

HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL
OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION ASSESSMENT

Report



January 2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This highly detailed report sets out the results of a comprehensive audit and community needs appraisal in relation to various types of open space in the Borough of Hartlepool. It complies with best practice in the undertaking of such studies and follows a robust and rigorous research methodology that is spelled out in detail in the introduction. A similar study in 2008 enables some comparisons to be made over time.
2. Over 1,000 residents have been consulted, together with over 400 children and young people, and every green space in the Borough over 0.1ha in size audited by trained staff.
3. The product of the study is a set of proposed standards for quantity, quality and accessibility of different types of open space and recreational facility, answering these questions:
 - quantity: is there enough of this type of open space in the Borough?
 - quality: does the space we have meet accepted and aspired-for standards of quality?
 - Accessibility: is the space we have well-located for residents and others to make use of it?
4. To enable analysis, the Borough has been divided into four sub-areas (North Central, South Central, Southern, Western) and data is reported at this level throughout.
5. The report also includes a resume of national, regional and local strategy and policy in relation to open space, within which any local response must sit.
6. Residents say they would use local open space more if it offered more opportunities and things to do, and if it was better supported with infrastructure such as toilets and seating. They also identify lack of information, and a perception that spaces are not well-maintained, as obstacles to greater use. Safety and ease of access are not significant barriers to usage.
7. People value open space as making their areas more attractive, and for the environmental contribution they make, though there is more that could be achieved here. They do not feel that there is sufficient choice of outdoor activities available locally, however.

PARKS

8. Although one in nine people say they never visit a park, the vast majority of local people use these spaces, and a third visit at least weekly. Ward Jackson is by far the most popular park. Young people are frequent users of park space, mainly for socialising and for sports and games. Two thirds of people make a journey of 10 minutes or less to reach their preferred park; over half walk there.
9. The Borough has seven parks, with a total area of 64.2 ha, providing 0.7 ha per 1000 people. This is considerably higher provision than Newcastle, for example, but much lower than Sunderland. Two thirds of residents think there are enough parks in Hartlepool, but there is particular support for more park space from North Central residents.
10. Parks are rated positively across a range of important attributes, but with substantial room for improvement; they are criticised for toilet facilities, and sports facilities; park scores show significant improvement over a similar study in 2008. The audit indicates that the highest scoring park for quality is Redheugh Gardens, while the median site is Croft Gardens.
11. Standards have been recommended for quantity, quality and accessibility, and projected deficiencies calculated based on future population forecasts.

PLAY

12. A quarter of people, primarily those with young families, visit a play area at least every fortnight; but half the population never visits. These spaces are most popular with children under 12, and three-quarters of families with younger children visit at least monthly. The most popular play sites are at Ward Jackson, Seaton and Rossmere. Over half of play area visitors travel on foot.
13. The Borough has 29 play areas and 6 multi-use games areas, meaning there is one site for every 507 children in Hartlepool. This level of provision compares well with other urban areas in Tees Valley. A majority of residents (57%) would like to see improved play area provision, especially in the inner areas of the Borough.
14. Quality scores are positive, but show room for improvement; seating is not highly thought of. The best scoring play area is the one at Ward Jackson Park, while the median score is achieved by Block Sands and Burbank Street.
15. Standards have been recommended for quantity, quality and accessibility, and projected deficiencies calculated based on future population forecasts.

AMENITY GREENSPACE

16. Amenity Greenspace is land around buildings, especially in housing areas, with no particular purpose but with value for amenity, informal play, or as environmental spaces. In Hartlepool these spaces play an important role for dog walking, informal ball games and other play, but some spaces suffer from anti-social activity or are used for parking cars.
17. There are 52 amenity green spaces in the Borough, totalling 71.54ha., and providing 0.78ha per 1000 population. A majority of residents (56%) think there is enough of this type of space in Hartlepool.
18. Around half of all spaces are rated as 'good' or better, but one in six attracts a negative score from residents; the audit also finds variable standards of quality. The best site is the Village Green at Greatham; the median score is achieved by Stamford Walk. The most commonly requested improvements are measures to address dog fouling, and improved maintenance generally.
19. Standards have been recommended for quantity, quality and accessibility, and projected deficiencies calculated based on future population forecasts.

ALLOTMENTS

20. There are 19 active allotment sites in Hartlepool, providing 1,083 standard size plots, representing nearly 26 plots per 1,000 households. For the north-eastern region, this is a high level of provision, well in excess of areas such as Stockton or Gateshead. The Borough nevertheless has a waiting list for allotments totalling nearly 300 people.
21. Most sites are well-cultivated and well-occupied with a reasonable range of facilities for ploholders. The highest scoring site is at Olive Street; the median site is Briarfields. Comparison with the 2008 study produces a mixed result with some sites improved while others have deteriorated.
22. Standards have been recommended for quantity, quality and accessibility, and projected deficiencies calculated based on future population forecasts. Deficiencies could be addressed by adopting a policy of allocating smaller plots to new applicants.

NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACE

23. Three in five local people visit a natural space at least once a month; a quarter go for a country walk at least once a week. Two fifths of young people visit natural spaces at least once a month. The majority of visits are made by car, with Summerhill by far the most popular site. These spaces are seen as catering well for walking, and for dog walking, but provide less well for mountain bikers and for anglers.
24. A total of 21 accessible natural green spaces have been assessed in the audit, totalling 314.43ha and representing 3.41ha per 1,000 population. A further four sites outside the Borough, but widely used by local people, have also been included. A majority of residents think there is enough of this type of space in the Borough. Hartlepool's accessible natural green space exceeds that of Newcastle, but is lower than Darlington and Sunderland.
25. Quality scores are largely positive, but are modest; there is scope for significant improvement at many sites. Several sites show improvement over the 2008 study, whilst a quarter show a decline in quality. Access for buggies and wheelchairs is a noted issue.
26. Standards have been recommended for quantity, quality and accessibility, and projected deficiencies calculated based on future population forecasts.

GREEN CORRIDORS

27. There are 35 green corridors in, or running into, Hartlepool. A majority of local residents (56%) think the number of green corridors is about right. Over a third of local people visit a green corridor at least once a month, with half of these visiting at least weekly.
28. The highest scoring green corridor for quality is Spion Kop/Marine Drive; but there are nine sites that are highly valued but low in quality. The benchmark site is the Hart to Haswell walkway.
29. A standard has been recommended for quality, but other standards are not appropriate to green corridors.

BEACHES

30. Three in five residents say they visit a local beach at least once a month; only 8% never go to the beach. Beaches are also popular with young people. By far the most popular local beach is at Seaton Carew, though the Headland area beaches also attract local people. Most visits are by car.

31. Seven beaches are identified in Hartlepool, though their boundaries are not always distinct.
32. Beaches are generally rated positively other than for catering and toilet provision. Cleanliness scores are, however, very low and there are also concerns over water quality. Seaton Carew is the highest scoring beach for quality, and the median site is Block Sands.
33. A standard has been recommended for quality, but other standards are not appropriate to beaches.

CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

34. Only a small proportion of local people visit cemeteries with any frequency, but over a quarter of those who go at all visit at least monthly. Two in five people say they visit occasionally. Stranton is by far the most visited cemetery, but the West View cemetery is also well visited.
35. There are twelve burial grounds on the Borough, six of which are churchyards. they total 42.25 ha in area. Almost everyone thinks Hartlepool has sufficient burial space.
36. Cemeteries attract positive scores on all key attributes, but are less well scored for seating, and for care and management of plots. There is room for improvement in all attributes. Scores have improved since 2008, especially on planting and daytime safety. The highest ranked burial ground for quality is Greatham Churchyard; the median is St Hilda's Headland. The North Cemetery scores poorly for quality, due to vandalism and neglect, but is highly valued, and represents a major challenge for improvement.
37. Standards have been recommended for quality, and for quantity based on current local mortality and interment rates.

CIVIC SPACE

38. One in five people visit a civic space at least weekly, two in five at least once a month.
39. There are seven civic spaces in Hartlepool, covering 6.19ha. A majority of residents think the Borough has enough civic space.
40. Spaces are modestly rated; less than a third are viewed positively for quality. Improvements sought are litter removal, better seating, a better market and improved paving. Views have risen a little since 2008. The highest rated site is Headland Town Square, while the median score is achieved by Victory Square.
41. A standard has been recommended for quality.

OUTDOOR SPORT

42. The Council completed a study of outdoor sport in 2013; the main findings of this study are included in this report for completeness but have already been reported separately to the authority. No changes are proposed to the standards suggested in that analysis.

SCHOOLS

43. The audit included an assessment of 37 school sites, just over half of which were rated positively for quality. Considerable use is made of secondary school facilities for community use but the report identifies other schools where there is potential to increase levels of community usage.

Table of Proposed Standards

Typology	Quantity standard	Quality standard	Accessibility standard
Parks and gardens	0.7 Hectares per 1000 population. Emphasis to be given to increasing provision in the North Central sub-area.	A quality score of 87% A value score of 90%. The benchmark site for parks is PRK002 Croft Gardens. Higher scoring parks should aspire to the Green Flag standard.	Accessibility Standard Community Park 1 kilometre Local Park 0.7 kilometres metres Satellite Park - Up to 0.4 kilometres Linear Park - wherever achievable
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	Provision should be made of 3.45 hectares of accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace per 1000 population and where this level of provision is exceeded existing natural or semi-natural greenspace should be retained. A minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per 1,000 population (which can be included in the quantity standard set above).	The quality standard is 72 %. The value standard is 84%. The benchmark site for quality and value is Family Wood.	The recommended Accessibility Standard is that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace within one kilometre actual walking distance of home.

Typology	Quantity standard	Quality standard	Accessibility standard								
Amenity Greenspace	<p>1 hectare per 1000 people.</p> <p>Current provision across the Borough is 0.78 hectares per 1,000. However, there has been an erosion of this type of space since the last study in 2008 with some sites having been built on and others reclassified. The quantity standard seeks to redress this and reflects the views from the consultation that more space, and more usable space, is needed.</p>	<p>Quality score of 74%</p> <p>Value Score of 70%</p> <p>The benchmark site is Stamford Walk (AG035) with a quality score of 74% and a value score of 70%.</p>	<p>Residents should have at least one amenity greenspace of at least 0.1 hectare in size within 400m of where they live.</p>								
Play	<p>0.65 hectares of playable space per 1,000 children aged 16 and under.</p> <p>At least three youth spaces specifically designed to accommodate the needs of teenagers, within in each sub-area</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Location</td> <td>71%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Play Value</td> <td>68%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Care and Maintenance</td> <td>60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Overall</td> <td>67%</td> </tr> </table>	Location	71%	Play Value	68%	Care and Maintenance	60%	Overall	67%	<p>A Doorstep Playable Space within 100m walking distance</p> <p>A Local Playable Space facility within 400m walking distance</p> <p>A Neighbourhood Playable Space facility within 1,000m walking distance</p> <p>A Youth Space within 800 metres walking distance</p>
Location	71%										
Play Value	68%										
Care and Maintenance	60%										
Overall	67%										

Typology	Quantity standard	Quality standard	Accessibility standard
Churchyards and Cemeteries	Provision for around 115 - 120 grave spaces per annum.	<p>The quality standard for cemeteries is 68% for quality and 74% for value.</p> <p>The benchmark site for quality is St Hilda's Church, on the Headland with a quality score of 68% and a value score of 74%.</p> <p>It is also recommended that the Charter for the Bereaved be adopted as a means of raising quality standards.</p>	None.
Civic Space	None.	<p>The quality standard for civic spaces is 83%.</p> <p>The benchmark site for civic spaces is Victory Square with a score of 83% for quality and 100% for value.</p>	None.
Allotments	<p>0.47 hectares per 1000 people and 26.1 plots per 1,000 people</p> <p>Emphasis to be given to increasing provision in the Southern and Western sub-areas</p>	<p>The quality standard for allotments is 87%.</p> <p>The benchmark site for quality and value is Thornhill (Grayfields) Allotments which scored 87% for quality.</p>	<p>50 or more plots: 1200m</p> <p>21 to 50 plots: 900m</p> <p>20 or fewer plots: 600m</p>

Typology	Quantity standard	Quality standard	Accessibility standard
Outdoor sports facilities	<p>The quantity standard for playing pitches 0.9 Hectares per 1000 population.</p> <p>The quantity standard for Tennis Courts is 0.02 hectares per 1000 population.</p> <p>The quantity standard for Bowling Greens is 0.03 hectares per 1000 population.</p>	<p>The quality standard for playing pitches is 66 - 79% (an 'average' pitch) with an aspiration to bring all pitches up to the level of a 'good' pitch i.e. 80 -94%.</p> <p>The recommended quality benchmark for changing accommodation is for a 'good' facility i.e. 60% - 89%. The benchmark facility is Brierton Sports Centre (formerly Brierton School) at 85%.</p> <p>The recommended quality benchmark for bowling greens is 76%.</p> <p>The recommended quality benchmark for tennis courts is 75%</p>	<p>The planning new facilities, should focus development around existing club bases (and avoid the provision of dispersed pitches).</p> <p>New provision required for new housing development should be located off site, or in conjunction with the development of a new club, or satellite club to an existing facility.</p> <p>Synthetic Turf Pitches – 20 minute drive time.</p>

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Open space, sport and recreation facilities are an essential component of the urban fabric of Hartlepool and make a profound contribution to the quality of life of the local community. They offer a wide range of economic, social, environmental and health benefits.

The importance of open space is well documented. A survey commissioned by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in 2011 found that 92% of respondents said it was fairly or very important for them to have public gardens, parks, commons or other green spaces nearby.¹

Open space offers significant benefits to the resident population, sustaining and improving the local environment and thus making an important contribution to quality of life. Open space can also attract people to live and work in an area; open space and recreational opportunities contribute significantly to perceptions of the attractiveness of a locality.

Ashley Godfrey Associates was appointed in January 2014 to review and update the PPG17 Audit and Assessment of Open Space, Sport and Recreation adopted in 2008. The new assessment will provide the evidence base for open space, sport and recreation that will support the development of a new Local Plan for Hartlepool. The assessment responds to the requirements of the new planning policy guidance for, 'Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way and local green space' which was launched in March 2014.² This new guidance replaced 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17'. The guidance explains that open space should be taken into account in planning for new development and considering proposals that may affect existing open space.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the important contribution to the health and well-being of communities that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make.

Paragraph 73 further states that:

'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.

The NPPF also affords a measure of protection to open space, sports and recreational facilities. Paragraph 74 states that:

'Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

¹ Attitudes and Knowledge Relating to Biodiversity and the Natural Environment, 2007 – 2011. The Survey of Public Attitudes and Behaviour Towards The Environment. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2011.

² <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities/>

- an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.’

The Government’s guidance also indicates that, in relation to the assessment of the need for sports and recreation facilities, reference should be made to guidance provided by Sport England.³

The aims of this study are:

- to summarise the national and local policy contexts relating to open space, sport and recreation provision;
- to review the amount, distribution and quality of existing open space, sport and recreation provision;
- to identify where there are deficiencies in the quantity and quality of provision and the types of enhancements which would improve the quality of individual sites;
- to suggest appropriate local standards of provision for the Borough Council to use as part of the planning process;
- to identify the new provision that the Council should require developers to provide or fund.

1.2 Profile of Hartlepool

Hartlepool is located on the North East coast of England within the Tees Valley sub region. It is a compact town, which is linked to the rest of the region and country by road, rail and sea.

Hartlepool was originally two towns, the ancient town of Old Hartlepool, known locally as the Headland, and the more recent West Hartlepool. They amalgamated in 1967 to form what is now the single entity known as Hartlepool.

The town became a major port in the 19th century, when shipping and shipbuilding were the mainstay of the local economy. When the shipyards and related industries closed in the 1960’s Hartlepool’s fortunes declined. In recent years, the town has seen a revival, centred around the building of a new marina complex built on the site of the old docks. New jobs have been created in service industries, light manufacturing and tourism. New shops have opened, and the port now has a thriving trade which includes importing new cars from their manufacturing bases abroad.

³ Assessing Needs and Opportunities Guide for Indoor and Outdoor Sports Facilities - How to undertake and apply Needs Assessments for Sport, Draft for Consultation December 2013, Sport England.

1.3 Demographics

The Mid Year Estimates for 2012 indicate that the population of the Borough is 92,235. The proportion of people from black and minority ethnic communities is 3.1% and 17.6% are at or above retirement age.

Table 1.1: Population Projections

Age Group	2014	2021	2031
0 - 14 years	18.0%	18.5%	17.4%
15 - 24 years	12.5%	10.6%	11.3%
25 - 39 years	17.6%	18.9%	17.4%
40 - 54 years	21.2%	17.7%	17.5%
55 - 64 years	12.3%	13.9%	11.8%
65 years and over	18.4%	20.4%	24.7%

Source: 2012-based Sub-national Population Projections, ONS.

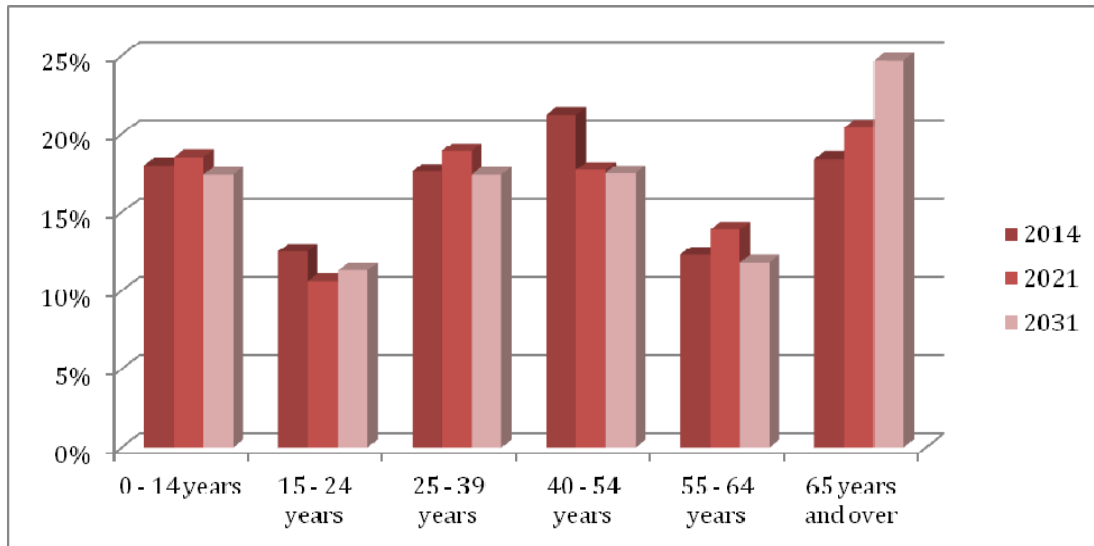
Hartlepool's population is projected to increase by 4.4% in the period 2014 to 2031 although a significant proportion of that increase will be in the oldest age group of 65 years and above. **Table 1.1** shows that the number in the youngest age group (0 - 14 years) remains fairly constant. In 2014 this age group constitutes 18% of the total population rising to 18.5% in 2021 and then falling to 17.4% in 2031. The 15 - 24 years age group is projected to decrease in numbers between 2014 and 2021 but recover slightly by 2031. Overall the proportion of the population in this age group is projected to decline from 12.5% in 2014 to 11.3% in 2031. A similar picture emerges for the 25 – 39 years age group.

Chart 1.1 shows the numbers in this group staying fairly constant with a small increase in the middle year of 2021. There is a decline in the number and proportion of people in the older age group of 40 to 54 years from being 21.2% of the population in 2014 to 17.5% in 2031. The 55 – 64 age group also remains constant in numbers over the period 2014 – 2031 although the proportion of the population in this group decreases from 12.3% in 2014 to 11.8% by 2021. The evidence for the ageing of the population in Hartlepool is demonstrated in **Chart 1.1** by the gradual increase in the number of people aged over 65 who represent 18.4% of the population in 2014 rising to 24.7% in 2031.

According to the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IM;D), Hartlepool has 58 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs), 21 of which are in the top ten per cent of deprived LSOAs in Britain (37%). The Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unity (TVU) has calculated IMD scores and ranks for wards from the LSOAs; in 2010 there were 17 wards in Hartlepool,⁴ seven of which fell into the top ten per cent of most deprived wards in Britain. Five wards - Dyke House, Stranton, Owton, Brus, and St. Hilda fell into the top three per cent most deprived in Britain, with Dyke House and Stranton being in the top one per cent most deprived.

⁴ This data is based on the old ward structure for the Borough, since superseded.

Chart 1.1: Population Projections



Unemployment in June 2013 stood at 16.8% of the economically active population compared to 10.9% for the North-East as a whole and 8.1% nationally.

Table 1.2: Unemployment as a proportion of the economically active (000s)⁵

Geography	Unemployed (000s)	Economically active (000s)	Unemployment Rate
Hartlepool	6.9	41.4	16.8%
North East	136.0	1,251.4	10.9%
England	2,143.0	26,592.7	8.1%

Source: Annual Population Survey Year: 2013

The 2011 census indicated that the level of car ownership is low with 64.7% of households having a car compared to 74.4% nationally. Single parent families accounted for 9.7% (3,913) of the population compared to 7.2% nationally.

⁵ Measure: Number and proportion of economically active adults who are unemployed and actively seeking work.

Close to a quarter (23.2%) of Hartlepool's residents identified themselves as having a limiting long-term illness in the 2011 census, compared to 17.6% nationally. In 2006/08, boys born in Hartlepool could expect to live for an average of 75 years and girls for an average of 79 years. Both of these are significantly worse than the England averages which are almost three years longer for both genders. Life expectancy between different wards within Hartlepool is more striking still, with a gap of over 13 years between boys born in Stranton and boys born in Hart.

1.4 Sports Participation

Table 1.3 shows the results of the Active People Surveys for 2005/06 and 2012/13. Once a week participation in sport (1 x 30 minutes moderate intensity) is Sport England's main measure of sports participation. It is based on the percentage of adults (aged 16+) playing sport for at least 30 minutes at moderate intensity at least once a week, measured by the Active People Survey (APS).

Table 1.3: Adult (16+) Participation in Sport (at least once a week⁶), by year, and demographic breakdown

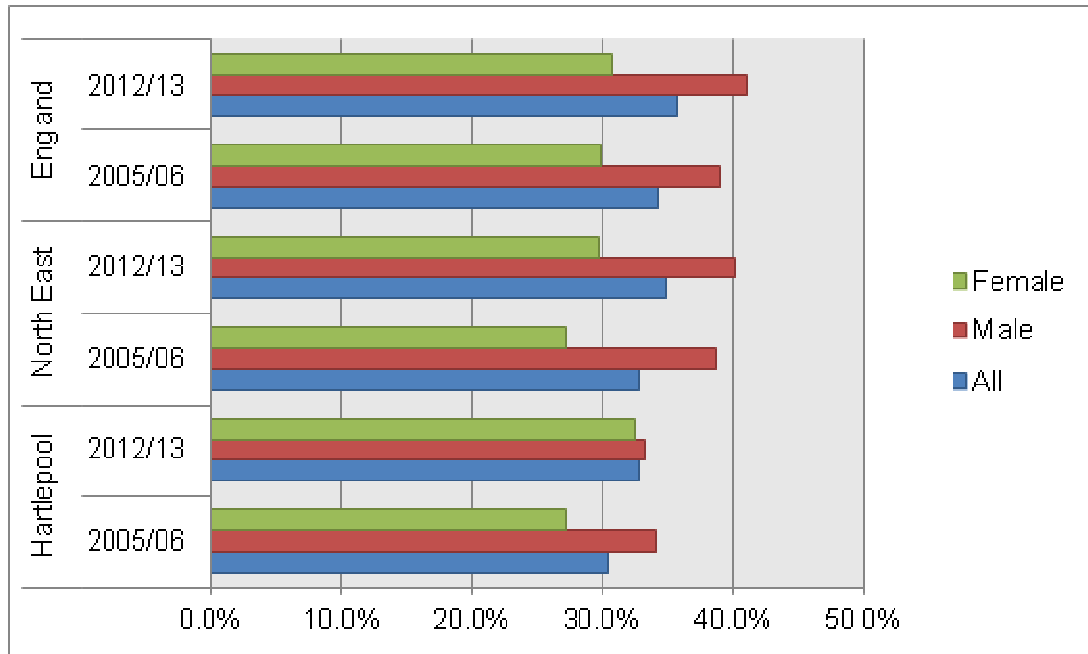
Year	Hartlepool		North East		England	
	2005/06	2012/13	2005/06	2012/13	2005/06	2012/13
All	30.4%	32.8%	32.7%	34.7%	34.2%	35.7%
Male	34.0%	33.2%	38.7%	40.1%	38.9%	40.9%
Female	27.1%	32.4%	27.2%	29.7%	29.8%	30.7%

Source: Active People Survey, Year: 2005/06 (APS1), to 2012/13 (APS7), Measure: Adult participation males and females

Participation in Hartlepool has consistently been below both the level of participation in the North East and nationally. However, participation by the whole population in Hartlepool has increased from 30.4% in 2005/06 to 32.8% in 2012/13. **Chart 1.2** shows that over the same period participation by women increased from 27.1% in 2005/06 to 33.2% in 2012/13. The latter figure is higher than both the regional (29.7%) and the national rate of participation (30.7%) by women 16+ years.

⁶ 1 session a week (at least 4 sessions of at least moderate intensity for at least 30 minutes in the previous 28 days)

Chart 1.2: Adult (16+) Participation in Sport (at least once a week).



1.5 The Brief

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- to identify any deficiencies or surpluses in provision and options for dealing with them now and in the future
- to use the audit and assessment to set locally derived open space and recreation provision standards, addressing accessibility (including disabled access), quality and quantity
- to provide a robust and comprehensive evidence base to enable the Council to develop planning policies as part of future Local Development Documents, sufficient to withstand scrutiny at an Examination in Public
- to provide information to enable the Council to justify collecting developer contributions
- to inform future decisions about the provision and funding of recreation facilities.

1.6 Methodology

To meet the objectives of the study there is a need to undertake:

1. An audit of open space, sport and recreation provision in Hartlepool in order to:
 - a) identify what provision exists, where it is located and to attribute a specific typology to each green space according to its 'primary purpose';⁷

⁷ Primary purpose reflects the function of the space and facilitates the classification of open space into separate typologies thereby ensuring that each site is counted only once in the audit. Where sites are multi-functional e.g.

- b) evaluate the quality and value of different types of green spaces or sport and recreation provision;
 - c) identify the features or characteristics of spaces that need to be improved;
 - d) identify the current quantity of each form of provision as an essential step in identifying quantitative provision standards;
 - e) map the audit findings using the Geographical Information System (GIS).
2. A community needs assessment which aims to determine:
- a) the extent to which local residents use different types of open space within the Borough;
 - b) which open spaces they use, and why they choose to use those spaces and not others;
 - c) which people do not use open space, and why that is;
 - d) the distances they travel, or are prepared to travel, to use different types of open space;
 - e) the modes of transport they use when accessing different types of local open space;
 - f) their views, both positive and negative, about the open spaces they currently use;
 - g) their expectations about levels of provision of different types of facilities in those open spaces;
 - h) their expectations and aspirations in relation to improving open space provision, in terms of the types of space available and accessible to them, and the quality of those spaces;
 - i) the barriers which prevent people making more (or indeed any) use of existing local space provision;
 - j) the ways in which the results of these questions vary according to the demographic and geographic characteristics of the respondent.
3. A review of existing policy and guidance. The study will therefore review relevant national and regional strategies, to ensure that the report includes and recognises the major changes that influence open space, sport and recreation provision. The study will also review existing policies in relevant local strategies including the Council's Corporate Plan and the local Community Strategy, identifying any tensions between guidance, strategic direction, and the results of the community needs assessment.
4. The development of a set of appropriate local standards of provision for Hartlepool based on a comprehensive analysis of the current provision and the views and aspirations of local people.

a park, which may contain sports pitches and provision for children and young people, the area of land taken up by these different typologies is recorded separately.

5. The identification of those areas that are served by existing provision by mapping the catchment areas for each type of provision, taking into account barriers and severance factors.
6. The identification of those areas lying outside the average distance that people are willing to travel to open spaces.
7. The identification of any deficiencies in the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision.

1.7 Local Standards of Provision

The study will:

- develop standards for the quantity of provision of appropriate elements within each typology of open space, taking into account the location of existing provision, community views and levels of use;
- determine quality standards for provision based on the results of the audit of current provision and community expectations as expressed in the research;
- provide a hierarchy of open space accessibility where appropriate, based on size, purpose and function, and distance thresholds based on current patterns and the evidence of maps, and recognising the barriers to movement that exist within the district;
- provide comparisons with other local authorities where the authorities have published relevant comparable data and/or those authorities that are close neighbours or authorities whose characteristics make them a good comparator for Hartlepool and thus a reasonable benchmark.

1.8 A Typology of Open Space

Planning practice guidance defines open space as follows:

‘All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.’⁸

The typology for Hartlepool covers all those types of open space which the Council requires us to examine. This is shown in **Table 1.4**. There are some types of open space which have been deliberately excluded including:

- ‘SLOAP’ (space left over after planning) – this term describes spaces that are incidental to development, too small or irregular in shape to be usable, but which may nevertheless create maintenance and other obligations
- other incidental areas of land that do not have a specific use, such as farmland, post-industrial wasteland, and areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace for which there is no normal public access.

⁸ <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/policy/achieving-sustainable-development/annex-2-glossary/>

Table 1.4: Typology of Open Spaces

Types of Open Space	Description	Purpose
Urban Parks and Gardens	Areas of land normally enclosed, designed, constructed, managed and maintained as a public park or garden.	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
Amenity Greenspace	Landscaped areas providing visual amenity or separating different buildings or land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons i.e. road verges, large roundabouts or greenspace in business parks. Areas of grass within housing areas that are used for a variety of informal or social activities such as informal play.	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Playspace for children and teenagers	Areas providing safe and accessible opportunities for children’s play, usually linked to housing areas.	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
Outdoor Sports Facilities	Large and generally flat areas of grassland or specially designed surfaces, used primarily for designated sports i.e. playing fields, golf courses, tennis courts, bowling greens; areas which are generally bookable.	Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports.
Green Corridors	Routes including canals, river corridors and old railway lines, linking different areas within a town or city as part of a designated and managed network and used for walking, cycling or horse riding, or linking towns and cities to their surrounding countryside or country parks. These may link green spaces together.	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.

Types of Open Space	Description	Purpose
Natural/semi-natural Greenspaces	Areas of undeveloped or previously developed land with residual natural habitats or which have been planted or colonised by vegetation and wildlife, including woodland and wetland areas.	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.
Allotments	Areas of land in or just outside a town that a person rents for growing vegetables, fruits or flowers. Allotments can be temporary or statutory.	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
Churchyards and Cemeteries	Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds.	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
Civic space	Squares, streets and waterfront promenades, predominantly of hard landscaping that provide a focus for pedestrian activity and make connections for people and for wildlife, with trees and planting.	Providing a setting for civic buildings, demonstrations and community events.
Beach & Foreshore	Foreshore has a legal definition which is the area between mean high water and mean low water. Beach is a pebbly or sandy shore, especially by the sea which is also between high- and low-water marks.	Informal sport and recreation e.g. beach volleyball, walking, relaxation, children's play, events, watersports.

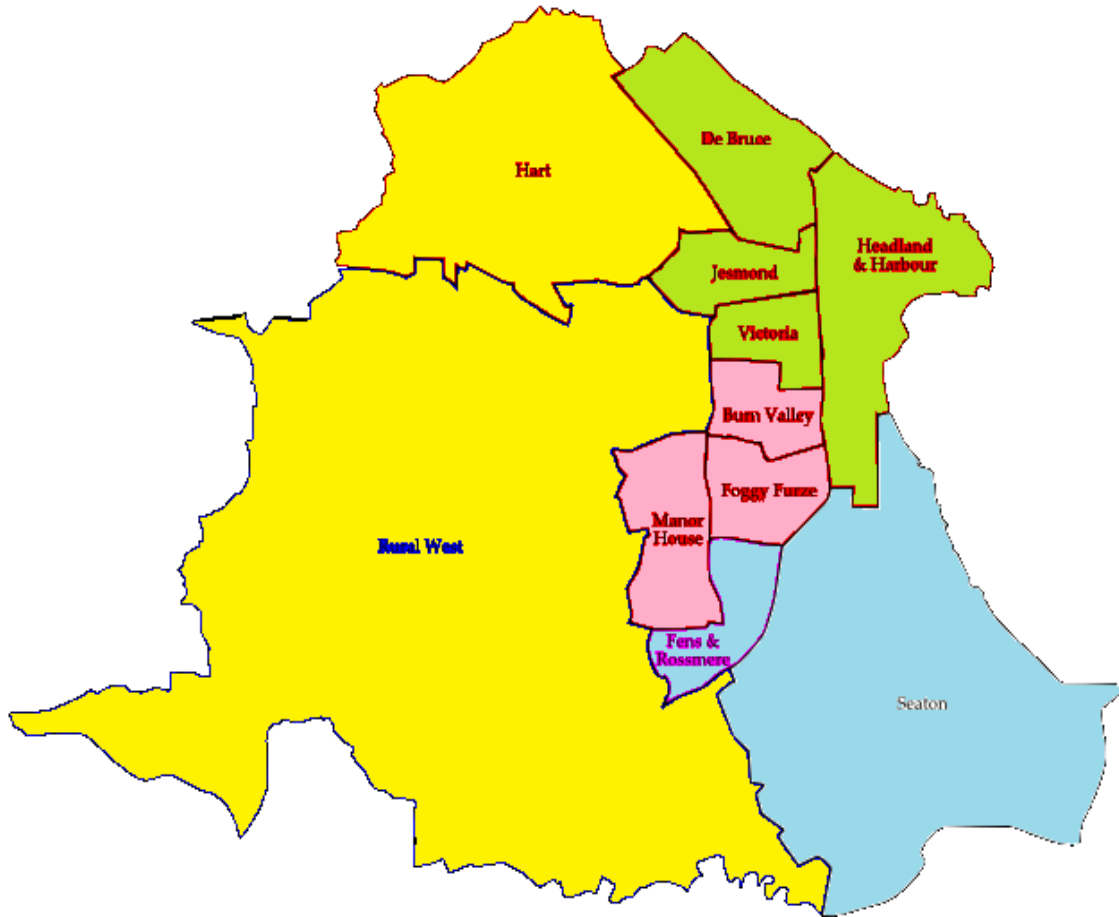
1.9 Analysis Areas

The analysis of the audit, and the community consultation, have been undertaken at different geographical levels. Data is reported at the level of the whole local authority, but, because of geographical variation, is also reported at lower levels as defined in **Table 1.5**. These sub-areas are aggregates of local authority wards (a base geography which combines local familiarity with access to census and other data) which seem to us, and to the Council, to have a degree of coherence and shared identity because of their geographical proximity, their position in relation to natural barriers, and their local character. The sub-areas are shown on **Map 1.1**. The wards used are those developed in the 2012 Electoral Changes order which revised the structure of local warding within the Borough.

Table 1.5: Areas of Analysis

Sub-area	Wards
Western	Hart
	Rural West
North Central	De Bruce
	Jesmond
	Harbour and Headland
	Victoria
South Central	Burn Valley
	Foggy Furze
	Manor House
Southern	Seaton Carew
	Fens and Rossmere

Map 1.1: Hartlepool Wards & Sub-areas



1.10.1 Audit methodology

The audit methodology used in this study was developed for compliance with the requirements of PPG17, and has been reviewed for compliance with the NPPF requirement.

The audit of open spaces was undertaken partly by the consultancy team and partly by the authority, as indicated in **Table 1.6**.

Data and maps were provided by the authority for analysis and site identification. All open spaces within the local authority area were identified, regardless of ownership and the extent of public access. However, only those sites accessible to the public at large are included in the assessment of supply, so privately owned sites accessed on payment of a fee⁹, or as an occasional concession, and sites closed to public open access (such as some wildlife sites) have been excluded.

Table 1.6 *Division of audit responsibilities*

Type of Open Space	Responsibility
Parks	Consultants
Amenity Greenspace	Consultants
Cemeteries & Churchyards	Consultants
Civic Spaces	Consultants
School Playing Fields	Consultants
MUGAs	Consultants
AGPs	Consultants
Allotments	Council
Children's Play	Council
Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Council
Green Corridors	Council

The definitive list of sites, which formed the basis of the audit, was taken from the records held by the authority, primarily within its Geographic Information System (GIS). This covers sites of a wide range of sizes, down to 0.1ha and lower in some instances; only sites greater than 0.1ha in size were audited. However, this was augmented by examination of other sources, including on the ground fieldwork, which generated additional sites, and occasional changes of boundary and typological definition, and which were mapped on the GIS database.

Each site was visited in person, examined at length, photographed, and scored against a predetermined set of criteria relevant to that type of space, for quality and value assessments. A set of audit forms showing the criteria used for each different type of space is included as an appendix to this report (**Appendix 1**). A small audit team was deployed for this work, so as to minimize subjectivity in these assessments, and the results were also moderated to ensure consistency across the range of scores; training and moderation were

⁹ Privately owned sports facilities which are open to the community either as 'pay and play' or which require payment of an annual membership fee are included in the audit.

also provided for Council staff undertaking their agreed portion of the audit. However, it should be borne in mind that the scores for each individual site represent the opinion of the surveyor(s) at the time of the audit and are necessarily subjective. They provide a broad guide of the quality of the space or facility, and complement residents' views on quality derived from the community surveys.

Quantity data were produced by calculation using the GIS shape file for each space; multi-functional spaces were subdivided between their respective functions so as to fit within the classification system. The audit data were then processed for each type of space to determine a range of quality and value scores from which a median could be calculated; this was then used as an initial benchmark site for the typology in question to begin the process of setting quality and value standards. Accessibility data was produced using the GIS layers for each type of space, with appropriate catchment areas drawn round each space, and due allowance made for major barriers to movement, such as motorways, railways and watercourses where no obvious crossing point exists to enable access to an open space.

The audit of provision also seeks to evaluate the quality and value of each individual space or facility in order to determine the most appropriate policy approach to existing provision.

Quality relates to the range of features or facilities on the site (e.g. trees, shrubs or seats), their basic characteristics (e.g. appropriate to the site or not), and their condition (e.g. on a spectrum from very good to very poor).

Value refers to the value of a site to people and bio-diversity; to its cultural and heritage value; and to its strategic value - for example, by providing a sense of openness in a densely developed area.

Quality and value are entirely independent of each other. For example, if a particular greenspace is the only one in an area where children and young people can play or 'hang out,' it is of high value, even if it is of poor quality. Conversely, a space or facility of excellent quality may be of little value if it is inaccessible or no-one knows it is there.

Assessing the quality and value of open spaces and sport and recreation facilities is fundamental to effective planning. It is the best approach to identifying those spaces or facilities which should be protected by the planning system, those which require enhancement, and those whose purpose may be altered to meet changing patterns of use and need. The a simple high/low classification shown in **Table 1.7** gives possible combinations of quality and value for open spaces and sport and recreation facilities.

Table 1.7: Quality/Value Matrix

High Quality/High Value	High Quality/Low Value
<p>These spaces or facilities should be protected through the planning system as they are both high value and high quality.</p>	<p>These spaces are of high quality but not particularly valuable in terms of meeting people's needs or bio-diversity and have little cultural or heritage value.</p> <p>Ways should be sought to improve their value, while retaining their high quality.</p>
Low Value/Low Quality	Low Quality/High Value
<p>These spaces are currently not valuable in terms of meeting community needs but they may be the only spaces in an area,</p> <p>It may be better to address a local deficiency in some other form of greenspace or if this is impractical the space or facility may be 'surplus to requirements' in terms of its present primary purpose.</p>	<p>These spaces are valuable and should be protected. Their quality should be improved to move them into the high value/high quality category</p>

1.10.2 Community Needs Study

The Community Needs study comprised a postal, self-completion questionnaire sent to a randomly selected sample of local households, augmented with an online survey of children and young people undertaken through local schools, and additional relevant intelligence obtained from other research carried out by the Council in other contexts.

The self-completion questionnaire was agreed with the Steering Group, and was sent out by post in April 2014 to a randomly selected sample, structured by ward, of households in the Hartlepool Borough area, using an address file of residential properties provided by the Council. Each selected household received a copy of the questionnaire, together with a covering letter explaining the reason for the survey, and its importance, signed by a Council Director; a pre-printed freepost envelope was also supplied to assist a good response. After a suitable interval, a reminder mailing was sent out to those addresses which had not responded; this contained a reminder letter, a further copy of the questionnaire, and another freepost envelope.

Sampling was undertaken at ward level, to ensure that each ward had an adequate and proportionate share of the original invitation; the sample was boosted for those wards that have the highest levels of deprivation, to compensate for the expected lower level of response from these areas.

This table shows the level of response secured:

Table 1.8: Response to postal survey

Sample mailed out	4,200
Returned by Royal Mail	49
Effective sample for mailing	4,151
Response received	1,119
Overall response rate	27.0%

A small proportion of the initial sample proved undeliverable, but the sample was sufficient to generate a response in excess of 1,100, achieving a response rate of 27%, which is a respectable response rate for a survey of this type and compares reasonably well with experience elsewhere. This level of response means that the results of the community consultation are accurate to within +/- 2.9% at the 95% confidence interval, which means that the same survey would secure results within that margin 95 times out of 100. This, together with the return of over 1,100 individual forms, means that the survey complies with accepted standards for this type of survey and meets the requirements normally set by Government, and by the wider research industry, when carrying out household surveys.

In accordance with standard research practice, incoming data have been weighted by the age, gender, and ward of the respondent to offset any bias that might arise from uneven patterns of response. This weighted dataset has been used to aggregate data by sub-area, and to determine statistically significant differences between results.

Data in this report are presented as tables with appropriate accompanying charts where these aid interpretation. In most tables, we show the base number of responses from which the table is drawn; this will be the weighted response unless otherwise indicated. The base may be the whole survey response (or a number approximating to it), but not all respondents answer all questions, and in some cases respondents will have been routed past some questions without being required to answer.

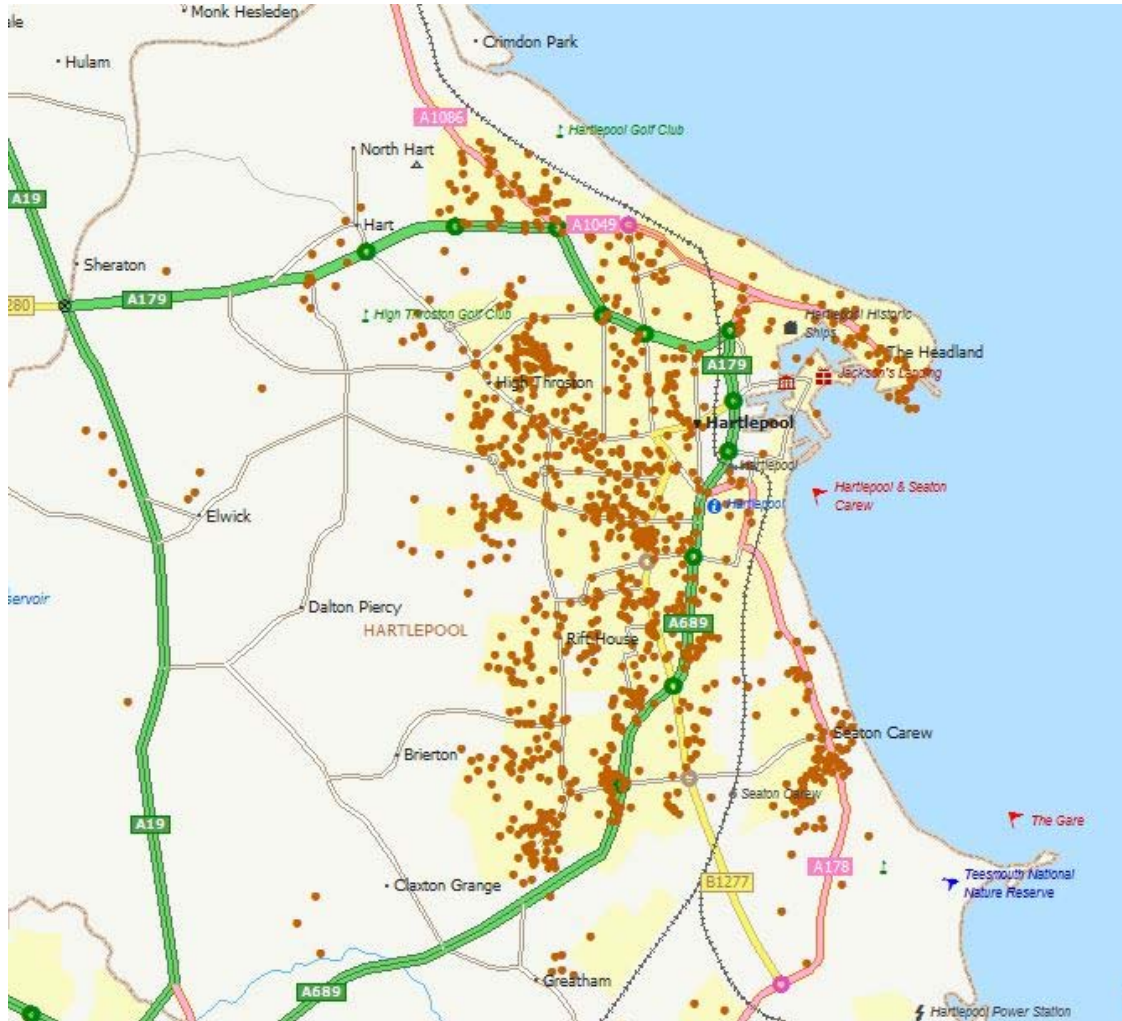
A similar survey to this was carried out in 2008, and the data from this is used for comparison purposes where the data and methodology support such comparison. The 2008 survey was carried out using sampling based on the previous ward structure for the Borough, however, obviating meaningful geographical comparisons with the current dataset.

In addition, an online survey was made available to local schools, and completion was encouraged by the Director of Education. At the time of closing this survey, a total of 413 valid responses had been received through this mechanism. This survey covers similar ground to the postal survey, but with some simplification of the survey questions. The data are therefore reported separately but under the relevant typological heading; data from this survey have not been weighted.

Assurances of confidentiality have been given to all contributors to the survey, and we have therefore taken care to ensure that no data or verbatim comment is used in a way that allows any individual to be identified from it.

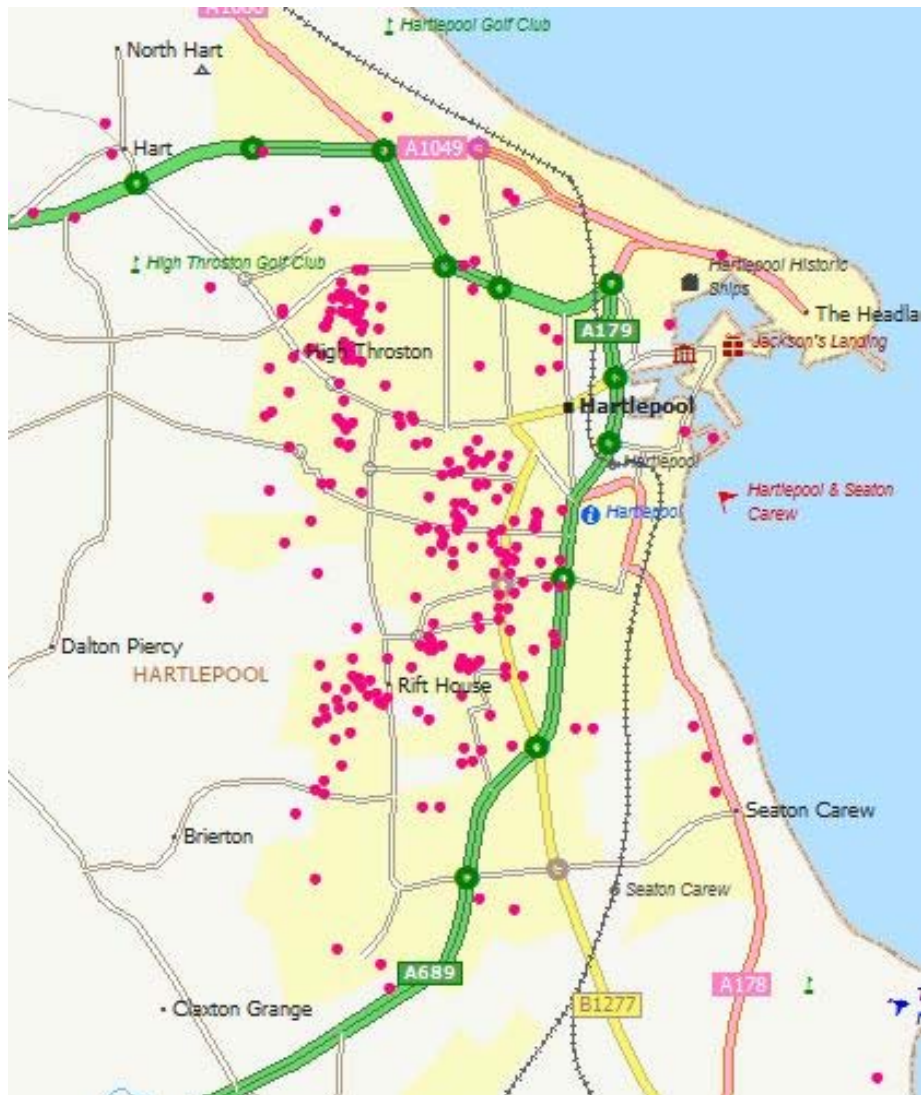
Maps 1.2 and 1.3 show the geographical distribution of response to the two surveys:

Map 1.2 *Response distribution for household survey*



People from all across the Borough have participated in this study; although there is a variation in response according to where people live, with concentrations of response in some areas, there is engagement with the survey from all areas of the Borough. Since geography is a major factor in people's use of open spaces, we have weighted the data using ward populations to ensure that the main dataset is fully representative of the diverse geography of Hartlepool Borough.

Map 1.3 *Response distribution for young people's survey*



Young people from different parts of the Borough have taken part, but the survey has included few respondents from some areas including Seaton Carew and the Headland. The survey was conducted through local schools and was heavily dependent on their co-operation; the results reflect the catchment areas of those schools that participated.

A full respondent profile for the two surveys, showing all the demographic data collected, is included as **Appendix 3**.

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

National and local strategies and initiatives provide a framework to influence the development of an Open Space Strategy. This section discusses the main policy initiatives that influence the provision and use of open spaces in the care or control of local authorities.

2.2 National Policy Background

This section provides a brief overview of current national policy priorities. The national policy agenda underpinning open space planning has undergone considerable change in recent years.

Central responsibility for sport and active recreation rests with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The aim of the DCMS is:

‘To improve the ‘quality of life’ for all through cultural and sporting activities, support the pursuit of excellence, and champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries.’

To address this aim, the DCMS Business Plan 2012-2015 outlines the Coalition Government’s priorities which include:

‘Create a sporting legacy from the Olympic and Paralympic Games ‘

To encourage competitive sport in schools by establishing a new School Games competition, improve local sports facilities and establish a lasting community sports legacy. Promote a sporting habit for life by concentrating investment on creating more opportunities for 14-25 year olds to play sport. Deliver a world-leading elite sport system, deliver major events, and reform the governance of sport.

To deliver this, the actions are focused on:

- Launching a new School Games competition;
- Using the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games to establish a lasting community sporting legacy by upgrading 1000 local sports clubs/facilities via the Places People Play initiative and recruiting 40,000 sports leaders to organise and lead community sport;
- Developing and implementing the Youth Sport Strategy

2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

The NPPF consolidates the former Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements issued by governments in the past. The essential premise of the NPPF is that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

The three dimensions to sustainable development are:

- an economic role – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;
- a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and
- an environmental role – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy.

The planning system should therefore play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions. This involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life.

With regard to open space, sport and recreation, the NPPF focuses on promoting healthy communities. It considers that the planning system can contribute to creating healthy, inclusive communities by ensuring access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation. Protection is afforded to existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields.

2.4 The Natural Environment White Paper (2011)

The Natural Environment White Paper's starting point is that the quality of the natural environment is declining, highly fragmented and unable to respond to the pressures that will follow from climate change.

The White Paper expresses the concern that people cannot flourish without the benefits of the natural environment, but that this is undervalued. A healthy, properly functioning natural environment is considered to be the foundation of sustained economic growth, prosperous communities and personal wellbeing.

There is therefore a need to value the economic and social benefits of a healthy natural environment while continuing to recognise nature's intrinsic value. The aim is to be the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than it inherited. This requires putting the value of nature at the heart of decision making, protecting and improving the natural environment

Concern is expressed about the findings of the Lawton Report, 'Making Space for Nature', which highlights the decline in biodiversity and fragmentation of wildlife habitats, resulting in a reduction in the benefits that ecosystems deliver. It suggests that the overall aim for England's ecological networks should be to ensure that:

'Compared to the situation in 2000, biodiversity is enhanced and the diversity, functioning and resilience of ecosystems re-established in a network of spaces for nature that can sustain these levels into the future, even given continuing environmental change and human pressures.'

An ambitious, integrated approach is promoted to create a more resilient ecological network. This is to be achieved by supporting healthy, well-functioning ecosystems and coherent ecological networks.

The framework for achieving the recovery of nature is threefold:

- Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) are to be established to strengthen local action;
- Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) will be formed by local partnerships to enhance and reconnect nature on a significant scale;
- Sustainable development is to be at the heart of the planning system and will enable development to enhance natural networks. The protection and improvement of the natural environment is a core objective of the planning system.

The White Paper argues for the creation and maintenance of a “resilient ecological network across England”. Its “2020 mission” is to halt biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning eco-systems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people. It also refers to urban green infrastructure as completing “the links in our national ecological network” and “one of the most effective tools available to us in managing environmental risks such as flooding and heat waves”.

2.5 Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services

The UK National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA) published in June 2011 provides a comprehensive account of how the natural world, including its biodiversity, is critical to the nation’s wellbeing and economic prosperity. However, the NEA also shows that nature is consistently undervalued in decision-making and that many of the services we get from nature are in decline. Over 40% of priority habitats and 30% of priority species are in decline. The challenge therefore is to halt this decline – for the benefit of this and future generations.

The biodiversity strategy for England builds on the Natural Environment White Paper and sets out the strategic direction for biodiversity policy for the next decade. The mission for the strategy is:

‘to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.’

A set of high-level outcomes has been developed which will be delivered through action in four areas:

1. A more integrated large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea

The independent review of England’s wildlife sites and ecological network, chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton¹⁰, concluded that England’s collection of wildlife areas (both legally protected areas and others) does not currently represent a coherent and resilient ecological network capable of responding to the challenges of climate change and other

¹⁰ Making Space for Nature: a review of England’s wildlife sites and ecological network (2010) Chaired by Professor Sir John Lawton CBE FRS Submitted to the Secretary of State, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on 16 September 2010

pressures. The review concluded that establishing such a network would effectively conserve biodiversity and ecosystem services, delivering many benefits to people, while also making efficient use of scarce land and resources. This requires a shift in emphasis, away from piecemeal conservation actions and towards a more effective, more integrated, landscape-scale approach.

2. *Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy*

Engaging more people in biodiversity issues so that they personally value biodiversity and know what they can do to help is thought crucial. The Government will work with voluntary sector organisations to engage more people and empower them to make a difference.

3. *Reducing environmental pressures*

The pressure on biodiversity needs to be reduced. To achieve this it is necessary to ensure that biodiversity is taken into account by decision-makers within those sectors which have the greatest direct influence on biodiversity. These sectors include agriculture, forestry, planning and development and water management. The problems of air pollution and invasive non-native species are further issues to be addressed.

4. *Improving our knowledge*

A good evidence base is fundamental to delivering the strategy to ensure that appropriate actions are taken and are focused on action that will have the most impact.

2.6 The Localism Act 2011

The aim of the Act is to devolve decision-making powers from central government into the hands of individuals, communities and councils. The Act covers a wide range of issues related to local public services, with a particular focus on the general power of competence, community rights, neighbourhood planning and housing. The key measures of the act were grouped under four main headings;

- new freedoms and flexibilities for local government
- new rights and powers for communities and individuals
- reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective
- reform to ensure decisions about housing are taken locally.

2.7 Creating a Sporting Habit for Life (January 2012)

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Youth Sport Strategy for an unspecified period beginning in 2012 notes that:

'Since London won the right to stage the (Olympic) Games in 2005, participation rates amongst young people have fallen, with many of our major sports – including football, tennis and swimming – seeing declines in the proportion of 16-25 year olds regularly taking part. Whilst participation rates remain relatively high in school (where curriculum Physical Education (PE) is compulsory), when young people leave school the proportion who

continue to play sport falls dramatically. The problem is starker for girls, with only around a third participating in sport at 18 compared to two-thirds of boys.'

The strategy seeks to deliver

"...a long-term step change in the number of people who play sport" and "... to create a sporting habit amongst our young people that will last a lifetime".

The Government is therefore seeking a significant, lasting increase in the proportion of young people regularly playing sport, which it aims to achieve by:

- Building a lasting legacy of competitive sport in schools
- Improving links between schools and community sports clubs
- Working with sports governing bodies to focus on youth
- Investing in facilities
- Working with communities and the voluntary sector

The main foundation of the strategy is the development of school-club links. It notes that:

'By 2017 we will have established at least 6,000 new school-club links. Football has pledged that 2,000 of their clubs will be linked to secondary schools, Cricket 1,250, Rugby Union 1,300, Rugby League another 1,000 and Tennis has pledged 1,000. This is a great commitment to the new strategy from our biggest sports.'

In addition:

'Every secondary school in England will be offered a community sports club on its site and will have a direct link to one or more of the sports' governing bodies. Through their Whole Sport Plans, the governing bodies will have to demonstrate the steps they will take to improve the transition from school to community clubs and County Sports Partnerships will be given new resources to create effective local links between schools and sport in the community.'

2.8 A Sporting Habit for Life

Sport England's strategy 2012 - 2017 aims to create a meaningful legacy from London 2012 by growing sports participation at the grassroots level and intends that the strategy will:

- See more people taking on and keeping a sporting habit for life
- Create more opportunities for young people
- Nurture and develop talent
- Provide the right facilities in the right places
- Support local authorities and unlock local funding
- Ensure real opportunities for communities

Sport England is seeking a year-on-year increase in the proportion of people who play sport once a week for at least 30 minutes. In particular it is seeking to raise the percentage of 14-25 year olds playing sport once a week and to reduce the proportion who are dropping out of sport.

To achieve its aims and deliver a community sport legacy, Sport England will focus on:

- continuing to work through National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) with a tougher performance regime;
- an increased focus on youth sport, making the transition from school to community sport easier; and
- taking sport to where people are.

In terms of facilities, Sport England intends:

- to build on its Places People Play programme with up to £100m of new investment for the most popular sports plus an additional mid-range funding programme;
- to open up school facilities for greater community use, including the development of community clubs on school sites;
- to continue to protect playing fields.

Overall, Sport England intends to invest over £1 Billion between 2012 and 2017 or roughly £20 for every person living in England.

2.9 Fair Society, Healthy Lives, the Marmot Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England post 2010

Professor Sir Michael Marmot was asked by the Secretary of State for Health to chair an independent review to propose the most effective evidence-based strategies for reducing health inequalities in England from 2010. The strategy includes policies and interventions that address the social determinants of health inequalities.

The Review had four tasks:

- Identify, for the health inequalities challenge facing England, the evidence most relevant to underpinning future policy and action;
- Show how this evidence could be translated into practice;
- Advise on possible objectives and measures, building on the experience of the current PSA targets on infant mortality and life expectancy;
- Publish a report of the review's work that will contribute to the development of a post-2010 health inequalities strategy.

As a result, in February 2010 the report "Fair Society, Healthy Lives: A Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England Post-2010" was published. The report included 9 key messages:

1. Reducing health inequalities is a matter of fairness and social justice. In England, the many people who are currently dying prematurely each year as a result of health inequalities would otherwise have enjoyed, in total, between 1.3 million and 2.5 million extra years of life.
2. There is a social gradient in health – the lower a person's social position, the worse his or her health. Action should focus on reducing the gradient in health.

3. Health inequalities result from social inequalities. Action on health inequalities requires action across all the social determinants of health.
4. Focusing solely on the most disadvantaged will not reduce health inequalities sufficiently. To reduce the steepness of the social gradient in health, actions must be universal, but with a scale and intensity that is proportionate to the level of disadvantage. We call this proportionate universalism.
5. Action taken to reduce health inequalities will benefit society in many ways. It will have economic benefits in reducing losses from illness associated with health inequalities. These currently account for productivity losses, reduced tax revenue, higher welfare payments and increased treatment costs.
6. Economic growth is not the most important measure of our country's success. The fair distribution of health, well-being and sustainability are important social goals. Tackling social inequalities in health and tackling climate change must go together.
7. Reducing health inequalities will require action on six policy objectives: (1) Give every child the best start in life; (2) Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives; (3) Create fair employment and good work for all; (4) Ensure healthy standard of living for all; (5) Create and develop healthy and sustainable places and communities; (6) Strengthen the role and impact of ill-health prevention.
8. Delivering these policy objectives will require action by central and local government, the NHS, the third and private sectors and community groups. National policies will not work without effective local delivery systems focused on health equity in all policies.
9. Effective local delivery requires effective participatory decision-making at local level. This can only happen by empowering individuals and local communities.

Local Strategic Context

2.10 Hartlepool's Ambition: The Sustainable Community Strategy for Hartlepool 2014 – 2020

The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the long-term ambition for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Hartlepool. It builds upon the ambition and aspirations set out in 2008 and sets out priorities for the period 2014 - 2020.

The long term ambition is that:

'Hartlepool will be an ambitious, healthy, respectful, inclusive, thriving and outward-looking community, in an attractive and safe environment, where everyone is able to realise their potential.'

The Borough remains committed to making improvements across the eight themes of the 2008 Community Strategy including:

Health and Wellbeing

‘Work in partnership with the people of Hartlepool to promote and ensure the best possible health and wellbeing.’

The outcomes and objectives for Health and Wellbeing are:

Improved Health

1. To support the people of Hartlepool in choosing a healthy lifestyle.
- 2 To reduce early death and ill health caused by heart disease, strokes and cancers.
- 3 To reduce drug and alcohol abuse and smoking and to enable people with related problems to overcome them.
- 4 To strengthen and support communities with specific needs to improve their health, wellbeing and social inclusion.

Easier access to services

- 5 To work together to provide high quality, convenient, accessible and co-ordinated services when people need them. Exercise of choice and control and retention of personal dignity
- 6 To ensure people are in control of decisions relating to their own health and wellbeing and can get the support and care they require when they need it.
- 7 To provide real choice for people, so that they can make decisions about their own care and support.
- 8 To value the work that carers do, promote carer awareness and social inclusion and improve the identification, range of support and training for carers.

Improved mental wellbeing

- 9 To promote mental wellbeing, reduce suicide rates and support people with mental health problems

Environment

‘Secure and enhance an attractive and sustainable environment that is clean, green, safe and valued by the community.’ The outcomes and objectives for Environment are:

Natural Environment

- 1 To protect and enhance the natural environment and its biodiversity, including sensitive and appropriate development of urban and brownfield sites.
- 2 To protect and enhance the quality of water courses, open water and coastal waters and their margins and minimize the risk of flooding to people, property and buildings from the sea, rivers and sewers.
- 3 To increase awareness and understanding of the natural environment.
- 4 To allow opportunities for the natural environment to adapt to the consequences of climate change.

- 5 To improve equality of access to high quality local environments where public and community open spaces are clean, green and safe.
- 6 To minimise all forms of pollution, make better use of natural resources, reduce the generation of waste, and maximize recycling.

Culture and Leisure

Create a cultural identity for Hartlepool which attracts people to Hartlepool and makes us proud to live and work here. The outcomes and objectives for Leisure, Culture and Sport are:

- 1 Enrich individual lives, strengthen communities and improve places where people live through enjoyment of leisure, culture and sport.
- 2 To create a strong cultural identity for Hartlepool within the region.
- 3 To celebrate Hartlepool and express that local identity.
- 4 To develop a sustainable cultural economy and build on existing tourism attractions.
- 5 Advocate the value of culture in meeting the expressed needs and aspirations of the community.
- 6 Cultural and Leisure services better meet the needs of the community, especially those from disadvantaged areas.
- 7 Increase participation, opportunity for access and diversity.

2.11 Hartlepool Borough Council Plan 2014/15

The Council's overall aim remains:

“To take direct action and work in partnership with others, to continue the revitalisation of Hartlepool life and secure a better future for Hartlepool people”.

The Council's aim is based on the long term vision of the Community Strategy which was agreed by the Council and its partners in July 2008:

“Hartlepool will be a thriving, respectful, inclusive, healthy, ambitious and outward looking community, in an attractive and safe environment, where everyone is able to realise their potential.”

The Council has adopted the eight themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy together with a ninth theme, Organisational Development, which covers what the Council is doing to sustain its capacity to deliver excellent, value for money services in the future:

Themes of relevance to this assessment include:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Environment
- Culture and Leisure

The Council has identified a number of key outcomes that it will contribute towards in 2014/15, working towards delivering the Council's overall aim through the nine themes. This

group of outcomes also support the Council's ongoing work to tackle family poverty and the interrelationships between the various outcomes.

2.12 Hartlepool Local Plan

The Hartlepool Local Plan and its associated documents forms the development plan for Hartlepool. The planning policies and standards within them are used to determine planning applications.

The Council had been through the process of producing a new Local Plan; however the decision was taken to withdraw the Local Plan and it was formally withdrawn on 11th November 2013. A new Local Plan is being developed and, whilst this work proceeds, a HBC Policy Framework has been produced indicating the saved policies from the 2006 Local Plan that are in conformity with the NPPF.

The recently published Issues and Options Document (May 2014) notes that the Local Plan will set out the vision for Hartlepool - what kind of place Hartlepool will be in the future. Its vision will be a spatial representation of the Hartlepool Vision and the overarching aims and vision of the 2014 Community Strategy for Hartlepool ('Hartlepool's Ambition') which is that:

'Hartlepool will be an ambitious, healthy, respectful, inclusive, thriving and outward-looking community, in an attractive and safe environment, where everyone is able to realise their potential.'

Looking at the vision for 'Hartlepool's Ambition' the spatial vision for the Local Plan should seek to achieve by 2031:

- the creation of a healthy local economy (a 'thriving' and 'ambitious' community),
- the creation of mixed communities with all services to hand (a 'respectful' and 'inclusive' community),
- provision of opportunities for recreational activities (a 'healthy' community),
- improvement of transport links (an 'outward-looking' community).
- improvements to the quality and design of housing and other areas (an 'attractive environment'),
- reduction of opportunities for crime and improvements in road safety (a 'safe environment')

The relevant issues for this assessment are:

Issue 11: How can we provide safe and accessible open space and facilities?

Issue 13: How should we protect and improve the Borough's natural, rural, and built environment?

Hartlepool Borough Playing Pitch Strategy 2012

The strategy sets out how the Council and its delivery partners will work to create;

'An accessible, high quality and sustainable network of sports pitches and other outdoor sports facilities, which provides local opportunities for participation at all levels of play from grassroots to elite'.

The strategy seeks to make sure that the following objectives are met;

- Ensure that the quantity of pitches is sufficient to meet current and future need;
- Ensure that the quality of pitches meets current and future need; and
- Support initiatives to increase participation and promote sustainable club development.

As well as the achievement of the strategic vision of this strategy, the successful delivery of the key strategy objectives will also contribute to the delivery of many other national, regional and local strategic targets.

Key issues to address

Football

- shortage of junior pitches (and these are likely to increase as participation continues to grow);
- shortage of pitches that are of the right specification to meet current needs and expectations;
- imbalance of use between sites, with some facilities at capacity and others hardly used;
- dispersal of clubs across multiple sites which is not beneficial for sustainable club development;
- changes to the way football is played will place further pressures on football pitches and the stock of existing facilities.

Cricket

- there are some quality improvements required at club bases to ensure the sustainability of cricket at these sites;
- the increase of more informal cricket in the Borough is a key priority of the ECB and this might impact upon demand for facilities.

Rugby

- pressures on the capacity at larger club sites;
- the role of public facilities in providing for rugby in the Borough;
- the need to improve the quality of facilities;
- the sustainability of rugby clubs

Hockey

- whilst the stock of sand based facilities is sufficient, only one pitch is floodlit, meaning that use of the site as a club base is restricted
- membership is declining;
- England Hockey is seeking to reverse participation trends through the implementation of new forms of the game which require more flexible facilities.

Bowls

- whilst greens are heavily used, all but one club has capacity for additional members, and there is scope to accommodate additional teams on some current greens. This requires flexible use of the facilities through careful programming of fixtures but ensures that maximum value is gained from the greens.

Tennis

- tennis offers a significant opportunity to increase overall participation in sport and physical activity in the Borough – the sport has a wider participation base than any other sport and the Active People Survey indicates that there is significant latent demand at present;
- there is spare capacity in the existing club bases. Eldon TC is experiencing year on year growth and Hartlepool LTC is also looking to grow the number of members.

Allotments Development Strategy 2010 – 2015

The challenges currently facing the allotments service are considered. Over a long period of time a general deterioration in the condition of allotment sites in Hartlepool has occurred as a consequence of the vagaries of funding and resource availability. Consequently the service's limited staff base, without the general support of strong partnerships with allotment associations, has struggled to police inappropriate activity on some allotments and on occasion misuse by service users and neighbouring communities.

In addition, low level issues resulting from a minority of allotment plots and holders have claimed a disproportionate amount of staff time in the past. This has contributed to the inability of the service to adopt a more proactive and constructive approach.

This strategy offers a series of possibilities, or developmental avenues, from which a new vision for the protection, promotion and management of Hartlepool's allotment resource can be built and sustained.

The strategy has a vision:

“Our vision is to work with allotment holders and surrounding communities to encourage through partnership working the growth of vibrant, supportive and inclusive allotment groups.

Help identify through these partnerships the means and support necessary to take forward works to improve the quality, appearance and environmental value of allotments and promote greater community participation.

Through these actions make a positive contribution to a greener and healthier future for the people of Hartlepool.”

In future, the intention is to develop positive partnerships and co-operation with the aim of ensuring that people can expect:

- Secure sites with tidy and practical allotments.
- Opportunities and encouragement to individuals and communities wishing to be involved in the cultivation of allotments.
- A willingness to build friendly and co-operative relationships with plot holders, neighbourhood groups, voluntary organisations, children and young people, police and other community agencies to help improve and develop allotment sites through partnership.
- Encouragement to sites and associations to develop self management.
- Efficient and effective allotment administration.
- Effective and appropriate allocation of resources.
- Fair, open and equitable treatment and safe tenure.
- Opportunities for developing gardening skills.
- Fair charges and rents.

The Allotment Development Strategy identifies a number of challenges.

- A human resource challenge: the need to move to a more proactive service delivery stance.
- A partnership challenge: a requirement to develop service partnership agreements with the health sector, businesses, local agencies, and local people.
- A financial resource challenge: the need to achieve a sustainable balance between revenue and expenditure.
- A capital budget challenge: how to finance repairs and renovations within a constrained budget.
- A revenue budget challenge: how to address rising costs of water charges and site management within a constrained budget.

In recognition of these challenges the Allotment Strategy aims:

- to raise awareness amongst all stakeholders of the issues surrounding allotments, their management and use.
- to encourage all parties to recognise the opportunities that could be developed with better understanding, support and commitment to the aims and objectives set out in the document.
- to secure a renewed commitment by plot holders, allotment associations, council members and senior officers to support the allotment management, administration and enforcement procedures developed in partnership to minimise resource wastage.

A Play Strategy for Hartlepool

The strategy will promote best practice using the 'Best Play - What play provision should do for children'¹¹ objectives which are acknowledged as the benchmark outcomes for play provision and form a basis against which play provision can be evaluated. These are:

- Extend the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it.
- Recognise the child's need to test boundaries and respond positively to their need.
- Manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm.
- Maximise the range of play opportunities.
- Foster independence and self esteem.
- Foster the child's respect for others and offer opportunities for social integration.
- Foster the child's well-being, health, growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn.

The seven objectives of the Action Plan are as follows:

- Develop a co-ordinated approach to play
- Increase play space/opportunities.
- Develop the quality of play opportunities.
- To further develop processes that facilitate the participation of children, young people and local communities.
- Aim to offer all children & young people the opportunity to experience acceptable risks in play environments.
- To improve safe accessibility within formal and informal play settings.
- Funding and sustainability of play.

Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and Action Plan.

Green Infrastructure

The National Planning Policy Framework defines green infrastructure as being:

"A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities."¹²

However for the purposes of the for the Hartlepool Green Infrastructure SPD a definition that more closely reflect green infrastructure within Hartlepool has been used:

¹¹ A joint publication from the then National Playing Fields Association (now Fields in Trust), PLAYLINK and the Children's Play Council, 2000.

¹² NPPF, Annex 2: Glossary.

“green infrastructure is the borough’s life support system – the network of natural environmental components and green and blue spaces that lies within and between the towns and villages which provides multiple social, economic and environmental benefits.”

In planning terms this involves the provision of strategically planned networks that link existing (and proposed) green spaces with green corridors running through urban, suburban, urban fringe, and rural areas.

The types of open space, sport and recreation facilities that are the focus of this study are also the physical components which link together to form green infrastructure . The SPD seeks to ensure that these critical elements are not only protected but are also joined together, where possible, to help to develop networks of green infrastructure within the Borough.

The SPD sets out the future strategy for the development of green infrastructure within Hartlepool. The Vision for Green Infrastructure is:

‘By 2028 Hartlepool will have a high quality, multifunctional, accessible green infrastructure network which enhances the community’s quality of life and also of wildlife.’

There are ten interrelated objectives of the strategy. Projects to achieve the objectives and help to deliver the vision are set in the Action Plan. The ten objectives are:

- 1 to protect a high quality visual landscape and townscape, and enhance the function, character, quality and sense of place of the network;
- 2 to provide a network of interconnected GI and spaces which are rich in habitat with a diverse range of wildlife which also play a critical role in improving the health of residents;
- 3 to minimise the impact of and adapt to the effects of climate change;
- 4 to promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and expanding and linking habitats together;
- 5 to ensure trees, ancient woodland and hedges are protected and integrate planting schemes within all new developments;
- 6 to protect and enhance a wide range of high quality opportunities for formal and informal sport, recreation and leisure facilities;
- 7 to involve users, including “friends of” groups, and neighbours of green infrastructure in its design and use to create a sense of ownership and pride.
- 8 to support economic growth and attract inward investment by improving the setting of industrial and commercial areas;
- 9 to create a quality, distinctive, and productive green infrastructure network to support local food production, rural diversification and tourism;
- 10 to ensure key green hubs, such as parks, play spaces and woodlands, are linked by means of safe and easily accessible green networks and rights of way;

3. PERCEPTIONS AND BARRIERS TO USE

3.1 Barriers to use of open space

The survey includes some questions that relate to people's perceptions of green space overall. The first of these relate to potential barriers to use of local open spaces; the answers offered are based on an analysis of identified barriers to use of open spaces in a range of other studies. To facilitate comparison, people's opinions have been converted into mean scores.¹³

Table 3.1: Barriers to use of open space

Barrier	Mean score for all respondents
More or better toilets	1.25
More choice of things to do	1.23
More information about open spaces	1.17
Open spaces cleaner and better maintained	1.14
Open spaces were welcoming	1.13
More choice of places to go	1.08
Open spaces were more attractive	1.05
More spare time	1.03
Dogs under better control	1.02
More or better seating	0.99
Easier to park	0.89
Spaces felt safer	0.85
Open spaces were busier and more exciting	0.81
Open spaces were quieter and more peaceful	0.76
Open spaces were easier to move about in	0.64
Easier to travel	0.63
Cheaper to travel	0.56
Someone else to go with	0.52
<i>N(=100%) ranges from 898 to 1,009</i>	

¹³ The mean score is calculated by taking each individual response for each of the different criteria and converting it into a score. A score of +2 is allocated for each 'would definitely use more' result, and +1 for each 'might use them more' response. 'No difference' attracts a score of zero, while don't knows are discounted completely. The resulting scores are then averaged to produce a mean score which indicates the strength with which each view is collectively held.

A score that exceeds 1.00 is moving towards a likely increase in use of open space, and thus identifies a potential barrier to usage. A score of 1.00 or less indicates an area for improvement that may or may not have any impact on usage, where people are suggesting they might use them more but without the same level of conviction that they might change their current behaviour.

On this basis, only two potential barriers emerge as especially significant; the provision and quality of toilets, and the range of things to do within an open space. The toilet issue may refer to the need for toilets where there are none, but equally may indicate a need to improve existing toilets that people may be reluctant to use.

Of less significance, but with some potential to increase take up of open space, are information (which could include general awareness raising as well as on-site information about aspects of interest), cleanliness and maintenance, and welcome. Seating, which is prominent as a quality issue for many types of open space in this study, emerges in this analysis as an aspect which has only some potential to improve take-up.

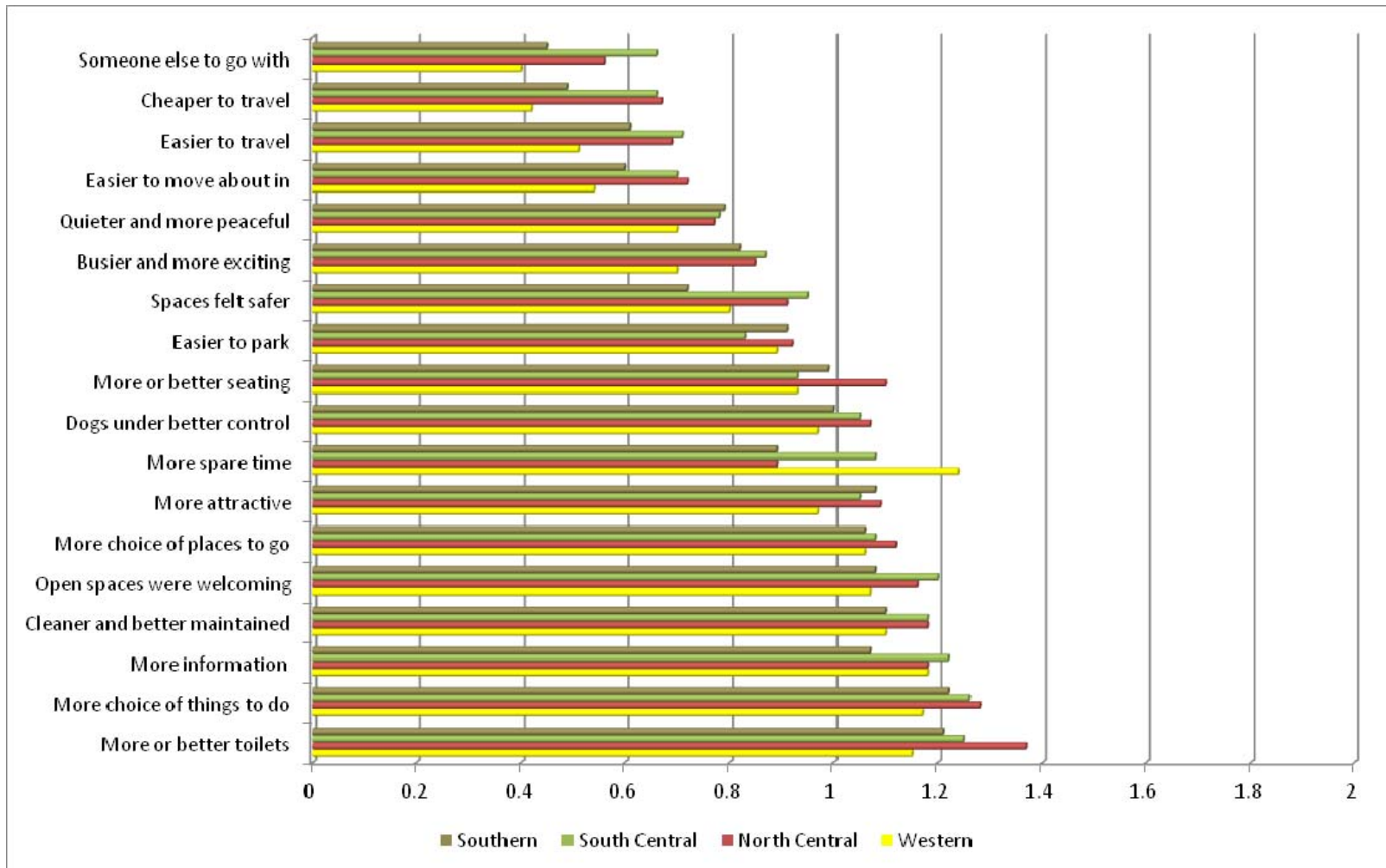
Other barriers are less important and less likely to change behaviour to any significant extent. Travel costs and travel difficulties emerge with low scores, suggesting that distance from open space is not an issue for the population in general; there is also no consensus about whether spaces should be more exciting or more peaceful.

The table below shows how these perceptions vary according to the sub-area where people live.

Table 3.2: Barriers to use of open space by sub-area

Barrier	Mean score for all respondents			
	Western	North Central	South Central	Southern
More or better toilets	1.15	1.37	1.25	1.21
More choice of things to do	1.17	1.28	1.26	1.22
More information	1.18	1.18	1.22	1.07
Cleaner and better maintained	1.10	1.18	1.18	1.10
Open spaces were welcoming	1.07	1.16	1.2	1.08
More choice of places to go	1.06	1.12	1.08	1.06
More attractive	0.97	1.09	1.05	1.08
More spare time	1.24	0.89	1.08	0.89
Dogs under better control	0.97	1.07	1.05	1.00
More or better seating	0.93	1.10	0.93	0.99
Easier to park	0.89	0.92	0.83	0.91
Spaces felt safer	0.80	0.91	0.95	0.72
Busier and more exciting	0.70	0.85	0.87	0.82
Quieter and more peaceful	0.70	0.77	0.78	0.79
Easier to move about in	0.54	0.72	0.70	0.60
Easier to travel	0.51	0.69	0.71	0.61
Cheaper to travel	0.42	0.67	0.66	0.49
Someone else to go with	0.40	0.56	0.66	0.45
<i>N(=100%) ranges from</i>	<i>211 to 251</i>	<i>224 to 251</i>	<i>238 to 267</i>	<i>221 to 246</i>

Chart 3.2: Barriers to use of open space by sub-area



Overall there are no marked differences in the scores from each sub-area, in that each aspect of open space appears in roughly the same broad score range. However there are some differences of interest. It is noticeable that the toilets issue is more prominent for residents of the North Central and South Central sub-areas than for those who live elsewhere, and the same is true of the range of things to do in local open spaces, and also cleanliness/maintenance. Spare time also seems to be more of a problem for people in the Southern sub-area, while dog control, site attractiveness and seating are bigger challenges for the North Central in particular.

Toilets are a particularly important issue for younger people; their significance reduces substantially with age; the same is true of the variety of things to do, which is extremely important for under 30s (score of 1.63), but much less so for those at or above retirement age. In fact many of the attributes listed achieve higher scores, and thus have more potential to influence, among younger adults, although dog control and spare time are exceptions.

Safety is more of an issue for women than for men, and so is the wish to be accompanied; women also tend to find moving about within the site more difficult, and are looking for sites that offer more bustle and excitement.

Travel and parking might be expected to be bigger issues for people with disabilities, but this is not the case; however, people with disabilities have more of an issue with mobility within sites than those with no disability. Otherwise, people with disabilities mainly give lower scores, and are thus less troubled by these issues, than their non-disabled counterparts. Travel is, not surprisingly, more of an issue for those with no vehicle.

3.2 Opinions about open space

People were also asked their views on a short selection of statements about open space, and again their answers have been converted into mean scores.¹⁴

Table 3.3: Statements about open space

Statement	Mean score for all respondents
Open space in my local area helps to make the area more attractive	1.14
Open space in my local area contributes strongly to the local environment	1.07
Local open spaces provide something for everyone in the community	0.90
Local open spaces are adequate for my needs	0.37
There is plenty of choice locally to enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities	0.06
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 965 to 999</i>

All the scores are positive (although one is very close to the midpoint). The strongest score is for the contribution open space makes to the attractiveness of the locality, where the consensus is that people tend to agree - a good score but one which can be improved. A similar result attends the statement on the contribution space makes to the local environment, and on their inclusion for all sectors of the community.

People are still positive, but much more guardedly, about the adequacy of local spaces, and are almost neutral about the choices available to them as regards open space, suggesting these are two strategic issues that might repay closer attention.

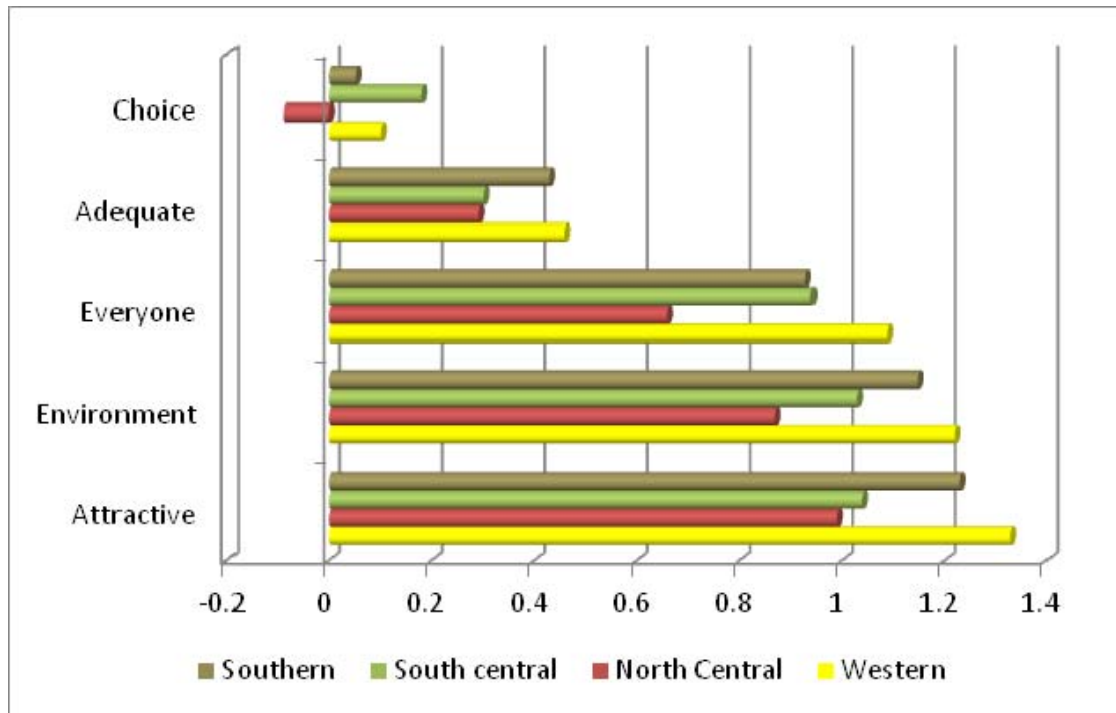
¹⁴ The mean score is calculated by taking each individual response for each of the different criteria and converting it into a score. A score of +2 is allocated for each 'agree strongly' result, and +1 for each 'tend to agree' response; 'tend to disagree' and 'disagree strongly' score -1 and -2 respectively. 'Neutral' attracts a score of zero, while don't knows are discounted completely. The resulting scores are then averaged to produce a mean score which indicates both the direction of opinion (positive or negative) and the strength with which that view is collectively held.

The variations by sub-area are indicated here:

Table 3.4: Statements about open space by sub-area

: Statement	Mean score			
	Western	North Central	South central	Southern
Open space in my local area helps to make the area more attractive	1.33	0.99	1.04	1.23
Open space in my local area contributes strongly to the local environment	1.22	0.87	1.03	1.15
Local open spaces provide something for everyone in the community	1.09	0.66	0.94	0.93
Local open spaces are adequate for my needs	0.46	0.29	0.30	0.43
There is plenty of choice locally to enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities	0.10	-0.09	0.18	0.05
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>235 to 244</i>	<i>232 to 248</i>	<i>261 to 263</i>	<i>233 to 247</i>

Chart 3.4: Statements about open space by sub-area



There are some variations here. North Central residents give lower scores on each of these statements, even to the point of giving a negative score on choice in their sub-area. Western and Southern sub-area residents, on the other hand, tend to be the most positive, although they too give a low score on choice.

Choice also attracts a negative score from under 30s, but is less of an issue for over 75s. Middle-aged people are more exercised about attractiveness and inclusion. The older a person is, the more likely they are to find open spaces adequate.

Men are generally more positive than women about open space, although the overall picture is not too different between the genders. People with disabilities are less sure that open spaces provide something for everyone.

4. PARKS AND GARDENS

Parks and gardens are areas of land normally enclosed, designed, constructed, managed and maintained as public parks or gardens, and do not therefore include informal open space, sites of nature conservation, or parkland not normally accessible for public enjoyment. They are intended to provide accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.

4.1 Strategic Context

Good quality open space is a key factor in making our urban areas attractive and viable places in which to live, work and play.

The 2009 Place Survey¹⁵ found that, in urban areas, 87% of the population had used their local park or open space in the previous year, and 79% had used it in the previous six months. The Place Survey indicated that parks and open spaces are the most frequently used service of all the public services tracked. Heritage Lottery Fund research reports 1.8 billion visits to parks in England every year.¹⁶

People's appreciation of parks and open spaces is increasing: in 2007, 91% of people thought it was very or fairly important to have green spaces near to where they live, and by 2009 this had risen to 95%.¹⁷

There is a strong link between people's satisfaction with their local parks and open spaces and their satisfaction with their neighbourhood, which in turn is one of the key things that affects perceptions of council performance. This is particularly acute in the most deprived areas, where neighbourhood satisfaction is at its lowest.¹⁸

CABE Space research¹⁹ has found that people in deprived areas, wherever they live, receive a far worse provision of parks than their more affluent neighbours. The most affluent 20% of wards have five times the amount of parks per person than the most deprived 10% of wards. Residents in affluent suburbs are therefore likely to have an above-average quantity of good parks nearby. On the other hand, residents of a deprived inner-city ward, with high-density housing, are more likely to have access to small, poor-quality green spaces and are unlikely to have access to large or high quality green spaces. Comparing deprived and affluent areas, residents' general satisfaction with their neighbourhood falls from around 80% in affluent places to around 50% in the most deprived places.

Wards that have almost no black and minority ethnic residents²⁰ have six times as many parks as wards where more than 40% of the population are people from black and minority

¹⁵ The Place Survey provides information on people's perceptions of their local area and the local services they receive. The survey collects information on 18 national indicators for local government, used to measure local government performance.

¹⁶ HLF funding for public parks 1 April 1994 – 31 March 2009 Heritage Lottery Fund Policy and strategic development department data briefing, October 2009.

¹⁷ Public attitudes and behaviours towards the environment - tracker survey. A research report completed for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs by TNS. September 2009

¹⁸ Source: BVPI 2006 survey.

¹⁹ Urban green nation: Building the evidence base. Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment 2010.

²⁰ Fewer than 2 per cent of ward population

ethnic groups. This is reflected in the indicator of general satisfaction with neighbourhood, when analysed by ethnicity (rather than affluence). In those wards with more than 40% of their populations from Black or minority ethnic groups, only half of residents are satisfied with their neighbourhood, compared with 70% in wards with fewer than 2% ethnic minority populations.

CABE Space research²¹ also found that park quality correlates directly to levels and frequency of use: unsurprisingly, higher quality parks tend to be used more, and used more often, than those of lower quality. Parks in the most deprived 10% of wards have a significantly lower frequency of visits, compared to those in the most affluent wards. Similarly, average visitor numbers to parks restored with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund have risen by 68%.

Young people are less satisfied with their parks; 15% of 16 to 24 year olds think their local parks are the aspect of their area that need most improvement, compared with 8% of 55-74 year olds.²²

It has been claimed that parks attract a broader spectrum of the population than other services (e.g. art galleries, museums and libraries)²³. Further, their local and accessible nature permits them to function as important social venues for individuals and small groups, including families. The flexibility of parks enables a wide variety of uses, providing suitable venues for medium and large-scale events which can help to provide a focus for wider community groups. They are among very few public facilities that have a genuine all-age potential.

Parks contribute to a sense of place and help define local communities, which can help to reduce social isolation and increase social cohesion. For many people, parks provide continuity because in times of rapid change they stay the same and provide a “key symbolic feature in the local sense of place”.²⁴ It has been suggested that benefits are maximised where parks provide for a range of needs and where wide open, featureless spaces are avoided.²⁵

Parks and open spaces have an important amenity value, by providing a contrast to the built environment and adding to the quality of life. They have the potential to provide attractive environments, which, by providing a sanctuary from the stresses of modern living, can contribute to a sense of well-being and improved mental health.

4.2 State of UK Public Parks 2014

There is no national representative body for parks and there is no statutory requirement governing their upkeep. The key national body for parks is the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) which has, since 1996, invested in improvements to over 700 individual public parks. This study is, in part, prompted by the need to protect and sustain this investment.

²¹ Ibid

²² Active People Survey 1, Sport England. 2006.

²³ Park Life: Urban Parks and Urban Renewal, a study of 1,211 users of urban parks and 295 local residents, Greenhalgh and Worpole (1995)

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ People Parks and the Urban Green, Burgess et al (1988) and Greenhalgh and Worpole (1995)

The State of UK Public Parks 2014 examines the current condition of the UK's public parks.²⁶ The study also considers how the quality and nature of parks might change in the future and makes suggestions for action and better ways of working. The study draws on evidence from three recent national surveys: a survey of 178 local authority park managers representing 41% of UK local authorities, a survey of park friends and user groups, and a public opinion survey.²⁷

Public parks are predominantly owned and managed by local authorities, but as a non-statutory service they face immense challenges in the future. HLF investment and improvement has meant that a significant proportion of UK's parks are in a good state; but HLF's research indicates that maintenance budgets and capital funding are being reduced. Local authority cut-backs have meant that management and maintenance skills are being lost, and some parks and green spaces may be sold or transferred to others to maintain.

The surveys found that 59% of park managers, as well as 50% of friends groups and the park-going public, considered their parks to be in good condition. In 2001 only 18% of park managers considered their parks to be in good condition. The improvement in parks is reflected in the number of Green Flag Awards (the voluntary, nationally recognised quality accreditation scheme for parks and green spaces). In 2001 Green Flags were awarded to only 81 parks in England. By 2010 this had risen to 905, and by 2013 there were 1,116 awards.

Visitor satisfaction and numbers also increased with 50% of managers saying that visitor satisfaction had increased over the last three years, and 47% reporting that visitor numbers had risen over the last year. For principal parks²⁸ 70% of park managers said that visitor numbers had risen over the last year.

However, only 21% of managers and 32% of friends groups anticipate that their parks will continue to improve, while 37% of managers and 34% of friends groups anticipate that their parks will be declining.

The public opinion survey found that 63% of respondent are either 'fairly concerned' or 'very concerned' that reduced council budgets could have a negative impact on the condition of their local park. This level of concern increases to 74% for those who also say that their local park is currently in poor condition; and 71% of households with children under 10 are concerned that reductions in council budgets could have a negative impact on the condition of their local park.

Key findings from the report are:

1. Pressure on budgets

The Audit Commission²⁹ reports that Government funding to local authorities reduced by an average of almost 20% in real terms between 2010–11 and 2013–14. Some of the poorest councils in the most deprived areas of England have experienced cumulative cuts that will average 25% by 2016.³⁰ Moreover, council budgets are expected to continue falling for the

²⁶ State of UK Public Parks 2014, Heritage Lottery Fund.

²⁷ Undertaken by Ipsos MORI.

²⁸ The main parks a council manages.

²⁹ Audit Commission (2013) Tough Times 2013, Councils' responses to financial challenges from 2010/11 to 2013/14.

³⁰ State of the UK's Public Parks Report Scoping Study. Land Use Consultants in association with The Next Field.

rest of the decade. Parks are a non-statutory service which means that their budgets are highly vulnerable to reduction. HLF found that:

- most parks budgets have been cut since 2010, many above the 20% average reported by the Audit Commission;
- 86% of park managers report that revenue budgets for day-to-day maintenance have been cut;
- over half of park managers report that capital budgets for investing in fabric and facilities, such as play areas, toilets and paths, have been cut.

The survey also shows that over the next three years:

- 87% of park managers expect further cuts to revenue budgets;
- 63% of managers also face further cuts to capital budgets.

An example of the scale of cuts, Liverpool City Council's parks department budget of £10million will be cut by 50% over the next three years³¹. Local authorities in the North East, in particular, are likely to experience a proportionately higher level of budget cuts and staff losses over the next three years

Those working in parks voice concern that by 2020 some local authority park services will no longer be viable. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation³² suggests that local government may cease to provide some services altogether, transferring responsibilities to other agencies, sectors and partnerships.

2. *The cost to park users*

Charges for facilities in parks have increased:

- 83% of managers reported increasing fees for facilities such as sports pitches, car parks, allotments and the hire of grounds or buildings for private events;
- 85% of managers intend to increase fees in the next three years.

The increase in the cost of hiring sports facilities is happening at a time when there is urgent need to promote active lifestyles to tackle obesity and poor health.

3. *Sale of parks and green spaces*

A significant number of authorities are considering selling or transferring management of their parks and green spaces over the next three years.

- 45% of local authorities are considering disposing of some green spaces;
- 19% of local authorities specifically mentioned disposing of parks as opposed to other green spaces.

³¹ State of the Market Survey 2012, Local Authority Parks Services, Association for Public Service Excellence, 2012.

³² The Guardian (2014) Local Government cuts hitting poorest areas hardest, figures show. 30 Jan 2014

4. *Loss of staff and skills*

The staffing of parks has fallen in line with the decline in funding over the last three years.

- 77% of councils have reduced frontline parks staff; and
- 81% of councils have cut park management staff.

The loss of park management staff means that local authorities will be much less able to support the work of community groups, promote innovation or assist the process of transferring or sharing management with local organisations and partners.

Volunteering has a critical role to play in developing dynamic community parks. However, volunteer numbers will decline if skilled staff are no longer available to provide training.

5. *The power of communities*

Community groups have an increasing role in championing and supporting local parks. In the last three years:

- managers have seen an increase of over 30% in the number of friends and user groups, and over half of managers expect this to continue;
- 47% of groups have seen an increase in membership.

There are an estimated 5,000 friends groups or park user groups across the UK. Each group raises on average £6,900 per year, representing over £30million raised for parks annually.

6. *Impact on quality of life*

Those who use parks value them highly. Some 68% of park users consider spending time in their local park important or essential to their quality of life. This rises to 71% for park users in urban areas, and over 81% for households with children under 10.

The highest percentage of park users are households with children; 83% of households with children aged five and under visit their local park at least once a month. In the UK almost 600 million visits are estimated to be made by households with children under the age of 16 each year. In total 2.6 billion visits are estimated to be made to the UK's parks each year.

Future Action

In the context of the potential risk facing the UK's parks, HLF sets out how it intends to respond to five key challenges for the future.

Challenge 1. Local authority commitment

It is essential for local authorities to remain committed to fund, staff and manage parks. Parks are one of the most heavily used public services, particularly by families. People's satisfaction with their local parks is a key determinant of their satisfaction with their neighbourhood and council.

HLF Response

Action by HLF includes actively monitoring and championing parks projects which it has funded to ensure standards are maintained, and it will evaluate projects to demonstrate the value of investing in public parks.

HLF will invest up to £24million per annum in parks up to 2018, with the Big Lottery Fund investing an additional £10million per annum in England until the end of 2015.

HLF calls on all local authorities to appoint an elected member to be their parks champion; to report annually how much they spend per resident in caring for their parks; and to commit to the provision of good, accessible parks.

Challenge 2. New partnerships

The transfer of park management from local authorities to other organisations is expected to almost double by 2016. This can help to diversify funding and resourcing. It will require commitment and resources if long-term, financially viable, locally based partnerships are to be established. This cannot be achieved if budget cuts and staff reductions continue.

HLF Response

HLF will use its Parks for People, Start-Up Grants and Rethinking Parks programmes to support a greater diversity of organisations in managing public parks.

HLF calls on the public, private and voluntary sectors to create innovative new partnerships to fund and manage parks, and provide opportunities for park managers to develop new business skills.

HLF calls on Government and local authorities to provide the support, resources and skills development needed by park friends and user groups who are considering entering into new partnerships to jointly manage parks.

Challenge 3. Getting communities more involved

There are more than 5,000 park user groups contributing valuable volunteer time and funding to local parks. However, they need to be trained and motivated if they are to continue to support park management.

HLF Response

HLF will support people to take a more active role in the parks projects we fund through investing in training, resources and activities to encourage and promote volunteering.

HLF invites the public and business to support Groundwork's X Marks The Spot campaign and Keep Britain Tidy's Love Parks Week to get more people actively involved through volunteering and fundraising, and making the case for parks in modern life.

HLF recommends that those using, managing and championing parks actively support the National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces, a national forum for park friends and user groups, to help them provide a central hub of information and advice for park groups.

Challenge 4. Collecting and sharing data

It is essential to collect and compare data between local authorities to facilitate the benchmarking of standards and resources.

HLF Response

HLF will encourage the development of a pilot project to help the UK's top 20 cities compare the quantity, condition and funding of their city parks.

HLF will commission and publish a second *State of UK Public Parks* study in 2016 to monitor changes in the condition, quality and resourcing of the UK's public parks.

HLF calls on Government and the Local Government organisations to encourage and facilitate the central collection of consistent and comparable data on parks across all local authorities.

Challenge 5. New finance models and rethinking delivery

The future health and vitality of parks services will be dependent on developing new business models for management to complement those that currently exist.

HLF Response

HLF, the Big Lottery Fund and Nesta will invest up to £1million through the Rethinking Parks programme to encourage innovation. The funding will support projects to develop creative new approaches to financing and managing parks.

HLF calls on Government to focus its support for innovation and community rights on the delivery and funding of good-quality public parks and green spaces.

HLF will encourage innovators considering new ideas and solutions to evaluate and share their ideas so others can learn from their experiences.

4.2 The Need for Parks and Gardens

The size, distribution and nature of parks and gardens in Hartlepool were largely determined as the Borough developed in the early to mid-twentieth century. It is very unlikely that there will be significant growth in either the number or area of urban parks in Hartlepool in the future. In these circumstances the required level of current provision of parks is largely pre-determined and supply-led, using the location and scale of existing provision as its starting point and seeking to make optimal use of it, for example by management initiatives designed to enhance existing provision.

In the period since the establishment of Hartlepool's parks, there have been many changes to where and how people live, how they move around, the expectations of access for people with disabilities or pushchairs, the access for dog owners, and the population, size and density of localities within the area. Some parks may no longer be in the most appropriate

locations in relation to where people actually live, and the facilities within them may be less relevant to people's needs and expectations than when they were first established.

Given the likely public and political opposition to the loss of urban parks, and a general policy presumption against their development, the consideration of a quantity standard of provision is effectively a process of post-rationalisation. It is therefore appropriate to consider the extent to which parks are relevant to current needs. The attractiveness and safety of access routes to them from nearby housing areas is also an important issue. Where existing parks are well located in relation to where people live, and clearly meet, or have the potential to meet, local needs, it will be desirable to enhance their attractiveness by improving their quality and accessibility.

4.3 Key findings from consultation

4.3.1 Usage

This table shows how often people in the Borough visit a local park or garden:

Table 4.1: Park visits

Frequency of visiting	Proportion of respondents who visit
Every day	8%
Once or twice a week	24%
Two or three times a month	18%
Once a month	8%
Once every two or three months	13%
Once or twice a year	12%
Less often	6%
Never	11%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>1,117</i>

Although one in nine people say they never visit a local park or garden, the vast majority of local people use these spaces, and a high proportion make extensive use of them. One in three adults in the Borough use a local park at least once a week, and a quarter of these visit a park more or less every day. Half the local population visits a park at least twice a month, and three in five people visit at least monthly.

There are variations in this result by sub-area: This table shows the proportions who visit at least monthly, and who never visit local parks:

Table 4.2: Park visits by sub-area

Sub-area	Proportion of respondents	
	visit at least monthly	Never visit
Western	61%	11%
North Central	46%	16%
South Central	60%	10%
Southern	65%	8%
All Hartlepool	58%	11%

In most areas of the Borough, three in five residents visit a park at least once a month; but this falls to less than half of residents in the North central sub-area. Correspondingly, the highest level of non-visiting, at one in six residents, occurs in the North Central sub-area.

Park visiting varies by age; under 45s tend to visit more often than their older counterparts, and the highest level of visiting takes place among those aged 31-45, two fifths (42%) of whom visit at least weekly, no doubt reflecting the value of parks for an age-group that is likely to have younger children needing places to play and exercise. In contrast, just one in eight (12%) of those aged over 75 visit a local park on a weekly basis, and only a quarter (22%) visit at least monthly.

Correspondingly, the proportion of those who never visit parks increases with advancing age. Only 3% of under 30s say they never visit, but this proportion rises to 16% of those aged 61-75, and over a third (34%) of over 75s. Disability is also a factor affecting park usage, with around a quarter (24%) of people with disabilities saying they never use parks, and a lower frequency of visiting on the part of those with disabilities who do use them.

Non-users of parks are a little more likely to be male: one in eight men (13%) never visit, compared with just one in ten women (10%). Men also tend to visit a little less often, with over half of women (53%) visiting at least twice a month, compared with just under half (47%) of men.

This table shows the parks most used by people in Hartlepool:

Table 4.3: Parks most visited

Park	Proportion of respondents who visit
Ward Jackson	53%
Rossmere	12%
Burn Valley	11%
Seaton	10%
Summerhill	3%
All other sites	11%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	889

Low numbers in this table do not indicate non-use, but rather that other sites are used more often.

By far the most popular park in Hartlepool is Ward Jackson; for over half of local people, this is the park they visit most often, and a number of others indicate that they also use this park, even if it is not the one they visit most. No other park even approaches Ward Jackson in popularity, with just one in eight visiting Rossmere and a similar proportion using Burn Valley or Seaton more than any other park. Other parks appear in the results, but not to any significant extent; Summerhill however also comes up as a natural space.

Park visiting also varies by sub-area. Ward Jackson is the park of choice in the Western sub-area, where 98% of those who use parks visit this one, and also in the North Central, where 89% of park visitors use Ward Jackson, but the site is less popular elsewhere; only around a third of residents in other parts of Hartlepool choose Ward Jackson. In South Central, loyalty is split between Ward Jackson (37%) and Burn Valley (37%) while in the Southern sub-area there is a three-way split between Seaton (34%), Rossmere (32%) and Ward Jackson (32%). These figures suggest that while Ward Jackson functions as a town park, it is also a local park for the north and west of the Borough; other parks in the Borough serve a primarily local audience.

Those who do not visit parks were asked why this was, with the following results:

Table 4.4: Reasons for not visiting parks

Reason	Proportion of respondents who do not visit parks
More interesting things to do	38%
Not enough time	36%
General age/disability issues	31%
Too far	18%
Difficult to get to	13%
Too expensive to travel to	8%
Concerned for safety in park	7%
Hard to move around in	7%
Concerned for safety travelling	6%
Park in poor condition	5%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>124</i>

The main reasons for not visiting parks are essentially ones of choice; two in five non-visitors have other things to do which they find more interesting, and around a third say they don't have enough time, meaning that other matters get a higher priority than visiting a park. These are factors which are largely outside a local authority's capacity to influence and do not represent any particular problem or barrier that needs to be overcome. The same is possibly true of the third of people who say that age and/or disability are limiting their capacity to get out; for many this is about mobility generally, and not parks specifically, and action taken to improve park accessibility further would still fail to overcome an innate reluctance to leave the house for a non-essential task.

There are, though, small proportions who hint that they are discouraged from using parks by issues related to cost, safety, difficulty of the journey, or personal safety, whilst a small number say they do not visit because of the condition of the park.

4.3.2 Quantity

This table shows people's perceptions of the quantity of parks:

Table 4.5: Quantity of parks

Opinion	Proportion of all respondents
Too many	0%
Too few	33%
About right	67%
N(=100%)	1,004

Virtually nobody in Hartlepool thinks there are too many local parks and recreation grounds, but one in three people would like to see the quantity of this kind of space increase, while for each of these people there are two who think the present supply is about right.

Quantity perceptions break down by sub-area in this way:

Table 4.6: Quantity of parks by sub-area

Opinion	Western	North central	South central	Southern
Too many	0%	0%	0%	0%
Too few	35%	41%	27%	28%
About right	65%	59%	73%	72%
N(=100%)	235	246	273	246

No sub-area perceives a surplus of park space; a majority in each sub-area believes existing provision to be adequate. However, a significant minority of people in the North central sub-area, two in five of the total, suggest a need for more park space, a view that is echoed by a third of Western residents and a quarter of those in other parts of the Borough.

The highest dissatisfaction with present provision occurs among those aged 31-45; older people are more likely to be happy with what there is. Women are a little more likely to want more park space, while men are more likely to be content with current levels of provision.

4.3.3 Quality of parks

The table below shows how local people rate their preferred park on a range of different criteria. To facilitate comparison, their opinions have been converted into mean scores.³³

³³ The mean score is calculated by taking each individual response for each of the different criteria and converting it into a score. A score of +2 is allocated for each 'excellent' result, and +1 for each 'good' response; 'below average' and 'poor' score -1 and -2 respectively. 'Average' attracts a score of zero, while don't knows are

Table 4.7: Quality assessments of parks

Attribute	Mean score for park users
Safety during the day	0.94
Planting and grassed areas	0.93
Accessibility for wheelchairs or buggies	0.89
Cleanliness and litter	0.82
Opportunities for children to play	0.81
Being well laid out with a variety of landscapes	0.80
Quality of fencing	0.80
Friendliness of park staff	0.77
Wildlife and nature areas	0.51
Level of vandalism and graffiti	0.44
Information and signage	0.44
Litter bins	0.37
Dog mess	0.25
Seating facilities	0.23
Lighting	0.17
Sports facilities	-0.08
Safety after dark	-0.26
Toilet facilities	-0.45
<i>N(=100%) ranges from 456 to 960</i>	

Most of the attributes are rated positively, but none exceeds a mean score of 1.00, the overall equivalent of a 'good' rating. Whilst there are people who find excellence in these different aspects of Hartlepool's parks, the overall consensus is a positive view with room for improvement in most areas.

The highest overall rating is for daytime safety, which attracts a score very close to an overall 'good' rating; this is in contrast to night-time safety, which attracts a modest negative score, indicating that views on safety depend very strongly on whether the site is being visited during hours of daylight or not. Lighting may be a factor in perceptions of safety and also attracts a relatively low, albeit positive, score, suggesting that the safety issue may be

discounted completely. The resulting scores are then averaged to produce a mean score which indicates both the direction of opinion (positive or negative) and the strength with which that view is collectively held.

related to darkness in the parks.³⁴ However, it may be noted that most of the Borough's parks are closed at dusk, so safety after dark is a perception, rather than a direct experience, in most instances.

Play opportunities are viewed much more positively than those for outdoor sports, where a negative score close to 'average' is recorded.

Planting and grass also attracts a good positive score, and so too does the landscaping applied to parks; a more qualified positive view is taken of the quality of nature and wildlife areas on these sites, however. Cleanliness and litter standards are also approximating to good, but perceptions of the provision of litter bins, and of dog mess in the parks, are markedly lower, and the score for vandalism and graffiti also indicates an issue that is not yet fully resolved to the public's satisfaction. Staff friendliness is rated reasonably strongly.

Infrastructure attributes such as accessibility and fencing are relatively well scored, but the scores on seating are low, and those for information also look like an area for improvement. Toilet scores are strongly negative, which reflects a lack of provision in some parks but also criticism of provision in those parks which have them.

The overall score for toilets is in fact strongly influenced by very strong negative scores at Burn Valley (-1.70) and Seaton (-1.60), where the background to the score is presumably the absence of these facilities. Toilet scores are also negative across the age range, and are equally poor for both men and women. Litter shows no variation by age, but younger adults are much less tolerant of dog mess than older park visitors seem to be.

Perceptions of night-time safety reduce with advancing age; over 75s give this a strongly negative score (-0.47), but people from all age-groups have concerns over safety in the Borough's parks after dark, and even under 30s score this negatively (-0.15). Men perceive a greater threat after dark than women do. On daytime safety, however, there is little variation by age or gender.

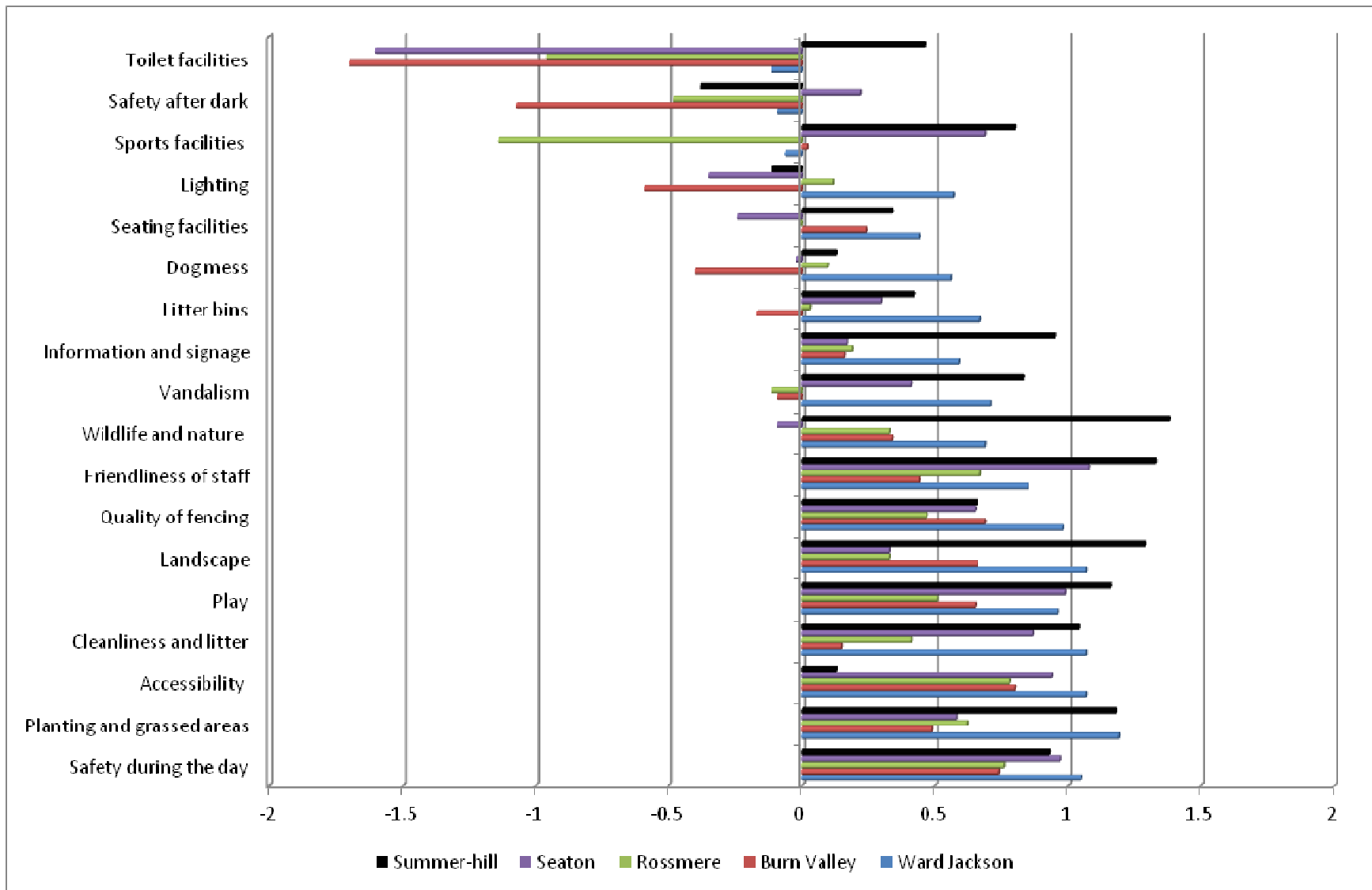
Accessibility scores well for people with disabilities, just slightly exceeding the score given by those without disability. Opinions on play opportunities and sports are higher among older users, and a little lower among those of an age to be taking children to the park; men are especially critical of sports facilities in parks. Staff friendliness is more highly rated by older people; users under the age of 30 give a much lower score against this attribute.

³⁴ Safety after dark is something of an enigma, since the parks are locked after dark and people would not therefore have any experience of using them at this time. The low score is thus indicative of a perception rather than a reality; the perception may be based on experience, media coverage, word of mouth, or observation of anti-social activity, or may be more primal in nature.

The scores for each of the principal parks are given in **Table 4.8** below:

Table 4.8: Quality scores for principal parks

Attribute	Mean score				
	Ward Jackson	Burn Valley	Rossmere	Seaton	Summer-hill
Safety during the day	1.05	0.74	0.76	0.97	0.93
Planting and grassed areas	1.19	0.49	0.62	0.58	1.18
Accessibility	1.07	0.80	0.78	0.94	0.13
Cleanliness and litter	1.07	0.15	0.41	0.87	1.04
Play	0.96	0.65	0.51	0.99	1.16
Landscape	1.07	0.66	0.33	0.33	1.29
Quality of fencing	0.98	0.69	0.47	0.65	0.66
Friendliness of staff	0.85	0.44	0.67	1.08	1.33
Wildlife and nature	0.69	0.34	0.33	-0.09	1.38
Vandalism	0.71	-0.09	-0.11	0.41	0.83
Information and signage	0.59	0.16	0.19	0.17	0.95
Litter bins	0.67	-0.17	0.03	0.30	0.42
Dog mess	0.56	-0.40	0.10	-0.02	0.13
Seating facilities	0.44	0.24	-0.01	-0.24	0.34
Lighting	0.57	-0.59	0.12	-0.35	-0.11
Sports facilities	-0.06	0.02	-1.14	0.69	0.80
Safety after dark	-0.09	-1.07	-0.48	0.22	-0.38
Toilet facilities	-0.11	-1.70	-0.96	-1.60	0.46
<i>N(=100%) ranges from</i>	<i>282 to 501</i>	<i>39 to 102</i>	<i>46 to 115</i>	<i>28 to 81</i>	<i>10 to 29</i>



Scores vary widely between sites. Summerhill emerges as the best park on most of these counts, with strong scores on landscape, play and planting, and also on information, staff friendliness, and wildlife; but even here there are less attractive attributes, with negative scores for lighting and safety after dark, and a neutral score for dog mess. Summerhill is also rated well below its peers for accessibility.

Ward Jackson also emerges well from this comparison, with high positive scores for several attributes including planting, cleanliness and landscape, and the highest score for accessibility. But the park performs less favourably in public perception on its toilet facilities, and is also rated close to neutral on sports and safety after dark.

The other three parks produce more mixed results. Burn Valley attracts a number of modest positive scores, but has negative scores on attributes including dog mess, litter bins and vandalism, and is poorly rated on safety after dark. It also has a low positive score for cleanliness. Its low toilet score reflects the absence of this provision.

Rossmere outperforms Burn Valley in some areas, especially on cleanliness, but is still below the levels achieved elsewhere. It has a lower rating for play, and does not score well on dog mess. Rossmere has negative ratings on four attributes, with substantial low scores for sports and for its toilets.

Seaton produces good results in many areas, although its planting and landscape scores do not match its performance in cleanliness and play. Staff at Seaton are seen as friendlier, though, and although vandalism is an issue it is not as marked as at Burn Valley or Rossmere. Seaton does not score well for seating, and although it has a low lighting score it is the only Hartlepool park to achieve a positive score for safety after dark. Its low toilet score reflects the absence of facilities.

4.3.4 Accessibility

This table shows how people travel to their preferred park:

Table 4.9: Means of travel to park

Travel	Proportion of respondents who visit
Walk or jog	54%
Car	42%
Bus	2%
Cycle	1%
Other	1%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	963

Over half of those who visit parks go on foot; almost everyone else travels to the park by car. This is a high level of pedestrian access and compares favourably with other areas where car dependence is much higher. Use of public transport in connection with park visits is low, as is the use of cycles. Other means of access are primarily motorised scooters or wheelchairs.

Car use is highest in the Western sub-area (47%) and falls to just a third (32%) of park users in the South Central sub-area. Walking is prominent in all sub-areas, especially in the South Central sub-area (65%). Bus use is confined mainly to the North central sub-area (8%).

Walking is most commonplace among those aged 31 - 45, where three in five visits to the preferred park are made on foot; it is lowest among over 75s, where just two in five visits takes place in this way. It is also low among under 30s, where again less than half (43%) of all visits to the preferred park take place on foot. Car use is correspondingly higher for the youngest and oldest visitors, with use of public transport or other methods of travelling low for all age-groups.

Women are more likely to walk than men; 58% of women, against just 50% of men, travel to the park on foot; as would be expected, pedestrian visits are also lower, though far from unknown, among people with disabilities.

The time taken to reach the preferred park is shown here:

Table 4.10: Time taken to reach park

Time	Proportion of respondents who visit
0 - 5 minutes	28%
6 - 10 minutes	38%
11 - 15 minutes	21%
16 - 20 minutes	7%
Over 20 minutes	6%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	967

Most people - two thirds of all those responding - can reach their preferred park in ten minutes or less using their favoured means of transport. In contrast, very few people are prepared to spend more than twenty minutes travelling to a park. In this Borough, parks are an essentially local provision that people wish to have close by their home or their route to home. This in turn suggests that people make the decision as to which park to visit and which mode of transport to use based at least partly on the time it will take to get there.

However, it is noticeable that visits to parks demand longer journeys from residents in the North central sub-area than elsewhere; only 55% of park users in this sub-area can reach their preferred park in 10 minutes, against over two thirds (68%) elsewhere. One in eight

(12%) of North Central park users travels for more than 20 minutes, reflecting the absence of a large park site closer to home.

There is little variation by age on this issue, although older people, and those with disabilities, tend to take a little longer; women tend to make shorter journeys than do men.

If we combine these two results, travel mode and time taken, we arrive at the following results:

Table 4.11: Travel by time taken

Mode and Time	Proportion of respondents who visit
Pedestrian, 0 - 5 minutes	17%
Pedestrian, 6 -10 minutes	16%
Pedestrian, over 10 minutes	20%
Car, 0 - 5 minutes	11%
Car, 6 -10 minutes	20%
Car, over 10 minutes	11%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>958</i>

The two largest groups, each representing one in five of all park users, are pedestrians on a journey of more than 10 minutes (almost all of whom are taking less than 15 minutes), and car users on a trip lasting between five and ten minutes. This indicates that a park needs to be within a 15 minute walk for those travelling on foot. For those with a car, however, a ten minute drive might well allow them to be more selective about which park they use; a third of car users are prepared to travel for 10 minutes or more, but again not normally exceeding 15 minutes to reach their preferred destination.

4.3.5 Comparisons with 2008 study

The proportions of people visiting parks, and the proportion not visiting them, are similar to the results in the earlier study; Ward Jackson remains the prominent park of choice. Travel preferences are also unchanged, with similar proportions walking or using cars, although the proportion of park users whose journey lasts for less than 10 minutes has risen slightly.

Quality scores have improved, as this tabulation shows:

Table 4.12: Park quality scores, 2014 and 2008 (comparable attributes only)

Attribute	Mean score for park users	
	2014	2008
Safety during the day	0.94	0.60
Planting and grassed areas	0.93	0.81
Accessibility for wheelchairs or buggies	0.89	0.62
Cleanliness and litter	0.82	0.63
Opportunities for children to play	0.81	0.72
Quality of fencing	0.80	0.61
Friendliness of park staff	0.77	0.34
Level of vandalism and graffiti	0.44	-0.06
Information and signage	0.44	0.08
Litter bins	0.37	0.04
Dog mess	0.25	-0.15
Seating facilities	0.23	-0.09
Lighting	0.17	-0.07
Toilet facilities	-0.45	-1.01
<i>N(=100%) ranges from 456 to 960</i>		

Not all quality attributes are covered by both studies, but every comparable quality attribute shows an uplift in mean score, sometimes to a considerable degree. The largest increases are in daytime safety, vandalism and graffiti, dog mess, and toilets - which although still negative, shows a massive improvement on the result from the earlier study. Improvement has also taken place in areas such as cleanliness and play opportunities, but not to the same extent.

There has also been an increase in the proportion of people who are satisfied with the quantity of parks, up from 50% in 2008 to 67% in 2014. It is possible that the uplift in quality has reduced the demand for additional space by effectively making existing space more useable.

4.3.6 Youth survey feedback

The table below shows the proportions of young people from the youth survey who visit parks in Hartlepool.

Table 4.13: Youth visits to parks

Frequency of visiting	Proportion of respondents who visit
At least weekly	44%
Once or twice a month	28%
Three or four times a year	9%
Less often	12%
Never	7%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	412

A large proportion of young people, over two-fifths, visit a local park at least once a week, and three quarters visit at least once a month. This is a higher frequency of visiting than for adult residents and demonstrates something of the importance of these spaces for younger residents. Only a small proportion of younger people never visit a local park.

The park visited most often is Ward Jackson, where well over half (58%) of young people go. Summerhill attracts one in nine (11%) and Burn Valley one in eleven (9%); the proportions visiting other parks are small, but also reflect the low participation from what might be the catchment areas for parks at Seaton Carew and Rossmere.

Those who don't use parks criticise them for lack of interesting content and for inconvenience.

Young people's journeys to parks use these travel modes:

Table 4.14: Means of travel to park (youth survey)

Travel	Proportion of respondents who visit
Walk or jog	58%
Car	23%
Bus	2%
Cycle	10%
Other	7%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	376

Three out of five young people travel to their preferred park on foot; a quarter get a lift there in a car. Cycling accounts for one in ten visits to a park by a young person. Not surprisingly, car use is much lower than for adults, but cycling is much higher in this age-group. Public transport use is minimal.

Most young people (53%) travel for less than 10 minutes, but a small proportion (10%) travel for over 20 minutes to reach their preferred park.

Activities engaged in by young people are shown here:

Table 4.15: Youth activity in parks

Activity	Proportion of all respondents using parks
Meet up with friends	66%
Sports and games	53%
Walking	51%
Use play equipment	47%
Sit and relax	37%
Enjoy wildlife and nature	22%
Cycling	21%
Skateboarding/scootering	19%
Other exercise	15%
Use exercise equipment	10%
Other	13%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>372</i>

For young people, parks are above all social spaces where they can meet up with their friends; but they are also places of significant levels of exercise, with sports, games, wheeled activities and other forms of exercise featuring prominently in this list. More passive activities such as enjoying nature and relaxing are also here, but not to the same extent.

'Other' activity in the park includes dog walking, free play, and tree climbing, but is more often an elaboration on an activity already mentioned elsewhere in the table.

For a quarter of young people (23%) the park in Hartlepool they visit most often is the best park they know; a further two-fifths (38%) say their preferred park is a good one, though not the best. One in four (23%) rate their park okay, while one in seven (14%) see considerable room for improvement.

Nor do young people find it difficult to suggest improvements for their preferred park. Their suggestions have been grouped into broad areas in this analysis:

Table 4.16: Improvements to parks (youth survey)

Opinion	Proportion of all valid comments
More/better play equipment	39%
More activities/facilities	16%
Goal posts/sports provision	14%
Improved catering	9%
Scooter/skatepark/BMX	9%
More teenage provision	8%
Better attention to cleanliness	7%
Improved toilets	5%
Other improvements	34%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>1,004</i>

Many comments suggest more than one area of improvement, so the results exceed 100%. By far the most prominent area for improvement is the play equipment, with some respondents making specific suggestions (climbing equipment is a strong favourite) and others simply seeking a better choice of provision; several request the repair of broken equipment, or the replacement of damaged kit that has been removed.

Play equipment may well be at least part of what people have in mind when they request more activities or facilities; though some are specifically looking for led activities, or community events, many more are not specific about what they are looking for here. Another popular improvement would be the provision of equipment to support informal sports, with goal posts a very prominent suggestion in this respect. Provision for wheeled activities would also be welcomed in some quarters.

Comments on catering include some who would like their park to provide this, but also others who are critical of existing provision for being over-priced (for young people), or closing up too early in the evening. There is a suggestion here that young people use the cafe as a social space, and elsewhere there is the observation that youth shelters have no seats in them, perhaps encouraging the use of the cafe in this way. More teenage provision is called for both by teenagers who need the park to offer more, and by younger children whose space is encroached on by their older peers.

A wide range of other suggestions includes the provision of hard surface courts, play provision for pre-schoolers, seating, picnic space, and pond clearance. More ambitious requests include swimming, hot tubs and ice skating.

Asked about the quantity of park space, young people divide fairly evenly; but those who think there is enough of this space (40%) are outnumbered by those looking for more (47%). Only a small group think there is a surplus of park space.

4.4 Audit

4.4.1 Quantity

In total, seven spaces have been defined as being parks and gardens. One additional space to those identified in 2008 has been classified as a park and this is Redheugh Gardens (PRK008) on the Headland. Parks range in size from 0.2 hectares (Redheugh Gardens) to 40.3 hectares (Summerhill Country Park). The total area of parks and gardens in Hartlepool is 64.2 hectares which equates to 0.70 hectares per 1,000 population. However, there are differences in provision by sub-area as can be seen in **Table 4.17**.

The distribution, in terms of numbers of parks, is even across the sub-areas with each sub-area effectively having two parks.³⁵ The largest park, Summerhill (40.3 hectares), is partly located in the South Central sub-area and partly in the Western sub-area. As a consequence, the distribution of park area is uneven across the Borough, with the South Central and Western sub-areas having significantly greater areas of park.

The sub-area with the largest provision is South Central, which has 76.8% of the total provision for Hartlepool as a whole. The North Central sub-area has less than 1% of the total provision.

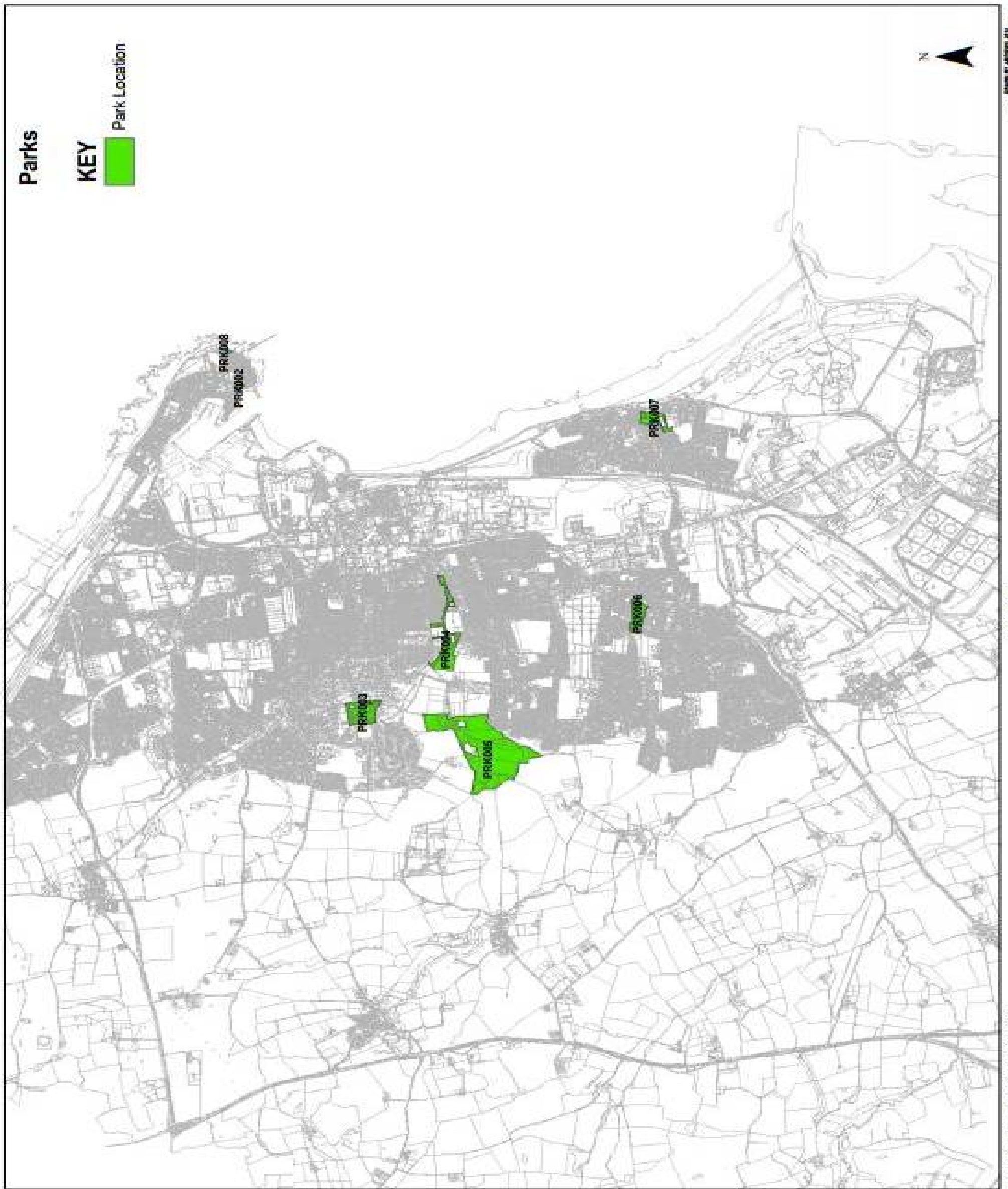
³⁵ Summerhill Country Park is split into two sub-areas.

Table 4.17: Parks and Gardens Provision in Hartlepool

Site Reference	Site Name	Sub-area	Hectares	Population	Ha per 1000	Persons per Ha
PRK002	Croft Gardens	North Central	0.4			
PRK008	Redheugh Gardens	North Central	0.2			
Sub-area			0.6	32700	0.02	54500
PRK004	Burn Valley Park	South Central	9.5			
PRK005	Summerhill Country Park	South Central	39.78			
Sub-area			49.28	26795	1.84	544
PRK006	Rossmere Park	Southern	3.9			
PRK007	Seaton Park	Southern	3			
Sub-area			6.9	17250	0.40	2500
PRK005	Summerhill Country Park	Western	0.52			
PRK003	Ward Jackson Park	Western	6.9			
Sub-area			7.42	15490	0.48	2088
Hartlepool			64.2	92235	0.70	1437

The locations of these parks is shown in **Map 4.1**.

Map 4.1 Locations of Parks in Hartlepool



A comparison of provision with some other local authorities is shown in **Table 4.18** below.

Table 4.18: Comparison of Parks and Gardens Provision³⁶

Location	Parks and Gardens per 1000 population (Ha)
Chelmsford	3.12
Sunderland	2.54
Enfield	2.49
Bexley	2.08
Middlesbrough	1.35
Redcar	1.24
Sevenoaks	0.95
Hammersmith & Fulham	0.94
Harrow	0.88
Vale Royal	0.88
Darlington	0.82
Hartlepool	0.70
Purbeck	0.66
Knowsley	0.59
East Hertfordshire	0.53
Reigate & Banstead	0.47
Thurrock	0.43
Three Rivers	0.31
Erewash	0.31
Islington	0.28
Windsor and Maidenhead	0.27
West Wiltshire	0.25
Waveney	0.25
Newcastle	0.20

Parks and gardens provision is normally expressed in terms of the area per 1,000 population; for Hartlepool as a whole this figure is 0.70 hectares per 1,000 population. This is a substantially lower level of provision than Sunderland (2.54 ha per 1000) but over three times the level of provision in Newcastle (0.2 ha per 1000).

³⁶ The list of comparators used here has necessarily been limited to those authorities which have completed their Open Space, Sport and Recreation assessments. Where possible, data from adjoining and similar local authorities have been included.

4.3.2 Quality and Value

Parks and gardens were assessed against a range of attributes that reflect both the quality and the value of the park, so as to identify those spaces of good quality and those that need enhancement. The assessment sheet used can be found in **Appendix 1**. Quality scores include attributes such as the character and layout of the park, and features such as the planting, entrance, pathways, and seating. Value scores relate to

- context – a space which is relatively inaccessible will be of little value, regardless of quality
- level and type of use – a space which attracts little use will always be of low value, whilst even a low quality space that is well used will be of high value
- wider benefits – structure and landscape will help to define the identity and character of the park, and there are also ecological, biodiversity, social inclusion and health benefits, and the creation of a sense of place

Table 4.19: Quality and Value Scores

Site Reference	Site Name	% Quality Score	% Value Score
PRK002	Croft Gardens	87%	87%
PRK003	Ward Jackson Park	91%	93%
PRK004	Burn Valley Park	78%	97%
PRK005	Summerhill Country Park	91%	100%
PRK006	Rossmere Park	58%	90%
PRK007	Seaton Park	82%	87%
PRK008	Redheugh Gardens	96%	87%

The statistical median³⁷ quality score for parks is 87%, and four parks achieve a score equal to or higher than this, with Croft Gardens (PRK002) being the site that scored closest to this figure; three parks score below the median. The highest scoring park for quality is Redheugh Gardens (PRK008) with 96%.

The median value score for parks is 90%, and four parks achieve a score equal to or higher than this, with Rossmere Park (PRK006) scoring exactly this figure; three parks score below the median. The highest scoring park for value is Summerhill Country Park (PRK005) with 100%.

³⁷ The median of a population is the point that divides the distribution of scores in half. Numerically, half of the scores in a population will have values that are equal to or larger than the median and half will have values that are equal to or smaller than the median. To work out the median:

a) Put the numbers in order. 3 6 6 6 7 9 11 11 13

b) The number in the middle of the list is the median 7 is in the middle. So the median value is 7.

If there are two middle values, the median is halfway between them. For example, if the set of numbers were 3 6 6 6 7 8 9 11 11 13 There are two middle values, 7 and 8. The median is halfway between 7 and 8. The median is 7.5.

Two parks, Ward Jackson (PRK003) and Summerhill (PRK005) achieved an assessment of high quality and high value.

Table 4.20: Summary of Quality and Value Rankings

Quality Ranking	Value Ranking	Number
High	High	2
High	Low	2
Low	High	2
Low	Low	1

The detailed results of the audit can be found in **Appendix 4**.

4.3.3 Comparison with 2008 Study

The results of the quality and value assessment carried out for the 2008 study, which used the same assessment framework, are shown in **Table 4.21** below. These indicate an overall improvement in the scores for individual parks. In terms of quality every park, with the exception of Rossmere Park (PRK006), has been scored more highly than it was in 2008. Of note are the increases in quality from 78% to 91% for Ward Jackson Park (PRK003) and from 58% to 82% for Seaton Park (PRK007).

Table 4.21: Quality and Value Scores in 2008

Site Reference	Site Name	% Quality Score	% Value Score
PRK002	Croft Gardens	81%	94%
PRK003	Ward Jackson Park	78%	100%
PRK004	Burn Valley Park	59%	94%
PRK005	Summerhill Country Park	90%	94%
PRK006	Rossmere Park	65%	89%
PRK007	Seaton Park	58%	67%
PRK008	Redheugh Gardens	96%	87%

4.3.4 Accessibility

Accessibility of parks is a key attribute because if a particular park is inaccessible it will be irrelevant to those who want to use it. Consultation with local residents has revealed that access to parks is mainly by foot. It has been possible to determine the distance thresholds for parks, taking into account barriers or severance factors such as major roads. The distance thresholds do not give an accurate indication of the “catchment” of a particular park,

but do provide an “effective catchment” i.e. the straight line distance travelled by around 75 - 80% of users.

The findings of the consultation about the way in which local people use their parks are similar to the results in the 2008 study. A hierarchy of provision which defines the role and significance of parks in Hartlepool, based on the function and key characteristics of each individual park is shown in **Table 4.22**. It is important to remember that a park that functions at the higher level will also function as a park at lower levels of the hierarchy, so that, for instance, a Community Park will also function as a Local Park. The hierarchy shown in **Table 4.22** below is identical to that used in the 2008 study.

This hierarchy reflects the findings of the questionnaire survey, but also the perception of the council that some of its more significant parks serve a much wider catchment population than would normally be the case, not least by offering facilities to visitors to the area. The Community Parks appeal to local residents from across the district. Trips to these parks are likely to be planned rather than casual, other than for those who live locally to the parks.

Table 4.22: Hierarchy of Parks

Type & Main Function	Approx Size and Maximum Distance from Home	Characteristics
Community Park		
Weekend and occasional visits mainly by foot but also by car	Size over 4.4 hectares Distance over 1 km	Open Space with varied landscape and general facilities for active and passive recreation. Children’s playing space with a good range of equipment for all age groups. Car parking provision, toilets and possibly catering facilities.
Local Park		
For pedestrian visitors including residents and workers	Size typically 3.5 hectares Distance typically 0.7 km	Providing children’s play area, sitting out areas and some outdoor recreation.
Satellite Parks		
Pedestrian visits especially by the elderly, parents with young children particularly in areas of high density housing, and for workers in employment areas	Size up to 2.5 hectares Distance up to 0.4 km	Small children’s play area, sitting out areas, grass and shrubbery planting.

The hierarchy is applied to parks and gardens in Hartlepool in **Table 4.23** below.

Table 4.23: Hierarchy for Parks and Gardens in Hartlepool

Site Reference	Site Name	Sub-area	Area (hectares)	Type	Distance
PRK005	Summerhill Country Park	South Central & Western	40.3	Community	Over 1km
PRK003	Ward Jackson Park	Western	6.9	Community	Over 1km
PRK004	Burn Valley Park	South Central	9.5	Local Park	0.4 km to 1 km
PRK006	Rossmere Park	Southern	3.9	Local Park	0.4 km to 1 km
PRK007	Seaton Park	Southern	3.0	Local Park	0.4 km to 1 km
PRK002	Croft Gardens	North Central	0.4	Satellite Park	Under 0.4 km
PRK008	Redheugh Gardens	North Central	0.2	Satellite Park	Under 0.4 km

There are two Community Parks that attract visitors from a larger catchment area, and three Local Parks that fulfil roles in both their immediate locality and across a wider catchment. Finally, there are two Satellite Parks which serve a very local catchment.

Ward Jackson Park has been categorised as a Community Park even though it does not meet the size threshold set out in **Table 4.23**. This reflects the findings of the community consultation. Respondents clearly consider Ward Jackson Park as a 'destination' and will travel across the Borough to visit it.

4.4 Standards

4.4.1 Quantity

The audit found that overall the current provision of parks in Hartlepool is 0.70 Hectares per 1,000. However, the distribution of parks between the different sub-areas is unequal with significantly greater provision in the South Central sub-area. The majority of respondents consider that existing provision is adequate. However, the lower level of parks provision in the North Central sub-area is reflected in the finding that a significant minority of people in this locality consider that there should be more park space. On this basis we consider that the quantity standard for parks should be 0.70 hectares per 1,000 population with emphasis on increasing provision in the North Central sub-area. This standard would not however suggest that there is a surplus in any other sub-area.

Quantity Standard

0.70 hectares per 1000 people

Emphasis to be given to increasing provision in the North Central sub-area.

4.4.2 Quality

The consultation indicates that overall, residents' views about the standards of quality in Hartlepool's parks is positive. There has been a perceived improvement in some attributes, notably in daytime safety, vandalism and graffiti, dog mess, and toilets. Improvement has also taken place in cleanliness and play opportunities.

The statistical median quality score for parks is 87% and for value the score is 90%. These are high scores which nevertheless set an achievable target which lower scoring parks can aspire to. The benchmark site for parks is PRK002 Croft Gardens.

Quality Standard

A quality score of 87%

A value score of 90%

A quality standard that has been achieved by two parks in Hartlepool³⁸ is the Green Flag Award. This scheme aims to raise standards in public parks by providing a benchmark by which the quality of parks and open spaces can be measured.

4.4.4 Accessibility

The pattern indicated by the community consultation, the distances people are prepared to travel locally, and the barriers to access, have informed the parks hierarchy set out in **Table 4.23**. The hierarchy establishes the accessibility standards for parks and gardens in Hartlepool.

The aim of these standards is to ensure that local people have access to good quality parks and gardens. Ideally, everyone should be within the catchment for each level of the hierarchy. A key element of the strategy will be the consideration of how the deficiencies revealed by the mapping of buffer areas can be alleviated or reduced.

³⁸ PRK003 Ward Jackson Park and PRK005 Summerhill Country Park.

Accessibility Standard**Community Park****1 kilometre****Local Park****0.7 kilometres****Satellite Park****Up to 0.4 kilometres****4.5 Application of the Standards****4.5.1 Quantity**

The quantity standard for parks is 0.70 hectares per 1,000 population which is the same as the current overall level of provision of parks in Hartlepool. However, whilst the South Central sub-area is well provided the North Central sub-area has a comparatively low level of provision and a significant minority of people in this locality considers that there should be more park space.

Table 4.24 shows the current level of deficiency for the Borough and for each of the four sub-areas, when the recommended standard of 0.70 ha per 1000 population is applied.

Table 4.24: Current Deficiencies in Parks and Gardens

Sub-area	Population (Mid 2012)	Current level of provision (Hectares)	Current level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population (Hectares)	Amount of Parks and Gardens required to meet standard (Hectares)	Surplus/ Deficiency (Hectares)
North Central	32700	0.60	0.02	0.7	22.89	-22.29
South Central	26795	49.28	1.84	0.7	18.76	30.52
Southern	17250	6.90	0.40	0.7	12.08	-5.18
Western	15490	7.42	0.48	0.7	10.84	-3.42
Hartlepool	92235	64.20	0.70	0.7	64.56	-0.36

Application of the standard generates a deficit of 0.36 hectares of park space across Hartlepool, and a deficit in three of the sub-areas. The deficit is most marked in the North Central sub-area, where 22.29 hectares of additional space is needed, but is also prominent in the Southern sub-area, where a deficit of 6.18 hectares is indicated. The deficit in the Western sub-area is 3.42 hectares. The South Central sub-area has a quantity above the standard. This is due to the large Country Park, Summerhill, which is over 40 hectares.

Table 4.25: Future Deficiencies in Parks and Gardens

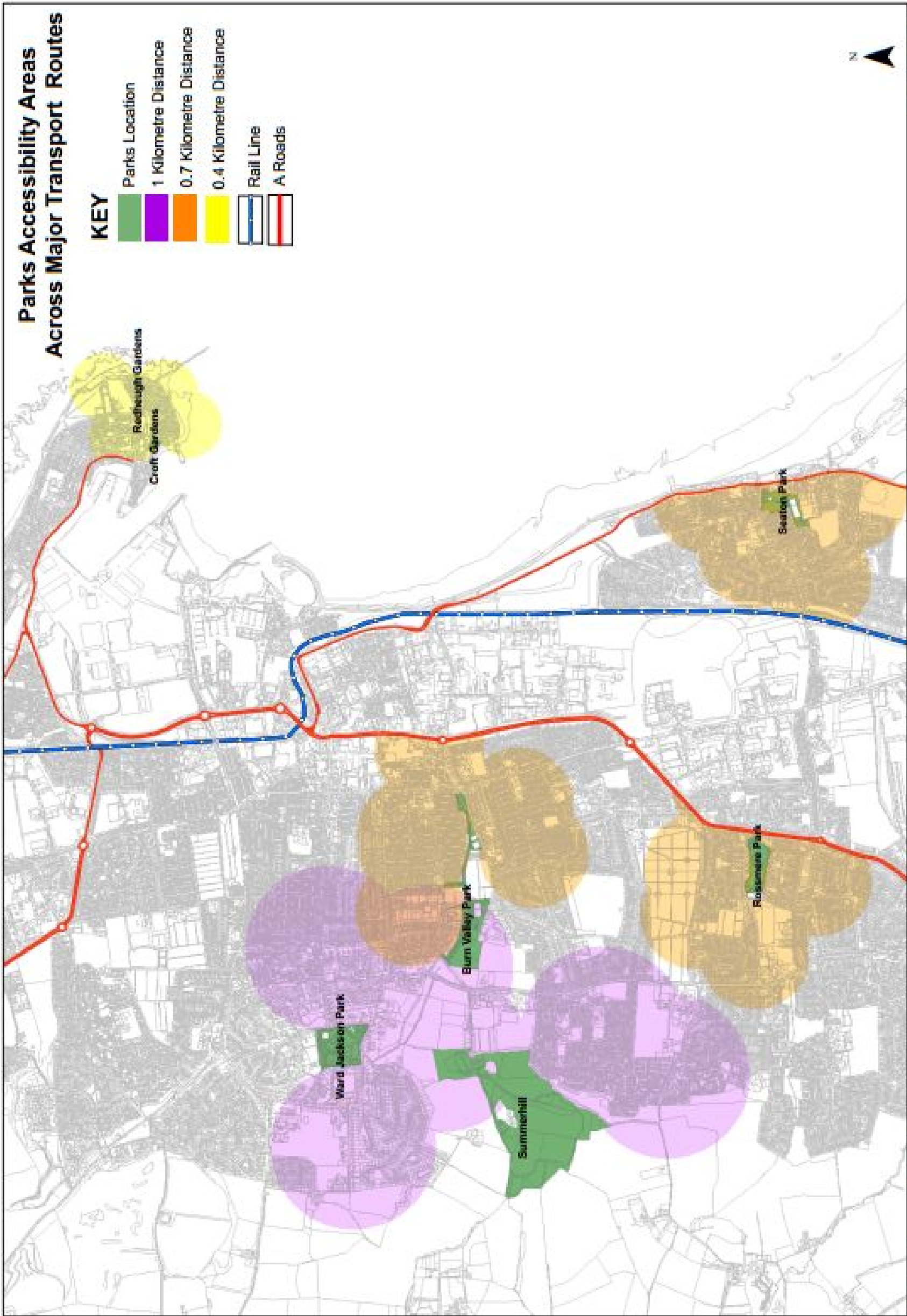
Sub-area	Population (Mid 2019)	Future level of provision (Hectares)	Future level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population (Hectares)	Amount of Parks and Gardens required to meet standard (Hectares)	Future Surplus/ Deficiency (Hectares)
North Central	33,160	0.60	0.02	0.7	23.21	-22.61
South Central	26,600	49.28	1.85	0.7	18.62	30.66
Southern	17,350	6.90	0.40	0.7	12.15	-5.25
Western	16,905	7.42	0.44	0.7	11.83	-4.41
Hartlepool	94,015	64.20	0.68	0.7	65.81	-1.61

By 2019 it is projected that there will be a deficit of 1.61 hectares of park space across Hartlepool, and an increased deficit in three of the sub areas. The deficit in the North Central sub-area increases to 22.61 hectares and in the Southern sub-area the deficit increases to 5.25 hectares. The deficit in the Western sub-area is 4.41 hectares. The South Central sub-area retains a level of provision well above the local standard.

4.5.2 Accessibility

Map 4.2 shows that the sub-areas with the greatest accessibility issues are the North Central sub-area, and the Southern sub-area. The map shows the catchment area for each park; the concentration of parks means that some catchment areas can overlap. When the catchments are amalgamated the areas without reasonable access to a Park can be identified. These are the ward of De Bruce and parts of Headland and Harbour in the North Central sub-area, Hart and Rural West in the Western sub-area, and Fens and Rossmere and part of Seaton in the Southern sub-area.

The rural areas are largely unserved. In the case of the coastal areas provision is addressed in part through the availability of the beaches and through the use of amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural greenspace to provide opportunities for recreation e.g. Town Moor on the Headland. Nevertheless there is a marked shortage of parks in the North Central sub-area.



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Scale: 1:20,000

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4.5.3 Addressing Deficiencies

There are two opportunities to address deficiencies in quantity. The first is the area of amenity greenspace and children’s play at Clavering and the second at Town Moor on the Headland. Details of these spaces are shown in **Table 4.26**. AG003 and CP005 are actually on the same site at Clavering.

Table 4.26: Potential future park space

Site Reference	Site Name	Ward	Sub-area	Ha
AG003	Town Moor	Headland & Harbour	North Central	4.29
AG007	Easington Road/West View Rd	Hart	Western	3.25
CP005	Clavering (Rafton Drive)	Hart	Western	1.02
Total				8.58

The Clavering site already has many of the attributes of a park. Further enhancements such as railings, paths and additional landscaping will considerably add to its quality and value to the extent that it could be considered as a Local Park at the next review of this study.

Town Moor is currently a large area of amenity greenspace lacking in many features of a park. However, adjoining Town Moor there are outdoor sports facilities including bowling greens and tennis courts. In addition there are opportunities for children’s play. A masterplan for the whole area could seek to integrate these separate features through careful landscaping to provide a new Local Park.

Quality levels in parks can be improved by addressing the following criteria:

Overall impression

- a welcoming appearance at the entrance to the park
- an appropriate layout of woody and non-woody elements giving good spatial quality
- good balance between natural, amenity and recreational elements
- good relationship between landscape elements, infrastructure, buildings and structures relative to the site and relating well in visual terms
- a varied topography and attractive views
- elements of formal and informal supervision provide a feeling of personal safety and encourage people to use the park.

Entrances

- the entrances to sites should be well placed, in good condition and well maintained.

Parking

- adequate parking adjacent to main entrances to the park.

Information and interpretation

- site is well signposted

- informative interpretation boards that provide good educational material

Water

- well maintained water areas.

Boundaries and paths

- fencing maintained in a good state of repair
- gates in good working order
- paths are generally well placed and in good condition
- gravel or grass paths not overgrown
- tarmac paths kept in good state of repair and potholes filled in.

Access

- site is accessible to people with disabilities
- measures to facilitate access and overcome obstacles such as steep hills or rough terrain

Safety, vandalism and graffiti

- feels safe during the day
- little evidence of graffiti and vandalism

Cleanliness, dog fouling, litter and fly tipping

- little evidence of litter, dog mess and fly tipping.

Facilities

- a sufficient number of seats maintained in good condition
- play areas/ buildings/toilets well maintained and functioning
- refreshment/café providing good quality food and drinks at a reasonable cost
- toilets should be clean and well maintained
- good range of sports provision in good condition.

Buildings

- maintained in above average condition
- absence of graffiti on the walls.

Nature conservation

- evidence of encouragement of nature conservation e.g. margin of grass areas allowed to grow.

Trees

- absence of dead trees
- diversity of species and age of specimens.

5. CHILDREN'S PLAY

5.1 Definition

'Play' has been defined³⁹ as freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child. This definition is widely recognised and understood in the play sector; in lay terms it says that children are playing when they are doing what they want to do, in the way they want to and for their own reasons.

The term 'play provision' is used to describe settings where the primary aim is for children to play. Play England's objective for good play provision has been summarised as the delivery of play provision that is accessible, welcoming and engaging for all children and young people including those who are disabled or have specific needs and wishes; it is acknowledged that children and young people of different ages have different play interests and needs.

This section is concerned principally with dedicated playable spaces which are mostly equipped, although children often play in spaces with no specific play equipment. In general, play provision is considered to be open access where children can come and go as they please. A study carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 1996⁴⁰ found that just 12% of outdoor play by children occurs in equipped play areas; in contrast, nearly half of all play was at that time in the street or on the pavement and 18% in public open space including amenity space, showing that this type of provision offers significant potential for children's play.

Playgrounds and play areas are located in parks, recreation grounds, playing fields and other public open spaces or in housing estates, where they have been designed as part of the development plan, or included when the area has been re-developed or renovated.

5.2 Strategic Context

In response to the growing demand for better play opportunities, in 2008 the government recognised the importance of play to child development and produced a national play strategy⁴¹ which set out plans to improve and develop play facilities for children throughout the country. The strategy identified the importance of free play, particularly outdoors, as being fundamental to children's learning, healthy growth and development. It emphasised that children must have access to opportunities for risk-taking and that those responsible for planning for play provision needed to strike a balance between risk and benefit. Children should have a legitimate claim to play both in places designed specifically for play and to share in the use of general public space for their own enjoyment.

The strategy sought to support and develop opportunities for play but also called for a much more imaginative and flexible approach to the creation of new play spaces.

The aim of the strategy was based on the following principles:

- a variety of supervised and unsupervised places for play, free from charge;

³⁹ Children's Play Council (2002) Making the Case for Play

⁴⁰ Child's Play: facilitating play on housing estates; Rob Whewy and Alison Millward, JRF 1997

⁴¹ The Play Strategy. DCFS and DCMS 2008.

- local neighbourhoods that are, and feel like, safe, interesting places to play;
- routes to children's play space that are safe and accessible for all children and young people;
- parks and open spaces that are attractive and welcoming to children and young people, and are well maintained and well used;
- children and young people have a clear stake in public space and their play is accepted by their neighbours;
- children and young people play in a way that respects other people and property;
- children and young people and their families take an active role in the development of local play spaces; and
- play spaces that are attractive, welcoming, engaging and accessible for all local children and young people, including disabled children, and children from minority groups in the community.

In a letter to Chief Planning Officers, the government advised that the Play Strategy:

'recognises that planning and wider local place shaping is of fundamental importance to the quality of space available for children to play, and to the ability of children to access that space safely by foot and bike.'

The Children's Plan, "Building brighter futures"⁴² set out the Government's strategy for children, young people and their families. This included £225 million of new government funding to create more and safer places to play with 3,500 playgrounds to be rebuilt or renewed, and made more accessible to disabled children. The plan also encouraged the development of more Home Zones, greater use of 20mph speed limits and the promotion of outdoor play where children can learn how to manage risks.

Playbuilder was a national 3-year programme of capital grants from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)⁴³ Hartlepool Council was awarded a grant of £1,129,958 under the Playbuilder programme to improve 22 play areas before March 2011, primarily for the 8-13 age group. In addition, the Big Lottery Fund's Children's Play programme provided an award of £296,457 over a three year period to provide free accessible play for children and young people.

The guidance 'Better Places to Play Through Planning'⁴⁴ aims to support local planning and transport authorities to develop and implement planning policy that ensures children and young people have access to high quality playable spaces close to where they live and spend their time. As the agency responsible for spatial planning, the creation of suitable spaces for play is a key responsibility of the local planning authority. Local planning policies and practice are considered to have a major impact on the provision of accessible spaces where children and young people can play in safety in their neighbourhoods.

The guidance makes recommendations for improving the quality, quantity and access to local playable spaces through planning policy and development control. The Local Development Framework (LDF) and development control are mechanisms to improve the

⁴² The Children's Plan: Building brighter futures. The Department for Children Schools and Families. 2007.

⁴³ Now (2010) the Department for Education

⁴⁴ Better Places to Play Through Planning. Play England 2008.

experience and enjoyment of children and young people and involve them in shaping their own neighbourhoods.

A recent review⁴⁵ produced by the Children’s Play Policy Forum reaches a number of conclusions about the wider impact of play initiatives. Evidence is presented which demonstrates how play initiatives lead to improvements in children’s physical and mental health and well-being, and are linked to a range of other cognitive and social developmental benefits.

The report concludes that benefits reach beyond children themselves and into families and the wider community. When given the opportunity to take action to improve facilities, local communities often place a priority on play provision. For example, the Big Lottery Fund Community Spaces initiative was demand-led: local communities made their own decisions about what spaces and projects they wanted to apply for. The programme evaluation showed 35% of projects put forward were playgrounds, more than any other single category.

5.3 ‘Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play’

‘Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play’ (PAD) formally known as ‘The Six Acre Standard’, published by Fields in Trust,⁴⁶ recommends the benchmark standards set out in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1: PAD benchmark standards for play space

Children’s Playing Space	Benchmark Standard (hectares per 1000 population)
Designated Equipped Playing Space	0.25
Informal Playing Space	0.55
Total - Children’s Playing Space	0.80

Fields in Trust has developed a quantity Benchmark Standard derived from a national survey of locally developed standards of provision in local authorities across the country. The standard provides a basis for assessing the adequacy of existing provision compared to the median score achieved in other local authority areas, and can be used to assess the adequacy of each category of equipped play space as well as the adequacy of provision for casual and informal play. The overall children’s playing space Benchmark Standard can then be applied to obtain an overview of the current level of provision.

Similarly, Fields in Trust has also developed an accessibility standard which is shown in **Table 5.2**.

⁴⁵ The Play Return: A review of the wider impact of play initiatives, Tim Gill for the Children’s Play Policy Forum, 2014

⁴⁶ Fields in Trust was formerly known as the National Playing Fields Association.

Table 5.2: FIT Children’s Playing Space Accessibility Benchmark Standard

Type of Space	Distance Criteria (metres)	
	Walking Distance	Straight Line Distance
Local areas for play or ‘door-step’ spaces – for play and informal recreation (LAPs)	100	60
Local equipped, or local landscaped, areas for play – for play and informal recreation (LEAPs)	400	240
Neighbourhood equipped areas for play –for play and informal recreation, and provision for young people (NEAPs); this also covers what is referred to in the London Supplementary Planning Guidance as youth space	1,000	600

Fields in Trust suggests that the Play England Quality Assessment Tool, or equivalent, can be used to assess the quality of both designated play spaces, whether equipped or not, and casual and informal spaces for play.

5.4 Play England typology

Play England has developed a typology of play spaces.⁴⁷ This defines play provision as spaces and facilities that are free of charge, where children are free to come and go (other than where safety is an issue for children with particular needs), and where they are free to choose what they do – the so-called “three frees”. The typology of play spaces is shown in **Table 5.3**.

⁴⁷ Tools for evaluating local play provision: A technical guide to Play England local play indicators. Ashley Godfrey Associates 2009

Table 5.3: Play England Typology of Play Spaces

Type of Play Space	Description	Walking Distance (metres)
Type A: 'Door-step' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation	<i>A small space, within sight of home, where children, especially young children can play within view of known adults.</i>	100
Type B: 'Local' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation	<i>A larger space which can be reached safely by children beginning to travel independently and with friends, without accompanying adults and for adults with young children to walk to with ease.</i>	400
Type C: 'Neighbourhood' spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation.	<i>A larger space or facility for informal recreation which children and young people, used to travelling longer distances independently, can get to safely and spend time in play and informal recreation with their peers and have a wider range of play experiences.</i>	1,000

5.5 Local Context

5.5.1 A Play Strategy for Hartlepool

The strategy will promote best practice using the 'Best Play - What play provision should do for children'⁴⁸ objectives which are acknowledged as the benchmark outcomes for play provision and form a basis against which play provision can be evaluated. These are:

- Extend the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it.
- Recognise the child's need to test boundaries and respond positively to this need.
- Manage the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from harm.
- Maximise the range of play opportunities.
- Foster independence and self esteem.
- Foster the child's respect for others and offer opportunities for social integration.

⁴⁸ A joint publication from the then National Playing Fields Association (now Fields in Trust), PLAYLINK and the Children's Play Council, 2000.

- Foster the child’s well-being, health, growth and development, knowledge and understanding, creativity and capacity to learn.

The seven objectives of the Action Plan are as follows:

- Develop a co-ordinated approach to play
- Increase play space/opportunities.
- Develop the quality of play opportunities.
- Further develop processes that facilitate the participation of children, young people and local communities.
- Aim to offer all children and young people the opportunity to experience acceptable risks in play environments.
- Improve safe accessibility within formal and informal play settings.
- Funding and sustainability of play.

5.6 The need for provision for Children and Young People

It is estimated that there are currently 18,980 children and young people under the age of 16 in Hartlepool or 20.5% of the total population. **Table 5.5** and **Chart 8.5** show how this group is projected to change over the next seventeen years. The growth in the numbers of children and young people in the period 2014 to 2024 will require additional play and informal recreation provision to meet the needs of the existing and future population.

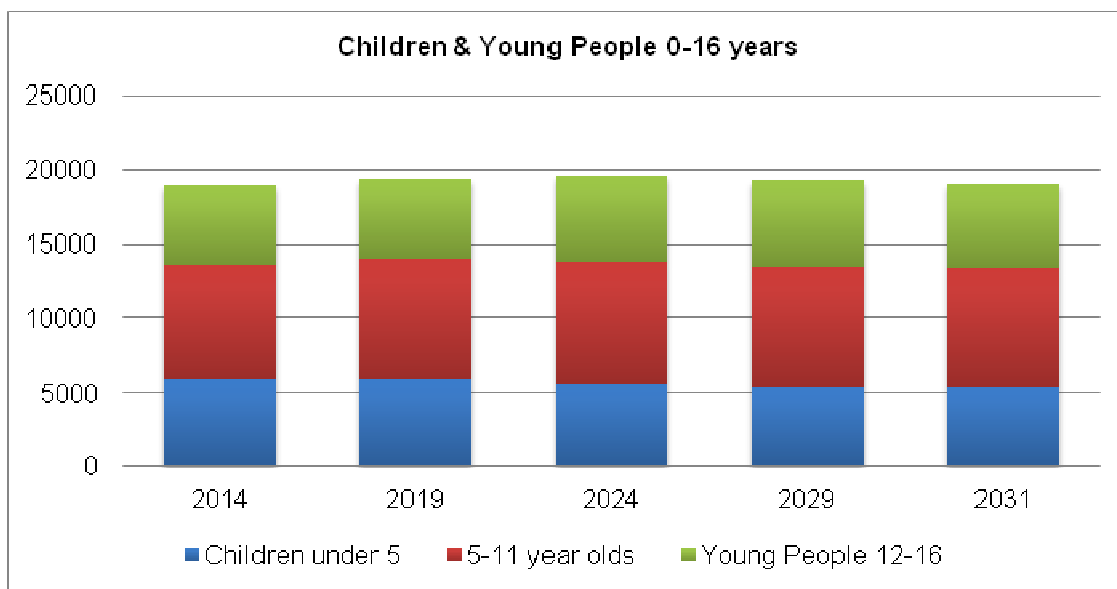
Table 5.5: Changes in Population of Children & Young People in Hartlepool 2014-2031

Age Group	2014	2019	2024	2029	2031
Children under 5	5800	5800	5600	5400	5400
5-11 year olds	7780	8180	8260	8060	7920
Young People 12-16	5400	5420	5740	5820	5760
Total 0-16 Years	18980	19400	19600	19280	19080

Source: 2012-based Subnational Population Projections for Local Authorities in England

In the period 2014 to 2024, the child population is estimated to increase by 620 (3.2%) to 19,600 and then decline by 520 (2.7%) to 19,080 by 2031.

Chart 5.5: Change in Numbers of Children 0-16 years 2014 to 2031



5.7 Key findings from consultation

5.7.1 Usage

This table shows how often people in the Borough visit a local children's play area:

Table 5.6: Play area visits

Frequency of visiting	Proportion of respondents who visit
Every day	1%
Once or twice a week	14%
Two or three times a month	11%
Once a month	6%
Once every two or three months	7%
Once or twice a year	7%
Less often	4%
Never	50%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	1,102

A quarter of residents visit a play area at least once a fortnight, and a third visit at least a month; although there are people who visit a play area every day, they are few and far between. Half of all residents say they never visit a play space.

There are variations in this result by sub-area, and this table shows the proportions who visit at least monthly, and who never visit local play spaces:

Table 5.7: Play area visits by sub-area

Sub-area	Proportion of respondents	
	visit at least monthly	Never visit
Western	35%	51%
North Central	29%	51%
South Central	32%	46%
Southern	32%	53%
All Hartlepool	32%	50%

Across the Borough generally, a third of people visit a play space at least once a month; the proportion is a little lower than this in the North Central sub-area, but the differences are not enormous.

Use of play space varies more by age: it is highest among those aged 31 - 45, where over half (51%) of residents visit a play space at least monthly, but is lower among older age-groups, and falls to just 7% of over 75s. A third of under 30s say they visit at least monthly. This table shows how these visits correlate to the presence of children in the household:

Table 5.8: Play area visits by children's age

Sub-area	Proportion of respondents	
	visit at least monthly	Never visit
Children aged 0 - 4	71%	12%
Children aged 5 - 11	75%	12%
Children aged 12 - 18	42%	40%
No children	19%	64%
All Hartlepool	32%	50%

It should be noted that several households fall into more than one of these bands, having children of different ages in the home.

Unsurprisingly, households with children make many more visits to play spaces than those without; but even so, one in five households with no children visit a play space at least monthly. These will include parents no longer living at home, and also grandparents, looking after children who do not live with them. Among households with children, play spaces are popular; three quarters of households visit at least monthly, and this level of visiting operates for children up to around 11 years of age; above this age, play spaces will not normally be attractive and the numbers are probably indicative of the play activities of younger siblings.

Women are much more likely than men to visit a play space; around two in five women (38%) visit a space like this on a monthly basis, in contrast to just a quarter (26%) of men. People with disabilities also visit less often, but this is probably related to their age, as many of those with disabilities are older people.

This table shows the play spaces most used by people in Hartlepool:

Table 5.9: Play spaces most visited

Park	Proportion of respondents who visit
Ward Jackson	33%
Seaton	14%
Rossmere	12%
Burn Valley	9%
Summerhill	9%
Clavering	7%
Headland/Heugh	5%
Grayfields	3%
King Oswy	2%
All other sites	6%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	470

Low numbers in this table do not indicate non-use, but rather that other sites are used more often.

Ward Jackson is the most popular park in Hartlepool by some distance, so it is no surprise that it features prominently in this list as well. One in three residents who visit a play area use the one at Ward Jackson as their preferred space, and it is also used on a more occasional basis by devotees of other spaces. Although it retains its predominance, however, it is not as dominant as it was in the Parks chapter. The play area at Seaton is popular with one in seven users, and the spaces at Rossmere, Burn Valley and Summerhill also feature. As for dedicated play spaces Clavering is the most popular, and the preferred space of one in fourteen users; the spaces at Headland, Grayfields and King Oswy are also mentioned by several users.

5.7.2 Quantity

This table shows people's perceptions of the quantity of play space:

Table 5.10: Quantity of play space

Opinion	Proportion of all respondents
Too many	* ⁴⁹
Too few	57%
About right	42%
N(=100%)	936

Although almost nobody in Hartlepool thinks there are too many children's play spaces, opinion is divided on whether there should be more of this type of provision. Two in five people think the level of supply is about right, but these are outnumbered by three in five residents who want to see more play space for children.

Quantity perceptions break down by sub-area in this way:

Table 5.11: Quantity of play areas by sub-area

Opinion	Western	North central	South central	Southern
Too many	* ⁵⁰	*	1%	*
Too few	54%	60%	64%	51%
About right	46%	40%	36%	49%
N(=100%)	220	232	247	232

No sub-area identifies a surplus of play space, and each sub-area shows a majority of people wanting to see more provision, but this varies: in the South Central and North central sub-areas, demand for more space is significantly higher than in either the Western or Southern sub-areas. Only a third of people in the South Central sub-area say that provision is sufficient.

Demand for more space is highest among under 45s, and especially so among those with children; among over 75s, only a quarter want to see more play space. But even among those with no children at home, there is a significant body of opinion that more play space is needed. Women are even more supportive of the idea of more play space for children, though a majority of men feel this way too.

⁴⁹ The use of an asterisk in this table indicates a result that lies between zero and 0.5%.

⁵⁰ The use of an asterisk in this table indicates a result that lies between zero and 0.5%.

5.7.3 Quality and Value

The table below shows how local people rate their preferred play space on a range of different criteria. To facilitate comparison, their opinions have been converted into mean scores.⁵¹

Table 5.12: Quality assessments of play spaces

Attribute	Mean score for play users
Located in a good place	1.00
Well used by children	0.90
Feels safe to allow children to play there	0.82
Children can meet and make friends there	0.72
Accessible for wheelchairs or buggies	0.70
Care and maintenance of surfaces and grassed areas	0.58
Attractive, welcoming, well laid out	0.53
Offers a range of different types of play	0.53
Suitable for a range of ages	0.44
Clean and litter free	0.42
Condition of play equipment	0.39
Litter bins	0.37
Information and signage	0.25
Seating for children and adults	0.02
<i>N(=100%) ranges from 471 to 523</i>	

All of the attributes are rated positively, but none exceeds a mean score of 1.00, the overall equivalent of a 'good' rating. As with the parks, the overall consensus is that the play spaces are above average but that there is still room for further improvement.

The highest rating is for location, which is not only the hardest of all attributes to change, but has also been identified in other research as the single most important attribute in making a

⁵¹ The mean score is calculated by taking each individual response for each of the different criteria and converting it into a score. A score of +2 is allocated for each 'excellent' result, and +1 for each 'good' response; 'below average' and 'poor' score -1 and -2 respectively. 'Average' attracts a score of zero, while don't knows are discounted completely. The resulting scores are then averaged to produce a mean score which indicates both the direction of opinion (positive or negative) and the strength with which that view is collectively held.

successful play space. However, the score is just 1.00, the equivalent of a 'good' rating, so although this is a strong result, there are play spaces that are less well located; in fact, 5% of play space users say the location of their preferred space is poor.

Play spaces are also well used by children, and are rated accordingly. Very few of the borough's play space users rate this attribute poorly, suggesting that most play spaces reach their target audience. They also generally feel safe, are accessible, and allow children to make and develop social contact with others.

Scores on other attributes are also positive, but more qualified. Care and maintenance of the surfaces and grassed areas attract a score midway between 'average' and 'good', as do attributes like attractiveness and diversity of ages and play opportunities. There is also a mixed view on litter, and on the condition of the equipment itself.

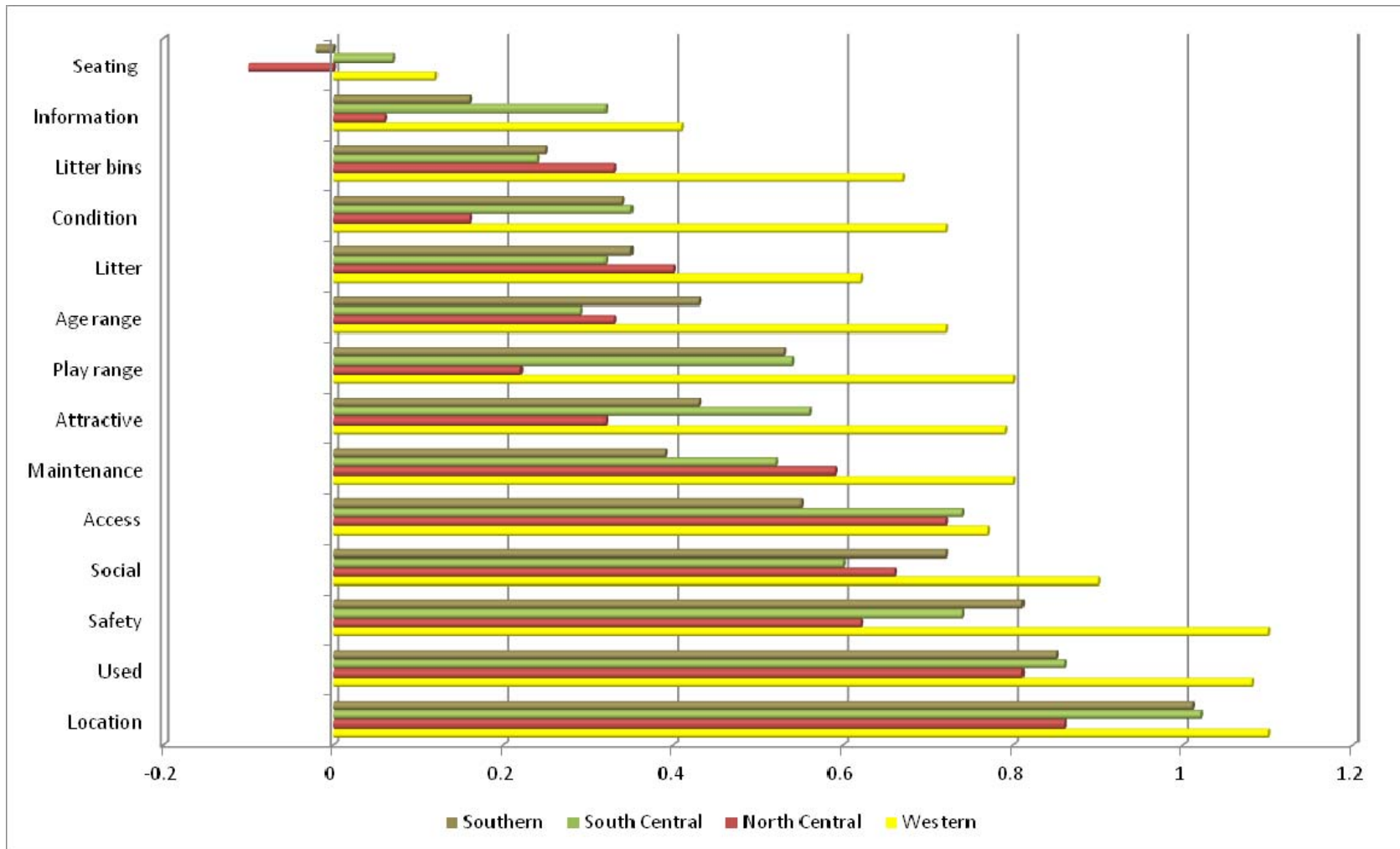
The lowest score, close to a neutral position, is for seating. Almost a third of respondents (30%) describe the seating in their preferred play space in negative terms, and this is clearly an area which can be improved.

There are too many play spaces to attribute scores individually, but the breakdown of these scores by sub-area is interesting:

Table 5.13: Quality assessments of play spaces by sub-area

Attribute	Mean score for play users			
	Western	North Central	South Central	Southern
Location	1.10	0.86	1.02	1.01
Used	1.08	0.81	0.86	0.85
Safety	1.10	0.62	0.74	0.81
Social	0.90	0.66	0.60	0.72
Access	0.77	0.72	0.74	0.55
Maintenance	0.80	0.59	0.52	0.39
Attractive	0.79	0.32	0.56	0.43
Play range	0.80	0.22	0.54	0.53
Age range	0.72	0.33	0.29	0.43
Litter	0.62	0.40	0.32	0.35
Condition	0.72	0.16	0.35	0.34
Litter bins	0.67	0.33	0.24	0.25
Information	0.41	0.06	0.32	0.16
Seating	0.12	-0.10	0.07	-0.02

Chart 5.13: Quality assessments of play spaces by sub-area



Results in the Western sub-area are consistently higher than those in other sub-areas, sometimes significantly so. Equally, results for the North central sub-area are often (though not always) the lowest scores by sub-area. Because play is essentially a local service, the perceptions of residents will often be about sites within the areas in which they live.

Location scores are high in all sub-areas, but noticeably lower in North Central than elsewhere. Usage scores are more evenly spread, confirming the local nature of this provision; although residents in the Western sub-area give the highest scores for use. Access scores are also consistent across all sub-areas.

In other respects, though, Western sub-area scores are much higher than those pertaining to other sub-areas. The differences on condition of equipment, range of play supported and age ranges are especially wide, but the Western sub-area also outperforms its counterparts in areas such as litter and maintenance of surfaces. The exception is in seating, where the low score in other sub-areas is largely replicated in the Western sub-area as well.

This is not to say that the Western sub-area is characterised by excellence in play; the scores are still relatively modest and suggest areas where things can be improved. The highest Western sub-area scores are only around the 'good' mark; the striking thing about this table is that other sub-areas are not matching these levels of provision.

5.7.4 Accessibility

This table shows how people travel to their preferred play space:

Table 5.14: Means of travel to play space

Travel	Proportion of respondents who visit
Walk or jog	55%
Car	41%
Bus	2%
Cycle	1%
Other	1%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	525

Over half of those who visit play spaces go on foot; almost everyone else travels to the park by car. This is a high level of pedestrian access and compares favourably with other areas where car dependence is much higher. Use of public transport in connection with play space visits is low, as is the use of cycles. Other means of access are primarily motorised scooters or wheelchairs.

Car use is highest in the Western sub-area (50%) and falls to just a third (34%) of play space users in the South Central sub-area. Walking is prominent in all sub-areas, especially in the South Central sub-area (63%). Bus use is confined mainly to the North central sub-area (2%).

Walking is most commonplace among those aged 31 - 45, where three in five visits to the preferred play area are made on foot; it is lowest among under 30s, where just two in five (42%) of visits are on foot. Even in the oldest age-group, over 75s, over half of the smaller number of visits that are made to play areas are on foot.

Women are more likely to walk than men; 56% of women, against just 51% of men, travel to play spaces on foot.

The time taken to reach the preferred play space is shown here:

Table 5.15: Time taken to reach play space

Time	Proportion of respondents who visit
0 - 5 minutes	34%
6 - 10 minutes	35%
11 - 15 minutes	19%
16 - 20 minutes	7%
Over 20 minutes	4%
N(=100%)	532

Most people - two thirds of all those responding - can reach their preferred play space in ten minutes or less using their favoured means of transport. In contrast, very few people are prepared to spend more than fifteen minutes travelling to a play space. Play spaces are even more local provision than parks, and, even more than park visits, play space visits seem to be largely based on the convenience of the space to the individual, given their travel options.

There is little variation on this by sub-area; a third of all play area visits involve a journey of 5 minutes or less. But in the Western sub-area, a higher proportion of play area users, around a quarter, travel for between ten and fifteen minutes, as do a fifth of residents in the South central sub-area, suggesting that these areas may be less well served than their counterparts.

The shortest journeys tend to be made by younger adults; journey time tends to increase with age, so older people taking grandchildren to play spaces may be making this more of an outing. men who use play spaces also tend to make longer journeys to them; women tend more towards very local provision.

If we combine these two results, travel mode and time taken, we arrive at the following results:

Table 5.16: Travel by time taken

Mode and Time	Proportion of respondents who visit
Pedestrian, 0 - 5 minutes	19%
Pedestrian, 6 -10 minutes	18%
Pedestrian, over 10 minutes	19%
Car, 0 - 5 minutes	15%
Car, 6 -10 minutes	17%
Car, over 10 minutes	9%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	521

Pedestrians are evenly divided into the three distance bands; one in five play area visitors is a pedestrian who travels less than 5 minutes, and similar proportions are pedestrians walking for up to 10 minutes and over 10 minutes respectively. Car drivers, on the other hand, are much less likely to travel for more than 10 minutes to reach a preferred play space.

5.7.5 Comparisons with 2008 study

Visit frequency has risen a little; a fifth (22%) visited at least every two weeks in 2008, and this figure now stands at 26%. Everyday use, which was low in 2008, remains at a similar level, however. The proportion never visiting a play space is unchanged at around half of all residents.

The most popular sites continue to be those located in the parks, with Ward Jackson again the most popular destination for children's play. The proportion of residents using play space at Seaton has risen sharply, while usage at King Oswy is lower (based on analysis of small numbers). Travel modes in relation to play areas are unchanged, with walking accounting for about half of all visits; journey times are also unchanged.

Quality scores are more difficult to compare directly because of changes in the assessment framework, but the pattern of scores suggests a significant improvement in perceptions of quality. Safety has improved significantly, as has accessibility; there has also been an uplift, albeit a more modest one, in cleanliness ratings, and a big improvement in litter bins which is not matched by the change in seating ratings.

The proportion of people seeking more play space has fallen slightly, from 64% in 2008 to 57% in 2014.

5.7.6 Youth survey feedback

The table below shows the proportions of young people from the youth survey who visit play areas in Hartlepool.

Table 5.17: Youth visits to play areas

Frequency of visiting	Proportion of respondents who visit
At least weekly	28%
Once or twice a month	29%
Three or four times a year	7%
Less often	11%
Never	25%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>160</i>

A large proportion of young people declined to answer this question, so the proportion who never visit is probably understated in this table. Aside from this, a quarter of young people say they visit at least weekly, and half of young people in the survey visit at least monthly. The proportion of young people using play space is thus much higher than the proportion of adult who visit. It is also clear from comments made by respondents that young people outside the designated age range of play spaces nevertheless use them.

The most visited play space is Ward Jackson Park, but the second most popular is the privately owned indoor play area at Mr Twister's. Summerhill is also a preferred play space.

Young people's journeys to play spaces use these travel modes:

Table 5.18: Means of travel to play space (youth survey)

Travel	Proportion of respondents who visit
Walk or jog	35%
Car	49%
Bus	4%
Cycle	8%
Other	4%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>113</i>

Only a third of young people who use these spaces travel on foot, a much lower proportion than is implied by the adult survey where over 55% of visits are made on foot.

Cycle usage is again higher than in the adult survey, suggesting this as an important means of independent travel for young people.

For a third (31%) of young people who use play space, the one they mention is the best one they are aware of. A further two-fifths (42%) say this play space is good, but that there are better ones elsewhere. A handful of young people give their most-used play space a negative rating, but clearly the quality of these spaces would tend to discourage patronage.

Young people were asked to suggest improvements for their preferred play space. Their suggestions have been grouped into broad areas in this analysis, but focus overwhelmingly on a single issue, the improvement of play equipment (which includes new equipment, repairing broken items, and replacing items removed). Half (50%) of all the comments made look at this issue. Other factors raised by much smaller numbers include the need for more play space, improved safety, and more provision for older children (either to improve facilities for this group directly, or to encourage them away from younger children's facilities).

5.8 Audit

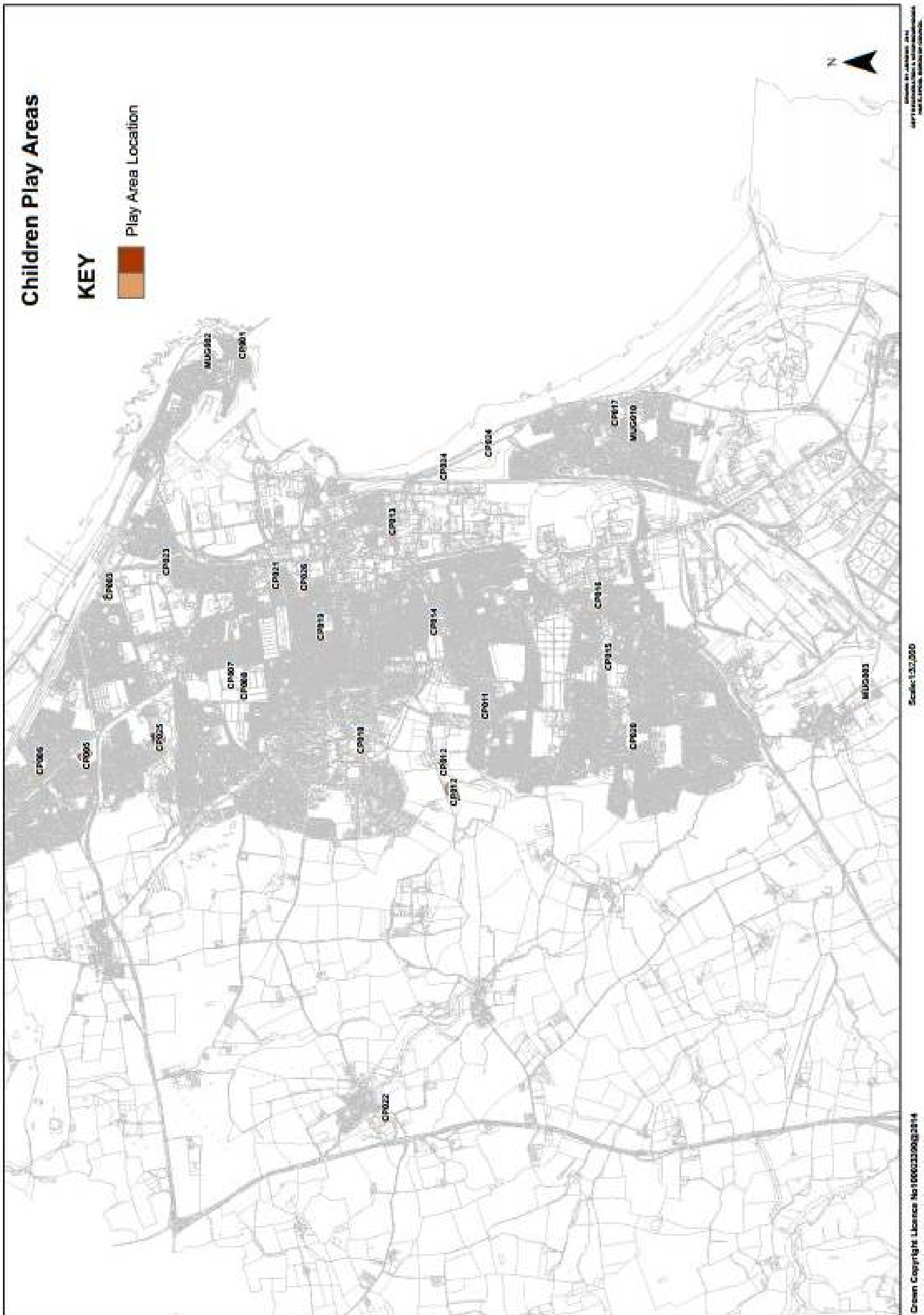
The audit focused on dedicated playable spaces. Each playable space was initially identified as being either Doorstep Playable Space, Local Playable Space, Neighbourhood Playable Space or Youth Space and assessed against the relevant criteria for that type of space. Adopting this approach does not mean that play is restricted to dedicated 'reservations'; children and young people do not limit where they play or hang out to dedicated equipped spaces, and will use a wide range of spaces including the street, civic spaces, parks, playing fields and amenity greenspace. There are therefore many other types of open space covered by this study that will provide informal play opportunities.

5.8.1 Quantity

The scope of the audit was confined to playable spaces catering for the needs of children and young people up to approximately 16 years of age. Youth provision for teenagers included facilities such as skateboard parks, basketball courts and 'open access' Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs).

There are currently 29 play areas and 6 open access multi use games areas (MUGAs) in Hartlepool. Some sites comprise an equipped playable space and youth provision; others contain either an equipped playable space or youth provision only. These sites are identified on **Map 5.1**.

Map 5.1 Location of Play Areas



The number of sites located in each sub-area is shown in **Table 5.19** below. Playable spaces were found in parks, recreation grounds, informal open spaces and smaller areas of open space or within residential areas.

Table 5.19: Playable space provision by sub-area

Sub-area	No. of play areas per sub-area	No of children 0-16 years	Children 0-16 years per play area.	Proportion of total children under 16 in population	Proportion of all playable spaces for children under 16
North Central	16	6580	411	20.1%	45.7%
South Central	5	5415	1083	20.2%	14.3%
Southern	6	2865	478	16.6%	17.1%
Western	8	2900	363	18.7%	22.9%
Hartlepool	35	17760	507	19.3%	

The sub-area with the largest number of play areas (16) is North Central, accounting for 45.7% of the total provision in Hartlepool. However the North Central sub-area also has the highest number of children and young people (6,580), giving 411 children and young people per play area. The level of provision varies, with the best provision being in the Western sub-area where there are 363 children and young people per play area compared to 1,083 children and young people per play area in the South Central sub-area and 478 in the Southern sub-area.

Table 5.20 compares provision in Hartlepool with other local authorities. The overall number of children per play area in Hartlepool is 507, which is a better level of provision than Darlington (961 children per play area) and South Tyneside (833 children per play area). Of the local authorities shown, only Redcar and Cleveland has a better level of provision (399 children per play area).

Table 5.20: Children aged 16 or under per play area

Local Authority	No. of Play Areas ⁵²	Number of Under 16s ⁵³	Children per play area
Darlington	22	21,140	961
South Tyneside	33	27,480	833
Middlesbrough	40	30,280	757
Sunderland	100	51,380	514
Hartlepool	35	17,760	507
Redcar & Cleveland	64	25,560	399

Table 5.21 shows that provision per child in terms of space provided is highest in the Western sub-area (0.91 hectares of playable space per 1,000 children). Provision in the South Central sub-area is 0.39 hectares of playable space per 1000 children. The two sub-areas each include a large play area: CP005 Clavering (Rafton Drive) which is 1.02 hectares in the Western, and CP012 Summerhill which in total is 1.71 hectares in South Central. Notwithstanding the larger number of play areas in the North Central sub-area (16), provision here is the lowest (0.22 hectares) of the sub-areas. Finally, the six play areas in the Southern sub-area provide 0.25 hectares of playable space per 1,000 children. Overall provision is 0.39 hectares of playable space per 1,000 children.

The quantity of provision is often expressed in terms of provision per 1000 population and on this basis provision in Hartlepool is 0.07 hectares of playable space per 1000 population, with the Western sub-area having the highest level of provision (0.17 hectares per 1000 population). The Fields in Trust benchmark at 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population is therefore significantly higher than overall provision in Hartlepool.

Table 5.21: Current levels of provision

Sub-area	Population	Number of Children aged 16 or under	Area of Playable Space (Hectares)	Area of Playable Space Per 1000 popn (Hectares)	Area of Playable Space per 1000 under 16s (Hectares)
North Central	32700	6580	1.43	0.04	0.22
South Central	26795	5415	2.12	0.08	0.39
Southern	17250	2865	0.72	0.04	0.25
Western	15490	2900	2.64	0.17	0.91
Hartlepool	92235	17760	6.91	0.07	0.39

The Mayor of London uses a measure of square metres per child under 16 years. The analysis of provision in the sub-areas is shown in **Table 5.22** below.

⁵² Includes fixed play areas, skate areas and multi use games courts.

⁵³ 2012-based Subnational Population Projections, ONS.

Table 5.22: Provision of playable space per child

Sub-area	Number of Children Under 16 Years	Area of Playable Space (m ²)	Area (m ²) dedicated Playable Space per child
North Central	6580	14300	2.17
South Central	5415	21200	3.92
Southern	2865	7200	2.51
Western	2900	26400	9.10
Hartlepool	17760	69100	3.89

The overall provision of 3.89m² is low when compared with the Mayor of London's recommended benchmark of 10m² of dedicated playspace per child. However, provision in the Western sub-area almost meets the Mayor of London's benchmark with 9.10 m² per child.

The Mayor of London's benchmark is a high level of provision, which has not been achieved by most London Boroughs. However, it is relatively unambitious compared to Holland where a standard of provision of 20m² per child has been recommended.⁵⁴ If the London benchmark is applied to Hartlepool, the requirement would be 17.76ha of play space.

5.8.1.1 Provision for Teenagers

Multi-use games areas (MUGAs) are intended primarily for ball games. The most common dimension for a 'one court' facility for 5-a-side football, tennis, netball and outdoor basketball is 37 metres by 17.5 metres.

There are six MUGAs that are open access and available for play. Only one sub-area, South Central, lacks a MUGA. However, this sub-area includes Summerhill which has a rock climbing boulder park which is the biggest of its type in Europe, a BMX course, a trim trail with nine apparatus stations along a 2km route and a high level ropes course.

Other MUGAs in Hartlepool are generally kept locked and only available through a formal booking system. These have therefore been assessed as sports facilities rather than open access play⁵⁵.

5.8.1.2 Provision for Children with Disabilities

Play equipment specifically designed to cater for the needs of children with disabilities has been provided at a number of play areas as a result of the Playbuilder programme. One example where inclusive play facilities have been installed is the new play area at Middle Warren.

⁵⁴ Improving the playability of the public space. JP Oost, Child in the City Conference 2002.

⁵⁵ Because they are not freely available for turn up and play, and because they are largely used for sport on a bookable basis.

5.8.2 Quality of Children's Play Areas

Quality and value were assessed using the Quality Assessment Tool advocated by Play England. The assessment focuses on three major aspects of children's outdoor play: the location of play areas, their play value, and the level of care and maintenance. Scores are obtained for the three aspects individually.

In addition an overall score has been calculated where a slightly higher weighting is given to location (40% of the overall score) than to play value (30%) and care and maintenance (30%).

The assessments were undertaken after improvements to playgrounds under the Playbuilder and Big Lottery programmes had been implemented.

5.8.2.1 Location

Research⁵⁶ shows that location is the single most important factor in how well children use open spaces. In general, children like to play locally where they can be seen, see others and meet others. Young people are able to roam further and can therefore use neighbourhood play areas, although they too like to feel safe wherever they are "hanging out".

Disabled children and parents/carers with buggies should be able to access play areas as much as non-disabled children. Often children will play with younger siblings who may need to be taken to the area in a buggy or push chair.

The scoring is designed to identify the suitability of the location of play areas and spaces where children may play.

5.8.2.2 Play value

The assessment deliberately does not focus exclusively on the fixed equipment in playgrounds, but considers the different ways in which children can experience sensations such as rocking, swinging and sliding – this is particularly true for some disabled children whose impairments mean they cannot, for example, sit on traditional swings. It seeks to capture the variety of different opportunities available to a child and the ways in which he or she can access different types of play. Quiet, contemplative play is as important as boisterous, physical play and although children will play in their own way in any given area, their play can be enriched through creating appropriate and stimulating play environments.

Children need to take risks to learn about and understand their own capabilities. Risk does not mean creating hazardous environments, but it does mean ensuring opportunities for challenge are available through design.

⁵⁶ Playable Space Quality Assessment Tool, Inspire for Play England, 2009; Child's Play: facilitating play on housing estates; Rob Whewey and Alison Millward, JRF 1997; Can Play Will Play, John A and Whewey R, Fields in Trust, 2004.

5.8.2.3 Care and maintenance

All play areas should enable children to play free from hazards. This section aims to assess the quality of care and maintenance.

The ranking of each dedicated children's play area is determined by whether the score achieved is above or below the median.⁵⁷

Table 5.23 below shows the rankings in terms of location, play value, care and maintenance and overall for each sub-area. In two cases, play areas on the same site have been assessed together, reducing the total number of equipped sites to 27. Those spaces that scored above the median are ranked as high and those below are ranked as low.

Table 5.23: Ranking of quality scores in each sub-area

Sub-area	Ranking	Location	Play Value	Care & Maintenance
North Central	High	7	8	6
	Low	6	5	7
South Central	High	3	3	2
	Low	2	2	3
Southern	High	2	1	4
	Low	2	3	0
Western	High	3	4	4
	Low	2	1	1
Hartlepool	High	15	16	16
	Low	12	11	11

The median score for location is 71%. Two examples of sites scoring at the median level are the play areas CP019 Lynnfield Community Centre and CP017.Owton Manor. The play area that achieved the best score (89%) for location is CP016 Burn Valley Gardens. The worst scoring site for location is CP007 Grayfields Site 2 which scored well below other sites at 40%. Overall, more spaces scored at the level of the median or above (21) than below (18).

The median score for play value was 56%. An example of a site with this score is the play area CP019 Jutland Road. The improved play area at Clavering (CP022) scored highly for play value at 93% and the new play area at Middle Warren (CP026) scored

⁵⁷ The median of a population is the point that divides the distribution of scores in half. Numerically, half of the scores in a population will have values that are equal to or larger than the median and half will have values that are equal to or smaller than the median. To work out the median:

a) Put the numbers in order. 3 6 6 6 7 9 11 11 13

b) The number in the middle of the list is the median 7 is in the middle. So the median value is 7.

If there are two middle values, the median is halfway between them. For example, if the set of numbers were 3 6 6 6 7 8 9 11 11 13 There are two middle values, 7 and 8. The median is halfway between 7 and 8. The median is 7.5.

90%. Play areas with low scores for play value included CP024 Greatham and CP009 Mill House, both of which scored 30%.

The median score for care and maintenance was 61%. A number of play areas scored 60% including CP001 Block Sands, CP027 Burbank Playbuilder and CP019 Lynnfield Community Centre. The site with the highest score is CP010 Ward Jackson Park with 94%. The site with the lowest score of 33% is CP020 Owton Manor.

The play area with scores closest to the three median figures is CP019 Lynnfield Community Centre which scored 71% for location, 68% for play value and 60% for care and maintenance.

The overall score for all sites taking all three factors into account, weighted as described above, has also been calculated. The median score is 64%. CP001 Block Sands scored 65% on this basis and CP013 Burbank St MUGA scored 63%. The best scoring play area overall is CP010 Ward Jackson Park (87%) and the lowest score is for CP009 Mill House MUGA (44%).

The full results of the audit and quality assessments can be found at **Appendix 5**.

5.8.3 Accessibility

The distances and classifications of playable spaces are specified in ‘Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play’⁵⁸ which provides ‘Accessibility Benchmark Standards for Children’s Playing Space’. This guidance sets out the maximum actual walking and straight line distances from home (taking into account barriers to movement) for different age groups. These are shown in **Table 5.24** below.

The guidance explains that age ranges stated in the hierarchy are indicative. They are inclusive and set out the broad age range of the main intended user group(s). It should not be interpreted that users of other ages should be excluded.

Table 5.24: Children’s Playing Space Accessibility Benchmark Standard

Type	Distance Criteria (metres)		
	Walking Distance	Straight Distance	Line
Local areas for play or ‘door-step’ spaces –for play and informal recreation	100	60	
Local equipped, or local landscaped, areas for play – for play and informal recreation	400	240	
Neighbourhood equipped areas for play – for play and informal recreation, and provision for young people; this also covers youth space	1000	600	

⁵⁸ Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play, Fields in Trust 2008.

5.9 Standards

5.9.1 Quantity

The results of the consultation reveal that over half of local people want more play spaces although two in five think there are enough. Demand for more play spaces is especially high in North Central and South Central sub-areas and demand is also high among people with younger children.

A standard is proposed of 0.65 hectares of playable space per 1,000 children aged 16 and under. This standard seeks to address the expressed need for additional play space particularly in the North Central (current provision 0.22 hectares of playable space per 1,000 children) and South Central sub-areas (0.39 hectares per 1,000 children). It will also address the relatively low level of provision in the Southern sub-area (0.25 hectares per 1000 children).

The proposed quantity standard for youth provision is that there should be at least three youth spaces specifically designed to accommodate the needs of teenagers in each sub-area, linked clearly to consultation with local young people about their specific needs and the best way of meeting these.

Quantity Standard

0.65 hectares of playable space per 1,000 children aged 16 and under.

At least three youth spaces specifically designed to accommodate the needs of teenagers, in each sub-area

5.9.2 Quality

With regard to quality, respondents' ratings of the quality of play areas are reasonable, and all are positive. The ratings are strongest for location, usage, safety and sociability. The lowest ratings are for seating, signage and bins, The quality scores are consistently higher in the Western sub-area and tend to be lowest in North Central sub-area. These quality ratings represent a significant improvement on the results in the 2008 study.

The quality standard has been set at a level which is higher than the median scores for each attribute. The consultation gave positive scores for key attributes of play, but nevertheless indicated room for improvement in all aspects of play, and especially in some attributes of quality; the standard is intended to promote a higher standard than pertains at present. The site which represents the quality standard for all criteria is Lynnfield Community Centre.

Quality Standard:

<i>Location</i>	<i>71%</i>
<i>Play Value</i>	<i>68%</i>
<i>Care and Maintenance</i>	<i>60%</i>
<i>Overall</i>	<i>67%</i>

Location

The benchmark standard score for location is 71%

It is further recommended that the location of children's playing spaces in future should be assessed against the guideline criteria set out in **Appendix 5**. This is to ensure that in future children's playing spaces are:

- reasonably close to home;
- within sight of walking or cycling 'desire lines' or main travel routes;
- in spaces where there is 'informal oversight' from nearby houses or other well-used public spaces;
- in locations identified by children and young people as appropriate;
- capable of being used for a variety of play activity, including sports;
- embedded in the community;
- providing encounters with the natural environment.

Play Value

The benchmark standard score for Play Value is 68%.

Provision for teenagers should meet expectations in terms of variety of opportunity to sit or exercise, and perceptions of safety, and it is recommended that prior consultation with young people be a requirement of new provision where this is possible.

Care and Maintenance

The benchmark standard score for care and maintenance is 60%.

We also recommend that all play equipment should comply with European Standards BS EN1176, Playground equipment, and BS EN1177 and BS 7188, Impact absorbing playground surfacing.

Overall Quality

The overall benchmark standard score is 67%.

This can be applied to both existing and proposed playable spaces. Any proposed playable space that fails to meet this minimum standard should be redesigned.

Quality Criteria

The quality criteria are those established by the Play England guidance.⁵⁹

- are 'bespoke'
- are well located
- make use of natural elements
- provide a wide range of play experiences
- are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children

⁵⁹ Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces. Play England 2009

- meet community needs
- allow children of different ages to play together
- build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- are sustainable and appropriately maintained
- allow for change and evolution

5.9.3 Accessibility

Table 5.24 above shows the accessibility standards for children's playing spaces. The aim should be for children within each age band to have easy, safe access to the appropriate playing space within the distances specified. These should be located so as to ensure children do not have to cross a busy or dangerous road to gain access to the space.

We draw attention, though, to the need to augment playable space with local informal space.

Accessibility standard

A Doorstep Playable Space within 100m walking distance

A Local Playable Space within 400m walking distance

A Neighbourhood Playable Space within 1000m walking distance

A Youth Space within 800m walking distance

5.10 Deficiencies

5.10.1 Quantity

Table 5.25 shows the level of surplus or deficiency for each of the four sub-areas, when the recommended standard is applied.

Table 5.25: Deficiencies in Provision for Children and Young People in 2014

Sub-area	Child Population under 16 years	Current playable space (Hectares)	Current playable space per 1000 0-15 years (Hectares)	Standard per 1000 under 16 years	Required playable space per 1000 under 16 years (Hectares)	Surplus/ Deficiency (hectares)
North Central	6506	1.43	0.22	0.65	4.23	-2.80
South Central	5448	2.12	0.39	0.65	3.54	-1.42
Southern	2902	0.72	0.25	0.65	1.89	-1.17
Western	2912	2.64	0.91	0.65	1.89	0.75
Hartlepool	17768	6.91	0.39	0.65	11.55	-4.64

Applying the standard generates a deficiency of 4.64 hectares of provision for children and young people across Hartlepool. There is a deficit in most of the sub-areas apart from the Western sub-area. However, some of this shortfall could be met by appropriately landscaped amenity greenspace which could provide opportunities for informal play in residential areas, although this will clearly not be the case where residents use this type of space for car parking.

Table 5.26: Deficiencies in Provision for Children and Young People in 2019

Sub-area	Child Population under 16 years	Future playable space (Hectares)	Future playable space per 1000 under 16 years (Hectares)	Standard per 1000 under 16 years	Required playable space per 1000 under 16 years (Hectares)	Surplus/ Deficiency (hectares)
North Central	6673	1.43	0.22	0.65	4.34	-2.91
South Central	5376	2.12	0.39	0.65	3.49	-1.37
Southern	2882	0.72	0.25	0.65	1.87	-1.15
Western	3165	2.64	0.91	0.65	2.06	0.58
Hartlepool	18095	6.91	0.39	0.65	11.76	-4.85

The application of the standard to the projected 2019 child population aged under 16 results in a deficiency of 4.85 hectares of provision for children and young people under

16 years. There continues to be a deficit in most of the sub-areas apart from the Western sub-area.

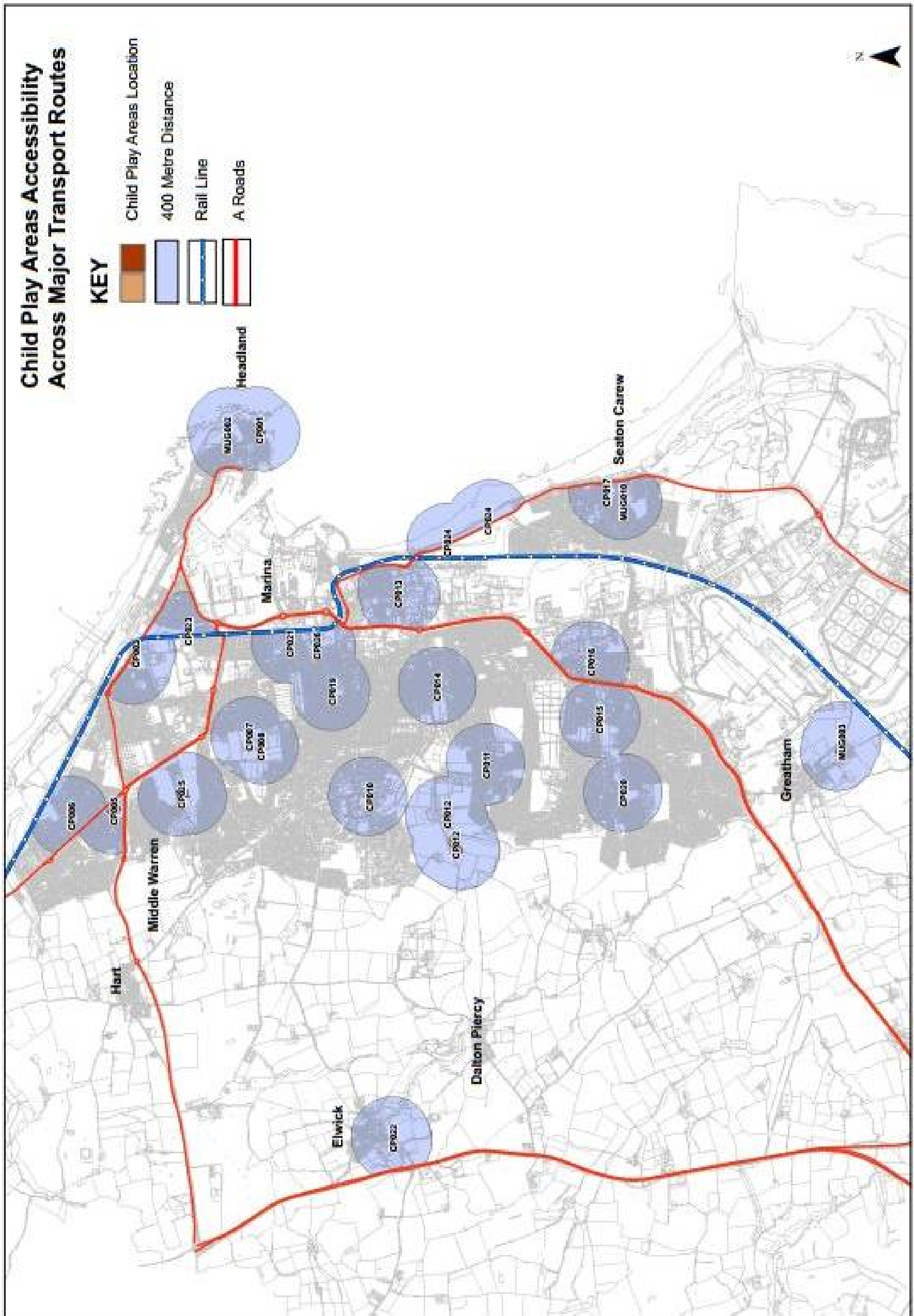
5.10.3 Accessibility⁶⁰

Having identified the existing play spaces and their catchment areas, it is possible to identify areas of deficiency where children and young people do not have access to existing facilities within a reasonable distance from their homes. These are identifiable in **Map 5.2**.

There are play spaces across the Borough, but their catchment areas mean that some areas are less well served than others. In particular, the urban parts of Hart ward are relatively sparsely provided, and barriers to movement cut off access for some parts of the North Central sub-area. Fens and Rossmere Ward is also poorly served and parts of Seaton lie outside the play area catchment. The rural area is largely unserved although there are facilities at Greatham and Elwick.

⁶⁰ Accessibility here refers to the number of children living within a reasonable distance for each type of play space. Accessibility for children with disabilities or impairments is one of the criteria assessed under *Location* as part of the quality assessment.

Map 5.2 Accessibility of Play Spaces



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Scale: 1:25,000

Map 5.2 Accessibility of Play Spaces

6 AMENITY GREENSPACE

6.1 Definition

Landscaped areas with no designated specific use, but which provide visual amenity or separate different buildings or land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons particularly in and around housing areas are generically described as amenity greenspace. Amenity greenspaces offer opportunities for informal activities such as play and dog walking and they may also function, incidentally, as wildlife habitats. Amenity greenspaces should be highly accessible and therefore located in close proximity to people's homes or places of work.

6.2 Strategic context

The provision of amenity space to meet the needs of new development is important in promoting the well being of residents and enhancing the quality of the urban environment. Amenity greenspace provides opportunities for recreation and leisure and contributes to the quality of the townscape. The measurable benefits include improved public health, reduced stress levels, child development through creative play, interaction with nature and economic prosperity.

The National Planning Policies Framework acknowledges the importance of access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation and notes that these can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities.⁶¹

Neighbourhoods Green was established in 2003 when Peabody Trust and Notting Hill Housing Group identified the need to raise the profile of the green and open spaces owned and managed by social landlords. It has been shown that high quality housing green spaces make a significant impact on the lives of tenants, residents and other people living in local neighbourhoods. Neighbourhoods Green champions good quality design, management and use of social housing green space. A guiding principle is that:

"The quality of people's homes is influenced by the spaces around them. There is increasing recognition that well designed, well managed green spaces by and in between housing are crucial to making neighbourhoods liveable, and contribute to people's quality of life."

Good quality landscapes provide opportunities for people of all ages to enjoy their local environment. Green spaces can be a catalyst to creating a sense of community. Individual case studies demonstrate that they can provide volunteering and employment opportunities, encourage civic action and mitigate the effects of climate change.

In order to promote more sustainable residential environments, both within and outside existing urban areas, local planning authorities are encouraged to promote a greener residential environment. Landscaping should therefore be an integral part of new housing developments, which should incorporate sufficient provision where adequate spaces are not already provided within easy access of the new housing.

⁶¹ Para 73, NPPF.

One factor in considering the amount of amenity space provided in residential development is that there is often overlap in the character and location of communal amenity space and casual play areas for children. Both are often relatively small parcels of greenspace which are closely related to homes, and the same space can meet both needs.

The need for amenity greenspace therefore relates to the nature of a development. A development where houses have large gardens will have less need than one consisting of flatted developments or areas of sheltered housing with little or no garden space. However, where a housing area is likely to contain a significant number of children, amenity greenspace also functions much of the time as space for children's play.

In 'Rethinking Open Space'⁶², Kit Campbell suggests that the need for amenity greenspace will vary according to:

- the proportion of children in the development and the need for play space;
- proximity to existing parks;
- the average size of gardens linked to houses or flats;
- the safety of roads;
- the availability of substitutes such as ready access to countryside.

The need for amenity greenspace is not limited to housing areas. The landscaping associated with many non-housing developments, such as business parks and even some industrial estates where it provides visual amenity or separates different buildings or land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons, should be included in the consideration of need, but with due recognition of the need for quality as well as quantity.

6.3 Key findings from consultation

6.3.1 Uses of amenity green space

Amenity space meets a number of needs, and this table shows how well local people think it caters for some of these:

Table 6.1: Use of amenity green space

Amenity space use	Proportion of respondents		
	Caters well	Caters adequately	Caters poorly
Dog walking	31%	47%	22%
Kickabout ball games	26%	42%	32%
Children's play	24%	47%	29%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 862 to 913</i>		

⁶² Rethinking Open Space - Open Space Provision and Management: A Way Forward, Report for Scottish Executive, Kit Campbell (Edinburgh, 2001)

These spaces are generally regarded as suitable for dog walking, with a third of people saying they cater well for this and a further half of residents rating them as adequate in this respect. Just one in five rate their local amenity space as unsuitable for dog walking.

Suitability for ball games and other play is rated a little more guardedly, with just a quarter of residents saying they think the space caters well for these activities, and around a third who think their local space is unsuitable for these purposes.

Interestingly, these activities are not seen as mutually exclusive; those who rate these spaces highly for children are quite likely to also rate them highly for dog walking.

Dog walking is better supported by these spaces in the Western and South Central sub-areas, and least well catered for in the North Central sub-area. Southern area residents rate their grassed areas much lower in terms of suitability for children's play; suitability for kickabout ball games is also much lower in the Southern sub-area than in other parts of the Borough.

People with children tend to give these areas a much poorer rating for play than those who are younger or older; older people are much more likely to see these areas as suitable for children to play in, or for ball games. There is less variation as regards use of these spaces for dog walking. Variations by gender are very limited.

Amenity green space can also be used in less constructive ways, and this table shows how prevalent two problem activities are:

Table 6.2: Misuse of amenity green space

Amenity space use	Proportion of respondents		
	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
Anti-social behaviour	15%	52%	33%
Car parking	13%	27%	60%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 992 to 1,006</i>		

Although neither of these problems occurs regularly in more than a minority of spaces, the problems do arise regularly for some residents. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a more persistent problem, and two thirds of residents say it occurs at least occasionally on their grassed areas, with just a third saying they don't experience this problem. As for car parking, this is much less of an issue; three in five people say they never experience this on their local green space, although a quarter of residents experience it occasionally, and one in eight have this on a regular basis.

ASB on grassed areas is much more of a problem in the North Central and South Central sub-areas than in either of the other localities. One in five (22%) North Central residents, and one in six (17%) in South Central, experience this regularly. Car parking on grassed

areas is also more of a problem in the North Central sub-area, where one in six (16%) of residents experience it regularly, but is also challenging in the Southern sub-area where a similar proportion (17%) experience it regularly.

ASB is more likely to be noticed by middle-aged residents, especially those with children; there is less variation by age as regards car parking. Men notice these problems a little more often than women, however.

6.3.2 Quantity

This table shows people's perceptions of the quantity of amenity green space:

Table 6.3: Quantity of amenity green space

Opinion	Proportion of all respondents
Too many	3%
Too few	41%
About right	56%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>970</i>

A small proportion of local residents think there are too many grassed areas, but the majority are happy with current levels of provision. There is nevertheless a significant minority who would like to see more of this type of space.

Quantity perceptions break down by sub-area in this way:

Table 6.4: Quantity of amenity green space by sub-area

Opinion	Western	North central	South central	Southern
Too many	3%	4%	2%	2%
Too few	45%	38%	44%	39%
About right	52%	58%	54%	59%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>237</i>	<i>243</i>	<i>249</i>	<i>236</i>

Demand for this space is higher in the Western and South Central sub-areas, but even here it represents a minority view, albeit one that constitutes a large body of the populace. The perception of too much of this space is uniformly small across all sub-areas.

There is little variation on this issue by gender, but older people incline much more strongly to the view that existing provision is adequate. Demand for more space of this type is much higher among under 60s, and among those aged 31-45 a majority of the age-group (55%) want to see more provision of this nature.

6.3.3 Quality of amenity green space

The table below shows how people rate amenity green space in Hartlepool.

Table 6.5: Quality assessments of amenity green space

Amenity space generally	Proportion of all residents
Excellent	7%
Good	40%
Average	37%
Below average	10%
Poor	6%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1,053</i>

About half of local people (47%) rate their local grassed areas positively, three times as many as take a negative view. However, there are relatively few who think their local grassed space is excellent, and a substantial proportion who think their space is only 'average', leaving significant room for improvement.

Ratings of amenity green space are higher in the Western (52% positive) and North Central (49% positive) sub-areas than in the other sub-areas (45% positive); the highest negative ratings are in the North Central (17% negative) and Southern (18%) sub-areas.

There are only limited variations in perception by age and gender, but younger people are more critical than their older peers, and women a little more positive about these spaces than men.

Asked how amenity space could be improved, respondents offer these suggestions:

Table 6.6: Improving amenity green space

Opinion	Proportion of comments
Dog mess/dog bins	21%
Improved maintenance	19%
Safety/security/ASB	10%
Ban on parking	9%
Litter removal/litter bins	9%
Clear mowings	8%
Need more space	7%
Space for parking	6%
Seating	4%
Improved planting	4%
Other suggestions	30%
<i>Total no. of comments</i>	<i>485</i>

A wide range of observations are made about improving amenity green space, but two areas stand out prominently from the pack. The issue most commonly raised is to do with dog mess, and one in five comments notes this; its presence detracts not only from the attractiveness of these areas but also from their usefulness, especially to children but also to more responsible dog owners.

There are also plenty of calls for better maintenance, which in most cases lack specificity, but in others refers to the frequency of grass cutting or pruning. Linked to this is the desire on the part of a significant minority of residents that mowings should be cleared after grass is cut.

Safety is a prominent issue and people see police or other enforcement action as a way forward here, to address a range of antisocial behaviour ranging from congregating in a noisy manner to substance abuse or vandalism.

Enforcement of parking rules, or stronger preventative measures such as bollards, are encouraged to remove unwanted parked cars from these spaces; but there are also people who think that making proper provision for parking, for instance by tarmacing these spaces, would improve their area by reducing the amount of churned up grass and mud.

Other suggestions range widely but include attention to seating, drainage, lighting and other infrastructure; additional provision for children and teenagers such as ball game areas; the banning of ball games or even of play; and measures to designate areas more clearly and separate children from dogs and vice versa.

6.3.4 Comparison with 2008 study

Quality scores show an improvement from 2008. In that study, a quarter rated their amenity greenspace positively, a proportion which has risen to nearly half in 2014. Correspondingly, the proportion giving a negative rating has fallen sharply. Maintenance continues to be an issue, but is less problematic than it was in 2008; a general cleanliness issue which was prominent in 2008 is now clarified as a significant dog mess challenge. Clearance of mowings was also an issue of consequence in 2008 and continues to be so; car parking issues also continue to be problematic in the south of the Borough.

On quantity, the proportion of people looking for more of this type of space is unchanged from 2008.

6.4 Audit

6.4.1 Quantity

The total area of amenity greenspace has been calculated from the mapping exercise undertaken as part of the audit. The locations of these spaces are shown in **Map 6.1**.

Map 6.1: Location of amenity greenspace

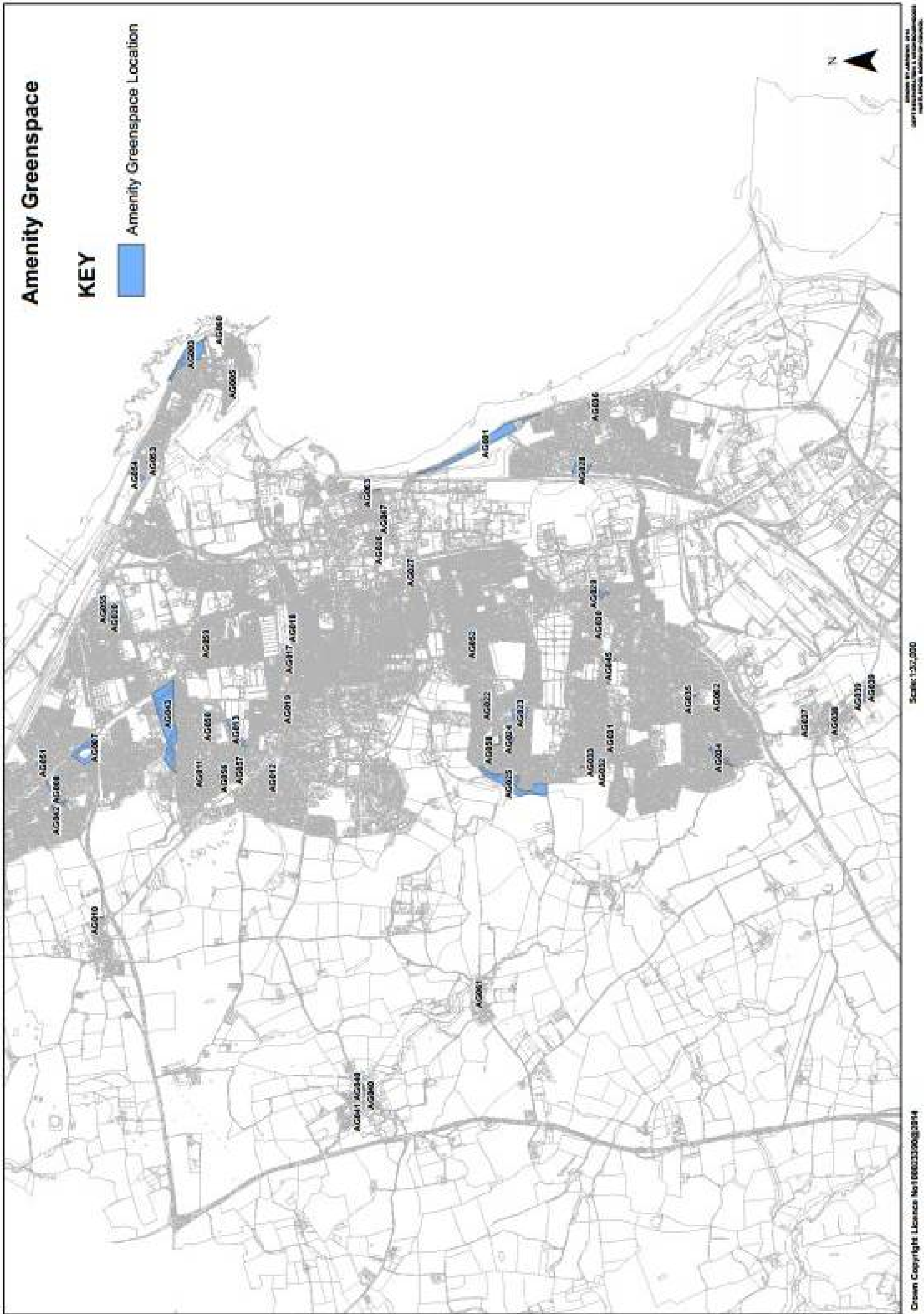


Table 6.7 shows that the total amount of amenity greenspace is 71.54 hectares. There is considerable variation in the amount of amenity greenspace in each sub-area, with two thirds of the quantity within the two best provided sub-areas and only one third in the remaining two sub-areas. The sub-area with the greatest amount is South Central with 26.5 hectares (37.1%) and that with the smallest amount is Southern with 11.8 hectares (16.5%). The Western sub-area has 28.4% and the North Central has 18.0%.

When the amount of amenity greenspace is calculated in relation to the population the quantity for Hartlepool overall is 0.78 hectares per 1,000. The sub-area with the highest provision is Western with 1.31 hectares per 1,000 followed by the South Central sub-area with 0.99 hectares per 1,000. The North Central sub-area has the lowest provision at 0.39 hectares per 1,000; the Southern sub-area has 0.68 hectares per 1,000.

The quantity of amenity greenspace is lower than that assessed in the 2008 study; some of this difference is due to spaces having been built on and some is due to changes in typology.

Table 6.7: Hectares per 1,000 and Population per Hectare of Amenity Greenspace

Sub-area	Population (mid 2012)	Amenity Greenspace (ha)	Hectares per 1,000	Persons per Hectare
North Central	32,700	12.90	0.39	2,534
South Central	26,795	26.52	0.99	1,010
Southern	17,250	11.82	0.68	1,460
Western	15,490	20.30	1.31	763
Hartlepool	92,235	71.54	0.78	1,289

In all, 52 sites were surveyed varying in size from 0.05 hectares (AG041 North Lane, Elwick)⁶³ to 11.28 hectares (AG043 Middle Warren). There are four large sites over 4 ha, one in each sub-area: Middle Warren in the Western sub-area, Coronation Drive (AG001) in the Southern sub-area at 5.97 ha., AG025 (West of Masefield Road) in South Central at 5.78 ha. and Town Moor (AG003) in North Central at 4.29 ha.

The sub-area with the largest number of sites is North Central with 19 sites followed by the Western sub-area with 14 sites. South Central and Southern have 11 and 8 sites respectively. Although there are also smaller amenity greenspaces, these are incidental in nature and do not make a significant contribution in terms of usage; the audit deliberately excludes these.

⁶³ This site is below the threshold of 0.1ha and is only included because it was present in the previous survey as an Amenity Green Space. No other site below the threshold size is included in the analysis.

6.4.2 Quality and Value

The amenity greenspace sites were assessed against a range of attributes that are considered fundamental to the quality of the site. These include the quality of grass and planting, condition of paths and bins and seating. Sites were also assessed for the level of ‘playability’ they provide i.e. the extent that the site provides the opportunity for informal play.

Appendix 6 shows the Quality and Value scores for each site.

The median quality score for amenity greenspace is 74% and 27 sites achieved a score equal to or higher than the median; 25 sites scored below this figure.

In general the condition of grassed areas was good, as was lighting and level of cleanliness; quality of planting was very variable from site to site and there was a general absence of seating which in some sites would not be appropriate but in others would enhance the quality of the site.

One of the sites which achieved the median quality score is the site at Stamford Walk (AG035) in the Southern sub-area. The highest scoring site for quality is Elwick Village Green (AG040) at 89%, followed by Spalding Road (AG034) and Park Square (AG017), both scoring 88%.

The median value score for amenity greenspace is 70%. In all, 27 sites achieved a score equal to or higher than this and 25 scored below the median. Sites that scored poorly were those that showed little evidence of regular use, failed to contribute to the amenity and sense of place of the neighbourhood, or were poorly located.

The highest scoring site for value is the Village Green at Greatham (AG038) at 97%. Other high scoring sites are Ross Grove (AG029), Elwick Village Green (AG040) and Park Square (AG017), all over 90%. Significant sites with high value scores are Town Moor (AG003) and Easington Road/ West View Road (AG007), known locally as Clavering, both scoring 87%.

Table 6.8 summarises the quality and value scores.

Table 6.8: Summary of Quality and Value Rankings

Quality Ranking	Value Ranking	Number of Sites
High	High	22
Low	Low	20
High	Low	5
Low	High	5
Total		52

In all, 22 sites achieved a high score for both quality and value, whereas 20 sites scored below the median for both quality and value. There are 5 sites with high quality but low value scores and 5 sites with high value and low quality scores. In discussion, Stamford Walk (AG035) which achieves the median scores for both quality and value was adopted as the benchmark site.

The quality and value scores represent a considerable uplift when compared with those in the 2008 study where the median score for quality was 56% and the median for value was 61%.

6.4.3 Accessibility

Many of these sites are located in housing areas and are therefore easily accessible on foot by local residents and children in particular. Larger areas of amenity greenspace are likely to be used by people living within a relatively restricted catchment area of up to 400 metres.

6.5 Standards

These standards are the locally determined standards for Hartlepool that have emerged from the consultation and audit.

6.5.1 Quantity

Current provision across the Borough is 0.78 hectares per 1,000. However, there has been an erosion of this type of space since the last study in 2008 with some sites having been built on and others reclassified. The quantity standard seeks to redress this and reflects the views from the consultation that more space, and more usable space, is needed. A quantity standard has therefore been set to encourage the creation of more amenity green space across the Borough.

Quantity Standard

<i>1.0 hectare per 1,000 people</i>
--

This standard is exceeded in the Western sub-area, but this is because of the presence there of a single large site which offers little amenity value to much of the sub-area. Additional space is needed to accompany any development in this sub-area outside the catchment area of Middle Warren.

6.5.2 Quality and Value

The benchmark site is Stamford Walk (AG035) with a quality score of 74% and a value score of 70%.

This represents a good level of quality and value and sites scoring below this level should be brought up to this standard. It represents an achievable level of quality given the constraints on expenditure. However, this particular site has limited potential for providing informal play space due to the configuration of footpaths.

Quality Standard

Quality score of 74%

Value Score of 70%

Quality Criteria

General

- Consideration should be given to the potential to link with other open spaces as part of a network of greenspaces that can contribute to the delivery of green infrastructure.
- Opportunities to provide safe routes away from traffic linking with walking and cycling routes should be considered.
- Amenity greenspace should create a sense of place and provide a setting for adjoining buildings.

Seats

- In sites with a clear lack of seating, seats should be provided and the level of quality of existing seats should be maintained.

Informal Play

- The potential to provide informal play space in residential neighbourhoods should be considered in consultation with children and local residents.

Nature conservation/vegetation/trees

- Some sites have good natural diversity and should continue to be managed in a way that encourages wildlife. Opportunities to improve nature conservation with planting of diverse species should be pursued, and existing planting maintained and managed.

6.5.3 Accessibility

The majority of these sites are located in housing areas and are therefore easily accessible on foot. However, the size of the space is a major factor in its usability. The prime consideration in determining minimum acceptable size standards should be the needs of the local community. On this basis, it is proposed that the minimum size of amenity greenspaces should be at least 0.1 hectares with no dimension smaller than 15 metres.

This equates to the area of about two tennis courts and is considered to be the smallest space capable of accommodating children's play. This 'door step' space should be within approximately one minute walk from the home (100 metres pedestrian route or 60 metres straight line distance) without having to cross a classified road.

Accessibility standard

Residents should have at least one amenity greenspace of at least 0.1 ha. in size within 400m of where they live.

6.6 Deficiencies**6.6.1 Quantity**

There is considerable variation in the amount of amenity greenspace in each subarea, with two thirds of the quantity within two subareas and only one third in the remaining two subareas. Overall, provision equates to 0.78 hectares per 1,000 indicating a reduction in this type of space since the last study in 2008. A quantity standard of 1.0 hectares per 1000 population seeks to redress this and reflects the views from the consultation that more space, and more usable space, is needed.

Table 6.9 shows the current provision of amenity greenspace against the recommended standard of 1.0 hectares per 1000 population.

Table 6.9: Current Deficiencies in the Provision of Amenity Greenspace

Subarea	Population (mid 2012)	Current level of provision (Hectares)	Current level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population (Hectares)	Amount of Amenity Greenspace required to meet standard (Hectares)	Surplus/ Deficiency (Hectares)
North Central	32,700	12.90	0.39	1.0	32.7	-19.80
South Central	26,795	26.52	0.99	1.0	26.80	-0.28
Southern	17,250	11.82	0.68	1.0	17.25	-5.43
Western	15,490	20.30	1.31	1.0	15.49	4.81
Hartlepool	92,235	71.54	0.78	1.0	92.24	-20.70

There is an overall deficiency in Hartlepool of 20.70 hectares. This deficiency is most pronounced in the North Central subarea where there is a deficit of 19.80 hectares, but there are also deficiencies in the South Central and Southern subareas. Only in the Western subarea is the standard met; but this is because of the presence of a single large site at Middle Warren, which distorts the result for this subarea, much of which lacks amenity green space in the required quantity.

Table 6.10: Deficiencies in Future Provision of Amenity Greenspace

Subarea	Population 2019	Future level of provision (Hectares)	Future level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population (Hectares)	Amount of Amenity Greenspace required to meet standard (Hectares)	Surplus/ Deficiency (Hectares)
North Central	33,160	12.90	0.39	1.0	33.16	-20.26
South Central	26,600	26.52	1.00	1.0	26.60	-0.08
Southern	17,350	11.82	0.68	1.0	17.35	-5.53
Western	16,905	20.3	1.20	1.0	16.91	3.40
Hartlepool	94,015	71.54	0.76	1.0	94.02	-22.48

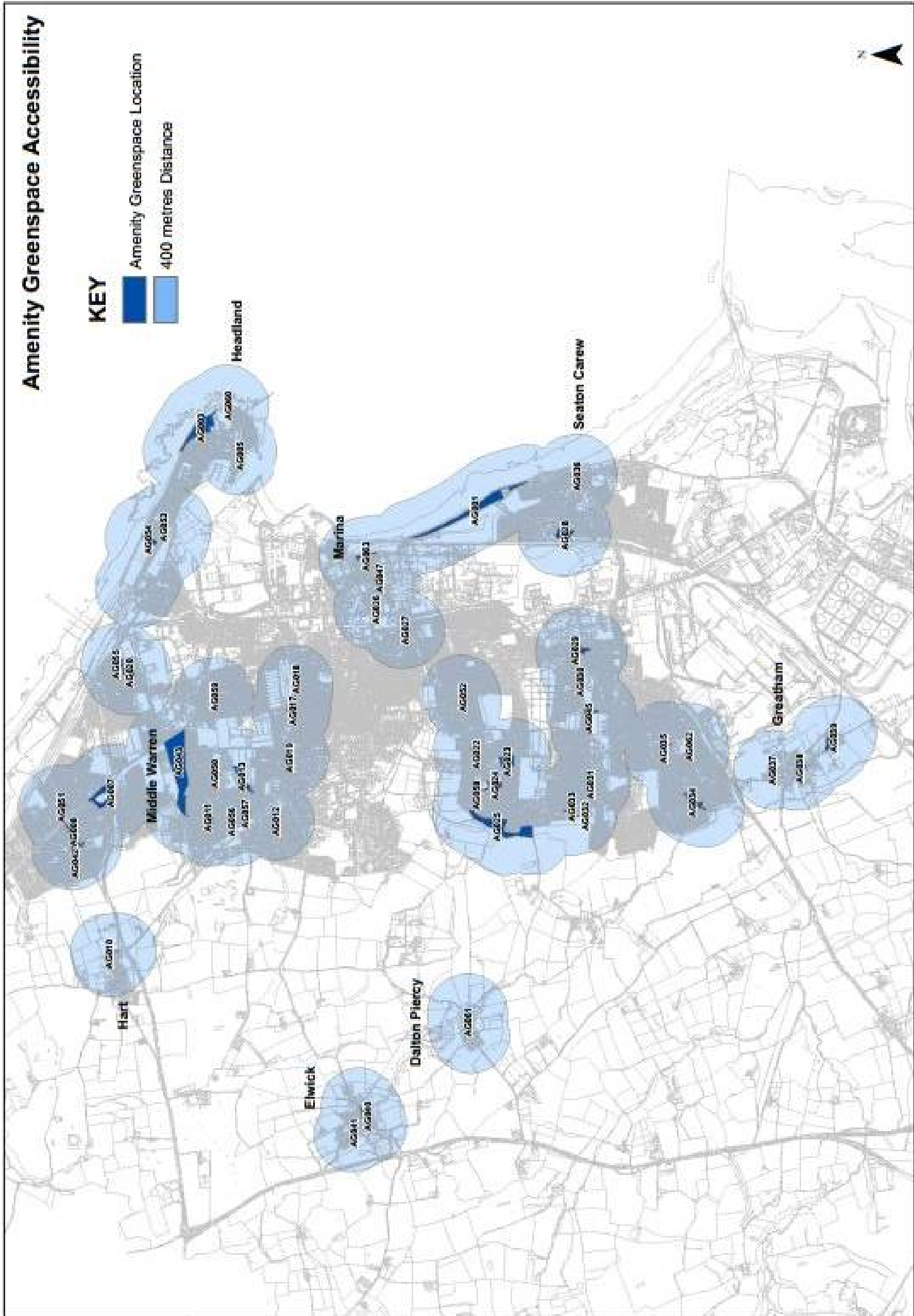
The deficiency in Hartlepool increases to 22.48 hectares by 2019 with the North Central subarea having a deficit of 20.26 hectares.

6.6.2 Accessibility

Map 6.2 shows the application of the recommended accessibility standard to amenity green space sites. The catchment is a 400m walking distance measured from the nearest point on the road network.

Access is good in some parts of the Borough, such as on the Headland, along the coast between the harbour and Seaton, and in the north western and south-western suburban areas. Amenity greenspace is also present in all four of the rural communities in the Borough. There are nevertheless areas with little access to amenity space and these are particularly in the central urban area, around the harbour/marina, and to the south of Seaton Carew.

Map 6.2 Accessibility of Amenity Greenspace



ORCA 2014
 www.orca.gov.uk
 ORCA 2014

Scale: 1:25,000

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7. ALLOTMENTS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS

7.1 Definition

An allotment is an area of land in, or on the edge of, a developed area, which can be rented by local people for the growing of vegetables, flowers or fruit. Allotments provide opportunities for those who wish to do so to grow their own produce, and support health, sustainability and social inclusion. They also provide garden space for those with no gardens, such as flat-dwellers.

An "allotment garden" is defined in the Allotments Act 1922 as an allotment not exceeding 40 poles⁶⁴ (1,011 square metres) which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of fruit or vegetables for consumption by himself and his family [*sic*], and this definition is common to all the statutes in which the term occurs. An "allotment garden" is what people commonly mean by the term allotment, in other words a plot let out to an individual within a larger allotment field.

Statutory allotments are parcels of land acquired or appropriated by the local authority specifically for use as allotments; these sites cannot be sold or used for other purposes without the consent of the Secretary of State. Allotments transferred by a local authority to a parish council will automatically become statutory allotments because they will have been acquired by the parish council specifically for use as allotments. Stranton Allotments, off Brierton Lane, is designated cemetery land under temporary use as allotments until cemetery demands require it. The remaining allotment sites in the Borough are statutory.

Temporary allotments are on land that is allocated for other uses but leased or rented by an allotments authority. Temporary allotments are not protected from disposal in the same way that statutory allotments are.

Privately owned land can also be let for use as allotments. There are three privately owned sites in Hartlepool. These plots have the same legal status as temporary allotment sites; the local council has control over the status of these sites through the planning system.

Community gardens are locally managed areas of land that have been developed in response to the needs of the communities in which they are based.

The origins of community farms and gardens stem back to therapeutic gardens associated with hospitals, school growing areas and early co-operative agricultural systems. Changing culture and a reduction in spaces available led to a decline in the number of gardens. However, since the 1960s, there has been a resurgence in community food growing, partly inspired by the growth of the community garden movement in the United States.

The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG) was established in 1980 and is the representative body for city farms, community gardens and similar community-led land-based organisations in the UK. FCFCG now represents nearly 1,000 community gardens. It has been estimated that over 300,000 individuals are involved in at least 450 community gardening programmes around the country.

⁶⁴ One pole, or rod, measures 25.29 square metres. The size of an allotment is measured in poles or rods, and traditionally rent is paid per pole. The standard size of an allotment is 10 poles.

Community gardens do not have any legal protection. Most are sited on what was previously derelict local authority land. In the longer term community gardening initiatives are likely to make an important contribution to the provision of green space in urban areas.

Whilst allotments are well understood and well-defined to be mainly for food production, community gardens are less well-defined and perform a different function from that of allotments.

7.2 Strategic context

The government has stated⁶⁵ that it believes that allotments make an important contribution to the quality of people's lives in our towns and cities, and in creating and maintaining healthy neighbourhoods and sustainable communities. Allotments are considered to be important social assets and the government is keen to ensure that they are better appreciated and properly managed and maintained.

Allotments are an important asset to Hartlepool, providing a wide range of benefits to local communities and the environment. They are a valuable green sustainable open space that benefits wildlife and provides a recreational activity that offers health, exercise, and social contact at a low cost. They are also readily accessible to those members of the community who find themselves socially or economically disadvantaged.

In July 2009 the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee published a report 'Securing food supplies up to 2050: the challenges faced by the UK',⁶⁶ which concluded that "When it has been established that there is an unmet demand for allotments in a local authority area, the Government should require the local authority to publish, within three years, a plan setting out how it proposes to meet the demand."

The Food Strategy⁶⁷ published by Defra,⁶⁸ notes that the popularity of 'grow your-own' has risen significantly over recent years. An estimated 33% of people already grow or intend to grow their own vegetables. Growing food is considered to have a range of benefits. The Defra strategy includes making land available for community food growing, so that more people should have the chance to grow their own food.

In 2006, the London Assembly concluded that the case for maintaining, promoting and protecting allotments is a strong one, on public health and environmental grounds as well as a means of enhancing community cohesion. Furthermore:

⁶⁵ 'Growing in the Community, a good practice guide for the management of allotments growing in the community', Professor David Crouch, Dr Joe Sempik and Dr Richard Wiltshire for the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions, The Greater London Authority, the Local Government Association and the Shell Better Britain Campaign.

⁶⁶ Securing food supplies up to 2050: the challenges faced by the UK (2009) House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee,

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmenvfru/213/213i.pdf>

⁶⁷ Food 2030 (2010) Defra, www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/food/pdf/food2030strategy.pdf

⁶⁸ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

‘Any policy decision on the future of allotments must have full regard to the very considerable benefits they bring to the individual and the wider community.’⁶⁹

In 2008 the Government launched the Healthy Towns Initiative aiming to get more people more active, help them make healthy food choices and tackle the problem of obesity. Two ‘Healthy Towns’ – Middlesbrough and Halifax – have incorporated food growing as part of plans to make their towns healthier.

The charity, Forum for the Future, established the Sustainable Cities Index to track progress on sustainability in Britain’s twenty largest cities, ranking them across three broad baskets of indicators: environmental performance; quality of life; and future-proofing – how well they are addressing issues such as climate change, recycling and biodiversity. The database of the number of allotment plots⁷⁰ was used as one of the 13 indicators in the 2010 Sustainable Cities Index.⁷¹

7.3 The need for allotments

Local Authorities have a statutory obligation in respect of provision and letting of allotments. It is a requirement under section 23 subsection (1) of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908 (as amended) for a local authority to provide “sufficient allotments where they consider that there is a demand for them in their area”. When assessing demand the local authority must take into account any written representations on the need for allotments by any six residents on the electoral register or persons liable to pay council tax (section 23(2) of the Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908).

The NPPF does not make any specific reference to allotments, although allotments are covered in the definition of open space in the current planning legislation. The NPPF requires local authorities to make assessments of future need for open space, including allotments.

The 1969 Thorpe Report⁷² recommended a minimum standard of allotment provision of 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres) per 1000 population. In the context of Hartlepool this would equate to an area of 44.14 hectares.

In 1996, the National Allotment survey identified an average provision in England of 15 plots per 1000 households⁷³. The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners considers that the target for provision, based on the findings of a national survey, should be 20 allotment plots⁷⁴ per 1000 households⁷⁵. This target allows for some growth in demand as forecast in the House of Commons Select Committee report ‘The Future of Allotments’

⁶⁹ A Lot to Lose: London’s disappearing allotments (2006) London Assembly.
www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/environment/allotments.pdf

⁷⁰ Waiting lists in England 2010. Margaret Campbell and Ian Campbell, Transition Town West Kirby in conjunction with the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners.

⁷¹ Forum for the Future. The Sustainable Cities Index 2010

⁷² Cmnd. 4166, Departmental Committee of Enquiry into Allotments, otherwise known as the Thorpe Report.

⁷³ Equates to 0.14 hectares per 1000 population (Tees Valley Unlimited (TVU) 2011 Census Based Population and Household Estimates).

⁷⁴ Where a plot is defined as 250 m².

⁷⁵ Equates to 0.29 hectares per 1000 population (TVU 2011 Census Based Population and Household Estimates)

(1998), and equates to a recommended spatial standard of 0.25 hectares per 1000 population.

7.4 Ownership and management

Out of 19 allotment sites in Hartlepool, 16 are owned and managed by the Council, with three sites in private ownership. Some of the allotment sites in Hartlepool have set up allotment associations who work in co-operation with the Council to improve the day-to-day management of allotments sites and improve facilities.

The Council is supporting and encouraging a movement towards Devolved Management arrangements for sites with active and well established allotment associations⁷⁶. The experience of Woodcroft Allotments undertaking devolved management of the site has been very successful; Woodcroft is a thriving association-led site, which is very well managed and popular. The success of this pilot project and the positive impact that this has had on allotment gardening in the town has encouraged an interest in this form of management across other sites.

7.5 Demand for Allotments

The accepted method of assessing the need for allotments is a demand-led approach based on local authority records. The Council's waiting list can be used to identify the level of unmet demand and also its spatial distribution.

Demand for allotments in Hartlepool has been increasing and most active sites have waiting lists. This renewed interest in allotments has been stimulated by the desire for good quality, sustainably grown, local, organic food. The current trend is for more women and families to take up allotments.

The most recent data available on the number of plots available in Hartlepool shows that 19 sites provide a total of 1,067 plots.⁷⁷ Waiting list data is available for the 16 sites managed by Hartlepool Borough Council, and the 2013 survey, which is carried out using Freedom of Information requests, reported that 1,704 applications for a plot were registered with the Council; this has subsequently been reduced to 1,067 in 2014.

The Council has since worked on this list to identify applicants who have applied to more than one site (waiting lists are maintained at site level), and to remove people who no longer require plots for a variety of reasons. The effect of this has been to reduce the effective waiting list to 295 as at August 2014.

The waiting list situation can be compared to the rest of the country and in particular to the surrounding local authorities using data from the 2013 survey of allotment waiting lists,⁷⁸ which is detailed in **Table 7.1** below. In this table, the figure reported by Hartlepool for the purposes of the survey is used, rather than the revised figure developed by the Council in 2014.

⁷⁶ Allotments Development Strategy 2010 – 2015.

⁷⁷ This figure includes both 10 pole and 5 pole plots.

⁷⁸ Waiting lists in England 2013. Margaret Campbell and Ian Campbell, Transition Town West Kirby in conjunction with the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners.

The total number of allotment plots for which English principal councils have waiting list data was 152,432 in 2013, and the total number of people waiting for these was 78,827. This is an average of 52⁷⁹ people waiting per 100 plots on average compared with 161 people waiting per 100 plots in Hartlepool. Hartlepool has a higher figure than any other North East local authority, but there are only two North East local authorities, Newcastle and Middlesbrough, where the average number of people waiting is below the average for England. **Table 7.1** shows the situation in adjoining local authorities at the time of the national survey.

Table 7.1: Waiting Lists in Neighbouring Local Authorities

Council	Number of sites	Number of plots	No. waiting	No. waiting per 100 plots	Number new sites	New area (ha)	Number new plots
County Durham	111	1141	993	87	2	0.5155	19
Darlington BC	15	820	552	67	0		
Gateshead BC	26	536	479	89	0		
Hartlepool BC	16	1057	1704	161	0		
Middlesbrough BC	9	943	111	12	1	0.23	26
Newcastle CC	66	2600	800	31	2	0.4	45
North Tyneside BC	55	1954	1515	78	1	0.15	9
Redcar/Cleve BC	18	870	1164	134	0		
Sth Tyneside BC	23	1366	813	60	0		
Stockton BC	2	292	191	65	0		
Sunderland CC	92	2839	2568	90	0		
England	3,558	152,432	78,827	52	65	34	2009

Source: *Waiting lists in England 2013*.

There are some uncertainties about the accuracy of allotment waiting list figures. Reasons for this, as has been suggested is the case in Hartlepool also, include the fact that people may add their names to lists at more than one site; changes in the circumstances of people on the list which mean that they are no longer 'active'; long waiting lists may deter some people from applying; people may have moved on, or become unable to manage a plot. These factors mean that the survey may have overestimated or underestimated the true figure. It is clear, nevertheless, that demand for allotments continues to grow.

There has been some increase in the supply of allotments in England. Overall 51 councils developed 65 new sites between 2011-2013. For the 58 sites where information was provided, the total area of new sites was 30 hectares, and the total number of plots on these new sites was 1,950.

⁷⁹ The England average number of people waiting per 100 plots was 57 in 2011.

Experience has shown that a 10 pole plot⁸⁰ is often too large for many people who are starting out as allotment gardeners. Plots have therefore been subdivided, as they become available, into 5 pole plots. A successful allotment gardener might then take on a second plot once they are established, subject to availability.

Whilst the council has a statutory obligation to provide a sufficient number of allotments, steps are being taken to meet the needs of people currently on the waiting list.

7.6 Consultation findings on allotments

Although the survey asks about allotments, the involvement of the general public in this service is quite limited, as this table shows:

Table 7.2: Allotment rental and use

Allotments	Proportion of respondents
Rent or use	3%
On waiting list	1%
No, but would like to	5%
No	92%
N(=100%)	1,079

Just 3% of households rent or use an allotment, but there are twice this number who are either on a waiting list or who would like an allotment but have yet to apply. Allotment usage is highest in the North Central sub-area, where it rises to 5% of households, but it is very low in the Western sub-area where no allotment holders responded to the survey.

The numbers are too small to categorise by age, except to say that people from all age-groups rent or use allotments; as do both genders, and also people with disabilities.

⁸⁰ The origin of the 10 pole plot is that it provides an area which, if properly husbanded, should feed a family of four for one year.

7.6.1 Quantity

This table shows people's perceptions of the quantity of allotments:

Table 7.3: Quantity of allotments

Opinion	Proportion of all respondents
Too many	3%
Too few	23%
About right	74%
N(=100%)	648

Very few people in Hartlepool think there are too many allotments, although the proportion who say they don't know is quite high on this type of space. Three quarters of households expressing a view think the provision is about right, but almost everyone else would like to see an increased allocation of space for allotment purposes.

Quantity perceptions break down by sub-area in this way:

Table 7.4: Quantity of allotments by sub-area

Opinion	Western	North central	South central	Southern
Too many	4%	2%	3%	5%
Too few	33%	24%	19%	17%
About right	63%	74%	78%	78%
N(=100%)	114	170	209	149

A majority in each sub-area is content with current provision, but the minority calling for more is substantially larger in the Western sub-area than in any other part of the Borough. Demand for more allotments is concentrated at the younger end of the age-range, especially among under 45s; demand is also higher among men.

7.6.2 Quality of allotments

The table below shows how those people who use an allotment, or who would like to, rate local allotments overall.

Table 7.5: Quality assessments of allotments

Allotments generally	Proportion of allotment users
Excellent	8%
Good	33%
Average	32%
Below average	11%
Poor	17%
N (=100%)	125

Two in five people (41%) give local allotments a positive rating, but over a quarter rate them negatively, and for one in six users the quality of local allotments is poor. The numbers of responses in each sub-area is low, and must be viewed with caution, but the 'poor' ratings are most likely to emanate from residents of the Southern sub-area, whereas excellence is most likely in the North Central and South Central sub-areas.

Quality ratings are highest among those aged 46 - 60, but are lower for younger allotment users and older users alike. Men are much more critical of quality, though, with three times as many men criticising local allotments.

Asked how allotments could be improved, respondents offer these suggestions:

Table 7.6: Improving allotments

Opinion	No. of comments
Improved security	24
Better fencing	14
Enforcement of rules	13
Re-let abandoned plots	9
Improved entrances and pathways	7
Other improvements	35
<i>Total no. of comments</i>	<i>77</i>

The most frequent suggestion made is for better security, which includes general pleas to improve security on site as well as specific suggestions about CCTV and lighting. Closely related to this, and often suggested by the same individual, is improved fencing for allotment sites. Some people have experienced issues with theft or inappropriate behaviour in allotments, especially after dark.

But it is not only outsiders who cause difficulties. Some allotment holders are accused of breaking the rules, by having livestock on site for example, or by holding barbecues and other activities that disturb neighbours and neighbouring ploholders alike, or by simply neglecting the plot and allowing weeds to flourish. Fly tipping is also an issue in some locations. Rules exist to prevent some of this activity, but enforcement is perceived to be lacking.

Recycling of abandoned plots is criticised for taking too long; as well as denying enthusiasts the chance to get started, this allows the plots to become overgrown and more challenging to work, especially for a beginner. Better entrances, access and pathways would help in some situations.

Other suggestions include drainage (Nicholson Field is mentioned), improved information for ploholders and applicants, and better management, with some people suggesting the formation of allotment societies to take over running the sites. There are also a small number of people who simply want to be left alone to get on with working their allotment free from interference.

7.6.3 Comparison with 2008 study

Perceptions of allotment quality were low in 2008, scoring -0.18 on a scale ranging from +2.00 (excellent) to -2.00 (very poor). In 2014, the equivalent score (again from the resident viewpoint, not that of site users) is 0.04, a modest change but one in the right direction. As to quantity, the general perception that there are enough allotments has risen from 64% in 2008 to 74% in 2014.

7.7 Audit

7.7.1 Quantity

There are 19 active allotment sites in Hartlepool providing 1,083 plots; these are listed in **Appendix 7**. The number of allotment sites is relatively evenly spread although the Southern sub-area has only three sites compared to six in the North Central sub-area. The size of allotment sites varies considerably; the largest site is ALT006 Chester Road (Jesmond Gardens) in the North Central sub-area which is 6.45 hectares, compared to ALT001 Olive Street in the North Central sub-area which is just 0.03 hectares. As a consequence of the difference in site areas, there is a significant difference in the area of provision for each sub-area. **Table 7.7** shows that the lowest area of allotment land is in the Western sub-area with 3.44 hectares which is slightly higher than the Southern sub-area which has 4.22 hectares. The sub-area with the largest area of allotment land is North Central (17.87 hectares) and the second largest is South Central (14.51 hectares).

The difference in the level of provision is also reflected in the number of persons per hectare of allotment. Overall, there are 2,304 persons per hectare of allotments, in Hartlepool, but this figure conceals differences between sub-areas. There are just 1,830 persons per hectare in the North Central sub-area, less than half the number of persons per hectare in the Western sub-area (4,505 persons) The 16 Council owned sites and the 3 privately owned sites are shown on **Map 7.1**.

Map 7.1 Location of Allotments

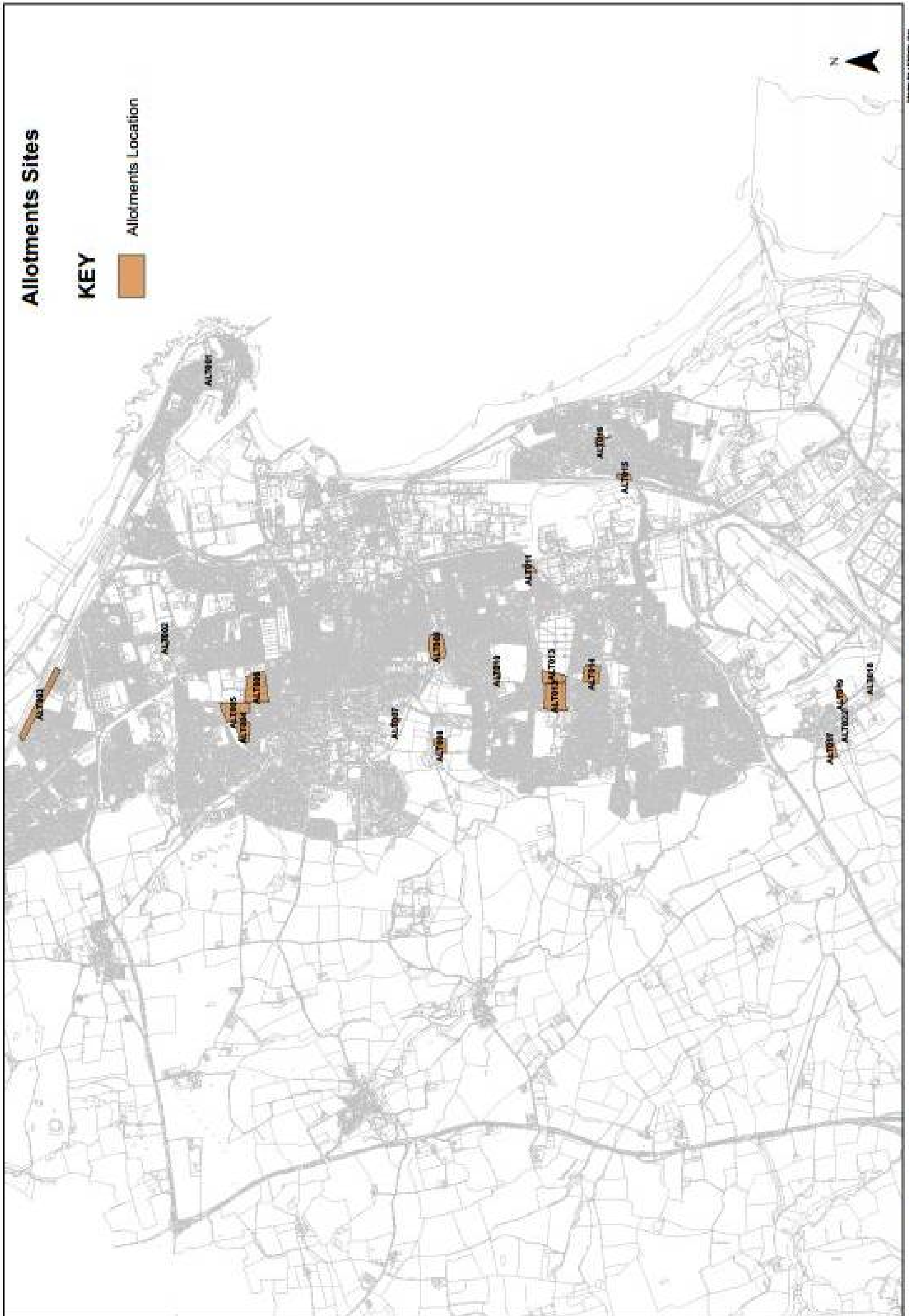


Table 7.7 shows an overall provision of 0.43 hectares per 1,000 population, which is double the Thorpe report recommended level of provision of 0.2 hectares per 1,000 population. However, the distribution of provision is skewed with a lower level of provision in the Southern and Western sub-areas - although provision here nevertheless matches the Thorpe standard.

There are no community gardens in Hartlepool.

Table 7.7: Provision of allotments space per 1000 population

Sub-area	Population ⁸¹	Allotments (Hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population	Persons per hectare
North Central	32,700	17.87	0.55	1,830
South Central	26,795	14.51	0.54	1,847
Southern	17,250	4.22	0.24	4,089
Western	15,490	3.44	0.22	4,505
Hartlepool	92,028	40.03	0.43	2,304

An alternative method of assessing the need for allotments is to consider the number of allotment plots⁸² per 1,000 households. A summary of provision per sub-area is shown in **Table 7.8** below.

Table 7.8: Allotment Plots per 1000 households

Sub-area	Number of Plots	Households ⁸³	Plots per 1000 households
North Central	495	15,750	31.4
South Central	367	12,293	29.9
Southern	180	7,641	23.6
Western	42	6,435	6.5
Hartlepool	1083	42,119	25.7

Appendix 7 provides details of the number of plots that were available on each site. Seven sites have fewer than 50 plots and there are three relatively large sites of over 100 plots. Overall, Hartlepool has 1083 allotment plots, which equates to 25.7 plots per 1000 households.

⁸¹ TVU Mid 2012 Mid year population estimates. TUV Ward figures are based on an exact fit basis rather than the ONS method of best fit for Output Areas. This leads to a difference with ONS figures for Hartlepool.

⁸² The measure of plots per 1000 household has to be treated with caution. A standard plot is 10 rods which was considered to be the area required to feed a family for one year. However, in recent years some local authorities have split 10 rod plots into two 5 rod plots, in part to address the waiting list but also in part because this smaller size of plot is more manageable.

⁸³ TUV 2011 Occupied Household, Census Data.

Table 7.10 shows that in comparison with neighbouring North East local authorities and with the national figure Hartlepool has an above average number of plots per 1,000 households. There are 25.7 plots per 1,000 households⁸⁴ in Hartlepool compared with 6.8 plots per 1,000 households for England as a whole and 12.6 plots per 1,000 households in the North East Region. The lowest levels of provision are in Stockton (3.6 plots per 1000) and Gateshead (3.9 per 1000).

The standard recommended by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) is that there should be 20 allotment plots per 1,000 households and the 1969 Thorpe report recommends provision of 0.2 hectares per 1,000 population or a minimum of 15 plots per 1,000 households. Current provision in Hartlepool exceeds the recommended NSALG standard which indicates that there is a good level of provision in the Borough.

Table 7.9: Allotment plots per 1,000 households nationally and in North East local authorities

Location	Number of Sites	Number of plots	Ration Plots per Site	Households ⁸⁵	Plots per 1000 households
England	3558	152432	42.8	22,542,903	6.8
North East	433	14,418	33.3	1,145,559	12.6
Darlington BC	15	820	54.7	47,382	17.3
Durham County C	111	1141	10.3	226,851	5.0
Gateshead BC	26	536	20.6	138,881	3.9
Hartlepool BC	19	1083	57	41,019	25.7
Middlesbrough C	9	943	104.8	58,054	16.2
Newcastle/Tyne CC	66	2600	39.4	119,537	21.8
North Tyneside BC	55	1954	35.5	93,138	21.0
Redcar/Cleve BC	18	870	48.3	60,131	14.5
South Tyneside BC	23	1366	59.4	68,147	20.0
Stockton-on-Tees BC	2	292	146.0	80,942	3.6
Sunderland CC	92	2839	30.9	121,269	23.4

7.7.2 Waiting List

The accepted measure of the demand for allotments is the waiting list. **Table 7.7** shows that the number of plot requests in Hartlepool totals 1,704; however as previously established in section 7.5 these requests originate from a much smaller number of actual individuals, 295 as of August 2014. The waiting list is reviewed annually in order to remove people whose

⁸⁴ Difference with figure in Table 10.2 due to difference in household projections between TVU and ONS Data.

⁸⁵ Household projections for England and local authority districts. Interim 2011-based.

circumstances have changed to the extent that they are no longer interested in taking an allotment. There is no information available about the waiting lists for private sites.

There is no general Hartlepool waiting list for allotments; the information is recorded according to individual sites. There are differences in the numbers on the waiting list for each sub-area, reflecting to some extent the number of sites in each sub-area. However, the breakdown by sub-area shown in **Table 7.11** reveals that there is stronger demand for allotments in the North Central (646) and South Central (612) sub-areas. In comparison, the Southern (300) and Western (146) Sub-areas have much lower numbers on the waiting list. It should be noted that the three private sites are in the Western Sub-area.

Table 7.10: Waiting list per sub-area

Sub-area	Waiting List	Number of Plots
North Central	646	495
South Central	612	367
Southern	300	180
Western	146	42

7.7.3 Quality Assessment

A quality assessment was undertaken for the 16 Council owned allotment sites. These are summarised in **Table 7.11** below. Details of the criteria used in the assessment can be found at **Appendix 1**, and the detailed scores for each site are at **Appendix 7**.

The median⁸⁶ score is 87% which reflects the fact that most sites are well cultivated, with good soil conditions, are mainly occupied and have a reasonable range of facilities. The sites with similar scores to the median are Briarfields (AL007) and Thornhill (AL005).

High scores are those above the median and low scores are below the median.

The scores range from 32.7% for Marsh House Lane (AL019) to 92.7% for Olive Street, Headland (AL001). **Table 7.13** provides a breakdown of the quality scores by location. The quality of sites is even across the sub-areas, although the Southern sub-area has only one out of three sites assessed as being high.

⁸⁶ The median of a population is the point that divides the distribution of scores in half. Numerically, half of the scores in a population will have values that are equal to or larger than the median and half will have values that are equal to or smaller than the median. To work out the median: a) Put the numbers in order. 3 6 6 6 7 9 11 11 13. b) The number in the middle of the list is the median. 7 is in the middle. So the median value is 7. If there are two middle values, the median is halfway between them. For example, if the set of numbers were 3 6 6 6 7 8 9 11 11 13. There are two middle values, 7 and 8. The median is halfway between 7 and 8. The median is 7.5.

Table 7.11: Quality Scores for Allotment Sites

Sub-area	High Scores	Low Scores
Western	2	2
North Central	4	2
South Central	3	2
Southern	1	3

The main reasons for the poorer scores were a lack of good access and parking, poor security, a limited range of plot sizes, the number of neglected plots and poor cultivation of plots.

7.7.4 Comparison with 2008 Study

Table 7.14 provides a comparison between the 2008 Study quality scores and the results from the audit for this study. The results are mixed with some sites assessed for this study scoring below the 2008 score. An example is ALT011 Haswell Avenue in South Central sub-area which scored 90% in 2008 and 85% for this study. At the same time a number of sites improved their score, including ALT014 Brierton (Brierton Hospital) in the Southern sub-area which scored 67% in 2008 and 83% for this study. However, on balance the trend is towards improvement with 66% of sites showing an increase in their quality score and 33% showing a decline.

Table 7.12: Comparison of Quality and Value Scores

Site Reference	Site Name	2014 Study % Score	2008 Study % Score
ALT001	Olive Street, Headland	93%	100%
ALT002	Thompson Grove	87%	76%
ALT003	Nicholson's Field (Brus, West View)	57%	67%
ALT004	Throston	83%	91%
ALT005	Thornhill (Grayfields)	87%	85%
ALT006	Chester Road (Jesmond Gardens)	90%	79%
ALT007	Briarfields	87%	77%
ALT008	Catcote (Summerhill or Springwell)	88%	83%
ALT009	Burn Valley Gardens	90%	92%
ALT010	Waverly Terrace	90%	80%
ALT011	Haswell Avenue	85%	90%
ALT013	Stranton (Brierton Lane or Catcote)	82%	81%
ALT014	Brierton (Brierton Hospital)	83%	67%
ALT015	Station Lane (Seaton)	75%	61%
ALT016	Woodcroft	92%	100%
ALT017	Hospital of God, Greatham	60%	55%
ALT018	Greatham (Hill View)	89%	73%
ALT019	Marsh House Lane, Station Road	33%	48%
ALT022	Station Road, Greatham	66%	

7.7.5 Accessibility

The catchment areas for allotments in Hartlepool are based on the following criteria:

Over 50 plots = 1200 metres radius

21 to 50 plots = 900 metres radius

20 or fewer plots = 600 metres radius

These criteria are based on empirical evidence of the distances people are prepared to travel to access an allotment site. For the study in question,⁸⁷ the distance from a site within which 70% of the ploholders live was calculated, together with the relationship between that distance and the size of the site in question, as measured by the number of plots regardless of plot size.⁸⁸ The correlation overall was not a strong one, but after removing outliers there was an underlying correlation between smaller sites and the distances travelled, and also between the larger sites and the distances travelled. This data informed the decision on effective catchments for the smallest and largest sites; the catchment for sites of

⁸⁷ Medway Council, Open Space Sport and Recreation Study, 2011.

⁸⁸ This approach uses the threshold at which 70-75% of users are identified. Research undertaken by Edinburgh University found a significant change in concentration of users at that approximate percentile.

intermediate size then followed logically. The allotments and their catchments are shown on **Map 7.2**.

7.8 Standards

7.8.1 Quantity

Allotments legislation requires the authority to provide allotments sufficient to meet demand; but this obligation can be met by providing sufficient plots, regardless of the size of the plots. A solution to an unmet demand for allotments may therefore be found in site management and in the creation, from standard plots, of smaller plots and 'starter' plots.

A quantity standard based on sites currently available would be 0.43 hectares per 1,000 population, which would maintain the existing situation. However, the waiting list indicates that there is unmet demand in the Southern and Western sub-areas. Given that local authorities are required, under section 23 of the 1908 Allotments Acts (as amended), to provide allotments for their residents if they consider there is demand, current levels of provision needs to be increased if this statutory requirement is to be met.

Quantity Standard

0.47 hectares per 1,000 people

26.1 plots per 1,000 people

Emphasis to be given to increasing provision in the Southern and Western sub-areas.

The proposed allotment standard of 0.47 hectares per 1,000 population seeks to address current unmet demand. It does not allow for any further growth in demand and should be considered to be a minimum level of provision.

It is considered that the existing allotment standard of 26.1 plots per 1,000 population should be retained.

7.8.2 Quality

7.6.4 The median quality score is 87%. The agreed benchmark site is ALT005 Thornhill (Grayfields) which scored 87% for quality. A number of Council owned sites did not attain this level of quality, and these sites should be brought up to the median level of quality as a minimum benchmark.

Quality Standard

A quality score of 87%.

7.8.3 Accessibility

The catchment areas for allotments in Hartlepool are considered to be the reasonable distances that people would expect to travel to an allotment site, taking into account the size of the allotment site and the number of plots available.

Accessibility Standard

Over 50 plots = 1200 metres radius

21 to 50 plots = 900 metres radius

20 or fewer plots = 600 metres radius

Allotments

7.9 Deficiencies

7.9.1 Quantity

Overall provision of allotments in Hartlepool is 0.43 hectares per 1,000 population, which is double the Thorpe report recommended level of provision of 0.2 hectares per 1,000 population. However, there is a waiting list for allotments indicating that there is significant unmet demand. Local authorities are obliged⁸⁹ to provide allotments when there is demand and this means that current levels of provision need to be increased if this statutory requirement is to be met. The proposed standard is therefore 0.47 hectares per 1000 population.

A second standard, which is recommended by the NSALG is that there should be 20 allotment plots per 1,000 households. A standard of 35 plots per 1000 households. Both standards are considered.

Table 7.13 shows the level of provision for each of the four subareas when the recommended standard of 0.47 ha per 1000 population is applied.

Table 7.13: Current deficiencies in Allotments & Community Gardens (hectares)

Subarea	Population	Allotments (Hectares)	Hectares per 1000	Standard per 1000 population (Hectares)	Total Hectares required to meet quantity standard.	Surplus/ Deficiency (Hectares)
North Central	32700	17.87	0.55	0.47 ha	15.37	2.50
South Central	26795	14.51	0.54	0.47 ha	12.59	1.91
Southern	17250	4.22	0.24	0.47 ha	8.11	-3.89
Western	15490	3.44	0.22	0.47 ha	7.28	-3.84

⁸⁹ Section 23 of the 1908 Allotments Acts (as amended).

Hartlepool	92235	40.03	0.43	0.47 ha	43.35	-3.32
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The standard generates a total deficiency of 3.32 hectares of allotment space across Hartlepool, concentrated in the Southern and Western subareas. There is sufficient supply of allotment land in the North Central and South Central subareas to meet the quantity standard.

Table 7.14: Current deficiencies in Allotments & Community Gardens (Plots)

Subarea	Households	Plots	Plots per 1000 households	Standard per 1000 households	Total Plots required to meet standard	Surplus/ Deficiency Plots
North Central	15,010	495	32.98	26.1	392	103
South Central	11,910	367	30.81	26.1	311	56
Southern	7,485	180	24.05	26.1	195	-15
Western	6,260	42	6.71	26.1	163	-121
Hartlepool	40,665	1083	26.63	26.1	1061	22

Turning to the standard based on plot provision per household, **Table 7.14** shows that the standard would not be sufficient to generate a sufficient number of plots to meet the unmet demand represented by the waiting list but it would address part of the shortfall in provision.

The projected level of deficiency of allotments in terms of population in 2019 is shown in **Table 7.15**. Application of the standard indicates a projected deficiency of 4.16 hectares of allotment space overall, the areas of deficiency being the Southern and Western subareas. There continues to be sufficient allotment land in the North Central and South Central subareas.

Table 7.15: Future Deficiencies in Allotments & Community Gardens (hectares)

Subarea	Population 2019	Future level of provision (Hectares)	Future level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population (Hectares)	Amount of Amenity Greenspace required to meet standard	Surplus/ Deficiency (hectares)
North Central	33,160	17.87	0.54	0.47	15.59	2.28
South Central	26,600	14.51	0.55	0.47	12.50	2.01
Southern	17,350	4.22	0.24	0.47	8.15	-3.93
Western	16,905	3.44	0.20	0.47	7.95	-4.51
Hartlepool	94,015	40.03	0.43	0.47	44.19	-4.16

In terms of the provision of plots, **Table 7.16** shows that the standard of 26.1 plots per 1000 households would provide a sufficient number of plots in the North Central and South Central subareas but there would be a deficit in both the Southern and Western subareas. Overall provision would be in balance.

Table 7.16: Future deficiencies in Allotments & Community Gardens (Plots)

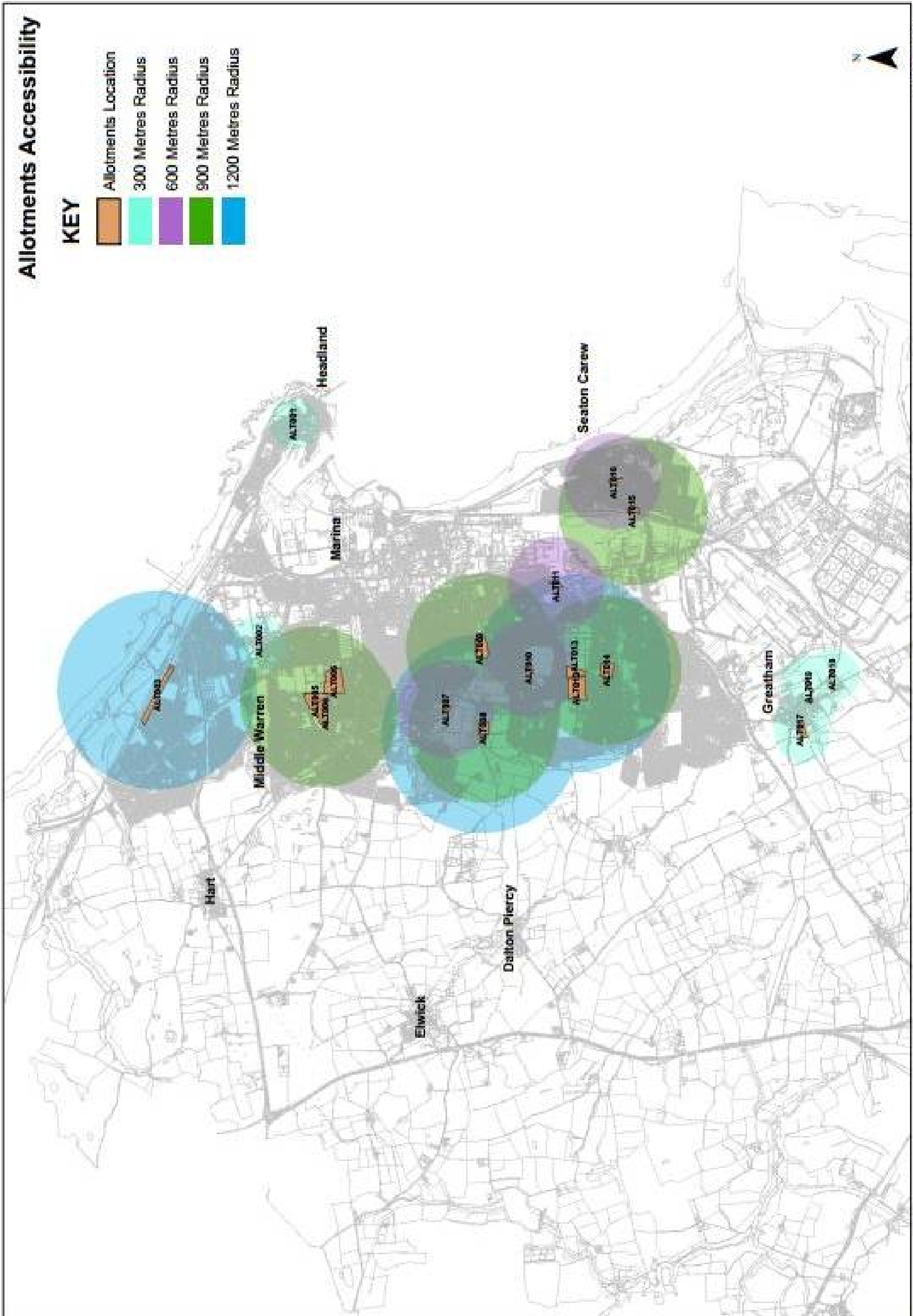
Subarea	Households	Plots	Plots per 1000 households	Standard per 1000 households	Total Plots required to meet standard	Surplus/ Deficiency Plots
North Central	15,221	495	32.52	26.1	397	98
South Central	11,823	367	31.04	26.1	309	58
Southern	7,528	180	23.91	26.1	196	-16
Western	6,832	42	6.15	26.1	178	-136
Hartlepool	41,450	1083	26.13	26.1	1082	1

7.9.2 Quality

The median site has been assessed as Thornhill Gardens, and all sites below the quality standard should be brought up to this level as a minimum. The main reasons for poorer scores were a lack of good access and parking, poor security, a limited range of plot sizes, the number of neglected plots and poor cultivation of plots, but the attribute scores for individual sites can be used to highlight priorities at individual site level.

7.9.3 Accessibility

Map 7.2 shows the effective catchment areas of the allotment sites, based on their individual characteristics. Much of the Borough is well served, with a ring of catchment areas covering most of the western urban area, and also Seaton Carew; there is also a limited availability on the headland. However, the eastern, seaward side of the Borough, especially around the harbour/marina area, is not within the catchment area of any existing allotment site.



Map 7.2 shows that there are parts of all four sub-areas that lie outside the catchment areas for allotments. The concentration of allotments in the North Central and South Central sub-areas means that catchment areas can overlap. The areas without reasonable access to an allotment are the wards of Harbour and Headland in the North Central sub-area; Foggy Furze in the South Central sub-area, Elwick in the Western sub-area and Fens and Rossmere in the Southern sub-area. The rural area of Elwick is largely unserved.

7.9.4 Addressing Deficiencies

The standard 10 rod allotment plot⁹⁰ requires a significant commitment on the part of the plotholder in terms of time and hard work. Pressure on people's leisure time now means that many people who take on a standard size plot start with enthusiasm, but then find that they are unable to sustain the commitment in terms of time and physical effort and are obliged to surrender the plot.

One common approach to the high turnover of plotholders is to change the size of plots. For example, in Cambridge, where there is a strong demand for allotments, standard 10 rod plots have been split into two 5 rod plots, which have proven much more manageable. Cambridge's policy is to allow people who can demonstrate their commitment and cultivate their allotment to a high standard to take on an additional 5 rod plot, or to take over the adjacent 5 rod plot if it becomes available. This policy has been very successful in reducing the number of people on the waiting list and the length of time people have to wait to obtain an allotment, and has led Cambridge City Council to develop 'starter' plots, eight of which can be located on one standard ten rod plot. Starter plots enable people to acquire experience and skills, and to gain the support of more experienced gardeners on the site, before they move on to a larger plot.

A second opportunity to address the long waiting list is to reclaim derelict allotments. The audit revealed that only two plots on ALT017 Hospital of God, Greatham in the Western Sub-area are in use; all the other plots on the site have been abandoned following the collapse of the drainage system on the site. Proposed new housing development in the Western and Southern sub-areas could provide an opportunity to secure the necessary funding via S106 contributions for qualitative improvements to this allotment site.

⁹⁰ Allotments have traditionally been measured using the old Imperial measures. A rod is 5.5 yards, and 160 square rods make one acre.

8. NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACE

8.1 Definition

Natural and semi-natural greenspaces have been defined as “land, water and geological features which have been naturally colonised by plants and animals and which are accessible on foot to large numbers of residents.”⁹¹ Natural greenspaces are mostly areas of undeveloped land with limited or no maintenance, which have been colonised by vegetation and wildlife, and can therefore include woodland, heathland, meadows, marsh, ponds and lakes, chalk grassland or derelict land, although linear spaces are treated separately as green corridors. The primary function of natural greenspaces is to promote biodiversity and nature conservation, but they are also important for environmental education and awareness, and for recreational enjoyment of nature.

The definition of natural space within ANGSt⁹² is:

“places where human control and activities are not intensive so that a feeling of naturalness is allowed to predominate”.

Natural England acknowledges that deciding at which point a feeling of naturalness predominates may be difficult to determine, and that there is considerable room for interpretation. For this Natural England uses a proxy measure for naturalness based on two ‘levels’:

- Level 1 includes Nature conservation areas, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), local sites (including local wildlife sites, Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Woodland and remnant countryside (within urban and urban fringe areas).
- Level 2 includes formal and informal open space, rivers and canals, unimproved grassland, disused/derelict land, formal and informal areas scrub, Country Parks and open access land.

Accessible greenspaces are defined by Natural England as:

‘places that are available for the general public to use free of charge and without time restrictions (although some sites may be closed to the public overnight and there may be fees for parking a vehicle). The places are available to all, meaning that every reasonable effort is made to comply with the requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 1995). An accessible place will also be known to the target users, including potential users who live within the site catchment area.’⁹³

Natural England has divided access into five categories to determine whether a natural area is accessible:

- Full Access: Entry to the site is possible without restriction.

⁹¹ Harrison, C, Burgess, J, Millward, A and Dawe, G (1995) Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities (English Nature Research Report 153), English Nature.

⁹² John Handley et al (2003) English Nature Report 526: Accessible Natural Green Space Standards in Towns and Cities: A Review and Toolkit for their Implementation

⁹³ Nature Nearby - Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance (NE265), Natural England 2010.

- **Conditional Access:** A right of entry exists which is subject to or affected by one or more restrictions or conditions that may affect the quality of the natural experience enjoyed by the visitor.
- **Proximate Access:** There is no physical right of access but the site can be experienced from its boundary, where a close-up visual and aural experience of nature may be available.
- **Remote Access:** No physical right of access exists and the proximate experience is limited, but the site provides a valuable visual green resource to the community along a number of distinct sightlines and at distance.
- **No Access:** No physical right of access exists and views of the site are largely obstructed.

In order to be considered sufficiently accessible to satisfy the needs of the model, sites must be either fully or conditionally accessible as shown in **Figure 8.1** below. Accessibility is taken to mean the ability of visitors to physically gain access to a site (sites which satisfy this criterion are then considered to exert a catchment zone upon the surrounding area).

Accessibility encompasses a spectrum ranging from the purely visual, to the right to enter a greenspace, move about freely and experience it without disturbance. The threshold for a site to be considered to provide sufficient experience of nature for the purposes of the model is considered to occur at the point at which physical entry to a site is possible.

8.2 Strategic context

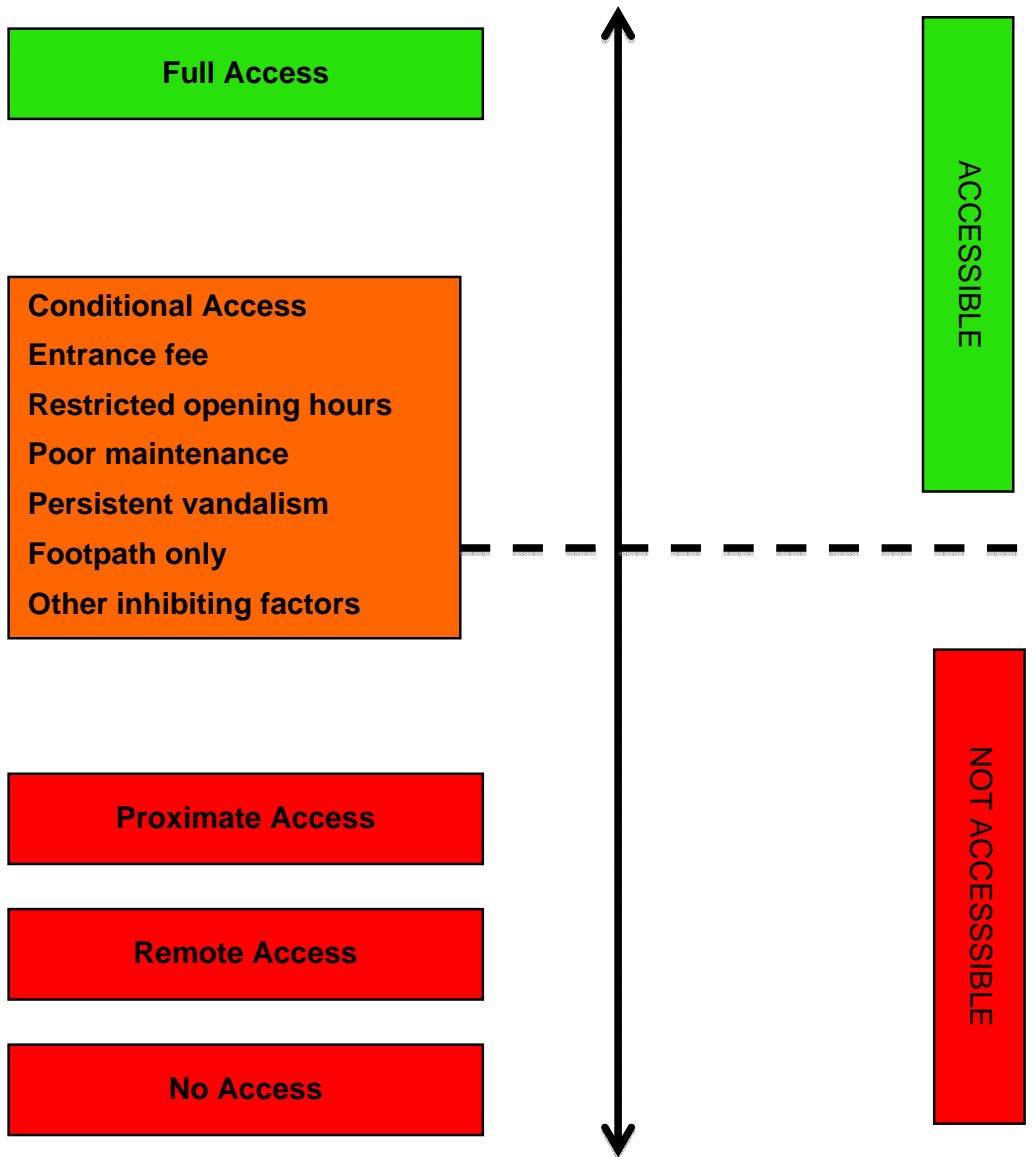
The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and England's Biodiversity Strategy all require local planning authorities to take action to conserve biodiversity, enhance priority habitats and establish more coherent ecological networks.

The Natural Environment White Paper⁹⁴ recognises that the key to protecting and improving the natural environment relies on first establishing a better understanding of its value and the inherent interdependency between people and nature. It emphasises that a healthy, diverse and sustainable natural environment gives more than it takes; it is an asset and not a liability, generating far greater economic and social value than the investment required to keep it in this favourable condition. It is the disconnection between people and the natural environment that leads to neglect; and neglect of the natural environment will result in significant economic and social costs.

The White Paper sets out how the Government will take forward the biodiversity challenge to halt the loss of UK and international species and habitats. It details how to "mainstream the value of nature across our society"; "promote an ambitious, integrated approach, creating a resilient ecological network across England." and "move from net biodiversity loss to net gain". The Government will establish a clear framework to achieve the recovery of nature through the establishment of Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) to strengthen local action and the creation of new Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) to enhance nature on a significant scale.

⁹⁴ The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011

Figure 8.1 Assessing Accessibility to Natural Greenspace



Source: *Providing Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities*, Natural England

The biodiversity strategy for England⁹⁵ sets out how the quality of England's natural environment will be improved up to the year 2020, and develops policies contained in the Natural Environment White Paper. The strategy provides guidance aimed at halting the loss of biodiversity by 2020 and to strengthen and enhance ecosystem services. The importance

⁹⁵ Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011

of ecosystem services was highlighted in the UK National Ecosystem Assessment.⁹⁶ The mission for the strategy is:

- *“to halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people”.*

To do this, the strategy has focused on four main themes:

- Theme 1 - A more integrated large-scale approach to conservation on land and at sea.
- Theme 2 - Putting people at the heart of biodiversity policy.
- Theme 3 - Reducing environmental pressures.
- Theme 4 - Improving our knowledge.

It has established a commitment to increase the overall extent of priority habitat by 200,000 hectares. Priority Action 1.1 of Theme 1 is to: *“Establish more coherent and resilient ecological networks on land that safeguard ecosystem services for the benefit of wildlife and people”.* The strategy expresses the Government’s ambitions under this action as “ better, bigger and more joined-up” and summarises its aspirations for each as follows:

- *“Better: we will improve the quality of Priority Habitat both within and outside protected sites...*
- *Bigger: we will increase the size of remaining areas of Priority Habitat where appropriate*
- *More: we will create new areas of Priority Habitat where appropriate*
- *Joined: we will enhance ecological connections between, or join up, existing areas of Priority Habitat, increasing opportunity for wildlife to move around the landscape by making use of stepping stones, corridors and other features.”*

However, there is clear evidence that biodiversity in the UK is still in decline. The State of Nature report⁹⁷ published in 2013 indicated that of 3,148 wild plants and animals monitored over the last 50 years 60% have declined. More than one in ten of all the species assessed are under threat of disappearing from the UK altogether. However, the report illustrates that targeted conservation has produced a number of success stories and, with sufficient determination, resources and public support, there is potential to improve the situation for wildlife.

Natural England is one of the Government agencies seeking to deliver the Government’s vision for biodiversity. The role of natural and semi-natural greenspace is considered to play a key role in delivering biodiversity and contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as providing opportunities for recreation. Natural England believes that everyone should have access to good quality natural greenspace near to where they live, i.e. ‘Nature Nearby’⁹⁸.

⁹⁶ UK National Ecosystem Assessment, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, 2011.

⁹⁷ State of Nature, The report is a collaboration between the 25 UK conservation and research organisations, 2013

⁹⁸ Nature Nearby - Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance (March 2010)

Three key standards have been proposed by Natural England which aim to deliver high quality natural green spaces close to where people live and connect people with the natural environment.

Access to Natural Greenspace Standard – ANGSt

Natural England has revised its approach to implementing ANGSt⁹⁹, with the aim of gaining better acceptance of the Standard. Sometimes called ANGSt Plus, this new framework for applying ANGSt is appropriate for assessing current levels of accessible natural greenspace, and planning for better provision. It identifies those sites that might be considered natural sites and areas within other green spaces that have a value for nature. It also facilitates the identification of areas of deficiency where the standard is not met.

The three underlying principles of ANGSt are:

- Improving access to green spaces.
- Improving naturalness of green spaces.
- Improving connectivity between green spaces.

Natural England is encouraging all local authorities to adopt ANGSt as their local standard because of the range of benefits that it can deliver; conformity to ANGSt is expected to benefit biodiversity and contribute to the mitigation of adverse climate change effects.

ANGSt's standards require that everyone, wherever they live, should have

- an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home;
- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres 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.

However, at the local level the Standard only deals with the requirement to have a 2ha site within 300m of people's homes. 'It does not address the need to express quantities of different types of space in terms of population sizes.'¹⁰⁰ Natural England acknowledges that ANGSt cannot therefore provide for the full range of a local planning authority's needs.

Visitor Service Standards

Visitor Service Standards are outlined for three types of natural greenspace:

- National Nature Reserves
- Country Parks

⁹⁹ In the earlier version of ANGSt, English Nature recommended that provision should be made of at least 2ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1000 population according to a system of tiers into which sites of different sizes fit. Handley, J. et al 'Providing Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities: A Practical Guide to Assessing the Resource and Implementing Local Standards for Provision'. English Nature. 2003.

¹⁰⁰ 'Nature Nearby': Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance. Natural England 2010

- Local Nature Reserves.

Greenspace Quality Standards

Natural England promotes the Green Flag Award as the national quality standard for all green spaces.

8.2.2 The Benefits of Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace

Research undertaken for Natural England¹⁰¹ revealed that the main reasons for people visiting natural greenspaces are to walk the dog, for exercise and for the pleasure of being in a green space or close to nature. Dog walking is popular at local sites, woodlands and country parks but less frequent at nature reserves. Reducing stress and relaxing constitute some of the main social values.

Maintaining and increasing access to natural greenspace has a number of well documented benefits:

Health benefits: access to nature provides psychological benefits and benefits to physical health. Studies have shown that people living in a greener environment report fewer health complaints, have better perceived general health and better mental health. The British Heart Foundation and the Countryside Agency have promoted access to the countryside and natural greenspaces as part of the 'Walking the Way to Health' initiative.

Economic benefits: natural open space acts as a green magnet, attracting people to live and work in the area. Greening also plays an integral role in regeneration initiatives and new and existing infrastructure, the public realm, and other developments. Biodiversity adds value to a site, and ecological management practices can save money. However, there are potential conflicts with economic development which have to be addressed if biodiversity is to be successfully integrated.

Educational benefits: the use by local schools of natural green spaces for nature study. Visiting such sites provides hands-on experience of plants and animals. They provide children and adults with opportunities to learn about and understand nature, potentially leading to a respect for living things and a desire to conserve them.

Functional benefits: vegetated surfaces help to slow water runoff and so reduce the risk of flooding. Vegetation provides local climatic benefits and helps to prevent erosion, ameliorate ambient noise and absorb some pollutants.

Sustainable development: the natural world provides a range of sustainability benefits. Natural greenspaces provide valuable wildlife habitats and contribute to the conservation of threatened species.

¹⁰¹ Nature for people: the importance of green spaces to East Midlands communities. English Nature Research Report No. 567.

8.2.3 Children's Play

Natural England is seeking to promote the need to make natural spaces more available for children today. The Natural England's National Childhood and Nature survey¹⁰² found that:

- Children spend less time playing in natural places, such as woodlands, countryside and heaths than they did in previous generations. Less than 10% play in such places compared to 40% of adults when they were young.
- Three quarters of adults claimed to have had a patch of nature near their homes and over half went there at least once or twice a week. Two thirds (64%) of children reckon they have a patch of nature near their homes but less than a quarter go there once or twice a week.
- Parents would like their children to be able to play in natural spaces unsupervised (85%) but fears of strangers and road safety prevent them from giving much freedom to their children.

The Natural England publication 'Accessible Natural Green Space in Towns and Cities'¹⁰³ research report found that, if the nearest area of green space is more than 280 metres from home (or involves crossing a significantly-trafficked road), then parents feel it is not safe to allow their 7-8 year olds out to play on their own.

8.2.4 Recreational Carrying Capacity

Recreational carrying capacity refers to the level of use that a recreation resource can receive without suffering negative impacts to its environmental resources.

The recreational activities of residents, particularly dog walking, inevitably put pressure on natural and semi-natural greenspaces. There is a need to ensure that sites of high biodiversity value are protected from the increasing recreational pressure they will experience in the coming years.

One approach to quantifying the vulnerability of sites¹⁰⁴ is the "Jackson Vulnerability Index"¹⁰⁵ which has been developed by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough.

The Vulnerability Scoring System classifies sites on the following basis:

- 1-7 This site is suitable as a recreation asset
- 8-14 This site is suitable as a recreation asset with visitor management
- 15-21 This site is moderately vulnerable to recreation and requires visitor management
- 22-27 This site is very vulnerable to recreation

A range of attributes that seek to measure the sensitivity of a site are assessed and scored. These attributes include the size of the site and its accessibility, connectivity with other sites,

¹⁰² Report to Natural England on Childhood and Nature: A Survey on Changing Relationships With Nature Across Generations England Marketing, 2009

¹⁰³ Harrison et al, Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities, English Nature 1995

¹⁰⁴ Sensitivity of Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation in Bedfordshire, L. Jackson. The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough 2008.

¹⁰⁵ © The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough

the type and status of the habitats and whether there are any protected species. The aim is to be able to identify vulnerable sites and facilitate the management of recreational activities to protect sensitive sites.

8.2.5 Woodlands

The Woodland Trust argues that it is important that there are sufficient woods close to where people live. In a survey undertaken as part of the 'Space for People' project, 85 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement that 'more woods in urban areas would help them to stay in touch with nature'.

To this end the Trust has developed the 'Woodland Access Standard', which recommends:

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

8.2.6 Designated Sites in Hartlepool

Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar Sites (RAMSAR) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).

Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance. They are designated under the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance which was adopted in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971 and from which the Convention takes its name. Many Ramsar sites have been selected for their importance to waterbirds and hence many Ramsar sites are also Special Protection Areas (SPA's) as designated under the EU Birds Directive.

In Hartlepool the Ramsar site and SPA have the same boundaries. The coastline from Crimdon Dene to Hartlepool Headland and much of Seaton Common and Teesmouth is classed as a Ramsar site.

The Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA covers parts of the coast and adjacent areas of Hartlepool. It qualifies as an SPA by supporting nationally important populations of Little Tern and Sandwich Tern; by supporting internationally important populations of migratory species, Ringed Plover, Knot and Redshank. It further qualifies by regularly supporting over 20,000 wintering waterfowl.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

SSSIs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and are designated for their interest in terms of their flora, fauna, geological or physiographic features

Three following three SSSIs are located wholly within the Borough of Hartlepool:

- Seaton Dunes and Common
- Hartlepool Submerged Forest
- Hart Bog

In addition, the following four SSSIs are partly located within the Borough of Hartlepool:

- Durham Coast (Hart Warren Dunes)
- Tees and Hartlepool Foreshore and Wetlands
- Seal Sands
- Cowpen Marsh

Local wildlife sites

In Hartlepool there are 35 local wildlife sites,¹⁰⁶ which are listed in **Table 8.1** below.

Table 8.1: Local wildlife sites in Hartlepool

Site name
Beacon Hill Marsh
Black Wood Marsh
Brenda Road Brownfield
Brierton Quarry
Butts Lane
Carr House Sands & West Harbour
Central Park embankment
Char Beck grassland
Craddon Bank
Crookfoot Reservoir
Elwick Hall grassland
Greatham Creek North Bank
Greatham North West (formerly Sharwoods site)
Gunnersvale Marsh
Hart Bypass
Hart to Haswell Walkway (now includes Easington Road Verge)
Hart Warren Railway Embankment
Hartville Meadow
High Newton Hanzard meadow
High Stotfold Gill
Naisberry Quarry
North Burn Marsh
North Hartlepool Dunes
Philips Tank Farm
Queens Meadow
Rossmere Park
Seaton Common
Spion Kop Cemetery
Summerhill
The Howls

¹⁰⁶ http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?downloadID=1319

The Slake
Tilery Gill Grassland
Tot Fenny's Field
West Carr Plantation
Zinc Works Field

Local Nature Reserves

Local authorities establish Local Nature Reserves (LNR) in consultation with Natural England. They make a contribution to conservation and are valuable for public education and enjoyment. There are 6 LNRs in Hartlepool, including Seaton Dunes and Common which is a Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR site. For Local Nature Reserves, the ANGSt sets a quantity standard of 1 Hectares of LNR per 1000 population. These sites are listed in **Table 8.2** below.

Table 8.2: Local Nature Reserves

Local Nature Reserve Area	Area (Ha)
Seaton Dunes and Common	147.7
Hart To Haswell Walkway	10.6
North of the A689	1
Hart Warren Dunes	11.3
Summerhill	42
Spion Kop Cemetery	3.0
Total	215.6

Overall, provision in Hartlepool is 2.39 Hectares of LNR per 1,000 population, which is well above the ANGSt quantity standard of 1 Hectares of LNR per 1,000 population.

Local Geological Sites

The sites are selected on a local basis according to the following nationally agreed criteria:

- The value of a site for educational purposes in life-long learning
- The value of a site for study by both amateur and professional Earth scientists
- The historical value of a site in terms of important advances in Earth science knowledge, events or human exploitation.
- The aesthetic value of a site in the landscape, particularly in relation to promoting public awareness and appreciation of Earth sciences.

Sites in Hartlepool Borough are listed in **Table 8.3**.

Table 8.3: Hartlepool's Local Geological Sites

Site Location
Long Scar & Little Scar Rocks
Dalton Batts Rivercliff
Hartlepool Headland
Whelly Hill Quarry
Naisberry Quarry
West Crimdon Dene

8.3 Key consultation findings

8.3.1 Usage

This table shows how often people in the Borough visit any local natural and semi-natural green space:

Table 8.4: Natural Green Space visits

Frequency of visiting	Proportion of respondents who visit
At least once a month	57%
Less often	28%
Never	15%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	1,090

Almost three in five local residents visit a natural green space at least once a month, and as the data below shows some go much more often than this. Just over a quarter are occasional visitors, leaving just one in seven who never go to any kind of natural space at all. Natural space is thus a prominent and significant element in the Borough's spatial provision.

Natural spaces vary widely in their nature, and this has an effect on the frequency of visiting, as this table shows:

Table 8.5: Natural Green Space visits by type of space

Frequency of visiting	Proportion of respondents who visit					
	Green corridor	Country walk	Nature reserve	Woodland	Country Park	Lake/river
Every day	6%	9%	1%	1%	2%	1%
Once or twice a week	11%	16%	5%	6%	7%	2%
Two/three times a month	11%	13%	9%	9%	11%	6%
Once a month	7%	9%	8%	9%	12%	6%
Once every 2-3 months	10%	12%	14%	13%	14%	8%
Once or twice a year	11%	7%	17%	16%	18%	15%
Less often	9%	6%	15%	12%	12%	15%
Never	35%	28%	31%	34%	26%	47%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	1,065	1,067	1,067	1,053	1,069	1,053

The most frequently visited sites are the undefined spaces where people go for country walks; half (47%) of local residents go to an informal natural space of this nature at least once a month. The question suggested spaces suitable for walks, jogs, cycles or rides, and clearly this type of space has a wide appeal. Green corridors, which might also be used for similar purposes, attract a third (35%) of local people at least once a month, while country parks (which would include Summerhill) attract a similar proportion (31% visit at least monthly). The least visited sites are those involving inland water; just one in seven local people visit a lake or riverbank at least once a month, and almost half never go to a space like this. Nature reserves and woodland are also less widespread in their appeal, although each attract around a quarter of residents at least once a month.

Daily visits to some types of site are rare, but one in eleven people go for a country walk on a daily basis and a quarter (25%) of residents visit this type of space at least once a week. Many of these, but not all, will be dog walkers or people taking exercise.

There are variations in this result by sub-area: This table shows the proportions who visit at least monthly, and who never visit local natural spaces:

Table 8.6: Natural space visits by sub-area

Sub-area	Proportion of respondents	
	visit at least monthly	Never visit
Western	55%	11%
North Central	55%	18%
South Central	55%	15%
Southern	62%	15%
All Hartlepool	57%	15%

There is surprisingly little variation here, with the proportion of each sub-area's population using natural space on a monthly basis at a consistent level approaching three in five residents. Non-use is highest in the North central sub-area but even here less than one in five residents never visits a natural space.

Natural space is more likely to be visited by younger and middle-aged people; the proportion visiting is highest in the 31 - 45 age-group, where only 3% never visit, but falls away above the age of 60. Among older residents over 75, only a quarter (27%) visit at least monthly, and two in five (44%) never go.

Natural space is popular with children. Four out of five (79%) of people with children of primary school age visit the countryside at least monthly, in contrast to just half (50%) of those with no children at home (though this is clearly also influenced by age and disability). There are very few households with children who never visit a natural space. There is no significant difference in visiting patterns by gender.

However, residents with access to a vehicle are much more likely to visit natural spaces, and tend to do so more often. Three in five (58%) of car owners visit a natural space at least monthly, against just over half (51%) of non-owners; a third (34%) of those with no car never visit. People with disabilities are also a lot less likely to visit at all, while those who do go, tend to visit less often than their counterparts. A third (35%) of people with disabilities never visit the countryside.

This table shows the natural spaces most used by people in Hartlepool:

Table 8.7: Natural spaces most visited

Natural space	Proportion of respondents who visit
Summerhill	51%
Hart- Haswell path	6%
Saltholme	6%
Seaton	5%
Beach	3%
Crimdon Dene	3%
Other local space	18%
Out of area	8%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	613

Low numbers in this table do not indicate non-use, but rather that other sites are used more often.

By far the most popular natural space in this locality is Summerhill. For half of all residents who use natural space, this is the space they visit most often, and this popularity

demonstrates the importance of this site to local people. Apart from the country park, the other sites used are diverse both in location and nature; walkways, beaches and dunes, and a wide variety of other spaces are all mentioned as people's preferred natural space.

One in twelve of those who visit natural space make their most frequent visits outside the Borough. Two sites are especially popular in this group: Castle Eden and Hardwick Hall.

8.3.2 Quantity

This table shows people's perceptions of the quantity of natural space:

Table 8.8: Quantity of natural space

Opinion	Proportion of all respondents
Too many	0%
Too few	38%
About right	62%
N(=100%)	935

Virtually nobody suggests that the amount of natural space in Hartlepool is excessive. Two in five residents think there are too few such spaces in the Borough, but they are outweighed by the two thirds of residents who think there is sufficient space of this type. There is a slightly higher demand for green corridors than for other natural space, but still a minority who want more space of this type.

Quantity perceptions break down by sub-area in this way:

Table 8.9: Quantity of natural areas by sub-area

Opinion	Western	North central	South central	Southern
Too many	0%	0%	0%	0%
Too few	37%	37%	44%	33%
About right	63%	63%	56%	67%
N(=100%)	228	232	250	221

No sub-area has a surplus of natural space, but there is a noticeably higher demand for more of this space from residents in the South central sub-area, where two in five residents say they would like to see more provision; even here, though, a majority of residents say there is enough space of this type.

The demand for more of this type of space comes primarily from younger people; a majority of under 30s (52%) want to see more natural provision, a proportion which tends to reduce with age. Among over 75s, there is a two to one majority who think there is enough of this

space. Men are much more likely to perceive a need for more natural space; 43% do so against just 34% of women.

8.3.3 Quality and value

The table below shows how local people rate their preferred natural space on a range of different criteria. To facilitate comparison, their opinions have been converted into mean scores.¹⁰⁷

Table 8.10: Quality assessments of natural spaces

Attribute	Mean score for natural space users
Diversity of nature and wildlife	0.81
Safety during the day	0.78
Planting and grassed areas	0.67
Information and signage	0.61
Cleanliness and litter	0.54
Path quality	0.49
Accessibility for buggies/wheelchairs	0.07
Seating	-0.10
<i>N(=100%) ranges from 768 to 821</i>	

The highest score is for biodiversity, but although this is positive it is not an especially strong result, equating to a score approaching, but falling short of, a 'good' rating. Daytime safety scores at a similar level. Scores for most other attributes are moderate positives, but accessibility gets only a qualified positive rating, and seating is rated with a low negative score.

Numbers for most individual sites are too small to make meaningful comparisons between them, but the prominence of Summerhill as a natural space makes it helpful to look at quality ratings for this site specifically:

¹⁰⁷ The mean score is calculated by taking each individual response for each of the different criteria and converting it into a score. A score of +2 is allocated for each 'excellent' result, and +1 for each 'good' response; 'below average' and 'poor' score -1 and -2 respectively. 'Average' attracts a score of zero, while don't knows are discounted completely. The resulting scores are then averaged to produce a mean score which indicates both the direction of opinion (positive or negative) and the strength with which that view is collectively held.

Table 8.11: Quality assessments of Summerhill as a natural space

Attribute	Mean score for Summerhill users	Mean score for other natural space users
Diversity of nature and wildlife	0.92	0.68
Safety during the day	0.82	0.76
Planting and grassed areas	0.79	0.53
Information and signage	0.80	0.40
Cleanliness and litter	0.62	0.45
Path quality	0.61	0.34
Accessibility for buggies/wheelchairs	0.15	-0.09
Seating	0.05	-0.36
<i>N(=100%) ranges from 291 to 350</i>		

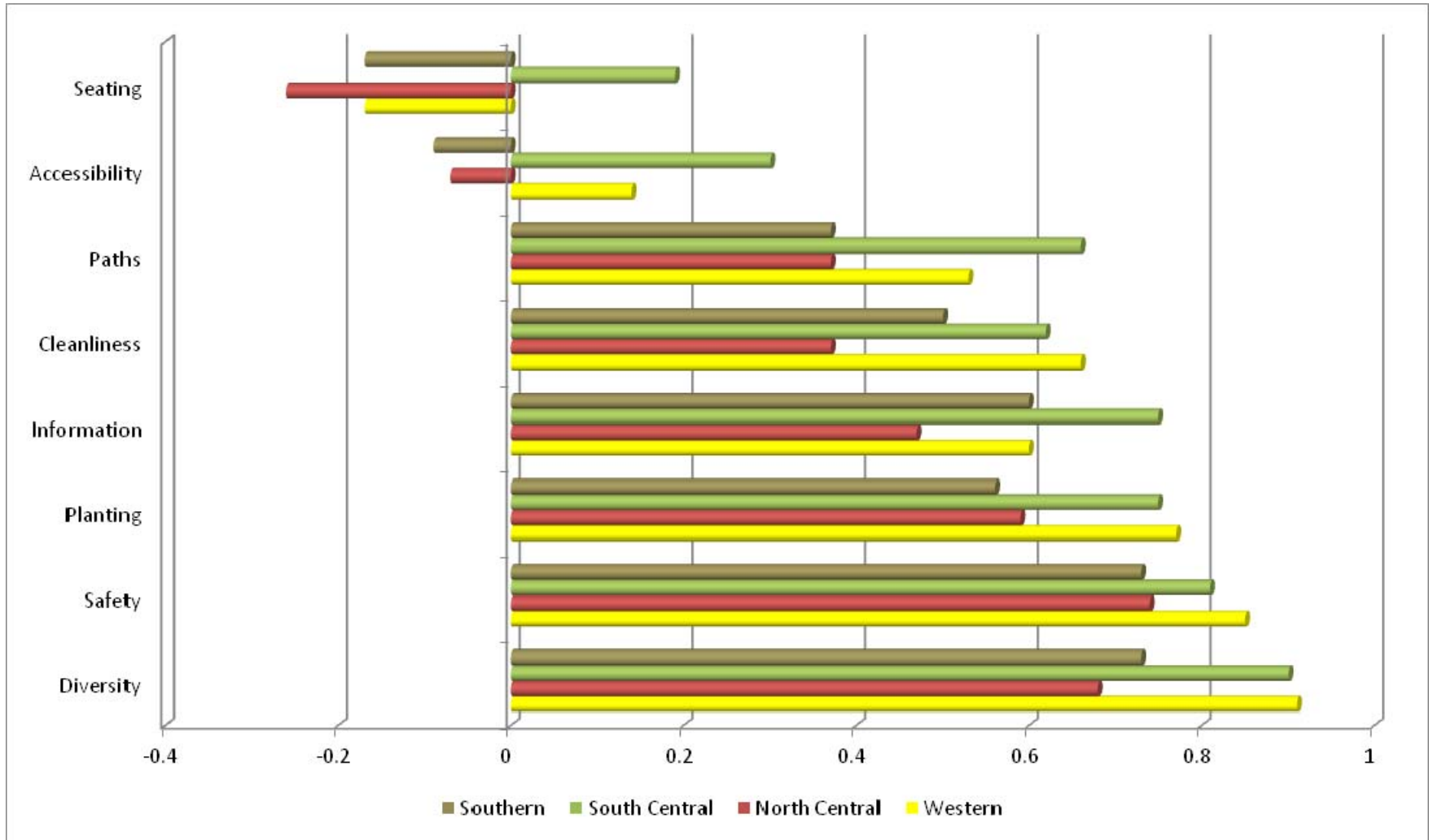
Summerhill scores are above the Borough-wide level in all attributes, so the presence of the country park is raising the overall quality levels for the Borough. The difference is not especially marked in most attributes, however, although there is clearly a higher score for information at the country park, and path quality gets a higher rating. Scores for seating and accessibility at other locations are negative, but even at Summerhill, perceptions of these attributes are quite equivocal.

This table shows how quality scores vary by sub-area, although it is evident (and should be borne in mind) that people do not necessarily visit spaces that are in the same sub-area as where they live.

Table 8.12: Quality assessments of natural spaces by sub-area

Attribute	Mean score for natural space users			
	Western	North Central	South Central	Southern
Diversity	0.91	0.68	0.90	0.73
Safety	0.85	0.74	0.81	0.73
Planting	0.77	0.59	0.75	0.56
Information	0.60	0.47	0.75	0.60
Cleanliness	0.66	0.37	0.62	0.50
Paths	0.53	0.37	0.66	0.37
Accessibility	0.14	-0.07	0.30	-0.09
Seating	-0.17	-0.26	0.19	-0.17

Chart 8.14: Quality assessments of natural spaces by sub-area



Perceptions of quality in the North Central sub-area, and to a lesser extent in the Southern sub-area, are lower than those in other sub-areas; the Western sub-area is the one that brings in the highest scores for most attributes. The exceptions are on accessibility and seating, where the results for the South Central sub-area are the strongest (though not especially strong); on seating, the Western sub-area achieves a negative rating.

There are major differences in scores on cleanliness, where the North Central comes in well behind its counterparts, and in path quality where the Southern and North Central sub-areas achieve lower scores than other sub-areas.

There are no evident patterns in scoring by age-group, although safety scores are highest among under 30s. Access scores are higher among over 75s, which suggests that the issue here may be more buggy-related and that expectations of accessibility may be lower among older residents. Men generally give slightly lower scores than women, but the overall pattern of scoring is similar.

Value of natural space for different types of user

Respondents were asked to assess the value of these types of space for different activities, and the results are shown in this table. It should be noted that this is a view from all residents expressing an opinion, and not necessarily from specialist users.

Table 8.13: Value of natural space for different groups of users

User group	Perceptions of natural space value		
	Caters well	Caters adequately	Caters poorly
Walkers	44%	51%	5%
Dog walkers	44%	49%	7%
Joggers	41%	50%	9%
Bird/wildlife watchers	38%	54%	8%
Families with children	35%	54%	11%
Cyclists	31%	50%	19%
Horse riders	27%	48%	25%
Mountain bikers	26%	47%	27%
Anglers	14%	40%	46%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>Varies between 411 and 810</i>		

A significant proportion of people give no opinion on some of these categories; don't know is especially common as a response in respect of angling and horse riding where nearly half of all respondents give no view, and for mountain biking where a quarter respond in this way.

Including don't knows in the result would thus create a significant distortion in the comparison, so don't knows are excluded.

Natural space caters best for walkers and for dog walkers, two groups whose needs from the space would normally be broadly similar and not in conflict with one another. In each of these cases, and in regard to joggers and birdwatchers as well, around two in five people think Hartlepool's natural space caters well for their needs, and about half think it is adequate; only small proportions feel the space does not meet the needs of people pursuing these activities.

About a third of people think natural space caters well for the needs of families with children, and most of the rest think it is adequate for these needs. Cyclists' needs are less well met, with a fifth of residents thinking cyclists are poorly served by natural space, and this proportion rises to a quarter for equestrians and mountain bikers.

The group least well served by natural green space in Hartlepool are anglers; one in seven residents think open space caters well for anglers' needs, but half of residents think natural space caters poorly for them.

8.3.4 Accessibility

This table shows how people travel to their preferred natural space:

Table 8.14: Means of travel to natural space

Travel	Proportion of respondents who visit
Walk or jog	34%
Car	58%
Bus	2%
Cycle	5%
Other	1%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>846</i>

The most common means of accessing natural space is by car; three out of five residents use the car to access their preferred space. Most of the rest, a third of all who use this type of space, walk to get there. Only a few use any other form of transport, though cycling is more prominent for this type of space than for others in the Borough. Other means of access are primarily motorised scooters or wheelchairs.

Those who walk to their preferred space are the most likely to visit frequently; four out of five (81%) walkers visit at least monthly, against three in five (59%) of those who use a car. This suggests that proximity to the space is more important than access to transport. Non-use is highest among those who rely on public transport to access the countryside.

Interestingly, walking is a little higher among those living in the more urban sub-areas: Around two in five (39%) of those living in the north central and South Central sub-areas who use natural space at all travel there on foot, against 30% of those living in the Western or Southern sub-areas. Car users are more likely to be in the middle age ranges, whilst those who are younger or older are more likely to walk; unsurprisingly, people with disabilities are more dependent on the car to get to these spaces.

8.3.5 Comparison with 2008 study

Usage levels for country paths are similar; in 2008 a quarter of people used them at least twice a month, and a similar proportion never used them. Country park take-up has improved, though, with an increase in fortnightly visitors from 14% in 2008 to 20% in 2014, while the proportion who never visit a country park has fallen from 38% in 2008 to 26% in 2014.

There are similar improvements in take up for nature reserves, where fortnightly visits are up and the proportion never visiting has fallen; but woodland visiting shows a different pattern: the proportions visiting at least fortnightly have increased, but the proportions visiting occasionally have fallen, and those who never visit have risen from 25% to 34% in the present study.

Quality scores have generally improved, as this table shows:

Table 8.15: Quality scores for natural space, 2008 and 2014 (comparable attributes only)

Attribute	Mean score for natural space users	
	2008	2014
Safety during the day	0.78	0.41
Planting and grassed areas	0.67	0.42
Information and signage	0.61	0.29
Cleanliness and litter	0.54	0.34
Path quality	0.49	0.12
Accessibility for buggies/wheelchairs	0.07	-0.11
<i>N(=100%) ranges from 768 to 821</i>		

Not all the attributes explored in 2014 were covered in the 2008 study, but those that were all show improvement. This is especially marked in the areas of daytime safety, path quality and information, whilst the previously negative score for access has been improved to a modest positive.

Accessibility has also changed, with the proportion accessing this type of space on foot up from 24% in 2008 (when beaches were included in the calculation) to 34% in 2014, and a corresponding fall in car use to reach these spaces.

The proportion of residents looking for more natural green space has fallen slightly, from 45% in 2008 to 38% in 2014; green corridors show a similar reduction in demand.

8.3.6 Feedback from youth survey

The table below shows the proportions of young people from the youth survey who visit the local countryside.

Table 8.16: Youth visits to countryside

Frequency of visiting	Proportion of respondents who visit
At least weekly	20%
Once or twice a month	21%
Three or four times a year	17%
Less often	17%
Never	25%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	368

Three-quarters of young people say they visit the countryside, but many do so only occasionally. One in five visits at least weekly, and two in five go at least once a month, but a third of young people visit less often than this, and a quarter say they never go to the countryside.

By far the most popular countryside site in Hartlepool is Summerhill Country Park, which is the preferred site for a quarter (26%) of young people who visit these places. No other site even approaches this in popularity. It is also clear that, for many young people, a countryside visit means leaving the Borough; one in five (19%) mention a site outside the Borough as their preferred countryside space, with Castle Eden the location most often mentioned.

Young people's journeys to the countryside use these travel modes:

Table 8.17: Means of travel to countryside (youth survey)

Travel	Proportion of respondents who visit
Walk or jog	37%
Car	46%
Bus	3%
Cycle	7%
Other	7%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	239

Around half of countryside visits are undertaken by car, but the proportion of visitors who walk there is substantial, approaching two in five visits. Cycle visits also occur, but are less common than for other types of green space; public transport makes a very small contribution to countryside visiting for young people.

8.4 Audit

8.4.1 Quantity

It is more appropriate to use a supply-led approach to natural greenspaces. It is difficult to plan effectively for any particular flora or fauna, and it is not possible to “design in” colonisation by plants or wildlife, so a demand-led approach would clearly be inappropriate. Accordingly, a supply-led methodology offers the best way of protecting established sites. Nevertheless, there may be opportunities to provide additional natural and semi-natural greenspace where there are opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement or expanding habitat at both existing and new sites.

The supply of natural greenspaces has been determined by whether sites are accessible by the general public and whether or not they have been included under a different, more predominant typology. The sites that were visited and included in the audit are those that are readily accessible to the public.

The principal natural and semi-natural greenspace sites in Hartlepool are listed in **Table 8.18**. A total of 21 sites were included in the audit; **Map 8.1** shows the locations of these.

Map 8.1 Location of Natural and Semi-natural Greenspace

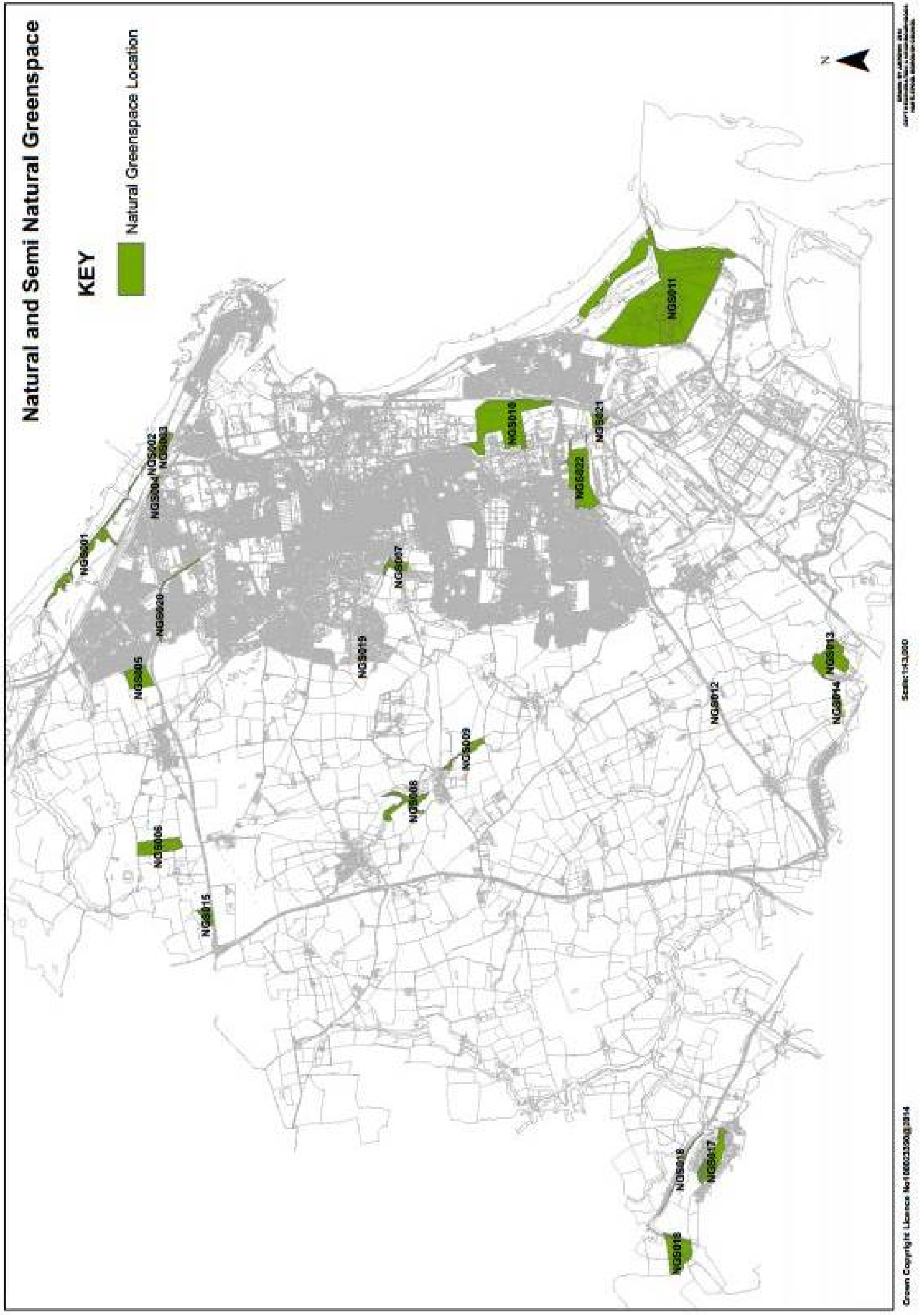


Table 8.18: Hectares per 1000 and Population per Hectare of Natural & semi-natural Greenspace

Site Reference	Site Name	Sub-area	Ha	Population	Ha per 1000	Persons per Ha
NGS007	Family Wood	North Central	3.58			
NGS001	Hart Warren Dunes	North Central	11.32			
NGS004	West View Gardens	North Central	1.18			
NGS002	Spion Kop Dunes	North Central	2.78			
NGS003	Spion Kop Cemetery	North Central	2.98			
		Total	21.84	32700	0.67	1497
NGS005	Springwell Farm Woodland	Western	8.37			
NGS006	Hart Moor Farm west	Western	10.35			
NGS015	Hart Moor Farm	Western	3.07			
NGS020	Middle Warren Perimeter	Western	2.99			
NGS008	The Howls	Western	7.60			
NGS009	Dalton Batts	Western	3.68			
NGS012	Claxton Bank	Western	0.47			
NGS013	Faith Wood	Western	14.04			
NGS014	Cow Bridge Wood	Western	2.54			
NGS017	Wynyard Country Park	Western	10.84			
NGS018	Wynyard Woodland Park	Western	15.18			
NGS019	Parklands Way	Western	0.33			
		Total	79.46	15490	5.13	195
NGS010	Brenda Road Mounds	Southern	41.08			
NGS011	Seaton Dunes & Common	Southern	147.74			
NGS021	Salt Barn Ponds	Southern	2.84			
Site Reference	Site Name	Sub-area	Ha	Population	Ha per 1000	Persons per Ha
NGS022	Golden Flats	Southern	21.47			
		Total	213.13	17250	12.36	81
		Hartlepool	314.43	92235	3.41	293

Table 8.19 shows that whilst the largest number of sites (12) are located in the Western sub-area, the largest area (213.3 hectares) of natural and semi-natural greenspace is located in the Southern sub-area. Whilst there are just 4 sites in the Southern sub-area, one of these, NGS011 Seaton Dunes & Common covers 147.74 hectares or 47% of all natural and semi-natural greenspace in Hartlepool.

Table 8.19: Numbers of Sites in each Sub-area

Sub-area	Number of Sites	Area (Hectares)
North Central	5	21.84
South Central	0	0
Southern	4	79.46
Western	12	213.13
Hartlepool	21	314.43

The total area of natural and semi natural greenspace sites is 314.43 hectares including four sites that are over 20 hectares (**Table 8.20**). This equates to 3.41 hectares per 1,000 population for Hartlepool as a whole.

Table 8.20: Hectares per 1000 population of natural and semi-natural green space

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Natural & semi-natural Greenspace (Hectares)	Hectares per 1,000	Persons per Hectare
North Central	32700	21.84	0.67	1497
South Central	26795	0	0.00	0
Southern	17250	213.3	12.37	81
Western	15490	79.46	5.13	195
Hartlepool	92235	314.43	3.41	293

Provision is highest in the Southern sub-area (12.37 hectares per 1,000 population) where 68% of the total area of natural and semi-natural greenspace in Hartlepool is located. There is no provision in the South Central sub-area, and a small level of provision (0.67 hectares per 1,000 population) in the North Central sub-area.

Table 8.21 shows that the majority of sites are comparatively small, with 13 sites of less than 10 hectares in area and just 3 sites in excess of 20 hectares.

Table 8.21: Size of natural and semi-natural green spaces

Size	Number of sites	Area (ha)
Under 10 ha	13	42.4
10 to 19.9 ha	5	61.75
20 to 99.9 ha	3	210.29
Total	21	314.44

Provision in Hartlepool is average compared with other North East local authorities as shown in **Table 8.22**.

Table 8.22: Comparison with other Local Authorities

Local Authority	Hectares per 1000 population
Darlington	4.01
Sunderland	5.00
Newcastle	1.60
Hartlepool	3.45

As regards Local Nature Reserves, Natural England recommends that at least 1ha of statutory Local Nature Reserve (LNR) should be provided per 1,000 population. The Local Nature Reserves in Hartlepool are listed in **Table 8.23** below.

Table 8.23: Local Nature Reserves

Local Nature Reserve	Area (ha)	Hectares per 1000 Population
Seaton Dunes and Common	147.7	1.60
Hart To Haswell Walkway	10.6	0.11
North of the A689	1	0.01
Hart Warren Dunes	11.3	0.12
Summerhill	42	0.46
Spion Kop Cemetery	3.0	0.03
Hartlepool	215.6	2.34

Overall, provision in Hartlepool is 2.34 Hectares of LNR per 1,000 population, which is well above the ANGSt quantity standard for LNRs.

8.4.2 Quality

The median¹⁰⁸ score for the quality assessment for Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace is 59% and the median score for value is 60%. **Table 8.24** shows the quality and value rankings achieved by each of the natural greenspace sites, based on the median score calculation.

¹⁰⁸ The median of a population is the point that divides the distribution of scores in half. Numerically, half of the scores in a population will have values that are equal to or larger than the median and half will have values that are equal to or smaller than the median. To work out the median:

a) Put the numbers in order. 3 6 6 6 7 9 11 11 13

b) The number in the middle of the list is the median 7 is in the middle. So the median value is 7.

If there are two middle values, the median is halfway between them. For example, if the set of numbers were 3 6 6 6 7 8 9 11 11 13 There are two middle values, 7 and 8. The median is halfway between 7 and 8. The median is 7.5.

Table 8.24: Quality and value scores for natural and semi-natural green space

Site Reference	Site Name	% Score Quality	Quality Ranking	% Score Value	Value Ranking
NGS001	Hart Warren Dunes	48%	Low	51%	Low
NGS002	Spion Kop Dunes	54%	Low	47%	Low
NGS003	Spion Kop Cemetery	76%	High	60%	High
NGS004	West View Gardens	37%	Low	47%	Low
NGS005	Springwell Farm Woodland	50%	Low	67%	High
NGS006	Hart Moor Farm - west	46%	Low	58%	Low
NGS007	Family Wood	72%	High	84%	High
NGS008	The Howls	63%	High	80%	High
NGS009	Dalton Batts	76%	High	80%	High
NGS010	Brenda Road Mounds	49%	Low	42%	Low
NGS011	Seaton Dunes & Common	85%	High	71%	High
NGS012	Claxton Bank	31%	Low	40%	Low
NGS013	Faith Wood	61%	High	62%	High
NGS014	Cow Bridge Wood	59%	High	58%	Low
NGS015	Hart Moor Farm	50%	Low	64%	High
NGS017	Wynyard Country Park	50%	Low	55%	Low
NGS018	Wynyard Woodland Park	70%	High	60%	High
NGS019	Parklands Way	61%	High	60%	High
NGS020	Middle Warren Perimeter	59%	High	71%	High
NGS021	Salt Barn Ponds	37%	Low	40%	Low
NGS022	Golden Flatts	44%	Low	42%	Low
NGS023	Saltholme	93%	High	78%	High
NGS024	Crimdon Dene	85%	High	67%	High
NGS025	Wynyard Woodland Park (Stockton)	96%	High	80%	High
NGS026	Cowpen Bewley WP	91%	High	85%	High

Table 8.24 shows that of the 25 sites that were assessed, 13 (52%) scored high for both quality and value and 9 (36%) scored low for both quality and value; 1 (4%) scored high for quality but low for value and 2 (8%) score low for quality but high for value.

Four of the sites have been assessed for quality and value but are located outside the Borough. Evidence for consultation indicates that these spaces are used by people living in Hartlepool. These are detailed in **Table 8.25** below.

Table 8.25: Natural and semi-natural Greenspace located on the borders of Hartlepool

Site Reference	Site Name
NGS023	Saltholme (Stockton)
NGS024	Crimdon Dene (Durham)
NGS025	Wynyard Woodland Park (Stockton)
NGS026	Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park (Stockton)

In terms of quality and value all four sites were rated as being high quality and high value.

Table 8.26: Summary of Quality and Value Ratings

Rating	Number
High/High	13 ¹⁰⁹
Low/Low	9
High/Low	1
Low/High	2
Total	25

Of the sites that score high for quality and high for value; 6 are in the Western sub-area and 4 are outside the Borough; 2 are in the North Central sub-area; and 1 is in the Southern sub-area. Conversely, low quality, low value sites number three in each of the three sub-areas with natural content.

All the Local Nature Reserves surveyed scored highly for quality and value, as can be seen in **Table 8.27**.

Table 8.27: Quality and Value Scores for LNRs

Local Nature Reserve	Site Reference	Quality Score	Quality Ranking	Value Score	Value Ranking
Seaton Dunes and Common	NGS011	85%	High	71%	High
Hart To Haswell Walkway	GC001	90%	High	100%	High
North of the A689	Not surveyed - no data				
Hart Warren Dunes	NGS001	48%	Low	51%	Low
Summerhill	Assessed as a park				
Spion Kop Cemetery	NGS003	76%	High	60%	High

¹⁰⁹ Including the four sites in Stockton.

8.28: Comparison with the 2008 Study

Site Reference	Site Name	Sub-area	% Score Quality	2008
NGS001	Hart Warren Dunes	North Central	48%	55%
NGS002	Spion Kop Dunes	North Central	54%	63%
NGS003	Spion Kop Cemetery	North Central	76%	75%
NGS004	West View Gardens	North Central	37%	45%
NGS005	Springwell Farm Woodland	Western	50%	45%
NGS006	Hart Moor Farm - west	Western	46%	43%
NGS007	Family Wood	North Central	72%	55%
NGS008	The Howls	Western	63%	60%
NGS009	Dalton Batts	Western	76%	50%
NGS010	Brenda Road Mounds	Southern	49%	38%
NGS011	Seaton Dunes & Common	Southern	85%	80%
NGS012	Claxton Bank	Western	31%	33%
NGS013	Faith Wood	Western	61%	60%
NGS014	Cow Bridge Wood	Western	59%	53%
NGS015	Hart Moor Farm	Western	50%	50%
NGS017	Wynyard Country Park	Western	50%	50%
NGS018	Wynyard Woodland Park	Western	70%	88%
NGS019	Parklands Way	Western	61%	48%
NGS020	Middle Warren Perimeter	Western	59%	33%
NGS021	Salt Barn Ponds	Southern	37%	
NGS022	Golden Flatts	Southern	44%	
NGS023	Saltholme	Stockton	93%	
NGS024	Crimdon Dene	Durham	85%	
NGS025	Wynyard Woodland Park	Stockton	96%	
NGS026	Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park	Stockton	91%	

Table 8.28 provides a comparison between the quality scores for the previous study in 2008 and the current quality scores for 19 sites. Overall 63% of the 19 sites show an improvement in quality, 11% have identical scores and 26% show a decline in quality. Significant improvements have been identified at NGS009 Dalton Batts in the Western sub-area which increased from a score of 50% to 76% and NGS020 Middle Warren Perimeter, also in the Western sub-area, which improved from 33% to 59%. A decline in quality was observed at NGS018 Wynyard Woodland Park in the Western sub-area which achieved a score of 88% in 2008 and 70% in the current audit. However, overall this site still achieved a relatively high score.

8.5 Standards

8.5.1 Quantity

The results of the consultation suggest that the majority of residents think the amount of natural space is about right. The demand for more space is highest in South Central sub-area, where there is currently no provision. Current provision in Hartlepool is 1.02 hectares of accessible natural greenspace per 1,000 population (including country parks). However, provision is concentrated on the Southern sub-area where there is over 12 hectares of accessible natural greenspace per 1,000 population. Determining an appropriate quantity standard is therefore complicated by the fact that provision in this Borough is extremely uneven.

We consider that a Borough-wide standard would be too heavily biased by the spatial distribution of existing provision. We therefore suggest that existing natural green space in the Southern sub-area be retained and protected, and that the standard for the remaining sub-areas is set at 0.4 ha per 1000 population.

Quantity standard:

Provision should be made of 3.45 hectares of accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace per 1000 population and where this level of provision is exceeded existing natural or semi-natural greenspace should be retained.

A minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per 1,000 population (which can be included in the quantity standard set above).

8.5.2 Quality

The median score for the quality assessment for Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace is 59% and the median score for value is 60%. It is felt that NGS007 Family Wood in the North Central sub-area which scored 72% for quality and 84% for value should be the benchmark site. This site should represent the minimum quality standard to which Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace sites in Hartlepool should aspire.

Quality and value standard

The quality standard is 72%.

The value standard is 84%.

The benchmark site for quality and value is Family Wood.

8.5.2.1 Quality Criteria

Good quality natural and semi natural greenspace sites can be achieved if the following criteria are satisfied:

Overall impression

- a welcoming appearance at the entrance to the park

- an appropriate layout of woody and non-woody elements giving good spatial quality
- good balance between natural, amenity and recreational elements
- good relationship between landscape elements, infrastructure, buildings and structures relative to the site and relating well in visual terms
- a varied topography and attractive views
- elements of formal and informal supervision provide a feeling of personal safety and encourage people to use the park.

Entrances

- the entrances to sites should be well placed, in good condition and well maintained.

Parking

- adequate parking adjacent to main entrances to the park.

Information and interpretation

- site is well signposted
- informative interpretation boards that provide good educational material

Water

- well maintained water areas.

Boundaries and paths

- fencing maintained in a good state of repair
- gates in good working order
- paths are generally well placed and in good condition
- gravel or grass paths not overgrown
- tarmac paths kept in good state of repair and potholes filled in.

Access

- site is accessible to people with disabilities
- measures to facilitate access and overcome obstacles such as steep hills or rough terrain

Safety, vandalism and graffiti

- feels safe during the day
- little evidence of graffiti and vandalism

Cleanliness, dog fouling, litter and fly tipping

- little evidence of litter, dog mess and fly tipping.

Facilities

- a sufficient number of seats maintained in good condition
- play areas/ buildings/toilets well maintained and functioning

- refreshment/café providing good quality food and drinks at a reasonable cost
- toilets should be clean and well maintained
- good range of sports provision in good condition.

Buildings

- maintained in above average condition
- absence of graffiti on the walls.

Nature conservation

- evidence of encouragement of nature conservation e.g. margin of grass areas allowed to grow.

Trees

- absence of dead trees
- diversity of species and age of specimens.

8.5.3 Accessibility

At the local level Natural England's ANGSt standards require that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home;

We consider that this standard would be difficult to achieve in Hartlepool and that the Mayor of London's standard which defines areas of deficiency as being those areas which are more than one kilometre distance from an accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace site would be challenging but is more achievable. We therefore have used this as the basis for our standard.

Accessibility standard

The recommended Accessibility Standard is that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace site within one kilometre distance of home.

8.6 Deficiencies

8.6.1 Quantity

Table 8.29 shows the level of deficiency of natural and semi-natural space for each of the subareas, when the recommended standards are applied.

Table 8.29: Current Deficiencies in Provision of Natural/semi-natural Greenspace

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Current level of provision (Hectares)	Current level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population (Hectares)	Amount of Natural Greenspace required to meet standard (hectares)	Surplus/ Deficiency (hectares)
North Central	32700	21.84	0.67	3.45	112.82	-90.98
South Central	26795	0	0.00	3.45	92.44	-92.44
Southern	17250	213.13	12.36	3.45	59.51	153.62
Western	15490	79.46	5.13	3.45	53.44	26.02
Hartlepool	92235	314.43	3.41	3.45	318.21	-3.78

There is a deficit in the provision of natural and semi natural greenspace in both the subareas of North Central and South Central. Overall there is a deficit of 3.78 hectares in the Borough as a whole.

By 2019, **Table 8.30** shows that the deficit overall will have increased to 9.92 hectares with the Southern subarea having 213.13 hectares of natural and semi-natural greenspace which is mostly one site, NGS011 Seaton Dunes & Common (147.74 hectares). This is balanced by the significant deficits in the North Central (92.56 hectares) and the South Central subarea (91.77 hectares). Provision in the Western sub area exceeds the requirement by 21.14 hectares.

Seaton Dunes and Common is an area of considerable importance for its flora, invertebrate fauna, and bird life. Its importance is due in part to its size and diversity. Seaton Dunes & Common forms part of Teesmouth Flats and Marshes which are of international importance and are included on the list of Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. In view of the significance of this site it is not appropriate to consider overprovision in the Southern subarea.

Table 8.30: Future Deficiencies in Provision of Natural/semi-natural Greenspace

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Current level of provision (Hectares)	Current level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population (Hectares)	Amount of Natural Greenspace required to meet standard (hectares)	Surplus/ Deficiency (hectares)
North Central	33,160	21.84	0.66	3.45	114.40	-92.56
South Central	26,600	0	0.00	3.45	91.77	-91.77
Southern	17,350	213.13	12.28	3.45	59.86	153.27
Western	16,905	79.46	4.70	3.45	58.32	21.14
Hartlepool	94,015	314.43	3.34	3.45	324.35	-9.92

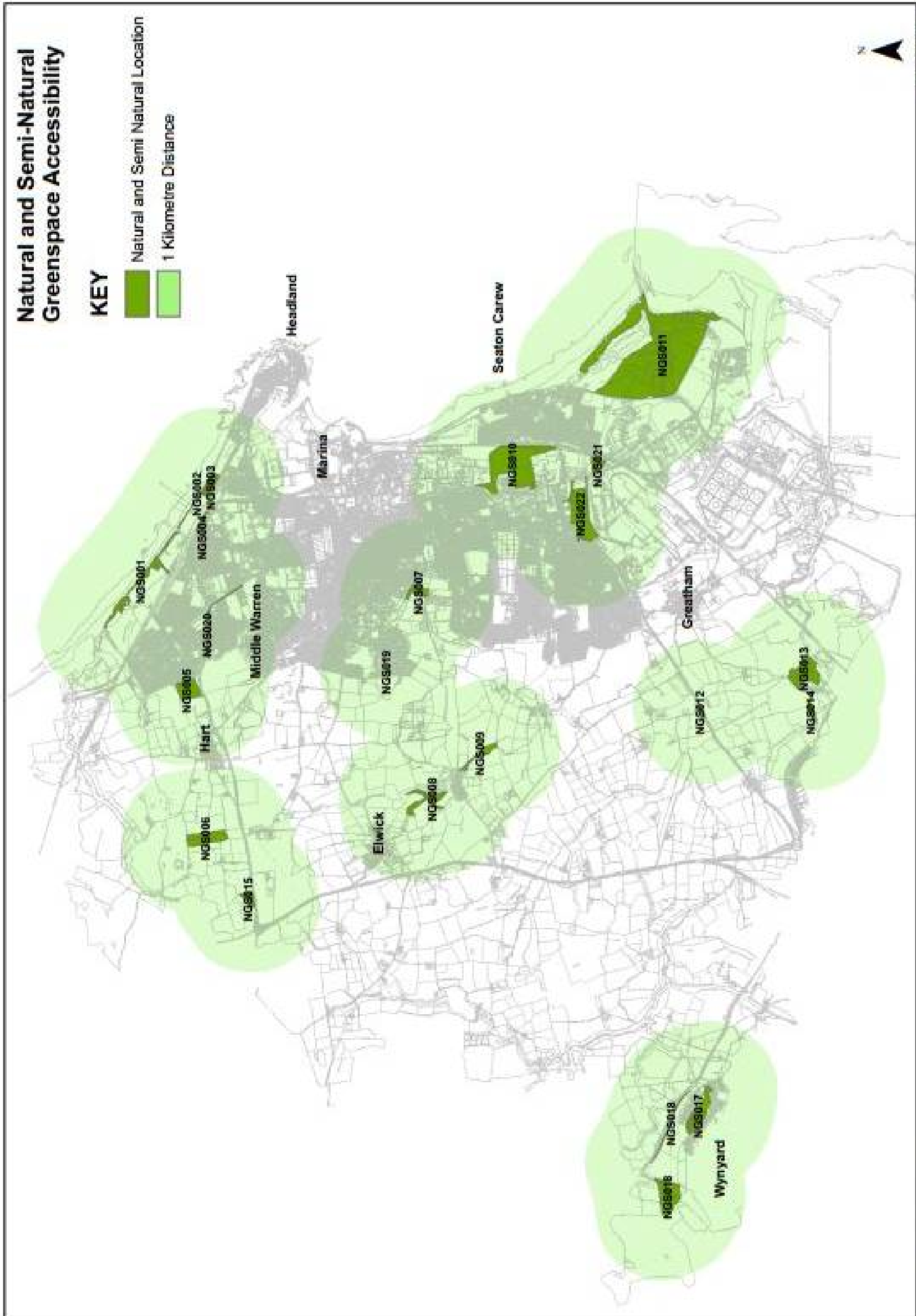
Currently there are 215.6 hectares of natural and semi-natural greenspace which are designated as an LNR providing 2.34 hectares per 1,000 population. The level of provision recommended by Natural England is 1 hectare of statutory LNR per 1000 population which equates to a requirement of 92.24 hectares. Overall, provision in Hartlepool is 2.34 Hectares of LNR per 1000 population, which is well above the ANGSt quantity standard for LNRs. In addition, there are proposals to provide an additional 38.36 hectares of LNR in the future.

8.6.2 Accessibility

Map 8.2 shows the catchment areas of the natural and semi-natural greenspaces in the Borough.

Much of the Borough lies within a natural greenspace catchment area, with the north shore especially well served. There is also good coverage for the southern subarea, apart from the village of Greatham which lies outside the catchments. The Burn Valley area, though, is outside any catchment, and so too is the hinterland of the Harbour, with the town centre part of the North Central subarea also outside any catchment. The rural areas, as might be expected, are well served.

Map 8.2 Accessibility of Natural and Semi-natural greenspace



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9. GREEN CORRIDORS

9.1 Definition

Access and transport networks, as well as natural features, create a variety of linear landscape components, including paths, railway lines, roads, rivers, streams and areas of open space. These features, and often the adjoining land, create a network, which provides links for people and wildlife. They can connect different localities within an area as part of a designated and managed network and are used for walking, cycling or horse riding, or can link towns and cities to their surrounding countryside, beaches, riverbanks or country parks. They may also link different pieces of green space to one another, to create a green infrastructure network.

9.2 Strategic Context

Green corridors are linked to the concept of environmental infrastructure and the need to provide connected and substantial networks of accessible multi-functional green space, in urban fringe and adjacent countryside areas.

Natural England considers green corridors to include rivers and canals including their banks, road and rail corridors, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, and rights of way.¹¹⁰

The Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy (2008) sets out the strategic vision for the development of green infrastructure within the Tees Valley and identifies key strategic corridors including a number within Hartlepool including The Coast – Hartlepool to Cowbar, the Town Centre to Summerhill and Saltholme to Cowpen Bewley, Wynyard and Hartlepool.

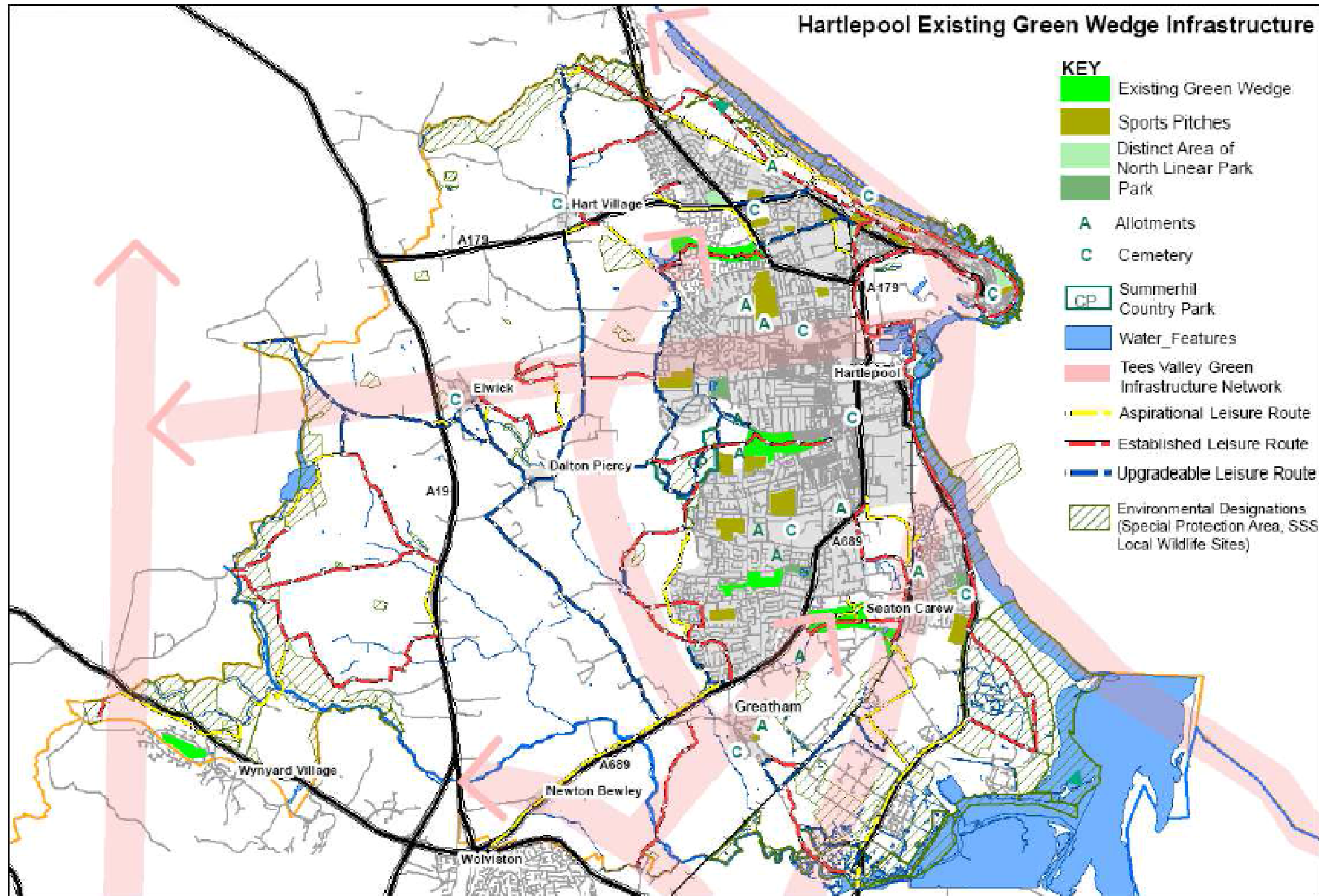
There is a wide range of green infrastructure (GI) spread across the Borough including some significant green wedges running from the countryside into the town. The Hartlepool Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) considers opportunities for new green infrastructure, enhancement to current provision or where new linkages are needed to help create a successful and useable network of green infrastructure across the Borough in the future. The 'Vision' of the SPD is:

'By 2028 Hartlepool will have a high quality, multifunctional, accessible green infrastructure network which enhances the community's quality of life and also of wildlife.'

One of the key elements in ensuring a GI network which functions well are green corridors, which provide the links between component parts of the GI network. **Map 9.1** highlights the green wedges and established, upgradable and aspirational leisure routes (rights of way, bridleways etc). The development and enhancement of these routes will play a critical part in the overall development of GI in the Borough.

¹¹⁰ Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance (NE176), 2009.

Map 9.1: Hartlepool Existing Green Infrastructure



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Green corridors are valued for recreation and for the migration of wildlife. A green corridor can connect wildlife populations separated by barriers such as roads or built development, allowing an exchange of individuals between species populations and thereby facilitating greater genetic diversity. Corridors may also help facilitate the re-establishment of populations that have been reduced or eliminated due to disease or fires. Green corridors also help to mitigate against the effects of habitat fragmentation which can pose a threat to the biodiversity of an area, while increased ecological connectivity also helps to increase the ability of the natural environment to adapt to climate change.

However, for the purposes of this assessment a green corridor must be publicly accessible. Green corridors help to promote environmentally sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling linking urban areas to the surrounding countryside. The value of a park or open space increases significantly when it is easily accessible and connected to a larger system, so it is important that existing open spaces, wherever possible, be incorporated into an overall network. Green corridors have a role to play in connecting places that are attractive to people, wildlife and business. Green corridors therefore are not just about green spaces. They are also concerned with connecting people via a network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways from doorstep to countryside.

The Town and Country Planning Association has produced a guide¹¹¹ on ways to maximise the opportunities for biodiversity in the planning and design of sustainable communities. This promotes the concept of ‘Greenways’ - linear wildlife corridors which can provide linkages between greenspaces and larger areas of habitat. They can be either woodland or wetland, based on existing landscape features or designed as new functional elements.

Woodland greenways can incorporate pedestrian and cycle routes. There are many examples to be found in Sweden and the Netherlands. In this country a good example is the New England Quarter in Brighton where a new green walkway is being constructed to provide a traffic-free link from Brighton station through the historic North Laine over a Grade II listed bridge and beside the Brighton Station site of nature conservation importance (SNCI).

Wetland greenways can be designed as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in order to provide ecological services. Buffer strips associated with SUDS can be integrated with linear greenspaces in order to maximise their habitat potential. The Council's Sustainable Building Design SPD promotes the use of SUDS to reduce surface water runoff by attenuating increased flows of surface water.

Some of the green corridors identified in the audit are rights of way, but not all rights of way were considered to be green corridors. Rights of way in Hartlepool include footpaths, bridleways and byways, open spaces and parks.¹¹² Strategic routes in Hartlepool include the England Coast Path which follows the North Sea coast from North Gare, south of Seaton Carew to Hartlepool Golf Course; this route ultimately leads to South Bents, near Sunderland. The National Cycle Network National Route 14 (Three Rivers Route). runs from Darlington in County Durham north-east to Hartlepool, then north-west through Durham to Consett. Over 50% of the route between Stockton and Hartlepool is off road.

¹¹¹ Biodiversity by Design: A Guide for Sustainable Communities. Town & Country Planning Association.2004.

¹¹² Hartlepool Rights of Way Improvement Plan: ‘Countryside Access; Our Way Forward’ 2007.

9.3 Key consultation findings

9.3.1 Usage

Questions about green corridors were asked in the context of wider natural green space, and the responses are explored in context in Chapter 5 of this report. However, information specifically about green corridors is extracted for comprehensiveness in this section as well.

This table shows how often people visit green corridors in Hartlepool:

Table 9.1: Green Corridor visits

Frequency of visiting	Proportion of respondents
	Green corridor
Every day	6%
Once or twice a week	11%
Two or three times a month	11%
Once a month	7%
Once every 2-3 months	10%
Once or twice a year	11%
Less often	9%
Never	35%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>1,065</i>

Over a third of local people (35%) visit a green corridor at least once a month, with half of these visiting at least once a week. A similar proportion, again around a third, say they never visit a space of this type.

These figures are broken down by sub-area in the following table:

Table 9.2: Green corridor visits by sub-area

Sub-area	Proportion of respondents	
	visit at least monthly	Never visit
Western	40%	27%
North Central	34%	37%
South Central	31%	40%
Southern	37%	35%
All Hartlepool	35%	35%

Low numbers in this table do not indicate non-use, but rather that other sites are used more often.

The most frequent users of green corridors are those living in the Western sub-area, where two in five visit at least monthly, and a quarter never visit; usage is also higher in the Southern sub-area, so the two areas closer to the countryside show the highest usage levels. In contrast, less than a third of residents in the South Central sub-area visit monthly, and two-fifths never visit.

Use of green corridors is much higher among under 60s than for older age-groups. Just 17% of over 75s visit at least monthly, in contrast to nearly half (46%) of those aged 31 - 45. Men are also more likely to use these spaces, and tend to do so more often than women. People with disabilities are much less likely to use green corridors: 58% never visit, against just 28% of those with no disability.

9.3.2 Quantity

This table shows people's perceptions of the quantity of green corridors:

Table 9.3: Quantity of green corridors

Opinion	Proportion of all respondents
Too many	0%
Too few	44%
About right	56%
N(=100%)	828

The majority view is that Hartlepool has enough of this type of space, but a significant minority of residents would welcome an increase in provision. The demand for more is highest in the South Central sub-area (48% want more) but is never a majority view in any sub-area.

Age is a factor here, with younger adults more likely to look for more, and a majority (54%) of under 30s say there should be more green corridor space. Men are more likely to look for more, but even so a majority of men say there are enough spaces of this type. People with disabilities are largely satisfied with the existing quantity.

9.3.3 Quality

Quality scores for natural green spaces are amalgamated across all types of space (see Chapter 5) and cannot be broken down for green corridors specifically. However opinions on path maintenance are certainly relevant to this typology, and over half of residents (55%) rate footpaths as good or excellent, with just one in eight (13%) rating them negatively.

9.3.4 Comparison with 2008 study

Opinions on quantity have shifted since 2008, when over half (56%) of people thought there were insufficient green corridors in the Borough; this view has tempered significantly in the intervening five years. At that time it was the younger residents who were looking for more, just as it is now. Usage levels have risen, with the proportion never visiting down from 44% in 2008 to 35% now, although the proportion visiting weekly has risen only from 13% to 17%.

Path quality shows a distinct improvement; in 2008 just a third (35%) assessed path quality positively, and that proportion is now over half (55%). There is a very slight reduction in the proportion rating paths negatively, but it is not statistically significant.

9.4 Audit

9.4.1 Quantity

The audit identifies 35 green corridors which are listed in **Table 9.4** below. There are green corridors in all sub-areas although only one, GC023 Rossmere Green Wedge Corridor is totally within the South Central sub-area. Three green corridors stretch across sub-area boundaries. They are:

- GC001 Hart to Haswell Walkway North Central, Western
- GC016 Belle Vue Way Green Corridor Southern, South Central, North Central
- GC012 Hart Lane Green Corridor Western, North Central

Green corridors account for over 116 hectares of open space although their value lies in the length of each corridor and the open spaces they link together.

Details of the green corridors are shown in this table and in **Appendix 9**.

Table 9.4: Green Corridors and Sub-areas.

Site Reference	Site Name	Size (hectares)	Sub-area
GC001	Hart to Haswell Walkway	10.56	North Central, Western
GC002	Spion Kop / Marine Drive	2.06	North Central
GC003	Linear Park	3.12	North Central
GC003	Linear Park	0.03	North Central
GC003	Linear Park	1.60	North Central
GC004	Cleveland Road /Central Estate	2.45	North Central
GC008	North of West View Road	2.18	North Central
GC009	Easington Road	1.45	Western
GC011	Middle Warren Green Corridor	7.43	Western
GC012	Hart Lane Green Corridor	5.65	Western, North Central
GC013	Middle Warren/Hart Reservoirs	0.60	Western
GC014	Middleton Road Green Corridor	0.69	North Central
GC015	West of Naisberry	1.82	Western
GC016	Belle Vue Way Green Corridor	5.27	Southern, South Central, North Central
GC017	Coronation Drive	20.12	Southern
GC017	Coronation Drive	5.59	Southern
GC018	The Stell, Seaton Carew	2.60	Southern
GC019	Brenda Rd Corridor	1.54	Southern
GC021	Usworth Road Industrial Estate	0.75	Southern
GC022	A689 (Rossmere Park)	0.72	Southern
GC023	Rossmere Green Wedge Corridor	9.68	South Central
GC025	Greatham Beck (Fens)	2.45	Southern
GC026	Seaton Lane Corridor	1.56	Southern
GC027	Rail corridor south of Seaton	3.12	Southern

GC028	A689 - Sappers Corner to Truro	4.57	Southern
GC029	Warrior Park	1.40	Southern
GC029	Murfield walk	0.49	Western
GC030	Central Park Embankment	3.03	North Central
GC031	Greatham to Cloff Bridge	3.48	Western
GC032	Brenda Road to Stockton Road	5.24	Southern
GC033	Dalton Batts to Brierton Lane	0.49	Southern
GC034	Summerhill Dalton Gorse Bushes	0.38	Western
GC035	Tunstall, Summerhill, FamilyWd	0.54	Western
GC036	Elwick to Dalton Piercy	1.89	Western
GC037	Hart 10 - Butts Lane	0.54	Western
GC038	Warrior Park - non pond area	No area data	Western
GC039	Central Park embankment	No area data	North Central

Map 9.2 shows the green corridors in Hartlepool.

9.4.2 Quality and Value

Sites were ranked as high or low in relation to the median scores of 76% for quality and 83% for value.

Overall, both quality and value scores are relatively high and this is reflected in the high median scores. The highest quality score is Spion Kop / Marine Drive (GC002) which achieved a score of 100% and the lowest is Belle Vue Way / Brenda Rd Corridor (GC019) with 44%. Sites achieving a higher score are normally highly accessible with good linkages to other green spaces and elements that enhance their character and contribute to a diversity of habitats. The main reasons for poor quality scores are the condition of paths, cleanliness in terms of litter and dog mess, a lack of character, entrances, lack of disabled access and a lack of diversity.

In terms of value, the highest value score is Hart to Haswell Walkway (GC001) which achieved a score of 100% and the lowest is again Belle Vue Way / Brenda Road Corridor (GC019) with just 30%. Higher value corridors are those that could easily be reached by the local community, were well used and safe.

Of the 32 corridors that were assessed, sixteen are ranked as being high in both quality and value. These include the Hart to Haswell Walkway (GC001) which scored very highly for both quality and value, and the Hart Lane Green Corridor (GC012) which is an important link.

Two green corridors scored high for quality but low for value. These are Spion Kop / Marine Drive (GC002) which scored 100% for quality but only 77% for value, and Easington Road (GC009) which scored 89% for quality but only 77% for value. Conversely, there are nine relatively high value sites that score poorly for quality. These include Rossmere Green Wedge Corridor (GC023) which scored 75% for quality but is considered to be of high value (93%) and Belle Vue Way Green Corridor (GC016) which scores 73% for quality but is also a high value site (87%). These are sites which could be included in the Action Plan for future quality enhancement.

A relatively new green corridor provided as part of the new housing development, the Middle Warren Green Wedge and Landscaping (GC011) also scores poorly for quality and highly for value. This may be a reflection of the fact that this is an area that has not yet reached maturity or it may be a reflection of indifferent landscaping.

There are five sites which score poorly for both quality and value.

Details of the quality and value scores for green corridors are shown in **Appendix 9**.

9.5 Standards

It is generally accepted that there is no sensible way of stating a provision standard for green corridors. Policy should promote the use of green corridors to link existing open spaces, housing areas to cycle routes, town centres, places of employment and community facilities such as schools, shops, community centres and sports facilities. Opportunities to use established linear routes, such as disused railway lines, roads or river banks as green corridors should be exploited. Networks of green corridors are able to accommodate

sustainable drainage facilities and can be designed to enhance the hedgerow and ditch network through the creation of new habitats. It may also be noted that there is substantial public interest in using this type of route not only for recreational purposes but also because it offers an alternative to traffic-clogged, polluted roads in accessing green spaces and other amenities such as public transport hubs.

Strategically green corridors will make an important contribution to a network of multi-functional open spaces, with linkages and corridors along transport routes, footpaths and cycleways to provide access to open space, routes for walking and cycling, nature conservation, opportunities for informal and formal recreation and flood risk management.

9.5.1 Quality Standard

The benchmark site for quality is the Hart to Haswell Green Corridor (GC001) which scored 90% for quality and 100% for value. Although this site scored well above the median for both quality and value it represents a level to which the Council could aspire in view of the fact that the Green Corridor Friends Group could be a vehicle for securing external funding and volunteer engagement.

Quality standard
<i>Quality 90%</i>
<i>Value 100%</i>

10. BEACHES

Beaches are not usually included in the typology of open space. However, in Hartlepool the beaches perform many of the functions associated with open space, mainly in terms of informal recreation.

10.1 Strategic Context

Two awards for beaches have been introduced in recent years, Blue Flag and Seaside Award both administered by Keep Britain Tidy who also administer the Green Flag Award for parks.

The Blue Flag programme was started in France in 1985 and it has been operating in wider Europe since 1987. It is run by the international, non-governmental, non-profit organisation FEE (the Foundation for Environmental Education). In the UK, the Blue Flag scheme was introduced in response to concerns about the cleanliness of British beaches and in particular with pollution from outfall sewers located near to some popular beaches.

In the years since it were first introduced, significant efforts have been made by local authorities and the Environment Agency to clean up the waters around England's coast. The Blue Flag Award is now an international quality mark for beaches. The scheme acts as a guarantee to visitors that a beach is clean and pollution-free, and among the best in the country and now in the world in this respect. The criteria for the Blue Flag Award require local authorities and beach operators to achieve high standards in the four categories of water quality, environmental management, environmental education and safety. The criteria are categorised as either imperative or guideline. Most beach criteria are imperative, i.e. the beach must comply with them in order to be awarded Blue Flag accreditation. If they are guideline criteria, it is preferable that they are complied with, but not mandatory.

In 2014, a total of 56 beaches in England have been awarded Blue Flags. The water quality criterion is now assessed against the EC Bathing Water Directive and bathing water must meet the very high standard for biological parameters.

The Seaside Award was introduced in 1993. It is very similar to Blue Flag but the requirements are slightly less stringent. To receive the award a beach must achieve mandatory water quality. The Seaside Award flag is a symbol of quality which aims to ensure that visitors are guaranteed to find a clean, safe, attractive and well-managed beach. In 2014, Seaside Awards have been presented to 112 beaches.

10.2 Key findings from consultation

10.2.1 Usage

This table shows how often people in the Borough visit a local beach or seashore:

Table 10.1: Beach visits

Frequency of visiting	Proportion of respondents who visit
Every day	4%
Once or twice a week	22%
Two or three times a month	22%
Once a month	13%
Once every two or three months	17%
Once or twice a year	10%
Less often	4%
Never	8%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>1,113</i>

There are a small number of people who make a daily visit to a beach, but the more common visiting pattern is to go on a weekly or fortnightly basis. In all, three in five people say they visit a local beach at least once a month. The proportion who never visit, at just 8%, is small and indicates the importance of these spaces to the overall mix of open space.

There are variations in this result by sub-area: This table shows the proportions who visit at least monthly, and who never visit local beaches:

Table 10.2: Beach visits by sub-area

Sub-area	Proportion of respondents	
	Visit at least monthly	Never visit
Western	57%	5%
North Central	57%	12%
South Central	58%	8%
Southern	71%	5%
All Hartlepool	61%	8%

In most areas of the Borough, three in five residents visits a beach at least once a month, but in the Southern sub-area (which includes the beach at Seaton Carew) this proportion

rises to well over two thirds. The highest proportion who never visit are in the North Central sub-area, where one in twelve residents never visits a local seashore.

Beach visiting is most frequent among those aged 31 - 45, the age at which people are most likely to be parents; but it is similarly high among all under 60s, and only reduces above this age level. Among over 75s, beach visiting is much rarer and just two in five (39%) of over 75s makes a monthly visit to a beach. The proportion who never visit a beach is very low among under 45s, and only increases slightly among 45 -60s; among over 75s, however, a quarter (25%) say they never visit. Men are more likely to visit the beach, and also do so more often than women do. People with disabilities visit less often than their counterparts, and are much more likely to never visit: one in five people with a disability stays away from the beach.

This table shows the beaches most used by people in Hartlepool:

Table 10.3: Beaches most visited

Beach	Proportion of respondents who visit
Seaton Carew	72%
Headland, Fish Sands and Block Sands	18%
Crimdon, Hart Warren, North Sands, Brus	6%
Hartlepool Beach, Marina	3%
Other local beaches	1%
Out of area beaches	1%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>947</i>

Low numbers in this table do not indicate non-use, but rather that other sites are used more often.

Many beaches have no definite boundaries at which their names change, while some people are more precise than others in identifying their preferred beach, so the results have been grouped in a way which seems appropriate and allows broad identification of the different areas being used.

By far the most popular beach is that at Seaton Carew, which is the preferred beach for three-quarters of all those who visit a local seashore. No other beach even approaches Seaton Carew in popularity, though different sites around the Headland account for one in five beach visitors, and the north shore beaches between the Headland and Crimdon account for a further 6%. Use of other local beaches is more limited, and there are a handful of people who prefer to go elsewhere, for instance to Saltburn, Whitby, or Bamburgh, rather than visit the seashore locally.

10.2.2 Quality of beaches

The table below shows how local people rate their preferred beach on a range of different criteria. To facilitate comparison, their opinions have been converted into mean scores.¹¹³

Table 10.4: Quality assessments of beaches

Attribute	Mean score for beach users
Peace and quiet	0.74
Suitability for children	0.69
Quality of environment	0.51
Safety	0.47
Car parking	0.27
Dog control	0.10
Water quality	0.04
Cleanliness and litter	0.02
Catering	-0.01
Toilets	-0.54
<i>N(=100%) ranges from 782 to 996</i>	

Most of the scores are positive, but not strongly so; the highest score, for peace and quiet, lies below the equivalent of a 'good' rating, and although suitability for children, environmental quality and safety also attract reasonable scores, there is clearly room for improvement. Other scores are more equivocal, with car parking an issue for some residents, and fairly neutral ratings for dog control, water quality and cleanliness.

Two attributes attract negative scores: people are essentially neutral on catering, but the perspective on toilets is much clearer.

Interestingly, water quality perceptions vary significantly by age, with under 30s much more critical in this area than older residents. Younger residents are also much less tolerant of litter and other debris on the beaches, and are very negative about toilets at the beaches

¹¹³ The mean score is calculated by taking each individual response for each of the different criteria and converting it into a score. A score of +2 is allocated for each 'excellent' result, and +1 for each 'good' response; 'below average' and 'poor' score -1 and -2 respectively. 'Average' attracts a score of zero, while don't knows are discounted completely. The resulting scores are then averaged to produce a mean score which indicates both the direction of opinion (positive or negative) and the strength with which that view is collectively held.

they visit, but take a more positive view of dog controls. Those aged 31 - 45 score car parking at a lower level than other age-groups.

Men generally give higher scores than women to each attribute; women are more critical of water quality and cleanliness, giving both negative scores, in contrast to men's modestly positive ratings. Both men and women are equally critical of the beach toilets, however.

10.2.3 Accessibility

This table shows how people travel to their preferred beach:

Table 10.5: Means of travel to beach

Travel	Proportion of respondents who visit
Walk or jog	22%
Car	71%
Bus	5%
Cycle	2%
Other	*
N(=100%)	1,012

Most beach visitors arrive by car; three quarters of those who visit the beach use this mode of transport to get there. In contrast, just one in five beach visitors walks to their preferred location, and use of public transport is very limited. Other means of access are primarily motorised scooters or wheelchairs.

Car use is highest in the Western sub-area (90%) and falls to just over half (54%) of beach users in the South Central sub-area. Walking is most prominent in the Southern sub-area (39% walk) and to a lesser extent in North Central (30%) but is rare in the Western sub-area (7%). Bus use occurs primarily in South Central where 10% of beach visits are made by bus.

Walking is most commonplace among those aged 31 -75; residents who are older or younger than this are more likely to visit by car. Public transport users are mainly women, and people with disabilities; men are a little more likely to visit on foot, but disability does not affect the level of visiting by car.

10.2.4 Comparison with 2008 study

Beaches were not examined as a separate entity in 2008, and were included in natural green space, so there is only limited comparability between the current data and that from

the earlier study. However, we can compare the frequency of visiting beaches, and observe a slight increase in the proportions visiting at least once a fortnight, up from 40% in 2008 to 48% today. The proportion who never visit a local beach is unchanged at 8%.

10.2.5 Feedback from youth survey

The table below shows the proportions of young people who visit local beaches.

Table 10.6: Youth visits to beaches

Frequency of visiting	Proportion of respondents who visit
At least weekly	21%
Once or twice a month	35%
Three or four times a year	27%
Less often	11%
Never	6%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	374

The beach is a popular destination for young people in Hartlepool. One in five young people goes there at least once a week, and well over half visit at least monthly. In contrast, just 6% of local young people say they never visit the beach. Given the geographical concentration of response in the landward parts of the Borough, this result is striking.

Seven different beaches are mentioned in this context, but one stands out well above the others in popularity: Seaton Carew is the preferred beach of almost 90% of those who visit a beach. The Headland is also mentioned, and its popularity is probably understated by virtue of low response from this part of town, and the north shore beaches also have adherents.

Young people's journeys to beaches use these travel modes:

Table 10.7: Means of travel to beach (youth survey)

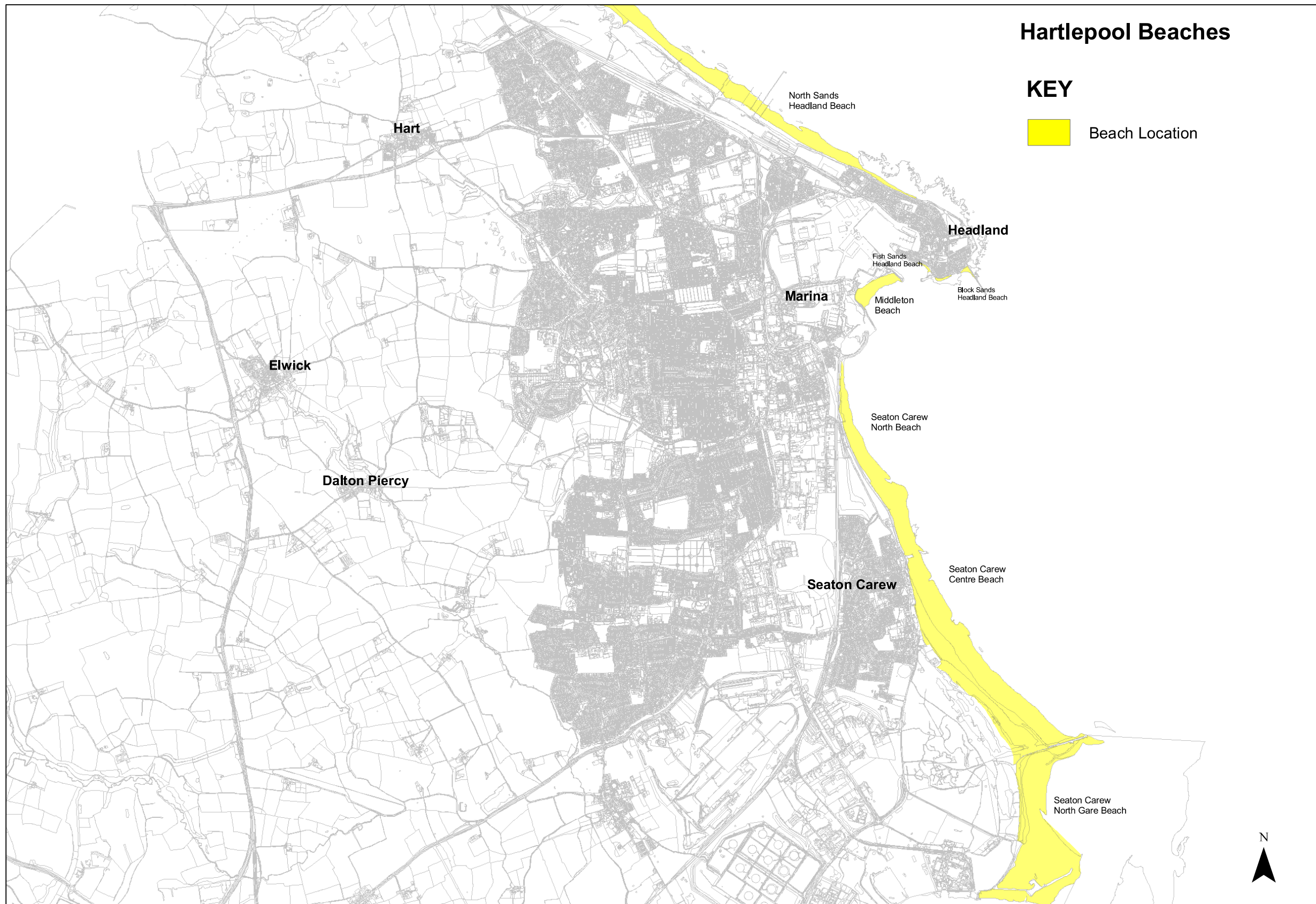
Travel	Proportion of respondents who visit
Walk or jog	15%
Car	68%
Bus	6%
Cycle	5%
Other	6%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	345

Two-thirds of young people who visit beaches travel by car; the age of participants in the youth survey implies that most of these visits will involve an adult as driver. Only one in seven visit as pedestrians. Cycle visits to the beach are much less commonplace than for green spaces.

10.3 Audit

There are seven beaches in Hartlepool; they stretch from Seaton Carew Centre Beach adjoin Seaton Carew Dunes in the south to Middleton Beach north of the Headland. These are shown on **Map 10.1**.

Map 10.1 Location of Beaches



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Scale:1:35,000

DRAWN BY J.BROWN 2014
DEPT REGENERATION & NEIGHBOURHOODS
HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL

10.3.1 Quality Assessment

Each of the seven beaches was assessed for quality against a range of criteria including:

- Information about bathing water quality and also about any environmentally sensitive areas should be available. The information should include a code of conduct for visitors to the area.
- The presence of essential features such as toilets, car parking and litter bins are assessed and also the cleanliness of these facilities.
- A map of the beach should show the location of lifeguards, lifesaving equipment and local facilities.
- Cleanliness of the beach is assessed in terms of litter and whether there are any industrial, waste-water or sewage-related discharges affecting the beach area.
- Safety is an important element in the assessment both in terms of whether the beach is a safe place with appropriate public safety control measures in place and also whether there are sufficient facilities for safe access to the beach (including access for the disabled) such as secured steps with handrails, and designated pedestrian crossings on busy roads in the vicinity of the beach.

The assessment form is included in **Appendix 1**, and the results of the assessment are shown in **Table 10.8** below.

Table 10.8: Quality and Value Assessment of Beaches

Site Reference	Site Name	% Quality Score	Quality Ranking	% Score Value	Value Ranking
BEACH 1	Seaton Carew Centre Beach	77%	HIGH	96%	HIGH
BEACH 2	Seaton Carew North Beach	70%	HIGH	88%	LOW
BEACH 3	Seaton Carew- North Gare Beach	56%	HIGH	92%	HIGH
BEACH 4	Fish Sands- Headland Beach	48%	LOW	96%	HIGH
BEACH 5	North Sands- Headland Beach	38%	LOW	84%	LOW
BEACH 6	Block Sands- Headland Beach	51%	HIGH	96%	HIGH
BEACH 7	Middleton Beach	40%	LOW	84%	LOW

The median score for quality is 51%. The beach which is closest to the median is BEACH 6 Block Sands - Headland Beach which scored exactly 51% for quality. The highest score for quality is BEACH 1 Seaton Carew Centre Beach which scored 77% and the lowest score is 38% for BEACH 5 North Sands - Headland Beach.

The median score for value is 92% reflecting the importance of these spaces to local people. All the beaches scored highly for value with only BEACH 5 North Sands- Headland Beach and BEACH 7 Middleton Beach scoring below 90%.

10.4 Standards

There is no quantity standard for beaches. There are two quality standards, the Blue Flag and the Seaside Award. Blue Flag now sets an international standard and its achievement has become more demanding in terms of resources. For this reason Hartlepool Borough Council now seeks to achieve the Seaside Award and this has been achieved in 2014 for BEACH 1 Seaton Carew Centre Beach.

<p>Quality Standard The Seaside Award.</p>
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11. CEMETERIES AND CHURCHYARDS

11.1 Background

Cemeteries and churchyards are spaces set aside for the burial of the dead, either through interment of the body or of cremated remains, or for memorials to those who have died. They are important for quiet contemplation and reflection linked to death. They have a secondary, but nonetheless important, role in the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity. Churchyards lie within the curtilage of a church, and are most often consecrated ground; cemeteries lie outside church confines, and will commonly have a chapel or other religious building on the site (though many such buildings are being lost). The former guidance noted the potential significance of churchyards and cemeteries as “important places for quiet contemplation”, especially in the busy urban context, and also notes their value in promoting biodiversity. However, there is ongoing debate about the importance of cemeteries and churchyards in modern Britain, centering not only on the need for space for burial but also on the purpose and focus of these spaces, and on the challenges they present.

11.2 Strategic context

There are important differences between churchyards and cemeteries, as well as the obvious similarities of purpose. Churchyards are generally historic in nature, and many, though not all, have existed for centuries. They are generally fairly small – often no more than around an acre (0.4ha) in size – and are usually owned by the denominational authorities of the church to which they are attached, which is most commonly (but by no means always) the Church of England. Many urban churchyards became full in Victorian times; some urban churchyards are also among the oldest remaining green spaces in their localities, having existed when communities that are now part of the urban sprawl were isolated, rural or semi-rural villages.

Cemeteries, on the other hand, began to come into being in the early nineteenth century; although originating in the private sector, most are now owned or managed by local authorities, including parish as well as district councils. A typical cemetery may be around 4ha in extent, and there are around 7,000ha of cemetery space in England in total.¹¹⁴ However, there is at present no statutory duty on an authority to provide burial space, and as such provision tends to be rather ad hoc. Some historic or otherwise significant cemeteries have active “Friends” groups which take a measure of responsibility for upkeep and care; but cemeteries are often neglected, vandalised, or even desecrated.

In recent years, a private sector involvement in burials has begun to re-emerge, linked to the environmental movement, in the form of provision for “green burials”. These involve the deceased being buried in a biodegradable casket, sometimes in municipal cemeteries but increasingly in privately run facilities, often located in tranquil rural surroundings.

¹¹⁴ Paradise Preserved, English Heritage, 2002 p 19

Practice in relation to burial has changed in the twentieth century, with an increasing preference to cremate rather than inter the deceased. The Cemetery Research Group estimates that 72% of deaths are now followed by cremation, leaving a minority (but a significant one) opting for full interment.¹¹⁵ The eminent bereavement sociologist Tony Walter notes that this proportion has now levelled off, and suggests that the demand for interment is now likely to remain relatively consistent for the foreseeable future.¹¹⁶

A survey undertaken by the Home Office¹¹⁷ reveals that there are nearly 10,000 burial grounds in England and Wales, of which just 21% are managed by a first or second tier authority. Most of the rest are provided by ecclesiastical bodies, with a small proportion provided by parish councils, charitable trusts, and by the private sector. Around three quarters of local authority burial grounds are open for new burials; about half of the remainder accept new interments in existing graves. Overall, about a fifth of designated burial space remains available for new graves; a similar proportion is occupied by graves over 100 years old. The median time remaining until burial grounds are full is around 25 years, suggesting that by 2040 there will be a lack of burial space in much of the country unless action is taken to provide further burial options.

This situation has led to repeated calls for consideration of the possible re-use of old graves. This discussion began in 1994, and led to a funded research project on the viability of the idea, which indicated widespread public acceptance provided that a time limit of 100 years was set.¹¹⁸ This ultimately led on to a consultation paper "Burial Law and Policy in the 21st Century"¹¹⁹ following a detailed report by a Select Committee, aiming at a widespread review of law and current practice.

The results of this consultation were published in 2006,¹²⁰ and the Government's conclusions, following further discussion, were announced in June 2007.¹²¹ A ministerial statement at that time indicated Government agreement to re-use, subject to safeguards, and a time limit of 100 years.¹²² The Minister also indicated an intention to produce Good Practice guidance to assist burial authorities in the re-use of old graves, and in more general maintenance issues around burial grounds, but this has never materialised, and the Ministry of Justice (through its Coroners' Department) has indicated that it is 'not the right time to

¹¹⁵ Dr Julie Rugg, Report of the Cemetery Research Group, University of York, 2002

¹¹⁶ Dr Tony Walter, evidence to Select Committee, 2001

¹¹⁷ Subsequently published by the Ministry of Justice: Burial Grounds: the results of a survey of burial grounds in England and Wales, June 2007

¹¹⁸ Reusing Old Graves: A Report on Popular British Attitudes, Douglas Davies and Alastair Shaw, Shaw & Sons, 1995

¹¹⁹ Burial Law and Policy for the 21st Century, Home Office Consultation paper, 2004.

¹²⁰ Burial Law and policy in the 21st Century, DCA paper CP @ DCA/HO 1/05 (Responsibility for this consultation was passed to the DCA during the consultation period)

¹²¹ Burial Law and Practice in the 21st Century, Government response to the Consultation, Ministry of Justice, June 2007 (The Ministry of Justice inherited responsibility from the DCA)

¹²² Ministerial statement by the Rt Hon Harriet Harman, Minister of State, 5 June 2007

take [this] forward.¹²³ Nevertheless, London authorities already have their own provisions¹²⁴ enabling them to re-use graves under certain circumstances after 75 years, and the Minister stated in 2007¹²⁵ that Government wished to encourage local authorities in London to begin reusing graves of this age.

Take up of the re-use option has in any event been very slow, and has not been aided by media reports that have tended to sensationalise the process, talking of “bodies dug up”¹²⁶ or “stacked double.”¹²⁷ In Ayrshire, where a 75 year rule operates, the plans do not seem to have the support claimed when the proposal was first discussed, while in Exeter the launch of a re-use scheme at Heavitree cemetery has attracted little interest.¹²⁸

One further factor which may affect the levels of cremation and interment, and the demand for burial space, is the increasingly diverse religious adherence of the population. Most religions have established rules and practices in relation to the disposal of the dead, and in many cases these include instructions to believers as to the approval or otherwise of cremation, and specific requirements in relation to interment.

The traditional Christian preference has been for burial; until the late nineteenth century almost all disposals were carried out in this way. Mainstream Protestant denominations, which predominate in British forms of Christianity, have never forbidden cremation and some in the church welcomed and promoted it. Roman Catholic hierarchies have traditionally discouraged cremation (Canon Law forbade the practice from 1917) but this restriction has been relaxed since the mid-sixties, with provisos as to the rites of passage and the interment of cremated remains. The Orthodox church, and some smaller Protestant groups, forbid cremation for their adherents. A weakening of religious authority over adherents in the second half of the twentieth century has also allowed more people to opt for cremation, for other reasons, without being over-troubled by their denominational guidance.

Islam, however, categorically forbids cremation and requires the interment of the deceased. Funeral ceremonies are managed within the Mosque and religious requirements are therefore very strongly enforced; Funeral Directors are rarely involved in Islamic funerals. The deceased should be moved as little as possible, so interments normally take place in the locality where the death occurs. Islam also requires that a grave be unique to the person buried there; shared graves, or re-use of a grave, would not be permitted.

Judaism has traditionally discouraged cremation, and this remains the position of Orthodox Jews, although more liberal Jews do allow cremation, and the subject is a controversial one within Judaism. Jews often have their own cemeteries, or areas set aside for Jewish burials; cremated remains are often not permitted in such cemeteries, at least partly as a deterrent

¹²³ Burial and Cremations Advisory Group, Spring 2012 newsletter

¹²⁴ GLC (General Powers) Act 1976, which allows re-use without disturbance of existing remains, and the London Local Authorities Act 2007, which allows disturbance, subject to veto by the owner of the right to inter.

¹²⁵ Rt Hon Harriet Harman, speech at Westminster Hall, 27 Feb 2007

¹²⁶ Ayrshire Post, April 2, 2010

¹²⁷ Daily Telegraph, 6 June 2007

¹²⁸ Not least, perhaps, because the work to introduce the scheme has identified a number of completely unused plots that can be made available. Western Morning News, 10 April 2010.

to cremation. Some secular Jews also reject cremation because of its association with the Holocaust. Israel's first cremator was installed only as recently as 2007.

In Hinduism, and also in the Sikh religion, cremation is the traditional method of disposal, and the preference (where it is permitted) is for an open-air cremation allowing the sunlight to fall on the body as it is consumed. The Cremation Act 1902 has generally been regarded as forbidding this practice in the UK (though some open air cremations have taken place¹²⁹), and most Hindus accept a normal British cremation as meeting their requirements. but a recent case in Newcastle threatens this position after the Appeal Court held that the Cremation Act does not forbid the practice.¹³⁰ There is however no crematorium at present that would be able to do this within existing environmental regulations.

Religious preferences have little impact on cremation take-up in many locations, where Christianity is the predominant cultural influence, but in some localities religious diversity does impact on the levels of provision of different types of disposal; this also has the potential to change as new communities with different disposal practices form in localities subject to immigration. In particular, this may affect the rate at which available burial land is taken up.

Another factor that is increasingly affecting burial and disposal preferences is the growth of the natural burial, in which the deceased is buried in a biodegradable casket in a more natural or semi-natural setting such as a woodland, normally without a memorial. This choice appeals to those concerned about the environmental impact of burial, and also the cost of more traditional interment, and its popularity has been reflected in a substantial increase in the number of dedicated sites for such burials, and by increased local authority provision in this regard. In the vicinity of Hartlepool, two natural burial sites are registered with the Association of Natural Burial Grounds: these are at Blue House, near Hart (but located outside the Borough boundary), and at South Road, Durham. Other local sites offering green disposal options include cemeteries at Consett and Guisborough.¹³¹ The Ministry of Justice has published guidance for the management of natural burial grounds,¹³² but these sites are not covered by the Local Authorities Cemetery Order (LACO) 1977, and are largely unregulated and rely on the willingness of owners to follow good practice, including as regards the depth of burial - though they have the same obligations as municipal cemeteries with regard to burial law and the keeping of registers.

As essentially quiet and undisturbed places, churchyards and cemeteries have also become a place where biodiversity can thrive, and provide habitats that are becoming scarce such as heathland and hedges. Flora and fauna have taken sanctuary in cemeteries and they make an important contribution to the protection of uncommon species in the British Isles. This is recognised, among others, by the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN)

¹²⁹ For instance, at Brighton during World War One, when a burning ghat was constructed on the Downs to cremate Indian soldiers who had died in local hospitals. The ghat and a memorial are still in situ.

¹³⁰ Reported in the Independent (and elsewhere) 10 Feb 2010

¹³¹ Natural Death handbook, list of sites offering natural burial, accessed at www.naturaldeath.org.uk July 2014.

¹³² Natural Burial Grounds: Guidance for Operators. Ministry of Justice, 2009

which, in conjunction with the Arthur Rank Centre, set up in 1989 a “Living Churchyards” initiative which claims to have worked with over 5,000 projects nationwide.¹³³

Hartlepool’s Biodiversity Action Plan recognises this and includes targets linked to the development of cemeteries as sites of natural interest.¹³⁴ The Council has organised activities and events to raise awareness of biodiversity in cemeteries, and has also supported the creation of Friends’ Groups to assist with cemetery management and maintenance as well as local events. One of the Borough’s cemeteries has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve.

However, it is important to recognise that churchyards and cemeteries are not primarily intended as open space or semi-natural environments. English Heritage recognises this and notes that “first and foremost, cemeteries are places to respect and commemorate the dead”.¹³⁵ However, they go on to add that cemeteries are also “thoughtful places, reflecting the impact of time on humankind....places for quiet communion.” This echoes the evidence of Tony Walter to the Select Committee investigating cemeteries in 2001, when he drew attention to their prime purpose as a place to bury the dead, and their prime significance as a *memento mori* reminding the living of their transitory nature. Walter suggested that burial grounds need to be “local, sustainable, accessible and safe”, and stated that “British burial grounds were the worst in Europe on all these counts”.¹³⁶

There is a widespread and growing concern over the quality and management of many churchyards and cemeteries, prompted initially by the unsafe and unstable condition of many memorials and monuments. In the early 1990s the Association of Burial Authorities drew attention to injuries and even deaths caused by unstable gravestones; this situation had not improved by 2002, when the Environmental Health Journal reported that accidents to cemetery workers and visitors were causing some councils significant problems in securing adequate insurance cover.¹³⁷

In older cemeteries, headstone settlement and vandalism may combine to create hazards for visitors and for staff working in cemeteries. LACO places an obligation on local authorities to keep sites under their management in good repair, although the primary responsibility for memorials rests with the owners, usually the family of the deceased and in older cemeteries, often difficult to identify. LACO provides for local authorities to level grave surfaces and to remove headstones, but guidance suggests caution in taking this step;¹³⁸ during the period of exclusive rights, the authority may only act to protect public safety.

Three frameworks have been developed which potentially contribute towards improvement of cemeteries and churchyards. One, which is of universal relevance to local authorities, is

¹³³ The UK Church and Conservation Project, www.ecen.org.uk/ch&cons.shtml, accessed 11/4/2005

¹³⁴ Hartlepool Biodiversity report 2008, p. 8

¹³⁵ English Heritage, Paradise Preserved, p4

¹³⁶ Dr Tony Walter, Memorandum CEM 45 Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Memoranda, December 2000

¹³⁷ Environmental Health Journal, February 2002

¹³⁸ Guide for Burial Ground Managers, DCA Nov 2005, para 2.31

the “Charter for the Bereaved”¹³⁹, which includes recommended quality standards for cemetery provision as well as for the service provided to the bereaved. In addition, English Heritage has published in “Paradise Preserved” recommendations of particular relevance to the protection and preservation of those sites that are of historic significance.¹⁴⁰ The Guide for Burial Ground Managers¹⁴¹ contains advice and guidance for the management and operation of cemeteries and also clarifies issues relating to closed churchyards.

English Heritage has also produced guidance on conservation of what are often complex sites that call for an inter-disciplinary approach.¹⁴² This guidance points out that the absence of an official designation should not be regarded as indicating that a particular site has little or no value or significance, and calls for an assessment of cemetery quality that takes due account of the quality of buildings (including walls and entrances), monuments, the graves of famous people, historic layout and planting, and biodiversity.

English Heritage commend a rounded approach to cemetery management that respects all the special meanings and characteristics of these places. It suggests a Conservation Management Plan approach and sets out in detail how this might be developed, acknowledging the considerable difficulties that its standards may cause, not least because so many cemeteries have yet to be properly surveyed and assessed. The standard is an exacting one and is really only appropriate for historic and heritage sites.

¹³⁹ Charter for the Bereaved, Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management

¹⁴⁰ Paradise Preserved, English Heritage

¹⁴¹ Dept for Constitutional Affairs, November 2005

¹⁴² English Heritage, Conservation Management Plans, available on www.english-heritage.org.uk

11.3 Key findings from consultation

11.3.1 Usage

This table shows how often people in the Borough visit a local cemetery:

Table 11.1: Cemetery visits

Frequency of visiting	Proportion of respondents who visit
Every day	2%
Once or twice a week	6%
Two or three times a month	10%
Once a month	10%
Once every two or three months	12%
Once or twice a year	19%
Less often	12%
Never	29%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>1,099</i>

Although only a small proportion of local people visit cemeteries with any frequency, there are those who visit every day, or at least on a weekly basis; one in twelve cemetery visitors is a regular to this extent, and over a quarter of cemetery visitors make a monthly visit at least. Although a third of people say they never visit a local cemetery, that leaves a significant proportion (43%) who visit from time to time, perhaps on anniversaries or for funerals. Cemeteries may not be popular places, but they clearly have a significant place in many local lives.

Table 11.2: Cemetery visits by sub-area

Sub-area	Proportion of respondents	
	visit at least monthly	Never visit
Western	20%	39%
North Central	29%	28%
South Central	32%	22%
Southern	30%	29%
All Hartlepool	28%	29%

Cemetery visiting is highest in the South Central sub-area, where a third of residents visit a cemetery at least once a month, but falls away sharply among residents in the Western sub-

area, where only one in five visit at least monthly. Correspondingly, non-visiting is highest in the western sub-area, but is much lower in the South Central sub-area, where only one in five people never visit.

Cemetery visiting is highest, as would be expected, among older people; among over 75s, a third visit at least once a month. But even among those under 30, cemetery visiting is part of the pattern of life for many; one in five under 30s also visits at least once a month; although the number of weekly or more frequent visitors in this age-group is low, only a third (34%) of under 30s say they never visit a cemetery.

Women and men are equally likely to visit, but women tend to visit more often. Disability does not affect cemetery visiting, suggesting that access is not a particular problem at the sites most frequently visited.

This table shows the cemeteries most visited by people in Hartlepool:

Table 11.3: Cemeteries most visited

Cemetery or churchyard	Proportion of respondents who visit
Stranton	72%
West View/New Cemetery	14%
North Cemetery	3%
Holy Trinity, Seaton Carew	2%
St Mary Magdalene, Hart	2%
St Hilda, Headland	2%
All other sites	5%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	720

Low numbers in this table do not necessarily indicate non-use, but rather that other sites are visited more often.

Stranton Cemetery is by far the most visited of all the burial sites in Hartlepool; nearly three-quarters of all those who visit any cemetery visit this one. The next most popular is the New Cemetery at West View, which accounts for one in seven of those who visit cemeteries. No other cemetery even approaches these in significance to visitors; the large North Cemetery attracts very few visitors, and the Old Cemetery at Spion Kop is also largely overlooked by mourners; both these sites are closed other than for re-opening of family plots. A small handful of people visit the small parish cemetery at Elwick, and the Jewish cemetery also has a handful of visitors.

As for churchyards, those at Seaton Carew, Hart and St Hilda's all attract some visitors.

11.3.2 Quantity

This table shows people's perceptions of the quantity of cemeteries.

Table 11.4: Quantity of cemeteries

Opinion	Proportion of all respondents
Too many	0%
Too few	7%
About right	93%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>884</i>

Virtually nobody in Hartlepool thinks the Borough is over-supplied with cemeteries, and relatively few think there is a need for more provision. The strong consensus among local people is that existing provision is sufficient.

Quantity perceptions break down by sub-area in this way:

Table 11.5: Quantity of burial grounds by sub-area

Opinion	Western	North central	South central	Southern
Too many	0%	0%	1%	0%
Too few	5%	5%	5%	11%
About right	95%	95%	94%	89%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>179</i>	<i>234</i>	<i>243</i>	<i>222</i>

No sub-area shows any inclination to reduce the amount of burial space, and almost everyone is content with current levels of provision. To the extent that there is any deviation from the norm, it is in the Southern sub-area, where a minority would like to see more space allocated for burial.

With such a strong agreement in the response, there is naturally little variation within the smaller population groups. To the extent that anyone wants to see an increase in cemetery provision, it is younger people; but the majority in favour of the status quo is overwhelming.

11.3.3 Quality of cemeteries

The table below shows how local people rate the cemetery they visit most often on a range of different criteria. To facilitate comparison, their opinions have been converted into mean scores.¹⁴³

Table 11.6: Quality assessments of cemeteries

Attribute	Mean score for cemetery users
Peace and tranquillity	1.00
Cleanliness and litter	0.88
Safety during the day	0.87
Planting and grassed areas	0.82
Nature, birds and wildlife	0.64
Care and maintenance of headstones and plots	0.35
Seating	0.14
<i>N(=100%) ranges from 623 to 731</i>	

All the scores are positive, but none exceeds an overall rating equivalent to 'good'. Whilst cemeteries are largely viewed positively, there is still room for improvement. The dominance of Stranton in the previous question means that the scores are heavily influenced by quality at that site, as are the scores within sub-areas.

The highest mean score is for peace and tranquillity, characteristics which probably are the most important in a space intended primarily for quiet reflection and where noise and distraction are unwelcome. Cemeteries also attract a reasonable score for cleanliness and litter, and are generally regarded as safe places to be during daylight hours; they also score reasonably well on planting, but less so for their contribution to natural biodiversity - the two main sites visited are both lawn cemeteries.

There are two areas where cemeteries might be improved. One is the condition of stones and plots, which seems to be very variable; the older cemeteries in particular suffer from extensive vandalism to statuary and sepulture. The other key area is seating; this is sometimes overlooked in cemeteries because of the risk of encouraging anti-social

¹⁴³ The mean score is calculated by taking each individual response for each of the different criteria and converting it into a score. A score of +2 is allocated for each 'excellent' result, and +1 for each 'good' response; 'below average' and 'poor' score -1 and -2 respectively. 'Average' attracts a score of zero, while don't knows are discounted completely. The resulting scores are then averaged to produce a mean score which indicates both the direction of opinion (positive or negative) and the strength with which that view is collectively held.

gathering on these sites, but is invaluable for the age of visitor a cemetery normally attracts, and because seating aids quiet reflection.

11.3.7 Comparison with 2008 study

Cemetery visiting was relatively high in 2008, with just a quarter of people (27%) saying they never visit, a figure which is largely unchanged in 2014. Visiting patterns are also similar, with about a third of people visiting twice a year or less, and about a sixth visiting at least every fortnight.

Quality scores are compared in this table:

Table 11.7: Quality scores for cemeteries (comparable attributes only)

Attribute	Mean score for cemetery users	
	2014	2008
Cleanliness and litter	0.88	0.69
Safety during the day	0.87	0.58
Planting and grassed areas	0.82	0.58
Seating	0.14	-0.16
<i>N(=100%) ranges from 623 to 731</i>		

Quality scores show an uplift, with a particular improvement in seating, and in safety during the day. There is no comparable score for headstone care, as this was not explored in 2008.

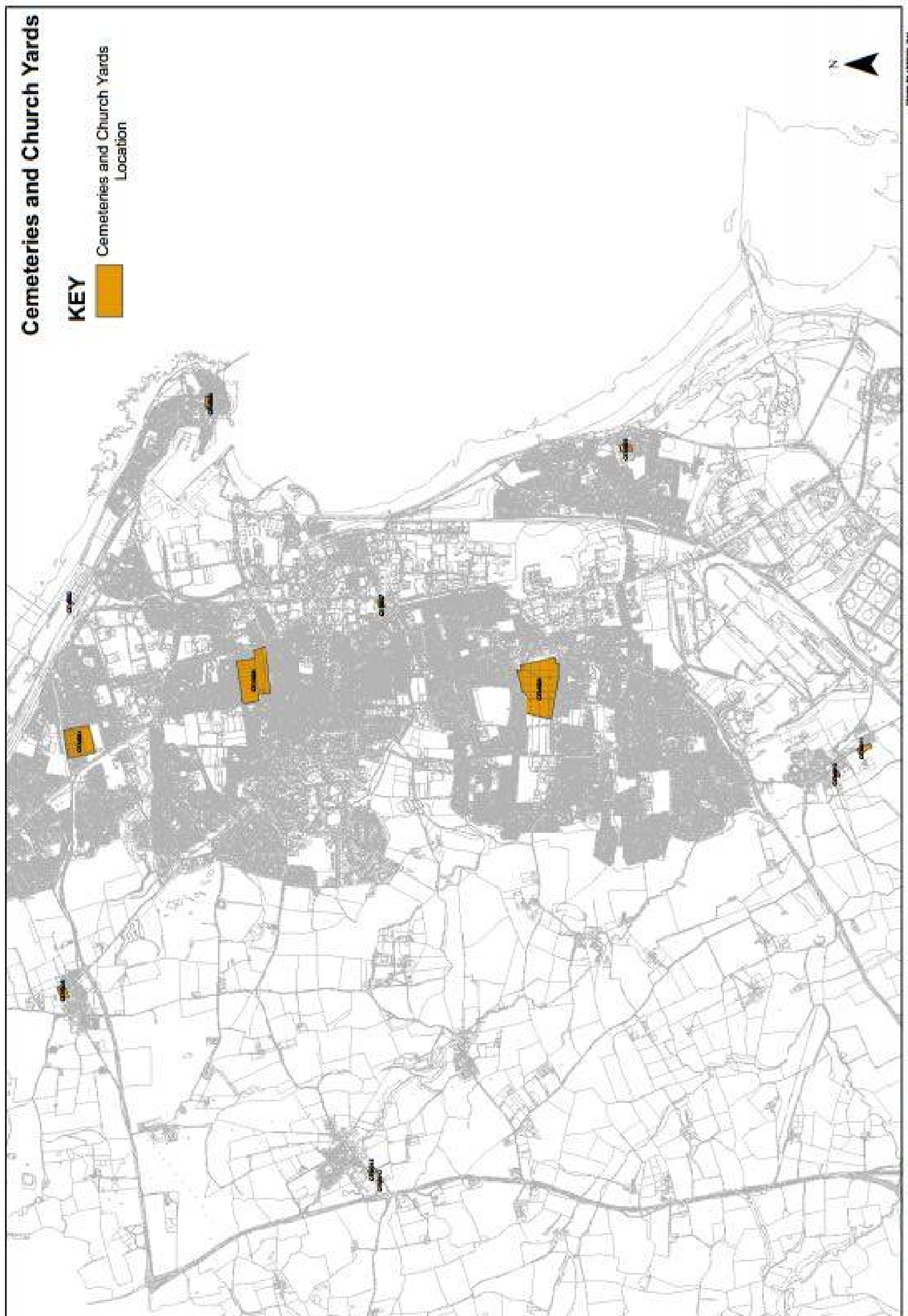
In 2008, three quarters of people thought the quantity of cemetery provision was about right; this view is now almost universal.

11.4 Audit

11.4.1 Quantity

There are twelve burial grounds in the Borough,¹⁴⁴ of which six are cemeteries and six are churchyards. The total land space allocated to burials is 42.25 hectares, and the locations of cemeteries and churchyards are shown in **Map 11.1**.

¹⁴⁴ This figure excludes the Old Cemetery at Spion Kop, which is designated a Local Nature Reserve and therefore assessed under natural green space.



The breakdown by sub-area is shown in **Table 11.8**.

Table 11.8 Number and area of cemeteries and churchyards

	No. of sites	Total area (ha)
North Central	4	21.0
South Central	2	18.42
Hartlepool	12	42.25

Stranton Cemetery has a crematorium and there is space for the interment of cremated remains at several cemeteries within the Borough. Churchyards in the Borough are closed, and therefore are not in current use for burials. Five burial grounds - West View Cemetery, Stranton Cemetery, Greatham Cemetery, Elwick Cemetery and the Jewish Cemetery - all accept new interments. North Cemetery accepts interments in existing plots but not the creation of new plots.

The Old Cemetery at Spion Kop is not included in these figures because it is now classified as a Local Nature Reserve and has been assessed accordingly under the Natural Green Space heading. There are nevertheless recent interments there and it still has a role as a place of quiet contemplation.

11.4.2 Quality and value

An assessment has been made of the quality and value of local burial sites using an appropriate assessment tool developed specifically for this type of site. Sites are scored against a range of criteria and emerge with percentage scores that represent their result out of a possible 100% score. The results of this assessment are shown in **Table 11.9**, and is summarised in **Table 11.10**.

Table 11.9 Quality and Value scores for cemeteries and churchyards

Site Reference	Site Name	% Score Quality	Ranking	% Score Value	Ranking
CEM010	Greatham Church Yard	83%	High	80%	High
CEM004	West View	78%	High	77%	High
CEM008	Stranton Cemetery	76%	High	63%	Low
CEM005	St Mary Hart	75%	High	80%	High
CEM013	St Peter's Elwick	71%	High	66%	High
CEM003	St Hilda, Hartlepool	68%	High	74%	High
CEM011	Greatham Cemetery	66%	Low	49%	Low
CEM009	Holy Trinity Seaton Carew	63%	Low	49%	Low
CEM007	All SS, Stranton	61%	Low	63%	Low
CEM012	Elwick Cemetery	56%	Low	23%	Low
CEM006	North Cemetery	54%	Low	86%	High
CEM002	Jewish Cemetery	44%	Low	34%	Low

Table 11.10 Quality and value summary

Quality	Value	No. of sites
High	High	5
High	Low	1
Low	High	1
Low	Low	5

In Hartlepool, the median score for quality is 67% and for value, 64%. The site that most closely matches these figures is St Hilda's Churchyard, Headland, which scored 68% for quality and 74% for value, therefore this site has been selected as the benchmark site, setting the target for all burial grounds to aim to reach in the future.

Five sites score above the median for both quality and value; these include the cemetery at West View. Five sites score low for both quality and value. One site, Stranton Cemetery, scored above average for quality (76%) but below average for value (63%), this is explained by the fact that scores for value were generally high in Hartlepool and the cemetery scored relatively less well for both appreciation of nature and for sustainability. One site, North Cemetery, scored below average for quality (54%) and above average for value (86%), as the site is a large, diverse, well landscaped and historically relevant space which has suffered from vandalism and poor maintenance; this suggests that North Cemetery is the site most in need of attention when allocating resources.

Quality and value scores are higher than those in the 2008 report where the median score for quality was 55% and for value 56%. There has been a slight modification of the assessment sheet for the present study. This now includes the extent to which the site provides natural habitats within the quality score and the site's value for the appreciation of nature as part of the overall value score.

11.4.3 Accessibility

Around half of the burial space in the Borough is located in the North Central sub-area, half in the South Central sub-area and very little in the Southern and Western sub-areas. The North Central and Western sub-areas have quite a large number of burial sites; the Southern and South Central areas have fewer.

However, accessibility is less of an issue for burial sites than for other types of site as visits tend to be concentrated on those places where a loved one is laid to rest rather than on one that happens to be nearby. If burial sites represent a significant part of local natural provision then accessibility would be more important, even though this is not the primary purpose of these sites.

11.5 Standards

11.5.1 Quantity

The public consultation does not suggest a significant weakness in the supply of plots, and the audit also indicates a substantial supply of space into the future. However, it is possible to calculate the likely requirement for burial space in the Borough based on current death rates and the proportion of people who choose to bury their loved ones. According to the Cemetery Research Group, approximately 28% of deaths are followed by full body interment, and 40% of these require new graves.

Table 11.11 shows how these percentages, which are reasonably constant over several years, apply in relation to population and mortality in Hartlepool.

Table 11.11 Projected need for burial space up to 2031

Year	Population	Projected deaths per annum	Burials per annum	New graves per annum
2014	92,600	909	255	102
2019	94,000	923	258	103
2024	95,300	936	262	105
2031	96,600	949	266	106

Applying Hartlepool's current death rate of 9.82 deaths per 1,000 population¹⁴⁵ to the population figures now and into the future suggests the progression in demand for grave spaces shown in the table above, assuming population growth as projected by the authority and no change in overall demography, death rates or preference for cremation. The calculation does not take account, however, of faith proportions. Hartlepool has an above-average Roman Catholic adherence and this would tend to increase the requirement for burials, and hence for new graves, perhaps by around 10% above the figures indicated in this calculation.

Quantity standard

Provision for around 115 - 120 grave spaces per annum.

11.5.2 Quality

Public consultation indicates that quality perceptions are reasonable, but with substantial room for improvement especially in some key areas such as care of headstones and plots, and seating. The benchmark site for quality is St Hilda's Church, on the Headland. Other cemeteries and churchyards should be brought to that level as a minimum, and this would make a significant impact on quality perceptions and be likely to address the concerns raised in the consultation.

There is no definitive national quality standard for churchyards and cemeteries at present. English Heritage publishes suggested quality standards in *Paradise Preserved*, but these are more appropriate to cemeteries capable of listing in the English Heritage Register, and a locally derived standard is more appropriate for most sites.

If it has not already done so, the Council should consider adopting the Charter for the Bereaved published by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. This covers a wide range of issues linked to bereavement, including matters focused on the bereaved themselves (procedures, choices, dignity, monuments and inscriptions) and others focused on the responsibilities of the authority (staff, maintenance, ceremonies, equality and cultural differences, and health and safety, for instance). The charter is a very comprehensive document which forms a good basis not only for setting standards in relation to quality, but also wider aspects of the authority's interaction and relationship with the bereaved.

Specifically in relation to quality, the charter expects subscribers to provide

- Grass cutting at least seven times a year, every four weeks from April to October (other than in cemeteries where grass is being allowed to grow freely for habitat purposes) with care taken to avoid damage to stones or tributes
- Weekly removal of litter and of dead wreaths from recent funerals (though not from subsequent visits, which are the responsibility of visitors)
- Accessible water supplies

¹⁴⁵ Source: ONS Mortality Statistics, 2012 (published March 2014)

- Clear paths and walking surfaces that are safe for the elderly and disabled people
- Minimal damage to existing graves, memorials and tributes when preparing adjacent new graves
- A statement of service standards

Quality Standard

The quality standard for cemeteries is 68% for quality and 74% for value.

We also recommend adoption of the Charter for the Bereaved as a means of raising quality standards.

11.5.3 Accessibility

There is no appropriate accessibility standard for cemeteries, although the importance of these places to the elderly and infirm suggests strongly a need to take account of public transport when planning sites, and to provide sites that are reasonably easily accessed in terms of distance, provided with level access into and within the site, and with seating.

12. CIVIC SPACE

12.1 Definition

Civic spaces include civic and market squares and other hard-surfaced community areas designed for pedestrians with the primary purpose of providing a setting for civic buildings, public gatherings and community events.

12.2 Strategic Context

In a survey by the now-defunct Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), 85% of respondents said that they believed that the quality of local public spaces impacted on their quality of life, and that the quality of the built environment directly impacted on the way they felt.

The Companion Guide to PPG17 stated: 'the purpose of civic spaces, mainly in town and city centres, is to provide a setting for civic buildings, and opportunities for open air markets, demonstrations and civic events. They are normally provided on an opportunistic and urban design led basis. Accordingly it is for planning authorities to promote urban design frameworks for their town and city centre areas'. Although this guidance is no longer current, the statement is still a useful summary of the role and purpose of this type of open space.

Civic spaces are an extension of the community. When they work well, they serve as a stage for public life. If they function in their true civic role, they can be the settings where celebrations are held, where social and economic exchanges take place, where people meet, and where cultures mix. They often provide the main entrance to key public buildings. Civic space is that space which encourages people to engage as citizens, sharing common interests in a manner which contributes to the life of the town or city. Good quality civic spaces are recognised and valued in their cities and towns as places with their own special character that relate to the larger community and bring the public together. They enrich the lives of their users and enhance the surrounding buildings and neighbourhood, whilst also contributing to the social, economic, cultural and environmental well being of the community. Their contribution to the public realm goes beyond the visual; they provide a sense of character and a forum for public activities. They can act as focal points for definition and foundations for prosperity. Civic spaces also offer the opportunity for people to relax and enjoy themselves. All of these benefits add up to greater liveability for the community as a whole.

Civic spaces are important to the identity of towns and cities because they are where the people who live and work in a community experience their neighbourhoods and each other. These special places have the capacity to instil a mutual sense of pride and ownership among diverse groups. They also offer a degree of distinctiveness; many such spaces are individual and prominent local features that are part of the character of the locality.

Good quality civic spaces have measurable economic benefits because they can contribute significantly to land values, and can act as a catalyst in revitalising town centres. Providing

places for walking, gathering, and shopping is perhaps the most direct example of how place-making can benefit a city or town economically.

Good quality civic spaces have environmental benefits because they give relief to urban living. They can offer free space for people to encounter art, to enjoy performances, and to participate in other cultural activities. Many spaces offer a meeting point for young people. Increasingly water features offer an opportunity for children to play and families to meet, while cultural events bring a great variety of people together and set the stage for positive social interaction.

12.3 Key findings from consultation

12.3.1 Usage

This table shows how often people in the Borough visit a local civic space.

Table 12.1: Visits to civic space

Frequency of visiting	Proportion of respondents who visit
Every day	5%
Once or twice a week	15%
Two or three times a month	13%
Once a month	9%
Once every two or three months	7%
Once or twice a year	10%
Less often	6%
Never	35%
<i>N</i> (=100%)	1,095

Just one in twenty people make a daily visit to a civic space, but one in five are there at least weekly and two in five (42%) visit this type of space at least once a month. One in three people, though, never visit a civic space at all.

Looking at this issue by sub-area reveals the following:

Table 12.2: Visits to civic space by sub-area

Sub-area	Proportion of respondents	
	visit at least monthly	Never visit
Western	38%	40%
North Central	41%	38%
South Central	47%	33%
Southern	42%	29%
All Hartlepool	42%	35%

Visiting is highest among residents of South Central sub-area, but otherwise is consistent across the remaining sub-areas of the Borough; the proportion who never visit varies more, rising to two in five residents in the Western and North Central Sub-area but falling to less than a third of residents in the Southern sub-area.

Use of civic spaces is highest among younger retired people, those aged 61 -75, half of whom (48%) visit at least monthly. People of all ages use these spaces, but the proportion who never visit is highest among under 30s and over 75s. Men tend to visit a little more often than women, but the difference is not marked. People with disabilities are equally likely to visit as those with no disability, but tend to visit a little more frequently.

12.3.2 Quantity

This table shows people's perceptions of the quantity of civic space:

Table 12.3: Quantity of civic space

Opinion	Proportion of all respondents
Too many	0%
Too few	41%
About right	59%
N(=100%)	794

As with most other types of open space, there are few people in Hartlepool who would argue for less civic space than is already available. Three out of five residents want to see more of this type of space, while two out of five suggest there is already sufficient.

Quantity perceptions break down by sub-area in this way:

Table 12.4: Quantity of civic space by sub-area

Opinion	Western	North central	South central	Southern
Too many	0%	0%	0%	0%
Too few	37%	42%	47%	38%
About right	63%	58%	53%	62%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	189	198	214	189

The demand for more civic space is highest in the South Central sub-area, and to a lesser extent in North central; it is much lower elsewhere in the Borough. Demand is higher among people of working age and only a third (36%) of over 60s, and a quarter (23%) of over 75s say there should be more space of this type. There is no variation of opinion between men and women on this issue.

12.3.3 Quality of civic space

The table below shows how people rate civic space in Hartlepool.

Table 12.5: Quality assessments of civic space

Civic space generally	Proportion of those visiting civic space
Excellent	3%
Good	27%
Average	50%
Below average	12%
Poor	8%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	689

Overall, people are fairly evenly split over civic space; half of those who use it rate it as 'average', and although the proportion who react positively to civic space outweighs those who view it negatively by three to two, the bulk of the rating is nearer to the midpoint than the extremes of this rating.

Ratings of civic spaces are higher in the North Central sub-area (35% positive) and the South Central sub-area (34%) than in the other two areas; less than a quarter (23%) of Southern sub-area residents give them a positive rating, and a similar proportion (25%) of Western sub-area residents evaluate them positively.

Civic space is more highly thought of by older people; positive views are weakest among under 30s and tend to increase with advancing age, with a corresponding reduction in

negative perceptions. A third of over 75s (35%) are positive about civic space (though few think it excellent) in contrast to just over a quarter (27%) of under 30s. Men are a little more negative than women about these spaces; people with disabilities are slightly more positive than those with no disability.

Asked how civic space could be improved, respondents offer these suggestions:

Table 12.6: Improving civic space

Opinion	Proportion of comments
Litter reduction/cleaner	29%
More/better seating	16%
Better market	16%
Pavement maintenance	10%
Reduce dog mess	9%
Safety/ASB reduction	8%
More pedestrian areas	6%
More events/attractions	5%
Environmental improvements	5%
Address disused/empty properties	4%
Other comments	31%
<i>Total no. of comments</i>	<i>329</i>

The largest issue with this type of space is its cleanliness; well over a quarter of all comments refer to litter reduction, the installation of bins, and general cleanliness in civic space. Closely linked to this is the need to tackle dog mess and provide more dog bins, or better enforcement. One in six comments mentions seating, making this the second most mentioned issue on civic space.

There is also significant concern about the market(s), with observations about the need to improve the variety of stalls and traders, the quality of goods sold, and the organisation of the activity.

Pavement maintenance comes in for criticism, with comments on both the quality and safety of paved areas. There is also interest in environmental improvements through better planting, floral displays or trees, and through dealing with disused properties which make pedestrian areas look shabby and downbeat. More general safety concerns focus primarily on anti-social or threatening activity, often by young people, drinkers or drug users.

More events and activities are suggested to create a new and wider audience using these spaces; there are also people looking for better promotion of activities.

A wide variety of other comments includes calls for more toilets, shelter, lighting and catering, and for bans on some activities including cycling, skateboarding, smoking and feeding of pigeons.

12.3.4 Comparison with 2008 study

Use of civic space has risen since 2008; the 44% who never visited in 2008 has fallen to 35% in 2014. Quality assessments are not directly comparable, but indicate a slightly more positive view of these spaces nowadays than previously; cleanliness remains a major challenge, and there is still a demand for more or better seating.

Opinions on quantity have changed, with the proportion seeking more space of this type falling from over half in 2008 to just two fifths in 2014.

12.4 Audit

12.4.1 Quantity

There are seven civic spaces in Hartlepool covering a total of 6.19 hectares. Five of these are in the North Central sub-area and the remaining two are on the seafront in Seaton Carew, in the Southern sub-area. The North Central sub-area has one civic space on the Headland, three in the town centre and one in the Marina area. Although the Southern sub-area has only two civic spaces these are both large spaces, so that the total area of civic space is 3.73 hectares compared with 2.46 hectares in the North Central sub-area. The locations of civic space are shown in **Map 12.1**.

Map 12.1 Location of Civic Space



12.4.2 Quality and Value

The seven sites were assessed for quality and value and the resulting median scores are 83% for quality and 95% for value. These scores represent a considerable uplift from those in the 2008 report when the quality median was 75% and the value median was 83%. Full details of the individual site scores are in **Appendix 12**.

Four civic spaces achieved a high quality ranking and four achieved a high value ranking which is represented by a score at or above the median score.

The site with the quality score at the median level is Victory Square (CIV 007) in the town centre. The value score is above the median at 100%.

The highest scoring sites for both quality and value are Headland Town Square (CIV 002) with 100% for both quality and value and Seaton Promenade (CIV008) with 97% for quality and again a value score of 100%.

The two sites with low scores for both quality and value are Wesley Square (CIV 006) and the front of Seaton Bus Station (CIV 009). There is an issue with car parking at Wesley Square with some of the space set aside for car parking and the front of Seaton Bus Station is lacking in interesting features.

Church Square (CIV 005) is the only civic space with a high value but low quality score indicating that this space could represent a priority for improvement.

12.4 Standards

No quantity standard is proposed for Civic Space. The proposed quality standard is 83% which is represented by CIV 007, Victory Square.

Quality standard

A quality score of 83%

13. OUTDOOR SPORT

13.1 Introduction

The Hartlepool Borough Playing Pitch Strategy¹⁴⁶ was adopted in 2013. The strategy considered the adequacy of provision to meet current and projected need for the key pitch sports of football, cricket, rugby and hockey, and also evaluated the adequacy of provision for facilities for tennis and bowls.

Given that the evidence that underpins this strategy has been recently assembled, this section will draw on the main findings of the assessment to provide a summary of the position regarding outdoor sports provision.

The strategy has been developed to:

- inform decision making on the need for new and enhanced pitch and outdoor sports provision both now and in the future;
- help to maximise the use of existing resources, including school facilities, to meet community need and to address any projected deficiencies;
- inform Local Plan policies and facilitate decision making on the re-provision, protection and disposal of playing fields;
- ensure the provision of high quality opportunities to participate in outdoor sport;
- sustain outdoor sports facilities in the context of a challenging financial environment; and
- support applications for external funding opportunities that arise.

13.1.1 Strategic Vision

The strategy sets out how the Council and its delivery partners will work to create;

'An accessible, high quality and sustainable network of sports pitches and other outdoor sports facilities, which provides local opportunities for participation at all levels of play from grassroots to elite'.

13.1.2 Objectives

To achieve this strategic vision for outdoor sports facilities in Hartlepool, the strategy seeks to make sure that the following objectives are met;

- Ensure that the quantity of pitches is sufficient to meet current and future need;
- Ensure that the quality of pitches meets current and future need; and
- Support initiatives to increase participation and promote sustainable club development.

¹⁴⁶ Hartlepool Borough Playing Pitch Strategy December 2012

The recommendations and related actions are derived from the following principles:

- Quality and specification of facilities is as important as the amount of provision – the strategy seeks to ensure the right amount of facilities of the right quality and specification are available
- Pitch and outdoor sport provision across the Borough will be delivered in partnership.
- Sustainability of provision and of the clubs using these facilities is central to the success of playing fields in the Borough

13.1.3 Methodology

The methodology used in the development of the strategy was 'Towards a Level Playing Field: A Manual for the Production of a Playing Pitch Strategy' (Sport England, 2003) (TaLPPF). The key stages of this methodology cover the issues of supply and demand as well as analysis of the adequacy of provision. Finally, issues and solutions are analysed. The study analyses demand and supply for Hartlepool as a whole and does not examine any sub-areas.

Demand

The assessment of demand required a full audit of teams playing or wishing to play within Hartlepool Borough.. Consultations were undertaken with all outdoor sport clubs. A high proportion of teams within the Borough responded as shown in **Table 13.1** below.

Table 13.1: Response rates of clubs to questionnaire surveys

Sport	Response rate
Football	72%
Cricket	95%
Rugby Union	100%
Hockey	100%
Tennis	100%
Bowls	74%

Supply

A full audit of the supply of all sports pitches in the Borough was undertaken. This included undertaking site visits to make an assessment of quality. The location of the outdoor sports sites is shown in **Map 13.1**.

Map 13.1 **Location of Outdoor Sports facilities**

Map to follow

13.2 Football

13.2.1 Pitch Supply

There are 105 individual formal grass football pitches across Hartlepool Borough. This figure includes all known public, private, school and other pitches whether or not they are in secured community use. These pitches comprise:

- 46 adult football pitches
- 36 junior football pitches
- 23 mini soccer pitches.

Since 2004 when the previous playing pitch strategy was compiled, the overall number of pitches has increased, with greater numbers of mini and junior football pitches than there were at that time. This is due to the reconfiguration of existing pitch sites, and marking out of additional pitches on existing sites rather than the creation of new playing fields.

Not all pitches however are accessible for community use; 61% of pitches are in secured community use, while a further 18% of pitches are accessible to the community although they provide unsecured access. Almost all pitches that are not available for community use are situated at school sites.

13.2.2 Pitch Ownership

The majority of pitches are in Hartlepool Borough Council ownership, either through the parks department or education. Details of ownership are shown in **Table 13.2**.

Table 13.2: Ownership of Football Pitches across Hartlepool Borough

Ownership	All Pitches			Secured Community Use		
	Nr of adult football pitches	Nr of junior football pitches	Nr of mini football pitches	Nr of adult football pitches	Nr of junior football pitches	Nr of mini football pitches
Local Authority	22	5	9	22	5	9
Education	18	28	8	9	6	1
Other Education	2	0	0	0	0	0
Parish Council	0	0	0	0	0	0
Voluntary Sector	2	2	6	2	2	6
Private/Corporate	2	1	0	1	1	0
Total	46	36	23	34	14	16

Location and Distribution of Pitches

Map 13.2 illustrates the location of all football pitches in the Borough, demonstrating the location of facilities that are available for community use. It indicates that sites are relatively

evenly dispersed although, as may be expected, there are very few sites in the more rural parts of the Borough. Sites offering unsecured use and no access are also evenly dispersed, with no clusters of inaccessible facilities in any part of the Borough.

The 64 pitches (mini, junior and adult) that are available for formal community use within the district are located at 18 sites of varying size. Four sites contain 5 or more football pitches (Rift House Recreation Ground, Grayfields, Manor College of Technology and Brierton Sports Centre).

Map 13.2: Playing Pitches

Map to Follow.

13.2.3 Quality of football pitches and facilities

Pitch quality influences the amount of matches that can be sustained, and as a consequence has a significant impact on the overall adequacy of supply. In general, the site visits undertaken reveal that the quality of football pitches is relatively similar to that achieved when pitches were assessed as part of the PPG17 study in 2008.

While there has clearly been investment into pavilions and changing facilities on some sites, there are several sites where the quality of ancillary facilities is either poor or non-existent. On some sites with changing facilities, there are not enough changing rooms for the number of pitches on site.

A high proportion of the sites are open and accommodate casual and informal use as well as competitive fixtures. As a consequence, dog fouling and litter were identified as problematic at some facilities and there was evidence of damage to the surface on some sites. Several pitches demonstrated excessive wear and tear.

13.2.4 Independent Site Visits

Hartlepool Borough Council commissioned independent site visits by specialist agronomists who found that

- grass coverage and condition of pitches is good given the levels of usage that some sites receive;
- confirmation that the maintenance programmes in place, specifically routine aeration, light rolling and topdressing ensure that pitches outperform the standards that would be expected for public use;
- the view that the surfaces levels are uniform and lines are clearly marked in high definition; and
- pitches at Central Park are poorer than other pitches – although in generally good condition the grass sward was not as healthy as other pitches.

13.2.5 School Playing Fields

Site visits were undertaken to a random sample of school playing fields in order to measure the quality of facilities in comparison to the public pitches and also to provide some context to the results of the school survey, in which schools were asked to evaluate their own facilities. In general, site visits revealed that:

- most school facilities are of higher quality than public pitches and there is less variation in the quality of the pitches.
- grass cover is a key issue and there are also issues with the length of grass at some sites. Line markings are much poorer than at public pitches; and
- there are some issues with informal use on some sites. There is clear scope to mark out additional pitches at some schools.

Few schools operate formal community use agreements and there is relatively limited community use of school facilities outside of the larger secondary schools with only three primary schools indicating that their facilities are regularly used.

Six schools indicated that their facilities are available now but are not used. For the remainder that would not, the key reasons were the impact that the additional use would have on the quality of the facilities and / or the perceived security risks associated with opening up facilities.

A separate comprehensive assessment of the quality of outdoor sports facilities in schools was undertaken for this study and the findings are reported in **Section 14**.

13.2.6 Club Perceptions of Quality

All clubs responding to the consultation process were asked to rate the quality of pitches that they use against a variety of criteria. Overall, clubs indicated that the quality of provision is acceptable. For changing facilities, there is a clear split between those who consider provision to be good and those that rate it poorly, reflecting the varying quality of facilities that are provided.

However, teams using club based pitches such as Seaton Carew (Hornby Park) and Rossmere Way Sports Pitches (St Francis 2000) are more satisfied with pitch quality than those using Council and school venues.

13.2.7 Demand

Football is the most popular sport in Hartlepool Borough. Since 2004, there has been significant growth in mini soccer, whilst the number of adult football teams has marginally declined. This is in line with national trends. The number of junior male teams has also declined.

13.2.8 Consultation Findings

Consultations with clubs revealed the following:

- Just under 50% of respondents are currently happy with the overall pitch stock in Hartlepool Borough. For those that are not satisfied, quality of pitches and changing facilities is the main issue raised for adult teams. Several junior clubs stated that access to appropriate pitches of the right size is the reason behind their dissatisfaction, as well as the overall quality of pitches.
- Eight clubs indicate that the poor quality of the existing pitch stock has impacted upon team / club development.
- Cost of pitch hire is also provided as a reason for overall dissatisfaction by several clubs and some clubs indicate that this has caused teams to disband.
- Only five clubs report difficulties accessing facilities for matches. The same teams also highlight issues with sourcing training facilities, with a lack of pitches with floodlights highlighted as a key issue. The cost of using training facilities is also referenced as problematic.

For all clubs, barriers to increasing participation were:

- A lack of junior pitches of appropriate size and quality
- The cost of participating
- A lack of internal fundraising
- Shortages of indoor training facilities
- A lack of external grants
- Shortage of and poor quality changing facilities.

13.2.9 The FA - National Governing Body Perspective

The Durham County FA has seen a 10% decline in participation in adult football between season 2010 – 2011 and 2011 – 2012. This is attributed to the wide variety of other opportunities that are available to potential players, as well as the closure of several pubs, many of who previously sponsored teams. The cost of participating is also becoming a growing issue, with both a decline in sponsorship and a rise in unemployment hitting teams.

Reducing the drop off in the transition between adult and junior teams is viewed as a key priority of the FA. The FA is also keen to improve the transition from mini to junior football and the need to adopt to the new methods of play are emphasised.

In addition to issues with the amount of pitches, the FA highlights the importance of ensuring that the quality of facilities is adequate to meet demand, and indicates that there are several pitches of relatively poor quality in Hartlepool and that the quality of the overall stock is low. There is a need to improve both the quality of pitches and the associated changing provision.

Table 13.3 – Adequacy of Football Pitch Provision in Hartlepool

			Football	Mini-soccer	
STAGE ONE Identifying teams		Adult games	75	26	
		Junior teams	55		
STAGE ONE Identifying teams		Adult games	0.5	0.5	
		Junior teams	0.5		
STAGE ONE Identifying teams		Adult games	38	13	
		Junior teams	28		
STAGE FOUR Establish temporal demand for pitches	Saturday AM	Adult games	7%	17%	
		Junior teams	9%		
	Saturday PM	Adult games	26%	0%	
		Junior teams	0%		
	Sunday AM	Adult games	46%	13%	
		Junior teams	61%		
	Sunday PM	Adult games	9%	70%	
		Junior teams	30%		
	Mid Week	Adult games	12%	0%	
		Junior teams	0%		
	STAGE FIVE Defining pitches used each day	Saturday AM	Adult games	3	2
			Junior teams	2	
Saturday PM		Adult games	10	0	
		Junior teams	0		
Sunday AM		Adult games	17	2	
		Junior teams	17		
Sunday PM		Adult games	3	9	
		Junior teams	8		
Mid Week		Adult games	5	0	
		Junior teams	0		
STAGE SIX Establishing pitches currently available		Adult games	34	16	
		Junior teams	14		
STAGE SEVEN identifying shortfall(-) and surplus (+)	Saturday AM	Adult games	31.4	13.8	
		Junior teams	14.		
	Saturday PM	Adult games	31.4	16.0	
		Junior teams	14.0		
	Sunday AM	Adult games	16.8	14.3	
		Junior teams	-2.8		
	Sunday PM	Adult games	30.6	6.9	

		Junior teams	5.8	
	Mid Week	Adult games	29.5	16.0
		Junior teams	14.0	

13.2.12 Supply and Demand Modelling

The Playing Pitch Model (PPM) is a peak day model, which determines the adequacy of pitch supply to meet peak time demand. In Hartlepool, the ability of pitches to meet peak time demand is particularly significant, as there is a strong emphasis on Sunday football with this being peak time for all forms of football – mini, junior and senior football. Circa 60% of junior football and nearly 50% of adult competitive football takes place on a Sunday morning. The majority of mini soccer also takes place on a Sunday, but during the afternoon.

Table 13.3 summarises the application of the PPM. It demonstrates that there are just enough football pitches to meet demand at peak times. There are small surpluses of adult football pitches and the amount of mini and junior pitches is also in balance with demand. These figures represent a baseline figure only and do not take into account the need to rest, recover and rotate pitches.

In the short term future the number of teams will decline as the proportion of people in age groups likely to participate decreases. In the longer term, this will increase again as population grows and the number of people in the relevant age group increases.

It is concluded that there is likely to be little change in the adequacy of provision in the coming years, and that taking into account population growth only, current participation is a relatively good indicator of future demand.

13.3 Cricket

13.3.1 Supply

There are only six cricket pitches in Hartlepool Borough. High Tunstall College of Science is the only school to provide a cricket wicket. This is an artificial wicket and is not accessible for community use.

Two club bases are located south of the town, while Hartlepool CC is more centrally located.

13.3.2 Current Participation

Cricket in Hartlepool has remained static between 2004 to 2012, with 18 teams playing both now and in 2004. The number of junior teams playing has actually declined marginally while the amount of adult teams has risen by one. All but one club indicates that participation has remained consistent with last year.

While the overall amount of teams has remained constant, there is a small decline in the number of teams playing more informal cricket while the number of teams run by the two larger clubs has grown.

13.3.3 Quality of Cricket Pitches

Pitch quality has a significant impact on the overall adequacy of supply, particularly for cricket where poor quality pitches can detract significantly from the playing experience.

The non technical site assessment matrix is of more limited value for cricket than for other sports. It does not assess the way that the pitch plays and provides only an overview of pitch quality.

Site visits indicate that there is a disparity in the quality of provision, with the grounds leased by clubs – Hartlepool Cricket Club and Seaton Cricket Club - being of a particularly high standard in comparison to other facilities. Both of these sites had recently benefitted from funding and they also contained artificial wickets and practice nets. These sites score 92% and 89% respectively. In general, site assessments reveal the following;

- The quality of both grass and artificial wickets is higher at the private grounds.
- With the exception of Hartlepool Cricket Club, all sites are easily accessible and are therefore subject to informal recreational use.
- The evenness of the pitch and wicket surface is identified as the key issue for cricket pitches. The quality of the surface at Grayfields in particular was identified as poor and the facility at Hartlepool Power Station was also poor, appearing to receive little use.
- While all clubs have access to changing accommodation, it is noticeable that the quality of this is varying. In particular, considering the quality of the ground at Hartlepool Cricket Club, the quality of changing facilities is poor.

13.3.4 Club Opinion on Quality

Responses suggest that;

- grounds are reasonably well equipped, with all clubs having access to facilities including a club house, sight screens and portable covers. Only Grayfields lacks these facilities; and
- overall, clubs perceive the quality of cricket pitches to be reasonably good with only Paragonians CC, who use Grayfields rating the overall pitch quality as poor.

13.3.5 Consultations

Consultation with cricket clubs demonstrated that:

- with the exception of Paragonians CC, all clubs responding to the questionnaire are happy with the overall supply of cricket facilities in the Borough.;

- the majority of cricket clubs have a relatively wide catchment area. Between 15% and 30% of each clubs' membership travel for five miles or greater to reach the home ground.
- three of the clubs indicate that they wish to run more teams; and
- with regards other issues impacting upon development, a shortage of internal / external funding was highlighted as being a key issue for clubs, while difficulties recruiting coaches and volunteers are also experienced by clubs.

13.3.6 National Governing Body perspective – English Cricket Board (ECB) / Durham County Cricket Board

Local targets currently focus on increasing the number of adults participating in cricket and in reducing the drop out associated with the transition between junior and senior cricket. In order to increase participation, a range of initiatives are currently underway in Hartlepool, specifically;

- Engagement with Hartlepool College of Further Education – The college is currently benefitting from the Cricket Activators programme, where students are provided with equipment to organise informal cricket (termed Easy Cricket) related activities at the college site to introduce / reintroduce students into the game. In the next couple of years it is hoped that a cricket academy will be created at the site.
- Softball cricket – the Durham Cricket Board is investigating opportunities to create a softball cricket league – the league would encourage more informal participation and would become a shorter form of the game.
- Inter school competition – there is a network of interschool competitions set up across the Borough.
- Coaching in schools – through both the Chance to Shine programme,
- School club links – both High Tunstall School and Manor College of Technology enter teams in formal cricket competitions and use facilities at Hartlepool CC and Seaton Carew as a base.

13.3.7 Supply and Demand Modelling

The PPM indicates that overall, there are sufficient pitches to accommodate demand, a broadly similar situation to that found in 2004. This is helped by the spread of play across the week, with 33% of cricket taking place on a Saturday afternoon, 22% on Sunday morning and 28% on Sunday afternoon (remainder midweek). This means that demand at peak time is comparatively low and can therefore be accommodated within the existing stock of facilities.

13.3.8 Meeting Future Demand

Analysis demonstrates that in the short term the number of teams will decline as the proportion of people in age groups likely to participate decreases. Longer term, this will

increase again as population grows and the number of people in the relevant age group increases.

13.4 Rugby

13.4.1 Pitch Supply

There are 18 rugby union pitches within Hartlepool Borough. Of these, five are located at school sites that have limited or no community use. Although English Martyrs School permits community use currently, there is no secured access to the site.

13.4.2 Current Participation

There are six rugby clubs based within Hartlepool Borough, which represents a decline on the number of clubs since 2004.

In terms of the overall number of teams playing, this has remained relatively static, with 40 teams in 2004 compared to 41 teams in 2013. It is clear that while some clubs have thrived and grown the numbers of teams that they are running, others are struggling.

13.4.3 Quality of Rugby Pitches

Site assessments reveal that overall, the quality of rugby pitches is better than the quality of other types of pitch in the Borough. No pitches are rated as excellent, however only four pitches were assessed as average and the remainder were considered good. Pitches achieving the highest overall scores are as follows:

- Seaton Carew RFC – Seaton Carew Sports and Social Club – 88% and 91%
- West Hartlepool RFC – highest quality pitch - 91%.

The poorest quality club based facility at the time of site visits was Hartlepool RFC with one pitch achieving a score of 63%.

Key issues for rugby pitches in the Borough are the availability of training facilities, the grass cover and length of pitches and issues caused by unofficial use, including litter and dog fouling.

The majority of pitches are supported by changing facilities. Pitches at Central Park are the only exception to this. While the secondary schools that have playing fields contain changing facilities, it is also questionable whether these facilities are available for use when pitches are used outside of curricular hours.

13.4.4 Club's views on quality

Clubs were also asked to comment upon the quality of the rugby facilities that are available to them. Key issues were:

- West Hartlepool TDSOB - Pitch evenness and drainage identified as the areas most in need of improvement.
- Hartlepool RUFC - Evenness of pitch is only acceptable. Some issues with litter are also identified. The quality of maintenance is rated as good.
- Hartlepool Rovers RUFC –Changing facilities are inadequate for disabled users. The quality of pitches is considered to be acceptable overall, however the drainage is identified as being poor (natural drainage only) and pitches are considered to suffer from overuse.
- Hartlepool BBOB – concerned about openness of the facilities which means that litter and dog fouling are both identified as being significant problems.
- West Hartlepool RFC –The club house is identified as a key area for improvement as the facilities are very old and falling into disrepair. In addition, the club indicates that drainage on the main pitch is poor although the majority of the site is well drained. The amount of litter and dog fouling that the pitches are subjected to is poor but the overall condition of the pitches is considered to be acceptable. The provision of a new club house and changing accommodation is identified as a key priority of the club.
- Seaton Carew RFC -. Improvements to the evenness of the pitches and the requirement for top dressing is identified as a key priority. The quality of maintenance of the pitches is rated as poor and there are no floodlights on site. Toilets are inadequate for disabled users. The club indicates that the refurbishment of the club house and changing areas is essential if they are to attract more members and highlights the quality of facilities as one of the reasons why the club are dissatisfied with the overall stock of pitches for rugby in the Borough.

13.4.5 National Governing Body perspective

Rugby union is a very popular sport in Hartlepool and there have been significant efforts put in to increasing participation by the National Governing Body in partnership with clubs, the Council and key providers. Increasing participation in rugby by teenagers, with a particular focus on retaining players during the transition between junior and senior rugby is a key priority of the RFU.

Key issues raised in relation to the current stock of facilities in the Borough include;

- Several clubs have inadequate changing and ancillary facilities.
- While most clubs have sufficient capacity within their club sites, one club (Hartlepool Rovers RFC) requires a new facility to ensure that facilities do not inhibit participation.
- It is essential to maximise knowledge and understanding relating to club sustainability and the maintenance of facilities.

13.4.6 Supply and Demand Modelling

There are enough rugby pitches in the Borough to meet peak time demand.

13.4.7 The Impact of Pitch Quality and Capacity

Site visits and consultation confirm that the overall quality of pitches across Hartlepool is good. While there are some localised issues identified, there are no qualitative issues that would prevent pitches from sustaining at least two games per week.

13.4.8 Meeting Future Demand

The trend towards an ageing population means that the population falling within the age bands most likely to play rugby will remain relatively stable, with changes to the number of teams being as follows;

- By 2017, there will be a slight decline in both adult and junior rugby, and midi rugby will remain constant.
- By 2022, adult rugby participation will increase (but still below current levels) while midi rugby remains constant. Junior participation will return to current levels.

This will have limited implications on demand for pitches.

13.5 Hockey

13.5.1 Pitch Supply

Two of the four full sized AGPs are sand based and are suitable for hockey.

13.5.2 Quality

The quality of the sand based AGPs in Hartlepool Borough is good, although both surfaces are over five years old, meaning that replacement will be needed in the medium term.

While the physical quality of both pitches is considered acceptable, the lack of floodlights at St Hild's School is raised as a key issue and inhibits the use of the facility outside of school hours. The facility at St Hild's is considered to be a higher quality facility than English Martyrs, but the lack of floodlights at the site makes extracurricular usage challenging.

13.5.3 Demand

Hartlepool Caledonians Hockey Club

Hartlepool Caledonians Hockey Club is the only club within the Borough Council boundaries. The club has 2 male teams, 2 female teams and a mixed youth team. Both male teams and the junior team play in the North East Hockey league, while the female team plays within the Durham Clubs league. Participation has increased since 2012, with the junior team created following development of the junior section of the club.

The club uses English Martyrs School as the home pitch and this site is used for both training and matches. They will move to St Hilds School in April as the facility is perceived to

be of higher quality. 30% of club members live within a mile of the home ground, while an additional 48% live within 1 and 5 miles. This suggests that the majority of players reside within the Borough.

The club indicates that, while the quality of pitches is acceptable, the value for money of the facility is low and the pitch is one of the most expensive in the North East. The cost of pitches considered to be a key barrier to participation.

While there have been few issues with accessing pitches for matches, the club highlights issues gaining access to the pitch for training. Floodlights are essential for the club to train and of the two sand based pitches that are suitable for hockey, only one (English Martyrs) has floodlights.

The club is concerned about the conversion of further AGPs to 3G pitches, highlighting the need to ensure that floodlit sand based pitches are retained for hockey. Along with the cost of pitch hire, the availability of appropriate pitches is identified as the key issue for the club.

13.5.4 National Governing Body Perspective

Hartlepool Caledonians have access to two sand based facilities, the quality of which is described as good. The facilities do not however meet the clubs needs as only one site is floodlit. The Club, supported by EH, is keen to develop links with St Hilds School with the overall aim of growing the junior section of the club, as well as ensuring the long term sustainability of the adult section.

EH would support a request from the club for floodlights at St Hilds if these facilities could then be used as a catalyst for club growth.

13.5.5 Supply and Demand Modelling

The Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM) models the adequacy of existing AGP provision. The key messages arising from the FPM are as follows;

- Hartlepool has 4 AGPs across 4 sites however when the availability of facilities across peak hours is factored in, the Borough enjoys the equivalent of 2.1 pitches working at capacity.
- Hartlepool's AGPs are able to accommodate 1565 visits per week in the peak period.
- Hartlepool residents enjoy 0.43 pitches per 10,000 population. This figure compares favourably to the national average of 0.34, and the regional average of 0.31. Active Places Power lists those Local Authorities which the ONS considers to be similar to Hartlepool in socio-economic terms. The level of provision in those local authorities is;
 - Redcar and Cleveland – 0.2 pitches per 10,000
 - Middlesbrough – 0.3 pitches per 10,000
 - Sunderland – 0.3 pitches per 10,000
 - Barnsley – 0.3 pitches per 10,000

- Using established usership parameters, Hartlepool's population would generate a demand for 2105 visits per week in the peak period. In physical terms this equates to 2.84 pitches to accommodate all the peak time demand
- Comparing peak time demand with peak time supply suggests that there is a shortfall of 0.73 pitches in Hartlepool.
- 84.3% of AGP demand in Hartlepool is considered to be met. This figure is higher than both the national (79.9%) and regional (81.7%) averages. Notably, levels of access to a car are lower in Hartlepool than the national average, and this is borne out by the fact that a high percentage of AGP users walk to the facility.
- Not all demand for AGP use arising from Hartlepool residents is satisfied within the town. Nearly 25% of all demand satisfied is met by facilities in adjacent local authority areas.

13.5.6 Demand and Supply Modelling

On the basis that each pitch can take 3 matches per day, the requirements of Hartlepool Caledonians Hockey Club can currently be accommodated at one sand based pitch assuming that fixtures are scheduled flexibly, allowing more than one fixture to take place at peak time.

13.5.7 Meeting Future Demand

The ageing population means that the population falling within the age bands most likely to play hockey will remain relatively stable. Detailed analysis indicates that participation in all age groups is likely to remain stable by 2027.

13.6 Bowls

13.6.1 Supply

The outdoor bowls venues across Hartlepool Borough are set out in **Table 13.4**. There is also an indoor bowls centre located in the town centre which has an eight rink bowling green and a bar, meeting room and conferencing area. **Table 13.4** illustrates that bowling greens are clearly concentrated in just five wards mainly in the central parts of Hartlepool.

Table 13.4: Bowling Greens

Facility	Number of Greens	Ward	Ownership
South Durham	1	Burn Valley	Club
Lower Burn Valley / Blakelock Gardens	1	Burn Valley	Hartlepool Borough Council
Brinkburn	2	Burn Valley	Hartlepool Borough Council
Grayfields	2	Jesmond	Hartlepool Borough Council
Ward Jackson Park	1	Victoria	Hartlepool Borough Council
Eldon Grove	1	Burn Valley	Bowls and Tennis Club
Owton Lodge	1	Seaton	Club
Seaton Park	1	Seaton	Hartlepool Borough Council
Town Moor	1	Headland & Harbour	Hartlepool Borough Council
Friar Terrace	1	Headland & Harbour	Hartlepool Borough Council

There are three sites containing two rinks, specifically Brinkburn, Grayfields and Ward Jackson Park. All sites also have a pavilion, although these are in varying condition.

13.6.2 Quality of Facilities

Key issues with the quality of existing playing and ancillary facilities include:

- the quality of pavilions is a key issue for many bowling greens across the Borough with opportunities to improve the facilities for players and spectators at many of the greens. Pavilions at Friar Terrace and Town Moor are particularly poor and the pavilion at Grayfields is only a temporary venue;
- grass cover was good on the majority of greens, although this can be attributed to the time of year that the site visits were undertaken. Even out of season, some greens were identified as lacking in grass cover and showing evidence of weeds. These included Town Moor and Blacklock Gardens.
- the condition of the surrounds of most of the greens was acceptable, although there is some evidence of a need to improve paths.

13.6.3 Current Participation

The Hartlepool Bowls Association believes that participation has declined marginally over the years. Most current participants are ageing and for the majority of people, the social element of participating in the sport is as important as the competitive element of the activity.

While some efforts have been made to attract younger players into the game, including the delivery of bowls in schools, there has been relatively little success with this. Although some younger players have been attracted to the sport to play with family members, this usually

drops off by the time the player reaches high school and experiences other types of sport and activities.

It is considered that bowls is a relatively accessible sport, with costs to play remaining low. This ensures that retired residents are able to participate.

The Hartlepool Bowls Association identifies the quality of facilities as the key issue for bowls in the town. While facilities were highly rated fifteen years ago, it is felt that the greens have deteriorated and are no longer of top quality. This decline is attributed to a lack of appropriate maintenance (and a lack of consistency) of the greens. Most Council staff are not specialist green keepers and do not have the extensive technical knowledge required to carry out effective out of season maintenance.

Historically, bowling greens have also suffered from vandalism and graffiti. This has reduced recently due to the installation of new metal fencing.

Adding to issues relating to the quality of the greens, the pavilions associated with greens are largely considered to be poor with most sites ageing and in need of modernisation. Pavilions that are particularly poor include:

- Grayfields (temporary porta cabin);
- Burn Valley – very old facility;
- Friar Terrace;
- Town Moor.

All existing sites are well used and there are several clubs / teams operating out of each facility. The high levels of use accommodated at each green can be attributed to the flexibility of the association and the clubs with regards the timing of fixtures.

13.6.4 Consultation

Consultation with clubs revealed that;

- of the clubs who responded to the questionnaire, the average membership of the club is 36 players. Moor Bowling Club and Eldon Grove Bowling Club are the largest clubs, both with more than 90 players.
- there are few if any junior players (under 16). Of the responding clubs, only 8 junior players are registered and five of these players are based at Stranton Bowling Club.
- with the exception of Catholic BC, all clubs indicate that they have capacity to accommodate additional members. Of the respondents, 45% indicate that they are actively trying to increase membership.

Clubs highlight that falling membership along with the quality of the greens are the main barriers to growth of bowling in the Borough.

Most clubs are relatively dissatisfied with the overall quality of facilities. Several clubs make general comments about the quality of maintenance at greens, the deteriorating quality of greens and the need to improve facilities. Only 22% of clubs indicate that they are satisfied with the overall provision of greens in the Borough.

Specific comments made relating to the above features of a bowling green highlight the importance of providing appropriate toilets and changing facilities, particularly given that in general, bowlers are ageing. The need for appropriate storage facilities is also referenced and it is felt that the majority of greens do not have this.

13.6.5 Accessibility

Consultation with bowling clubs reveals that most members choose clubs relatively close to their home, with only four clubs indicating that they have members that travel more than 5 miles to reach their home green. Nearly 80% of players travel between 1 and five miles to reach their bowling green and the majority of the remainder travel less than one mile.

The Hartlepool Borough Council PPG17 study sets a standard of 1000m for bowling greens. It is clear that there are some parts of the borough are outside of this catchment. It can be seen that while the majority of bowling greens are located centrally in a cluster, the spread of other facilities means that many residents are within 1km of a bowling green.

13.6.6 Meeting Current and Future Demand

The 2008 PPG17 for Hartlepool Borough sets a standard of 0.03ha of bowling greens per 1000 population. Provision at that time was below the standard, with a shortfall equivalent to 1 green. The number of greens has since decreased by one and population has grown marginally. The quantity of facilities is therefore below the standard set in the PPG17 study by 2 greens.

Current participation in bowls is high, although there is no evidence of increasing membership in clubs in recent years and there is limited latent demand. While greens are relatively heavily used, all clubs indicate that they have capacity for additional members, and the Hartlepool Bowls Association suggests that there is scope to accommodate additional teams on existing greens.

Despite quantity standards suggesting that there is a requirement for additional greens, analysis of capacity of existing facilities suggests that while greens are heavily used, all but one club has capacity for additional members, and there is scope to accommodate additional teams on some current greens. This requires flexible use of the facilities through careful programming of fixtures but ensures that maximum value is gained from the greens.

Although there is sufficient capacity currently, the ageing population suggests that the number of people who may have the propensity to participate in bowls is likely to grow in future years. Future participation in bowls is only likely to grow significantly however if a more aggressive approach to recruitment is taken by clubs and governing bodies. There is little marketing of existing opportunities outside of word of mouth currently.

13.7 Tennis

13.7.1 Supply

45 courts are available across Hartlepool Borough and are in a variety of ownerships. 40% of courts are located at school sites and 27% are in club ownership. With the exception of the court managed by Greatham Sports Association, the remainder of the sites are owned and managed by Hartlepool Borough Council.

13.7.2 Current Participation - Clubs

There are two tennis clubs in Hartlepool Borough, specifically;

- *Eldon Grove Tennis Club* is the largest tennis club in the Borough and has achieved club mark accreditation. They have circa 200 members and of these, just over 120 are junior members. The club is running 3 adult male teams, 2 adult female teams, 2 mixed teams and a veterans team. They also run several teams for juniors. The number of teams has increased over the past five years.
- *Hartlepool Tennis Club* runs three teams – a male team, a female team and a mixed team. The club has 56 members of which 46 are adult members. According to data held by the LTA, there has been a decline in membership over the past few seasons.

13.7.3 Quality of Provision

Key issues with the quality of existing playing and ancillary facilities are:

- overall, the playing surface is reasonable at most sites in the Borough. The surface of most public facilities is however clearly lower than the quality of club based sites;
- storage is a key issue at most sites;
- the only floodlit tennis courts in the Borough are located at Brierton Sports Centre. Only the private tennis clubs – Hartlepool TC and Eldon Grove TC - have pavilions.

13.7.4 Consultation

Both clubs own and manage their own facilities. The key issues identified with regards facilities are as follows:

- Eldon Grove Tennis Club – facilities overall are good - three of the tennis courts were refurbished in 2009 while the others were newly created in 2010. There are issues with the changing and the club highlights the need for floodlighting at the site to ensure that activity can be sustained into the evening.

- Hartlepool Tennis Club –facilities are rated poorer than Eldon Grove Tennis Club. They consider the facilities to be only acceptable, and the showers are poor. The club highlights the need to improve three courts and replace two.

13.7.5 Accessibility

The majority of players travel between 1 and 5 miles and between 15% and 20% of the membership of each club travels less than this.

The Hartlepool Borough Council PPG17 study sets a standard of 1000m for tennis courts. While most residents are within 1km of at least one tennis court, there are clusters of residents to the east of the borough in particular that are further than 1km away from a court. Circa 25,000 residents are outside of the 1km catchment of a tennis court.

The two tennis clubs are located in close proximity to each other and therefore serve similar catchments.

13.7.6 National Governing Body Perspective – Lawn Tennis Association

Within Hartlepool Eldon Grove LTC has seen significant expansion in recent years and has a wide base of membership. The club has achieved club mark accreditation, meaning that the ongoing growth and sustainability of the club is a particular priority of the LTA. The LTA has provided funding to the club to support the creation of four additional courts.

When looking at participation in Hartlepool compared to the region of the whole, just over 1% of adult members of clubs in Durham and Cleveland are affiliated to a club in Hartlepool and 4% of juniors. It must however be noted that these figures include indoor tennis clubs that can skew figures significantly. A lack of floodlighting at both venues does however impact upon the ability of the clubs to sustain play.

The key priorities for tennis in Hartlepool are considered to be:

- floodlighting at Eldon Grove TC to ensure the ongoing sustainability at the club. The club currently has to train indoors during the winter months which does not facilitate club development;
- investigation into opportunities to encourage better use of Council facilities (for example Brierton Sports Centre)– linked to the Beacon Status programme provided by the LTA.
- ongoing support for existing clubs to grow and sustain their membership base; and
- creation of school club links – possibly linked to the Tony Blair Sports Foundation.

13.7.7 Adequacy of Current Provision and Meeting Future Demand

With regards the adequacy of provision in quantitative terms, provision in the central areas of the Borough is much higher than in other areas. Active People surveys show that across the Borough, 1202 people currently participate in tennis and a further 1503 would like to play. This indicates that there is potentially quite a lot of latent demand currently and that there is an overall potential tennis playing population of 2705. Previous LTA standards have

suggested a quantity of one court per 45 participants as being sufficient. Applying this to the estimated current and future demand this would therefore indicate that current provision is more than sufficient to meet current demand – with 45 courts and 1202 participants, there are only 25 players per court if all courts were open to the community. When discounting facilities that are not available, provision becomes more closely matched with estimated demand. In future, if all existing latent demand were to be realised, provision would fall below 1 court per 45 players. While population growth is likely to occur, the impact of the ageing population suggests that demand will remain static.

With regard to accessibility, all residents have access to a pay and play tennis court within 10 minutes of their home. However, not all residents have access to a club mark accredited facility within a ten minute drivetime of their home.

While overall there are sufficient courts, there are some quality issues that need to be addressed, specifically resurfacing at several sites and provision of floodlights at club sites. Also new changing facilities are required at Eldon Grove Tennis Club.

13.8 Local Standards

Local standards can be used to determine the requirements of new developments, as well as to evaluate improvements required to the existing facility stock. They provide an indication as to the amount of provision that is expected in the area.

The population growth that is forecast in the Borough means that ensuring appropriate contributions from new developments towards outdoor sports facilities will be essential if the facility stock is to meet local need in terms of both quality and quantity.

It is recommended that local standards should include:

- quantitative elements (how much new provision may be needed);
- a qualitative component (against which to measure the need for the enhancement of existing facilities); and
- accessibility (including distance thresholds and consideration of the cost of using a facility).

Local standards will:

- underpin negotiations with developers over their contributions towards new pitch provision to meet the needs of new residential developments;
- provide an additional overview of the general supply of pitches/level of provision;
- assist in protecting land in playing field use;
- assist in benchmarking with other areas/authorities.

As well as providing an overall evidence base, local standards enable the assessment of sites on a site by site basis, enabling locally informed decision making. This will be essential for both proactive and reactive planning across the Borough.

13.8.1 Quantity Standards

The Fields in Trust standard for pitch provision states that for every 1,000 people, 1.2 hectares of playing pitches should be provided. However, this is a national benchmark and it is important to also consider the local context.

The Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) outlines where current shortfalls and surpluses exist for each type of sport. It takes into account the additional pitches needed (or surplus pitches identified) to meet demand and enables the calculation of the area of this required level of provision. These calculations are derived directly from a robust assessment of local need.

The Hartlepool Borough Council PPG17 Study sets the following standards for pitches, tennis and bowling greens;

- Playing Fields – 1.23ha per 1000 population
- Tennis Courts – 0.02ha per 1000 population
- Bowling Greens – 0.03ha per 1000 population.

The evidence collated as part of this playing fields assessment enables these standards to be updated to reflect current needs and aspirations.

Table 13.5 summarises the requirements for provision in 2028 based on meeting baseline peak time demand. It includes community use provision only – non community use pitches should be considered separately.

Calculation of the local standard is based upon the assumption that in order to maintain adequate pitch protection, all pitches that are currently available for community use are protected (or directly replaced). It is also important given aspirations in the Borough to increase participation. It assumes that all pitches are up to the required specification to accommodate play. Where clear deficiencies in pitch provision have been identified (e.g. in junior football) these have also been included in the standard. The strategy sets out a series of recommendations designed to address these deficiencies. The strategy recommendations therefore form the basis of the calculations of a local standard which represents a minimum level of provision. It does not take into account the need to maintain a strategic reserve.

Table 13.5 – Local Standard Calculations

Pitch Type	Current numbers available for community use	Minimum Number Required to meet Baseline Demand	Approximate Size Per Pitch	Total Requirement
Adult Football	34	34	0.9	30.6
Junior Football	14	27	0.6	16.2
Mini Football	16	16	0.22	3.52
Cricket	4	5	1.5	7.5
Rugby	13	15	1.2	18
TOTAL	81	97	N/A	75.82

Table 13.5 suggests that a minimum of 75.82 hectares is required to meet baseline demand. This equates to circa 0.78ha per 1000 population. This constitutes a minimum level of provision to ensure that supply and demand are aligned for community use only, and does not take into account the need to have a strategic reserve.

It reflects the amount of pitches that are required for community use only. This considers only the pitch area and does not account for changing accommodation / pitch run off and changing or parking.

When taking these issues into account:

- changing room / pavilion - provision of around 200m² – 0.02 ha would provide sufficient space for a small multi functional pavilion with four changing rooms, match officials space, showers, toilets, circulation space and a small kitchen.
- parking and access - 0.025 ha would provide sufficient for a parking area of 10m x 25m

Demand is therefore equivalent to 0.82 ha per 1000 population.

As well as ensuring that deficiencies are met for each sport and each pitch type, some degree of spare capacity is an integral part of playing pitch provision for the following reasons:

- to accommodate latent and future demand for existing pitch sport teams;
- to enable the development of new clubs and teams;
- for the development / expansion of new pitch sports (such as mini-soccer and 'tag' rugby); and
- to accommodate backlogs and for rest and recovery periods.

For the reasons highlighted above, it is important to ensure that a strategic reserve of facilities is maintained. An additional 10% has been added onto the standard to accommodate this. **The overall standard for playing pitches therefore equates to 0.9 ha per 1000 population** and represents the amount of playing fields required.

For tennis and bowls, the standards set within the PPG17 study continue to reflect local need as set out in sections 6 and 7. Standards set are therefore as follows:

- Tennis Courts – 0.02ha per 1000 population (represents existing level of provision)
- Bowling Greens – 0.03ha per 1000 population (provision slightly below).

13.8.2 Quality Standards

When determining the required quality of pitches, it is important to consider:

- the standard of play at the site and expectations of users(including league requirements);
- the demand on the site (the number of games played per week);
- the need to facilitate concurrent usage by young people, women and other;
- target groups through appropriate ancillary facilities; and
- facility specifications from National Governing Body (NGB) strategies.

Reflecting this, there are several factors integral to the successful delivery of a network of high sports facilities, stating that:

‘Quality depends on two things: the needs and expectations of users, on the one hand, and design, management and maintenance on the other’.

Specific to playing pitches for football, rugby and cricket, all pitches should include:

- a high standard of maintenance, enabling the pitch to be played at least twice per week without detrimental impact and ensuring that sites are clean and attractive facilities;

adequate changing facilities that:

- are flexible, fit for a variety of purposes and which fully comply with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act
- provide for a number of different groups to use the facility at the same time, in safety and comfort
- meet current standards - Sport England and NGB guidelines
- managed community access;
- easily accessible by public transport and by car;
- sufficient car parking;
- size of pitches and run offs must meet NGB specification;
- located in a no flood zone;
- security of tenure (at least 10 years) if a club is to be based at the site; and
- for rugby clubs in particular, sites should include floodlit training facilities.

The National Governing Body (NGB) for each sport provides detailed guidance on the design of facilities and changing accommodation.

The PPG17 study provides further guidance on the quality of playing pitches, using the scores achieved against the Towards a Level Playing Field matrix (also used in this report as a basis).

Evidence collated suggests that these standards remain appropriate, and the local standards are therefore as follows;

- The quality standard for playing pitches is that for an average pitch i.e. 66 - 79% with an aspiration to bring all pitches up to the level of a good pitch i.e. 80 -94%.
- The recommended quality benchmark for changing accommodation is for a good facility i.e. 60% - 89%. The benchmark facility is Brierton Sports Centre (formerly Brierton School) at 85%.
- The recommended quality benchmark for bowling greens is 76%
- The recommended quality benchmark for tennis courts is 75%

13.8.3 Accessibility Standards

Consultation undertaken as part of this study demonstrates that:

- The nature of football pitches in Hartlepool means that players travel to reach larger sites. Most players live within 2 – 5 miles of their home ground and only five clubs are not playing at their preferred venue.
- The majority of cricket clubs have a relatively wide catchment area. Between 15% and 30% of each clubs' membership travel for five miles or greater to reach the home ground. Notably, Paragonians CC, who play cricket more informally, have a much more localised membership base, with 60% of residents living within a mile of Grayfields.
- like cricket, rugby is club based and residents travel from further afield to reach their club;
- there is only one hockey club in the Borough and this is located relatively centrally
- nearly 80% of users of bowling greens travel between one and five miles to reach their home green.

For all sports, residents demonstrate a willingness to travel (within reason) to facilities that meet their specification and requirements.

This suggests that when planning new facilities, particularly as part of new developments, linking with the quantity standards set out above, there is a need to consider the location of the site and to focus development around club bases (and avoid the provision of dispersed pitches). New provision should therefore be located off a development site, or in conjunction with the development of a new club, or satellite club to an existing facility. The recommendations draw out the key priorities for the future delivery of playing fields in Hartlepool Borough.

13.8.4 Incorporating Pitch Issues into the Local Planning Framework

On the assumption that all existing playing fields are retained and improved to ensure that they meet specifications and that community use can be secured for additional sites, there are sufficient sites to meet demand in the short term. There is however a clear need to improve the specification of existing facilities and to maximise community use of school sites otherwise provision is insufficient.

Longer term, while adult and mini participation is likely to remain static, junior participation may continue to grow and several clubs have aspirations to increase participation. This will increase demand and pitch requirements.

While there is no requirement for additional pitches to meet current demand, it is clear that there remains demand for more larger facilities that can accommodate all teams from a club (as opposed to dispersing teams across multiple venues), particularly if demand increases in line with aspirations. Proposals that see the creation of large multi pitch sites should be encouraged. Taking this into account, and to account for the likely increase in demand which will occur longer term (and result in demand for additional playing fields), the existing allocation for playing pitches should be retained.

13.8.5 Implications for Planning

- P1:** Planning policy should protect existing playing fields from development and seek to ensure the playing field requirements set out in the Playing Pitch Strategy are met. There may be opportunities for development of playing fields but only based on where there is net benefit to sport from development. This may include the reinvestment of funds generated from the development of a single pitch site into qualitative improvements to nearby sites or more likely, the replacement of single pitch sites with a larger multi pitch site. The potential for the site to fulfill a role as a wider open space should be considered prior to disposal. Overall the Council should adopt a flexible approach to development but ensuring in all potential developments there is a net benefit to sport and this is identified and safeguarded.
- P2:** Incorporate the local standards of provision into the Hartlepool Borough planning policies and ensure that they are considered material at any planning stage.
- P3:** To take into account the impact of new population growth on the demand for playing fields and the location of this demand, planning policy should require contributions towards pitch and outdoor sports provision from all new developments.
- P4:** The creation of new multi pitch sites should be prioritised and the delivery of new single pitches should be avoided

14. SCHOOLS

14.1 Introduction

The audit included all primary, secondary and special schools in Hartlepool. Visits were undertaken to 38 schools but one school, the Pupil Referral Unit, was subsequently excluded as it was due to be demolished and move to a new site. The schools visited are listed in **Appendix 14.1**.

Most of the schools' outdoor sports pitches which were available for community use had been assessed for the Hartlepool Borough Playing Pitch Strategy (December 2012) and these pitches were not re-assessed. The remaining pitches were assessed as part of this study using the new Non Technical Quality Assessments which are part of the new Sport England Methodology for undertaking a playing pitch assessment. In addition, all changing facilities were assessed using both the new and the old methodology as appropriate, as were all the Artificial Grass Pitches.

Many schools did not have sports pitches regularly marked out on their sports fields. These fields were assessed using a general quality assessment covering the overall condition, level of grass cover, slope and evenness of the field and the extent of excessive wear. Where school fields were marked out with sports pitch markings, any usable unmarked area of the field was assessed in this way.

Schools were asked whether they had sufficient space for outdoor sport or whether they had any lack of facilities and whether any investment in sports or play facilities was needed. They were also asked whether they would consider making their outdoor sports facilities available for community use. Whilst most schools reported that their outdoor space needs are met, either on-site or by using facilities at an adjoining school, a number of schools had particular needs for outdoor sport or play facilities.

Sacred Heart Primary School.

The school has a small grass field to the rear of the school which it uses for PE lessons and sports days; this is in poor condition and is completely inadequate for the purpose. The school has almost 500 children on the roll including the nursery intake.

The school has attempted to obtain funding for an AGP on a number of occasions but has been unsuccessful due in part to requirement for floodlighting and the objections to this from local residents.

Pupils use the facilities at English Martyrs, but this is some distance away and so transportation causes difficulties.

Stranton Academy and Community Centre

The school states that it has a need for a half sized AGP for use of the pupils in school time and for community use out of school hours. The school has applied for grant funding to the Football Foundation but this was refused on the grounds that there are sufficient AGPs in

Hartlepool. The school contends that it is located in an extremely deprived area and children living nearby need a very local facility; they are not likely to be potential users of the large sports AGPs elsewhere in Hartlepool.

The school is open until 9.30 every night due to existing high levels of community use at evenings and weekends; the facility would not therefore have extra staffing requirements. There is potential for a joint project with the neighbouring Belle Vue Sports and Youth Centre. Stranton Academy is stated to be an important site for community use in the Hartlepool Playing Pitch Strategy.

Barnard Grove Primary

The school states that it has a need for a small 5 a side AGP. The school is being re-built under the Priority Schools Building Programme and the AGP was included in the original plans. However, the AGP had to be deleted from the plans due to higher than expected costs for the re-build of the new school.

Clavering Primary

The school states that it has a need for a Sports Hall. The school was built for 250 pupils but there are now 394 pupils on the roll which makes for a shortage of space within the building.

Rift House Primary

The school states that it has insufficient outdoor space for its pupils and has a need for a small AGP on part of the sports field.

Springwell SEN Primary School

The school continually needs funding for expensive specialist outdoor play equipment and would find a sensory trim trail on the school's field more useful for the pupils than the existing grass field.

Catcote SEN Academy

Catcote has a large field with one football pitch. This is not currently used for football matches due to the changing nature of the school's intake. Compared with previous intake pupils have greater levels of disability and many are very ill. Because of this the school would like to field to be changed to incorporate a "Forest School" similar to the one at Eaglescliff.

Hart Primary School

The school has a large field which is open for informal community access after school hours. The school would like to install some fixed play equipment on the field but this plan was

opposed by a small number of local residents and has not been pursued as a result. There is no access to outdoor equipped play facilities for children of the village.

High Tunstall Science College

The school has an extensive grass field with football, rugby and cricket pitches. The changing facilities are small and outdated and situated far away from the furthest sports pitches which means that the pitches are not fully utilised by the school. The changing facilities were rated poorest of all changing in the assessments done for this audit.

The school has suffered from a lack of investment in the past; it is proposed that the old Thornhill School at the site (currently used as classrooms) be demolished and additional changing facilities and an AGP be built on the site. The school performs at a high standard in a variety of sports and it is felt that investment in the sports facilities would continue to further this achievement and would enable community use to take place of all the sports facilities.

Notes on all the school sites which were visited are recorded in **Appendix 14.2**.

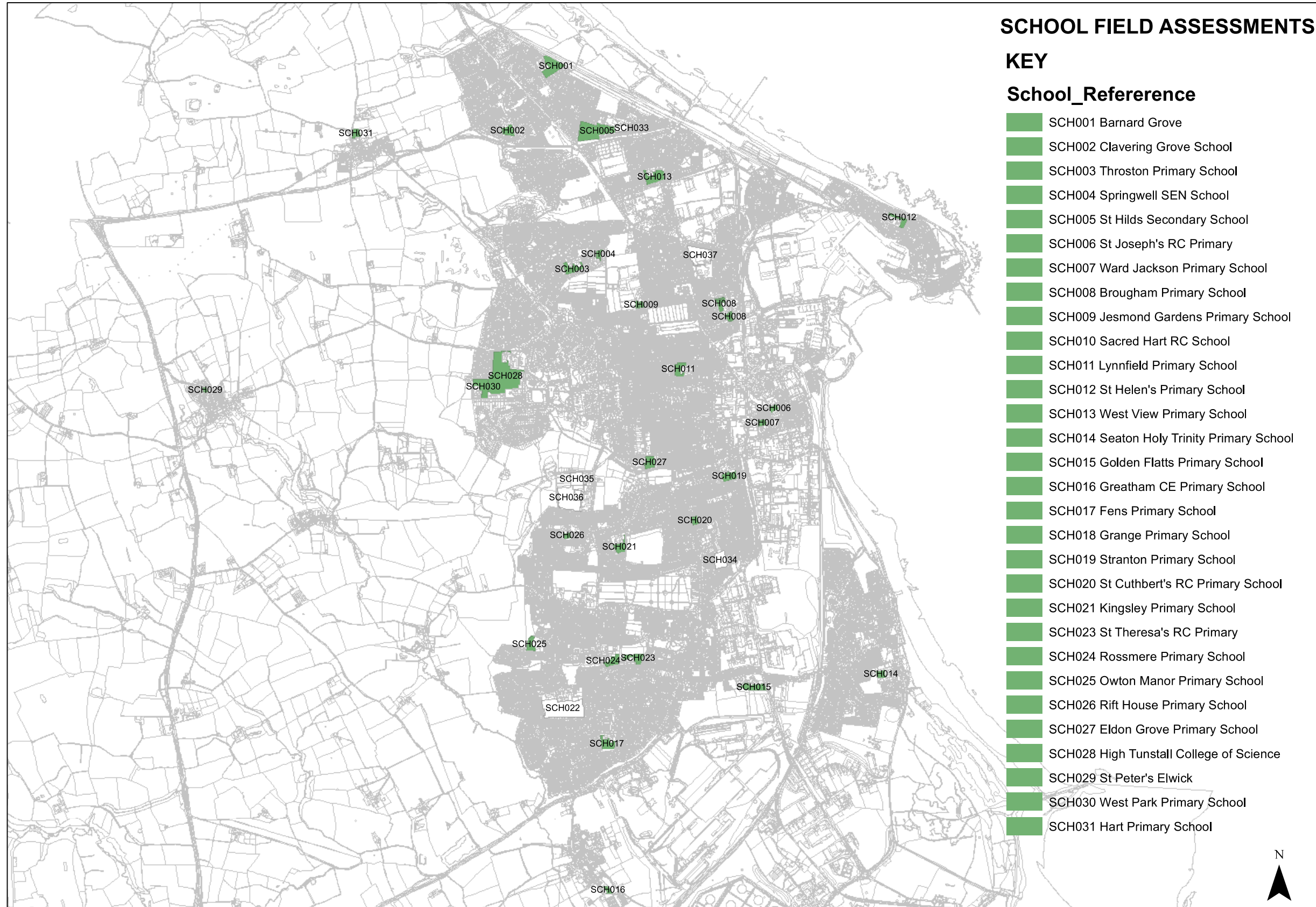
14.2 Quality assessment

The school fields were assessed in all cases except for 7 schools which did not have any usable field space that was not allocated to pitches. These seven schools are:

- Manor College of Technology
- English Martyrs School
- Dyke House School
- Catcote Academy
- St Begas Primary
- St John Vianney Primary
- St Aidans Primary

Table 14.1 shows the results of the quality assessment for each school and **Map 14.1** identifies the location of the schools where the school fields were assessed for quality.

Map 14.1 School Field Assessments



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Table 14.1: Quality Assessment of School Fields

Site Reference	Site Name	Subarea	Total Score %	Rating
SCH001	Barnard Grove	North Central	72.0%	Average
SCH002	Clavering Primary	Western	64.0%	Average
SCH003	Throston Primary	North Central	68.0%	Average
SCH004	Springwell SEN School	North Central	92.0%	Excellent
SCH005	St Hilds Secondary	North Central	64.0%	Average
SCH006	St Joseph's RC Primary	North Central	96.0%	Excellent
SCH007	Ward Jackson CE Primary	North Central	80.0%	Good
SCH008	Brougham Primary	North Central	80.0%	Good
SCH009	Jesmond Gardens	North Central	40.0%	Poor
SCH010	Sacred Heart RC Primary	North Central	44.0%	Poor
SCH011	Lynnfield Primary	North Central	84.0%	Good
SCH012	St Helen's Primary	North Central	88.0%	Good
SCH013	West View Primary	North Central	80.0%	Good
SCH014	Seaton Holy Trinity Primary	Southern	88.0%	Good
SCH015	Golden Flatts Primary	Southern	80.0%	Good
SCH016	Greatham CE Primary	Western	84.0%	Good
SCH017	Fens Primary	Southern	84.0%	Good
SCH018	Grange Primary	South Central	20.0%	Very Poor
SCH019	Stranton Primary	South Central	80.0%	Good
SCH020	St Cuthbert's RC Primary	South Central	88.0%	Good
SCH021	Kingsley Primary KS1	South Central	76.0%	Good
SCH021	Kingsley Primary KS2	South Central	76.0%	Good
SCH023	St Theresa's RC Primary	Southern	80.0%	Good
SCH024	Rossmere Primary	Southern	68.0%	Average
SCH025	Owton Manor Primary	South Central	92.0%	Excellent
SCH026	Rift House Primary	South Central	76.0%	Good
SCH027	Eldon Grove Primary	South Central	72.0%	Average
SCH028	High Tunstall College of Science	Southern	76.0%	Good
SCH029	St Peter's, Elwick	Southern	40.0%	Poor
SCH030	West Park Primary (Front)	Southern	52.0%	Average
SCH030	West Park Primary (Back)	Southern	80.0%	Good
SCH031	Hart Primary	Western	60.0%	Average

Of those fields which were assessed over half (17) were rated good and three were excellent. One quarter (8) were rated average and 4 fields scored below this level.

The extent to which the field is useful is a function of both its size and quality. However, it was not possible to measure the actual size of the fields for this study.

The highest scoring fields are at Owton Manor Primary and St Joseph's Primary and also the small field at Springwell Special School, all of which were rated excellent. Fields which were rated good but scored almost as high as the excellent fields are at St Helen's Primary, Holy Trinity Seaton, Lynnfield, Greatham and Fens Primary Schools.

Full details of the quality scores can be found in **Appendix 14.3**.

14.2 Informal Community Use

Several schools open up their school fields outside school hours for informal access to the community. Fields tend to be used for both informal play and dog walking. Schools making their fields available are:

- St Helen's Primary
- Lynnfield Primary
- Hart Primary

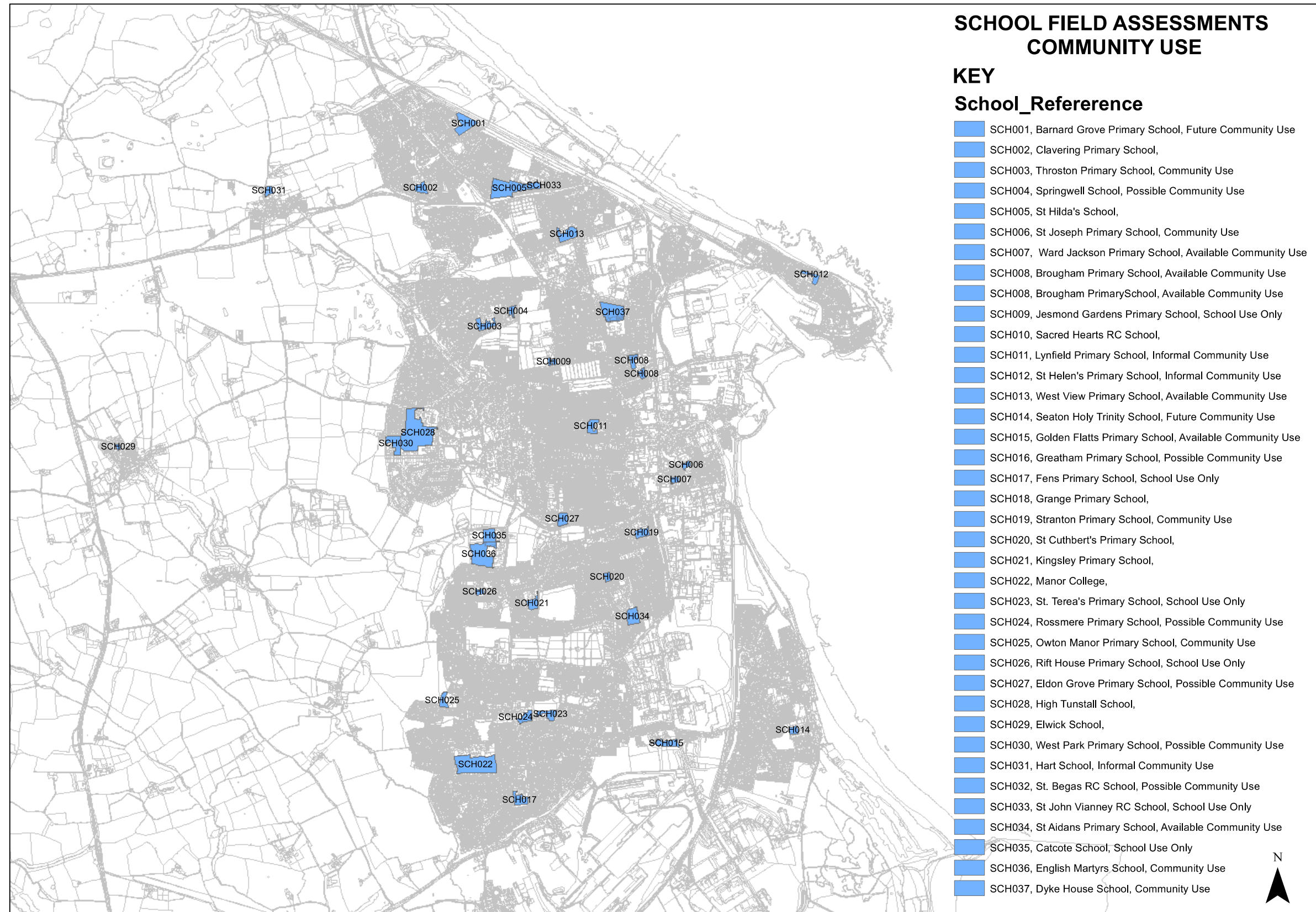
In addition part of the school field to the rear of Fens Primary School has been fenced off and is available to the community at all times. This has been assessed as amenity greenspace.

Problems do occur with community use mainly due to dog fouling and, to some extent, litter being left on the field. This causes extra work for caretaking staff. Other schools reported that they had made their fields available to the local community for informal use but this arrangement had ceased due to problems of dog fouling and litter.

14.3 Community Use for Sports Clubs

All the secondary schools apart from High Tunstall have considerable levels of community use of their outdoor sports facilities. The remaining schools with existing or potential for community use are listed in **Table 14.2** below and are shown in **Map 14.2** below.

Map 14.2 : School Sites with Existing or Potential Community Use



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Table 14.2: Schools with existing or potential for community use

Site Reference	Site Name	Subarea	Community Use	Facilities
SCH001	Barnard Grove	North Central	New school being built – will have community use of sports pitches	Football pitches – 1 full size and 1 5 a side (planned)
SCH003	Throston Primary	North Central	Community use at present (Throston Tornados)	One football pitch. School also has large field.
SCH004	Springwell School SEN	North Central	No current community use. School would consider.	Small field
SCH006	St Joseph's Primary RC	North Central	Community use at present	One 11 a side pitch.
SCH007	Ward Jackson Primary CE	North Central	Community use in the past. Still available. Clubs can have key to gate to field without need for caretaker to be present.	Football pitch
SCH008	Brougham Primary	North Central	Available for community use. Not used at present due to lack of demand.	Grass football pitch and 5 a side pitch on asphalt. Changing accommodation with separate community entrance
SCH009	Jesmond Gardens	North Central	School use only	MUGA with polymeric surface and very small grass area
SCH011	Lynnfield Primary	North Central	Open access for informal community use.	Football pitch, playing field and MUGA.
SCH012	St Helen's Primary	North Central	Open access for informal community use of field. No community use of pitch at present but school would consider this.	Playing field. Field marked out with one football pitch and has room for 2 additional small pitches
SCH013	West View Primary	North Central	Available for community use. Some community use takes place but facilities are underused by community due to cost and competition from new local AGPs.	Football – one 11 a side pitch. One small AGP. Changing facilities.
SCH014	Seaton Holy Trinity Primary	Southern	New school being built – planned opening in November 2015. Community use of pitches will be promoted	One mini soccer pitch (54 x 36M) and possible second pitch.

Site Reference	Site Name	Subarea	Community Use	Facilities
SCH015	Golden Flatts Primary	Southern	Available for community use.	2 grass football pitches. Also space for a third pitch. One MUGA.
SCH016	Greatham CE Primary	Western	No community use at present but school open to possibility of community use.	One small football pitch.
SCH017	Fens Primary	Southern	School use only	One football pitch
SCH019	Stranton Primary and Community Centre	South Central	Community use at present. School open every day until 9.30 pm.	One 11 a side football pitch (or 2 five a side pitches). Changing facilities.
SCH023	St Theresa's RC Primary	Southern	School use only	One football pitch
SCH024	Rossmere Primary	Southern	Community use in the past. May be available.	Sports field and MUGA
SCH025	Owton Manor Primary	South Central	Community use at present. (Seaton FC)	One mini soccer pitch (54 x 31.5 M) plus room for one more pitch. Changing facilities.
SCH026	Rift House Primary	South Central	School use only	One 7 a side and one mini pitch
SCH027	Eldon Grove Primary	South Central	No community use a present but would be considered	One youth football pitch plus space for one more pitch.
SCH028	High Tunstall College of Science	Southern	No community use at present.	3 football pitches, 2 rugby pitches, one cricket wicket. Changing facilities.
SCH030	West Park Primary	Southern	No community use at present but school very keen to promote community use of pitches and MUGA.	Football pitches on rear field. Small MUGA planned (18x10 M) and grant funding obtained from Sport England.
SCH031	Hart Primary	Western	Informal community use of field	One youth football pitch.
SCH032	St Begas Primary	North Central	No community access at present. School would be prepared to allow community access but considers that there is no demand due to the costs of employing the caretaker	One youth football pitch

Site Reference	Site Name	Subarea	Community Use	Facilities
SCH033	St John Vianney Primary	North Central	School use only	One youth football pitch
SCH034	St Aidans Primary	South Central	Available for community use	One youth football pitch
SCH035	Catcote Academy	South Central	No community use. School wishes to change usage to " Forest School" to better meet the needs of their current intake.	One large football pitch

Four primary schools with football pitches available for community use also have changing facilities; they are West View Primary (football pitch and small AGP), Owton Manor, Stranton and Brougham Primary Schools. In addition, community use takes place at present at Throston and St Josephs Primary schools. Other schools willing to make their football or other sports facilities available are shown in **Table 14.2** above.

Three schools in Hartlepool are being re-built as part of the Priority Schools Building programme; Sport England has been involved with the planning and community use is planned for the sports facilities. Barnard Grove School will have one full sized and one five a side football pitch; Holy Trinity in Seaton will have one mini soccer pitch and possibly a second pitch; Manor College of Technology will be re-built partly on the current sports field and there will be community use of the new facilities.

Another planned development is the creation of a Forest School at Rossmere School. This will be available for pupils of Rossmere and other schools in Hartlepool.

14.3 Football Pitch and Changing Assessments

The audit was undertaken during the spring and early summer which was not therefore during the football season. Many schools reported that their fields were marked out for football during the winter months. Where football pitches were marked out at the time of the audit they were assessed using Sport England's new Non Technical Quality Assessment (NTQA). Pitches were not re-assessed if they had been assessed for the Playing Pitch Strategy. However, the Sport England NTQA incorporates an element of scoring for changing facilities and all schools with changing facilities which also had football pitches were assessed.

Results are shown in **Table 14.3** below.

Table 14.3: Football pitch and changing scores - NTQA

Site	Changing score	Changing rating	Pitch score	Pitch rating
Owton Manor Primary	83%	Good	61%	Good
West View Primary	61%	Standard	56%	Standard
Stranton Primary	76%	Good		
Manor College of Technology	63%	Standard		
English Martyrs Secondary	79%	Good		
High Tunstall Secondary	49%	Poor		
Dyke House Secondary	71%	Standard		
St Hilds Secondary	64%	Standard		
Brougham Primary	61%	Standard		

The football pitch at Owton Manor School was rated good and the pitch at West View Primary as standard. The changing accommodation with the highest scores with this assessment are at Owton Manor, Stranton and English Martyrs Schools all achieving a good rating; the remaining changing was rated as standard apart from High Tunstall changing which was rated poor.

14.4 Changing Assessments – Original Sport England VQA

Changing accommodation was also assessed at sites with an AGP and all school sites with changing facilities where access was possible. Assessments were undertaken using the original Sport England Visual Quality Assessment as there is no separate scoring template available with the NTQA for AGP sites. The assessment covers the overall quality of the changing rooms as well as quality of individual elements such as toilets, showers and heating, availability of access for disabled, fire safety and adequate car parking and access to the public transport network.

The quality of changing was good with scores ranging from 60% to 98%. Six sites achieved a rating of excellent and five were rated good. The changing facilities with the highest

scores are Dyke House Secondary School, West View Primary School and JD Sports Domes. The poorest scoring changing is at High Tunstall School where the score was at the lowest level for a good rating. These changing rooms are small with many of the features rated only as average. The results are shown in **Table 14.4** below.

The site with the largest number of changing rooms is Manor College of Technology with six changing rooms, followed by St Hild's and English Martyrs Secondary schools and Stranton and Owton Manor Primary Schools all with four changing rooms.

Table 14.4: Hartlepool Changing Facilities – Original VQA

Site	% Score	Rating	No of Changing Rooms
West View Primary	98%	Excellent	2
Dyke House Secondary	97%	Excellent	3
St Hilds Secondary	86%	Good	4
Brougham Primary	72%	Good	3
Stranton Primary	94%	Excellent	4
Manor Tech College	86%	Good	6
Owton Manor Primary	69%	Good	4
English Martyrs Secondary	91%	Excellent	4
High Tunstall Science College	60%	Good	2
Brierton Sports Centre (AGP changing)	91%	Excellent	2
JD Sports Domes	97%	Excellent	2

14.5 Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)

Hartlepool has three full sized Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) in schools and one brand new full size AGP at Brierton Sports Centre. In addition there is a three quarter size AGP at Grayfields Recreation Ground and a small sized AGP at West View School. All AGPs have ancillary changing facilities and all except St Hilds have floodlighting.

Hartlepool also has a new commercial five a side centre, JD Sports Domes at Seaton Carew, with 6 small 5 a side pitches.

Two of the full sized pitches, those at St Hilds School and English Martyrs School are sand based; the remaining AGPs are of the 3G rubber crumb type.

The AGPs were assessed using the new Sport England Assessment tool which covers such attributes as the age and quality of the surface, grip underfoot, assess for disabled and presence of lighting and changing facilities. The total score is 93 – no percentage score is

obtained. AGPs scoring 80 or over are rated good, those with a score between 51 and 79 are rated standard and those scoring 50 or lower are rated poor. (see **Table 14.5** below)

The highest scoring AGP is the relatively newly surfaced AGP at Dyke House School which achieved the maximum score of 93 and a rating of good. The courts at JD Sports Domes also achieved a good rating.

The remaining AGPs all achieved a standard rating with scores ranging from 78 at West View Primary School (just under a good rating) to 56 at Grayfields Recreation Ground.

It was not possible to gain access to the new AGP at Brierton Sports Centre as it was under the final stages of construction at the time of the audit.

Table 14.5: Artificial Grass Pitches

Name	Subarea	Type	Size	Score	Rating
Grayfields Recreation Ground	North Central	3G Rubber crumb	Three quarter size	56	Standard
English Martyrs School	South Central	Sand based	Full size	69	Standard
West View Primary	North Central	3G Rubber crumb	Small size	78	Standard
St Hilds School	North Central	Sand based	Full size	64	Standard
Dyke House School	North Central	3G Rubber crumb	Full size	93	Good
J D Sports Domes	Southern	3G Rubber crumb	6 x Five a side	83	Good
Brierton Sports Centre	South Central	3G Rubber crumb	Full size	N/A	