunities are for ecosystem services to be fully integrated within the delivery of new and improvement of existing green infrastructure assets and networks.

8.2 Strategic Opportunities

8.2.1 Formal Provision

The planned growth in the study area (see section 8.4.1) presents an opportunity to develop a hierarchy of provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities. A hierarchy of provision essentially means splitting facilities into categories based on their size and use. For example, a small local recreation ground may always be intended for local use, and may only attract people from the immediate town or parish, where as a large recreation ground with multiple facilities may attract people from further afield.

Developing a hierarchy of provision is not appropriate for all types of open space, for example, there is little value in developing a hierarchy for amenity space or allotments, which the study has identified as having very local use and demand. However, other typologies, namely Parks, Sport and Recreation Grounds and Play Space have the potential to function at different levels. The hierarchy of provision of natural green space is discussed in the following section.

Parks and Recreation Grounds

This type of provision does function in different ways and at different levels. Indeed across the study area, the audit has identified a range of different types of provision, sizes, functions and facilities. The following section makes some recommendations in relation to a hierarchy for this typology.

It is proposed to keep the hierarchy straightforward and it is recommended that two classifications are adopted: Local Sites and Hub Sites. The following makes some recommendations based on observations from the study - it is fully intended that this would be subject to further consultation with town and parish councils, in particular through the neighbourhood planning process, where appropriate.

Local Sites

As suggested, these are local sites providing facilities for the immediate town/parish or its immediate neighbours. Sites of this size are likely to be below 2 hectares in size, and typically have only 1 sports pitch (or possibly football and cricket), along with a play area. Provision for sport is at a local level, and may not have changing facilities.

Hub Sites

These are larger sites, typically greater than 2 hectares in size and will currently or be capable of performing a range of functions for outdoor sport and recreation. Typically, they will have more than one sports pitch, play facilities for children and young people, changing rooms, village hall or pavilion, car parking and space for events and informal recreation.

Although they may not currently have all the facilities, the sites would have the potential to perform this range of functions with investment. These sites would be the priority for investment in sport, particularly developing pitches which are capable of accommodating a higher standard of play than local sites - this may include additional drainage, fenced sports pitches and modern changing facilities.

Figure 31 suggests a number of publicly accessible sites which have the potential to perform as hub sites. As a guide, a 2km buffer has been applied to each potential hub site, but further analysis could be applied to consider drive times if these sites are deemed suitable, and if the hub site policy is adopted. Other locations have been considered as part of this analysis, and there is potential for additional hub sites to come forward through new or enhanced provision as a result of development.

Figure 31 Potential 'Hub sites' in the study area

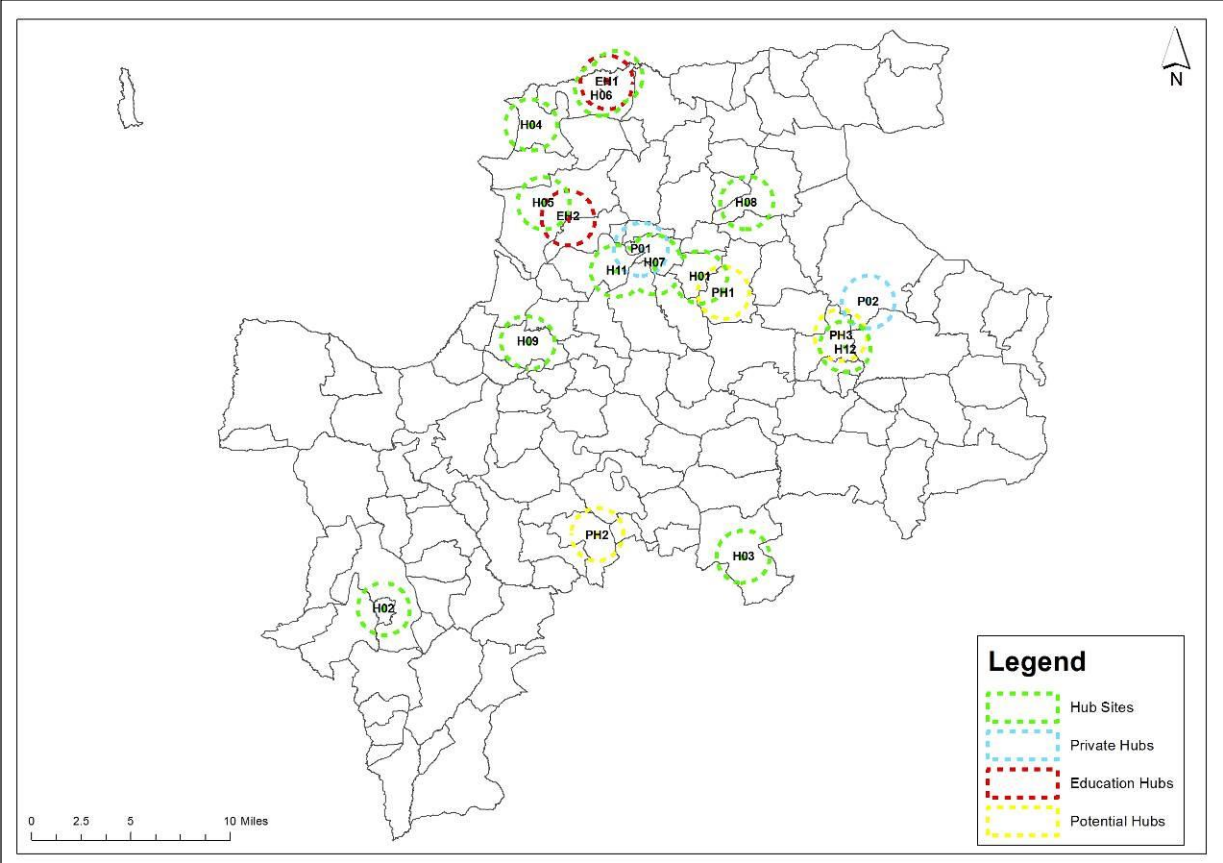


Table 18 Hub sites within the study area

Ref	Site Name	DISTRICT	PARISH	Ha	Class	Play (Child)	Play (Youth)	Football	Cricket	Rugby	Pavilion/Hall	Bowls	Tennis	Other	Class
P01	Barnstaple Rugby and Football Club Site	North Devon	Barnstaple	7.40	Urban			•		•	•	•			Private Hub
H07	Rock Park	North Devon	Barnstaple	9.90	Urban	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	ATP	Hub Site
H09	Bideford Recreation Ground	Torridge	Bideford	3.60	Urban	•	•	•			•				Hub Site
H08	Bratton Fleming Sports Club	North Devon	Bratton Fleming	3.64	Rural			•	•		•		•		Hub Site
H05	Braunton Lobb Field	North Devon	Braunton	2.80	Rural			•			•				Hub Site
EH2	Braunton Community College	North Devon	Braunton	6.58	Urban			•	•		•		•	ATP, Athletics	Education Hub
H11	Queen Elizabeth II (Tews Lane)	North Devon	Fremington	3.50	Urban	•	•	•			•				Hub Site
H02	Stanhope Park	Torridge	Holsworthy	3.29	Urban	•	•	•	•		•	•			Hub Site
EH1	Community College & Killacleave	North Devon	Ilfracombe	5.67	Urban			•	•	•	•		•	ATP under construction	Education Hub
H06	Bicclescombe Park & Mill	North Devon	Ilfracombe	2.27	Urban	•					•		•		Hub Site
H10	Brimlands	North Devon	Ilfracombe	2.58	Urban	•		•	•	•	•				Hub Site
H01	Millennium Green	North Devon	Landkey	4.41	Urban	•		•			•				Hub Site
H04	The Meadows	North Devon	Mortehoe	2.13	Rural	•		•			•				Hub Site
P02	North Molton Sports Ground	North Devon	North Molton	3.92	Rural			•	•		•				Private Hub
PH2	Petrockstow Cricket Fields	Torridge	Petrockstow	3.25	Rural				•						Potential Hub
PH3	Hacche Lane Recreation Ground	North Devon	South Molton	2.00	Urban			•						Teen Shelter	Potential Hub
H12	Central Park	North Devon	South Molton	1.00	Urban	•	•				•	•	•	Various community buildings	Hub Site
PH1	Swimbridge Parochial School	North Devon	Swimbridge	2.22	Rural									Planning granted for football, cricket, car par, play and village hall	Potential Hub
H03	Winleigh Playing Field	Torridge	Winkleigh	4.70	Rural	•		•			•	•	•		Hub Site

Play Space

Play spaces also lend themselves to the development of a hierarchy of provision, both Torridge and North Devon have previously used the NPFA standards for providing play spaces which seeks the provision of Local Areas of Play (LAPs), Local equipped Areas of Play (LEAPs) and Neighborhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAPs). This study has recommended moving away from this type of classification, and recommends the Play England classification of play is adopted:

A Door-step spaces close to home

B Local play spaces - larger areas within easy walking distance

C Neighbourhood spaces for play - larger spaces within walking distance

D Destination/family sites - accessible by bicycle, public transport and with car parking.

Analysis of this type of provision is made in the sub area profiles, however, as some general principles, the following is recommended:

A Door-step spaces close to home

These may include non-equipped areas which are large enough to support informal play or a kickabout - this provision may well be met through the amenity open space typology.

B Local play spaces - larger areas within easy walking distance

These would typically be equipped with provision for toddlers (under 4) and juniors (5 - 12). The site is unlikely to have provision for youths. It is expected that there would be at least one example of provision within each settlement area or neighbourhood.

C Neighbourhood spaces for play - larger spaces within walking distance

These would typically be equipped with provision for toddlers and juniors, and likely to have one form of provision for young people. It is expected that there would be at least one example of provision within each parish.

D Destination/family sites - accessible by bicycle, public transport and with car parking

These would be larger play facilities for a range of ages including toddlers, juniors and young people. Provision for young people may include a skate park and MUGA. It is recommended that these facilities are provided at the hub sites suggested in figure 25.

8.2.2 Accessible Natural Greenspace

The draft Devon Green Infrastructure Study has included detailed analysis of existing provision and deficiencies of GI across the whole county (this is summarised in section 7.3 of this study). This study will also provide a framework for providing GI, in particular accessible natural greenspace and rights of way at a strategic level. This comprehensive approach is considered to be relevant and appropriate to Torridge and North Devon, it is therefore recommended that this strategy adopts the findings and recommendations that emerge from the county wide study when finalised.

In addition to this, the study area falls within the North Devon Biosphere Reserve (see section 3.3.3). The reserve strategy covers many aspects of GI including Community, Education, Businesses, Farming and Wildlife, providing significant opportunities for local communities to engage with the natural environment. Again, many of these projects and initiatives within the Biosphere Reserve are relevant and appropriate to Torridge and North Devon, and it is recommended that this strategy adopts strategic priorities that are proposed.

8.3 Local Opportunities

At a local level there are a number of opportunities for addressing existing gaps in the GI network, these are through:

- Community groups and initiatives;
- Neighbourhood Plans;
- Planned housing growth (see following section).

8.3.1 Community groups and initiatives

The local consultation identified the value local communities place on green infrastructure, with particularly high levels of use of local parks, footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths, countryside and wildlife areas. The study area also has numerous community groups who are involved with managing open spaces at different levels from organizing events to practical conservation work.

The projects and initiatives being championed by the North Devon Biosphere Reserve also has a focus on engaging local communities in the natural environment and there are many initiatives such as 'Biosphere Action Week', 'Green Pioneers', Biodiversity offsetting to name but a few. This structured and coordinated approach provides significant opportunity for local communities within Torridge and North Devon to engage and linking opportunities through the reserve should be a priority for this study.

8.3.2 Neighbourhood Plans

The Localism Act, which received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011, introduced new rights and powers to allow local communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans. Neighbourhood planning can be taken forward by two types of body - town and parish councils or 'neighbourhood fora'. For this study area, as it is Parished, it is likely that neighbourhood plans will be taken

forward by Town and Parish Councils. Neighbourhood fora and parish councils can use new neighbourhood planning powers to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. These are described legally as 'neighbourhood development plans.'

Neighbourhood plans present the best opportunity for realising opportunities for improving the GI network at a local level. This study should be used by the fora responsible for preparing the plan to identify current deficiencies in the quantity or access to different types of GI, and put forward plans for meeting these deficiencies.

8.3.3 Green Infrastructure Strategy

As a result of this study to identify local GI standards, existing deficiencies against these standards and opportunities for enhanced provision, the Councils could prepare a GI strategy to identify sites for new or enhanced GI provision towards addressing existing deficiencies, with priorities identified within any delivery strategy. A GI strategy would need to conform with the emerging Devon GI strategy, and could inform the emerging Local Plan and other relevant strategies

8.4 Future Opportunities

8.4.1 Proposed housing growth

This section considers the future opportunities to enhance and expand existing green infrastructure networks to meet the growing and changing needs of an expanding population over the next 20 years. Key to this is understanding the planned levels and distribution of housing growth during this time period, which is summarised in figure 32 and table 19 below for settlements accommodating more than 500 new homes over the period to 2031.

Figure 32 Proposed housing growth

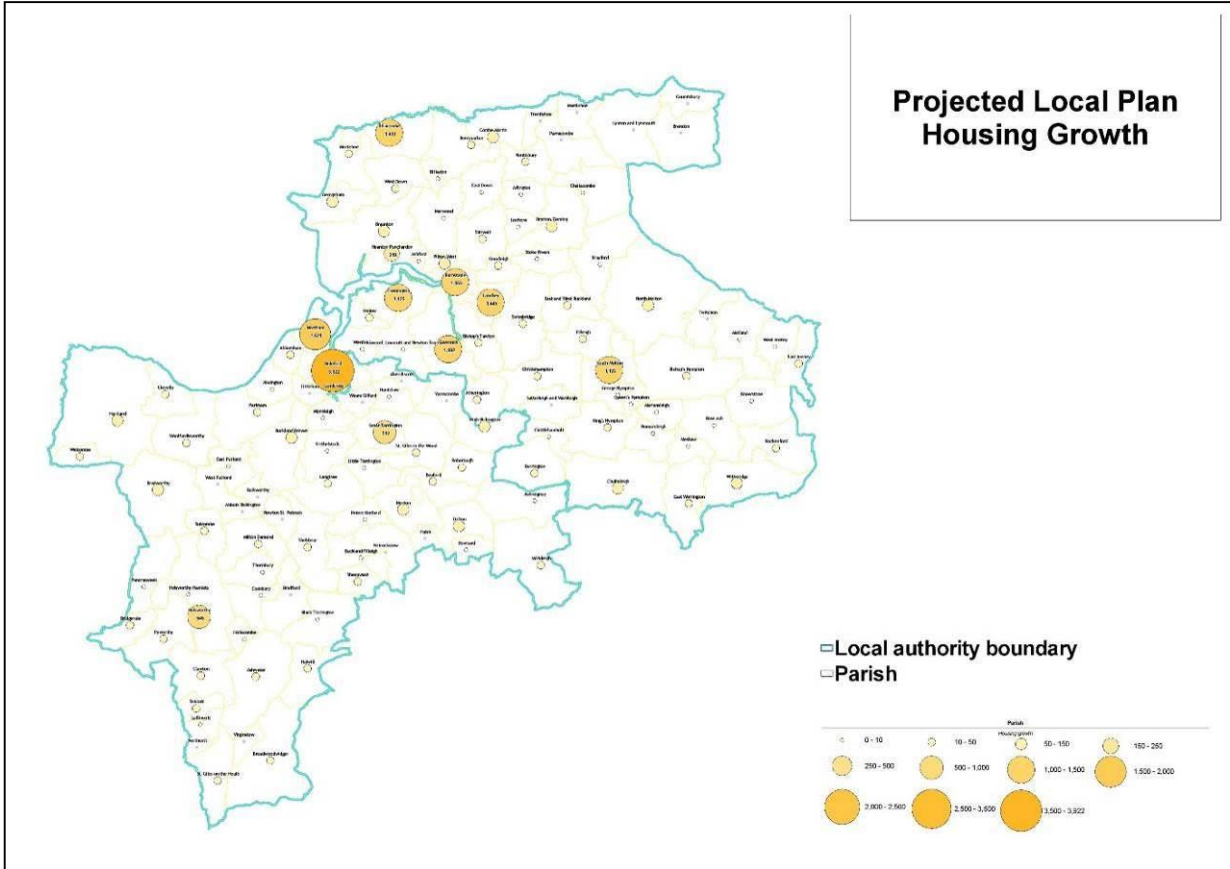


Table 19 shows the estimated levels of housing growth for the study area taken from the draft local plan. These figures may be subject to change as the local plan develops.

Table 19 Main areas for housing growth (assuming 2.3 people per dwelling)

Name	Housing growth *	Estimated population (2011)	Estimated population growth from new housing	Estimated new population in 2031	Local Authority
Barnstaple sub-regional area	4,000	31,145	9,200	40,345	North Devon
Bideford	4,100	16,610	9,430	26,040	Torridge
Great Torrington	550	5,714	1,265	6,979	Torridge
Ilfracombe	1,550	11,509	3,565	15,074	North Devon
Northam	1,550	12,062	3,565	15,627	Torridge
South Molton	1,200	4,875	2,760	7,635	North Devon
Braunton/ Wrafton	330	5134	759	5,893	North Devon
Holsworthy	570	2641	1311	3,952	Torridge

Using these figures for estimated housing growth, it is possible to determine the required provision of open space that will be required using the recommended standards as outlined in this study. Table 20 shows the requirement for open space for each typology using the recommended standards, as a result of anticipated population growth. These do not include the requirements to meet any existing deficiencies.

Table 20 Future requirements (hectares) for open space from proposed development

PARISH	Population Growth	Allotments	Amenity & Natural Greenspace	Park, Sport and Recreation Ground	Play Space (Children)	Play Space (Youth)
Barnstaple sub regional area	9,200	1.38	18.40	11.96	0.46	0.18
Bideford	9,430	1.41	18.86	12.26	0.47	0.19
Great Torrington	1,265	0.19	2.53	1.64	0.06	0.03
Ilfracombe	3,565	0.53	7.13	4.63	0.18	0.07
Northam	3,565	0.53	7.13	4.63	0.18	0.07
South Molton	2,760	0.41	5.52	3.59	0.14	0.06
Braunton/ Wrafton	759	0.11	1.52	0.99	0.04	0.02
Holsworthy	1,311	0.20	2.62	1.70	0.07	0.03
Total requirement	31,855	4.78	63.71	41.41	1.59	0.64

Through this housing growth, there is an opportunity to deliver new provision on site within strategic site allocations, or secure funding through developer contribution to invest in infrastructure, through section 106 and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

8.4.2 Developer Contributions

This section sets out higher level strategic recommendations and recommends an approach to developer contributions in accordance with the CIL regulations.

1) *Capital cost of providing open space*

In order to calculate developer contributions for facilities, a methodology has been adopted which calculates how much it would cost the Local Authority to provide them. These costs have been calculated using local information, and have also been benchmarked against other Local Authorities costs for providing facilities. A summary of the costs are outlined in table 21 below.

Contributions towards the provision or improvement of open space are calculated using the capital cost of provision. The same charges apply to both provision of new facilities and the upgrading/improvement of existing facilities, which more often than not includes new provision. This is in line with Paragraph B9 of Circular 05/2005, according to which obligations “should be fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the proposed development”. Contribution per person is therefore taken to be a reasonable measure of that impact, irrespective of whether new provision or improvement of existing facilities is required. The calculated costs have drawn on the standards of provision for urban areas, as this is where the majority of proposed growth is planned.

Table 21 Costs for providing open space

Typology	Standard (m ²) per person	Cost of provision	
		Cost / m ²	Contribution per person
Allotments	1.5	£30.00	£45.00
Play Space (children’s and Youth combined)	0.7	£170.00	£119.00
Parks and Recreation grounds	13.0	£72.00	£936.00
Natural Green Space and amenity green space (new provision)	20.0	£15.00	£300.00
Total	35.20		£1,400

This shows that it costs £1,400 per person to provide new open space to meet the North Devon & Torrridge standard for open space. These calculations are to be used to calculate developer contributions required through CIL, which is discussed below.

If the open space study identifies the need for a development to provide open space on site, CIL will not be applicable, but the development will be required to provide open space in line with the recommended Standards.

2) Applying costs to CIL

Overall contributions through CIL will be per square metre of development set through a future CIL charging schedule for each district council, together with a list of what it can be spent on. Any strategic green infrastructure provision could be included on this list but will need to compete with other strategic infrastructure requirements including new schools and road junction improvements.

Using assumptions about average floorspace sizes, number of persons living in different sized homes and all provisions being offsite made through financial contributions, table 22 shows an overall open space contribution requirement for £37.73 per square metre. It is unlikely that this level of provision can be delivered through CIL.

Table 22 Costs for providing open space per metre square of new development

Dwelling Size	Household Size	Open space contribution	Size of dwelling (square metres)	Contribution per metre square of new development
1 bed	1.5	£2,100	64.3	£32.65
2 bed	2.5	£3,500	71.2	£49.15
3 bed	2.5	£3,500	95.6	£36.61
4+ beds	2.8	£3,920	120.6	£32.50
Average rate				£37.73

3) Maintenance Contributions

If a development is required to provide open space on site, the developer would be expected to maintain the open space for a minimum period of 1 year. Developers will then be asked to maintain the new provision for up to 10 years, after which arrangements must be put in place for a management company and/or third party to manage the open space.

If the developer does not wish to assume responsibility for maintaining the open space, the council may be willing to accept a commuted sum and make arrangements for management of the open space through the council or a third party. The amount payable for the commuted sum will be calculated using the figures in table 23.

Table 23 *Committed sums payable for open space*

Typology	Cost/m ²
Children & Young People’s Space	£3.67
Parks and Gardens	£2.20
Outdoor Sports Space	£0.92
Amenity Green Space	£0.62
Natural Green Space	£0.42
Allotments	£0.13

The figures in table 23 show how much it costs to maintain open space per metre squared. The figures have been calculated from average unit rates for maintenance of different types of open space, drawn from standard rates (Spons).

4) Eligible types of development

Table 24 outlines the type of housing that will be considered eligible for making contributions towards open space to meet the needs of future occupants.

Table 24 *Eligible types of residential development*

Category	Open Market Housing / Flats	Affordable Housing *	Housing for the active elderly	Permanent mobile homes
Play Space	✓	×	×	✓
Outdoor Sports Space	✓	×	✓	✓
Parks and Gardens	✓	×	✓	✓
Amenity Open Space	✓	×	✓	✓
Natural Green Space	✓	×	✓	✓
Allotments	✓	×	✓	✓

[* Should recognise that affordable housing generates a need for new green infrastructure, but it is a policy decision as to whether GI contributions should be provided]

Includes agricultural workers’ dwellings. Excludes extensions (for administrative reasons)
Excludes replacement dwellings and nursing houses types.

5) *Thresholds for provision*

The required open space, sport and recreation facilities can be provided by on-site provision, or through CIL. Where facilities are to be provided on-site, the Council will expect the developer to provide the land for the facility and either:

- Design and build the provision to the satisfaction of the Council; or
- Make a financial contribution to the Council so that it may arrange for the construction and development of the required facility.

The decision on whether facility provision is to be on-site, off-site or both depends on the following considerations:

- The scale of the proposed development and site area;
- The suitability of a site reflecting, for example, its topography or flood risk;
- The existing provision of facilities within the neighbourhood and/or the sub area;
- Other sites in the neighbourhood where additional provision is proposed;
- Existing access to facilities within the neighbourhood and/or sub area.

Table 25 provides an indicative guide to assess which scales of housing generate a need for facilities in the categories listed to be provided onsite. It will provide a starting point for negotiation with flexibility subject to opportunities available. Sites identified for development in the Local Plan will normally clarify requirements for onsite provision

Table 25 Requirement for open space, sport and recreation facilities

Type of Provision	1-9 dwellings	10-49 dwellings	50-199 dwellings	200-599 dwellings	600+ dwellings
Play Space	*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Amenity Green Space	*	✓	✓	✓	✓
Outdoor Sports Space	*	*	✓	✓	✓
Allotments	*	*	✓	✓	✓
Parks and Gardens	*	*	*	✓	✓
Natural Green Space	*	*	*	✓	✓

KEY: ✓ on site provision normally sought * off site provision normally required

8.5 Ecosystem Services

This section considers how local opportunities for ecosystem services can be integrated within the delivery of new and improvement of existing green infrastructure assets and networks.

8.5.1 The role of Green Infrastructure

The following has drawn heavily on guidance provided by the Landscape Institute¹⁸, who define Green Infrastructure as:

‘The network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect villages, towns and cities. It is a natural, service-providing infrastructure that is often more cost-effective, more resilient and more capable of meeting social, environmental and economic objectives than ‘grey’ infrastructure’.

Green infrastructure assets

GI assets range from country parks, lakes and woodlands to urban interventions such as green roofs and street trees. They can be specific sites at the local level or broader environmental features at the landscape scale within and between rural and urban areas such as wetlands, woodlands and moorlands.

Green infrastructure functions

GI functions are the roles that assets can play if planned, designed and managed in a way that is sensitive to, and includes provision for, natural features and ecosystem services. They may have obvious primary functions, but each asset can perform different functions simultaneously - a concept known as multi-functionality. For example, street trees add aesthetic quality to an urban area, but will also reduce airborne pollution, provide shade, reduce urban heat island effects, mitigate wind chill and turbulence and increase biodiversity.

8.5.2 GI and Ecosystem Services

Underpinning the multiple functions that GI assets perform is the concept of ecosystem services. Between 2009 and 2011, the UK National Ecosystem Assessment (UK NEA) analysed the natural environment in terms of the benefits it provides for society and economic prosperity. The UK NEA found that health, wellbeing and economic productivity depend on the range of services provided by ecosystems and their constituent parts, such as water, soil, nutrients and organisms. There are 4 types of ecosystem services which include: providing support necessary for all other ecosystem services, such as soil formation and photosynthesis; supplying food, fibre and fuel; regulating air quality and climate; controlling erosion; and non-material benefits for people, including aesthetic improvement and recreation.

¹⁸ Green Infrastructure. An integrated approach to land use. Landscape Institute.

Connectivity

Connectivity between different GI assets can help maximize the benefits that they generate. Well-connected GI assets create infrastructure that is adaptive and resilient to changes in climate, such as dramatic increases in rainfall. Physical connections and networks make the most impact, often by creating ecological ‘stepping stones’ that encourage biodiversity migration and connect places with sustainable walking or cycling routes.

The green infrastructure approach

A GI approach to land-use planning, design and management enables us to demand and deliver more from the land in a sustainable way. By considering the widest range of functions an asset can perform simultaneously, GI can enhance the primary use of the land and unlock the greatest number of benefits. At its heart, the aim of GI is to manage the many, often conflicting, pressures for housing, industry, transport, energy, agriculture, nature conservation, recreation and aesthetics. It also highlights where it is important to prioritise particular single or limited land-use functions.

8.5.3 Supporting Services

The services that are necessary for the production of all other ecosystem services including soil formation, photosynthesis, nutrient cycling and water cycling.

Water Management

According to Defra, an estimated 2.7 million properties in England and Wales lie in areas that are at risk of flooding. A GI approach to water management can reduce the number of properties at risk or the severity or frequency of any flood events. Rather than taking space from water, it makes space for water and in doing so enhances opportunities for biodiversity, recreation and local character.

Where impermeable paving and piped drainage used in ‘grey’ infrastructure increase flows into drainage systems and rivers, GI creates a simpler and cheaper system that is equivalent to natural percolation into the soil and groundwater. Healthy forests, woodlands, wetlands and floodplains also provide natural water storage and flood protection by slowing the passage of water to streams and reducing sedimentation.

Dealing with waste

Historically, waste has been placed in landfill sites, which have then been adapted for other GI functions, including wildlife habitats and leisure parks. Closed landfill sites are a legacy that could provide a much greater range of functions if their technical potential was more fully realised. GI assets can also deal with waste in a sustainable way. A good example of this is the use of reed beds, which help remove pollutants from water.

8.5.4 Provisioning Services

The products obtained from ecosystems, including food, fibre, fuel, genetic resources, biochemicals, natural medicines, pharmaceuticals, ornamental resources and fresh water.

Creating space - even temporary space - for food production through allotments, community gardens and orchards increases opportunities for healthy living, access to healthy food, provides educational and business opportunities, contributes to food security and reconnects communities with their local environment. Joining local communities with these assets using footpaths and cycleways can encourage this reconnection further.

8.5.5 Regulating Services

The benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes, including air quality regulation, climate regulation, water regulation, erosion regulation, water purification, disease regulation, pest regulation, pollination, natural hazard regulation.

Climate-change adaptation

Even modest increases in tree-canopy cover can significantly reduce the urban heat island effect through evapotranspiration and shading, as well as improve air quality, which often suffers because of higher temperatures, and would lead to fewer deaths due to hot weather. Connected GI assets can create wildlife corridors to enable species movement and richer, more resilient biodiversity in the face of a changing climate. Green space designed as sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) attenuate surface-water run-off and reduce the risk of flooding. Addressing and responding to the effects of climate change will increasingly require well-informed decisions on the design of structures, open space and planting choices.

Climate-change mitigation

Well-designed and managed GI can encourage people to travel in a more sustainable way, such as cycling and walking. In addition to acting as carbon sinks, trees and landform can reduce the energy used for heating and cooling buildings by shading them in summer, whilst allowing natural light through in winter when there are no leaves. A GI approach to planning can also optimise the potential for efficient, decentralized renewable energy, improving local energy security and providing space for ground-source heating, hydroelectric, biomass and wind power. Climate-change mitigation could also include planting trees to fix carbon in timber and then using this timber in construction or as wood fuel for carbon-neutral heating schemes.

8.5.6 Cultural Services

The non-material benefits people obtain from ecosystems through spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, reflection, recreation and aesthetic experiences - thereby taking account of landscape values.

Recreation and health

Ensuring that GI assets respond to the needs of local communities, are provided in close proximity to people's homes and are then well maintained, is critical if they are to have a positive role in public health and wellbeing. One important role is in reducing health inequalities. According to Defra, people in deprived areas are six times less likely than those in affluent ones to describe their area as 'green'. A GI approach can help to lower stress levels and encourage exercise by providing local, safe and inspiring places for recreation.

Education

There is an urgent need to transform school grounds to provide for experiential learning facilities and to reconnect children with nature. Natural environments that are connected to local communities can provide a range of educational opportunities and assist in reconnecting society with the natural environment. This is a fundamental prerequisite of living within environmental limits and a cornerstone of sustainable development.

Stronger communities

The spirit of the GI approach lies in unlocking landscapes' social, environmental and economic potential. GI can be a focus for community participation through public involvement in the design, delivery and management of new GI assets, as well as providing opportunities for education and training, volunteering and capacity building.

Enhancing biodiversity

The role of GI in providing wildlife habitat in both urban and rural areas is well established. Taking a landscape-scale approach to the planning, design and management of connected GI assets provides the framework within which species migration can more readily occur in response to environmental pressures such as climate change. The biodiversity offsetting pilot project will also facilitate a net gain in biodiversity.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS (STEP 6)

9.0 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Introduction

This section outlines higher level strategic options which may be applicable at town, parish and study area wide level. The strategic options addresses four key areas:

- 1) Existing provision to be protected;
- 2) Existing provision to be enhanced;
- 3) Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of open space;
- 4) Identification of areas for new provision;
- 5) Facilities that may be surplus to requirement.

9.2 Delivering Strategic Options

Since the change in government in 2010, and the subsequent adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework, the planning environment is still in a state of change and flux.

The abolition of regional spatial strategies, and the move towards localism, puts more focus on local authorities to work with local communities to make decisions and deliver services, rather than relying on national or regional guidance. This will clearly impact how some of the recommendations in this study will be delivered.

Whilst the Local Authority will have an important role in delivering open space, sport and recreation facilities, their role may move from that of 'deliverer' to 'facilitator'. The aim will be to work with community organisations to make local decisions about how facilities and services will be provided. Organisations such as neighbourhood fora, residents groups, voluntary organisation, sports clubs and societies will all have a key role in this.

One of the emerging priorities from localism is for there to be much more local decision making with regards to planning, and for local communities to develop neighbourhood plans. Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities within neighbourhood plans, the information provided within the area profiles in this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities.

The following sections, consider the key issues for open space in the study area, and the recommendations that emerge need to be taken in context with the Localism Act and consider how they can fit into local decision making. With this agenda still relatively new, the following sections serve to highlight issues, but do not necessarily resolve how they may be delivered.

9.3 Existing provision to be protected

The starting point of any policy adopted by the Councils should be that all open space should be afforded protection unless it can be proved it is not required.

Existing open space or sport and recreation facilities which should be given the highest level of protection by the planning system are those which are either:

- Critically important in avoiding deficiencies in accessibility, quality or quantity and scored highly in the value assessment; **or**
- Of particular nature conservation, historical or cultural value.

The area profiles in section 8 of this study provide more detailed results at neighbourhood level as to the above considerations. The following draws on this and makes some more general observations and recommendations.

Green Infrastructure Policies:

- GI1** The distribution of open space varies across the study area, however, there is a general shortage of provision across the key towns against the recommended standards (despite a number of these standards being set lower than some national guidance). It is therefore recommended that priority is placed on protecting those open spaces where there is an existing shortfall of supply as highlighted in the neighbourhood profiles.
- GI2** Sites which are critical to avoiding deficiencies, or making existing deficiencies worse, in quality, quantity or access should be protected unless suitable alternative provision can be provided.
- GI3** Sites which have significant nature conservation, historical or cultural value should be afforded protection, even if there is an identified surplus in quality, quantity or access in that local area.
- GI4** Considering the general under supply across most typologies (with the exception of amenity green space in some areas), loss of any existing provision should be avoided, unless alternative new provision can be provided.
- GI5** The importance of privately managed spaces (e.g. sports grounds) as a community facility has been highlighted in this study. Therefore it is recommended they should be afforded protection. Loss of these spaces should only be considered if:
- there is an identified overall surplus of open space and surplus of that typology in the local area and locality,
 - adequate alternative provision can be made or an acceptable mitigation package developed,
 - the development results in an overriding community benefit, or
 - Sport England are consulted and satisfied with the proposals.

GI6 There is a significant supply of semi-natural green space across the study area which has limited access. Nevertheless, these spaces are important in providing opportunities for informal recreation, walking, cycling etc., contributing to the GI network and should be afforded protection for their recreational value.

9.4 Existing provision to be enhanced

In areas where there is a quantitative deficiency of provision but no accessibility issues then increasing the capacity of existing provision may be considered. Alternatively, in areas where facilities or spaces do not meet the relevant quality standards, qualitative enhancements will be required.

This includes those spaces or facilities which:

- Are critically important in avoiding deficiencies in diversity, accessibility or quantity, **but**
- Scored poorly in the quality or value assessment.

Those sites which require enhancement are identified within the quality audit that was undertaken. Some of the key observations related to site enhancement include:

1. The importance of providing high quality provision and maintenance of formal facilities such as Parks and Recreation Grounds and Play Space.
2. The role of private sports spaces to some local communities and the need to provide opportunity for investment.
3. The need to ensure high quality open spaces are designed and provided through new development where feasible.
4. The importance of semi-natural green space within the Study area, and the need to maintain and enhance provision for biodiversity.
5. The role of open space in contributing to wider initiatives and strategies, for example providing background information for the Districts' emerging green infrastructure strategy.
6. Extending and enhancing the network of green infrastructure including the connectivity between sites and improved accessibility to existing sites.

Green Infrastructure Policies:

- GI7** Future LDPD's and Neighbourhood Plans should consider the opportunities for creating and enhancing a network of both utility and recreation routes for use by foot and bike in both urban and rural areas. Creative application of the amenity open space and the semi-natural green space components of the proposed overall standard in respect of new development should be explored.
- GI8** The study makes recommendations for improving the quality of open space across the study area. However, a long term strategy for achieving improvements is required which could be delivered through a Green space Strategy, neighbourhood plans and be considered within the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- GI9** Priorities for improvement include the enhancement of the existing provision for children and young people and the improvement of sports pitches.
- GI10** Management plans should be developed for the main parks, sport and recreation grounds. These priorities could be considered in neighbourhood plans and by the local community.

9.5 Opportunities for re-location/re-designation of green infrastructure

In some areas it may be possible to make better use of land by relocating an open space or sport and recreation facility, especially if this will enhance its quality or accessibility for existing users, or use land which is not suitable for another purpose. This needs to be determined at a local level, considering the quality, quantity and access to facilities at neighbourhood level and in some cases at a District wide level.

Although it is up to local communities to define their own priorities within neighbourhood plans, the information provided within the neighbourhood profiles in this study will form a good basis to inform any decisions related to the provision or replacement of open space, sport and recreation facilities. Some settlements may seek a consolidation of facilities on a single site, such as a new sports hub.

These decisions could include the spatial and investment plans for green space, and set the foundations for green space provision (e.g. for the next 20 years). They should outline where different types of facilities and space - such as children's playgrounds, sports pitches, young people's facilities etc. are to be located. It will also identify if any green space is no longer needed and its disposal or re use can be used to fund improvements to other spaces.

Each plan should apply the standards and policies set out in this study and ensure that the significant investment anticipated for green spaces is prioritised with the help of

stakeholders and communities. The standards agreed in this study can determine a minimum level of quality and quantity of green space provision and the maximum distance people should have to travel to access different types of green space.

The area profiles provided with this study provide information on the existing supply of different types of open space, an analysis of access and identify local issues related to quality. They will act as a good starting point for feeding into neighbourhood plans in consultation with the local community.

Green Infrastructure Policies:

GI11 Develop a pilot project within one of the main towns to develop a neighbourhood plan which incorporates green space planning.

9.6 Identification of areas for new provision

New provision may be required where there is a new development and a planned increase in population, and/or an existing deficiency in supply or access to facilities exists. The neighbourhood profiles outline the existing situation with regards to supply and access to green infrastructure. As discussed, neighbourhood plans would form a good mechanism to determine exactly where new provision is required, however, this study can be used as the basis for decision making, as follows:

Quantity

Within the study report, for each typology, there is an identified ‘sufficient supply’ or ‘under supply’ for each settlement or parish. If an area has an existing under supply of any typology, there may be need for additional provision. This could be delivered through developing a new site (for example as part of a housing development), acquiring land to extend the site or changing the typology of an existing space (which may be in over supply).

The supply statistics should be used as part of the decision making process in development management to determine if a new development should provide facilities on site or enhance existing provision through developer contributions.

The use of the quantity statistics should not be in isolation, and considered alongside the access standards.

Access

This study considers how access to different types of open space varies across parishes against the proposed standards. The maps show where there are deficiencies and potential over supply of facilities. This information can be used alongside the quantity statistics to determine if new provision or improved accessibility is required in an area. For example, if a new development is proposed, the maps should be consulted to determine if there is an existing gap in provision of a particular typology which could be met by the development.

Therefore, even though the quantity statistics may identify a sufficient supply of a particular typology, there may be gaps in access, and thus a new facility may still be required.

Delivering new provision

There are a number of opportunities for delivering new facilities through new development - developer contributions and to a lesser extent through capital and grant funding.

New development, CIL and Section 106

North Devon and Torridge Council are in the process of developing their priorities, charging schedule and policy for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Many community needs and aspirations which will have a call on this levy. This open space study clearly identifies that there are needs for new and /or enhanced open space provision, particularly where new development is planned.

Outside of CIL, new development may also be required to provide on-site open space through section 106 agreements. Whilst not all developments will be of a size that will generate the requirement for on-site open space, when considering future housing numbers for the District, there will be many that will. This study should be used to make local decisions about where and when new on site provision will be required.

Capital and grant funding

Although the availability of capital and grant funding has diminished in recent years, nevertheless funding does become available for providing facilities for open space, sport and recreation. National and governing bodies for individual sports should be consulted where new infrastructure is required, such as changing rooms and sports pitches. Environmental grants and stewardship schemes are available for managing natural green space. As neighbourhood plans are developed and open space priorities are established within these, funding requirements will be identified and delivery through grant funding can be considered.

Green Infrastructure Policies:

GI12 New provision of open space may be required as part of new development in towns or parishes where there are existing deficiencies in quantity or access to open space and/or where the new development will result in deficiencies.

Where on site provision is required, it should be provided in line with the proposed open space standards. Where on site provision is deemed impractical, or not required, off site contributions will be required to meet the quantity, access and quality standards where possible.

GI13 The priorities for new provision are for allotments and young people's space.

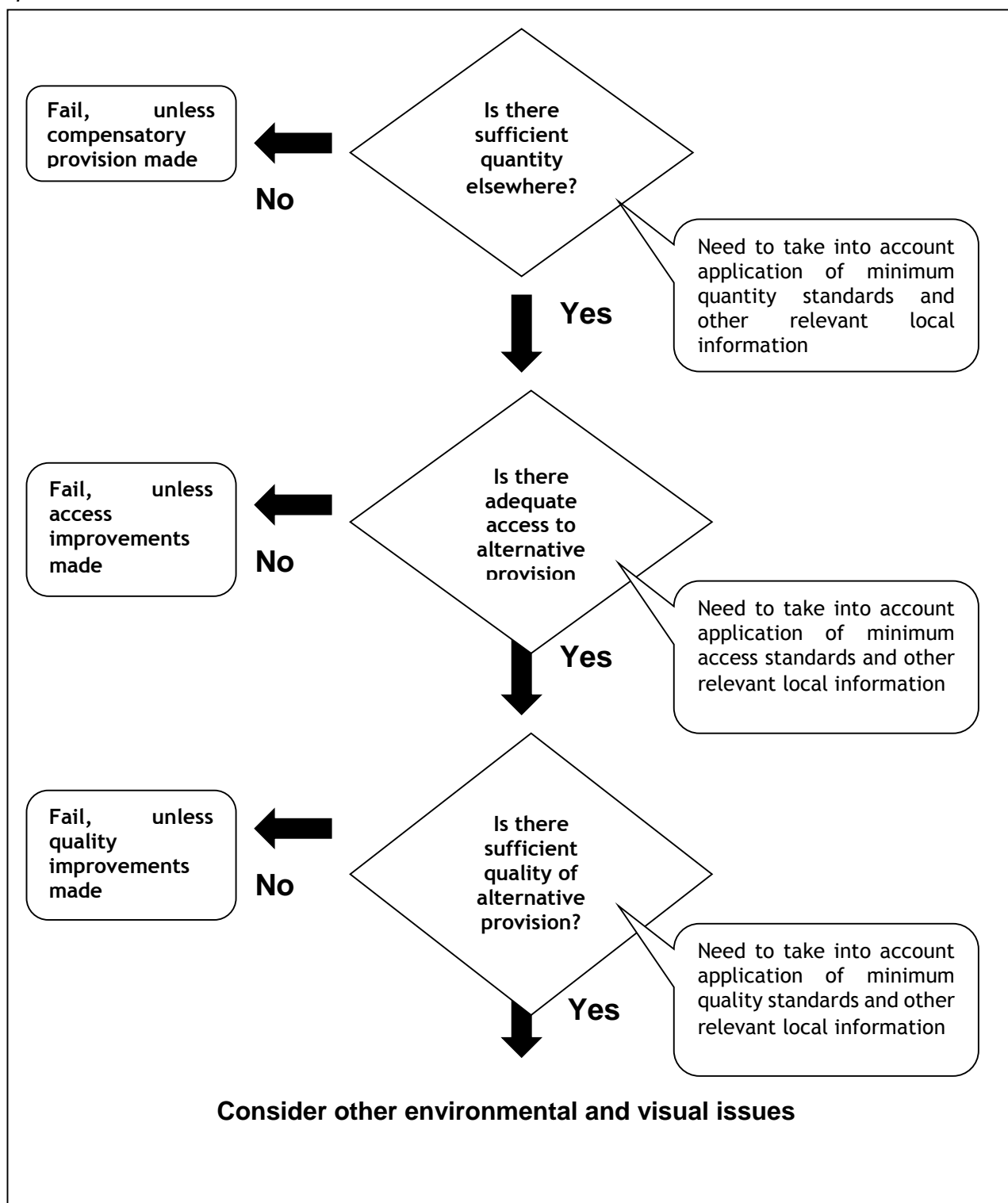
9.7 Facilities that are surplus to requirement

In addition to the strategic options outlined above, consideration should also be given to facilities that are surplus to requirement. There are important issues to resolve in terms of getting the correct balance of green infrastructure across the study area before any disposal can be contemplated. Whilst there is under provision relative to the minimum standards in several neighbourhoods, there are other areas where provision compares favourably with the standards. However, it is once again emphasised that the proposed standards are for *minimum* levels of provision. Factors to be taken into account before any decision to release open space for alternative uses can be taken include:

- The local value and use of a given open space - as it may be a locally popular resource.
- Whether future local development/population growth might generate additional demands for open space.
- Whether there is a demonstrable need for some other type of open space within the locality that a given space (subject to a change of management regime) would be well placed to meet.
- Other non-recreational reasons that suggest a space should be retained (which might include ecological and visual reasons).

Figure 33 suggests an outline of the decision process that should be followed before the development of an open space can be seriously contemplated.

Figure 33: Outline decision making process in relation to sanctioning (re)development of open space



Q. Is there sufficient quantity?

A. If the minimum quantitative standard for amenity green space is exceeded in a defined geographical area, the relative provision of other forms of open space must then be considered. (Amenity green space can in principle be converted into other forms of open space where the need arises). If a) provision meets the minimum

quantitative standard; b) there is no significant local information suggesting a need to retain the site; and, c) there is not a perceived lack of other forms of open space. The next question can be addressed.

Q. Is there adequate access to alternative provision?

A. Within the defined geographical area there may be good overall provision of amenity green space relative to the quantity standard, but is it in the right place and can it be easily reached? Applying the accessibility component of the minimum standards will help to answer this question. If other similar open space cannot be easily reached, the site's disposal for other uses may be unacceptable.

Q. Are other accessible and similar opportunities elsewhere of sufficient quality?

A. If it can be demonstrated that alternative opportunities are sufficient both in quantity and accessibility, there may still exist issues with the quality of these alternative provisions. The quality component of the proposed standards may indicate that certain improvements to alternative opportunities must be made which should be funded and secured before development is sanctioned.

Even if these three tests are passed there may be other reasons for the site to remain as open space. For example, it may have value as a natural habitat or be visually important. Such considerations are important, but beyond the scope of this report.