



CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

OPEN SPACE STUDY

STANDARDS PAPER

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QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Open Space Standards Paper prepared by Knight, Kavanagh & Page (KKP) for Chesterfield Borough Council (CBC). It follows on from the preceding Open Space Assessment Report. It acts as a bridge between the Assessment Report and the Open Space Strategy to be delivered. Together, the documents provide an evidence base to help inform the current quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces and the future provision across Chesterfield.

This Standards Paper is intended to clarify the approach and recommendations to the provision standards. The provision standards will be used to help inform the future needs, priorities and recommendations for open space provision (to be set out in the Strategy).

This will help identify the potential deficiencies and surpluses in existing and future open space provision. In addition, it should help inform an approach to securing open space facilities through new housing development and help form the basis for negotiation with developers for contributions towards the provision of open spaces.

Scope

The table below details the open space typologies included within the study:

Table 1.1: Open space typologies

Typology	Primary purpose
Parks and gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	Accessible sites with more of a focus on wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness. Human recreational activities are likely to be less intense (e.g. nature reserves, woodlands, plantations).
Amenity greenspace	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Provision for children and young people (including teenage provision)	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction for children and young people, such as formal equipped play areas, MUGAs, skateboard areas and teenage shelters. It can also include informal areas of land surrounding formal play provision.
Allotments and Community Schemes	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.
Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
Green Corridors	Routes which provide for walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel. May also offer opportunities for wildlife mitigation.

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Analysis areas

For mapping purposes and analysis, the Chesterfield area is divided into 22 analysis areas. These are intended to reflect the recognisable places of the different areas of Chesterfield. These relate to the 19 Wards across Chesterfield. They also reflect known barriers to pedestrian movement such as major roads (e.g. A61, A619 and A617), railways (e.g. Midland Main Line) and waterways (e.g. Chesterfield Canal and River Doe Lea).

The 22 analysis areas allow more localised examination of open space surpluses and deficiencies. It enables examination of the quantity and access to different types of open space for each analysis area; whilst also taking into account local circumstances and issues (e.g. barriers to pedestrian movement). The analysis areas and their populations are shown in the Table 1.2 and Figure 1.1.

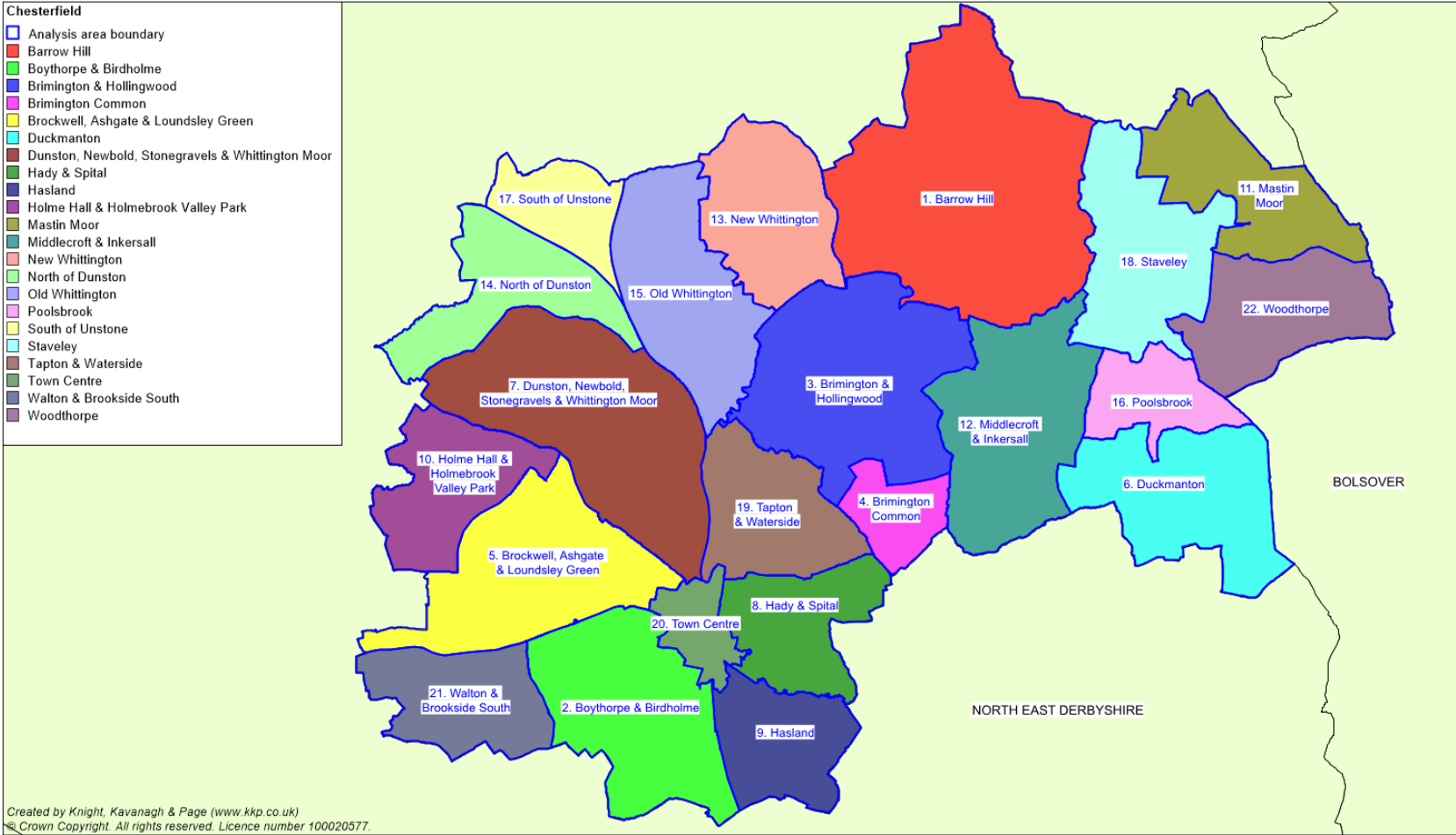
Population figures for each of the 22 analysis areas use ONS Mid-Year 2016 figures at a Lower Super Output level. These are then allocated to reflect the number of residential dwellings located within each of the 22 analysis areas.

Table 1.2: Analysis areas with estimated population

Analysis area	Estimated population
Barrow Hill	1,388
Boythorpe & Birdholme	12,715
Brimington & Hollingwood	9,851
Brimington Common	1,410
Brockwell, Ashgate & Loundsley Green	14,960
Duckmanton	1,067
Dunston, Newbold, Stonegravels & Whittington Moor	16,231
Hady & Spital	3,961
Hasland	7,416
Holme Hall & Holmebrook Valley Park	5,474
Mastin Moor	1,718
Middlecroft & Inkersall	7,462
New Whittington	4,385
North of Dunston	12
Old Whittington	4,108
Poolsbrook	1,037
South of Unstone	149
Staveley	3,028
Tapton & Waterside	1,529
Town Centre	544
Walton & Brookside South	5,498
Woodthorpe	497

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Figure 1.1: Map of analysis areas



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PART 2: ASSESSMENT REPORT SUMMARY

The Strategy is supported by an Open Space Assessment Report which details the quantity, distribution and quality of open space provision across Chesterfield. A summary from the Assessment Report on a typology by typology basis is set out below.

2.1 Parks and gardens

- ◀ There are 20 sites classified as parks and gardens totalling over 111 hectares. This is an equivalent to 1.06 hectares per 1,000 population.
- ◀ The country parks of Holmebrook Valley and Poolsbrook are both included within natural and semi-natural greenspace. However, it is recognised that they have a dual use and role as parks provision. If these sites are included from quantity levels a provision level of 2.31 hectares per 1,000 population is observed.
- ◀ Chesterfield as a whole surpasses the FIT suggested standard of 0.80 ha per 1,000 population.
- ◀ Catchment mapping shows that areas of higher population density are covered by the walk time catchment applied. The drive time catchments applied to country parks also provides substantial coverage.
- ◀ Nearly all park and gardens rate above the threshold for quality. Only four sites rate below the threshold. However, no specific issues are highlighted with scoring being reflective of the comparison between other park sites.
- ◀ The quality at a number of sites is noted as being particularly good. This is reflected in two park sites achieving Green Flag Award status.
- ◀ All assessed sites score highly for value, with the important social interaction, health benefits, ecological value and sense of place sites offer being recognised.

2.2 Natural and semi-natural greenspace

- ◀ There are 33 natural and semi-natural greenspace sites covering over 314 hectares.
- ◀ FIT suggests a standard of 1.80 ha per 1,000 population. Using the 33 sites, there are 3.00 hectares per 1,000 population across Chesterfield.
- ◀ There is a good distribution of natural and semi-natural sites across the area. The 30-minute drive time catchment sufficiently covers the whole of the local authority boundary. However, gaps in the 15-minute walk time catchment are identified in several areas. These will be explored further as part of the strategy.
- ◀ There are three natural sites designated as LNR's; Bluebank Wood, Brearley Wetland and Norbriggs Flash.
- ◀ Of the natural and semi-natural sites assessed, two thirds (66%) rate above the threshold set for quality. There are 11 sites that rate below the quality threshold mainly due to poor maintenance.
- ◀ All sites rate above the threshold for value which demonstrates the added benefit natural and semi-natural greenspaces can provide especially in terms of contributing to flora and fauna. There are also a number of sites which provide a good level of recreational offer; such sites tend to rate highly for value.

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2.3 Amenity greenspace

- ◀ There are 95 amenity greenspace sites equating to over 93 hectares of provision.
- ◀ FIT suggests a standard of 0.60 hectares per 1,000 population. Overall, Chesterfield (0.89 hectares per 1,000 population) sufficiently meets the FIT standard.
- ◀ Mapping demonstrates a good distribution of amenity greenspace across the area. No significant gaps in catchment mapping are identified.
- ◀ Nearly three quarters (74%) of amenity sites assessed rate above the threshold for quality. The majority of sites to score lower for quality is due to a lack of ancillary features, poor surfaces and paths and being perceived to be generally poorly maintained.
- ◀ In addition to its multifunctional role, amenity greenspace makes a valuable contribution to visual aesthetics for communities – hence 94% of sites rate above the value threshold.

2.4 Provision for children and young people

- ◀ There are 92 play sites identified; a total of over five hectares.
- ◀ FIT suggests a standard of 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population. Overall, Chesterfield has an equivalent of 0.05 hectares per 1,000 population. If land from the surrounding 'parent' site is also included then provision level of 0.36 hectares per 1,000 population is noted.
- ◀ There is a good spread of provision across the area. All areas with a greater population density are within walking distance of a form of play provision.
- ◀ A greater proportion of play sites (74%) rate above the threshold for quality. Lower quality scoring sites tends to reflect a lack in and/or range of equipment and/or its general condition. Observations highlight a number of sites appearing dated and in need of refurbishment.
- ◀ The majority of play provision (88%) rates above the threshold for value; reflecting the social, healthy and developmental benefits provision can provide.

2.5 Allotments

- ◀ There are 33 allotments sites: equating to more than 40 hectares
- ◀ Current provision of 0.39 hectares per 1,000 population sufficiently meets the NSALG recommended amount (0.25 hectares per 1000 people).
- ◀ Catchment mapping does not highlight any significant gaps in provision.
- ◀ Quality and value of provision is good overall. The value of allotments is widely recognised due to the associated social inclusion, health benefits and the sense of place they offer.
- ◀ Waiting lists operate at sites suggesting a continued level of demand for provision.

2.6 Cemeteries

- ◀ There are 10 cemeteries and churchyards, equating to over 30 hectares.
- ◀ The largest site is Chesterfield and District Crematorium (6.35 hectares). It is a Green Flag Award site signifying its high quality and value.
- ◀ No standards are set for cemeteries. The need for additional cemetery provision should be driven by the requirement for burial demand and capacity.

2.7 Green corridors

- ◀ There are four green corridors identified across Chesterfield.
- ◀ All four sites rate above the quality threshold. Chesterfield Canal has a Green Flag Award.
- ◀ All four sites also rate above the threshold for value. This reflects the sites offer to recreational opportunities such as walking, cycling and wildlife migration.
- ◀ Biodiversity is high for such sites as they serve as habitats and as connections to others

PART 3: PROVISION STANDARDS APPROACH

3.1 Developing and setting standards

The following section derives and details the approach to local open space provision standards for Chesterfield.

Setting provision standards is a useful tool in helping to determine potential deficiencies and surpluses of open space (as recommended by best practice). They help to identify current provision levels and how they compare in context of each analysis area, the Borough of Chesterfield as a whole and any national benchmarks (where applicable). These in turn help to inform priorities and recommendations for open space provision in addressing instances of deficiencies including potential opportunities to explore.

Provision standards are recommended in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.

It is important to recognise that there are no prescribed national standards for open space provision. In general, very little guidance is offered at a national level for quality with benchmarking of standards focusing on quantity and accessibility levels. Subsequently the following approach has been used to provide an informed reasoning to the setting and application of provision standards for CBC.

As part of the Assessment Report a community survey was undertaken in order to gather the views from residents to the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces. The findings of the survey respondents are used to help inform the setting of provision standards. A full analysis of the community survey is set out in Part 3 of the Open Space Assessment Report.

The following sections provide an overview of the recommended standards in terms of quality, accessibility and quantity. Further supporting information on the evidence used to inform these standards is provided in the associated Open Space Assessment Report.

3.2 Quality

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by guidance); the results of the site assessments are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The primary aim of applying a threshold is to help identify sites where investment and/or improvements are required and to inform decisions around the need to further protect sites. It can also be used to help identify sites potentially surplus to requirements in their current form (particularly when applied with its value score in a matrix format).

The only national benchmark available for quality of parks and open spaces is the 66% pass rate for Green Flag. However, the Green Flag pass rate is not appropriate for every open space typology as it is designed to represent a sufficiently high standard of provision.

For example, a park would be expected to feature a greater presence and variety of ancillary facilities (e.g. seating, bins, paths, play equipment, landscaping, etc) in comparison to an amenity greenspace or other type of open space.

Furthermore, the 66% threshold for Green Flag is not appropriate as a different scoring mechanism is used (albeit the criteria for this study is derived from the categories used as part of Green Flag).

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For each typology a different set or weighting for each criterion of quality is used. This is in order to better reflect the different roles and uses of each open space type. Consequently, a different threshold level is set for each open space typology.

In order to distinguish between higher and lower quality sites, the quality thresholds are set to reflect the average scores for each typology. In our experience this works as an effective method to reflect local levels of provision and their variability.

Sites are also allocated a value score. Quality and value are fundamentally different and can be unrelated. For example, a high-quality space may be inaccessible and, thus, be of little value; while, a poor quality space may be the only one in an area and thus be immensely valuable. As a result, quality and value are also treated separately in terms of scoring.

For value, there is no national guidance on the setting of thresholds. The 20% threshold applied is derived from our experience and knowledge in assessing the perceived value of sites.

A high valued site is one deemed to be well used and offering visual, social, physical and mental benefits. Therefore whilst 20% may initially seem low - it is a relative score. One designed to reflect those sites that meet more than one aspect of the criteria used for assessing value (as detailed earlier). As when a site meets more than one criterion for value it scores more than 20%.

Table 3.2.1: Quality benchmark standards

Typology	Quality threshold	Value threshold
Parks and gardens	55%	20%
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	40%	20%
Amenity greenspace	60%	20%
Provision for children and young people	60%	20%
Allotments	50%	20%
Cemeteries/churchyards	60%	20%
Green corridors	60%	20%

3.3 Accessibility

Accessibility catchments for different types of provision are a tool to identify communities currently not served by existing facilities. It is recognised that factors that underpin catchment areas vary from person to person, day to day and hour to hour. For the purposes of this process this problem is overcome by accepting the concept of 'effective catchments', defined as the distance that would be travelled by the majority of users.

Catchment areas are overlaid on the mapping of sites to help identify potential gaps in provision for each analysis area. In effect these are circular 'as the crow flies' areas (radial catchments). They do not simulate actual walking distances based on pedestrian routes or barriers to movement (a costly method). However, significant barriers to movement are also mapped to help recognise instances where access to open space provision may be restricted. The use of radial catchment areas is a common and accepted method to identify potential gaps in provision (as set out in best practice such as FIT and Companion Guidance to PPG17).

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Results of the community survey have been used to set initial accessibility catchments. These are presented in Table 3.3.1 and are applied to help inform potential deficiencies in each form of open space provision.

No catchments are set for the typologies of cemeteries. It is difficult to assess such typologies against catchment areas due to their nature and usage. For cemeteries, provision should be determined by demand for burial space.

Table 3.3.1: Accessibility catchments

Open space type		Accessibility catchment	Equivalent radial distance*
Parks & Gardens		15-minute walk time	1,200m
		30-minute drive time to country parks	n/a
Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace		15-minute walk time	1,200m
		30-minute drive time	n/a
Amenity Greenspace		15-minute walk time	1,200m
Play areas & provision for young people	Children's play	15-minute walk time	1,200m
	Youth provision	15-minute walk time	1,200m
Allotments		15-minute walk time	1,200m
		15-minute drive time	n/a

Guidance on walking distance and times is published by Fields In Trust (FIT) in its document *Beyond the Six Acre Standard* (2015). These guidelines have been converted into an equivalent time period in the table below. FIT also offer appropriate accessibility distances for children's play provision. These vary depending on the type of play provision (children's play or older age ranges).

Table 3.3.2: FIT accessibility guidelines

Open space type		FIT Walking guideline	Approximate time equivalent
Parks & Gardens		710m	9 minutes
Amenity Greenspace		480m	6 minutes
Play areas & informal provision	LAP	100m	1 minute
	LEAP	400m	5 minutes
	NEAP	1,000m	12 ½ minutes
	Other provision (e.g. MUGA, Skate park)	700m	9 minutes

* Equivalent radial distance calculated on basis of average person walking one mile in 20 minutes

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In addition, Natural England set an Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) in terms of catchment distances. These have also been used to help identify potential gaps in provision.

Table 3.3.3: ANGSt Guidelines

Open space type	Applicable site size	Walking guideline
Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	Over 2 hectares	300m
	Over 20 hectares	2 kilometres
	Over 100 hectares	5 kilometres
	Over 500 hectares	10 kilometres

Recommendation for accessibility standards

For the purposes of this study, we recommend using the accessibility catchments derived from the community survey as the primary accessibility standard for most typologies. Best practice advice advocates using locally derived provision standards.

Whilst the FIT and ANGSt accessibility catchments are recognised benchmarks, they are not as relevant locally in comparison to accessibility standards derived from the community survey. Further justification to the use of the community survey to help inform provision standards is detailed in Part 3.4.

Accessibility catchment standards work best when reflecting the walk time distances individuals are willing to travel. Drive time catchments become less relevant when examining surpluses and deficiencies on a smaller scale (such as at an analysis area level) as they cover such large areas of travel; in some instances the whole Borough. Consequently, we recommend the walk time catchments are utilised as the primary accessibility catchments. However, the drive time catchments for some forms of provision such as the country parks may still act as a useful tool to help inform potential priorities.

3.4 Quantity

Quantity standards can be used to identify areas of shortfalls and help with setting requirements for future developments.

No quantity standard is suggested for open space provision such as cemeteries or green corridors. Cemetery provision should be determined by instances of demand such as burial capacity and local need. Green corridor provision should be considered as a general design principle for developments.

Guidance on quantity levels is published by Fields In Trust (FIT) in its document *Beyond the Six Acre Standard* (2015). The guidance provides standards for three types of open space provision; parks and gardens, amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural greenspace. The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) offers guidance on allotments. FIT also suggests 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population of equipped/ designated playing space as a guideline quantity standard for play provision.

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Table 3.4.1: National suggested quantity standards

Typology	Organisation	Suggested provision levels (Ha per 1,000 population)
Allotments	National Society for Allotment & Leisure Gardeners	0.25
Amenity greenspace	Fields In Trust	0.60
Parks and gardens		0.80
Provision for children and young people		0.25
Semi / natural greenspaces		1.80

FIT suggests 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard for play provision. Overall, Chesterfield has a current provision level of 0.05 hectares per 1,000 population. However, FIT also recognises that there are instances where the surrounding open space of the site in which the play provision is located will also contribute to the play offer. If such sites* are also included in the calculation then a total of 37 hectares is identified; an equivalent to 0.36 hectares per 1,000 population.

Consequently, the quantity provision tables for each analysis area (Part 4) contain two rows for provision of children and young people. The first row only includes designated equipped play sites; whilst the second row also includes the wider informal land of the 'parent' site. This is only applicable to 'parent' amenity sites. It does not include parks and gardens due to the often-large size of provision and difficulty in only allocating a proportion of a park site to wider informal play.

Table 3.4.2 sets out the quantity figures for current provision levels identified and the existing Chesterfield standards.

Table 3.4.2: Comparison of current provision and existing standards

Typology	Hectares per 1,000 population	
	Current provision levels	Existing standards [†]
Allotment	0.39	n/a
Amenity greenspace	0.89	n/a
Parks & gardens	1.06	0.50
Provision for children & young people	0.05	0.29
	0.36*	
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	3.00	1.00

There is a need for caution when using two current provision levels which both include the same land/sites. For instance, a site could feature under the typology of amenity greenspace as well as within the figure for play provision including the surrounding informal land. Whilst this is acceptable for comparing current levels to Borough and national figures; when setting quantity standards any double-counting of such land should be avoided.

* Includes any amenity space hosting a play area. Does not include parks & gardens or natural greenspace due to large size

[†] Source: CBC Parks and Open Spaces Strategy

Recommendation for quantity standards

The recommendation for open space is for the current provision levels to be used as the basis for the recommended quantity standards for Chesterfield.

The existing provision standards are not justified for use as it is not possible to explain how they have been set. There are also some typologies without a provision standard. It is also noticeable that the existing standards are below the current provision levels identified as part of the 2018 review and update of the open space audit.

Similarly, the national benchmark quantity standards are not deemed as appropriate for use as they do not take into consideration the local circumstances, distribution and historical trends of the area. An approach using locally derived quantity standards ensures more reflective standards are set as they are based on and take consideration to current local provision levels and views.

In general, the amount of open space provision is considered to be very or quite satisfactory for most typologies by respondents to the community survey.

Parks, country parks and nature reserves are types of open space viewed as predominantly being very or quite satisfactory. A total of 73% of respondents rate the quantity of parks provision as very/quite satisfactory. Country parks also receive a similar response with 75% of respondents very/quite satisfied with quantity. A similar trend can be seen in the responses to nature reserves with most respondents rating quantity as very/quite satisfactory (77%).

In addition, most respondents rate quantity as very/quite satisfactory for outdoor networks (63%), amenity greenspace (52%) and cemeteries (38%).

The exceptions are for allotments (26%) and teenage provision (15%) which have a slightly lower proportion in comparison to other typologies. However, this is likely to reflect the niche use and user numbers of these types of open space.

Similarly, availability is also positive with respondents viewing parks as very/quite satisfactory (86%). Country parks (75%), nature reserves (72%), outdoor networks (67%), amenity greenspace (59%) and play areas for younger children (55%) are also viewed by respondents as being generally quite or very satisfactory.

On this basis, the recommendation is for the current provision levels to be used as the basis for the recommended quantity standards for Chesterfield. This will better reflect existing provision levels and expectations whilst ensuring future demand from housing growth is not detrimental to existing provision levels.

As highlighted above caution to using two current provision levels which both include the same land/sites is required. For instance, a site could feature under the typology of amenity greenspace as well as within the figure for play provision including the surrounding informal land. Whilst this is acceptable for comparing current levels to Borough and national figures; when setting quantity standards any double-counting of such land should be avoided.

Table 3.4.3 sets out the recommendations for the quantity standards in Chesterfield. An explanation of what each quantity standard consists of is also provided.

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This approach ensures no double counting of provision through the setting of the quantity standards whilst still reflecting the current levels and uses of open space provision.

Table 3.4.3: Recommended quantity standards

Typology	Explanation	Recommended quantity standard (Ha per 1,000 population)
Allotments	All allotments	0.39
Amenity greenspace	All amenity greenspace which do not host a play site (as well as sites over two ha hosting a play site)	0.68
Parks and gardens	All parks and gardens	1.06
Provision for children and young people	All equipped play provision including informal amenity greenspaces (below two ha) which host a play site	0.27
Semi / natural greenspaces	All natural and semi-natural greenspace	3.00

The recommended quantity standard for amenity greenspace and provision for children and young people in Table 3.4.3 is different to the current provision levels set out in Table 3.4.2.

This reflects the need to ensure no double counting of sites. Consequently, the recommended standard for provision for children and young people consists of all equipped play provision as well as the 'parent' host amenity greenspace. Any amenity greenspace over two hectares which hosts a play site is not included in the provision for children and young people standard as it is considered more appropriate to be within the standard for amenity greenspace.

The amenity greenspace standard therefore consists of any amenity greenspace site not hosting a play site as well as any amenity greenspace site hosting a play site, but which is over two hectares in size. This avoids any double counting of provision and ensures the larger amenity greenspace sites (over two hectares) with play provision do not skew the figures for the provision for children and young people standard.

