

Open Space Assessment 2012

1	Introduction and Methodology	3
2	Implications of National Policy	7
3	Setting Local Standards and Local Evidence	15
4	Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space	21
5	Amenity Green Space	32
6	Green Corridors and Urban Fringe	66
7	Provision for Children and Young People	78
8	Civic Spaces	125
9	Allotments	129
10	Cemetries and Churchyards	135
11	Water Based Recreation	137

1 Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Open Space, sport and recreation facilities, if well located, accessible, well designed and maintained, can make a major positive contribution to ensuring that villages, towns and cities are attractive places in which to live, work and visit and that people have adequate opportunities to maintain healthy lifestyles.

1.2 The aim of this local assessment is to provide a framework to enable positive planning of accessible open space, sport and recreation facilities that meet the needs of local communities within and visitors to the District. This evidence will underpin policies and proposals to be incorporated into the Lichfield District Local Plan

1.3 In today's society the need to provide a range of different types of quality accessible green space is increasingly important. The provision of areas for organised sports, children's play and passive recreation pursuits can improve and maintain physical and mental health and well being provide areas for socialising, as well as contributing to the quality of the environment.

1.4 This report provides an audit and assessment of a variety open spaces. It also assesses the long term requirements in terms of the quantity and quality of the various types of open spaces, sport and recreation for future provision in meeting local need where appropriate, through establishing minimum standards to be achieved.

1.5 The report analyses open space, sport and recreation facilities in terms of the existing situation and identifies areas with deficiencies and surpluses. In relation to some typologies it is easier to establish where deficiencies exist such as outdoor sports or amenity greenspace, whereas others such as green corridors, cemeteries and churchyards are not as easy. Where appropriate this report also sets out recommendations in the form of local standards that we should aspire to.

1.6 The evidence provided within this study will be incorporated into and assist in formulating proposals and policies within the Local Plan. The detail of the assessments can be found within the Open Space Assessment 2012 Appendices.

1.7 In a change from previous District plans, the plan period for the Local Plan is intended to be longer, covering the period 2008-2028. With this in mind, and to ensure that planning policy delivers the open space, sport and recreational requirements to meet the existing need and forecast population growth, policies will need to be sufficiently flexible and subject to review, as the evidence is updated and monitored throughout that plan period.

Methodology

1.8 The aim of the study is to:

- provide a clear picture of the existing situation in relation to open space, sport and recreation in terms of provision both in quantity and quality;
- identify existing deficiencies/surpluses;
- set out how to address the needs of the district now and in the coming years to 2028;

- set minimum standards to be achieved in new developments; and
- set out other mechanisms and ways of improving quantity and quality of open space, sport and recreation within areas shown to be deficient.

1.9 The approach to carrying out the audit and assessment was derived from 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities,' the companion guide to PPG17. Whilst PPG17 has been replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the accompanying companion guide has not been superseded and still provides the best guidance on the carrying out of local open space assessments. The methodology for assessing the different type of open spaces, sport and recreation varies slightly dependant on the typology being assessed in order to best obtain relevant accurate information. Summaries of the methodology undertaken can be found at the start of each section. Overall the methodology broadly follows the steps set out below:

Methodology	
Step 1: Identifying Local Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review existing strategies, guidance and their impact. • Review existing policies, standards and their effectiveness. • Consult local communities
Step 2: Audit of Local Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and undertake audit of open spaces, sport and recreational facilities.
Step 3: Set Provision Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine quantity, quality and accessibility standards. • Determine minimum acceptable size and design standards. • Determine hierarchy of open space provision. • Determine normalised costs.
Step 4: Apply the Provision Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify deficiencies against quality and accessibility standards. • Identify deficiencies against quantity standards. • Identify local opportunities for improved sport and recreation.
Step 5: Draft Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft policies/ recommendations • Consider policies through emerging Local Plan

Table 1.1 Methodology

Identifying Local Needs

Policy Context

1.10 The initial starting point in undertaking this assessment is to consider the broad policy framework within which open space, sport and recreation is set and to this end national through to district wide plans and strategies have been reviewed.

Assessing Local Needs

1.11 In order to assess local needs a variety of methods were used including local surveys, consultation with Parish Councils and organised local groups/clubs, external consultants and other relevant reports as well as utilising local knowledge and information from a variety of officers within the District Council.

Audit of Local Provision

1.12 In order to assess the current supply of open space, sport and recreation, an audit has been undertaken. This audit has been carried out over a number of years and consists of surveys and site visits of existing open spaces as well as external studies into outdoor and indoor sports facilities. A number of questionnaires and postal surveys targeting local residents and users were also utilised, together with information from providers, land owners and Parish Councils. The information combined has resulted in an audit which has assessed the quantity and quality, along with the accessibility, of the different types of open space, sport and recreational facilities.

1.13 The Playing Pitch Strategy was published in 2011 and provides a detailed position of the outdoor playing pitch, bowling green and tennis court provision across the District. Additionally, the Facilities Planning Model (January 2010) assesses the current supply of indoor sports provision and the supply that will be required in the future. These two studies along with this Open Space Assessment will combine to provide a detailed picture of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation provision within Lichfield District.

Open Space, Sport and Recreation covered by this study

1.14 Detailed definitions of the individual categories outlined below are set out at the beginning of the relevant chapter heading. Briefly they include the following:

- **Natural and semi-natural greenspaces** – for wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education awareness;
- **Amenity greenspace** – for informal activities close to home or work, which enhance the appearance of an area;
- **Green corridors** – for walking, cycling or riding for leisure and travel and as wildlife corridors;
- **Urban Fringe** – accessible open areas on the edge of Lichfield, Burntwood and large settlements;
- **Provision for children's play and young people** – for play and social interaction such as equipped play, ball courts, skateparks;
- **Allotments** – for growing own produce;

- **Parks and Gardens** – provide high quality opportunities informal recreational and community events;
- **Cemeteries and churchyards** – provide quiet areas and for wildlife conservation;
- **Civic spaces** – provide a setting/settings for civic buildings for public and community events.
- **Water spaces** - lakes, ponds, rivers and canals;

Setting of and Applying Provision Standards

1.15 As a result of the detailed assessments in relation to quality, quantity and accessibility of the various types of open space, sport and recreation facilities, locally based standards and/or recommendations have been set for indoor sports, equipped childrens playspace, amenity greenspace, parks and gardens, natural and semi natural greenspaces and allotments. Whilst no standards have been set for the remaining typologies they contribute to the overall framework of spaces and an aspirational statement has been set. Further work has been carried out in relation to qualitative assessments of equipped children's play areas aimed more specifically at assessing 'quality of the play experience', the equipment and type of play areas available. This was conducted during 2011/12 and uses criteria to base qualitative assessments that have arisen from engaging young people and others directly involved in play provision.

1.16 It has not been possible or practicable to set standards for all types of open space, for example green corridors, cemeteries and churchyards. However, this does not exclude the consideration of these types when considering proposals for development or improvement within the District.

1.17 It should be noted that there are other types of open space that cannot be categorised but are still significant in terms of accesibility and community use. An example of such sites would be Curborough Sprint Course. The importance of such facilities should be recognised where there is clear evidence of local support and usage of such sites.

1.18 Standards suggested in this assessment reflect the existing provision and consideration of views gathered. Settlement summaries within the Appendices set out the existing situation in relation to the various types of open space, sport and recreation facilities.

Draft Policies

1.19 The Local Plan: Strategy will include policies to direct development and identify areas of protection within the District to 2028. Included within the document will be policies for open space, sport and recreation to ensure that additional provision can be secured, and existing facilities protected and improved where necessary. These policies will draw from the evidence and recommendations contained within this assessment along with the Playing Pitch Strategy and other relevant evidence, plans and strategies.

2 Implications of National Policy

Implications of National Policy

2.1 National planning policy guidance which impacts on the consideration of open space, sport and recreation provision is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and various other strategies and reports. Over the years there has been a trend towards, and emphasis on, ensuring better quality and accessibility of existing open spaces and future provision, greater emphasis on involving community stakeholders in the decision making process, working towards standards that are based upon local needs and in exploring all potential funding sources including securing funding where appropriate through new developments. The NPPF states the importance that open spaces and opportunities for sports and recreation have in contributing to the health and well being of communities.

2.2 More recently 'Green Infrastructure (GI)', defined by Natural England as 'a strategically planned network of high quality greenspaces and other environmental features' has been promoted as a holistic approach to green spaces. It is suggested that GI should be designed and managed as a multi-functional resource capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Green Infrastructure includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, allotments and private gardens". A Green Infrastructure Study is currently being undertaken by the District Council and will form part of the evidence base of the Local Plan.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

2.3 The NPPF replaces all national planning policy guidance including PPG17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation. This new planning framework places emphasis on Local Planning Authorities providing robust assessments of the needs and opportunities for open spaces which will inform planning policies. The NPPF states that local audits of open space should consider both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of open space provision so that local standards may be set.

2.4 Whilst PPG17 has now been superseded, the accompanying companion guide "Assessing Needs and Opportunities" still remains relevant. The companion guide sets out the principle that Local Authorities should set standards for open space, sport and recreational needs, and provides good practise guidance on producing robust Open Space Assessments. The guidance states that standards should be informed by robust assessment of needs and opportunities. Specifically, standards should cover the accessibility and quality of open space and facilities as well as the quantity. In line with this guidance, a comprehensive audit and assessment of open space and sport and recreational facilities has been undertaken to inform and support local planning policy.

Other Strategies

2.5 'Playing to Win' was published in 2008. This is a strategy aimed at increasing take up of sport and building a world-leading sports development system in England. It aimed to engage a million more people in regular sport participation and produce a seamless ladder of talent development from school to elite level, with opportunities for more competition and more coaching.

2.6 In the wake of the 2012 Olympics a further strategy '**Grow Sustain Excel**' 2008-2011 - Sport England Strategy was produced by Sport England, it aim to increase sport participation within communities, identify and develop talent early and ensure quality to maximise potential.

2.7 Other national documents such as Sport England's - 'Making England an Active and Successful Sporting Nation', Choosing Health White Paper, DfES 'Learning through PE, Physical Education and Sport Strategy for Young People (2008) are all aimed at promoting the profile of and benefits of taking part in physical activities.

2.8 The Active People Survey is carried out nationally by Sport England and provides a nationally accepted measure of adult participation in sports across the country. The survey has been carried out on an annual/bi-annual basis and the most recent survey is Active People 4 (AP4).

2.9 Sports Across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent (SASSOT) Nortoft 2009: SASSOT provides a strategic link between the Regional Sports Facilities Framework (RSFF) and other strategies. It prioritises investment in the larger facilities where gaps are identified across the sub-region up to 2021 following the vision set out in the RSFF. It aim is to increase participation in sport by 1% per year through new and improved facilities and includes facilities defined as being at 'hub level' and above, that is facilities that meet the needs of the whole of the SASSOT area for specific sports including high quality training and competition needs at national level as well as other key sports facilities used for general participation, training and low level competition. Aspirations for sports facilities within the district identified within the SASSOT study include:

- A new leisure centre for Lichfield consisting of a pool with teaching pool, sports hall, gym, a sand-based Synthetic Turf Pitch (STP) and outdoor pitches;
- A new closed road cycle track of around 1.5 to 2km in length. The local authority have been discussing proposals with British Cycling;
- A new 3G STP at Chasetown FC, possibly linked to ChasetownSportsCollege. As part of the £21 million scheme to improve facilities at specialist sports colleges, Chasetown Sports College has secured funding for £305,000 towards an STP. The Friary School has also been awarded £225,000 towards an STP under the same scheme; and
- If the option arises, the Council would like to operate/manage the sports facilities at Whittington Defence Medical Services, for both community and service personnel use.
- In addition to the above, consideration is being given to the further development of a multi-sport site at Lichfield Cricket and Hockey Club. The site, located on Eastern Avenue, also provides facilities for Lichfield Diamonds FC and Whittington RC. The possibilities of providing tennis and in the long-term, expanding current grass pitch provision to accommodate more rugby and football and providing indoor facilities for cricket coaching and practise are being considered. The site is allocated as a Recreation Zone in the 1998 Local Plan, but is located within the Green Belt, which may have implications for development.

Implications of Sub Regional Policy

2.10 The Staffordshire Structure Plan sets a framework for the spatial planning of Staffordshire. As the Lichfield District Local Plan progresses through to adoption, setting the framework for spatial planning at a local level, the Structure Plan and its saved policies will cease to form part of the planning framework for the District.

2.11 At present the Structure Plan contains several references to the need to protect and enhance natural and cultural assets: ensuring that where appropriate new open spaces are incorporated within new developments; encouraging walking and cycling via accessible safe routes to open spaces (T4); retaining and enhancing the environment, including open spaces within conservation areas; protecting open space corridors such as those running along canals as well as resisting the loss through development of accessible open spaces which have a high recreational value. This will also have an impact upon the detailed Playing Pitch Strategy which is covered later in this chapter.

2.12 Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Delivery Plan identifies 13 priorities for 2008-2009 including increasing adult participation, raise profile of and support implementation of the 9 Community Sports Networks delivery plans, supporting voluntary sector in developing and delivering increased capacity and participation together with a number of priorities for increasing sport and promoting better partnership working.

2.13 The **Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent 2012 Games Legacy Action Plan** aims to ensure that Staffordshire plays its part in making the 2012 Olympic Games a success.

2.14 Other open space, sport and recreation studies have also been undertaken by adjacent authorities; this is of particular relevance when looking into existing provision of playing pitches and other formal leisure activities such as indoor sports in terms of demand and supply, because local residents travel out of the District to other facilities in settlements nearby and similarly residents from outside the district travel into Lichfield District.

Implications of Local Policy

Lichfield District Local Plan 1998

2.15 The Lichfield Local Plan was adopted in 1998 and is to be replaced by the new, emerging Local Plan in due course. Following changes within the legislative planning framework in 2004 the policies of the local plan now comprise those that were 'saved' at September 2007 following a Direction from the Secretary of State. Following the publication of the NPPF all 'saved' Local Plan policies will continue to carry weight where they are in conformity with the NPPF.

2.16 The majority of policies relating to open space and recreation were saved and concern the provision of both formal and informal recreation, facilities for sport in urban and rural areas and the need for and protection of open spaces. Local plan policy also makes provision for both local authority and private investment in increasing facilities within the district. Recreation Zones are also identified on the edge of Lichfield and Burntwood as areas suitable for a range of outdoor sports. The Council's policy does not allow the loss of existing playing pitches unless appropriate alternative pitches are put forward or there is overwhelming evidence which suggests that there is no current or likely future demand.

2.17 The current 1998 Local Plan policies only deal with overall standards for the quantitative provision of open space and relates only to the provision of on-site facilities.

Review of existing Local Plan policy and standards and their effectiveness.

2.18 Lichfield District Local Plan contains several policies related to the provision of open space, leisure and recreation facilities. These saved policies, consistent with the NPPF, include:

- R1 – Open Space Provision
- R3 – Recreational Buildings
- R4 – Sports Playing Fields
- R5 – Loss of Sports Pitches/Recreation Grounds

2.19 In addition to these policies there are also several others relating to particular sites such as:

- L35, L36, B22 Recreation Zones
- L37 Lichfield Linear Park
- B24 Chasewater Country park
- L49 Framework Open Space
- L 50 Landscape Improvements in Framework Open Space
- EA14 Tame & Trent Valley
- Emp11 Wyrley and Essington Canal

2.20 It should also be noted that many open space and play areas have been delivered as part of further housing development.

2.21 A simple SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis was undertaken to examine views on open space provision in Lichfield. Some of the key conclusions are set out below:

An Overview of Open Space Provision	
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good level of infrastructure has been secured in new development areas • The District has a well established and tested system of securing provision in conjunction with major development sites – good experience of using Section106 Agreements. • The District has several valuable parks. • The District has a good number and range of accessible open spaces. • High level of biodiversity in open spaces.
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a deficiency of open space in most parts of the District but particularly in terms of equipped children’s play provision. • Poor perception of open spaces.

An Overview of Open Space Provision	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources, for example developer contributions towards open space maintenance have affected the quality of maintenance of new open space. • The overall quality of open space has suffered due to lack of resources. • Lack of communication, co-ordination and promotion for open spaces. • Lack of specific facilities such as skate parks and equipped play areas. • Narrowly focused Local Plan policy has limited the opportunity for appropriate developer contributions towards open space. • There is a lack of assessment of needs and opportunities for open space, sport and recreation and a lack of an overarching strategy.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy access to high quality countryside around the urban centres. • Potential economic, social and health benefits from improving open spaces. • Range of funding opportunities including developers, lottery etc. • Potential for innovative approaches to managing open spaces by working with other organisations. • Increased community involvement. • New spaces with different purposes e.g. new public squares in the urban areas. • Enhanced biodiversity.
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vandalism. • Perceived fear of crime. • Development on open spaces. • Lack of funding. • Lack of political priority. • Perceived fear of crime. • Pressure to use previously developed land.

Table 2.1 An Overview of Open Space Provision

2.22 It appears that despite narrowly focused Local Plan policies, the District has achieved success in negotiating agreements with developers in delivering further open space provision and improvements. Some examples include redevelopment of Bison Concrete where contributions were secured towards improved facilities at Shortbutts Park. The development of Beacon School and Sandford House enabled contributions to be secured towards improvements at Beacon Park and Holly Grove Lane secured improvements to open spaces in Burntwood. This provides an indication that there is potential to negotiate off-site contributions towards open space improvements within the District.

2.23 Monies have also been secured through external grants and other sources of funding. For example, the Heritage Lottery Fund bid which was successful and has led to significant improvements to Beacon Park, Minster Pool and the Memorial Gardens in Lichfield City.

A Plan for Lichfield District 2012-2016

2.24 The focus of the plan is to create a District where people love to live and where people have an improved quality of life. The plan sets out three key themes which set out what the District will aim to achieve over the period of the plan. Several aspects of the plan can be linked directly to the quality of open spaces and recreation facilities. The plan states that the enhancement and protection of open spaces within the District will be a key part of creating places where people want to live and improve their quality of life.

Greens and Open Spaces Strategy 2008

2.25 The Greens and Open Spaces Strategy sets out the District Council's vision for greens and open spaces within the District, including the provision and enhancement of the parks and green public spaces, along with an action plan, methods and timescales needed to meet this vision. In order to ensure that the strategy is delivered, the vision is translated into a series of aims and objectives set within an action plan which can then be monitored. The Strategy is outcome focused with specific actions and milestones identified. This Strategy is part of a wider focus on how Lichfield District develops over the next 10-20 years.

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Strategy 2005

2.26 This assessment covered some 422 open spaces and aimed to provide a clear picture of the current provision of outdoor play space and covered amenity greenspace, casual play, equipped play, outdoor sports pitches and other outdoor sports.

2.27 The assessment led to initial standards for each of the open space, sport and recreation types assessed. As part of the preparation of this document a number of consultation exercises were carried out and/or drawn upon. These identified concern over the lack of equipped play areas and the quality and maintenance of open spaces. The strategy also concluded that Local Plan policies applied to date were successful in delivering contributions for new open spaces and improvements to existing, however contributions for ongoing maintenance of these areas was less successful.

Open Space Assessment May 2008

2.28 This assessment concentrated on the provision of facilities for children and considered 39 sites spread throughout the district splitting by type into LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs. This assessment highlighted those sites which scored poorly in relation to quality of physical features such as paths, lighting, presence of bins and benches. Further work on quality from the perspective of those using the play areas in terms of their play value and on equipment needs to be carried out. The assessment drew from Household and Omnibus survey data which showed that the majority felt that there was sufficient provision for children's play although with a quarter stated that there was insufficient. This study also provided the evidence which led to the standard recommended for walking distances to this type of open space of 10 minutes or 480 metres.

Lichfield District Sport and Recreation Strategy

2.29 The Strategy aims to provide opportunities to enable residents to participate in good quality leisure and sporting activities that enable their skills to be developed.

Lichfield District Play Strategy 2007

2.30 The Play Strategy 2007-2012 covers most aspects of play including indoor provision. It primarily focuses on improving quantity, quality and accessibility to play. As part of its preparation views were sought from both users and providers including Parish Councils. Key findings within the strategy include that football and riding bikes were the most popular pursuits amongst children over 6 years and that there is a lack of facilities for teenage children along with general support for larger informal play areas. A number of projects are identified some of which have since been completed and are now open, and others are ongoing.

2.31 In addition the Play Strategy sets out a series of strategic objectives in relation to children's play, which include:

- Promotion and profile raising of play and its importance;
- Ensuring play areas are safe and well maintained;
- Ensuring each community has a play space;
- Improvement of fixed and natural play areas within larger parks;
- Encouragement of inclusive play for all children;
- Promotion of mobile facilities within rural areas; and
- Reconsideration of bye-laws which place restrictions on play

Indoor Facilities Planning Modelling 2010

2.32 The main conclusions arising from this study of indoor facilities (swimming pools and sports halls) is that, given the existing provision, together with population increases forecast over the next 20 years, consideration should be given to increased pool space and hall provision within the District to meet unmet demand and projected population and demographic change.

2.33 This could be met through the provision of:

- A new pool of a minimum 4 lanes (equivalent of 212sqm) to be built by 2021 (which needs to be financially viable) and/or by extending opening arrangements of existing dual use facilities currently only available to community and other organised groups for use by the general public. It should be noted that the latter option may not generate sufficient additional pool availability to positively impact on the amount of water space/time needed to meet demand.
- A new sports hall of a minimum equivalent size of 6 badminton courts.

Playing Pitch, Tennis Court and Bowling Green Strategy 2012

2.34 This study considered outdoor pitch provision for football, rugby, cricket, hockey as well as greens for bowls and courts for tennis. It assessed the existing levels of participation and provision within the District as well as assessing the requirements for playing pitches,

tennis courts and bowling greens in the future, ultimately providing the information necessary for considering need when making decisions on future development proposals. This study will also be key in informing the District Council's leisure strategies. The document provides key recommendations by sport type and by settlement. Key recommendations include:

- Creating new pitches where there are identified shortfalls in provision.
- Protecting playing fields from development unless it can be proven that sites are surplus to requirements.
- Securing existing arrangements for use of pitches in medium to long term and seeking to increase number of secured pitches.
- Re-designating pitches where appropriate.
- Securing additional contributions from new developments to improve existing or providing new pitches

3 Setting Local Standards and Local Evidence

Setting Local Standards

3.1 Open space standards are best set locally so as to reflect local circumstances, such as differing demographic profiles, popular local/regional activities and the extent of existing built development in an area. The NPPF states that policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities. 'Assessing needs and opportunities' furthers the emphasis on the importance of Local Authorities setting locally derived standards when it comes to open space provision.

3.2 Having carried out an assessment of local needs and an audit of existing provision and opportunities, it is then possible to set locally derived standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities. Local standards should include:

- A local quantity standard for each typology (how much new provision may be needed);
- A local quality standard or vision (against which to measure the need for enhancement of existing facilities), including a standard to which new facilities should be built. Some typologies are more difficult to assess and to set specific standards such as natural and semi-natural spaces or cemeteries and churchyards). In some instances a descriptive quality standard is set out to which sites should aim to aspire to; and
- A local accessibility standard including distance thresholds. This considers how far residents should be expected to travel to the variety of typologies, together with consideration of the cost of using a facility.

3.3 Setting robust local standards based on assessments of need and audits of existing facilities will form the basis for redressing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies through the planning process.

3.4 Open Space Assessments Five Step Process: 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' sets out a five step process for undertaking a local assessment of open space. The NPPF did not replace the companion guide to PPG17 which provides guidance on producing Open Space Assessments. The guidance contained within 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities' focuses on producing local assessments and standards which is in line with the NPPF. As such the five step process outlined within the companion guide is still considered to be best practise in producing robust local open space assessments. This process has been used as the methodology for this Assessment and is as follows:

- Step 1 - Identifying local needs
- Step 2 - Auditing local provision
- Step 3 - Setting provision standards
- Step 4 - Applying provision standards
- Step 5 - Recommendations

3.5 Quantity: Assessing what is the appropriate **quantity** for the different types of open space, sports and recreation is not simple, some typologies are easier to define in terms of quantity.

3.6 Quantitative need can vary between settlements due the nature and size, historic provision and locations as well as parish/community involvement. These variations can result in some settlements having higher quantities of some open spaces, sport and recreational facilities than others.

3.7 In some instances certain categories are easier to quantify and set standards such as equipped children's play areas and amenity open space. Whereas standards for, civic spaces, allotments, green corridors and churchyards are more difficult to quantify and may in some instances result in no standard being set. For the purposes of this study and depending on the open space category, some standards may vary across the district between the urban areas of Lichfield and Burntwood, key rural settlements and the smaller rural settlements and whilst setting minimum standards it is important that they are flexible enough to reflect different local circumstances that may exist or be identified when evidence is updated throughout the plan period.

3.8 Quality: The quality of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities depends on many factors, its fitness for purpose in terms of its design, management, maintenance as well as the expectations of the end users. Qualitative information has been gathered from users of certain spaces such as equipped play areas, amenity open spaces and parks and gardens. Information gathering will be an ongoing process with a need to update qualitative information already gathered as well as programming resources in to obtaining information from users of facilities.

3.9 The approach to establishing and setting the qualitative criteria against which to assess and set within standards varies. The indoor and outdoor sport and recreation studies carried out by Sport England and Neil Allen Associates use different methodologies that reflect their specific requirements.

3.10 The qualitative approach to amenity greenspace and in part to equipped children's play spaces considers and scores the quality of elements such as surfaces and boundary treatments both hard and soft, accessibility within the site, furniture including seating, lighting, bins, car parking, toilets, interpretation and cleanliness.

3.11 In scoring quality of equipped children's play an additional aspect was scored, that of 'play quality'. Details of the criteria used to score this element of quality is set out in the equipped play chapter but focus more on those elements from a users viewpoint that contribute to a quality play experience.

3.12 Other typologies that are more difficult to assess include natural and semi natural greenspaces many, of which are important from a biodiversity aspect, together with green corridors and water spaces, cemeteries and churchyards. Many of these typologies, in terms of quality, are due to their nature, ownership and/or specific management requirements or plans, subject to a variety and often complex set of external influences.

Accessibility: It is important to ensure that residents are able to access open spaces, sport and recreation facilities within a reasonable distance of their home. Clearly appropriate thresholds should relate to the particular type of open space, sport or recreation facility. In assessing appropriate accessibility thresholds, consideration has been given to published guidance together with feedback from community and residents information gathering exercises. This approach will mean that different types of open space, sport or recreation facilities may have different thresholds. It is more likely that shorter distances and times would be appropriate in accessing amenity greenspaces and children's equipped play areas as they are more likely to be visited on foot, whereas other types of open space may have a larger catchment as they are visited by car and other forms of transport.

3.13 Accessibility thresholds are based on straight line distances and it is recognised that barriers may exist which impair accessibility, such as roads, railway lines and canals. To this end accessibility distances have been measured using a GIS map based system within which it has been possible to gauge accessibility to different types of open space. This turn shows those areas which are not within a reasonable distance. Those areas outside the accessibility thresholds for a particular type of open space, sport or recreation are considered to be deficient. ⁽ⁱ⁾

3.14 In general, feedback from residents has indicated that in most instances a 10 minute walk time which roughly equates to around 480 metres is considered acceptable in accessing most types of open space where access is by foot.

3.15 Local Needs: Key to producing a robust local assessment is the emphasis that is placed on reflecting and taking into account local needs in the process of assessing the quantity and quality of open spaces, sports and recreation provision. This forms a key element of the evidence to underpin any related strategies and importantly reflect the standards set.

3.16 In order to assist in assessing local needs, various methods were used to engage residents, organisations, users and owners involved in or having an interest in open space, sport and recreation within the district. Methods included:

- Questionnaires:
 - Parish Councils
 - Residents - both as part of wider general questionnaires and those targeting specific sites and proposals
 - sports clubs
- Public Events:
 - exhibitions
 - workshops
- Door to door interviews

ⁱ The maps contained within this assessment display the accessibility buffers around each type of open space. However the buffers shown do not take into account any barriers that may restrict access such as major roads and railways. It is important that such barriers are considered when applying any policies

- Telephone calls to organised clubs
- Consultation on documents
 - Open Space Assessment 2005 & 2008
 - Local Plan
 - Playing Pitches, Tennis Courts and Bowls Strategy
 - Greens and Open Spaces Strategy
 - Play Strategy

Summary of results: For a more detailed summary of results from surveys, questionnaires and consultations see the Open Space Assessment 2012 Appendices.

3.17 The Citizens Questionnaire was conducted during 2011 and included a series of questions on leisure services, parks and open spaces. The survey found that a majority of people are satisfied with the parks and open spaces within the District although a significant proportion of Burntwood residents felt there are not enough facilities for children and young people within the town.

3.18 The General Household Survey Lichfield District Council 2006 included questions related to parks and open spaces and people's perception of them. It concluded that most residents were satisfied that the District Council had fulfilled its duty to keep land well maintained, however just over 10% were dissatisfied. Accessibility to open spaces and parks was highlighted as an area that had improved over recent years.

3.19 An Open Space, Sport and Recreation Survey was specifically undertaken which aimed at obtaining residents views on provision. Whilst most confirmed that they use their local park most often and that they agreed that open spaces were generally available within walking distance from their home, there were mixed views as to whether they were satisfied with these spaces. Specific parks were identified within both Lichfield and Burntwood as being poorer in quality (Redwood Park and Chase Terrace Park – Burntwood and Beacon Park, Darnford Park and Shortbutts Lane – Lichfield City) together with inadequate provision within some rural settlements including Alrewas, Armitage with Handsacre, Clifton Campville, Fazeley/Mile Oak and Fradley.

3.20 The need for improvements to off - road cycle and footpaths was considered important in encouraging the use of and accessibility to open spaces.

3.21 As expected, most journeys to local open spaces accessible within 10 minutes were by foot with longer journeys being made by car.

3.22 An Omnibus Survey (2004) (See Technical Appendix) confirmed that satisfaction with parks and open spaces was around 75% and that the proportion which considered they had deteriorated over recent years is far smaller than those who considered that they had improved. The survey showed that parks were generally well used by local residents, primarily for walking. Around a quarter of respondents felt that there was insufficient provision specifically for young children and teenagers and for outdoor sport; this was perceived to

be more acute in Burntwood than LichfieldCity. As anticipated, the survey showed that up to a 10 minute walk time was acceptable and any longer journeys were most likely to be made by car.

3.23 The 20:20 Vision event specifically related to LichfieldCity highlighted the need for more and better facilities for children of all ages, from equipped play areas to specific skate and cycle park provision. Other key outcomes included the general need to improve the quality of spaces physically, environmentally and visually and some areas which were felt to be poorer than others. The Lichfield City Parks household survey confirmed that city centre parks were valued and used as open spaces largely for passive activities (walking). Poor quality and lack of basic street furniture was highlighted as an area for improvement.

3.24 There have been various surveys and studies related to Chasewater as a major resource close to Burntwood. Specific door to door interviews were carried out in relation to Chasewater Country Park and Gentleshaw Common which aimed to gather information in relation to the introduction of grazing as part of a long term strategy to protect and enhance heathland habitats. It concluded that the majority of residents local to these areas used them frequently. Amongst the issues raised were difficulties of accessibility in certain areas, problems of misuse by motorbikes, vandalism, over-use of mountain bikes in some areas, concern over loss of trees and need for additional planting, and the need to protect wildlife and habitats.

3.25 As the only significant expanse of water used for formal water sports within the district, Chasewater was identified as having further potential for encouraging leisure use. Chasewater was also the focus of an earlier study aimed at looking at its future potential. This study highlighted its sub regional attraction with an estimated population within a 15 minute drive time at around 205,000 and just over 1.1million within 30 minutes. It saw growth in visitor numbers from 150,000 in 1997 to 400,000 in more recent years. The report concluded that whilst there are opportunities for visitor growth of Chasewater, future policy guidance applied to this site would need to address and balance planning and conservation issues with any leisure, tourism and economic development objectives.

3.26 From the 'Chasewater Hub,' which considered the potential for improvements and regeneration potential, it was clear that there were many existing weaknesses and strengths in taking this area forward. It is an area that needs to be tackled sensitively balancing the need to protect and enhance its rich biodiversity interests with any potential regeneration proposals.

3.27 Some open spaces have been the subject of specific consultation exercises in relation to existing open spaces. For example at Chase Terrace, Burntwood, there was opposition to formalising the site with goals for football but support for environmental improvements such as tree planting and dog bins; at Shortbutts Lane, Lichfield, there was support for additional opportunities for sport, play and walking. Extensive exercises have been carried out with the local community at Fradley in order to guide the creation of new facilities.

3.28 A fairly consistent theme runs through the majority of data obtained on the provision and facilities for young children and teenagers as part of the various surveys that have been carried out over recent years. The lack of provision of facilities for teenagers was highlighted as one of the most important issues which contributed to overall quality of life with later

surveys linking this to increased perception of anti-social behaviour. In terms of improvements that were suggested, the need for more 'game type facilities' and equipped play areas were highlighted.

3.29 Parish Councils have a good general knowledge in the state of open space, sport and recreation provision within their areas and therefore their input is seen as important within the process of assessing existing provision in terms of quantity and quality. Of the 12 Parish Councils which responded in relation to 19 settlements, 4 settlements were identified as having a deficiency in quantity of open space (Shenstone, Upper Longdon, Whittington and Lichfield City), and 8 identified a specific open space type that was lacking. A lack of equipped play areas were identified in both urban areas (Lichfield and Burntwood) together with Kings Bromley, Hill Ridware, Upper Longdon, Edingale and Whittington. Poor accessibility was identified within both urban areas, as well as Pipe Ridware, Hill Ridware, Hopwas, Shenstone and Whittington.

4 Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space

Definition

Natural and semi natural greenspaces have a primary purpose of sustaining wildlife conservation and biodiversity. They can include woodlands, urban forestry, scrubland, grassland, wetland, open and running water and nature reserves. Natural greenspaces are spaces that are not managed. There are no sites within Lichfield District that are unmanaged. Semi-natural greenspaces are sites managed for their habitat. An example of semi-natural greenspace within the District is Gentleshaw Common which is managed for its Heathland habitat.

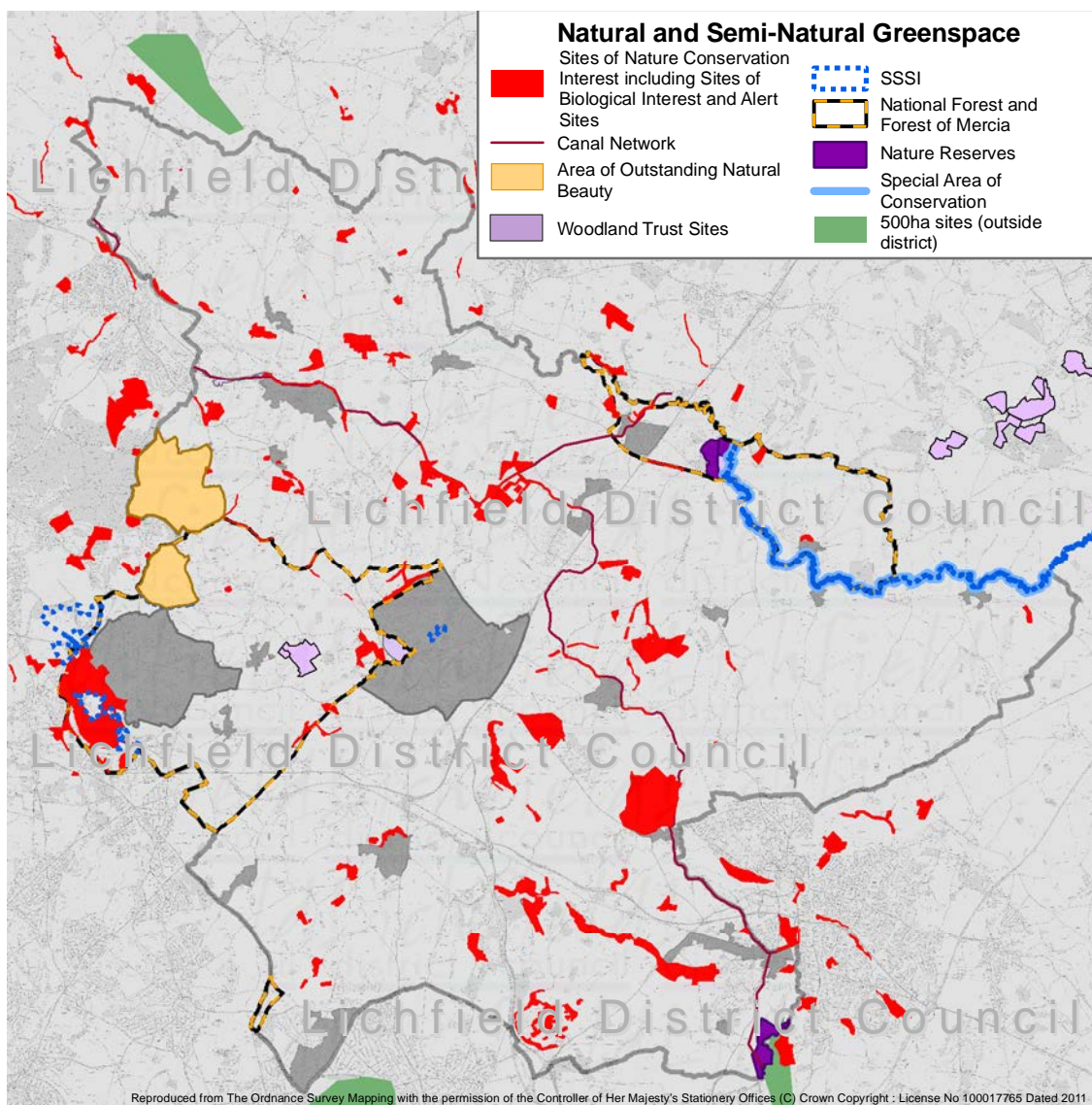
- 4.1** There are no purely natural greenspaces within the District. All those identified within this assessment are managed to some degree either through formal agreements or informally.
- 4.2** Sites of semi natural greenspace include sites of European, National, County and Local significance for wildlife including Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SBI, BAS, Local Nature Reserves).
- 4.3** In terms of designations of landscape significance, parts of Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) lie within the western edge of the District and parts of conservation areas such as the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area, encompass areas of semi natural greenspace, including green corridors such as canals.
- 4.4** Opportunities for assessing natural and semi-natural greenspaces can only be identified on a site by site basis, through Phase 1 habitat surveys and biodiversity audits. Phase 1 surveys were carried out in the mid-1990's and were reviewed again in 2003. In 2009 an Ecological Assessment by Staffordshire Ecological Services was carried out as part of the evidence gathering for the Local Plan. This concentrated primarily on areas which have been identified as potential growth locations. These areas were surveyed in detail and included sites around Lichfield City, Burntwood and north of Tamworth as well as the key rural settlements of Armitage with Handsacre, Alrewas, Fradley, Shenstone and Little Aston.
- 4.5** Whilst the primary purpose of natural and semi-natural greenspaces is their importance in terms of their biodiversity value, such spaces also contribute to the health and well being of the population that lives near to and/or use these spaces as well as having a positive impact on the visual amenity of the locality.
- 4.6** Natural and semi-natural greenspaces also play a positive role as 'green infrastructure.' The District Council's partners, including Natural England, The National Forest, Forest of Mercia and Woodland and Wildlife Trusts are working towards creating a greener environment, including multi-functional and a linked network of green spaces, within the District.

Quantity: The total amount of natural and semi-natural greenspace throughout Lichfield District is some 1983.32 hectares (ha), giving a total provision of 20.77ha per 1,000 population. Designations included within this calculation are:

- Nature Reserves;
- Biodiversity Alert Sites (BAS);
- Sites of Biological Interest (SBI);
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB);
- Woodland Trust Sites;
- Sites of Nature Conservation Interest;
- Conservation Areas;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- National Forest Sites;
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

4.7 Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that all such spaces are identified it must be recognised that not all privately or publicly owned land is included. Due to the nature of the District there are also likely to be large areas of land that are publicly accessible but whose primary use is not that of open space e.g. accessible farmland. In addition there are other areas that have known biodiversity value such as churchyards.

4.8 As the map below shows, there is a wide spread of sites identified as semi-natural greenspace within the District of varying types and sizes. Some parts of the District have more than others, the eastern area in particular having larger areas with fewer such greenspaces.

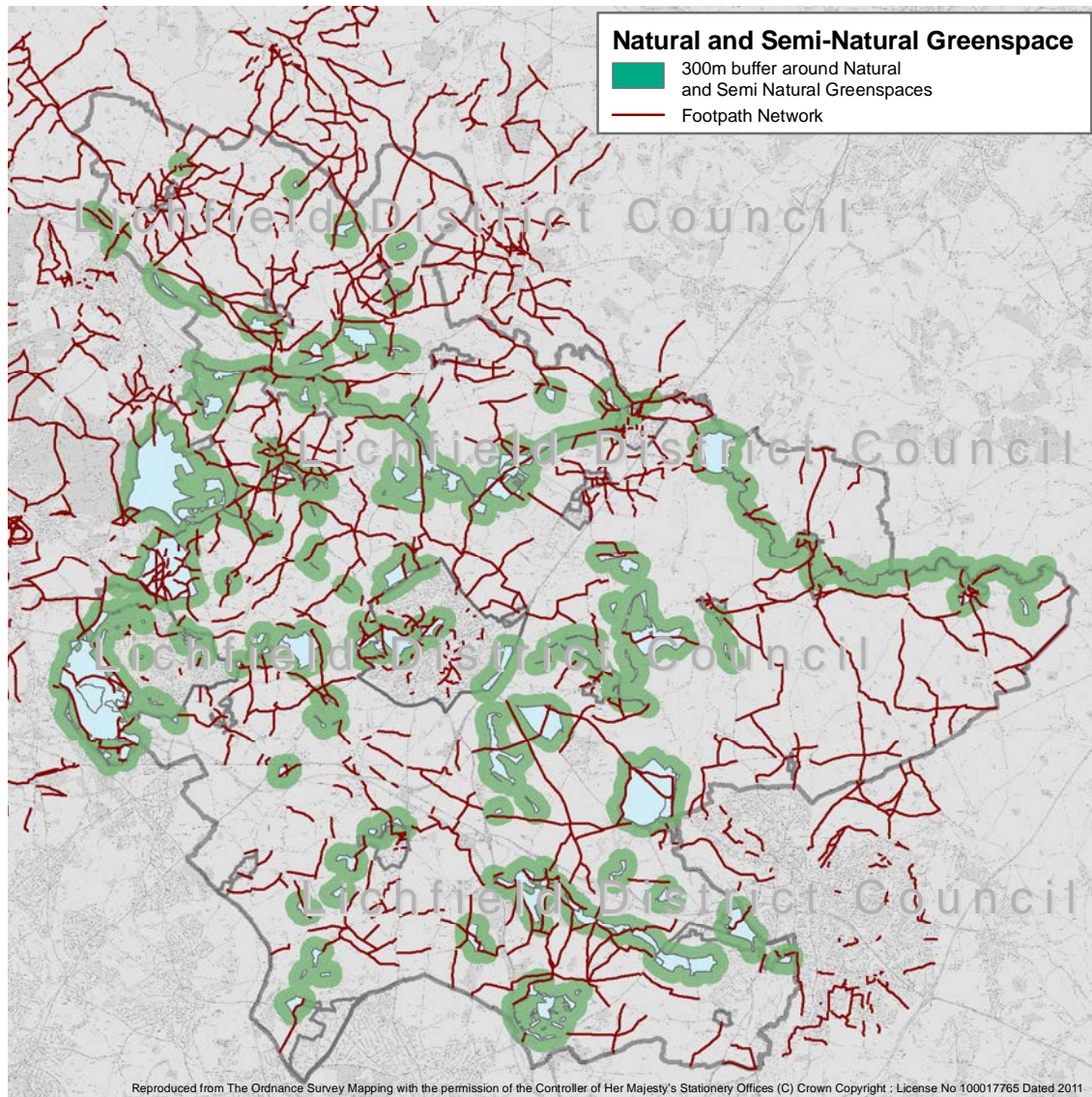


Map 4.1 District Wide Natural and Semi-natural Green Space

4.9 Key standards relating to the provision of natural and semi-natural greenspace have been developed by Natural England and focused on urban greenspaces. Natural England standards are set out below, they accept that such measures are not likely to be achieved in the short term but that they should be included as a long term aim. Suggested Natural England standards are that there should be at least:

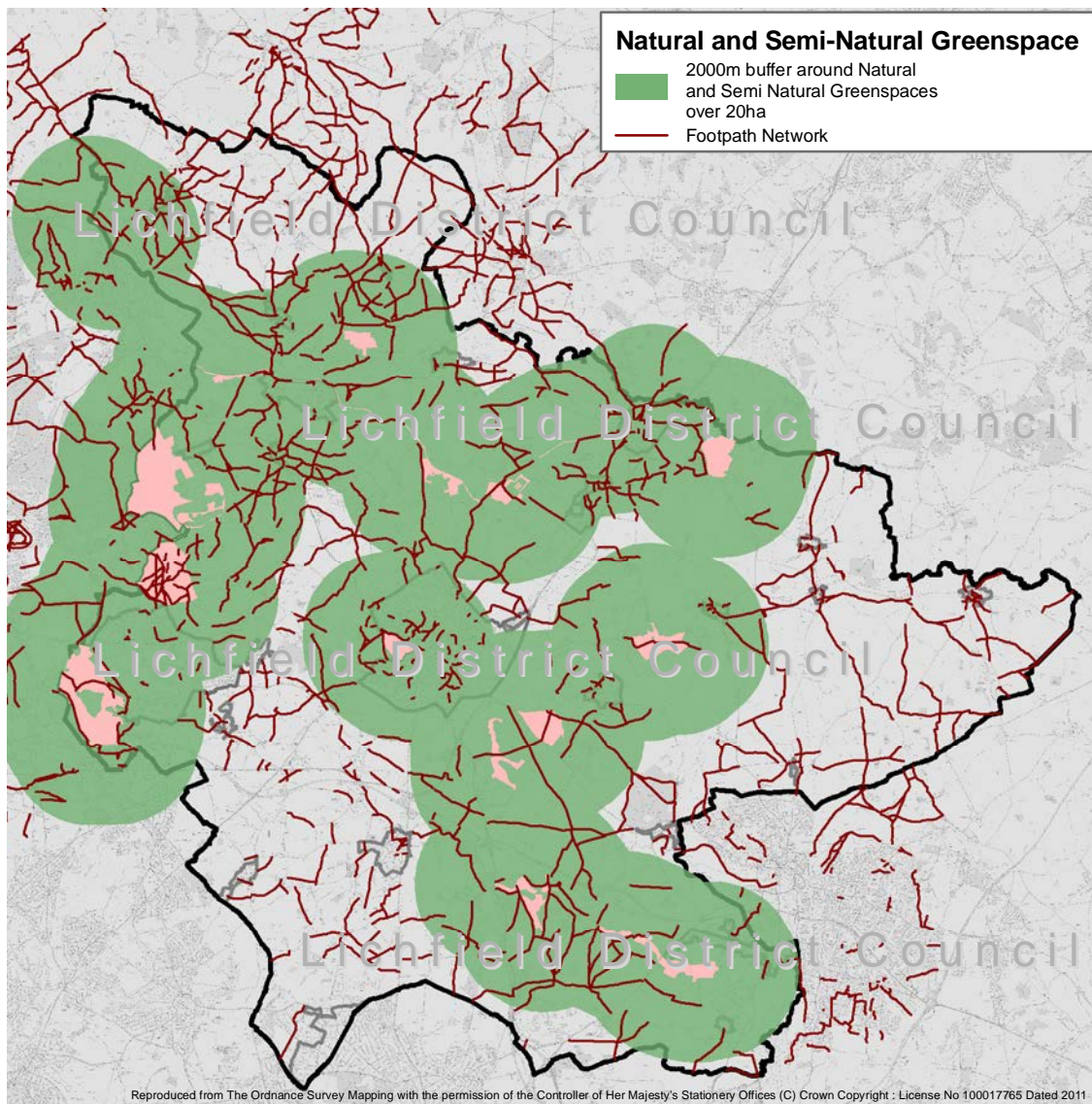
- One accessible 20 hectare site within 2 km of home;
- One accessible 100 hectare site within 5 km of home;
- One accessible 500 hectare site within 10 km of home;
- 2 Ha of accessible natural greenspace no more than 300m (5 minutes walk) from home;
- A statutory Local Nature Reserve at a minimum level of 1ha per 1000 population.

4.10 Maps 4.2 to 4.5 show Natural England's standards when applied to areas of natural and semi-natural greenspaces.



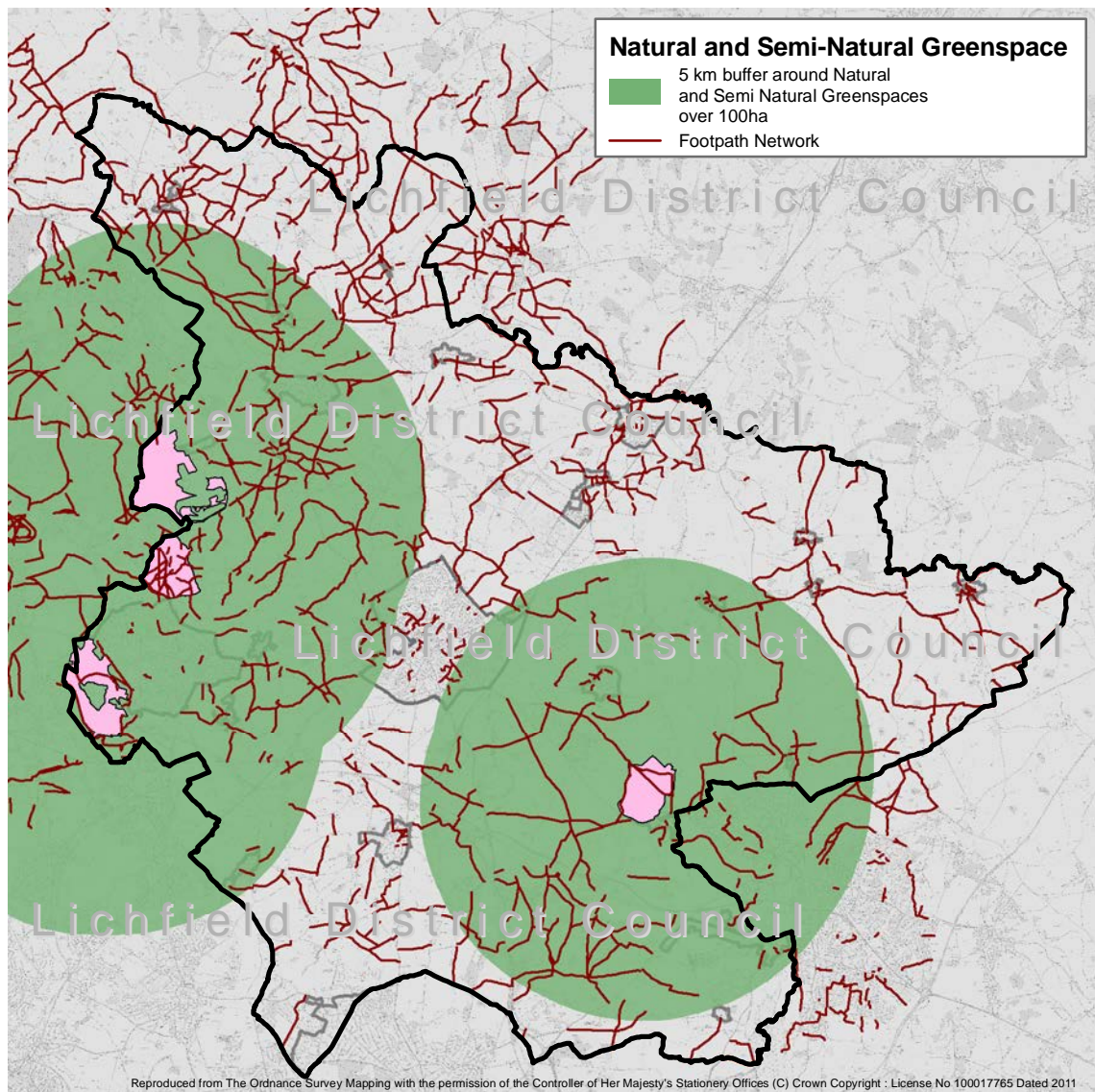
Map 4.2

4.11 Large areas of the District have limited accessibility to natural and semi natural greenspace of 2ha or more. This is evident when a 300m accessibility buffer is applied.



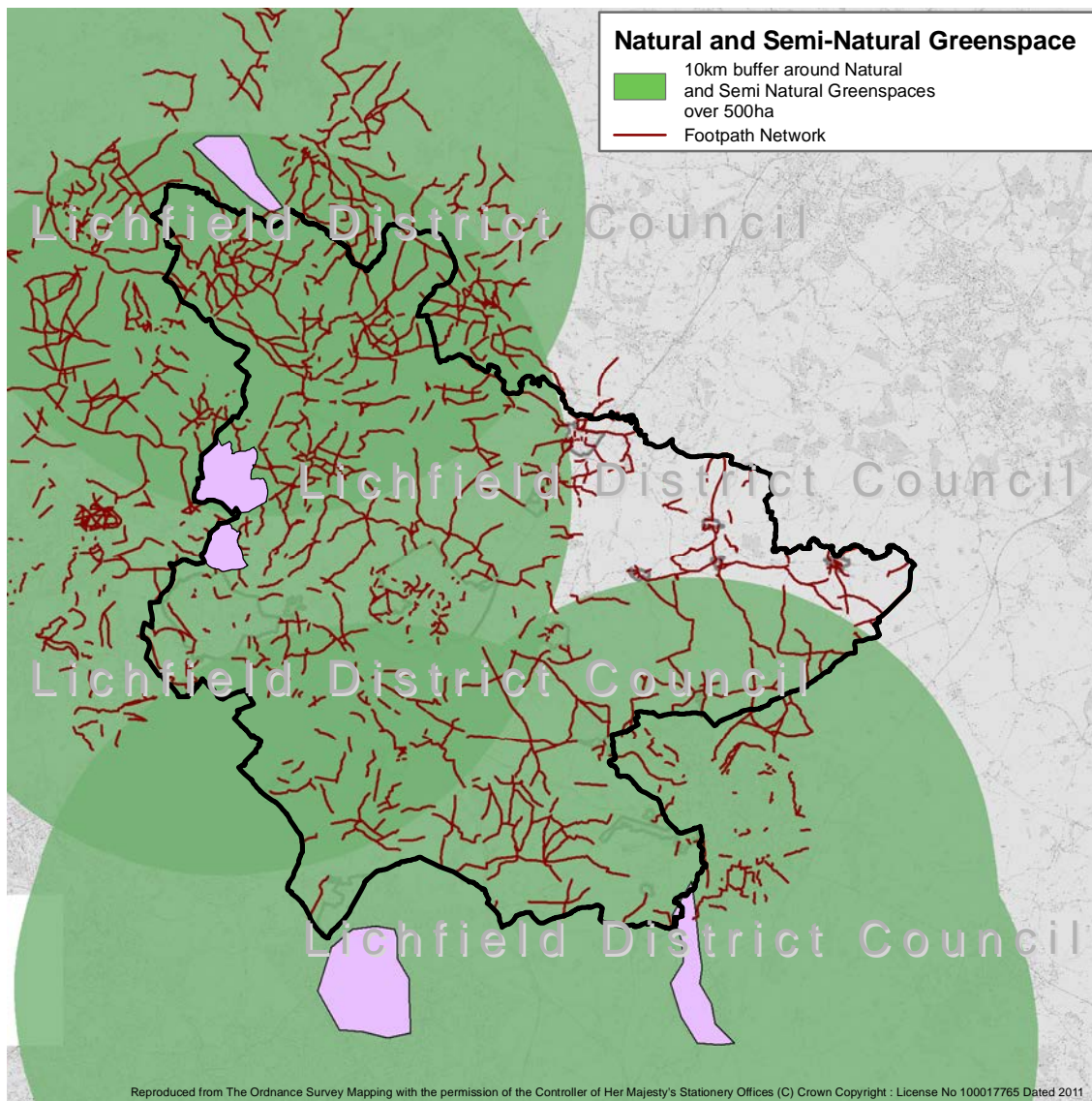
Map 4.3

4.12 There are 17 sites identified within the district that are 20ha or more and when mapped alongside a 2km (2,000m) buffer there are areas of the district with no access, these include most of the eastern area, south west and parts of the northern edge of the District.



Map 4.4

4.13 There are 5 sites identified within the District that are 100ha or more and when mapped alongside a 5km (5,000m) buffer there are distinct areas with no access. These include most of the north and eastern area together a large swathe to the south west of the District. Areas within the south of the District have easy access to Sutton Park which falls within Birmingham City Council's boundary.



Map 4.5

4.14 There are 4 sites of 500ha or more that impact on the District, three of which are located outside the Lichfield District's boundary:

- Blithfield Reservoir;
- Sutton Park; and
- Kingsbury Water Park.

4.15 Cannock Chase straddles the District boundaries of Lichfield and Cannock. When mapped alongside a 10km (10,000m) buffer there are small areas within the east of the District with no access.

4.16 Other quantitative/accessibility standards have been developed by the Woodland Trust, these are:

- No person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of less than 2ha in size;
- There should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4 km of a home.

4.17 In terms of establishing a quantity standard appropriate to Lichfield District the starting point should be that there is no loss of the overall amount of natural and semi-natural greenspace as identified within this assessment. In addition, opportunities that arise to increase provision through creating new public access to areas not currently accessible should be considered, with each site being considered in relation to the type of natural and semi-natural greenspace. It is unlikely that large areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace will be created close to existing built up areas, however the District Council will seek to encourage additional natural and semi-natural greenspaces and improve the quality and accessibility of existing natural and semi-natural greenspaces where opportunities arise. Projects that the District Council are involved in include:

- Creation of Local Nature Reserves (Such as Christian Fields, Lichfield);
- Sustainable Management of Chasewater and surrounding environment including grazing; and
- Better footpaths and interpretation

4.18 There may be opportunities to contribute to this objective particularly within the Central Rivers Initiative area and through other projects carried out by organisations including the Woodland Trust, Forest of Mercia, and National Forest.

Quality: In terms of quality and in view of the variety of criteria needed to assess all different types of greenspaces included within the natural and semi-natural category, it is not possible to set a single quality standard.

4.19 Quality of natural and semi-natural greenspaces is important, and assessments can potentially highlight areas that people are not using or highlight areas of overuse, and thus could then influence changes to existing management practises to improve the quality of areas. Examples of where semi-natural greenspaces are carefully managed include Chasewater and Gentleshaw Common SSSIs, both of which now benefit from sustainable management policies.

4.20 Whilst there are no national standards for the quality of natural and semi-natural greenspaces, it is expected that land should be managed to conserve and enhance the landscape, biodiversity and local heritage. The majority of sites included within this designation are either owned, influenced, protected or managed by organisations whose role it is to safeguard such sites.

4.21 Given the difficulty in setting a detailed standard that encompasses the various types of natural and semi-natural greenspaces a broad qualitative standard is considered appropriate. Quality of natural and semi-natural greenspaces should be gauged taking account of:

- **High value aesthetics** – clean, no litter, vandalism with opportunities where appropriate for seating, signs including interpretation and footpaths.
- **Habitat** – protect and encourage biodiversity and links between sites
- **Sustainable management** – where appropriate sites should be managed

Accessibility: The 2011 Citizens survey identifies that 66.25% of respondents stated that there was either 'more than enough' or 'about right' amount of natural green spaces within the District, with residents of both Lichfield and Burntwood being slightly less satisfied with the level of natural green space than their counterparts in the rural areas.

4.22 Data from the Woodland Trust illustrates how Lichfield District Council fares in comparison to County and Regional levels of accessibility. Basic levels are:

	Lichfield District	Staffordshire County	West Midlands Region
Accessible Woods % population with access to 2ha+ wood within 500m	2.29%	10.77%	9.42%
% Population with access to 20ha+wood within 4km	75.5%	66.23%	54.66%
Inaccessible woods % extra population with access to 2ha+ wood within 500m if existing woods opened	22.09%	24.34%	23.19%
% extra population with access to 20 ha+ wood within 4km if existing woods opened	23.74%	30.48%	25.82%
Woodland creation % population requiring new woodland creation for access to a 2ha+ wood within 500m	75.61%	64.89%	67.39%
% Population requiring new woodland creation for access to a 20ha+ wood within 4km	0.76%	3.29%	19.52%
Minimum Area of new woodland required for 2ha+ woods within 500m	138ha	108ha	483ha
Minimum area of new woodland required for 20ha+ woods within 4km	20ha	200ha	914ha

4.23 In short this table highlights that as a District, residents have access to far fewer small woods but higher than average levels of accessibility to larger woods over 20ha, when compared to the wider west midlands. When considering the District's provision against standards set by Natural England it shows the following:

- **One 20 hectare site within 2 km of all residents** – when a 2km buffer is applied to existing sites a large proportion of the District is accessible with the exception of areas around Shenstone and Stonnall to the south, the eastern part of the District as well as small areas to the north around Hamstall Ridware and Kings Bromley.

- **One 100 hectare site within 5km of all residents** – Within the District there are 4 sites which fall into this category. They include Hopwas Wood, Gentleshaw Common, parts of Cannock Chase AONB and Chasewater. Outside the District there are 3 further sites; Sutton Park; Blithfield Reservoir; and Kingsbury Water Park, which are accessible from some areas within the District. Areas within the District which do not fall within 5km of such a site include central parts of the District including Shenstone and Lichfield City and northern and eastern parts of the District.
- **One 500 hectare site within 10 km of all residents** - There are no sites within Lichfield District over 500 ha, however the District is bordered by Sutton Park, Blithfield Reservoir and Cannock Chase and when these standards are applied to Lichfield District, with the exception of the eastern areas, the majority of the District is accessible.

4.24 There are also issues relevant to the District in terms of managing the impact that access by local communities to certain natural and semi-natural greenspaces can have. In particular, the harmful effect of visitors on parts of Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Beauty and Special Area of Conservation, which is of particular concern. Work by the various organisations involved in the management of Cannock Chase is currently ongoing including that undertaken by Cannock Chase AONB Partnership and that which is being undertaken by the Cannock Chase SAC Partnership. The results of this work will need to be taken into account in considering future protection, management and improvements.

4.25 Where possible, opportunities to increase access to existing natural and semi-natural greenspaces should be encouraged, in particular by sustainable methods. Access to areas of significant biodiversity importance should be carefully managed and monitored to avoid any potential conflicts.

Setting Standards

4.26 By the very nature of the different types of greenspaces included within this typology some are very sensitive in terms of biodiversity and therefore it is difficult to set rigid standards. It is accepted that certain parts of the District (particularly the east) have few sites and thus reflect poor accessibility levels. Importantly, all natural and semi-natural greenspaces identified should be protected and opportunities to increase provision in areas of low provision should be encouraged, in particular sites that are within a reasonable walking distance of residential areas.

4.27 It is important to take into consideration a variety of issues in developing a standard for natural and semi-natural greenspace. There are many types of accessible natural and semi-natural greenspaces spread throughout the District. However, there are areas where accessibility using the standards set by Natural England, typically in the east, is below standards. When using those advocated by the Woodland Trust, in terms of access by residents to existing woods, the figure is very low when a 500m distance to woods of 2ha or more is compared to the wider Midlands. Data from the Trust shows that around 138ha of new woodland is required to achieve access for residents within 500m and an additional 20ha woodland to achieve accessibility within 4km.

Priorities

- All identified natural and semi-natural greenspaces should be safeguarded and opportunities to increase the provision of accessible natural and semi-natural greenspaces be encouraged. In addition links between natural and semi-natural greenspaces should be considered.
- The current quantity of 1983.32ha natural and semi-natural greenspaces should be protected and the current amount of 21ha per 1,000 population should be maintained.
- The District Council should continue to work with other organisations in improving and increasing provision of natural and semi-natural greenspaces.
- Ensure that where development takes place which would impact on existing natural and semi-natural greenspaces, that measures are put in place to ensure that appropriate contributions are made, to improve, maintain and/or protect natural and semi-natural greenspaces likely to be affected.

Standards for Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space

Quantity: the existing standards of 21ha per 1,000 population should be maintained and existing sites should be protected. There should be no net loss of the total amount of natural and semi-natural greenspace.

Quality: sites should be clean and well managed, having regard to the type of natural and semi-natural greenspace, free of litter and vandalism and include interpretation material where necessary. Appropriate sites near to residential areas should deliver opportunities for seating, bins, and footpaths – subject to local community aspirations.

Accessibility: where opportunities arise to increase accessibility to natural and semi-natural greenspaces, they should be encouraged having regard to the requirements of individual natural and semi-natural greenspaces. In particular, access by sustainable modes of travel to sites close to residential areas should be encouraged. In line with survey responses the importance of sites accessible within 480m/10 minutes walk time of residential areas should be recognised.

Where development is likely to have a negative impact on existing natural and semi-natural greenspaces, appropriate mitigation should be considered. This may include financial contributions to improve/protect sites or provision of alternative natural and semi-natural greenspaces or a combination of both.

5 Amenity Green Space

Definition

Amenity Green Space is mainly found in housing areas where it is used both to enhance the appearance of an area and provide opportunities for informal activities such as jogging, dog walking and children's play space close to home. This type of open space is also present in town and city centres where they are used by workers or visitors for informal recreation and relaxation.

5.1 Amenity green spaces provide an important feature within the local environment, they are often multi-functional. Their function may be dependent on their size, location and how they are laid out. They are commonly used for informal recreation including children's play and other passive pursuits such as walking. Typically these areas comprise of mown grass, occasional planted areas or trees, often with no physical boundaries. Amenity green space is a key feature within the built environment and, as well as being used and enjoyed by those who work and visit these areas, contribute to the overall visual amenity of an area.

5.2 The distribution of amenity green spaces mapped within the districts settlements are shown on Map 5.1. It shows that with only a few exceptions most settlements within the District contain amenity greenspace, often combined with other more formal uses such as play or sporting facilities.

Assessment of Quantity

5.3 There are 222 sites spread throughout the District which have been surveyed as part of the assessment. These sites total 124.4ha and range from 0.02ha to 11.02ha and gives an average existing provision of 1.27ha per 1000 population at 2001. This is higher than the National Playing Fields Association recommended minimum standard for children's play spaces of 0.8ha per 1,000 population. Map 5.1 shows all amenity greenspaces within the District that are located within settlements. The majority of the District settlements have some amenity greenspaces, but those with no such spaces include Hamstall Ridware, Wigginton and Little Aston.

5.4 By 2028⁽ⁱⁱ⁾ it is estimated that the population will be 113,300 and therefore there will be a need for an additional requirement of 25.4 ha to meet the existing provision level of 1.27ha per 1,000 population (since the 2001 Census). With this in mind and taking into consideration of comments made through surveys a district wide quantity of 1.27ha per 1000 population needs to be considered as a minimum, this will allow the maintenance of the District total. It is considered that in the creation of new amenity greenspaces and identification of areas which are deficient, the quantitative element should be considered alongside accessibility by local residents to existing spaces. Some settlements that have generous amounts of existing amenity greenspace may have very poor accessibility for large parts of the community where it is concentrated in one location within a settlement e.g. Alrewas and Shenstone.

ii Estimates are taken from the Southern Staffordshire District Housing Needs Study 2012

5.5 Ideally there should be a range of amenity greenspaces that contribute to the overall aesthetic quality of an area. The presence of, location of and type of amenity greenspace is largely governed by historic development patterns, most being found within, and as a result of, residential development.

5.6 It is important that sufficient amounts of amenity greenspaces are provided particularly within new developments and that opportunities to increase amenity greenspaces in areas where there are existing identified deficiencies are explored.

Assessment of Quality

5.7 Quality amenity green spaces should be located close to housing and be easily accessible, clear of dog fouling and containing appropriate ancillary accommodation such as benches and litter bins. There should be varied vegetation including provision of flowers, trees and shrubs and grassed areas should be well kept and large enough to accommodate informal play.

5.8 Details of assessments are listed within the Open Space Assessment 2012 Appendices and show the overall score for each amenity open space. Sites were scored in relation to a number of elements, the quality of;

- boundaries,
- roads and paths,
- planted and grassed areas,
- presence of bins and seats,
- parking, toilets, lighting and cleanliness.
- Information and events programming

5.9 In a change to the methodology used in previous Open Space Assessments, each amenity open space was given a maximum total score as many open spaces may not have been suitable for features such as toilets, parking and events programming, as such these features have been removed from the assessment for certain sites and an overall percentage score has been calculated for each site.

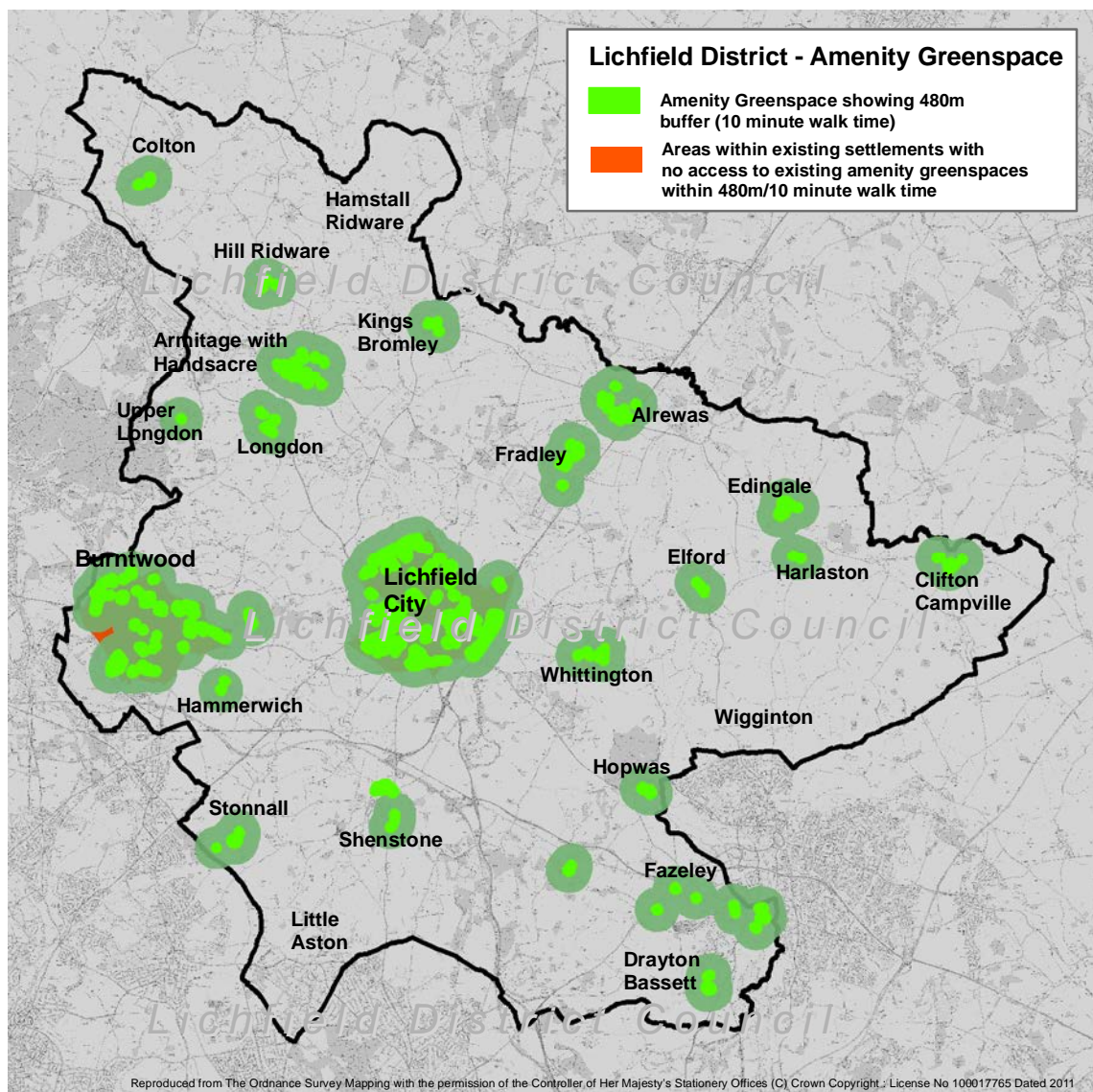
5.10 The 2011 Citizens Survey showed that across the District 58% of respondents felt that access to amenity open space is acceptable. Those living in the rural areas and Lichfield City are more satisfied than those living in Burntwood.

5.11 Quality of amenity openspaces varies considerably throughout the district. Areas with poor assessment scores (below 40%) include sites within Lichfield, Burntwood and Fazeley. Areas of high scoring amenity open space are also found within Lichfield, Burntwood and within some of the rural settlements in the north of the District.

5.12 Map 5.1 shows the location of amenity greenspaces located within the Districts settlements; it illustrates the distribution of amenity greenspaces as well as identifying those poorer sites which scored below 40%. Map 5.2 shows that quality varies across the district with concentrations of poorer quality spaces found within Lichfield, Burntwood, Fazeley, Alrewas, Armitage with Handsacre and Fradley.

Accessibility

5.13 The Omnibus survey (2007) showed that the most popular walk time (43%) response to amenity open space was between 6 and 10 minutes. The need to provide this type of open space 'close to home', accessible by children and in view of survey responses received, has led to a standard of a 480m/10 minute walk time. The maps below show the location of existing amenity greenspaces throughout the District together with a 480m/10 minute walk time buffer as well as 240m/5 minute walk time buffer.

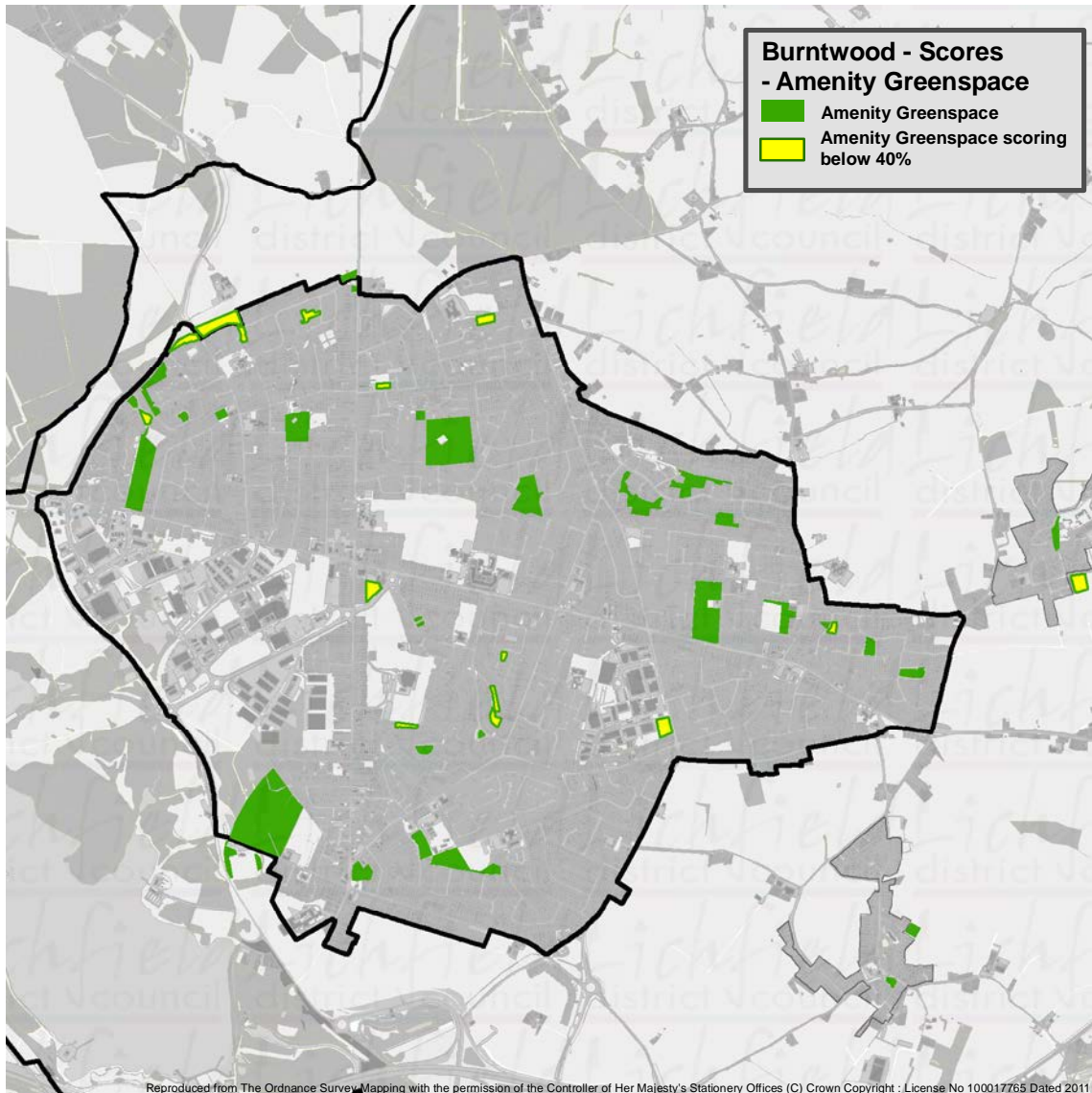


Map 5.1 District Amenity Greenspace

5.14 Using the 480m/10 minute walk time around existing amenity greenspaces within settlement boundaries it shows that only small areas are not accessible. Villages including Hamstall Ridware and Wigginton which have no amenity greenspace. Whilst some areas of Burntwood, Lichfield, Shenstone, Little Aston, Armitage with Handsacre, Fazeley and smaller areas within some of the rural settlements do not have access to areas of amenity greenspace. These areas can be seen in more detail in the following settlement section.

Provision By Settlement

Burntwood



Map 5.2 Burntwood Amenity Green Space Scores

Quantity

5.15 Within Burntwood there is approximately 30ha of amenity open space on 45 sites ranging from 0.05ha in size up to 4.3ha at Church Street. Using 1.27ha as a minimum standard for amenity open space, at 2001 population level of 27,079 an additional 4.4ha would be required within the Burntwood area.

5.16 It should be noted however, that just to the south of the Burntwood bypass is Chasewater Country Park which is classed under the category of natural and semi-natural open space, although it fulfils a number of other functions including amenity and recreation. The Burntwood Town Plan (2011) expresses a clear desire to see links to this multi-functional area of open space improved from the existing settlement.

Quality

5.17 Thirteen amenity greenspaces with Burntwood score below 40% with a majority of sites scoring between 40% and 55%.

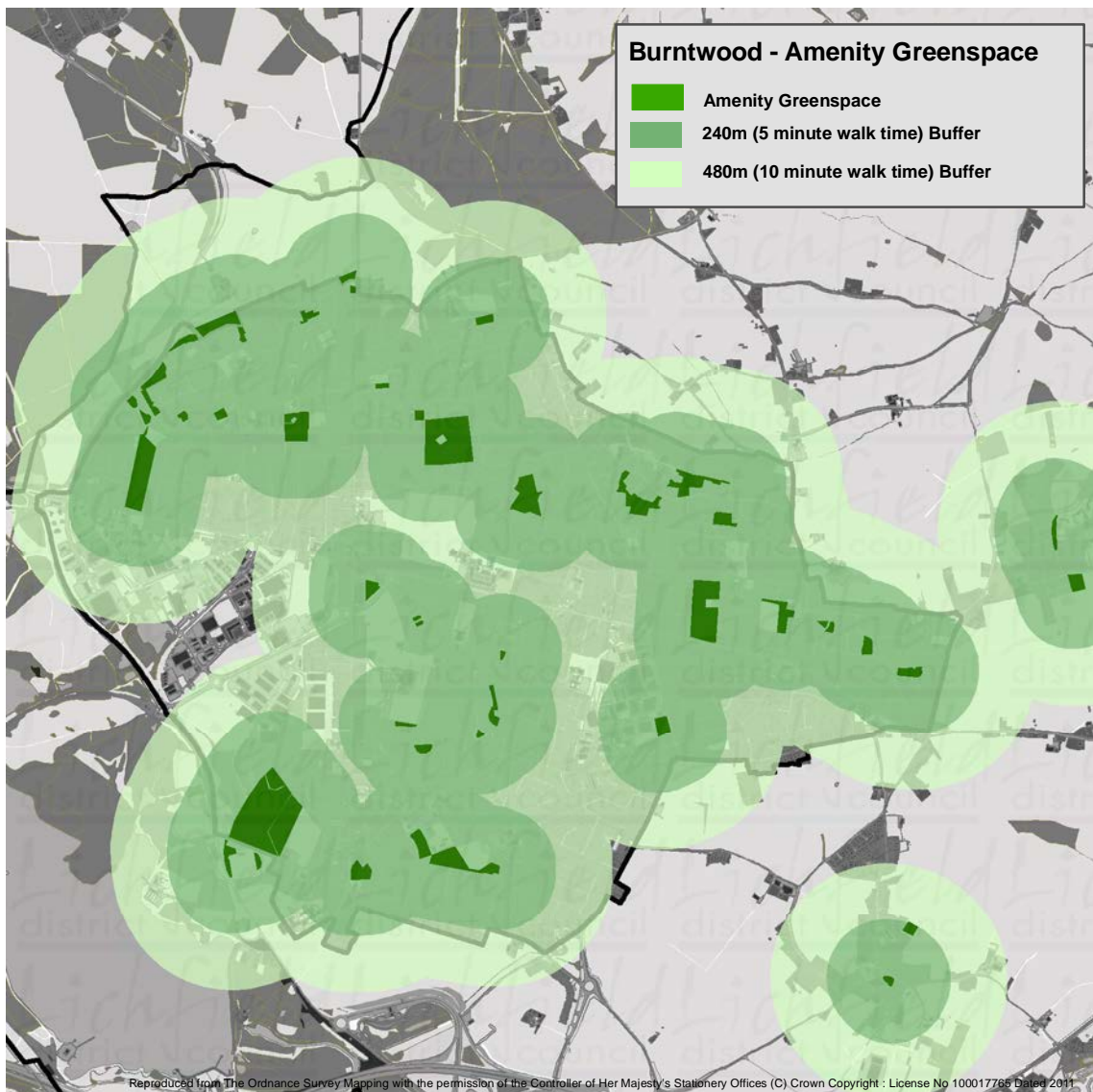
5.18 Those of the poorest quality include land north of Kingsdown Road, New Road, spaces within the Oakdene area and land at Pooles Way and, whilst generally clean, the scores reflect a range of poor entrances, grass, paths and boundaries as well as a lack of bins and seating.

5.19 Those that score particularly highly include Church Street, land around Chasetown Football Club, Chase Terrace Park and Burntwood Park. These scores reflect a mixture of good quality planted and grassed areas, availability of parking and the presence of bins and seating.

5.20 In general the quality of grassed, planted areas and cleanliness within Burntwood appear to be good, the quality of boundaries and paths was more variable. There appears to be an overall lack of bins and benches present within identified amenity greenspaces. Opportunities to improve the quality of any site scoring below 40% should be explored whilst any additional potential to improve other sites through the addition of seating and bins should also be encouraged.

Accessibility

5.21 In terms of accessibility to amenity open space most areas are accessible to some form of amenity open space within 480m/10 minute walk time, but as shown on the map 5.3, fewer and smaller areas of amenity open spaces are located within the southern half of Burntwood. This can be seen more clearly when the 240m/5minute walk time buffer is applied. There are particular areas including land running along the Cannock Road and to the east around Chase Road and Norton Lane which, whilst lying within 480m of a space, lie outside the 240m buffer.

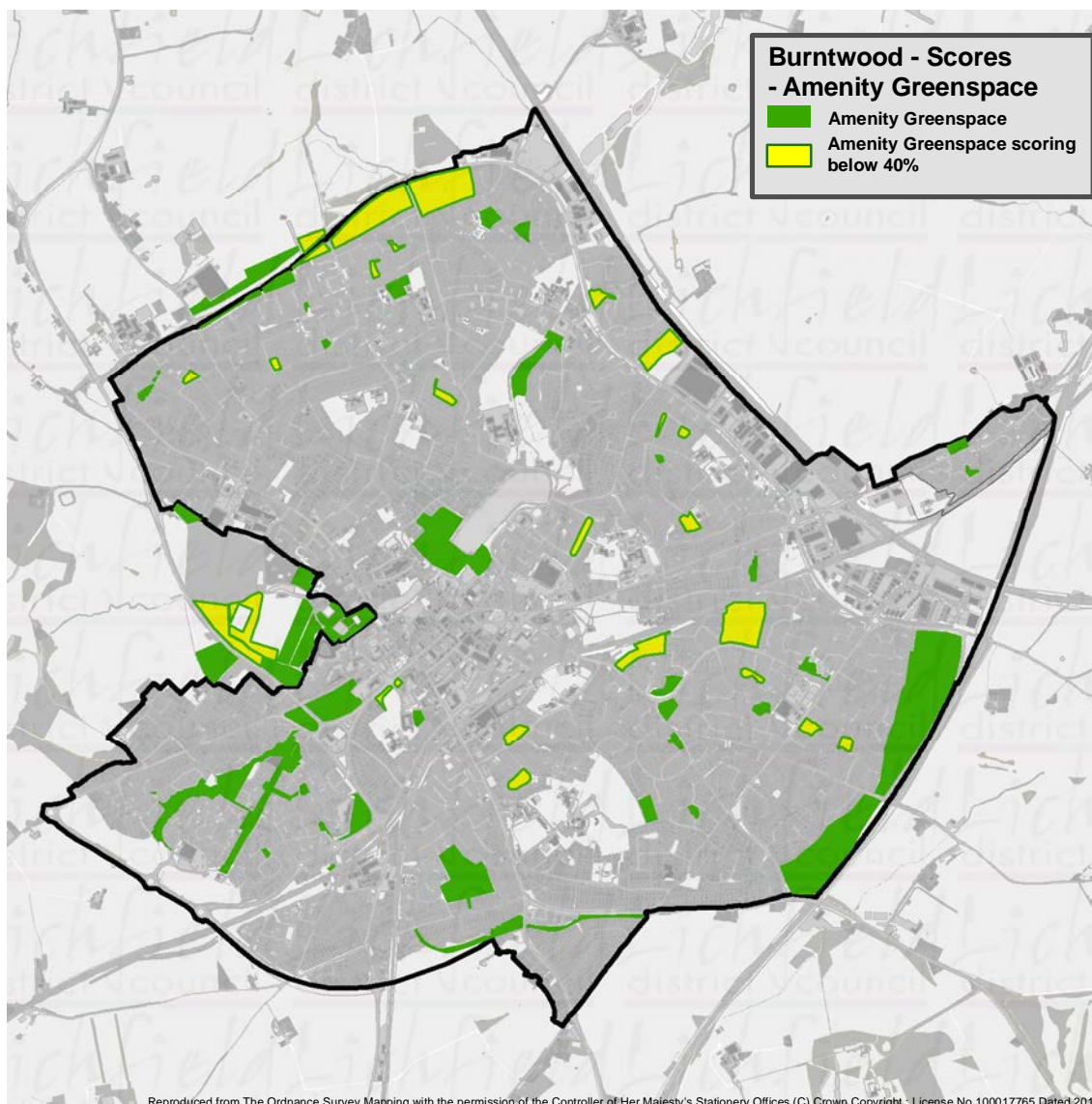


Map 5.3 Burntwood Amenity Greenspace with Buffer

5.22 Priorities for action within Burntwood include addressing those lower scoring sites by improving the individual elements that score poorly and exploring opportunities for additional sites particularly in the south within existing residential areas.

5.23 Whilst most of Burntwood is accessible to an existing amenity greenspace (within 480m), there are many busy roads and obstacles that residents may identify as impairing accessibility. In this instance it is important that opportunities to improve pedestrian access are considered.

Lichfield



Map 5.4 Lichfield Amenity Greenspace with Scores

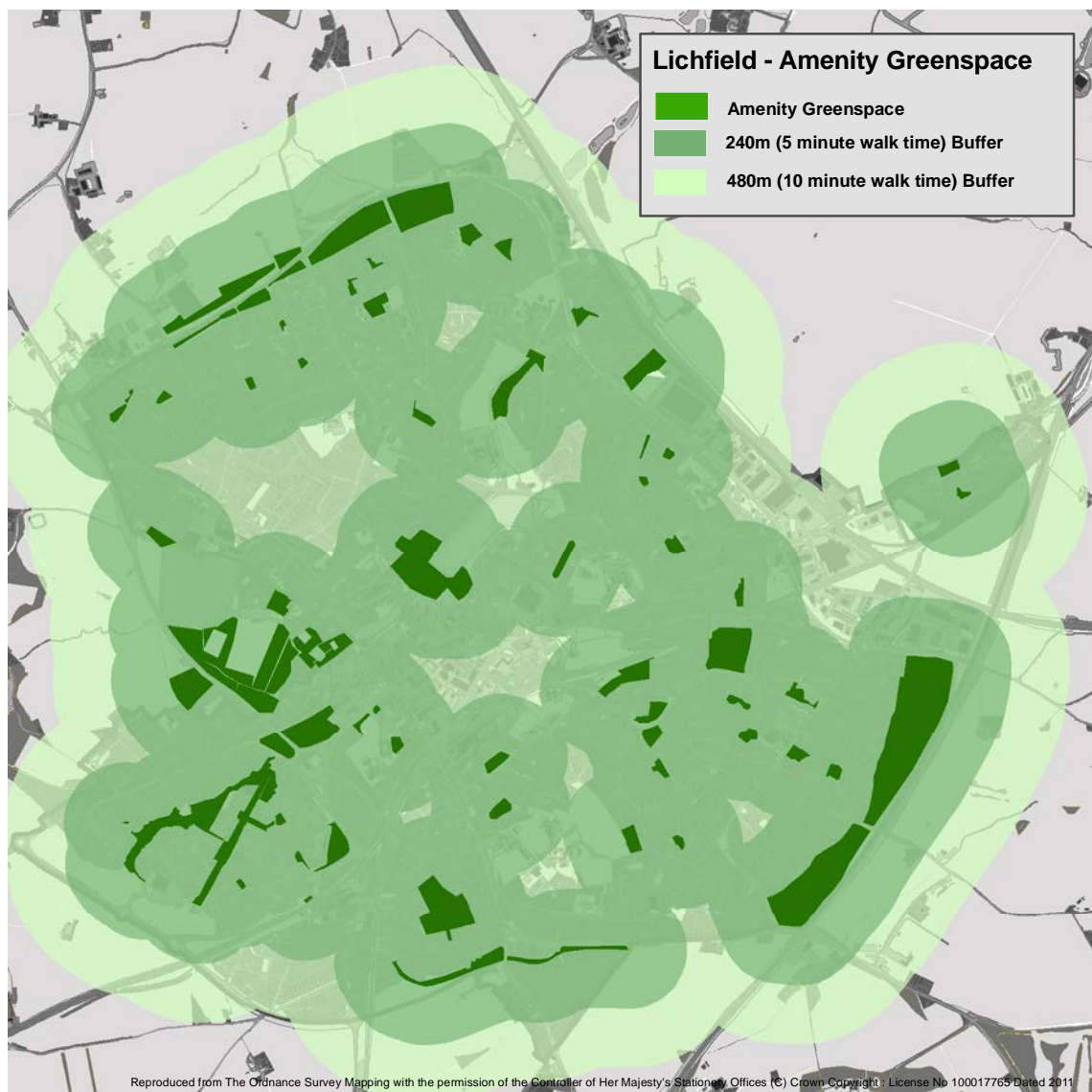
Quantity

5.24 Within Lichfield there is approximately 80ha of amenity open space on 74 sites ranging from 0.02ha in size up to 11ha at Darnford Park. Using 1.27ha as a minimum standard for amenity open space, at the 2001 population level of 27,436, Lichfield exceeds the 1.27ha of amenity open space per 1,000 population across the District as a whole. There are several large areas of amenity open space within Lichfield which results in the higher than average provision of this type of open space. As the map shows there are large sites around Beacon Park, Darnford Park and Eastern Avenue within Lichfield.

Quality

5.25 The quality of the 72 sites within Lichfield City varies considerably with some scoring high and others particularly low. It is important that the quality of sites is raised, especially where scores fall below 40% and where they score poorly on quality of grassed and planted areas, bins and seats, which can typically influence the attractiveness and subsequent usability of sites.

Accessibility



Map 5.5 Lichfield Amenity Greenspace with Buffer

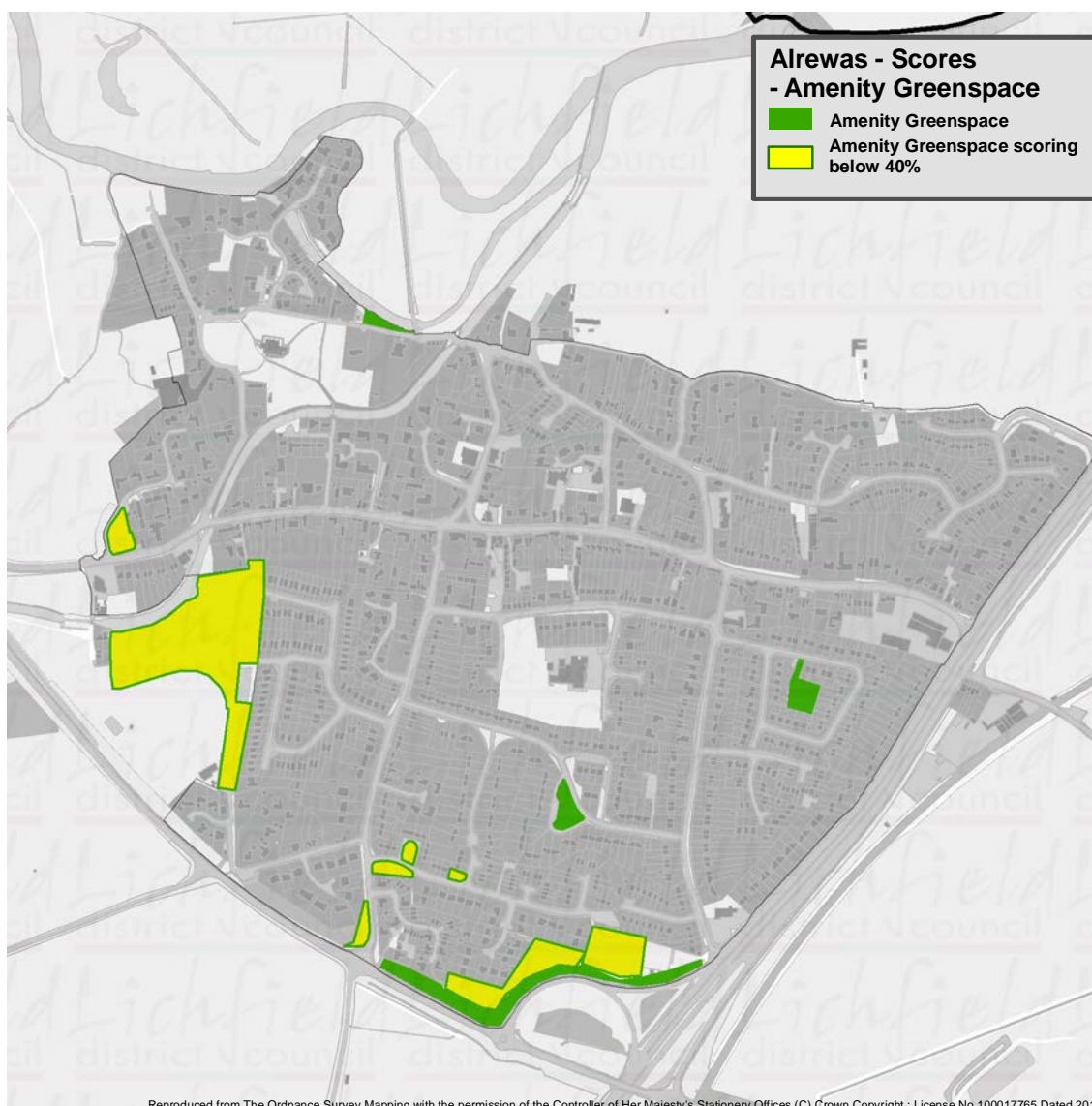
5.26 In terms of accessibility to amenity open space, Lichfield City has total coverage within a 480m/10 minute walk time with a large majority of the city having amenity green space accessible within a 240m/5 minute walk time. Map 5.5 illustrates the wide range in size of amenity greenspaces within the city with a number of larger sites being located on the edges of the settlement.

5.27 The major priority for Lichfield City will be to ensure any future development continues to have complete coverage in terms of accessibility to amenity greenspace. New developments should provide amenity greenspace within the development to maintain the current provision within the City.

5.28 As with Burntwood it should be recognised that there are a number of obstacles such as busy roads and railway lines which prove to be barriers to accessibility. As such any opportunities to improve pedestrian links to amenity greenspace should be explored.

Key Rural Settlements

Alrewas



Map 5.6 Alrewas Amenity Greenspace and Scores

Quantity

5.29 The majority of amenity greenspace located within Alrewas is found within the southern half of the village, the largest being located adjacent to the cricket ground. Sizes of amenity greenspace areas vary from 0.07ha at Fox Lane to 2.1ha at the cricket ground. In total there is 3.25ha of amenity greenspace within the settlement on 12 sites.

Quality

5.30 In qualitative terms scores range from 29% to 46%. These scores are low primarily due to the lack of seats, bins, paths and planting but quality of grass is good overall. Scores could be increased in most cases through the addition of bins, seats or improving the quality of existing planting or boundary treatment. Opportunities should be sought to seek improvements to the existing sites within Alrewas, particularly those which score below 40%.

Accessibility



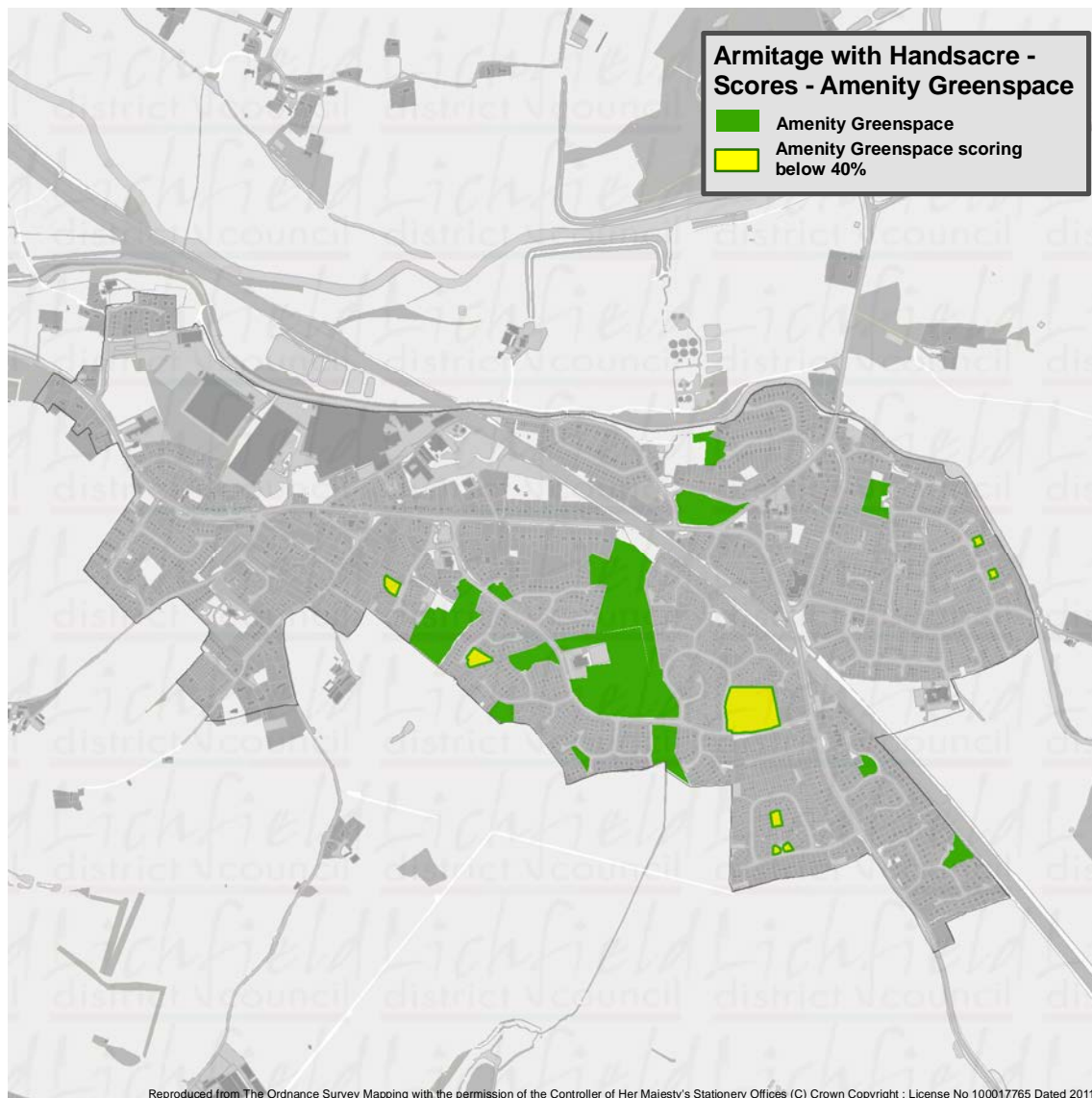
Map 5.7 Alrewas Amenity Greenspace with Buffers

5.31 Alrewas has complete coverage when a 480m/10 minute walk time is applied to existing areas of amenity greenspace. When a 240m/5 minute walk time is applied, a clearer picture emerges showing that due to the concentration of sites in the southern half of the settlement there are gaps in coverage within the north-east of the settlement.

5.32 Alrewas also has the benefit of accessible towpaths running alongside the canal which crosses through the settlement and, whilst not counted in this instance as amenity greenspace, acts as a valuable walkway and green corridor.

5.33 In terms of amenity greenspace, opportunities for additional spaces should be explored where possible or in response to any identified need. New sites should be located within the northern half of the settlement. Consideration should also be given to safe crossing points across Main Street to enable safer pedestrian links from the north.

Armitage with Handsacre



Map 5.8 Armitage with Handsacre Amenity Greenspace Scores

Quantity

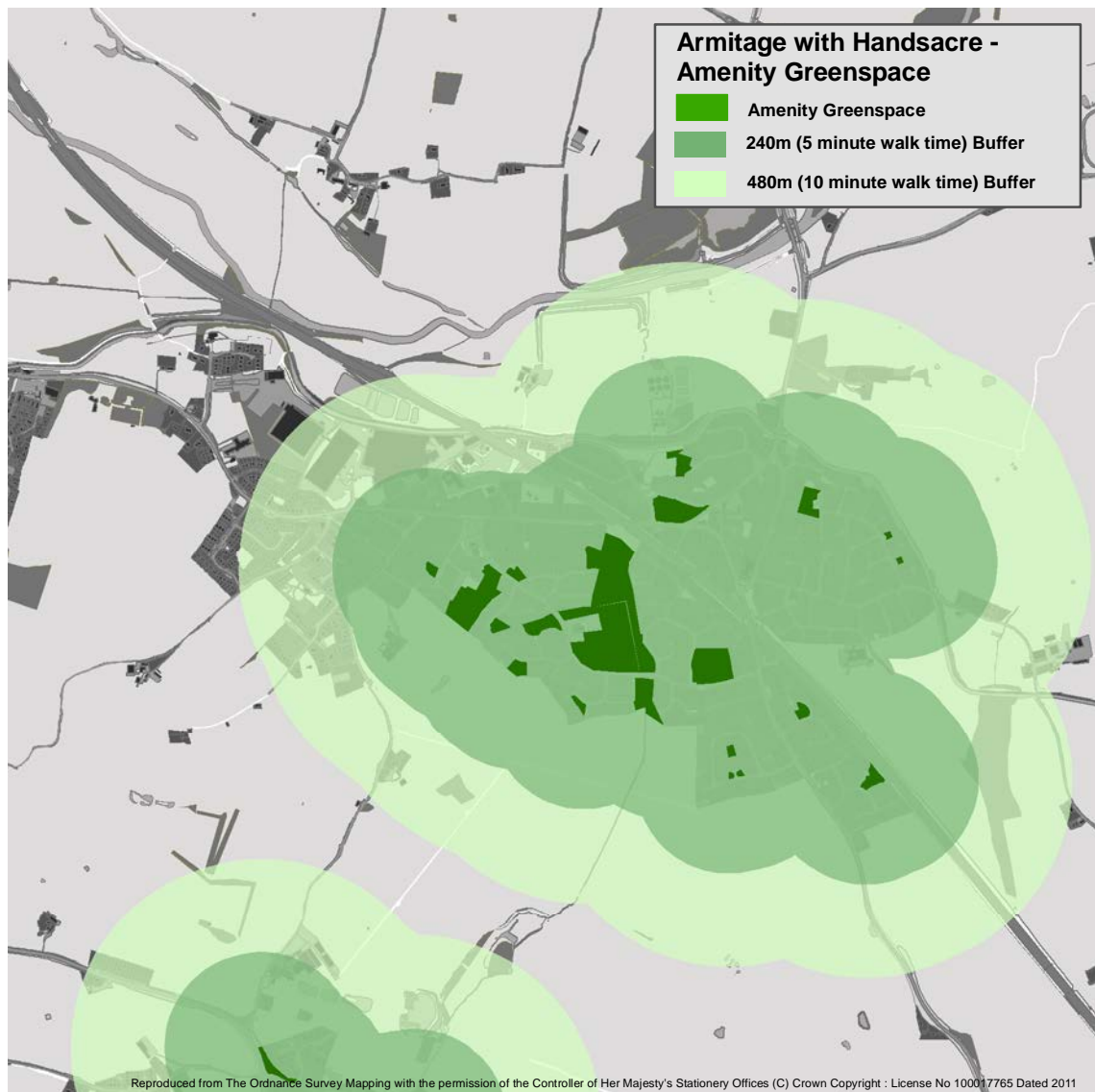
5.34 Armitage with Handsacre has the largest amount of amenity greenspace within any of the key rural settlements, with the majority of amenity greenspace being concentrated within the Shropshire Brook Road area. There are however no spaces within the western half of the settlement. In total there are 21 amenity greenspaces which vary in size from 0.03ha at Harvey Road to over 4.5 ha to the east of the village hall. In total there is 9.2ha of amenity greenspace within the settlement.

5.35 Armitage with Handsacre also has the benefit of a towpath alongside the Trent and Mersey Canal running along the northern edge of the settlement and, whilst not counted in this instance as amenity greenspace, (as it is referred to within Green Corridor section) it acts as a valuable walkway and green corridor. However, access to the canal towpath is limited from the settlement with the towpath itself being on the north side of the canal.

Quality

5.36 In qualitative terms scores range from 23% to 62%, the scores are generally good with the lowest scoring areas typically comprising the smaller pockets of amenity greenspace located within residential areas. These areas tended to score low on cleanliness, lack of bins and seating as well as quality of planted areas (although it must be noted that elements such as seating may not be appropriate on some sites). The higher scoring areas comprise of the larger sites at Shropshire Brook Road, Millmoor Avenue and Old Road.

Accessibility

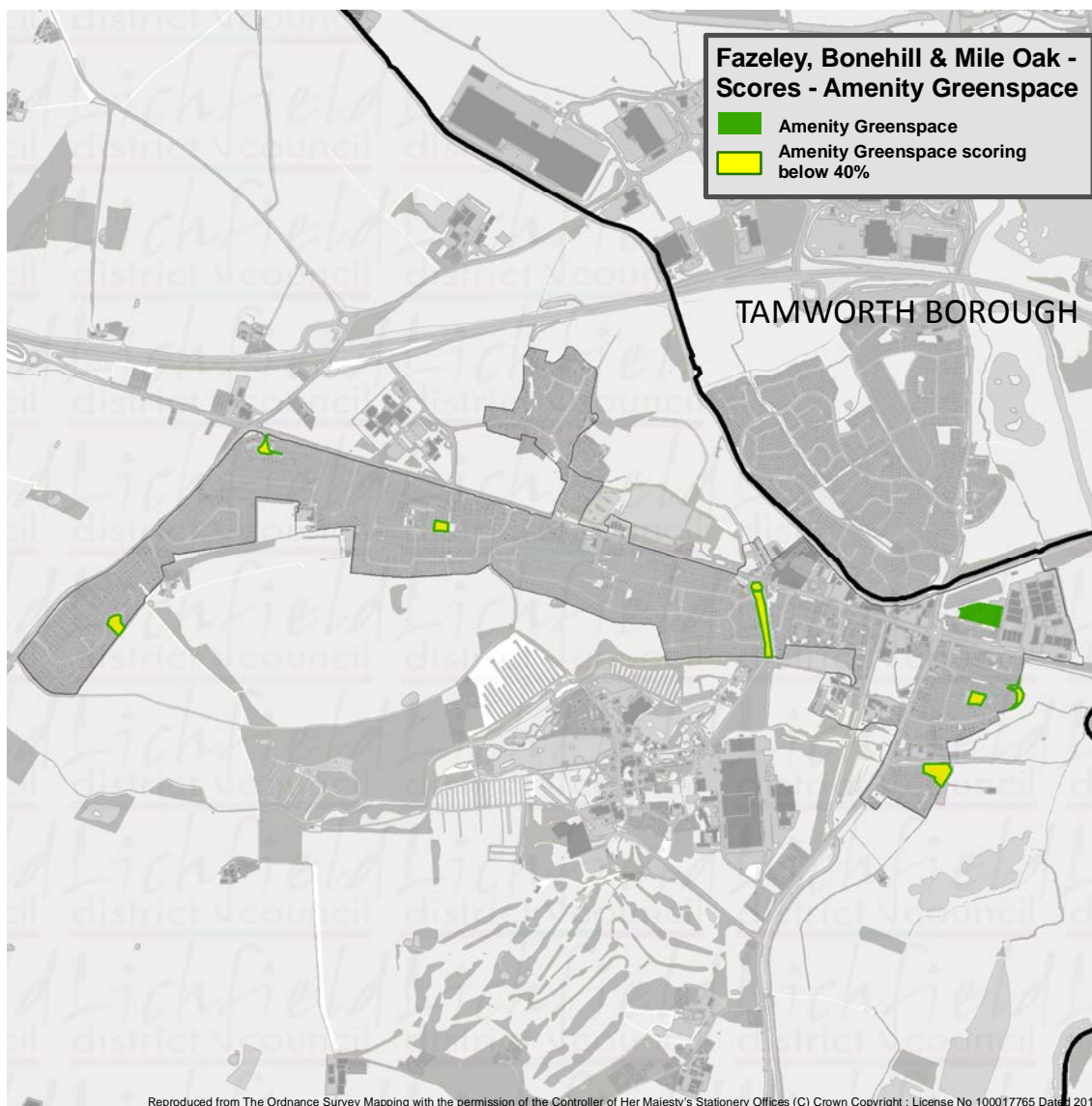


Map 5.9 Armitage with Handsacre Amenity Greenspace with Buffers

5.37 Largely due to the linear form of Armitage with Handsacre the settlement has almost complete coverage when both 480m/10 minute walk time and 240m/5 minute walk time is applied to existing areas of amenity greenspace. The exception relates to those residential areas to the west around Church Lane and Upper Lodge Road where there are no accessible amenity greenspaces (it should be noted that the equipped play site on Upper Lodge Road is small and of very poor quality resulting in no other available open spaces in the area). Very little space exists to the west and some residential areas around Tuppenhurst Lane are also lacking access to amenity greenspace.

5.38 Opportunities for additional amenity greenspace should be explored where possible or in response to any identified need and, where possible, new sites should be located within the far western part of the settlement. Opportunities to improve the quality scores within the densely populated area around Tuppenhurst Lane should also be considered if opportunities arise. Consideration should also be given to improving the quality of low scoring sites.

Fazeley



Map 5.10 Fazeley, Bonehill & Mile Oak Amenity Greenspace Scores

Quantity

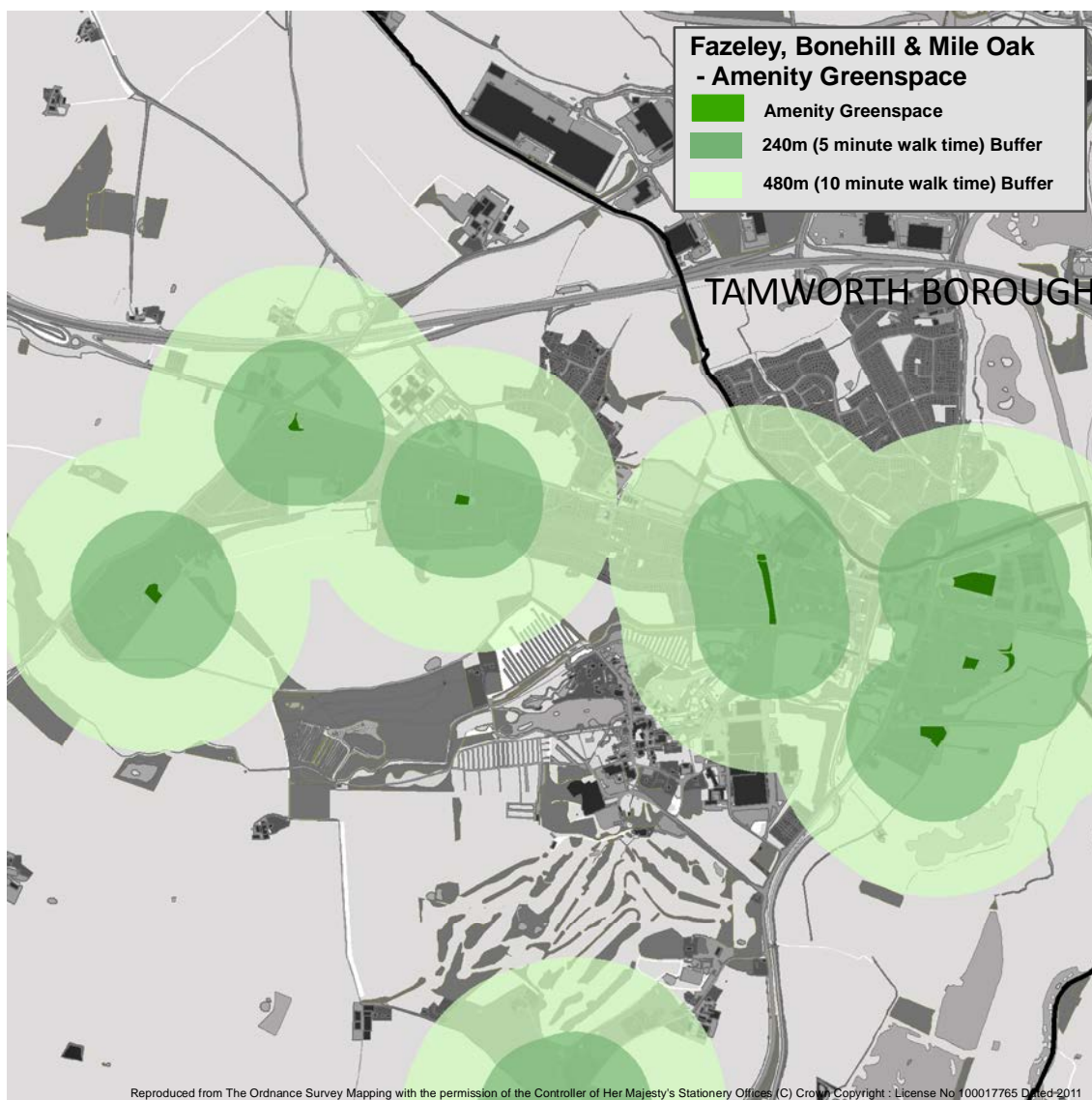
5.39 Despite being the largest of the Districts rural settlements in terms of population, Fazeley has few amenity greenspaces. In total there are 10 amenity greenspaces all of which are below 1ha in size. The 10 amenity green spaces are spread through this linear settlement. In total there is 2.34ha of amenity greenspace within the settlement. The majority of these spaces are small particularly when compared to Armitage with Handsacre, a similar sized village.

5.40 Like Alrewas and Armitage with Handsacre, Fazeley is also crossed by the Trent & Mersey and Birmingham & Fazeley canals. Both canals have the benefit of towpaths linking Fazeley with Tamworth to the north. Whilst not counted in this instance as amenity greenspace, both act as valuable walkways and green corridors.

Quality

5.41 In qualitative terms, scores range from 23% to 43% which show that the overall scores were generally poor with the lowest scoring sites at Brook End (23%) and at Mayfair Drive (26%). Typically all sites score poorly in relation to quality of the boundaries, grass, lack of planted areas, bins and seats. Across the settlement the quality of the limited amenity greenspace is poor and any opportunities to improve the quality scores of these sites should be explored.

Accessibility



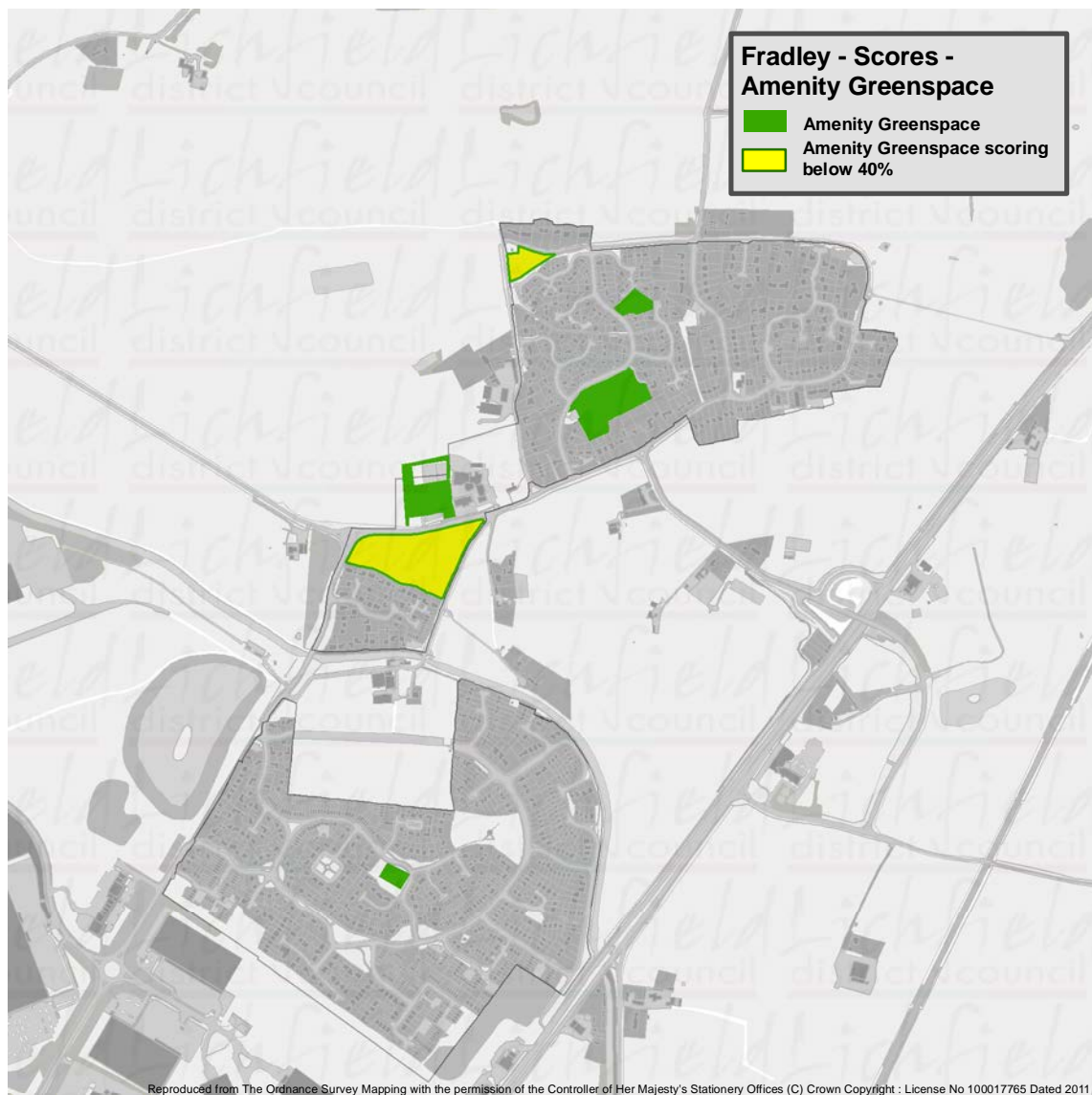
Map 5.11 Fazeley, Bonehill & Mile Oak Amenity Greenspace with Buffer

5.42 Largely due to the linear form of Fazeley, the settlement has almost complete coverage when 480m/10 minute walk time is applied to existing areas of amenity greenspace. The northern part of Bonehill lies outside the 480m/10 minute walk time. However, when this distance is reduced to 240m/5 minutes walk time it becomes a little easier to see which areas would benefit from additional spaces.

5.43 In terms of accessibility to the larger spaces, including amenity greenspaces at Victory Terrace and Mayfair Drive, these are located in the eastern half of the settlement and so are not readily accessible to the majority of the settlement. The Victory Terrace site is not easily accessible due to being separated from potential users by busy roads and a traffic island. This site is also hidden from view, leading to concerns about natural surveillance and safety.

5.44 There is scope to provide additional good quality, multi-functional, amenity greenspace, particularly located to the centre of the settlement to improve accessibility. Opportunities to improve provision accessible to Bonehill and Reindeer Road area should be considered if opportunities arise. Consideration should also be given to improving the quality of all existing amenity greenspaces as well as improving safe routes to existing spaces in particular those in the east.

Fradley



Map 5.12 Fradley Amenity Greenspace Scores

Quantity

5.45 In terms of its size Fradley has a higher proportion of amenity greenspace than larger settlements such as Shenstone, Fazeley, Little Aston and Whittington. This is largely due to several large sites which are located centrally to the two main residential areas south of Hay End Lane.

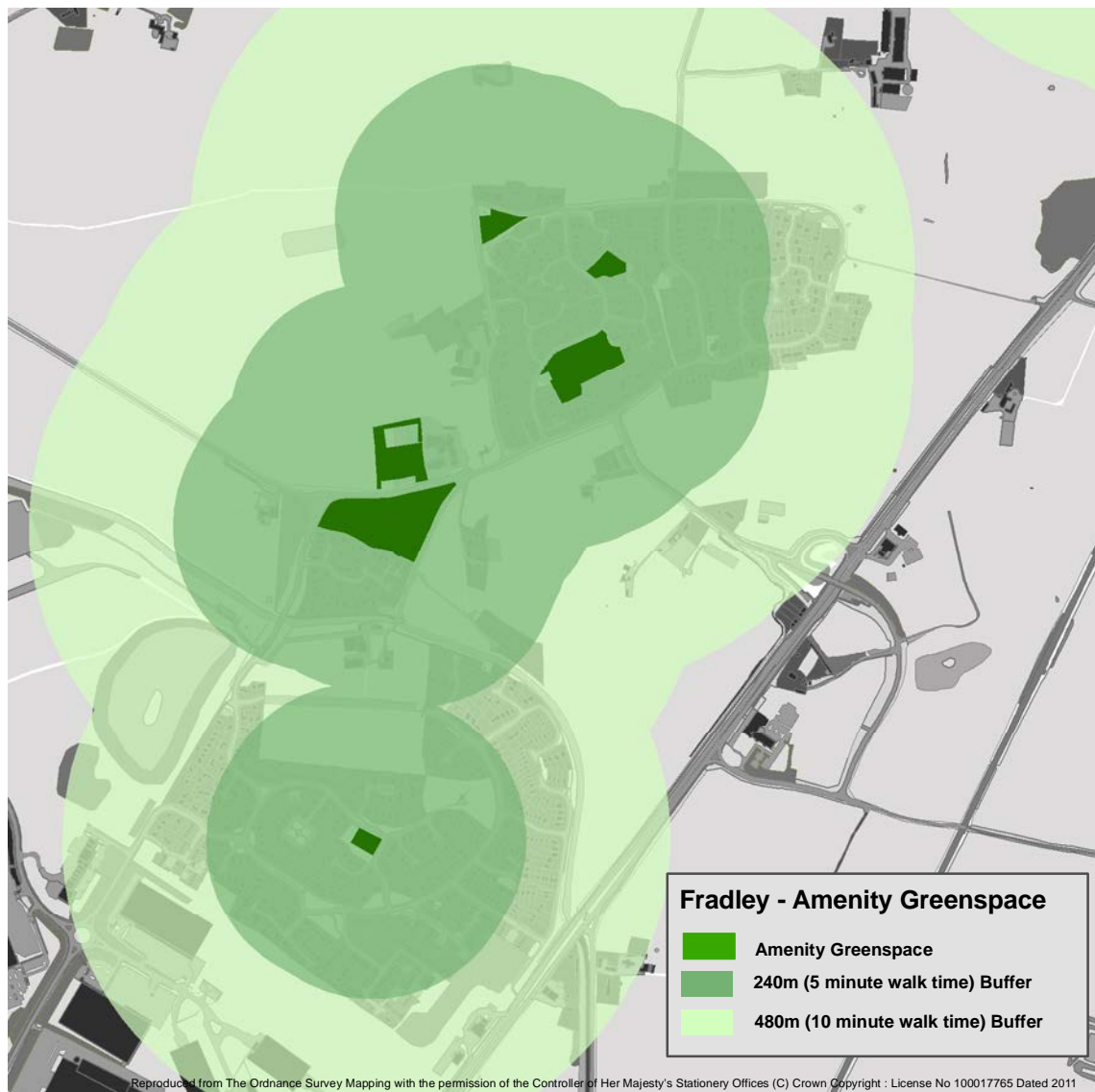
5.46 In total there are 6 amenity greenspaces in total varying in size from 0.1ha at Williams Avenue to over 1.5 ha at Hay End Lane, these 6 spaces are concentrated within the northern half of the settlement with only one small area within Fradley South. In total there is 3.5ha of amenity greenspace within the settlement (whilst the equipped play area off Common Lane is used both formally and informally for play it is considered as an equipped play site and not amenity greenspace for the purpose of this assessment).

5.47 Fradley is another key rural settlement crossed by a canal. Like most canals, the Coventry Canal benefits from a towpath alongside linking Fradley with Fradley Junction and destinations further afield including Whittington. Whilst not counted in this instance as amenity greenspace, the towpath acts as valuable walkway and green corridor.

Quality

5.48 In qualitative terms, scores range from 32% to 72% showing that there is a large difference in the quality of sites in the village. The amenity space around the skate park at Hay End Lane scores particularly highly due to the quality of the grassed areas, parking and seating. The low scoring sites typically score poorly due a lack of bins and seats, the poor quality of the boundaries and paths. The quality of the grass and cleanliness of sites appears to be good.

Accessibility

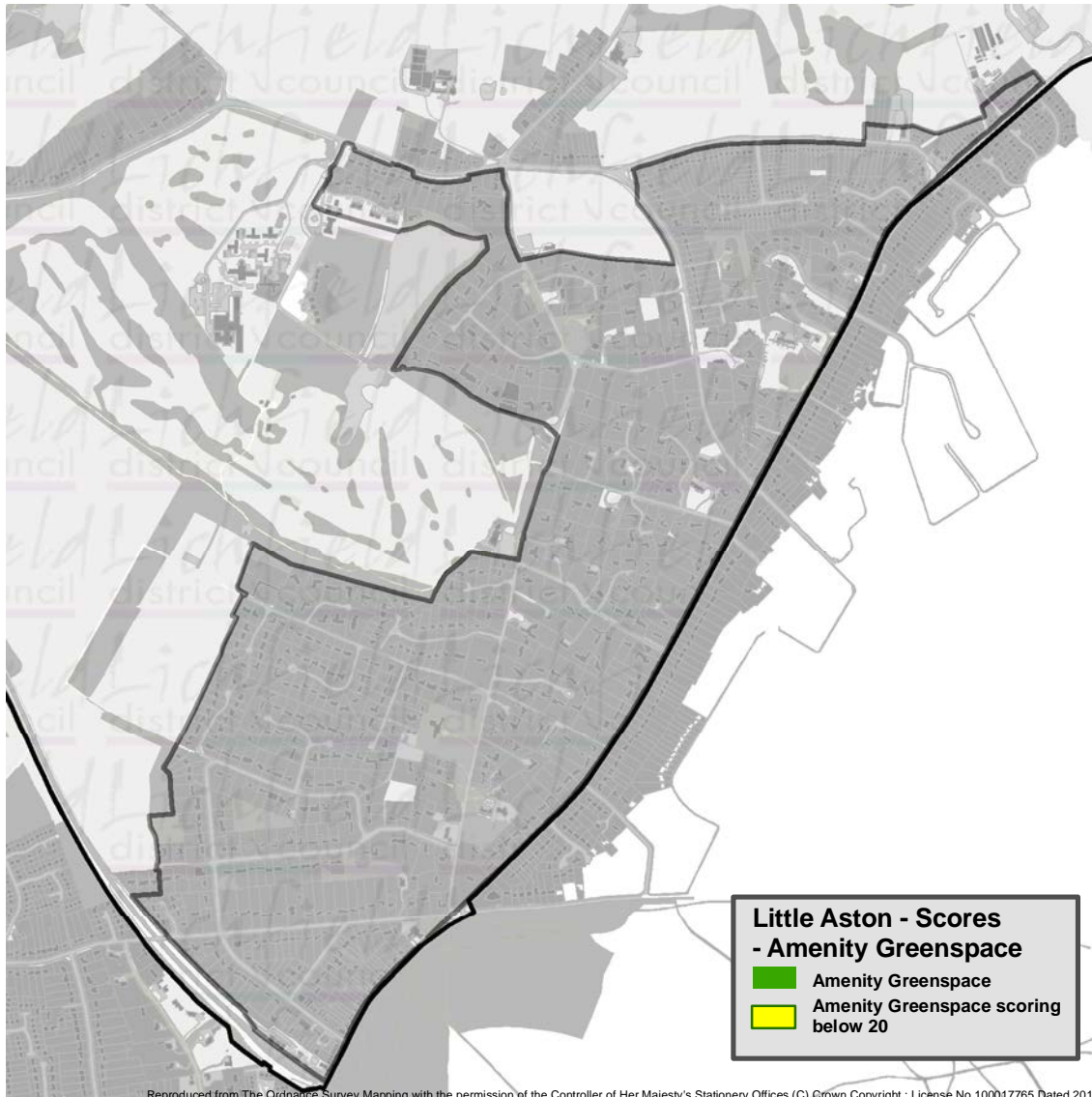


Map 5.13 Fradley Amenity Greenspace with Buffers

5.49 Fradley has complete coverage when a 480m/10 minute walk time (and majority coverage when a 240m/5 minute walk time) is applied to existing areas of amenity greenspace. In terms of accessibility, given the size and form of Fradley, the larger amenity greenspaces are centrally located giving good access to most Fradley residents, however residents of Fradley South have only two crossing points over the canal which separates them from the large sites of amenity greenspace.

5.50 In terms of amenity greenspace opportunities and potential improvements, additional spaces should be explored where a local need is identified. Opportunities to improve elements within individual sites such as planting, bins and seating should be considered.

Little Aston



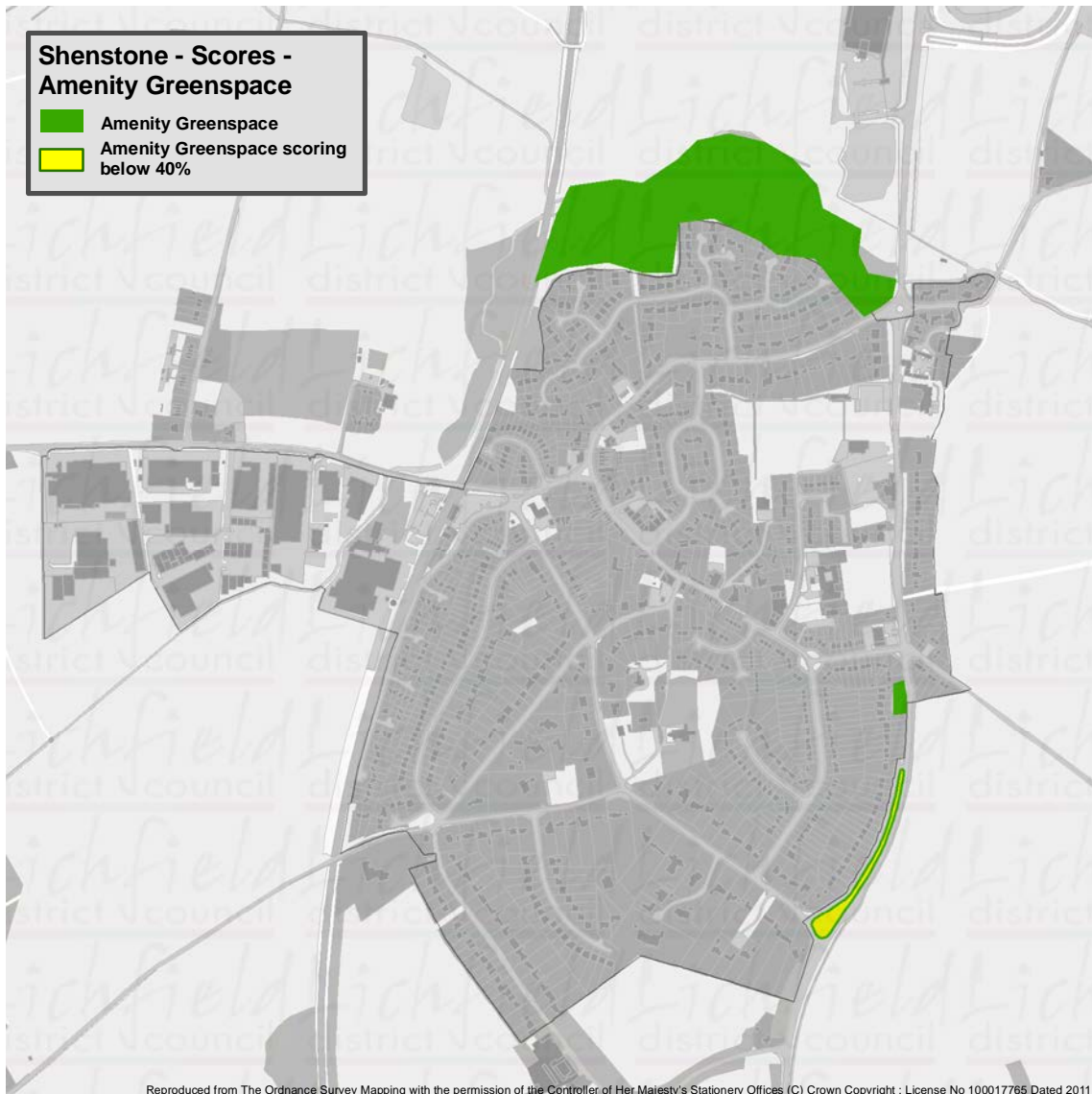
Map 5.14 Little Aston Amenity Greenspace

Quantity, Quality and Accessibility

5.51 Despite its size, and large equipped play area off Walsall Road, there are no publicly accessible amenity greenspaces within Little Aston. This is due primarily to the proportion of the settlement covered by a privately managed residential estate and possibly its location adjacent to Sutton Park.

5.52 Whilst the creation of accessible new amenity greenspaces is likely to be limited, any potential opportunities that could deliver accessible spaces should be explored as and when they arise or in response to an identified local need.

Shenstone



Map 5.15 Shenstone Amenity Greenspace Scores

Quantity

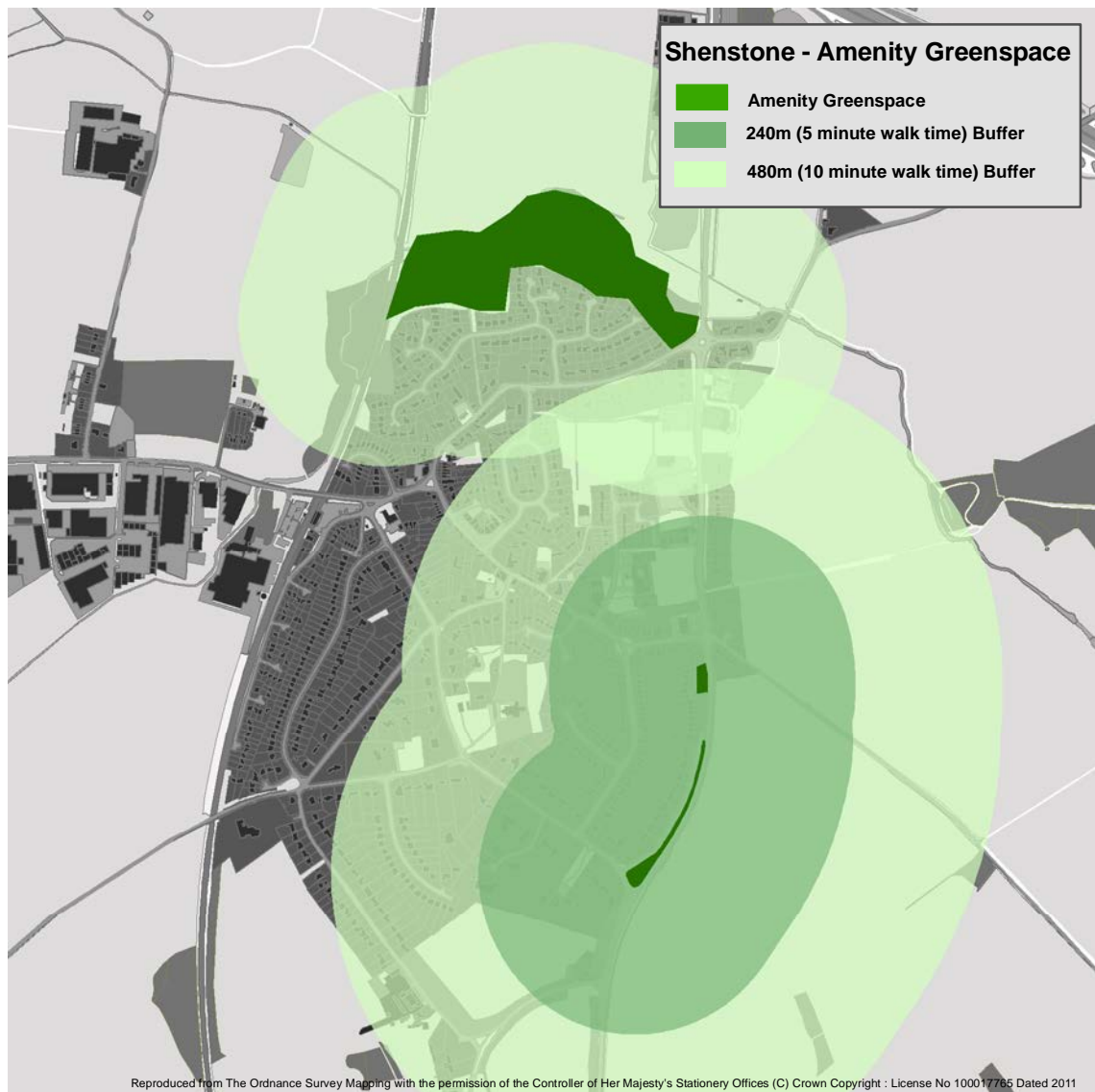
5.53 In terms of its size Shenstone has very little amenity greenspace, far less than other key rural settlements. In total there are 2 amenity greenspaces, both are linear in form running alongside the Birmingham Road located within the settlement. However, just outside the settlement boundary to the north there is an area, known as the Lammas land running alongside Fotherley Brook that is used by residents for primarily for walking. The Lammas land does provide a large accessible area of amenity space but is located outside of the settlement boundary.

5.54 With only two small areas of amenity greenspace which are primarily a visual and physical buffer between the Birmingham Road and adjacent residential area, there is a clear lack of accessible and functioning amenity greenspace for informal use within the settlement. When considering the contribution that other existing types of spaces have, these are concentrated around the north east of the settlement and include the recreation ground and equipped play area around the village hall.

Quality

5.55 These two grassed sites do not score particularly well despite being well kept with good grass coverage, scoring 39% and 42%. It is questionable as to whether the score total can be improved as it may be unnecessary/inappropriate to install seating, bins, paths etc through this particular amenity green space. They primarily act as a physical and visual buffer between housing and the busy Birmingham Road.

Accessibility

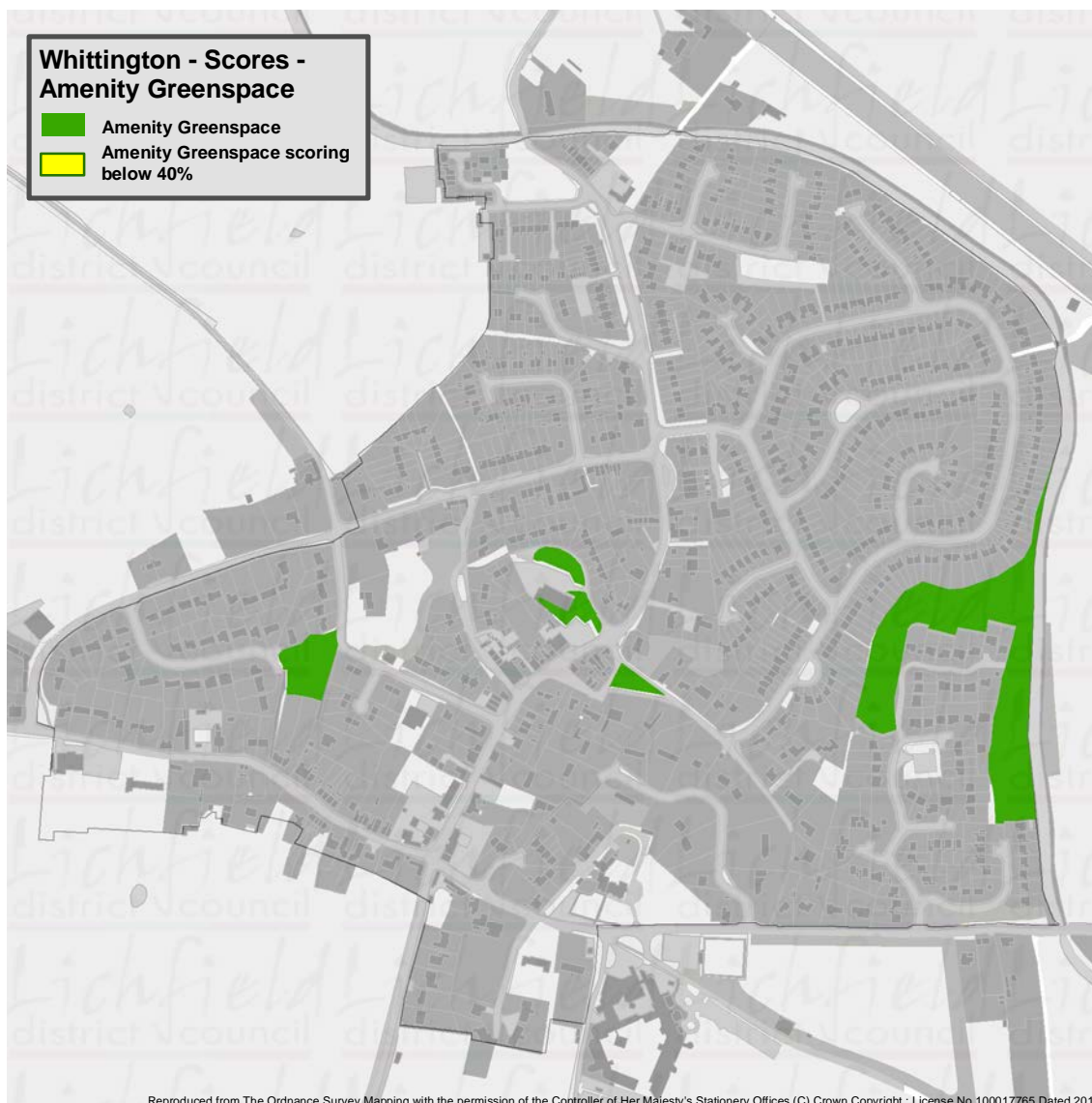


Map 5.16 Shenstone Amenity Greenspace with Buffers

5.56 Despite the lack of existing amenity greenspaces, the overall perception of Shenstone is one of a high quality settlement with areas of established tree coverage. Almost half of Shenstone residents do not live within 480m/10 minute walk time of an existing amenity greenspace. The location and type of the two existing amenity greenspaces are not appropriate for many informal uses. Given that the Lammas land lies outside the village it can be concluded that there is no accessible amenity greenspace within the village of Shenstone itself.

5.57 In terms of amenity greenspace opportunities and potential improvements, the provision of additional spaces should be explored where possible to accommodate a variety of informal uses, particularly to the centre and within the south of the settlement. Any future development should contribute towards providing amenity green space for the village.

Whittington



Map 5.17 Whittington Amenity greensapce Scores

Quantity

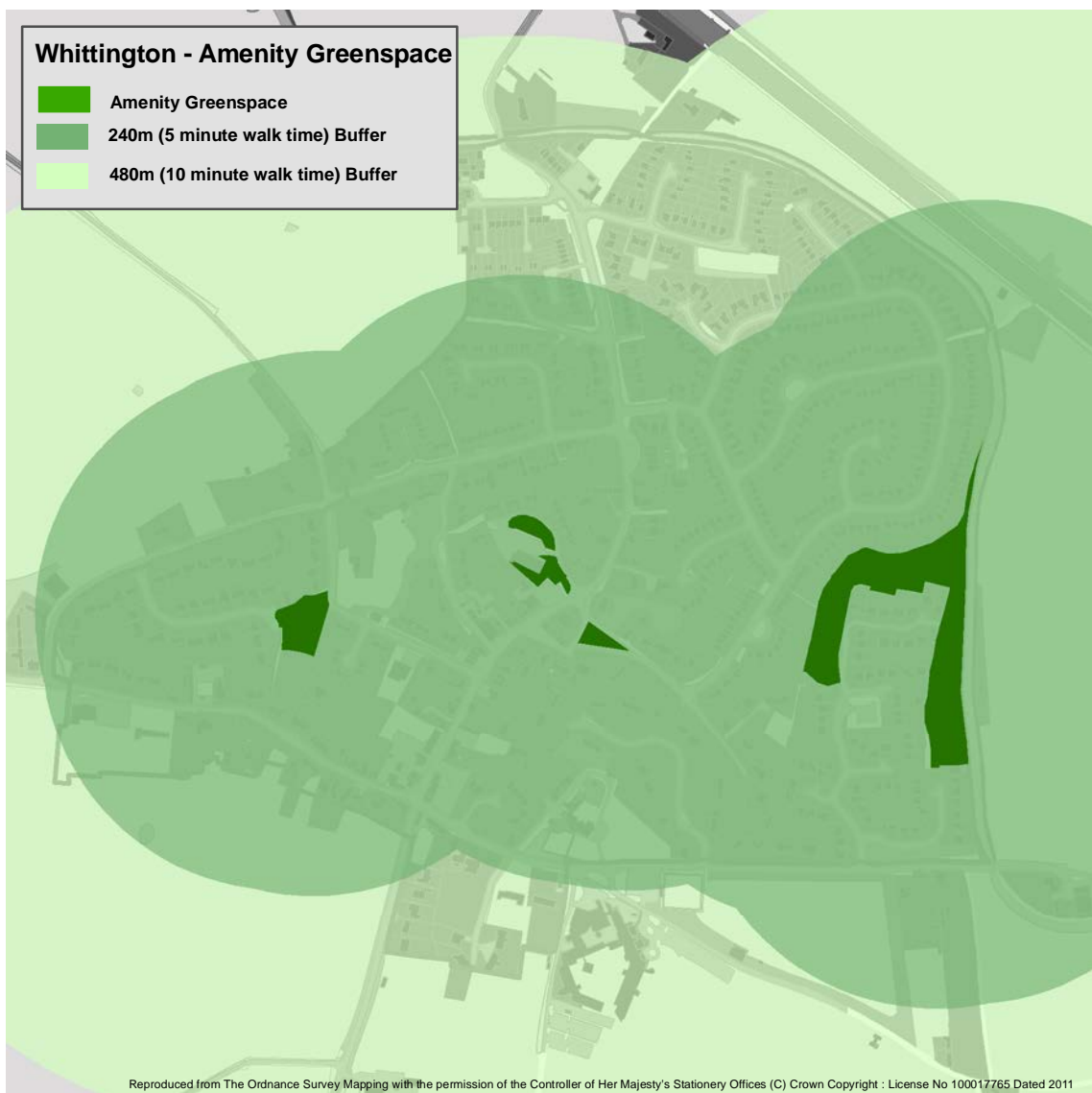
5.58 There are 6 amenity greenspaces located within Whittington, the largest being located in the east on two sites around Peregrine Close and Merlin Way, totalling around 1.5 ha created as part of the residential development on the former Seven Trent Water site. The remaining 4 spaces are centrally located within existing residential areas. There are no amenity greenspaces to the north or south, however there are other types of open spaces within these areas including two equipped play areas, a canal and recreation/playing fields to the south.

5.59 Whittington is accessible to the canal network being bordered by the Coventry Canal. Like most canals, the Coventry Canal benefits from a towpath alongside linking to Fradley and Fradley Junction and further afield to Hopwas. Whilst not counted in this instance as amenity greenspace, the towpath acts as a valuable walkway and green corridor.

Quality

5.60 Overall the quality of amenity greenspaces within Whittington is good with no sites scoring below 40%, due in part to grassed and planted areas being of generally good quality. Individual scores could be improved further by the addition of benches and bins.

Accessibility



Map 5.18 Whittington Amenity Greenspace with Buffers

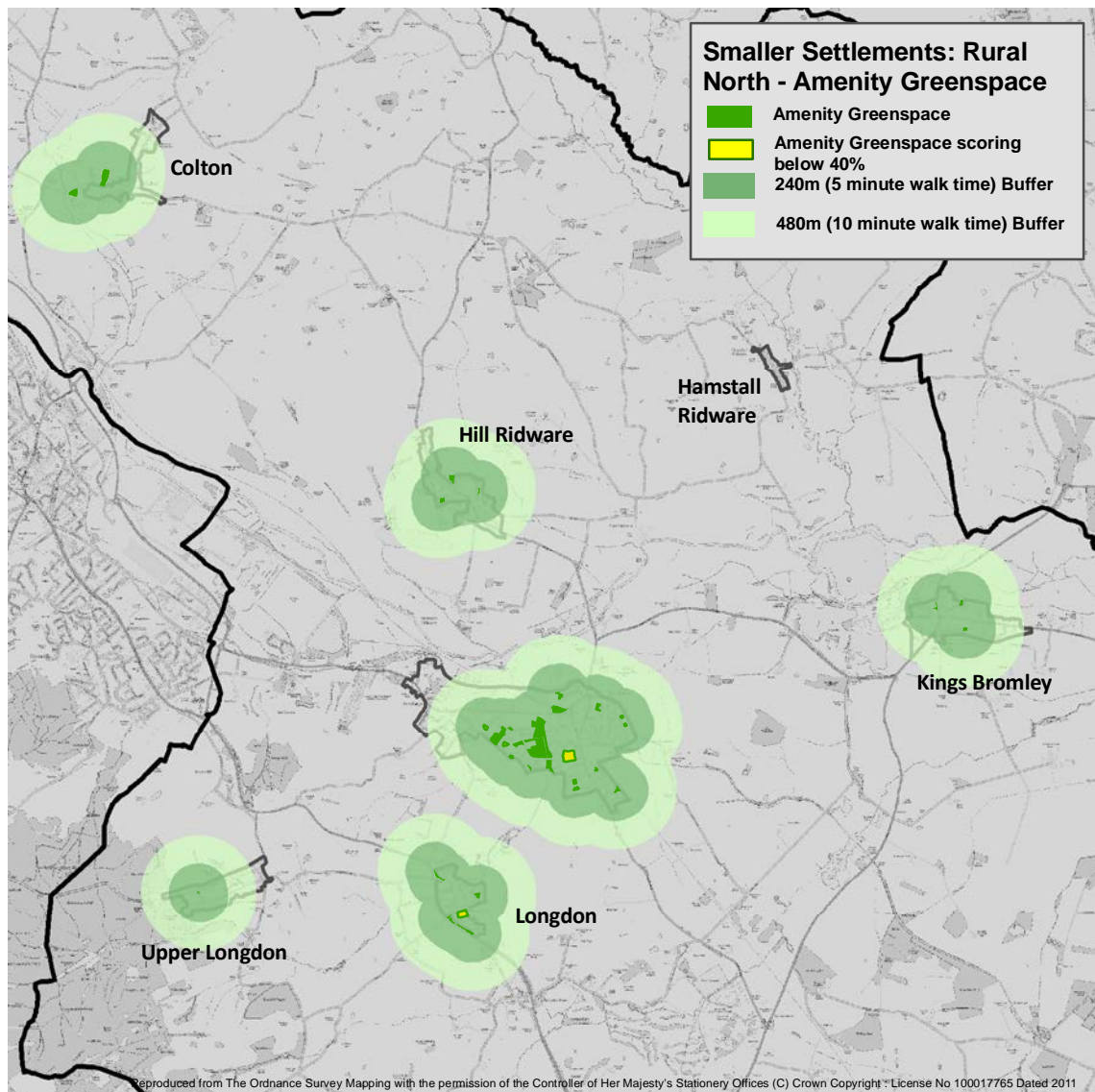
5.61 The entirety of Whittington falls within the 480m/10 minute walk time of existing amenity greenspaces with most areas having access within the 240m/5 minute walk time.

5.62 In terms of amenity greenspace opportunities and potential improvements, should a need arise, opportunities for additional spaces should be explored in particular locations accessible to the northern part of the settlement. In addition, improvements to existing sites should include the consideration of opportunities for seating and bins.

Other Smaller Rural Settlements

5.63 Most of the District's smaller rural settlements have some provision of amenity open space, the two exceptions being Wigginton and Hamstall Ridware.

Northern Rural Settlements



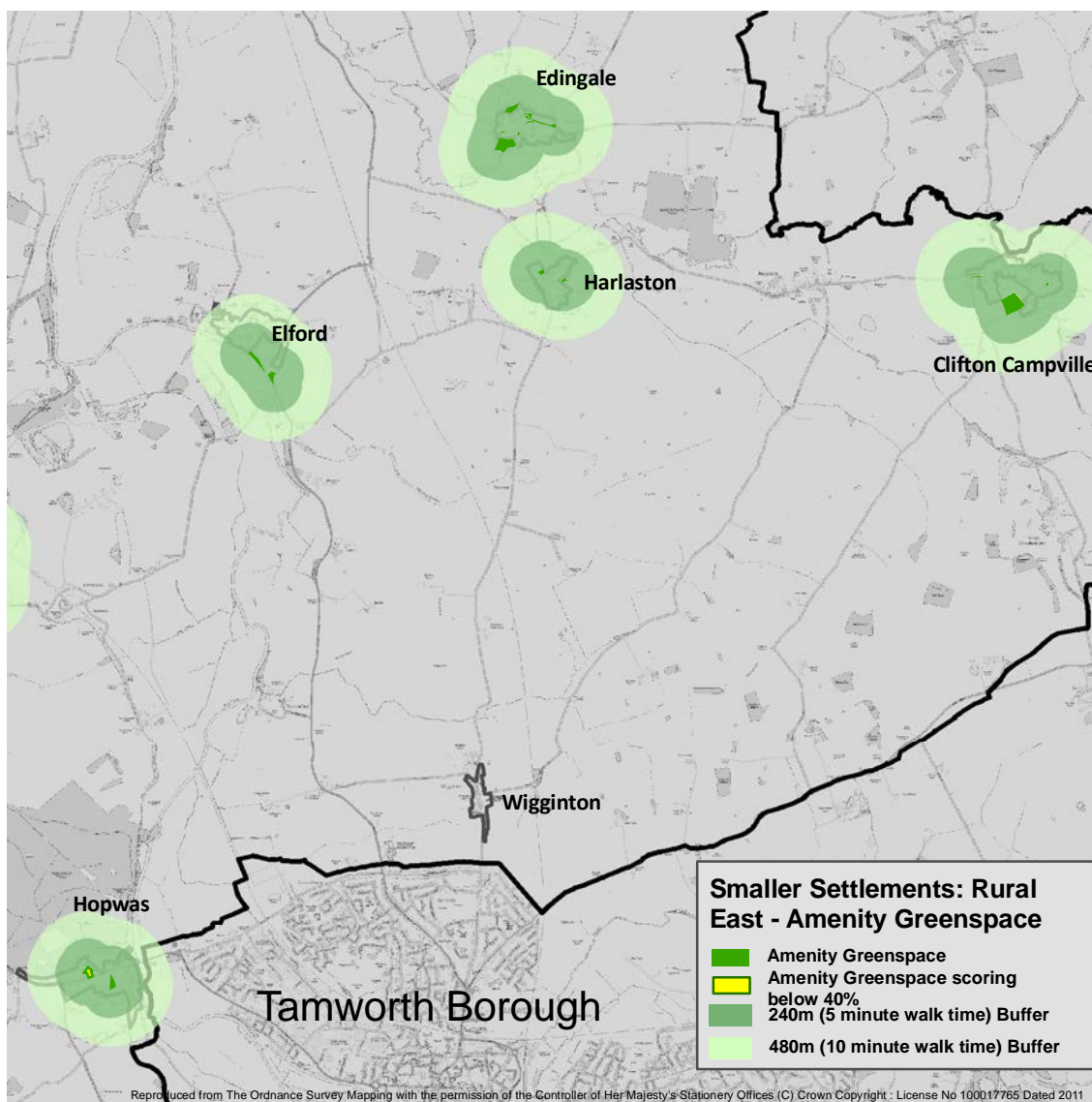
Map 5.19 Rural North Amenity greenspace

5.64 The quantity of amenity greenspace varies across the smaller rural settlements in terms of the number of individual sites and sizes of individual amenity greenspaces within settlements. In relation to those settlements within the north of the District, only Hamstall Ridware has no amenity greenspace, Upper Longdon has one small space, and Longdon has 2 spaces within the settlement with several more adjacent to the village boundary. Kings Bromley and Hill Ridware have 3 spaces whilst Colton has 2 spaces.

5.65 In terms of quality in the rural north, a majority of the sites score reasonably well with only one site in Longdon scoring below 40%. Most of the sites score between 40% and 60% with both the sites at Colton and Woodyards Drive, Kings Bromley scoring particularly well. Any opportunities to increase the quality of sites through the addition of seating, bins and improved planting and grass should be explored.

5.66 There are only small areas Colton and Upper Longdon which are not within the 480m/10 minute walk time of an amenity open space, although it must be noted that the one space within Upper Longdon is particularly small. Any opportunities to increase provision in areas where there is an identifiable need and to ensure all residents have access to amenity open space should be explored.

Eastern Rural Settlements



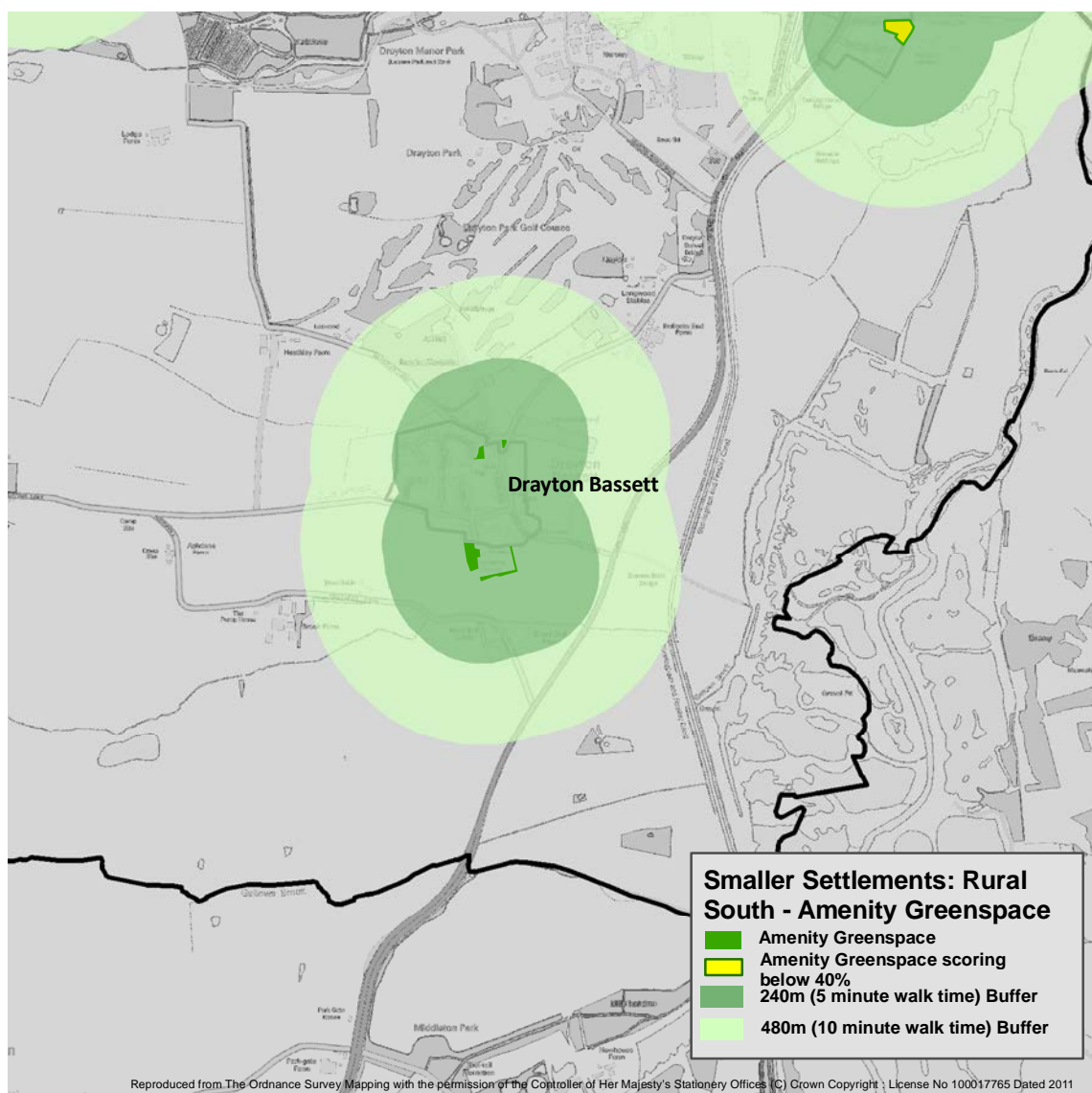
Map 5.20 Rural East Amenity Greenspace

5.67 Within the rural east of the District only Wigginton has no amenity greenspace. Elford, Hopwas and Harlaston have 2 spaces, Clifton Campville has 3 spaces and Edingale has 9 spaces of varying size. Opportunities to provide amenity open space where there is an identified deficiency should be explored.

5.68 The quality is generally good across these settlements with the notable exception being the site at Church Drive, Hopwas which scores below 40%. Generally, the other sites score well, with many scoring between 50% and 65%. Whilst the sites score well any opportunities or local desires to improve the quality of sites should be explored.

5.69 In terms of accessibility, with exception of residents in Wigginton and those on the western edge of Hopwas, there is almost complete accessibility within 480m/10 minute walk time. In addition, pedestrian movement around and within these settlements is generally good.

Southern Rural Settlements



Map 5.21 Rural South Amenity Greenspace

5.70 The only smaller settlement located within the south of the District is Drayton Bassett. With 4 amenity greenspaces it has complete accessibility within a 250m/5 minute walk time.

5.71 All four sites score between 40% and 50% showing that the quality is generally good, although all the sites could be improved through better quality planting, boundary treatments and the installation of additional bins and seating.

Rural West Settlements



Map 5.22 Rural West Amenity Greenspace

5.72 Within this area there are two settlements, Hammerwich and Stonnall, with two and three amenity green spaces respectively, with the largest site being located around the playing fields at Stonnall.

5.73 Stonnall has complete coverage within a 480m/10 minute walk time catchment despite the linear form of the settlement. The largest amenity open space, which surrounds the playing fields, is centrally located and easily accessible to most of the village. The two smaller

sites do not provide opportunity for recreational use but do have amenity value for the village. Like Stonnall, all of Hammerwich is within the 480m/10 minute walk time of amenity open space.

5.74 In terms of quality the sites within Hammerwich and Stonnall all score between 40-50%, the sites are generally in good condition but could be improved by the addition of seating and bins. Both sites within Hammerwich and the larger site in Stonnall could be improved through increased planting, bins and seating.

Summary of Smaller rural Settlements

5.75 Given the size and nature of the majority of these settlements most of the issues in relation to quantity, quality and accessibility are to be determined at a local level. The 2011 Citizens survey showed that generally a larger proportion of residents in rural areas felt that there is an adequate supply of amenity open spaces in their villages. Satisfaction may also be higher due to the availability of open countryside in these areas.

5.76 There is a need to ensure that those sites which score poorly in term of quality should be considered as to whether they could or need to be improved through more seating, bins, improved grass quality or planting etc. Similarly to quality, quantity should be a matter that is considered at a local level as to whether there is a lack of sites or particular deficiency of a particular size/type of site. Where opportunities arise to improve quality, increase quantity and improve accessibility to amenity greenspaces they should be encouraged, particularly where there is local evidence to support this.

Setting Standards for Amenity Greenspace

5.77 Due the nature of this typology and its usual location within residential developments it is hard to set rigid standards. Where locations do not have access to amenity greenspace it may not always be possible to create new spaces due to the built up nature of such developments. Ideally residents should have access to a variety of types of good quality amenity greenspaces of various sizes that can accommodate a range of informal uses that can be accessed safely within a 480m/10minute walk time of their home. With this in mind it is important that existing amenity green spaces are protected and any loss is compensated for within a suitable area. In addition, any opportunities to increase the quantity of provision, particularly in areas where there is an identified deficiency, should be encouraged. With regards to quality, sites should aim to achieve as high a score as possible although it must be recognised that improvements such as seating, bins and footpaths may not be suitable for all amenity greenspaces.

5.78 At local level it is important for local communities to influence amenity greenspace provision as needs will vary between communities.

5.79 In terms of quality the qualitative criteria for scoring amenity greenspaces should be considered and monitored so that spaces are able to be improved and score higher scores where possible. Those scoring below 40% should be considered for improvements. Dependent on the amenity greenspace and its primary function, high scores should be achieved through

consideration of the need for new or additional improvements including, boundary treatment, paths within and around the space, availability of bins and seating, grass coverage and planted areas as well as cleanliness.

Standards for Amenity Greenspace

Quantity: no specific standard will be set in terms of quantity, however it is expected that all residents within the District will have access to amenity greenspace within a 480m/10 minute walk time (see accessibility below).

Quality: sites should be of a high quality, free of litter and vandalism and should consider opportunities for seating, bins, and footpaths where this may improve the amenity of the space. Sites which score below 40% should be considered for improvements along with any sites which are identified locally for improvements. Proposals to improve the quality of any existing amenity space should be considered and supported (Scoring Assessments can be seen in full within the Technical Appendices).

Accessibility: all residents within defined settlements should have access to amenity greenspace within 480m/10minute walk time of their home. Where there are issues that need to be addressed to improve safe pedestrian access to existing amenity greenspaces, any identified improvements should be considered favourably.

New development will be expected to provide high quality amenity greenspace which ensures the quantity, quality and accessibility standards (above) are adhered to.

6 Green Corridors and Urban Fringe

Definition

This type of open space is mainly used for environmentally sustainable forms of transport such as walking or cycling. It provides linkages between housing areas and makes use of linear routes such as public rights of way including bridleways, cycle routes, disused railway lines, roads, canals and river banks.

6.1 Green corridors provide opportunities for walking, cycling or horse riding, for leisure or travel purposes, and offering routes for wildlife migration. Such corridors are important as they promote environmentally friendly means of travelling through the district. It is suggested through 'Assessing Needs and Opportunities'⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ that planning policies promote the use of green corridors to link housing areas to the national cycle network, towns and city centres, places of employment and community facilities.

6.2 Green corridors can contribute to better access to and enjoyment of the countryside. Long distance footpaths (such as the Heart of England Way), bridleways and cycleways can all provide recreational opportunities and activities. Their use also provides important social, health and economic benefits for people and communities. There is substantial evidence that links the natural environment with good physical health as the countryside offers many opportunities for physical activity such as walking, horse riding and cycling. Also, accessing the countryside makes a direct, positive contribution towards mental health and emotional well-being.

6.3 In addition, such corridors contribute to delivering sustainable transport links which connect towns and villages with amenities such as community facilities, employment locations, shops and a wider range of assets. It is important that where there are opportunities to improve such links, that these are maximised.

6.4 Within the District there are also opportunities for green corridors to link areas of wildlife importance so as to reduce the fragmentation of natural and semi-natural areas such as seen in recent years around Burntwood and Chasewater.

6.5 Further information on types of green corridors that are not covered within this assessment can be found within the Strategic Green Infrastructure section of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, which looks at the types of green infrastructure that will be required in the future and how this may be delivered.

Public Rights of Way

6.6 There are currently 1,155 Rights of Way in Lichfield District totalling 440.7km. In addition there are also some 187.7km of cycle routes in the District which connect the main urban settlements of Lichfield and Burntwood to Cannock, Rugeley and Tamworth. Notable and well known walkways which cross the District include the Heart of England Way and Darwin Walk.

iii Assessing Needs and Opportunities - Companion Guide to PPG17

6.7 As required under Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Staffordshire County Council as the Highway Authority was required to publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) by November 2007. The purpose of the ROWIP is to give authorities an opportunity to reassess their existing local rights of way network and its relevance to the people who use it now and those who may wish to do so in the future. The ROWIP assessed:

- The extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public;
- The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of outdoor recreation and the enjoyment of the area; and
- The accessibility of local rights of way to the blind or partially sighted and people with mobility problems.

6.8 In coming to recommendations the ROWIP also takes into consideration of:

- Environmental considerations – impact on the ecology, landscape and historic environment;
- Biodiversity – areas also used for outdoor recreation include Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Cannock Chase, a Special Area of Conservation, where impact on wildlife requires careful management;
- Built environment – it is important to preserve certain historic features from the impact of erosion and enable practical measures to be taken to avoid damaging them. Similarly canal corridors and their towpaths are designated Conservation Areas and care would need to be taken where it is likely to directly impact on or affect their setting; and
- Carbon Reduction – Increased all-year use of footpaths resulting from initiatives to contribute to carbon reduction could potentially lead to path erosion, potential for increase in accidents where users conflict such as walking, mountain biking and horse riding.

6.9 The ROWIP sets out, in conclusion, a ‘Statement of Action,’ setting out areas for improvements. However as with most improvements, funding remains the main obstacle. It therefore recommends the continuation of and increasing of partnership working and involvement of local people and communities to take advantage of the resources and knowledge.’(ROWIP)

Canals

6.10 Within Staffordshire, canal towpaths have been linked with to the footpath network to provide two long-distance routes:

- The Way for the Millennium; and
- The Staffordshire Way.

6.11 Improvements to the accessibility of towpaths should be supported e.g. at Fradley Junction there is the potential to develop routes that are available to those with mobility impairments.

6.12 Many of the canals run by British Waterways are open to cyclists, however within Lichfield District there are no formal cycle routes running along existing canal towpaths.

6.13 Several settlements are situated along the canal network including Armitage with Handsacre, Fradley, Alrewas, Whittington, Hopwas and Fazeley. Given the extent of canal towpaths crossing the District and the settlements that sit alongside them it is possible that towpaths may need to be considered when looking at improvements to sustainable routes that can be used for recreation, employment and as a means of accessing services and facilities.



Map 6.1

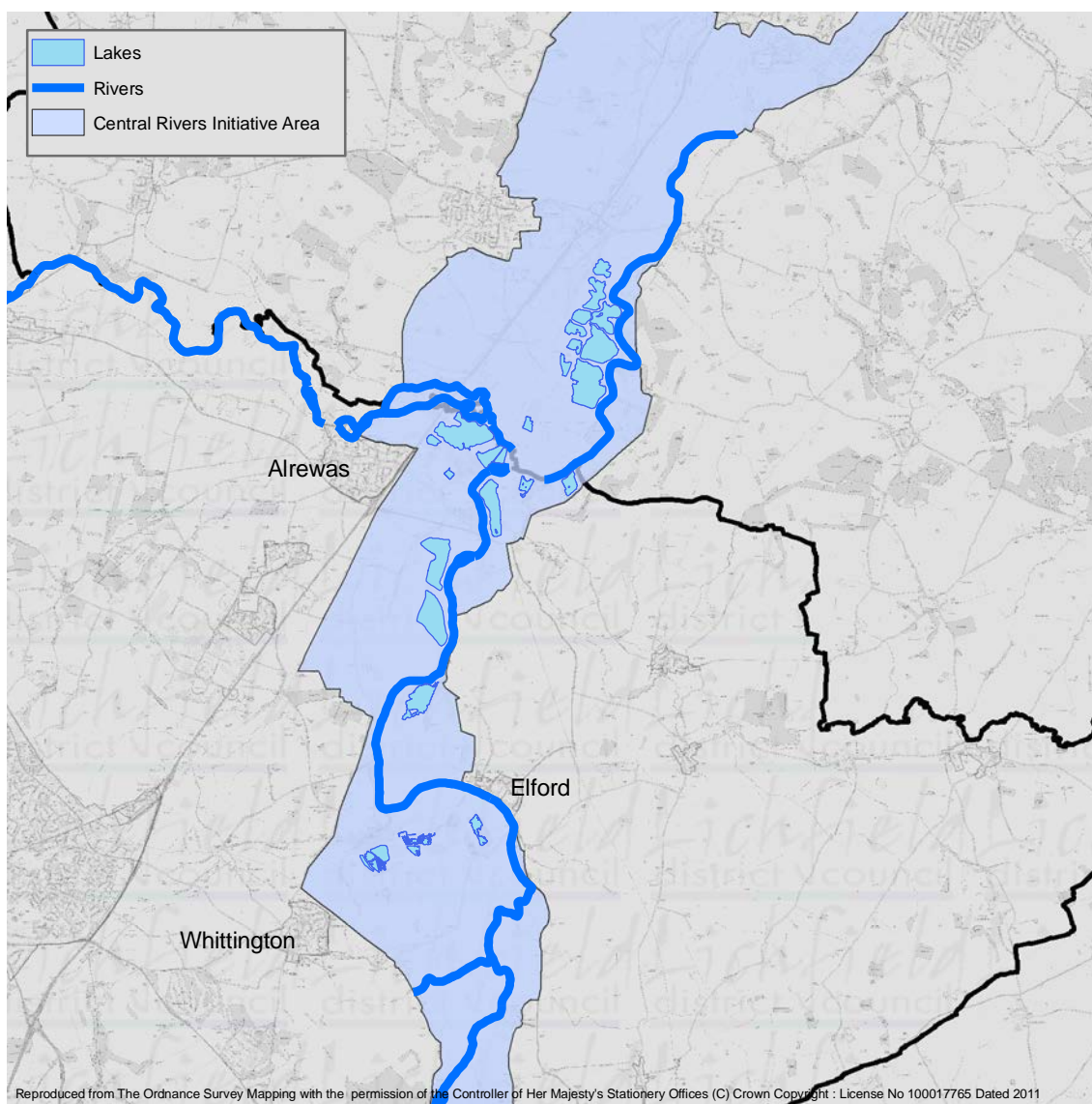
6.14 In addition to cycle routes and rights of way there is also a network of canals crossing the District, these include the Birmingham and Fazeley Canal, Trent and Mersey Canal and Coventry Canal. In addition work is also being undertaken to restore and re-open the Lichfield

Canal by the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Trust. Whilst initially constructed for the transportation of goods and in more recent years for leisure cruising, canals are increasingly popular with walkers and cyclists.

6.15 Continued support and promotion of the canal network should be maintained in order to raise their profile in terms of their importance in contributing to the sustainable transport network.

Rivers

6.16 In terms of rivers the District is crossed by the Rivers Tame and Trent both of which are part of the wider Central Rivers Initiative (CRI) area which stretches across Lichfield District and into Tamworth Borough and East Staffordshire District.



Map 6.2 Central Rivers Initiative Area

6.17 The Central Rivers Initiative is a rural regeneration project seeking in particular to 'secure a multi-functional end use for post sand and gravel extraction sites'. In recent years work on this project has moved away from site-specific biodiversity targeted projects towards a landscape scale ecosystem approach to habitat management and landscape enhancement. It is envisaged that the number of residents living within relatively easy access of the CRI area will increase over the coming years. The CRI is seen as an area with potential to provide leisure and recreational facilities and could also relieve some of the potential pressures on existing more sensitive areas such as Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

6.18 There are a number of proposals within the CRI area within Lichfield District;

- Alrewas North: enhance open water;
- Alrewas South: integrate restoration proposals to allocated sites with National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, National Forest;
- Elford, Fisherwick and Whittington: area includes proposals to agree restoration plans at Elford South for water based recreation activities, access improvements to tame Valley walkway and green infrastructure links from Lichfield.
- Landscape, habitat and recreation projects proposed at Whitmore Haye, Elford North and South, Fisherwick, Comberford, Hopwas Canal, Fazeley Junction and Birmingham and Fazeley Canal.

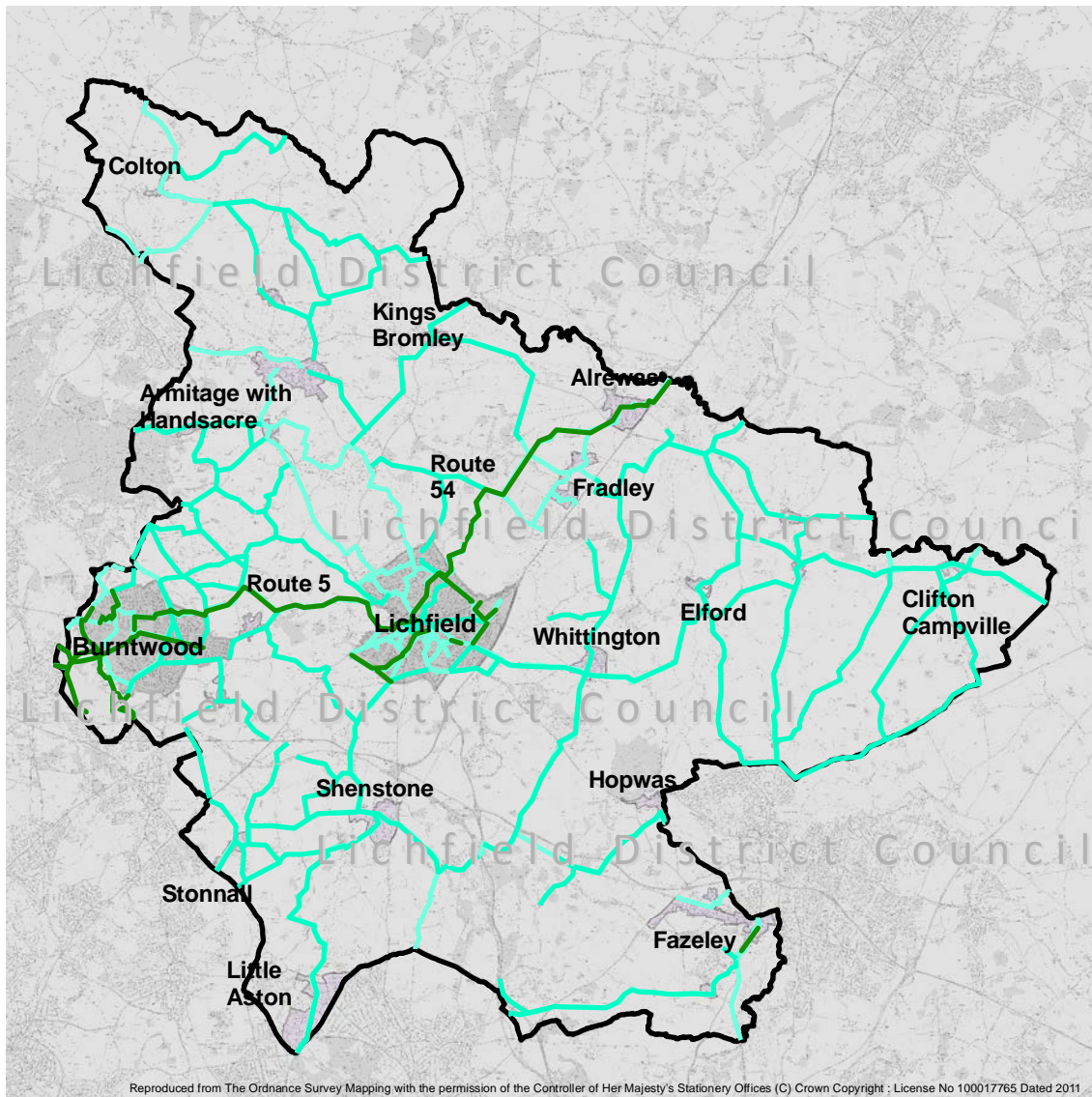
Cycleways, Walkways and Bridleways

6.19 Cycling and walking are critical in creating an integrated and balanced transport network. As well playing a central role in reducing pollution and cutting congestion they also provide a healthy and sustainable way of transport.

6.20 Two important cycle routes currently pass through the District:

- Lichfield to Burntwood National Route 5 (8 miles). Starting at Lichfield Cathedral the route runs through Lichfield City and into Burntwood Town Centre and on to Chasewater Country Park before leaving Staffordshire for Brownhills; and
- Lichfield to Burton upon Trent National Cycle Network Route 54(18 miles). Starting at Lichfield Cathedral the route runs to Fradley, Alrewas and Barton under Needwood before entering Burton on Trent and then into Derbyshire via the A38 Trunk Road.

6.21 The Local Cycling Strategy for Staffordshire covers the 15-year period 1999-2014. The Strategy is reviewed annually. Staffordshire County Council supports the Government's initiative to shift current transport investment away from schemes which simply increase capacity for motor traffic into alternative projects such as cycling. The Lichfield District Integrated Transport Strategy 2011-2026 was published by Staffordshire County Council and places emphasis on the need to promote sustainable links to encourage residents of the District to use alternative forms of transport.



Map 6.3

6.22 Existing canals are an important feature in terms of sustainable transport corridors, however within Lichfield District there are no towpath cycle routes at present. Should this be an option in the future it could provide links between settlements such as Fradley and Armitage, Armitage and Rugeley, Fradley and Whittington, Whittington and Hopwas as well as Hopwas and Fazeley.

6.23 Continued support and promotion of the canal network needs to be maintained, raising the profile in terms of their importance in contributing to the sustainable transport network.

Quantity Summary

6.24 There are inherent difficulties in setting standards for green corridors, not least because of the variety of types and end users of these corridors. Corridors such as those described above are important for many reasons and whilst no quantitative standard is to be set there is a need to continually ensure that such routes are well maintained and managed. Where new development is proposed it is important that additional links are incorporated to enhance the existing network of corridors. Developments need to be designed to integrate with the existing corridor network, to provide their own green corridors, and to take into account any implications for biodiversity.

Quality Summary

6.25 The quality of green corridors varies throughout the District and is dependent on a number of factors, including the nature of each corridor. When assessing the quality of these corridors it is important to consider the following:

- Aesthetics;
- Accessibility;
- Biodiversity; and
- Sustainability.

6.26 Similarly to considering quantitative standards it is not considered appropriate to set a definitive quality standard. This is due to the amount of green corridors, the diversity of types and how they are used, together with the fact that they are often owned and maintained by other organisations. Whilst no standard is to be set it is envisaged that they should be clean, well maintained and managed having regard to the nature of the green corridor; this will vary between types. Popular corridors regularly used by the public should be safe and accessible in particular those that link together other areas of green infrastructure, with good signage, and where appropriate, should have litter and dog bins and adequate lighting.

Accessibility Summary

6.27 No accessibility standards will be set in relation to this typology given the varied nature of green corridors. Instead planning policies will seek to promote the use of green corridors to link communities and promote sustainable access to services and facilities as well as encouraging and promoting recreational use. To this end it is important that routes are well maintained to ensure that there are no obstructions which limit accessibility and that those sites identified as being of poor quality in the Greens and Open Spaces Strategy, are improved. Examples of obstructions and poor quality sites include the A38 which prevents the link of National Cycle Network route 54 to the National Memorial Arboretum, and other areas of the network with poor surfaces.

6.28 It is important that any opportunities to increase accessibility and better linkages through the use of existing green corridors are considered, whether through safe cycle routes or improvements to existing footpaths and canal towpaths. In addition it is important that opportunities to increase the biodiversity of such corridors are also explored

Standards

Quantity: no quantitative standard is to be set however it is expected that where development takes place new green corridors will be designed to integrate with the existing corridor network and to address any implications for biodiversity.

Quality: no qualitative standard is to be set however it is envisaged that Green Corridors should be clean, well maintained and managed having regard to the nature of the green corridor. Corridors regularly used by the public should be safe and accessible, in particular those linking communities and other areas of green infrastructure and, where appropriate, should have signage, adequate lighting, litter and dog bins.

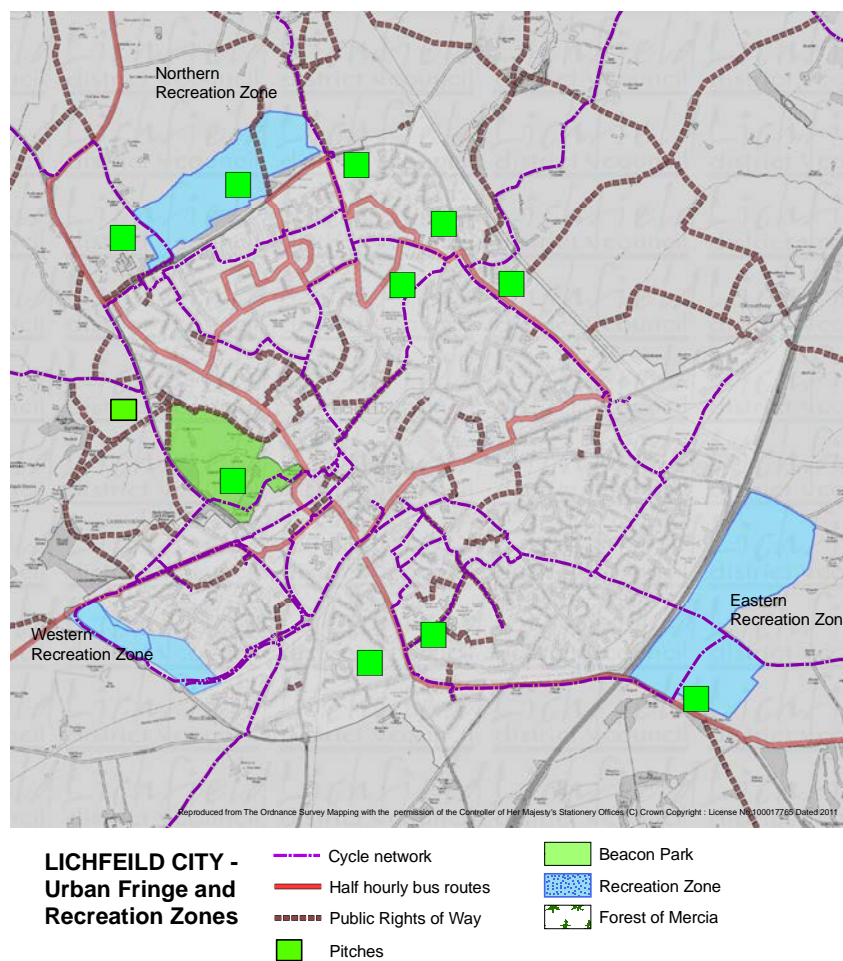
Accessibility: no accessibility standards will be set in relation to Green Corridors. Planning policies will seek to promote the use of Green Corridors to link communities and promote sustainable access to services, facilities and recreation.

Urban Fringe

Definition

Urban fringes are areas of countryside around towns which can be a valuable resource for sport and recreation. Local authorities should encourage the creation of sports and recreational facilities in such areas.

Recreation Zones



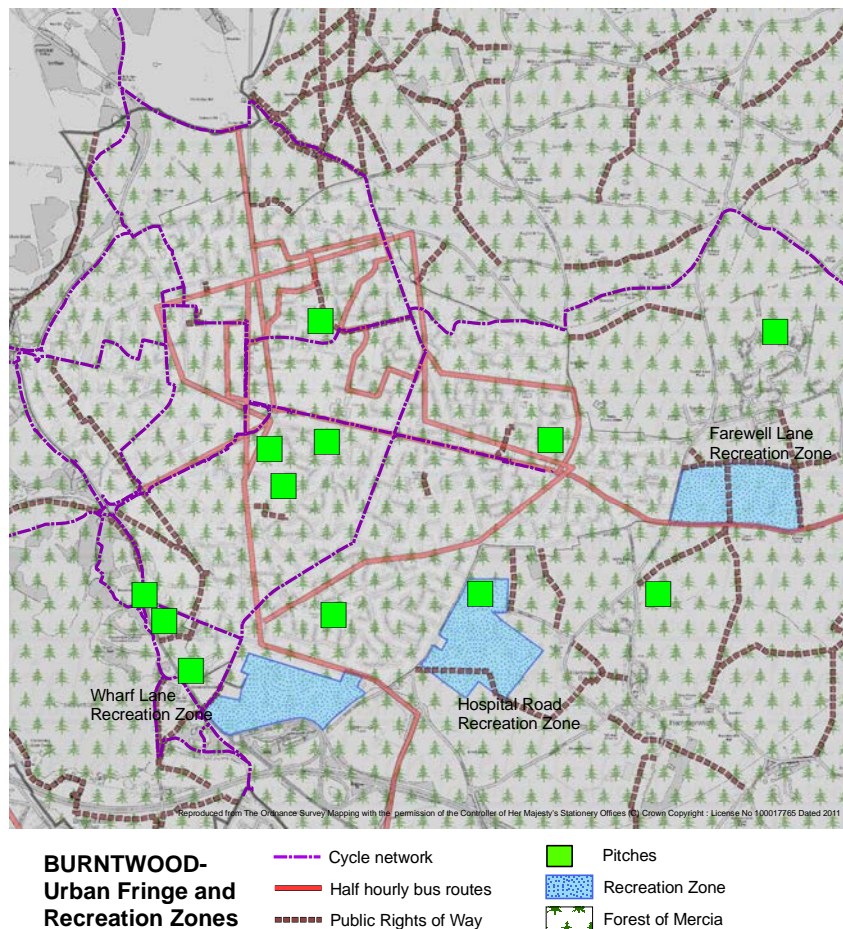
Within recreation zones, the emphasis is on the promotion of recreation and sports within these urban fringe sites. As shown they are accessible (by foot, bike and public transport) open areas in sustainable locations for those living within adjacent urban areas and more importantly they can provide a valuable resource for sport and recreation particularly where there are limited opportunities within the urban areas themselves.

Map 6.4 Lichfield City Urban Fringe

6.29 On the periphery of Lichfield City and Burntwood there are a number of 'urban fringe' spaces including areas designated within the existing 1998 Lichfield Local Plan as recreation zones. These are areas where proposals for outdoor recreation uses will generally be supported.

6.30 Three recreation Zones were designated around Lichfield City in the 1998 Local Plan. Two of these areas have developed as locations for recreation and sport over the past 15 years, the exception being the Western Zone which remains in agricultural use and continues to be promoted through the emerging Local Plan process by landowners for built development. The future designation of the Western Recreation Zone will be considered through the Local Plan Allocations document which will follow the emerging Local Plan Strategy due to be adopted in Spring 2013. The Recreation Zones around Lichfield City contain the following uses:

- Sport and recreational uses located within Lichfield Eastern Recreation Zone include Lichfield Rugby Club, tennis club, both 18 and 9 hole golf courses and driving range.
- Sport and recreational uses located within Lichfield Northern Recreation Zone include Lichfield Cricket and Hockey Club and archery club. Other uses within this zone include Christian Fields Local Nature Reserve and Cemetery.
- Within Lichfield Western Recreation Zone there are no sport and recreational uses.



Within recreation zones, the emphasis is on the promotion of recreation and sports within these urban fringe sites. As shown they are accessible (by foot, bike and public transport) open areas in sustainable locations for those living within adjacent urban areas and more importantly they can provide a valuable resource for sport and recreation particularly where there are limited opportunities within the urban areas themselves.

Map 6.5 Burntwood Urban Fringe

6.31 Three recreation zones were designated around Burntwood in the Local Plan. Only the Hospital Road Zone has been developed for outdoor football use. Farewell Lane and Wharf Lane Zones remain in agricultural use and both continue to be promoted through the emerging Local Plan process by landowners for built development. The future designation of these Recreation Zones will be considered through the Local Plan Allocations document which will follow the emerging Local Plan Strategy due to be adopted in Spring 2013.

6.32 There remains a need to consider the relevance of recreation zones designations for the delivery of outdoor sport and recreation, either existing sites identified in the 1998 Local Plan or new/additional sites. Several factors need to be considered, including:

- Is there a need for further pitch and outdoor recreation provision?
- Can they help deliver outdoor sport and recreation facilities where no specific designation exists?

- Are the recreation zones in the best locations?
- Consideration in terms of planning policy: these uses are already acceptable within the countryside without the need for specific policy wording/designation.
- The recommendations of the Playing Pitch Strategy published in 2012.

6.33 The emphasis on the promotion of these urban fringe sites relates to the fact that they provide valuable and accessible (by foot, bike and public transport) open areas in sustainable locations for those living within adjacent urban areas and, more importantly, they can provide a valuable resource for sport and recreation, particularly where there are limited opportunities within the urban areas themselves. However, those designated zones in which sport and recreation uses have been located were all home to an existing sport/recreation use prior to designation. With this in mind and given the reluctance of landholders in general to see edge of urban land given over to less profitable uses, it seems a challenge to deliver sports/recreation facilities where the landowner or interested parties are pursuing built development. The locations for built development will be set out in the Local Plan Strategy and subsequent Allocations document.

6.34 In terms of planning policy, outdoor sport and recreation uses together with essential facilities are acceptable forms of development in the countryside and green belt. Potentially by supporting such uses in urban fringe locations accessible by public transport, by foot and cycle as well as by car and resisting other uses it may bring forward additional facilities.

Recommendations

6.35 Recreation Zones are still considered to be an appropriate mechanism in delivering outdoor sport and recreation on the fringes of Lichfield and Burntwood, however further consideration needs to be given to each and every zone through the Local Plan Allocations document. The Playing Pitch Strategy recognises the success of many of the existing Recreation Zones and can see the potential for many to deliver further or improved facilities, particularly those that incorporate existing successful sports clubs. In addition, other smaller settlements may also have suitable sites for such development. With this in mind it is recommended that outside the strategic developments locations, which may include such formal recreation provision, support for outdoor sport and recreational uses should be given on the fringes of settlements. A key consideration should be ease of access of the sites (by foot, cycle, public transport and by car).

7 Provision for Children and Young People

Definition

Areas specifically for children's play and young persons with its primary purpose being for play and social interaction, for example areas of equipped play, ball courts and skateparks.

7.1 Provision of sufficient, good quality, accessible play spaces for children and young people ensures that there are opportunities to learn social and movement skills and interact with their peers. Ideally a variety of good quality spaces/facilities should be well located in order to maximise access from within local communities.

7.2 The following table provides definitions for the different types of site which provide for Children and young people

Type of Play	Definition
Local Areas of Play (LAP)	Sites designed specifically for younger children (up to the age of about 6) with a minimum size of approximately 100m ² Examples of such sites are Stowe Fields in Lichfield and the site at Burntwood Leisure Centre.
Local Equipped Areas of Play (LEAP)	Play areas which are designed for a slightly older children between 4 and 8 years old with a minimum size of approximately 400m ² Examples of LEAPs would be Saddlers Wood in Lichfield and Burntwood Park.
Neighbourhood Areas of Play (NEAP)	These are sites which are designed to serve older children than the two types above, these sites have a minimum size of approximately 1000m ² . Examples of this type of site would be Beacon Park in Lichfield and Redwood Park in Burntwood.
Other Outdoor Sites	This will catch any site which is not defined above, such as skateparks, stand alone multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and bmx tracks. Examples would be the skate parks located in Burntwood and Fradley and MUGA's such as that located of Sante Foy Avenue in Lichfield.
Multi-use Games Area (MUGA)	Area which provides opportunities for a range of games to be played. Usually consists of hard surfacing, goal posts, basket ball hoops, seating and fencing. Examples of these can be found at numerous locations within the District often as part of wider equipped play spaces.

Table 7.1 Types of Play

7.3 The Play Strategy 2007-2012 (Lichfield District Council) highlights many reasons that make play an important aspect of childhood. Children benefit from exercise and social interaction and accessible, well designed and maintained play areas and can also improve quality of life for families and the wider community. To this end the Play Strategy aims to;

- Promote and raise awareness of play;
- Ensure that public open space and play areas are safe;

- Provide each community with a safe, properly designed play space;
- Provide mobile facilities for rural areas.

7.4 The was produced by Lichfield District's Play Partnership which was made up representatives from the District, County and Parish Councils along with representatives from schools and local children's groups. The play partnership adopted the following mission statement;

'Every child and young person in Lichfield District has an equal right to play in a safe and stimulating environment and enjoy their health and childhood experiences through a range of formal and informal play- opportunities. The Play Partnership will strive to create these opportunities and promote the provision of play to help create a healthy vibrant community'

7.5 Within Lichfield District at 2001 there were 16,908 children under 14 years of age and this is projected to rise by 2028 to 18,000, an increase of around 1,100. The number of teenagers in the 15-19 age groups is expected to fall slightly from 6,674 in 2001 to 6,000 in 2028.

7.6 This assessment of existing equipped play spaces, will identify areas where there are deficiencies in the provision, quality and accessibility of play spaces and that standards are set where appropriate to assist in addressing these deficiencies. In addition it will set minimum requirements that should be specified when creating new play spaces.

7.7 This section refers specifically to equipped play areas although it is recognised that amenity greenspaces also play an important role in providing areas for play which, when combined with equipped play areas can result in larger spaces offering a more varied play experience.

7.8 It is acknowledged that some equipped play spaces contain more than one type of play and or open space, where this is the case the play area has been put into the designation it most closely matches. Whilst the section focuses specifically on equipped play areas it should also be noted that children often play in parks or on amenity greenspaces as well as less formal spaces such as streets.

Survey Findings and Views of Users

7.9 In addition to residents and children who use spaces, information has been sought regarding local deficiencies in quality, quality and accessibility from Parish Councils, who have been approached to ascertain their views based on their particular local knowledge of their individual areas. In the past resident's surveys were carried out as part of the Household Survey, Omnibus, Best Value Performance and more recently in 2008/9 as part of the Place Survey with specific targeted evidence being obtained as part of the work which informed the Play Strategy.

7.10 A fairly consistent theme runs through the majority of data obtained on the provision and facilities for young children and teenagers as part of the various surveys carried out over recent years. All the surveys which have been carried out over recent years consistently show that there is a need for facilities for teenagers. This is an issue which has continued to be raised throughout numerous surveys and shows it is an important local issue.

7.11 The 2011 Citizens survey demonstrated that across the District 54% of people surveyed felt that there was either 'nearly enough' or 'not enough' provision equipped. This demonstrates that there is still a feeling that greater provision and facilities for young people and teenagers is required across the District. The survey highlighted that residents of Burntwood in particular felt this was an issue in their area with 48% of respondents stating that there was not enough provision.

7.12 The Play Strategy is a key document in relation to children's play, bringing together various parties with an interest/involvement in children's play as well as providing useful views of the children themselves. Developed with involvement of children as well as providers of facilities, including Parish Councils, it showed that football was the most popular outdoor activity with bike riding also being very popular, but it highlighted the issue that these activities were not permitted on many sites. In addition, issues of poor maintenance, vandalism, and play areas which are considered 'boring' by children were also raised. In Lichfield City and in particular within Burntwood, the lack of facilities for older children was raised. The Play Strategy concluded that local play areas were very important to local communities and children and whilst access to equipped play areas is desirable, access to larger, more informal outdoor open spaces is equally important, enabling opportunities for a more varied and better quality of play experience,

7.13 In order to provide attractive equipped play spaces, it is important that sites specifically aimed at children and young people contain elements which they consider contribute to the quality of play. Views from children were sought as part of the Play Strategy along with views resulting from other informal consultations carried out by the Play Development Team. These have been used as the basis for setting criteria against which to judge and score the quality of 'play value' of equipped play spaces. In addition to the issues concerning quality of play from a user's perspective, a survey of the more physical elements of these sites has also been undertaken. Whilst there is some degree of overlap between the two scores, together they provide an overall picture of the quality of each site.

7.14 A survey of Parish Councils was undertaken in 2004 looking at open space and equipped play areas for children and young persons within their Parish. Of those Parish Councils that responded the general view was that existing provision was adequate. Those highlighting concerns included Hill Ridware and Kings Bromley where it was identified that there was a lack of facilities for teenagers. Some stated that play areas were needed in areas where there was no current provision for children's play such as at Shenstone Woodend, Longdon and Longdon Green. Burntwood Town Council expressed concerns over noise conflicts between some existing play areas and adjacent residents, the need for better maintenance and additional play areas in south east Burntwood. Lichfield City Council expressed similar issues to those of Burntwood Town Council adding that there was a lack of play equipment and an accessible skatepark.

7.15 Later consultations relating to the Local Plan (Core Strategy) highlighted concerns in relation to the condition of two individual play areas at Roman Way and Darnford Park within Lichfield. Additional comments were made encouraging reference to the inclusion of 'sensory play' within open spaces.

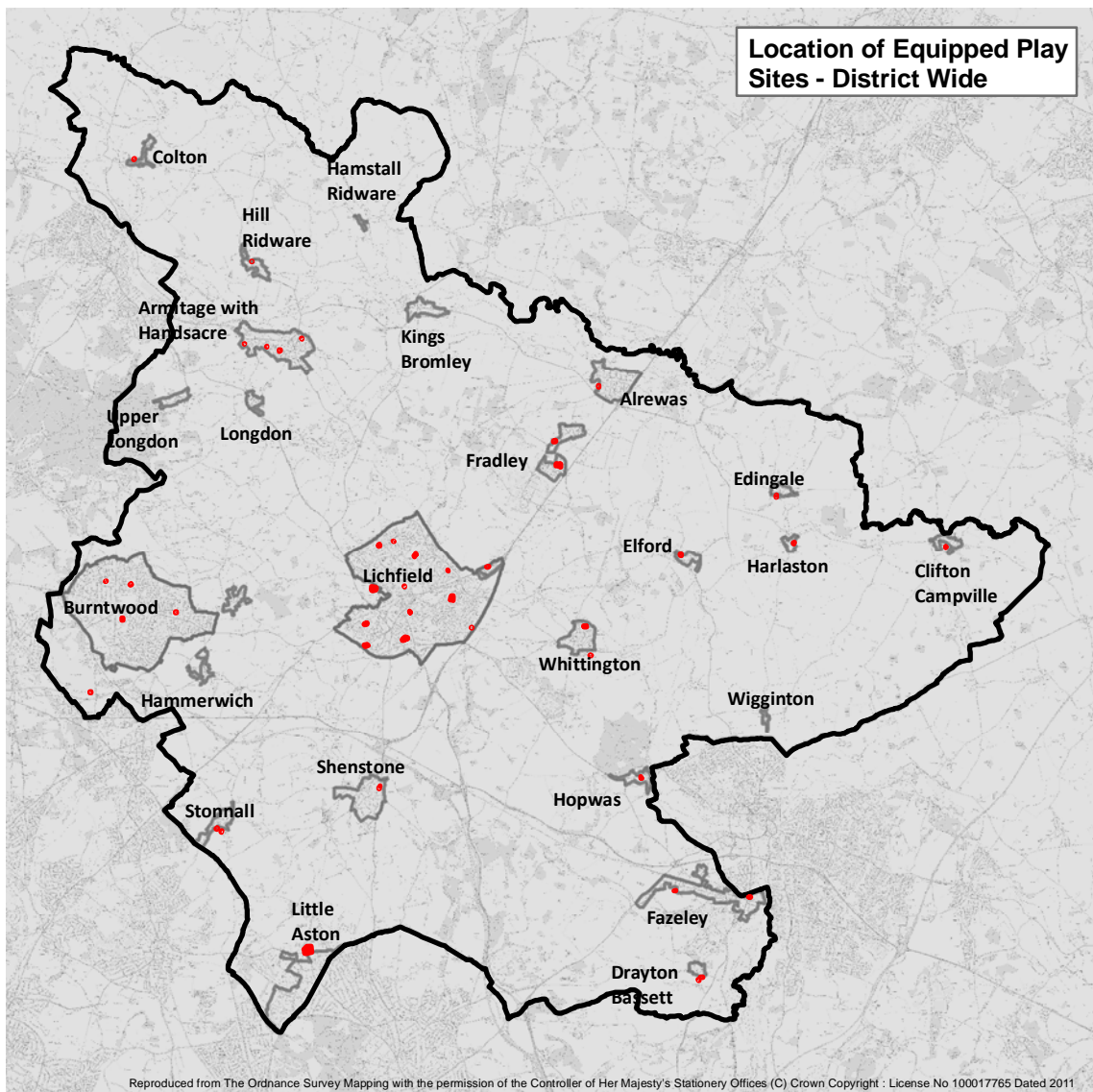
7.16 Other comments included support for the provision of recreation and leisure opportunities throughout the District, with many comments relating to the identified shortfalls or needs for provision. In relation to children's playspaces comments included support for the need for provision for young people, reference to the lack of amenity greenspace in Burntwood and the need to improve maintenance of existing areas needs, the need for clear links to multi-functional green spaces and that the Lichfield skatepark project should be supported and referenced^(iv). A full summary of comments received to the 'Shaping our District' consultation can be viewed through the District Council's Planning Policy Consultation Centre.

7.17 In 2009 as part of a consultation on the District Councils Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment, few comments were made in relation to children's play provision. Responses received generally supported the need for accessible play areas, including support for 10 minute walk times as reasonable for time travelling to such sites.

Assessment of Quantity

7.18 There are a total of 44 equipped play spaces throughout the district ranging in size from small play areas in rural villages to large areas with numerous facilities such as Beacon Park. Accuracy of measuring the size of equipped play areas is not straightforward, with the boundaries of some sites not clearly defined, being often set within a larger area or comprise a range of equipment spread across a larger greenspace. In total there is approximately 10ha of equipped play space within the District. In addition to measuring difficulties, is the issue of how much 'land take' is a factor in terms of quantity and or quality. Indeed, it is possible for smaller sites to score highly where there is a variety of good quality equipment set in a well designed and maintained environment conducive to physical and imaginative play.

iv Lichfield District Core Strategy: Shaping Our District - November 2010



Map 7.1 District Equipped Play

Past Approach: In the past, assessment of quantity has had regard to a variety of published sources including the National Playing Fields Association: Six Acre Standard (2001), using Locally Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs).

7.19 An examination of other Local Authority methodologies and experience in applying Local Plan policies initially led to the conclusion that there was no need to significantly alter the 1998 adopted Local Plan standard of 2.83 ha per 1,000 population overall for public open space, however there was no breakdown within this figure for provision for children or equipped play. Despite this, the application in recent years of Local Plan policies within new developments has generated a number amenity open spaces and new equipped play areas including sites at Walsall Road, Lichfield and at Fradley. The application of these policies has resulted in high quality equipped playspaces being delivered.

7.20 It is considered that this standard needs to be broken down into the various component types in order to assess and ensure that the appropriate amount and type are tailored to the needs of the local community. This would ensure that quantity, quality and accessibility of new equipped play areas are planned properly with community involvement as well as supporting improvements to existing equipped play spaces especially where there are identified deficiencies, and that contributions to maintenance of on and off site provision, where deemed appropriate, are clearly set out.

7.21 The NPFA, Six Acre standard provides a useful starting point when considering standards, the standard for Equipped Childrens Playspace should be 0.3ha per 1,000 population.

7.22 In terms of provision for equipped childrens playspace, the District falls well below the standard set at 0.3ha per 1000 population and concerns have been expressed about the lack of provision for childrens play in certain areas such as Burntwood, Lichfield City and some rural villages including Fazeley, Longdon and the hamlet of Shenstone Woodend. Indeed some rural settlements have no formal equipped or informal play spaces such as, Longdon, Hammerwich and Hamstall Ridware. Numerous surveys carried out over recent years have also consistently highlighted the need for additional facilities for teenagers.

7.23 Working to a standard of 0.3ha per 1,000 population the District should have approximately 28ha of equipped children's play space. Using this approach in terms of quantitative measurement of equipped play spaces the reality is that Lichfield District has around 10ha of equipped children's play space which equates to 0.1ha per 1000 population. From survey work, feedback from local residents and children the general consensus is that there is sufficient children's play space, although there are particular issues relating to the inaccessibility of existing play spaces particularly within certain parts of Lichfield City and Burntwood.

7.24 The traditional square metre per head of population is not considered to be the best approach in delivering the right amount of equipped playspace in the right locations as it does not reflect local circumstances or aspirations for the delivery of good quality, accessible play areas. It is considered that a more appropriate way forward is to aim to provide good quality accessible equipped play areas that deliver those elements that children themselves consider important in play outlined at paragraph 7.26. This moves the focus away from a purely 'equipped play area of a particular size' (which could potentially offer a poor play experience) to a more flexible approach which can allow equipped play areas of a range of sizes where the focus is on high quality play experience. This, together with providing emphasis on accessible play spaces within a 10 minute walk time/480metres, would deliver a better end result than just focusing on site size alone.

7.25 To this end an approach that focuses more on ensuring that sufficient spaces are delivered in the most appropriate locations to maximise accessibility is preferred. In addition to this, applying the qualitative standards in conjunction with local community involvement, it is envisaged that this would lead to better equipped playspace provision and this could enable some equipped play spaces to be set within or adjacent to less formal amenity greenspaces which allow for non-equipped play.

Quality

7.26 Quality of playspaces is dependent on a number of factors including the layout, design, surfacing and planting; type and amount of play equipment, degree and perception of safety from users viewpoint, management, maintenance and the local environment. These all contribute to the play value users place on spaces. To this end two separate qualitative surveys have been undertaken, one relating to more physical appearance, presence of street furniture and maintenance and the second relating to play value from a users perspective. Together, surveys undertaken of existing equipped areas will assist in establishing a qualitative standard for equipped play areas. In addressing quality two factors were assessed:

- play value; and
- physical quality.

Quality - Play Value

7.27 In terms of scoring 'play,' seven themes were identified to be assessed (listed below). These themes were derived through combining local knowledge from individuals, groups and other organisations involved in the provision and design of equipped play areas (often involving consultation with local communities), the District Councils Play Leaders involved in community play schemes and, importantly, the views of local children. The seven themes which effect the qualities of 'playability' have been used to give a percentage score to existing equipped play sites. These are:

- **Degree to which the site is overlooked:** there is the perception of safety from a child's point of view from having a play location that is near to and clearly visible from residential or other properties such as community buildings, even regularly used footpaths or from passing traffic on low speed residential streets. Conversely from a parent/guardian point of view the more visible and less isolated the play site the more likely they are to let children play.
- **Degree to which the site is inclusive:** this includes elements such as whether the site is open/accessible during daylight hours, whether movement within the site is not hampered by poor surfaces particularly for push chairs and wheelchair users, whether there is sufficient seating both formal and informal (informal includes boulders, grass mounds etc).
- **Proximity to other services/facilities:** potential to encourage opportunities to visit play areas en route to other destinations such as shops, community buildings, schools and other leisure uses.
- **Catchment:** amount of residential coverage that falls within a 480m /10 minute walk time buffer of an equipped play area.
- **Accessibility:** whether there are any physical barriers which impede safe access, such as busy roads with fast traffic speeds and/or no safe crossing points, railways, lack of footpaths radiating from equipped play areas to surrounding residential areas.
- **Play Value Children's Criteria:** (must have at least 5 to score 100%)
 1. somewhere for running and walking;
 2. opportunities to play ball games such as football/cricket;
 3. Hard surface to play basketball, cycle, roller skate/skateboard;
 4. somewhere to sit and 'hang out;'

5. older children (8+) - risky play -climbing, jumping from high up, swinging high, balancing, dens;
6. younger children - swings and slides;
7. natural features - grass, trees, flowers;
8. looked after properly, bins for rubbish that are regularly emptied.

- **Equipment:** good quality play equipment that it in full working order.

7.28 Also highlighted in the Play Strategy in relation to quality is the concept of 'risk'. Play providers often feel that health and safety considerations are more important than the needs and aspirations of children and young people. It is the job of play providers to look at and manage the level of risk so that children and young people can be given the chance to challenge themselves and test and develop their abilities.

7.29 In addition there is a need to consider whether play encompasses 'inclusive play', in terms of meeting the needs of children of differing physical and intellectual abilities.

7.30 The elements above are derived from views of children through the work on the Play Strategy, views of play leaders involved in running local play schemes and those involved in the provision, refurbishment and maintenance of equipped play areas.

7.31 These qualitative elements within equipped children's play sites have been scored by percentages, with a total score being derived for each site. However, it is felt that in order for the scores of individual sites to reflect the potential that each site could achieve, a separate estimated maximum score is also set out. For example, if a low score reflects that the site is not well related to benefit from linkages to other potential sites such as schools, community centres and shops, its overall potential may also be low; this would be reflected in the overall score which would not penalise sites for this (as the probability of achieving a high score on this particular element is low).

7.32 Whilst 'on site' surveys have been used to assess existing equipped play areas, the individual criteria and elements scored are also useful when considering new schemes where new equipped play areas are being provided as well as improvements to existing sites. In addition sites will need to be monitored on a regular basis as some of the 'Play Value' elements assessed may change from year to year (Assessment carried out 2011).

Quality - Physical Elements

7.33 A detailed assessment of quality has been carried out of all equipped play and children's open play spaces and their quality has been scored against set criteria, the result for individual sites and detailed assessment form are set out within the Appendices. This qualitative assessment involved scoring particular elements of equipped play spaces, including:

- quality of boundaries;
- surfacing and maintenance;
- provision of furniture such as bins, seating;

- interpretation and information points, toilets on or near to site;
- availability of parking and street lighting; and
- cleanliness.

7.34 It should be noted that assessment scoring may be affected by the time of year the survey was undertaken. In addition, sites may have been improved through redesign and/or new equipment or furniture, treatment to surfaces, or changes to maintenance regimes.

7.35 Physical elements of the quality scoring uses the same scoring criteria used for Amenity Green Spaces. It is felt that this will combine with the play value score to provide a detailed assessment of the quality of the District's play areas. Again, like the amenity open space assessment, the methodology for assessing these sites has changed slightly, with each site being given a maximum score which the site could achieve. This allows a final percentage to be calculated and provides an indication of the potential for improvements at sites.

7.36 As the scoring shows there are definite variations in quality based on the scoring of these individual elements, with this in mind it is important that sites aim to score high. Whilst there is no particular emphasis in terms of individual elements and order of importance, some may have a more direct and obvious impact and influence on perceived quality of an equipped playspace, such as the presence and quality of seating, grassed areas, paths and bins etc.

7.37 Maintenance also influences quality and enjoyment of equipped playspaces. It is considered that maintenance of sites is reflected in these scores but it is also important to remember that the impact of changes to maintenance regimes as well as seasonal changes can affect the overall appearance and thus quality scores.

7.38 It is envisaged that, in terms of the overall physical elements, the District Council needs to aspire to high scores and a regular monitoring system should be put in place to assess the condition of equipped play sites.

Improvements to Equipped Play Areas

7.39 In light of findings from previous surveys, and following on from concerns raised over the quality of equipped play areas, a number of specific spaces have been targeted for a variety of improvements over recent years by the District Council including sites associated with residential development. Sites improved include; Worthington Road, Fradley; Beacon Park, Saddlers Wood and Shortbutts Park, Lichfield; St. Barbara's Road, Armitage; Redwood Park, Burntwood; Mile Oak and Alrewas.

7.40 Other sites have been created or significantly improved through Parish Council and community involvement within some of the rural villages such as Edingale, Colton, Streethay and Elford and Shenstone.

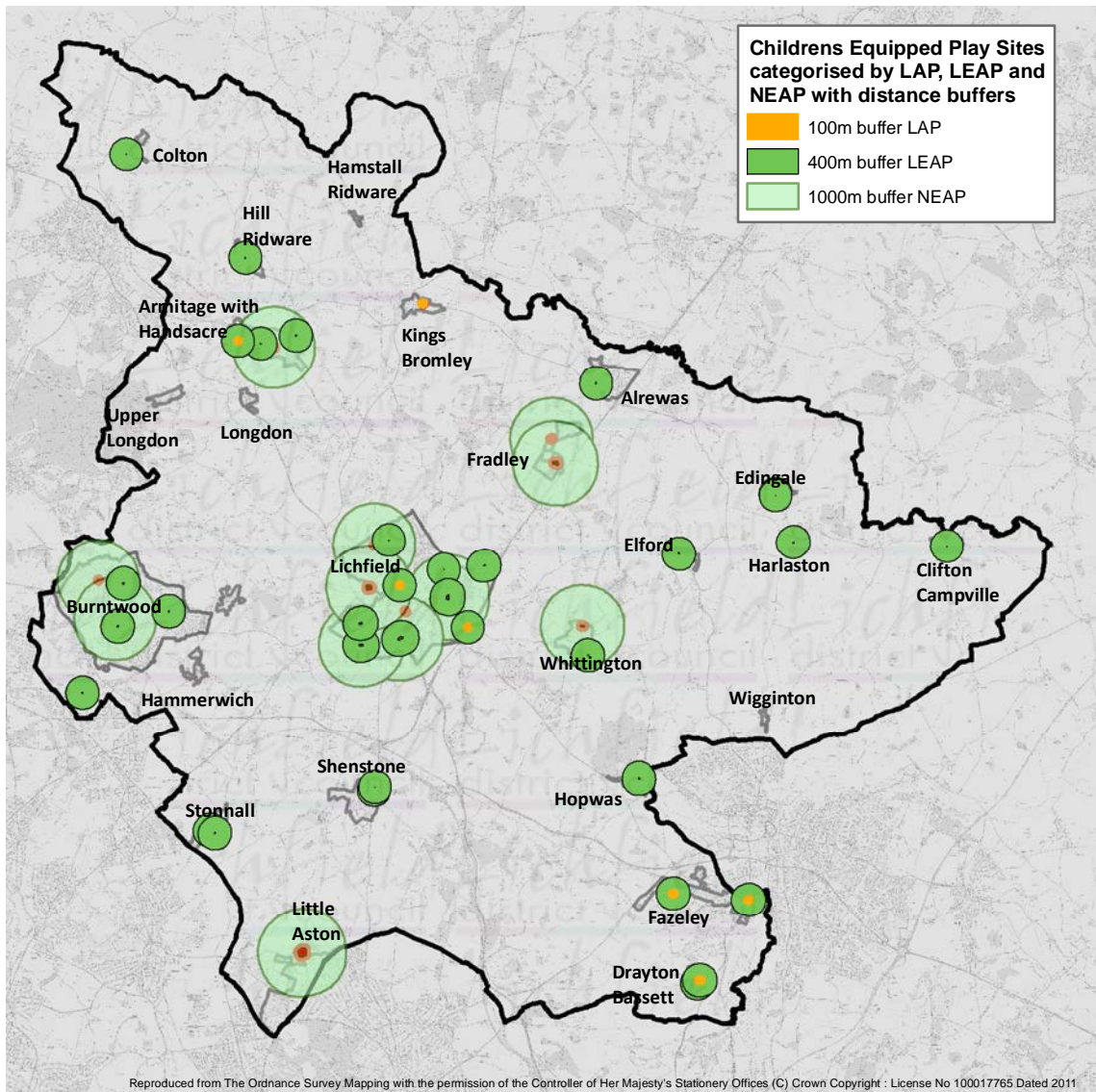
7.41 There are several projects which still remain identified within the Play Strategy which are due to be progressed as well as others which are planned as part of new developments such Hawksyard – near Rugeley. Many of these and other recent projects have developed and evolved from extensive consultation with local communities, Parish Councils and user groups to ensure local aspirations are achieved.

Accessibility

7.42 Accessibility to open spaces used for play by children and young people is particularly important, it can influence the amount of use these spaces get, and along with design, accessibility can influence the perception of whether play areas are safe and whether people feel safe in that particular environment. Irrespective of its quality, a poorly located playspace may not be used to its full potential if children cannot, or are not allowed, to play there.

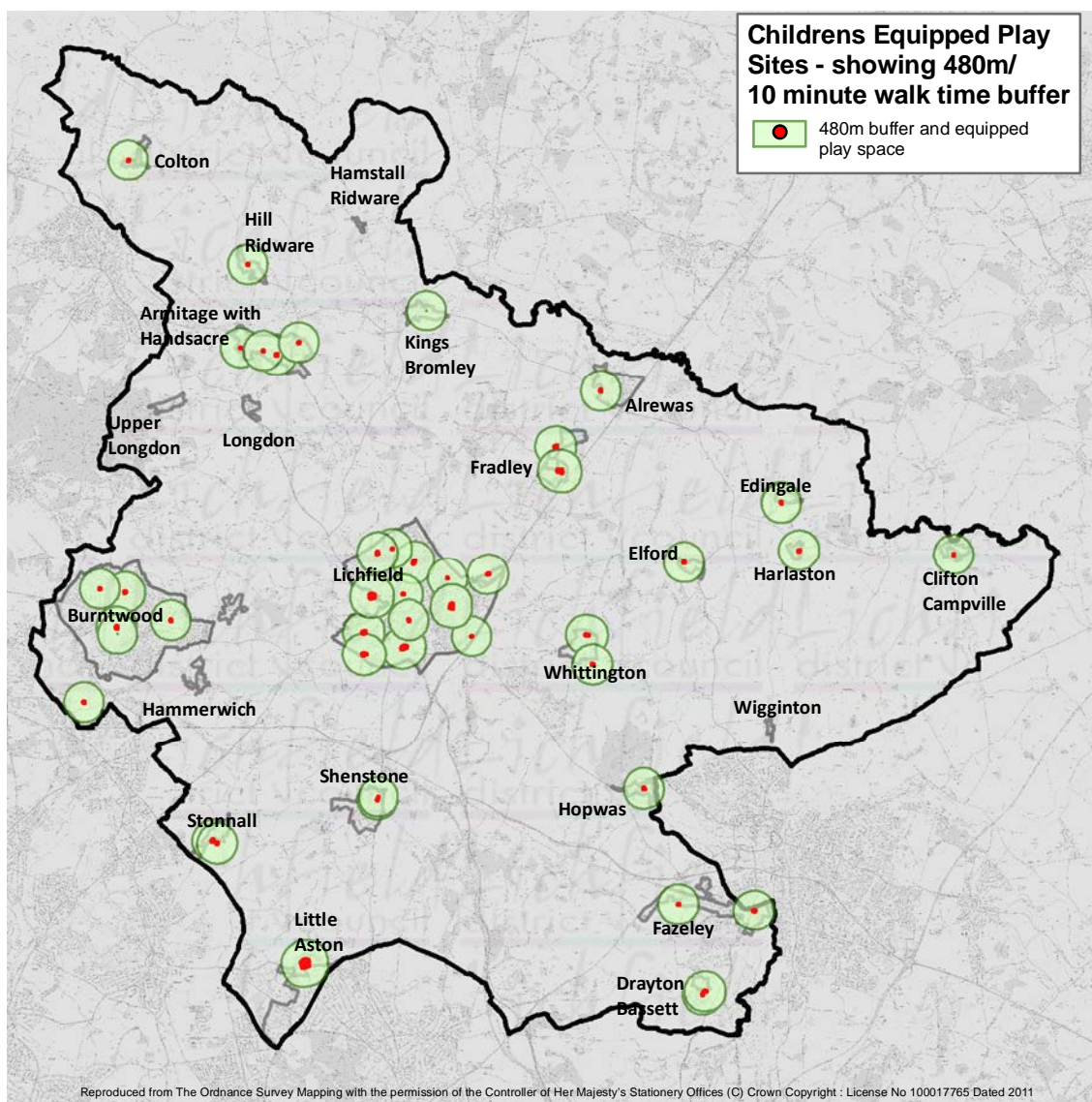
7.43 The degree to which a site is accessible is not only influenced by its location but can be affected by the availability of pedestrian safe routes and physical barriers which in turn impact on the distances which can be travelled and the time taken. Ideally play spaces aimed at very young children need to be within a short walking distance of their home, however, it is most likely that they would be accompanied by an adult, whereas it is reasonable to assume that play areas aimed at older children and teenagers can involve longer walking distances, often without adult supervision. Ideally, the best solution would be to ensure that residents are able to safely and conveniently access equipped playspaces within a reasonable distance of their home.

7.44 When looking at accessibility, and in applying the NPFA standards of a straight line between 100-400 metres for equipped playspaces as well as national standards for LAPs (100m), LEAPs (400m) and NEAPs (1000m), the map below shows the extent of coverage of the District's play areas (shown in more detail for Lichfield, Burntwood and Key Rural Settlements later on within the relevant sections).



Map 7.2 Childrens Equipped Play Categorised with NPFA Buffers

7.45 In Lichfield, accessibility of equipped play spaces is set at 10 minutes walk time (480 metres); this has been derived from consideration of both national standards and responses from residents arising from surveys carried out. Most equipped playspaces within the smaller rural settlements can be accessed within a 10 minute walk time.



Map 7.3 Equipped Play with 480m Buffer

7.46 From these maps, it is possible to see the coverage within the District of equipped childrens playspaces both in terms of national standards as well as the 480m, 10 minute walk time. The location and 480m accessibility buffers are shown in more detail within the relevant sections.

7.47 In summary, whilst not all areas are accessible to existing playspaces, Lichfield City has a greater proportion of the built up area that falls within the 480 metre buffers than Burntwood as it has more equipped playspace locations. Within the Key Rural Settlements, (Armitage with Handsacre, Alrewas, Fradley, Little Aston, Fazeley, Shenstone and Whittington) the above map shows that not all areas are within 480m buffer of an equipped playspace.

7.48 Due to a number of variables including the form and scale of smaller rural settlements, it is considered inappropriate to apply a 10 minute walktime/480m. Alternatively, play provision is best tailored to the individual requirements of each settlement which should arise from

consultation and involvement of local communities. With this in mind it should be noted that the one of the recommendations of the Play Strategy is that all rural settlements should have at least one children's play area.

Lichfield City

7.49 Within Lichfield City, recent improvement schemes and new sites have increased the total amount of equipped play space. At 2011 there were 13 equipped play spaces totalling 35,974sqm (3.6 ha). Currently a new skatepark is also proposed on a new site along the western bypass within Beacon Park which will eventually bring the total to 14 equipped play spaces within the City.

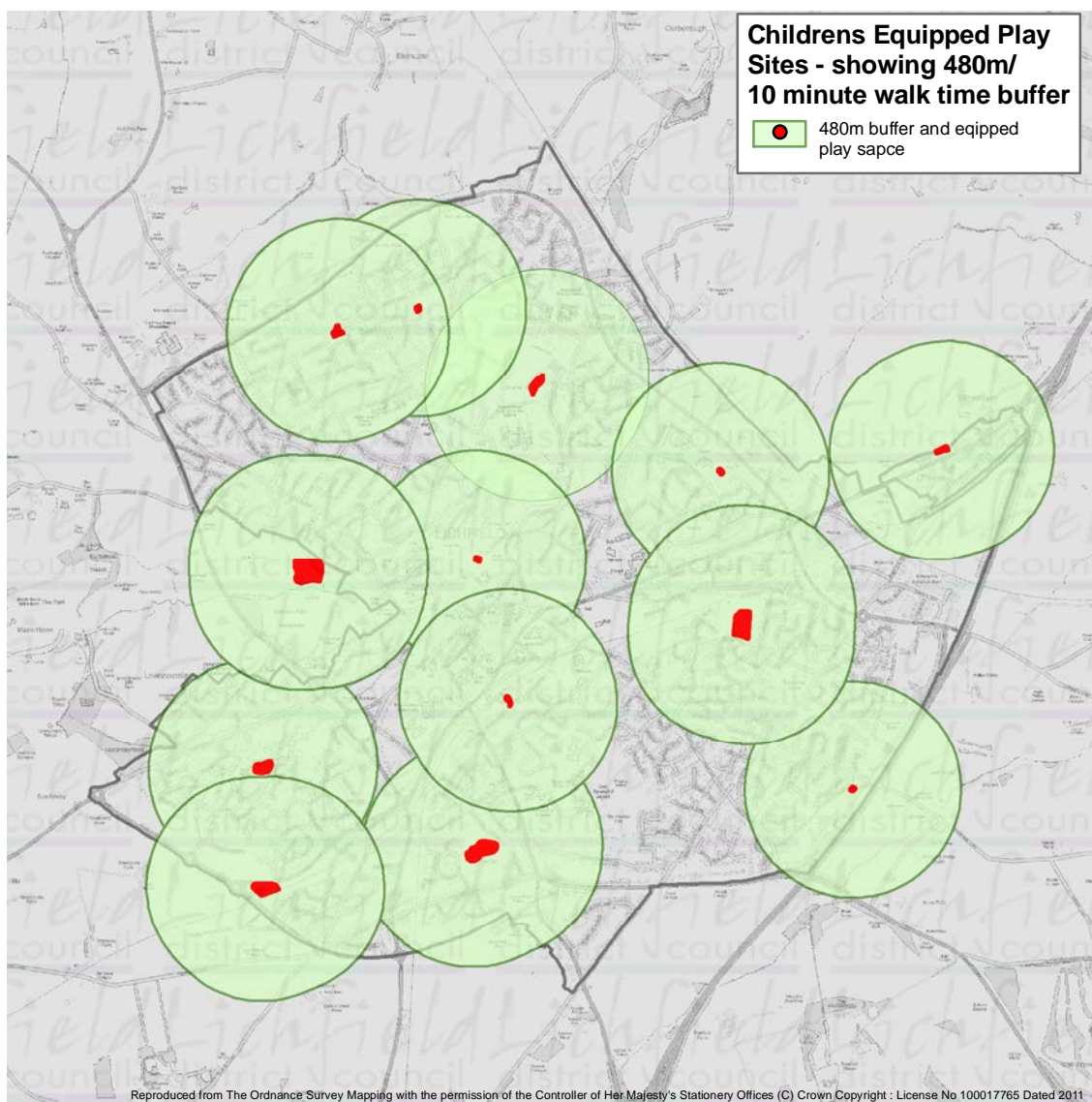
Quantity

7.50 Within Lichfield City there are 13 equipped playspaces which serve the resident population. There are twice as many equipped play areas within Lichfield City than Burntwood. The amount in Lichfield has changed from earlier assessments due to a larger, newly equipped play area at Shortbutts Park, a new natural play area close to Nether Stowe School, a small equipped play area within the City Wharf development and a new play area at Sainte Foy Avenue which includes a skatepark and outdoor gym.

7.51 As mentioned earlier, some equipped play sites are not easily defined, with equipment set within a larger space often spread out. The measurements below represent the best fit.

Location	Type	Area (Ha)
Heather Close/Scotch Orchard	LEAP	0.03
Darnford Park	LAP	0.02
Shortbutts Lane	NEAP	0.66
Saddlers Wood Park	LEAP	0.68
Stowe Fields	LAP	0.03
David Garrick Gardens	LEAP	0.03
Beacon Park	NEAP	1.06
Oakenfield/Thomas Greenway	NEAP	0.11
Sante Foy Avenue, Darwin Park	LEAP	0.4
Lightwood Road, Darwin Park	NEAP	0.28
Burton Road (Streethay)	LEAP	0.67
City Wharf	LAP	0.04
Stowe Croft Natural Play Park	N/A	0.17

Table 7.2 Lichfield City Equipped Play



Map 7.4 Lichfield City Equipped Play

7.52 As stated earlier the question of relating quantity solely in relation to square metres per 1,000 population, may not lead to the best result in terms of provision. A large playspace in one area may not be readily accessible to the majority of local residents and therefore a mixture of types of playspaces spread across the wider area is preferable. In Lichfield the play areas vary considerably in size and it does not always equate that a small site provides a poorer quality play experience than a larger one. Size of actual playspaces should be derived from the need to provide for equipped playspaces that provide good quality play value and through community involvement as set out earlier, this will result in a variety of sizes of equipped playspaces.

7.53 Whilst Lichfield City has a high quantity of equipped play space the [Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan](#) identifies the need for a skate park within Beacon park to serve Lichfield City and the wider district. This will be subject of a planning application which will seek permission to provide the facility.

Lichfield City Equipped Play Quality Recommendation

It is therefore considered that in terms of quantity, measures to improve existing sites should continue alongside exploring opportunities for additional sites within those areas with no access to an existing site within a 10 minute walk time (480m)

Quality

	Good site
	Good site but could be improved
	Site needs improving

Equipped Play Location	Play Value Score		Physical Score	Comments
	Play Value Score	Estimated Maximum Score		
Thomas Greenway	780	780	54% (28/52)	Excellent site - explore opportunities for natural play.
David Garrick Gardens	610	750	58% (30/52)	Lack of equipment, on site equipment is poor and better surfacing needed.
Saddlers Wood Park	610	650	40% (21/52)	Explore potential for safe road crossing point, new goal posts.
Darnford Park	490	570	36% (17/47)	Surfaces, seating and environment poor.
Shortbutts Park	700	700	83% (43/52)	Excellent newly equipped site.
Heather Close/Scotch Orchard	710	750	53% (25/47)	Potential for more equipment.
Lightwood Road, Darwin Park	800	800	67% (35/52)	Excellent new site.
Sante-Foy Avenue, Darwin Park	630	630	52% (27/52)	Very visible site, with new outdoor gym and skate board area.
Beacon Park	760	760	95% (59/62)	Excellent site which had been recently refurbished as part of the HLF ^(v) project.

v Beacon Park was awarded funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to improve the park as part of a wider project encompassing the museum gardens, garden of remembrance and Minster Pool

Equipped Play Location	Play Value Score		Physical Score	Comments
	Play Value Score	Estimated Maximum Score		
Stowe Fields	640	700	33% (17/52)	Explore potential for additional equipment and natural play elements. Paths between the separate play areas, the car park and existing footpaths would provide better links.
Burton Road (Streethay)	575	600	46% (24/52)	Very good site.
City Wharf	660	680	54% (28/52)	Good quality small site which serves the new development well.
Stowe Croft Natural Play	760	760	63% (33/52)	Site under construction - site is well located and offers a range of natural play features. It is estimated that the site will achieve it's maximum score once it is complete.

Table 7.3

Play Value Score

7.54 The overall quality within the City is good with a number of sites having benefited from major investment and improvements in recent years. There is a wide range of sites which on the whole offer a good range of play opportunities from formal pieces of play equipment to more natural play.

7.55 The sites which score the lowest are David Garrick Gardens, Darnford Park and Stowe Fields. David Garrick Gardens playspace is well located in terms of proximity to residential areas and could benefit from a number of improvements, notably additional play equipment as well as opportunities for creation of natural play within the site. Stowe Fields serves the City Centre along with neighbouring residential areas and the site could be improved through a broader range of well maintained equipment and better linkages between the separate equipment areas. Darnford Park on the other hand is not well located in relation to the surrounding residential areas and is well hidden from general view which contributes to its poor overall score.

7.56 A majority of the sites within Lichfield City score well including several recently completed/refurbished areas such as Shortbutts Park, Beacon Park, and the two sites within Walsall Road. It is important that good maintenance of these sites should continue to keep the sites in good order. Any opportunities to improve any site should be explored if there is a desire locally to further improve the provision for children and young people.

7.57 Detailed Assessments are included within the Open Space Assessment 2012 Appendices.

Physical Quality Score

7.58 The results of the physical quality assessment of Lichfield's equipped play spaces vary considerably with scores from 33% at Stowe Fields to 95% at the newly refurbished Beacon Park. Many of the sites score well (above 50%) in terms of their physical quality, any opportunities to increase the physical score of sites should be explored.

7.59 The physical assessment was initially carried out approximately 5 years ago, although these assessments have since been revisited to identify where there have been any improvements to provision.

7.60 Concern was expressed from children through the Play Strategy with regard to sites within the City, over the type and condition of equipment, lack of bins and subsequent litter problem and anti-social behaviour affecting some sites.

Lichfield City Equipped Play Quality Recommendation

The District Council aims to provide good quality equipped play sites and to this end high scores on both qualitative elements assessed should be aimed for. In terms of 'Play Value', sites should aim to achieve maximum scores. As each site has been assessed against a set of qualitative criteria, and a maximum potential score identified, sites should seek to achieve their maximum potential. In terms of the 'Physical Score,' sites should aim to reach a minimum score of 50%.

Accessibility

7.61 Accessibility to equipped play areas in Lichfield City is shown on map 7.1. This shows there are some large areas of the City where equipped play areas are not easily accessible within a 10 minute walk time (480m). There are also other areas that may not be easily reached within this timeframe within these buffers due to physical barriers such as railway lines and busy main roads which may have no safe crossing points. In those areas where there is no, or restricted access to, an existing equipped playspace, consideration may need to be given to any opportunities to provide new equipped play areas and this may include considering the potential within existing amenity greenspaces and or making access safer and easier to existing equipped playspaces.

7.62 It should be noted that Beacon Park acts as a destination equipped playspace serving a much wider area beyond the City itself and where distances travelled are often longer than the 10 minute/480 metres assumed for other equipped playspaces.

Lichfield City Equipped Play Accessibility Recommendation

Whilst there are numerous equipped play sites through Lichfield City, there are areas shown on the map which lie outside the 10 minute/480m walk time. Where possible, opportunities to create new spaces should be sought where development opportunities arise, particularly in areas not currently covered by an existing equipped playspace access buffer. With this in mind and given the nature of the exiting built-up form and limited opportunities for new sites arising from new development in these areas, consideration should be given to opportunities to provide equipment on other suitable greenspaces.

Burntwood

7.63 Within Burntwood there are 6 equipped play spaces (including a site at Chasewater which is not within Burntwood itself) totalling 4,575sqm (0.45ha). This is approximately half the number of sites that are available in Lichfield City, despite Burntwood have a similar sized population. The provision is further reduced when the site at Chasewater is not included. The site at Chasewater is set apart from the main town and is considered a destination play area for users specifically visiting Chasewater and not within a 10 minute/480m walking distance of Burntwood residents.

Quantity

7.64 Burntwood has less than half the number of individual equipped play areas than Lichfield City despite being a similar size. However, as with some sites within Lichfield City, there have been a number of improvements in recent years to elements within some of Burntwood's equipped play areas. The Burntwood map below, shows the proportion of Burntwood covered by the 480 metre buffer. This hides the fact that there is an acute shortage within the southern half of the town as the two sites at Burntwood Leisure Centre comprise a very small equipped playspace and a skatepark and do not provide a wide range of play opportunities.

7.65 Following the redevelopment of the Burntwood Leisure Centre the equipped play area has changed significantly, now occupying a very small site fronting onto the car park. This scores particularly poorly given its central location and adjoining uses, however potential exists within the grounds of the centre to provide a better and bigger site that would be likely to attract, and be attractive, to users.

7.66 7.4 Clearly the issue for Burntwood is the lack of equipped play space locations which in turn result in a poor coverage in terms of accessibility. The lack of sites results in larger areas or the population having no access to equipped playspaces within a 480m/10 minute walk time.

Location	Type	Area (Ha)
Burntwood park	LEAP	0.07

Location	Type	Area (Ha)
Redwood Park	NEAP	0.10
Chase Terrace Park	NEAP	0.03
Leisure Centre	LAP	0.02
Youth Club	Skatepark	0.17
Chasewater	LEAP	0.06

Table 7.4 Burntwood Equipped Play



Map 7.5 Burntwood Equipped Play with Buffers

7.67 In Burntwood, playspaces vary considerably in size and whilst it does not always equate that a small site provides poorer quality play experience than a larger one, in Burntwood there is not the same variety in terms of size of playspaces as in Lichfield. Whilst it is considered that in terms of quantity, sites should not necessarily be measured in square metres per head of population, it is important that a sufficient number of sites are available that are accessible to local communities. Therefore, a priority in Burntwood is to increase the number and variety of equipped playspaces within those areas with no access to an existing site within a 10 minute/480m walk time, particularly in the southern half of the of the town where existing sites are small and limited in the play opportunities they offer.

7.68 The Burntwood Town Strategy was produced by Burntwood Town Council in 2011 and reaffirms the position that there is a lack of facilities for children and young people within the Town. This is a view is supported by the 2011 Citizens Survey and representations from Burntwood Town Council to the Core Strategy: Shaping Our District Document who also expressed concern over the lack of accessible quality equipped playspaces within the town.

Burntwood Equipped Play Quantity Recommendation

Size of actual playspaces should be derived from the need to provide for equipped playspaces that provide good quality play value and through community involvement. This will result in a variety of sizes of equipped playspaces. In Burntwood there is a shortage of equipped playspaces. Additional playspace are needed ideally to be located within those areas not covered by an existing 10 minute/480m walk time buffer. Consideration should be given to additional facilities suitable for teenagers. Opportunities for new sites should be explored including consideration of the potential for co-locating other amenity greenspace where appropriate.

Quality

	Good site
	Good site but could be improved
	Site needs improving

Equipped Play Location	Play Value Score		Physical Score	Comments
	Play Value Score	Estimated Maximum Score		
Burntwood Park	550	730	50% (26/52)	Would benefit from improved equipment, natural play, safe road crossing and explore ways of opening up views to the site.
Redwood Park	650	690	40% (25/62)	Good site, better surfaces and overall landscape improvements.

Equipped Play Location	Play Value Score		Physical Score	Comments
	Play Value Score	Estimated Maximum Score		
Chase Terrace Park	690	690	54% (28/52)	Good site, potential for informal seating.
Leisure Centre	690	800	37% (23/62)	Site is too small with few pieces of equipment. Next to car park/safety issue, poor visual and play environment. Opportunities within this area to significantly improve provision.
Youth Club	730	750	68% (18/47)	Good site, potential for informal seating.
Chasewater	300	320	92% (48/52)	Potential for visual improvements. Should not be counted as a playspace accessible to Burntwood residents.

Table 7.5

Play Value

7.69 Within Burntwood itself only the site at Chase Terrace Park scores as a good site due to the range of equipment located here. All of the other play areas within Burntwood are identified as being in need of some improvement. When this is considered along with the lack of sites within the town it is vital that any opportunities to improve existing sites is explored.

7.70 As shown above there are opportunities to improve on the play quality of existing equipped playspaces within Burntwood, especially the two lowest scoring sites, being located at Burntwood Park and Burntwood Leisure Centre. Whilst the site at Burntwood Park is well located, being surrounded by residential areas, it suffers from old equipment, no safe road crossing and is relatively isolated in terms of public views which can contribute to poor perception of safety and a reluctance to use the site.

7.71 The site at Burntwood Leisure centre is also well located within the Leisure Centre complex and is fairly central to the town itself. However following its redevelopment, it is now located adjacent to the car park and occupies a very small area aimed solely at very young children. Opportunities to significantly improve equipped playspace in terms of the amount of space occupied, the amount of and variety of equipment and to increase the age ranges targeted should be explored.

Physical Quality

7.72 The majority of the lower scores were a result of issues generally relating to maintenance together with condition of the entrances and boundaries. Whilst these scores are a result of a number of individual elements that have been assessed, some elements have the potential to vary from year to year as well as being influenced by the time of year

an assessment is made. The physical quality scores are comparable to those in Lichfield City, however the best scoring site is that at Chasewater which is outside of Burntwood and serves those using the Country Park as opposed to residents local to the site.

7.73 Like Lichfield City, views of children expressed as part of the consultation on the Play Strategy highlighted their concern over the type and condition of equipment, lack of bins and subsequent litter problem and anti-social behaviour affecting some sites.

Burntwood Equipped Play Quality Recommendation

The District Council should aim to provide good quality equipped play sites and high scores on both qualitative elements assessed should be aimed for. In terms of 'Play Value,' sites should aim to achieve maximum scores. As each site has been assessed against a set of qualitative criteria, and a maximum potential score identified, sites should seek to achieve their maximum potential. In terms of the 'Physical Score,' sites should aim to reach a minimum score of 50%.

Qualitative improvements are needed to improve the physical and play value quality of certain sites, notably Burntwood Park and at Burntwood Leisure Centre, both are well located within residential areas but both score poorly on quality. To a lesser degree there is also potential to improve quality at the Youth Club and Redwood Park.

Accessibility

7.74 In applying a 10 minute/ 480m walk time and factoring in that there are only 5 equipped playspaces within Burntwood, less than half of that of Lichfield City, the proportion of the settlement within 480m of an equipped playspace is also low.

7.75 Large, densely developed residential areas in the east and southeast of Burntwood have no access to an equipped playspace. Within the southern half of the town there is only a very small site for young children and a skatepark, but no overall quality equipped playspace/Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) with associated amenity greenspace as exists in the north of the town. When the site within the grounds of the Leisure Centre is excluded, the lack of accessible site in the southern half of the town is exacerbated. In order to redress and improve accessibility to equipped playspaces in Burntwood, additional sites are required together with improvements to existing spaces, the problem being more acute in the south.

7.76 The view of users taken from the Play Strategy show that:

- play areas within Chase Terrace are too far away from home and more play areas are needed with increased, better and/or different equipment; and
- within Chasetown the main park is accessed via a busy road, equipment is poor in terms of play value and that children often play, as a result, on areas not designed for play.

Burntwood Equipped Play Accessibility Recommendation

There are too few equipped playspace locations within Burntwood resulting in poor accessibility, resulting in over half the built up area lying outside a 10 minutes/480m walk time of an equipped playspace. Where possible, opportunities to create new spaces should be sought where development opportunities arise, particularly in areas not currently covered by an existing equipped playspace access buffer. With this in mind and given the nature of the exiting built-up form and limited opportunities for new sites arising from new development in these areas, consideration should be given to opportunities to provide equipment on other suitable greenspaces.

Rural Areas

7.77 The rural areas of Lichfield District are home to a number of settlements ranging in size and function. The provision of equipped play areas varies considerably across the rural settlements. Whilst most have at least one equipped play area, some of the larger settlements have more and there still remain a few settlements with no provision at all. Settlements with no existing provision include, Hammerwich, Hamstall Ridware, Longdon, Upper Longdon, Wigginton, Shenstone Woodend, Hints, Canwell, Chorley and Wall.

7.78 Whilst it may be the case that some of these smaller rural settlements have no demand due to their size, demographics or form, some such as Shenstone Woodend, have been highlighted by the Parish Council as settlements where there is an identified need for a childrens play area . Smaller hamlets such as Wall and Canwell have confirmed that there is no local need, at the current time, for an equipped playspace, although this may change in the future. Support should be given where there is an identified local desire to provide or improve facilities for children and young people.

7.79 For the purposes of this assessment and in line with other work that has been undertaken as part of the Local Plan (including the Rural Settlement Sustainability Study), the larger more sustainable settlements are dealt with in this assessment in terms of provision, differently from how those much smaller settlements are assessed. These larger rural settlements benefit from a range of services and facilities present within the settlement and frequent bus/rail transport allow residents access to other services and facilities elsewhere. These 'sustainable' settlements are referred to as 'Key Rural Settlements' and include:

- Armitage with Handscare;
- Alrewas;
- Fazeley;
- Fradley;
- Little Aston;
- Shenstone; and
- Whittington.

Quantity - Key Rural Settlements

7.80 Rural settlements are, for the purpose of this assessment split into two categories, key and other rural settlements. Key settlements have the largest numbers of residents of the districts rural settlements, and with the exception of Little Aston, Shenstone and Alrewas which have a single equipped children's space, Armitage with Handsacre has four equipped playspaces, with Whittington, Fazeley and Fradley having two sites.

7.81 It is expected that within these larger rural settlements there is likely to be a requirement for more than one equipped playspace, as typically due to their size and or form, they need more play locations to achieve coverage within 10 minute/480m walk time accessibility buffers, whilst smaller settlements may achieve maximum coverage due to their size regardless of their location within the settlement.

7.82 In line with the Play Strategy, it is suggested that the minimum starting point for all rural settlements is that at least one accessible equipped playspace is located within the settlement unless there is evidence to show that no requirement has been identified.

Settlement	Estimated Population at 2001	% aged 0-15	Number of sites	Total Size (Ha)
Alrewas	2,744	18.9	1	0.065
Armitage with Handsacre	4,903	21.9	4	0.25
Fazeley	4,581	19.3	2	0.14
Fradley	1,689	25.5	2	0.89
Little Aston	2,486	19.2	1	2.89
Shenstone	2,132	18.7	1	0.055
Whittington	2,040	17.5	2	0.21

Table 7.6 Key Rural Equipped Play

Quality

7.83 The quality of equipped play areas within the key settlements varies between sites and settlements. Those which scored highly overall in terms of both physical and play value include Little Aston and Fradley along with other recently refurbished sites such as St.Barbaras Road, Armitage. Since last surveyed in 2006 there have been improvements to other sites including equipped playspaces at Mile Oak (Fazeley), Fradley, Alrewas and Little Aston and very recently Shenstone.

7.84 In terms of physical quality there still remain areas that need improving and particular aspects of certain sites that need addressing, as even on high scoring sites there are usually some improvements that can be carried out. Due to the nature of equipped playspaces maintenance and monitoring is key to raising and maintaining high quality sites. Typically

equipment can break, and surfacing can get damaged or worn as can seating, fencing and bins. Problems in relation to physical quality are often easier to identify than play quality although it must be noted that one often affects the other.

	Good site
	Good site but could be improved
	Site needs improving

Equipped Play Location		Play Value Score		Physical Score	Comments
		Play Value Score	Estimated Maximum Score		
Armitage with Handsacre	St. Barbaras Road	700	720	42% (22/52)	Good site benefiting form recent investment.
	Shropshire Brook Road	690	800	52% (27/52)	Good location but lacks equipment given opportunities on adjacent greenspace.
	Upper Lodge Road	390	610	35% (20/57)	Poor site. In need of total overhaul. As it stands, it is unattractive and potentially dangerous for small children to use the site.
	Millmoor Avenue	435	670	21% (11/52)	Site is poor. Could be improved by total overhaul and use of adjacent land.
Fradley	Worthington Road	710	720	63% (39/62)	Investigate opening through site visibility (currently obscured by trees and hedge) to open views across the whole site. Appears split contributing to lack of use of certain parts within the site.
	Hay End Lane	680	680	57% (27/47)	Intermittent vandalism/graffiti. Overall site seems well used and in good repair.
Alrewas	Chaseview	620	620	46% (24/52)	Space around play area to include informal play/natural play. Not central to most of village.
Shenstone	Recreation ground	650	720	51% (29/57) & 60% (34/57) ^(vi)	A more central location would give best coverage, possibly more equipment and spread out onto adjacent greenspace.

vi Site is included as two sites in Physical Score Assessment

Equipped Play Location		Play Value Score		Physical Score	Comments
		Play Value Score	Estimated Maximum Score		
Little Aston	Forge Lane	470	490	63% (39/62)	An excellent site in a poorly accessible location at the far end of the settlement. Limited as to what improvements would make the site more accessible.
Whittington	Noddington Lane	680	700	52% (27/57)	Good site, well located with a range of equipment. Some of the equipment is old and could be updated to further improve this site.
	Vicarage Lane, Cricket ground	400	500	54% (31/57)	Poor site located on the edge of the village. Equipment is in poor state of repair. Potential to improve offer within wider green space.
Fazeley, Mile Oak & Bonehill	Victory Terrace	400	600	31% (16/52)	Poor site in need of replacing. Equipment is small and limited, site is also poorly located and difficult to access.
	Coronation Avenue	740	750	35% (22/62)	Well located site, close to playing fields and other facilities. Equipment is of varying ages and there are opportunities to improve the offer.

Table 7.7 Key Rural Settlements

Key Rural Equipped Play Quality Recommendation

The District Council aims to provide good quality equipped play sites and to this end high scores on both qualitative elements assessed should be aimed for. In terms of 'Play Value', sites should aim to achieve maximum scores. As each site has been assessed against a set of qualitative criteria, and a maximum potential score identified, sites should seek to achieve their maximum potential. In terms of the 'Physical Score,' sites should aim to reach a minimum score of 50%.

Accessibility

7.85 The accessibility of equipped play areas varies greatly across the key rural settlements. All of the settlements have areas which are not accessible within the 480m/10 minute walk time, however the extent of these varies significantly. Alrewas, Fazeley, Mile Oak & Bonehill, Little Aston and Shenstone all have large residential areas with limited access to play areas.

7.86 Little Aston, whilst having a very good quality play space, both in terms of the physical elements and play value, scores poorly in relation to accessibility for the surrounding community. This playspace was developed by the local community and its location resulted largely, from a lack of opportunities of alternative more accessible sites due to local circumstances however it is located close to Little Aston Primary School and benefits from off road parking.

7.87 Those key settlements located on and around busy main roads such as Little Aston, Fazeley and Armitage often involve crossing these roads in order to access playspaces, which despite the considerable positive elements of some of the playspaces, impede accessibility. Views from children as part of the Play Strategy highlight that within Armitage with Handsacre play areas are too far away from children's homes and that they are accessed via busy roads. The existing play area in Handsacre is seen to be poor quality in terms of equipment and cleanliness and that it often attracts anti-social behaviour. Pupils at Hayes Meadow School suggest that an all-weather surface, and an area to ride bikes was needed and suggested better maintenance.

7.88 There is generally poor accessibility to existing playspaces within Alrewas and Shenstone. To a lesser degree accessibility is an issue within small parts of Whittington and Fradley which lie outside a buffer of 480m from equipped playspace. Whilst Shenstone, Whittington, Alrewas and Fradley have moderately busy roads within their settlements, safe pedestrian movement around them is generally good, via a network of residential footpaths.

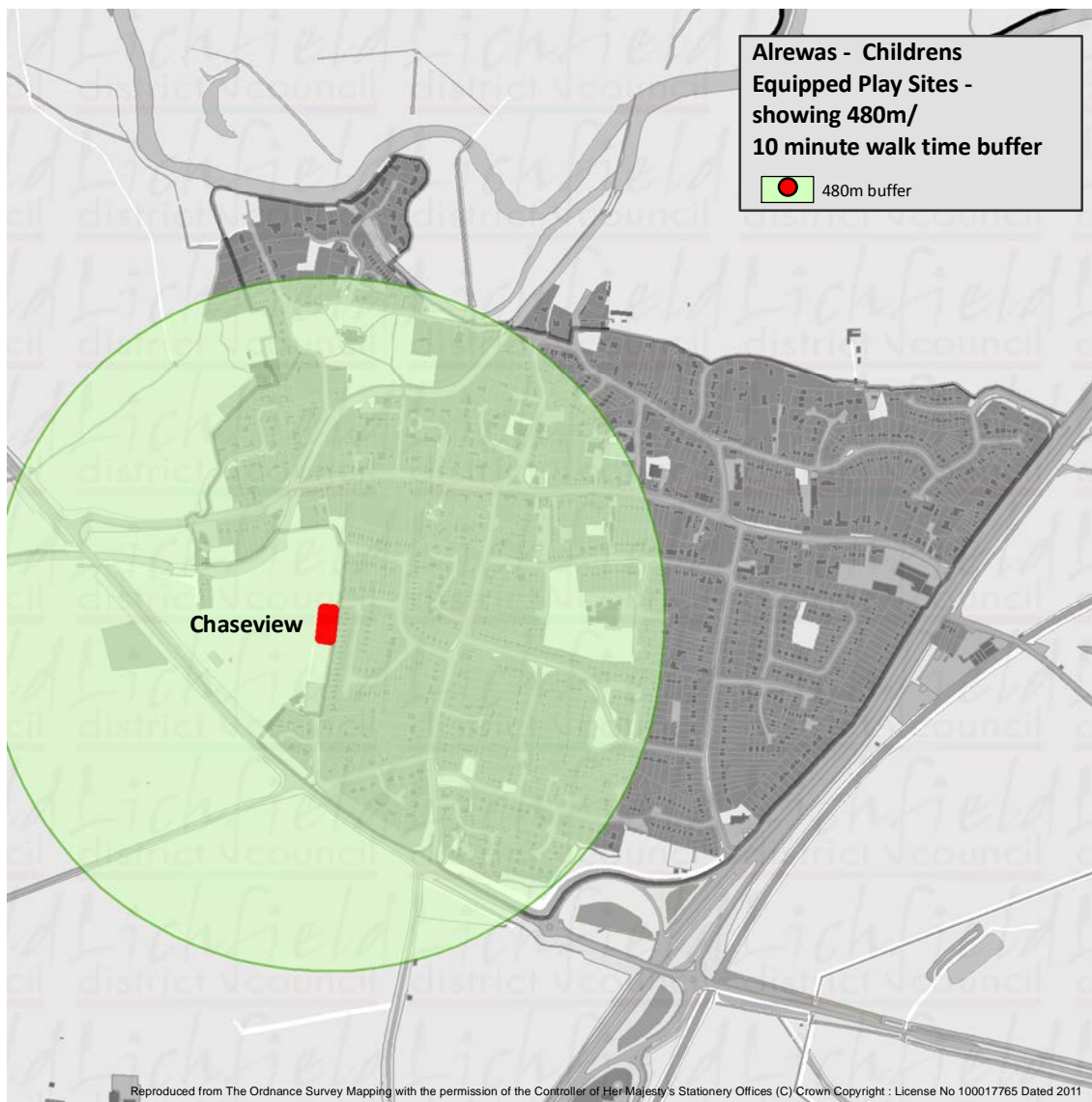
Key Rural Equipped Play Recommendation

Where possible, opportunities to create new spaces should be sought where development opportunities arise and/or consideration of equipped play on existing well located greenspaces, focusing particularly in areas not currently covered by an existing 10 minute (480m) walk time buffer.

Key Settlement Summaries

7.89 The summaries below provide recommendations for the quality, quantity and accessibility for each of the key rural settlements.

Alrewas



Map 7.6 Alrewas Equipped Play

7.90 There is only one equipped playspace, located at the western edge of the settlement adjacent to the cricket field and, using 10 minute (480m) walk time, its location does not afford access by all residents of the settlement.

Alrewas Play Recommendation

With only a single equipped play area located in the edge of the settlements, accessibility is limited in terms of the 10 minute/(480m) walk time and therefore opportunities to locate an additional equipped play area within the eastern half of the settlement should be considered, this may include the need to explore potential co-location of existing amenity greenspaces. Other options that may need considering, include improving safe pedestrian access to the existing equipped play area.

Armitage with Handsacre



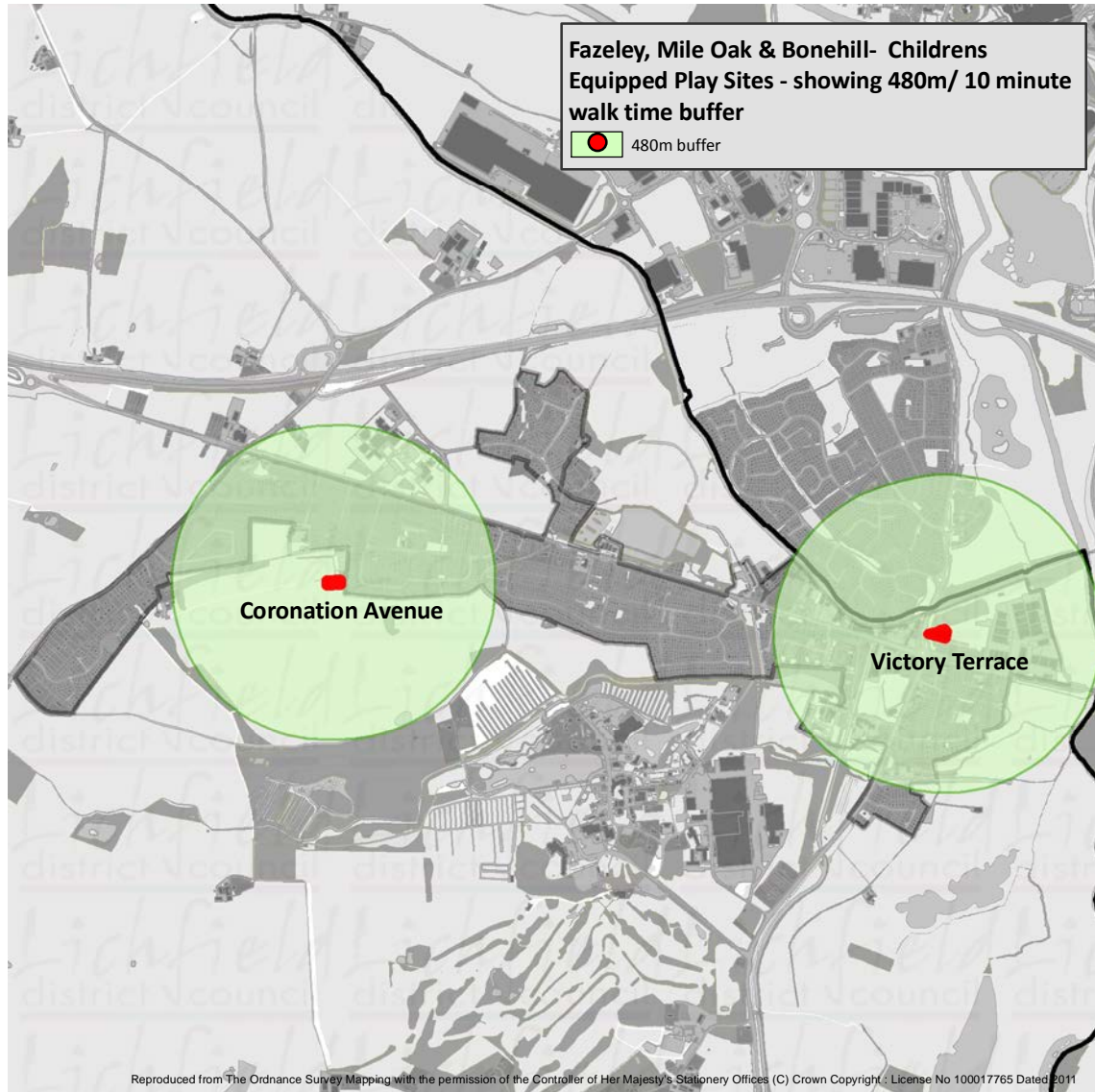
Map 7.7 Armitage with Handsacre Equipped Play

7.91 There are four equipped playspaces located within this settlement including the smallest equipped playspace of all the Key Rural Settlements at Upper Lodge Road. At only 241sqm, this site is also very poor quality both in terms of physical elements and in terms of its play value. There is potential to improve the quality of the playspace at Shropshire Brook Road site which is ideally located set within a larger open amenity greenspace adjacent to the village hall. In addition this centrally located site benefits from reasonable access from adjacent residential areas and its location adjacent to the village hall. At Millmoor Avenue the equipped play space, although not ideally located in terms of overlooking, needs better new equipment and could be adapted to incorporate and benefit from its location in relation to adjacent open greenspace to spread out any new equipment. The smallest site at Upper Lodge Road scores poorly in relation to most of the criteria both in terms of play value and its physical attributes. Serious consideration should be given to the future of this site and its potential to become a viable equipped playspace. In its present state it is neither attractive, or conducive to play.

Armitage with Handsacre Play Recommendation

There is a need to improve the quality at three of the four sites within Armitage with Handsacre. With the exception of the St. Barbaras Road site all of the sites score poorly in terms of quality. It is important to explore any opportunities to improve these sites. Additionally it may be necessary to explore any opportunities for additional play to the south-east of the settlement which currently is not within a the 480m/10 minute walk time buffer.

Fazeley, Mile Oak & Bonehill



Map 7.8 Fazeley, Mile Oak & Bonehill Equipped Play

7.92 Despite its size (the second largest Key Rural Settlement) and linear form, there are only two equipped play areas within Fazeley, together they do not afford access to the whole settlement in terms of the proportion covered by the 10 minute/480m walk time. As part of the Play Strategy views of children highlighted that within Mile Oak there is concern over safety due to anti-social behaviour of older children and that often residents complained when children play near their houses.

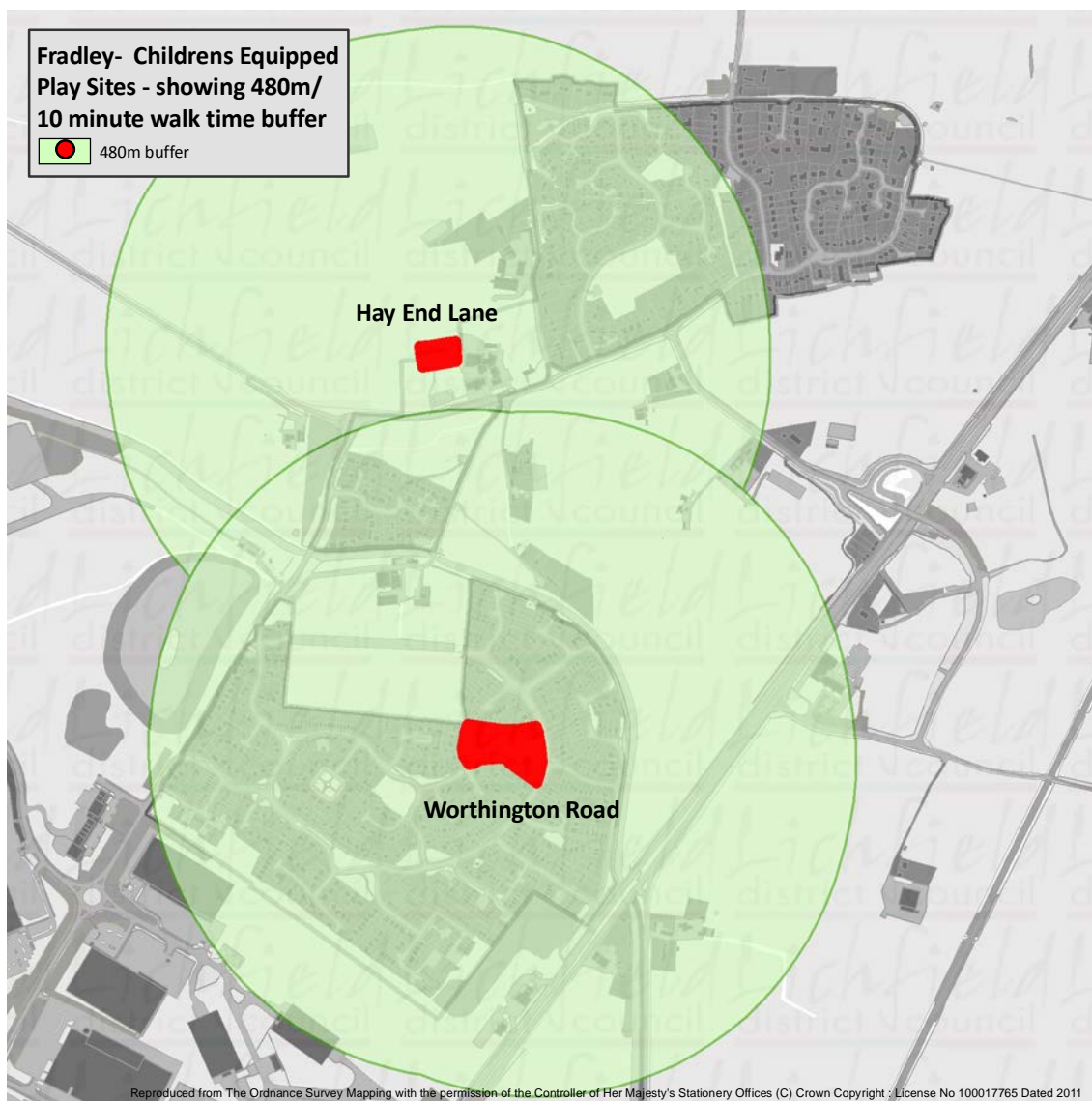
7.93 The play area at the Community Centre (Coronation Avenue) scores reasonably well due to recent investment at the site. However some of the equipment is a little old and the site could be improved through a range of newer equipment being provided. The play area

to the rear of Victory Terrace is in poor condition and is not well located as it is situated to the rear of adjacent flats. This play area is very poor and is in need of complete redevelopment or even relocation at a site that is more accessible to a wider area.

Fazeley, Mile Oak & Bonehill Play Recommendation

Improvements are needed both in terms of quality and quantity; at the very minimum an additional equipped play site is needed ideally located towards the centre of Fazeley, which could incorporate Bonehill. A further play space may be needed to the west of the settlement.

Fradley



Map 7.9 Fradley Equipped Play

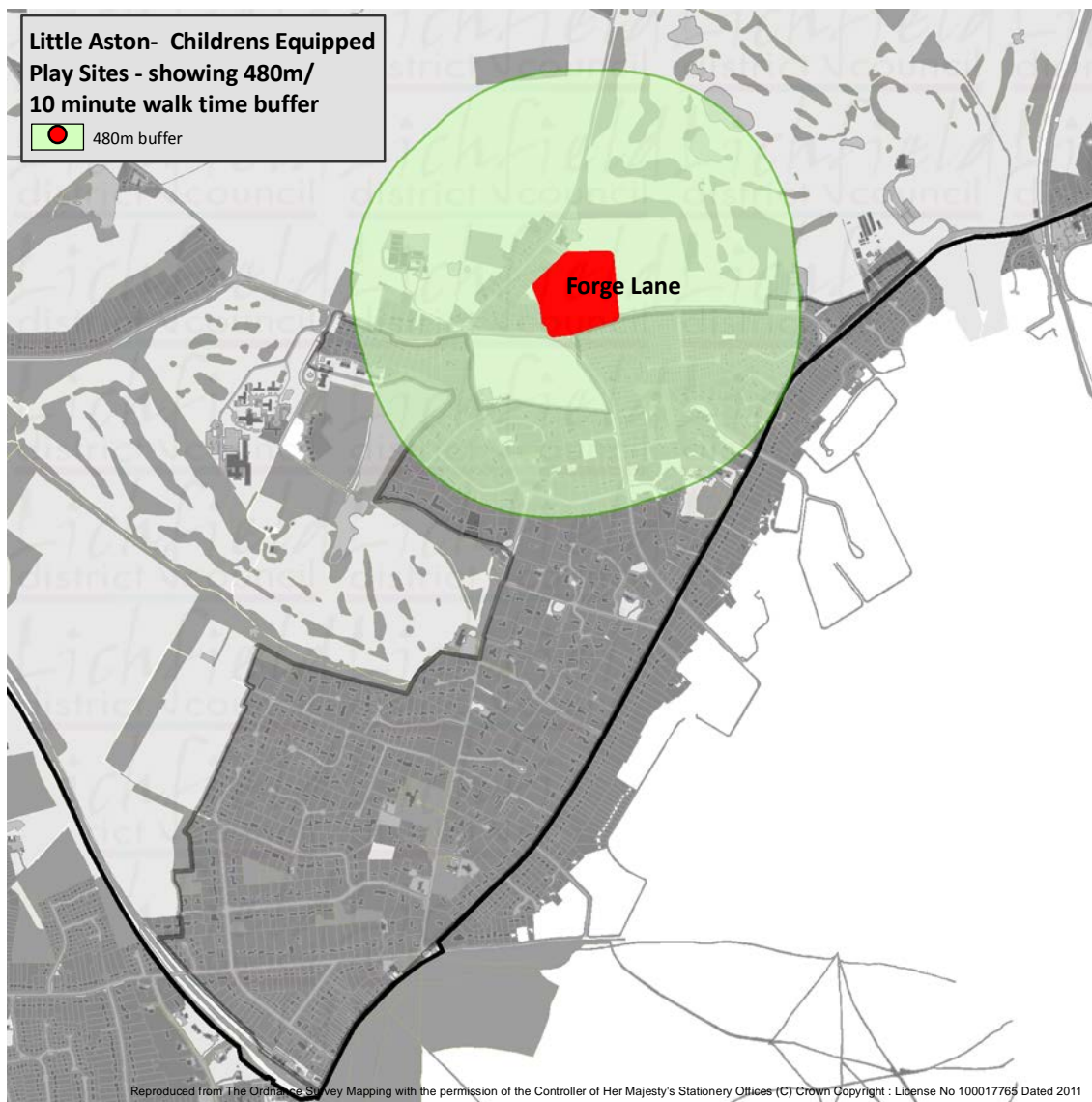
7.94 New development within Fradley over recent years has led to the creation of 2 new sites, one of which is a skatepark/MUGA at Hay End Lane adjacent to the Village Hall and a larger play space at Worthington Road (this replaced the original poor quality equipped play area). Both sites score highly in terms of quality, both in terms of play value and physical attributes.

7.95 Despite the actual size of the Worthington Road playspace it lies some distance from the northern half of Fradley and whilst there is a skatepark/MUGA there is no equipped playspace suitable for younger children or that offers any other type of play. The canal does provide a barrier to accessibility between the two halves of the settlement and as such provision of additional equipped play to serve younger children in the northern part of the settlement should be considered.

Fradley Play Recommendation

An additional equipped playspace should be considered within the northern half of Fradley and to this end the potential of existing amenity greenspaces should be considered. It is understood that consideration is being given at Parish level to the re-designation of existing amenity greenspace off Statfold Lane.

Little Aston



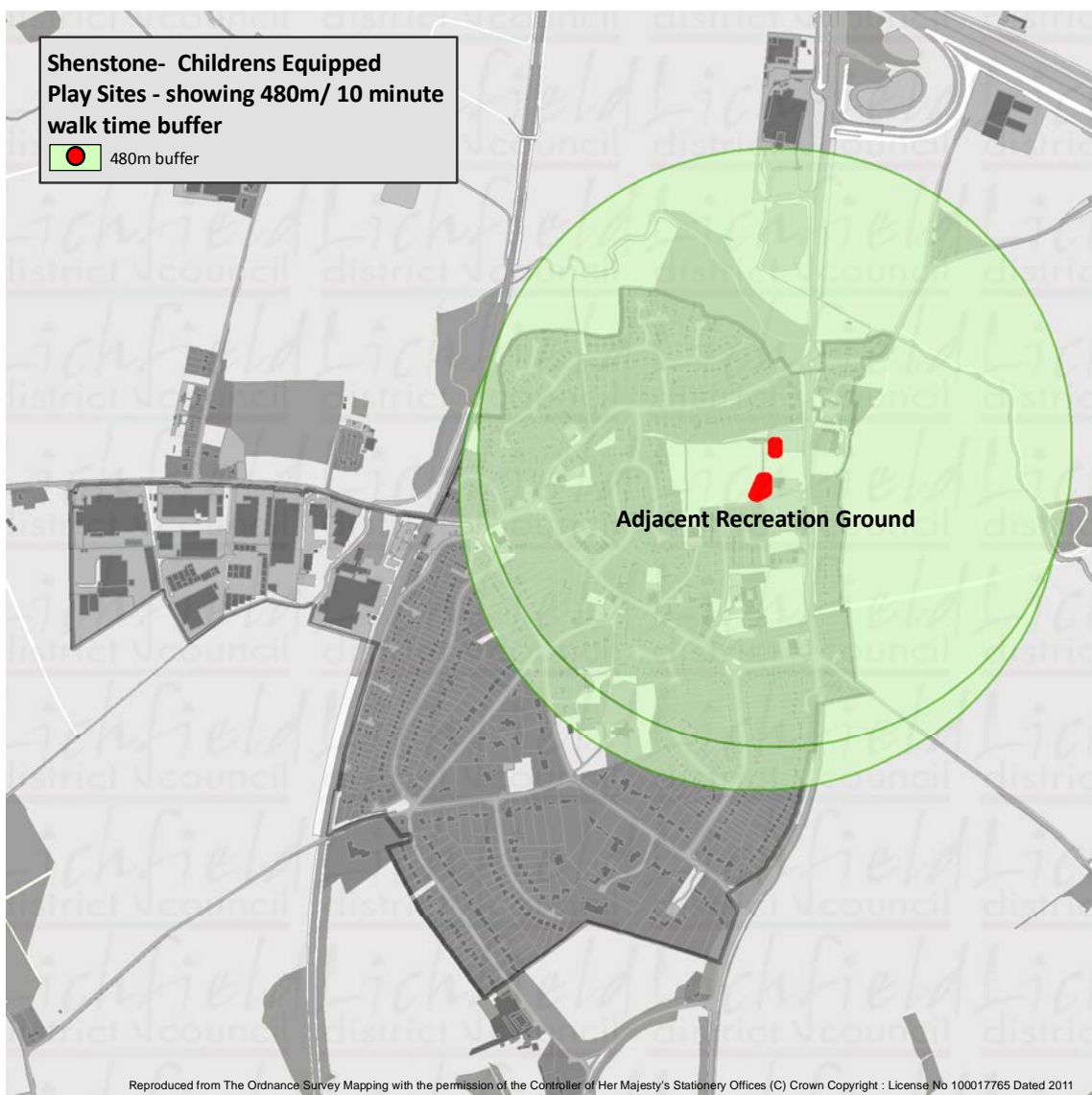
Map 7.10 Little Aston Equipped Play

7.96 This is the District's largest site and is located on the northern edge of Little Aston. Despite the size of this site in relation to Little Aston, accessibility for residents is poor; however this is considered an excellent equipped playspace. Within Little Aston itself, there is very little real prospect of a better located similar site coming forward. At almost 3ha, this site has been promoted and developed by the local play association and incorporates a variety of equipment for all ages spread throughout the site as well as open areas for ball games.

Little Aston Play Recommendation

This site has developed over recent years following active involvement and investment at the local community level. Despite its location on the northern edge of the settlement, the site is well used and incorporates a variety of equipped and non equipped play. Consideration in terms of further improvements will need to be considered at local level and ideally should focus on improving safe access to the site.

Shenstone



Map 7.11 Shenstone Equipped Play

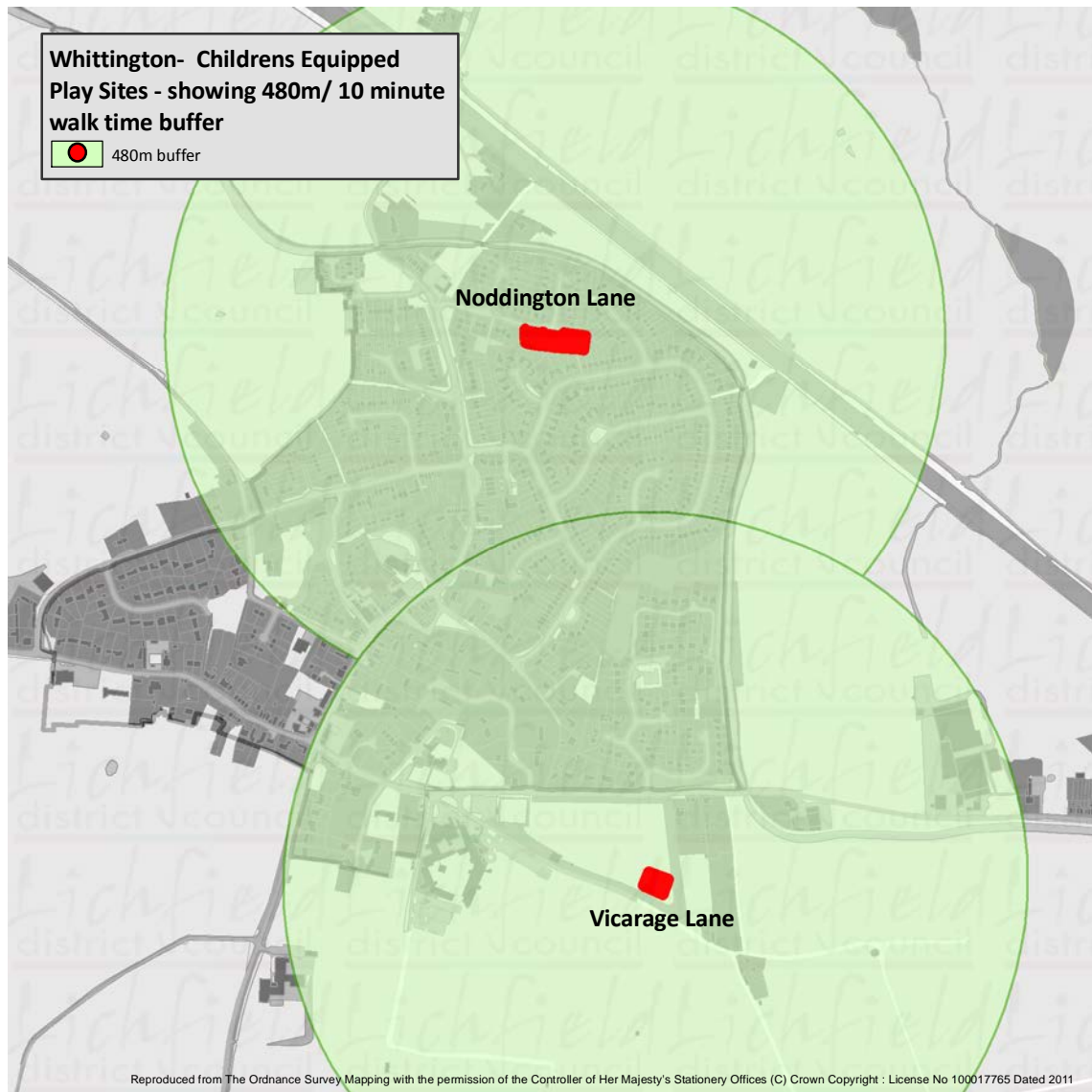
7.97 There is only one equipped playspace location within Shenstone, at the east side of the recreation field, comprising a relatively small area given over to play equipment and a mini skate ramp nearby. However, using 10 minute/480m walk time, neither site provides total accessibility to the whole settlement; residents within the southern half lie outside the accessibility buffer.

7.98 It must also be considered that there is very little amenity green space within the southern part of Shenstone, which combined with the lack of accessibility of equipped play shows there is very little opportunity for public play within large parts of Shenstone. Further to this, the lack of amenity space means there are limited opportunities within the settlement to locate additional play facilities. With this in mind it will be important to explore any opportunities for additional plan and open space which arise.

Shenstone Play Recommendation

Whilst improvements have been carried out very recently to the play area, due to its location in on the northern side of the settlement, accessibility from the southern half of Shenstone is poor. Opportunities for an additional equipped play area should be explored within the southern half of the settlement, along with consideration of further opportunities to increase the play value of potential within the existing location adjacent to the recreation ground.

Whittington



Map 7.12 Whittington Equipped Play

7.99 There are two equipped play locations within Whittington. The small site adjacent to the cricket field is some distance from the residential areas and has limited equipment; however, there are proposals at Parish level for further improvements to recreation provision on newly acquired land at Vicarage Lane. The other site at Noddington Lane is well equipped on a relatively small site and serves the northern part of the settlement. At Parish level consultations are underway to improve local recreation facilities.

Whittington Play Recommendation

Improvement to both the quality and accessibility needs to be considered in the southern half of the settlement which currently has a small, poorly equipped play space that is not well located to or connected with the residential areas. An equipped play area that incorporates better and more varied equipment is needed. Additional provision could be provided to serve the west of the village and any opportunities to do this could be explored.

Other Rural Settlements

7.100 As with most other settlements, equipped playspaces are often owned and managed by the local Parish Councils. Many improvements to such spaces have been a result of local community involvement alongside the work of Parish Councils themselves – this approach is supported as it allows changes to be made at local level in response to local needs.

Quantity

7.101 The majority of smaller rural settlements have some form of equipped playspace, with the size and type of play varying across the district. In most cases, this is a reflection of local circumstances and local community involvement. Some settlements have a dedicated equipped playspace whilst others have play equipment associated with greenspace such as those adjacent to village halls. There are a handful of smaller settlements that have no equipped playspace, including:

- Hammerwich:
- Hamstall Ridware:
- Longdon:
- Upper Longdon: and
- Shenstone Woodend

7.102 In addition some settlements have stated that there is no demand for an equipped playspace whilst others have such as Hammerwich, Longdon and the much smaller hamlet of Shenstone Woodend have expressed a need for such a space. Notwithstanding these variations, the Play Strategy promotes a vision that all settlements have at least one equipped playspace.

7.103 The size of the equipped playspaces across the rural areas also varies with some occupying small areas such as at Colton and others occupying much larger spaces such as at Edingale. As set out in the 'Quantity' section earlier, size does not reflect quality of a play space, indeed, a mixture of sizes, quality and accessibility all contribute.

7.104 A few settlements have one equipped playspace location where different types of play can be enjoyed, such as a playing pitch, open greenspace and MUGA in addition to play equipment. Such settlements include Stonnall and Drayton Bassett.

7.105 A number of settlements have equipped playspaces located adjacent to their village halls, such as, Colton, Edingale, Hill Ridware, Kings Bromley and Stonnall.

Smaller Rural Settlements	Estimated Population at 2001	% of people aged 0-15	Total Size (Ha)	Play Value(score/max score)	Quality Scores	Accessibility Score - 10 minute walk time
Clifton Campville	527	16.3	0.013	640/640	42%(24/57)	Good
Colton	521	18.4	0.018	670/670	65% (29/52)	Adequate
Drayton Bassett	723	20.1	0.16	700/720	52% (17/52)	Poor
Edingale	426	23.2	0.032	735/735	62% (32/52)	Good
Elford	581	17.9	0.082	585/675	57% (27/47)	Good
Hammerwich	No equipped play areas.					
Hamstall Ridware	No equipped play areas.					
Harlaston	378	19.8	0.063	540/620	58% (30/52)	Good
Hill Ridware	741	17.8	0.042	770/770	75% (39/52)	Good
Hopwas			0.08	620/640	40% (21/52)	Adequate
Kings Bromley	1,315		0.013	750/800	56% (29/52)	Good
Longdon	No equipped play areas.					
Stonnall	1,298	16.5	0.22	670/680	42% (22/52) & 29% (15/52) ^(vii)	Adequate
Upper Longdon	No equipped play areas.					
Wigginton	No equipped play areas.					

Table 7.8

7.106 A majority of the sites scored well in terms of play value and physical quality. Sites which are likely to score poorly are those which have had little investment over recent years and typically correspond to those that scored poorly in terms of their physical attributes as detailed below, these include, Stonnall, Drayton Bassett and Kings Bromley.

vii Site is included as two sites in Physical Score Assessment

7.107 The need to consider play value alongside physical quality is clearly seen in the case of Clifton Campville which scored poorly against the criteria that assessed the more physical elements but did not reflect the potential higher play value of the site (largely as a result of its focus on natural play).

Other Rural Equipped Play Quality Recommendation

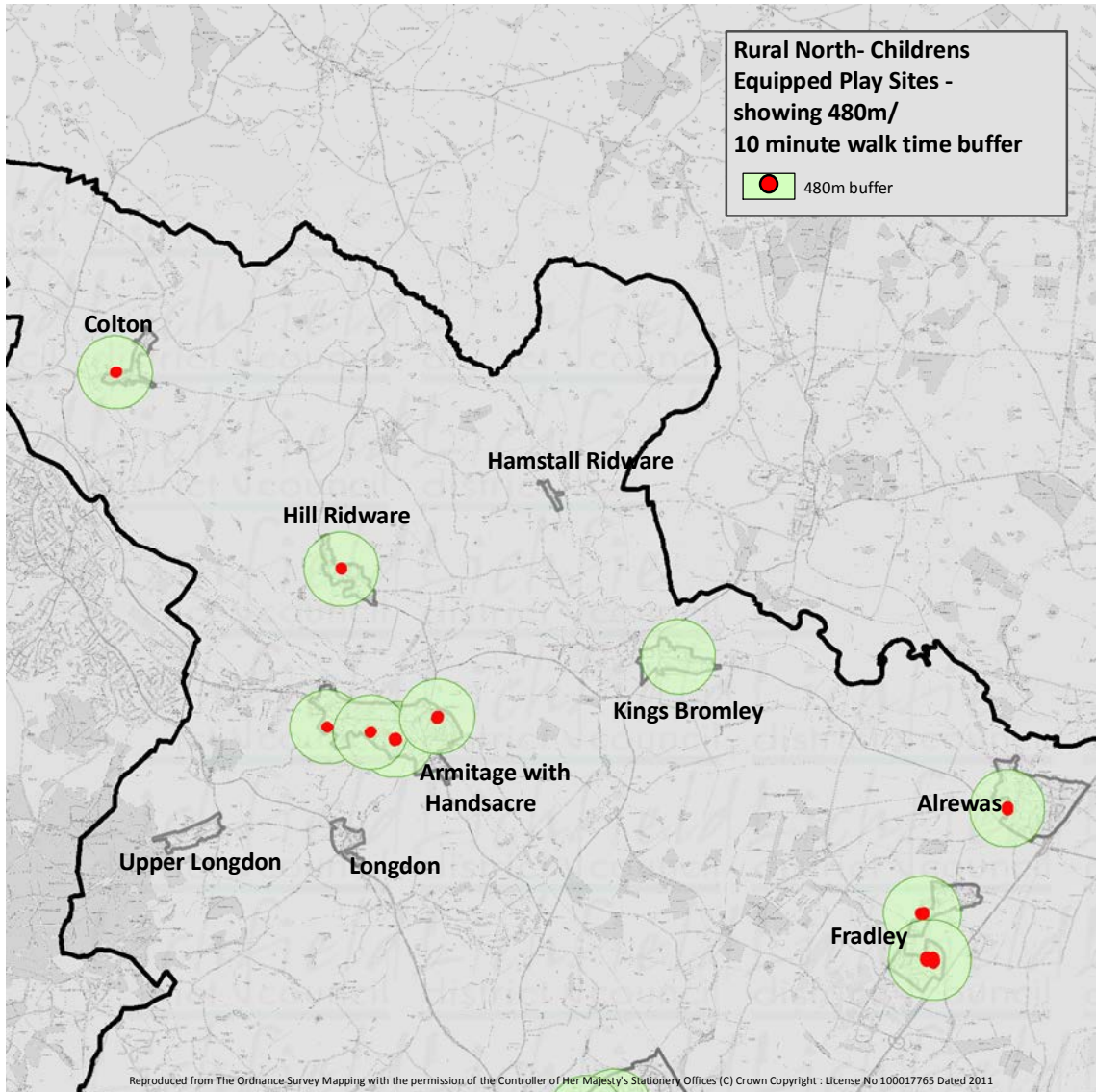
In terms of 'Play Value,' sites should aim to achieve maximum scores. As each site has been assessed against a set of qualitative criteria, and a maximum potential score identified, sites should seek to achieve their maximum potential. In terms of the 'Physical Score,' sites should aim to reach a minimum score of 50%.

Accessibility

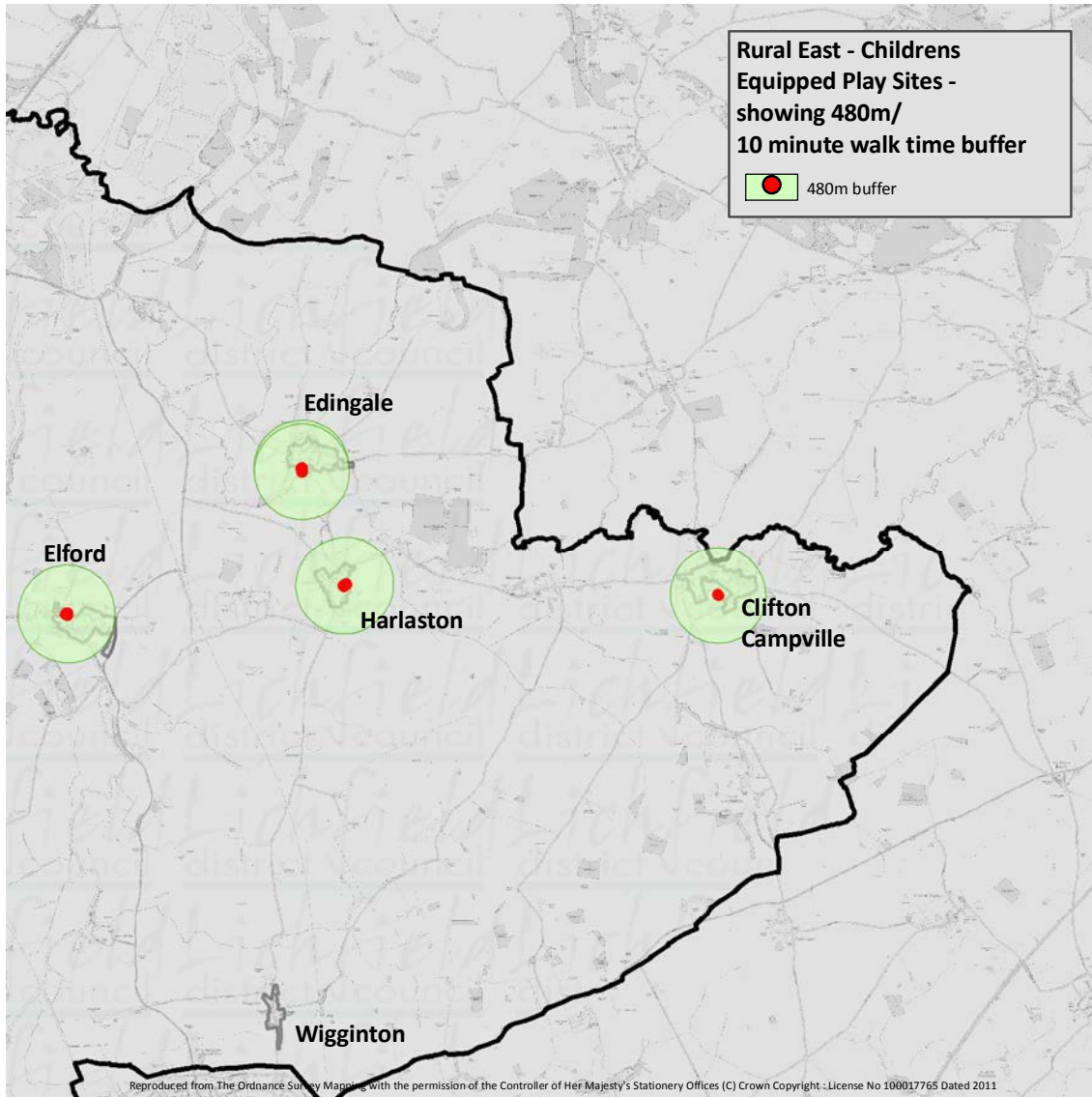
7.108 The following maps show the distribution of equipped playspaces across the rural areas split by rural north, south and east. Together they show the District wide picture of settlements with and without equipped playspaces as well as the proportion of each settlement covered by the 10 minute /480m walk time. Outside the larger key settlements, when a simple circular buffer is applied, and given the physical size of these smaller settlements, almost all residents fall within the accessibility buffer (with the exception of small parts of Colton, Kings Bromley, Stonnall and Drayton Bassett).

7.109 Despite this, the location of the equipped playspaces and the presence of safe footpaths and road crossing points varies between all settlements. Elford for example has no footpath in part and, areas with heavier traffic like Kings Bromley and Hopwas have pedestrian crossings whereas pedestrian access in some of the more rural settlements such as those in the east of the district tend to rely on footpaths, which may not provide completely safe access to equipped play areas.

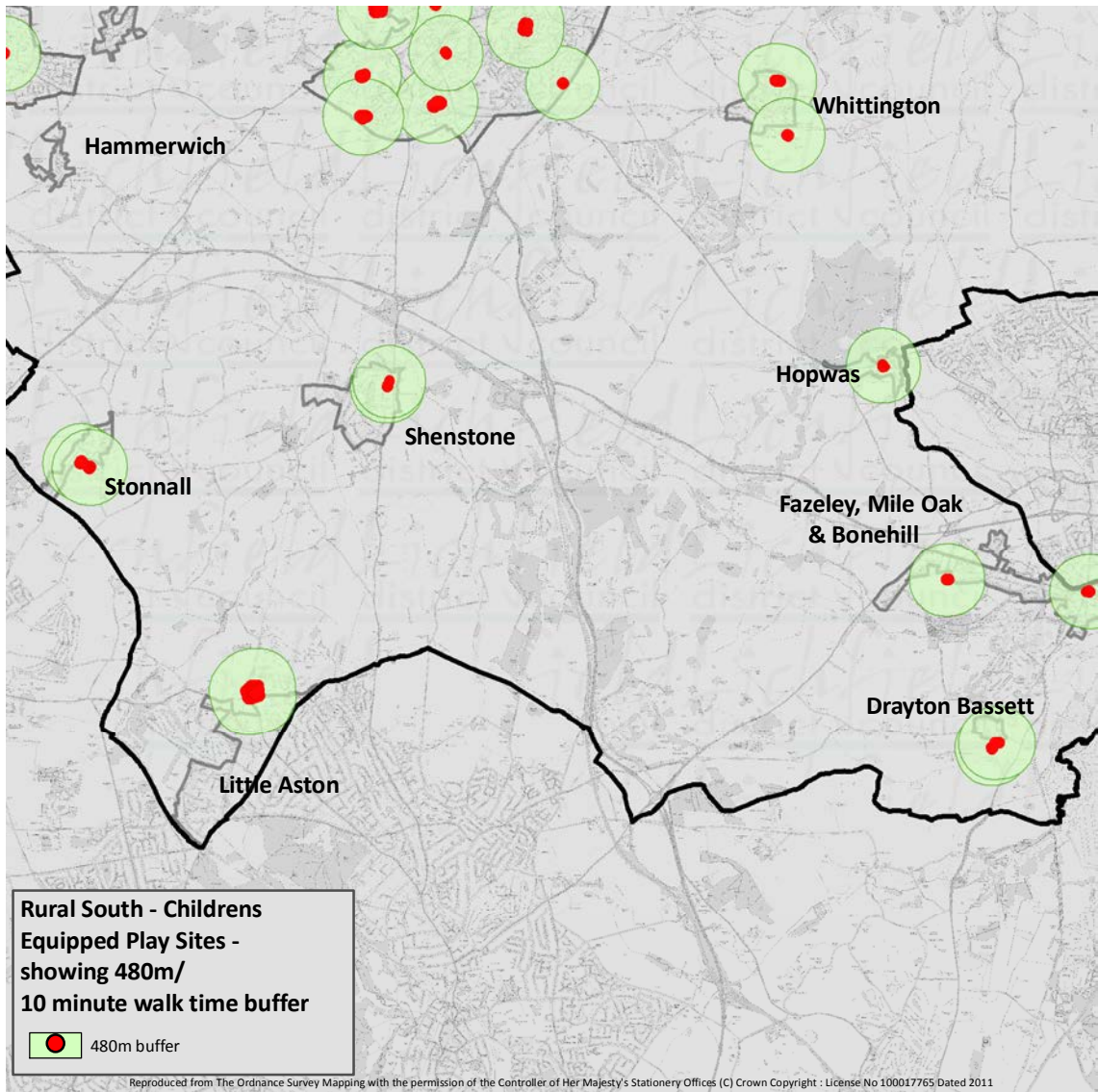
7.110 Even in areas that appear to have good, safe pedestrian access to equipped playspaces, there is often room for improvement, whether through creating more direct access points from the existing or new residential areas, providing safer road crossing points or better lighting amongst others. Ultimately some areas are only likely to see an improvement to accessibility through the provision of new equipped playspaces. Typically this is more likely in the larger settlements where the local population is greater and where a larger proportion of the residents live outside the 480m access buffer to any existing equipped playspaces.



Map 7.13 Rural North Equipped Play



Map 7.14 Rural East Equipped Play



Map 7.15 Rural South Equipped Play

Other Rural Play Recommendations

As adopted in the Play Strategy, the District Council should seek to encourage the provision of at least one equipped children's playspace within each rural settlement. Due to the nature of rural settlements it is recognised that the location and size is often a result of how the individual settlement has developed over the years. Changes to the quantity of equipped play within the smaller rural settlements is considered very much a decision that should be made at the local level to reflect identified needs.

In terms of quality, as with all equipped play areas across the District, it is considered important to work towards high quality sites that are accessible by safe means. Sites should seek to achieve their maximum play value score. In terms of the 'Physical Score', sites should aim to reach a minimum score of 50%.

7.111 The following table provides a summary of the equipped play in the District's rural communities.

Summary of Equipped Play in Rural Areas			
Rural Settlement (with Equipped Play)	Total Size (Ha)	Accessibility Score - 10 Minute Walk time	Comment
Alrewas	0.065	Poor	Additional Equipped Play Area to the east and/or improve accessibility to the existing provision. Improve quality of existing area of Equipped Play.
Armitage with Handsacre (4 sites)	0.25	Adequate	Additional Equipped Play Area and/or improve accessibility to existing provision. Improve quality of existing provision.
Clifton Campville	0.013	Good	Improve quality of existing site.
Colton	0.018	Adequate	Improve accessibility of existing site.
Drayton Bassett (2 sites)	0.16	Poor	Improve accessibility and quality at existing sites.
Edingale	0.032	Good	Improve quality of existing site.
Elford	0.081	Food	-
Fazeley (2 sites)	0.14	Poor	Additional Equipped Play Areas and improve accessibility to existing provision. Improve the quality of existing sites.
Fradley (2)	0.89	Good	-
Hammerwich	-	-	New Equipped Play Area needed.

Summary of Equipped Play in Rural Areas			
Rural Settlement (with Equipped Play)	Total Size (Ha)	Accessibility Score - 10 Minute Walk time	Comment
Hamstall Ridware	-	-	Consider whether local community need and Equipped Play Area.
Harlaston	0.063	Good	-
Hill Ridware	0.042	Good	-
Hopwas	0.08	Adequate	Improve accessibility to the site from the west and improve quality of the site.
Kings Bromley	0.018	Good	Improve quality of existing site.
Little Aston	2.89	Poor	Improve accessibility of existing.
Longdon		-	Community has expressed desire that a new equipped play area is needed.
Shenstone (2 sites)	0.055	Poor	Additional Equipped Play Area and improve accessibility to existing provision. Improve the quality of existing sites.
Shenstone Woodend			Community has expressed desire that a new equipped play area is needed.
Stonnall (2 sites)	0.22	Adequate	Improve accessibility and quality at existing sites.
Streethay	0.066	Good	Improve quality of existing site.
Upper Longdon	-	-	Consider whether local community needs an Equipped Play Area.
Whittington (2 sites)	0.21	Adequate	Additional Equipped Play Area needed and improve accessibility to existing provision.
Wigginton	-	-	Consider whether local community needs an Equipped Play Area.

Table 7.9

Conclusions

7.112 Ideally there should be sufficient good quality childrens playspaces that are well located to maximise coverage of local communities, that are accessible by safe pedestrian routes and that meet the play needs of children and young persons within local communities.

7.113 It is accepted that the 'one size fits all approach' to assessing quality and quantity of play areas does not always deliver the best outcome in terms of play, and therefore it is important that local communities, including local children, work with others involved in play provision such as Parish Councils, the District Council and in new developments, the developers themselves, to deliver quality equipped playspaces that reflect local requirements.

Standards for Play

7.114 These standards are derived from evidence from on-site surveys, evidence and conclusions contained within and as part of the development of the Play Strategy, views of those involved in providing and managing play sites as well as those who work with in organising and operating play events with local children. These standards relate to designated play areas and do not cover the multitude of more informal areas used for play such as streets, town centres etc. It incorporates principles of safe play as advised by 'Secured by Design'.

Equipped Play Areas

Provision of new or refurbishment of existing children's play areas should involve interested parties including local communities.

Quantity

- Within Lichfield City, Burntwood and key rural settlements the number of equipped play areas is to be set by the need to access sites within 10 minutes walk/480m of people's homes. Where there is incomplete coverage, additional equipped play areas will need to be considered.
- Within other smaller rural settlements there should be a minimum of one equipped play area.
- In terms of size no minimum is set, however they should accommodate a minimum of 5 pieces of equipment, the type of equipment, design and layout, informal and formal seating – and should result from local community involvement. In larger settlements there should be a range of equipment designed to enable play for all age groups.

Quality

Existing sites should aim to achieve maximum play value score set individually for each existing site and in terms of their;

- 'Physical Score:' sites should aim to reach a minimum score of 50% (see appendix for detailed scoring sheets)
- Play Value: sites should aim to achieve a maximum score that should be set for each individual play area.

Accessibility

- All residents living within the Districts settlements should be within a 480m/10 minute walk time of equipped play facilities. Safe pedestrian access needs to be considered and improved where necessary – this could include consideration of access from areas outside the 10 minute walk time/480m buffer.
- Within Lichfield City, Burntwood and Key Rural Settlements, equipped play areas should be within 10 minutes walk/480m of residential areas.
- Where new equipped play sites are considered they should be located to maximise safe pedestrian access (within 10 minutes walk/480m) to new and or existing residential areas

New developments should seek to ensure that the above quantity, quality and accessibility standards are met.

8 Civic Spaces

Introduction

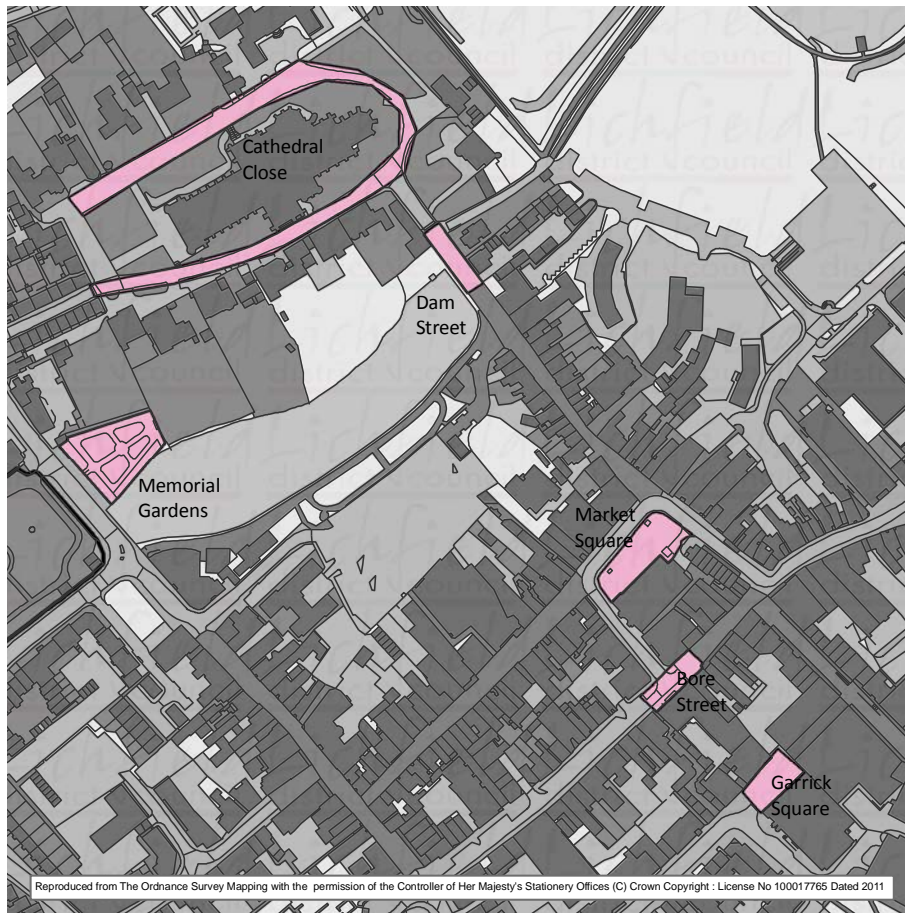
8.1 Civic spaces are the formal areas of open space, such as squares or promenades, which create the setting for civic buildings such as town halls often used for open air markets, public arts demonstrations and public events.

8.2 Civic spaces are normally provided on an opportunistic and urban design led basis and it is desirable therefore for planning authorities to promote urban design frameworks for town and city centre areas.

8.3 In research carried out by Commission for Architecture and Built Environment (CABE) 85% of people surveyed felt that the quality of public space and the built environment has a direct impact on their lives and the way they feel. But having access to public space is not all that matters. Just as important are the planning, design and management of that space. In 'Better Civic Buildings and Spaces' CABE also emphasises that the drive towards better civic buildings and spaces must be understood in the context of attempts to revitalise our towns and cities, with good design high on the agenda.

8.4 Many people visit the District's civic spaces, however due to their location it is likely that they are visited as part of an associated trip, for example to visit the District's heritage assets, to use shops and services, eat out, socialise or take part in another leisure activity.

Quantity



Map 8.1 Lichfield City Civic Spaces



Map 8.2 Fazeley Civic Space

8.5 The only identified civic spaces within the District are the Market Square outside St Mary's Church, part of Bore Street outside the Guildhall and the Memorial Gardens adjacent to Minster Pool, part of Dam Street (Speakers Corner) and the Cathedral Close. Outside of Lichfield City there is only one other recognised civic space; land outside Fazeley Town Hall.

8.6 However it is noted that within many of the District's other settlements that village greens/village centres, war memorials and other key spaces within settlements play an important role in bringing communities together. The importance of such spaces should be recognised and local communities may wish to define their own 'Civic Spaces' within community driven plans.

8.7 There are no civic spaces identified within Burntwood. However, support should be given to the creation of new civic spaces in the creation of an enlarged town centre at Burntwood should the opportunity arise.

8.8 There are no definitive national or local standards for civic spaces.

Quality

8.9 The quality of civic spaces within Lichfield City have been greatly improved as a result of a £1.2 million City Centre enhancement scheme which focused on the Market Square and parts of Market Street and Bore Street.

Accessibility

8.10 Due to the rural nature of Lichfield District, civic spaces are confined to Lichfield City Centre and Fazeley. It is notable that no civic spaces have been identified in Burntwood, which is a town of comparable size to Lichfield. Accessibility to civic spaces in Lichfield City is good, with bus and train stations in close proximity. The City Centre enhancement scheme also established a more pedestrian friendly environment reducing the dominance of the motor vehicle. Fazeley is also well served by bus routes between Tamworth and Birmingham and Tamworth Stations are also accessible by bus.

Standards

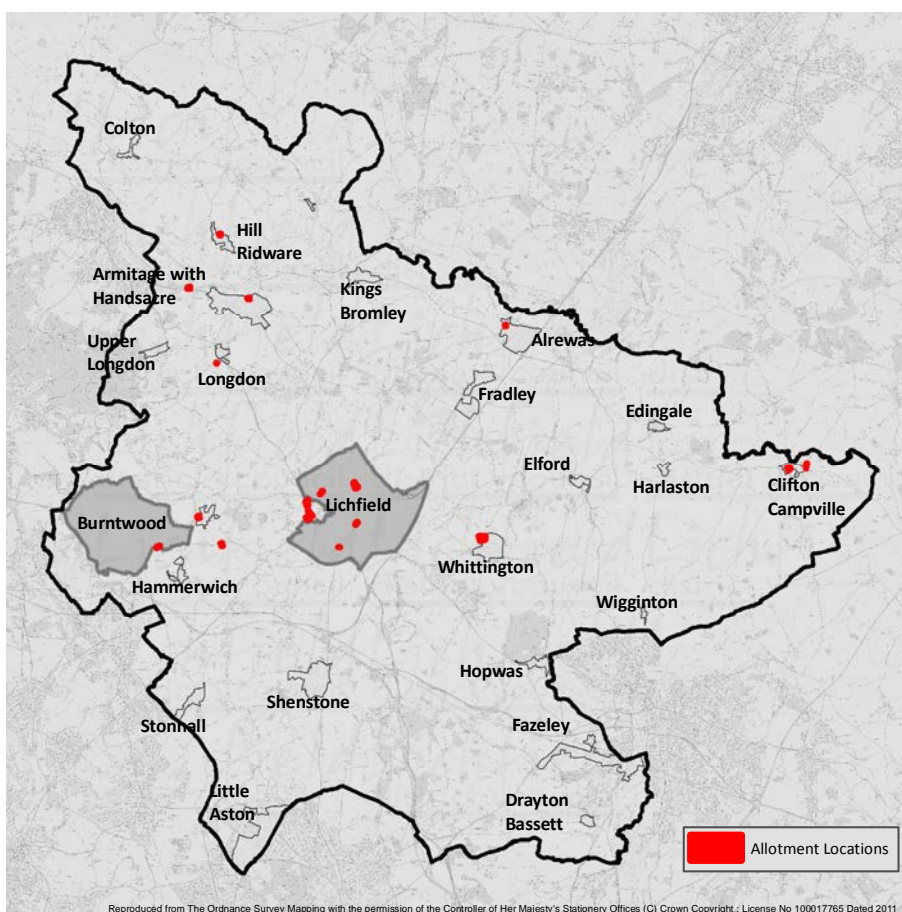
No specific standards are to be set but there will need to be periodic reviews of existing civic spaces to ensure that they continue to be improved and maintained to a high standard. Opportunities to create a new civic space at Burntwood through the creation of an enlarged town centre should be considered.

Civic spaces must be clean, attractive, well lit, safe and well maintained places ideally with seating and bins.

9 Allotments

9.1 In 2010 the LGA and CLG published 'A Place to Grow 2010,' which sets out that allotments are considered as valuable green spaces offering opportunities for local people to grow their own produce and that there are benefits in terms of health and wellbeing. Allotments can benefit the environment provide valuable green spaces particularly within towns and cities as well as contributing to biodiversity by providing a varied and valued habitat for wild animals and plants.

9.2 Rising housing densities and the consequential reduction in the size of many gardens together with growing interest in organic food production has contributed to an increase in the popularity and demand from people to grow their own produce in allotments. It is expected that allotments will continue to be popular and that demand will remain strong.



Map 9.1 Allotment Locations

9.3 Lichfield District has a number of allotments largely concentrated within Lichfield City, but with further provision in the northern half of the District, Burntwood and within some villages. With growing awareness of allotments there has been recent interest by a number of Parish Councils in considering providing allotments within their parishes. The practical value of an allotment stems from the direct benefits provided by access to affordable, fresh vegetables, physical exercise and social activity.

Demand – Supply

9.4 Most allotments are well established, and historically provided and managed by Parish Councils or the Local Authority. In the District provision in relation to demand varies. In Lichfield City demand far outweighs supply (Lichfield City allotments are leased by Lichfield City Council to the Lichfield and District Allotment Society), in other areas there are some plots available and at the same time some sites have seen changes to plot sizes in an attempt to address demand and or make plots smaller for users.

9.5 In 2009, after a review of the waiting list, it revealed that there were 91 people registered on the Allotment Society's waiting list for plots in Lichfield City, and with an average turnover of 20 plots per year meaning most people can expect around a six-year wait for a plot to become available. The Allotment Society were contacted again in 2012 when the waiting list had reduced to 70 people. However, the Allotment Society advised that at the time of contact (April 2012) the waiting list was at a low due to people giving up plots as plot rents were due in April. On the whole the waiting list is usually higher than 70 and it is thought that on average a waiting list of 90 people provides the most accurate picture of the annual demand for allotments.

9.6 In terms of identifying further demand elsewhere in the district, there are no formal records available and no information has been received as part of consultation exercises. However, there is evidence that some Parish Councils are considering providing allotments within their areas, these include, Stonnall, Fradley, Shenstone and more recently new allotments have been provided within Whittington.

9.7 The 2011 Citizens Questionnaire highlighted that across all areas of the District there was a perceived shortfall in allotment provision with 79% of respondents believing there is insufficient provision.

9.8 In 2011 new allotments have become established on land to the west of Armitage with Handsacre. This site has been fully let and whilst no details have been provided in relation to where plot holders live, it does show that there is continuing demand for allotment spaces.

Quantity

9.9 There are currently 17 recorded allotment sites in Lichfield District ranging in size from 0.11ha to 2.01ha. These sites are found in the following locations:

- Lichfield City – 150 plots on City Council owned land at Beacon Street, Nether Stowe, Cherry Orchard;
- Dovehouse Fields, Christchurch and The Moggs plus 40 plots on a privately owed site west of Christchurch;
- Burntwood – 52 plots on sites at Norton Lane, Coulter Lane and Peters Lane;
- Clifton Campville – 15 plots off Main Street/Netherseal Road;
- Hill Ridware - 12 plots to the rear of the village hall;
- Longdon – 8 plots off Borough Lane;
- Hill Ridware - 12 plots rear of Village Hall;
- Armitage with Handsacre - around 30 plots at Pinfold Drive and north of A513;

- Alrewas - land adjacent to Church; and
- Whittington – land at the former Whittington Grange School.

Lichfield City

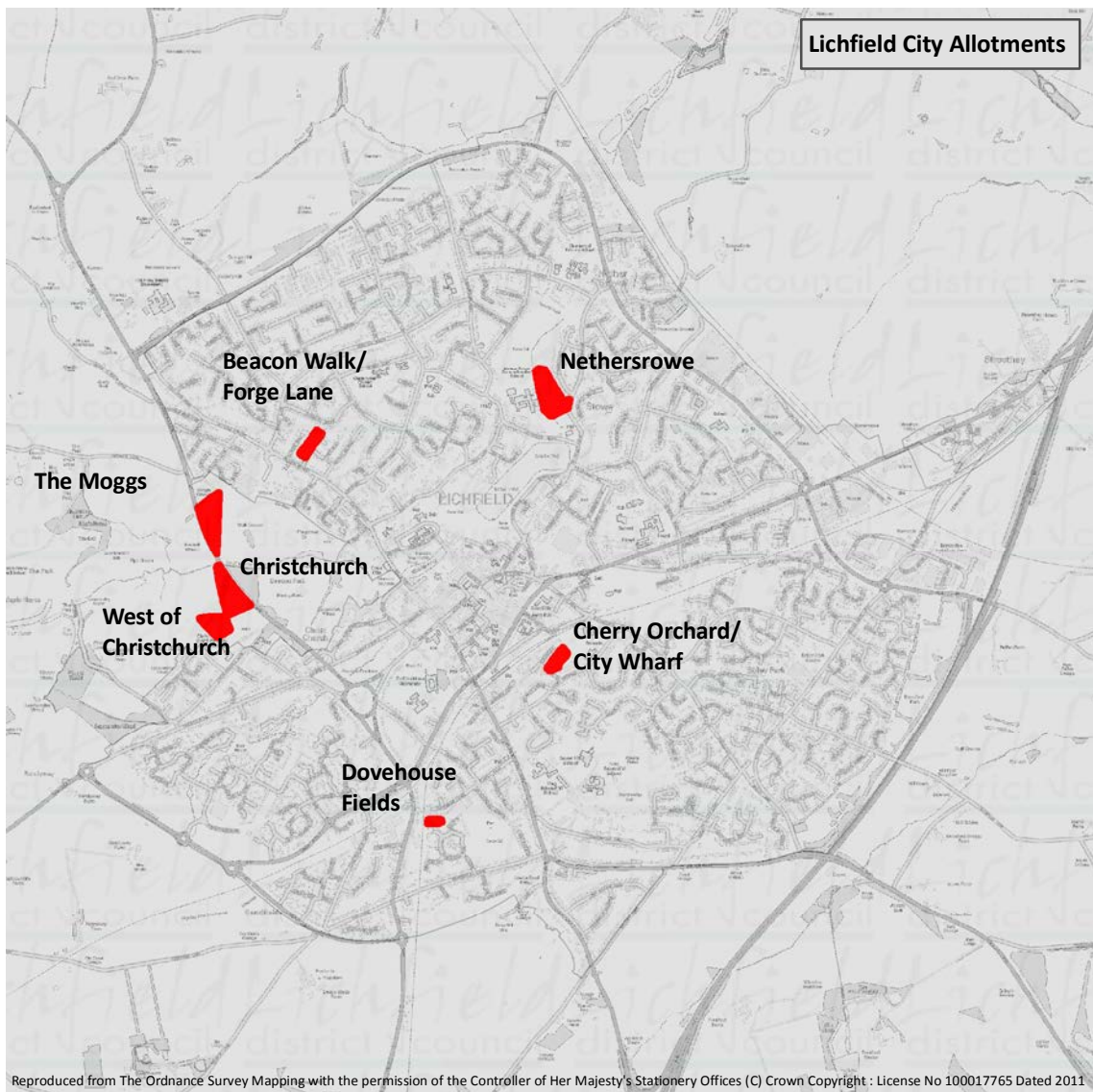
9.10 Within Lichfield City there is an existing unmet demand for allotment plots as shown by the waiting list. Lichfield City Council own six allotment sites, run by the Lichfield and District Allotment Society. In response to the high demand for new allotments plots the Lichfield and District Allotment Society is promoting a strategy of splitting some of its full sized plots in order to maximise availability of existing stock, resulting in the provision of 225 plots. In addition to City Council owned sites there is a further privately operated allotment site to the west of Christchurch (estimated 40 plots) giving a total of 265 plots for Lichfield City.

9.11 In Lichfield City there is a total of 5.3ha of allotments land. In order to clear the current waiting list an additional 1.35ha of allotment land (assuming plot size of 150sqm) would be required, this would deliver 90 plots. With 11,700 households within the City and 265 allotment plots (225 Lichfield City Council and estimated 40 private). If existing demand is to be met there would need to be around 355 plots (existing 265 plus additional 90) within or on the edge of Lichfield City to satisfy demand. This would equate to around 1 plot of 150sqm per 32 households, as such this ratio should be sought on new developments to ensure demand is met on any new large development.

9.12 Following discussions with Lichfield and District Allotment Society a plot size of 150sqm is considered appropriate, this could allow for some flexibility in plots sizes. At 150sqm, the creation of an additional 90 plots would equate to a minimum of 1.35ha of allotment land needed to satisfy existing demand.

9.13 Large developments will need to to apply a minimum 1:32 ratio and provide allotments within easy access of the development .

9.14 In summary, ideally an additional 1.35ha (90 plots at 150sqm) of allotment land is needed to satisfy existing demand from the existing waiting list and further supply will be required at a rate of 1 plot per 32 households to provide for the demand that will be created by the future growth.



Map 9.2 Lichfield City Allotments

Quality

9.15 There are currently no definitive local or national quality standards for the provision of allotments and community gardens. 'A Place to Grow' Supplementary Document considers a variety of issues that relate to allotments including design and layout and managing waiting lists. Almost all allotments within the District appear to be well used and maintained. Lichfield and District Allotment Society apply certain criteria to maintain the appearance of all plots to ensure that plots are not neglected and that the amenity of adjacent users is not adversely affected.

9.16 However it is important that existing and new sites be maintained and managed both visually (fences, hedges, sheds, waste and compost bins, paths, car parks etc) as well as from a 'growing' perspective such as safe removal of weeds. Strict control will need to be maintained to ensure that the erection of small buildings and sheds which are often contrary to other policies, including Green Belt, do not occur within allotment sites.

Accessibility

9.17 In terms of distribution Lichfield City has the most sites, followed by Burntwood and some of the larger rural settlements. As Map 9.1 indicates there is not an even spread of allotments with no allotments being located in the southern half of the District. However, typically allotments are a demand led open space type and there is little value in applying a district wide standard which could provide allotments in areas with no demand. New sites will be supported throughout the District, in particular in those areas poorly served. Allotments should aim to be accessible by wheelchair users.

9.18 Due to the nature of allotments, journeys are usually made by car (carrying tools, supplies etc). Ideally new sites should be well located to existing settlements to provide opportunities for shorter car journeys or access by foot, however it is accepted that this is not always possible.

New Sites

9.19 The provision of new sites is covered by specific Allotment Acts as well as planning law, whilst the change of use of agricultural land to allotment use will not necessarily require planning permission, car parking, access arrangements and other physical structures such as sheds or fencing may where they constitute development. Being demand led and thus subject to potential fluctuations, makes setting rigid district wide standards challenging. It is considered therefore that it is important to balance the need to set standards as well as being sufficiently flexible that they may be reviewed as circumstances change.

9.20 It is also important that waiting lists are reviewed regularly to ensure that a true picture of demand is maintained. Given the potential wait time for plots it is possible that some of those on waiting lists may need to be removed due to changing circumstances, thus waiting lists need to be kept up to date. Ideally a structure needs to be in place which not only registers those wanting plots but conversely gives those involved in plot provision an opportunity to give an update on waiting times and any other relevant news.

Standards

9.21 The District Council is supportive of additional allotment provision and considers that a demand led approach is generally the most appropriate way forward in delivering additional allotment plots where they are needed, particularly as outside of Lichfield there is no robust evidence of demand. This demand led approach was generally supported through responses received following consultation on the emerging Local Plan to date.

9.22 However, it is acknowledged that there is an identified demand which exceeds supply within Lichfield City and it is considered appropriate to address this matter through the establishment of new allotment standard to serve Lichfield City in order to address existing

demand. In addition, where strategic housing sites proposed within Lichfield City, the provision of new allotments should be provided as proven need exists and thus land should be identified.

9.23 With regard to Lichfield City, an additional 1.35ha (90 plots at 150sqm) of allotment land is needed to satisfy existing demand from the existing waiting list.

9.24 Allotment provision will be sought at a rate of 1 plot per 32 households (assuming plot size of 150sqm) on all strategic development allocations to meet the needs of the growing population within these settlements.

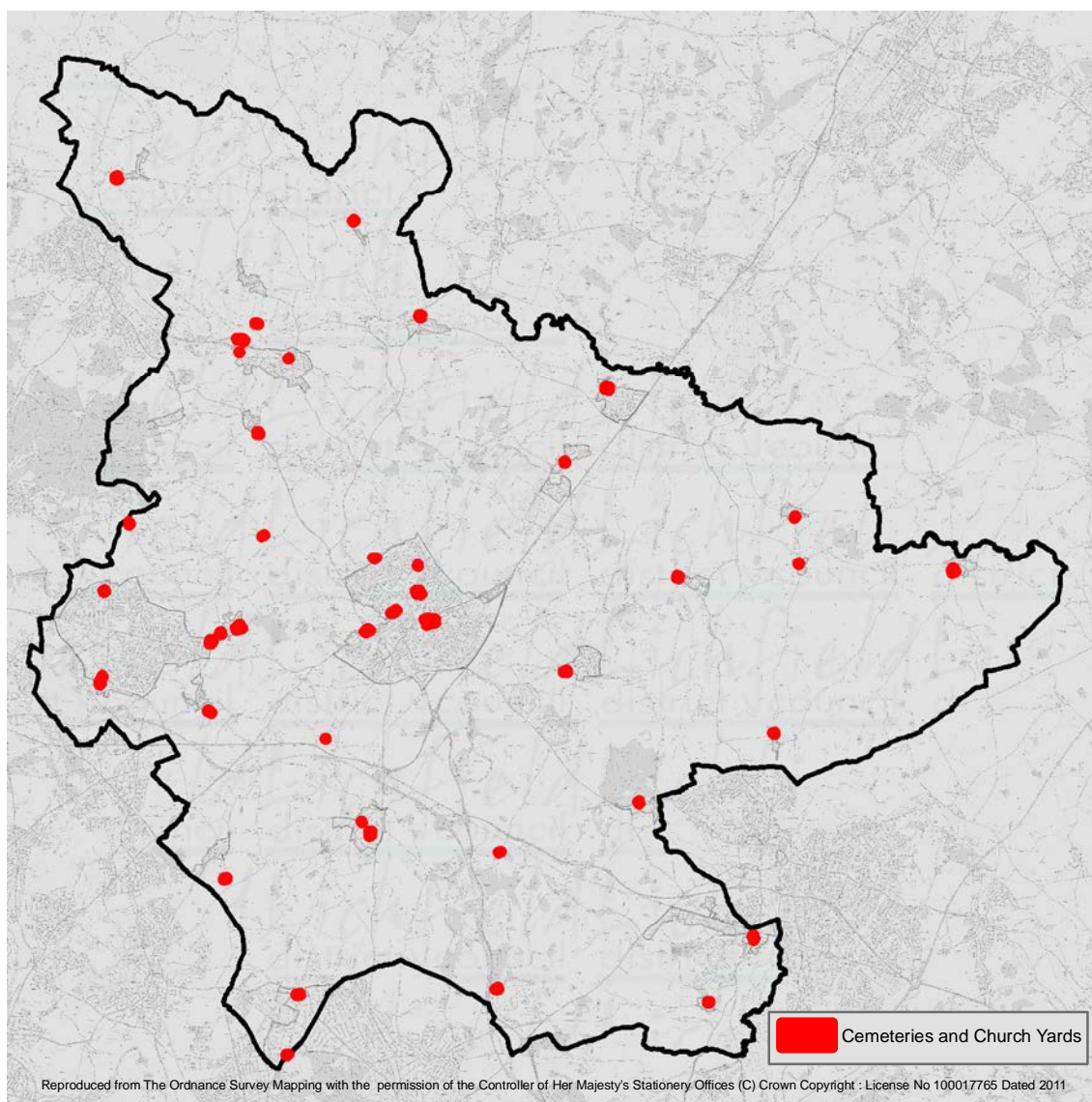
Standard - Quantity	Justification
Standard for Allotments - 1 plot per 32 households on large developments.	The proposed standard aims to ensure allotments are provided for the new population growth in line with projected demand, ensuring that as a minimum, existing provision is maintained.
Elsewhere	As it is not possible to predict demand elsewhere because there is no single organisation outside of Lichfield City that manages waiting lists, new sites for allotments will be supported and where larger developments are proposed the applicant will be encouraged to consult with residents and local bodies to establish whether there is a local need.
Allotments to be considered by applicants on larger sites in consultation with residents and Parish Councils.	
General support for allotments on suitable sites will not be supported where they conflict with other policy designations	Poorly maintained allotments can be an eyesore and therefore strict control over the visual impact is needed. Practically, sites need to be suitable for allotment purposes having access to water, parking and toilets where necessary.
Quality	
Allotments should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● be well maintained – boundary fences, plot boundaries, entrances and footpaths, composting areas etc ● adhere to strict control to over buildings ● be clean and litter free ● be encouraged to incorporate elements that promote biodiversity ● provide adequate water supply ● where appropriate, provided sufficient parking and toilet provision. 	
Accessibility	
Ideally locations close to existing settlements are preferable, however given the nature of use, in terms of heavy/bulky equipment and supplies trips by car are not just common but often necessary.	

10 Cemeteries and Churchyards

Introduction

10.1 Cemeteries and churchyards have an amenity value as people will use them to walk through and the peaceful nature and minimal disruption not only benefits people but also wildlife and biodiversity. Often flora and fauna can flourish in these conditions as they are relatively undisturbed compared to more intensively used environments.

Quantity



Map 10.1 Cemeteries and Churchyards

10.2 There are 40 recorded churchyards within Lichfield District ranging in size from 0.077ha to 3.83ha, whilst there are no existing crematoriums located within the District, there is a site with planning permission south of Burntwood. In total they amount to 29.04ha. There is a relatively new cemetery located off Eastern Avenue adjacent to the Local Nature Reserve.

10.3 The need for burial grounds and new burial spaces is dependent on site capacity and the gradual need for more space when the capacity of remaining sites becomes exhausted. The need to monitor population estimates is necessary as this could give an indication of demand depending on whether an area has an ageing population or not. In the case of Lichfield District, population forecasts show that there is likely to be a significant rise in the number of older people over the next 20 years.

Quality

10.4 There are currently no national or local standards for the provision of cemeteries and churchyards. Aside from their main purpose it is also important to note that cemeteries and churchyards bring wider benefits to local areas including cultural and landscape value as greenspaces, as well as ecological diversity.

Accessibility

10.5 There are no definitive local or national standards for accessibility.

Summary

10.6 There are no specific plans to identify additional churchyards and cemeteries within the district and a demand led approach will followed. The District Council should continue to support acceptable proposals in suitable locations where demand is identified.

Standards

Cemeteries and Churchyards Recommendation

No standard is to be set, however existing churchyards and cemeteries should be protected to ensure that their value to people is maintained, to provide areas of biodiversity and contribute to the green infrastructure of the District. The District Council should encourage enhancement of the quality both visual and ecological on existing sites and ensure that new sites are designed to encourage 'quiet contemplation in a high quality environment.'

11 Water Based Recreation

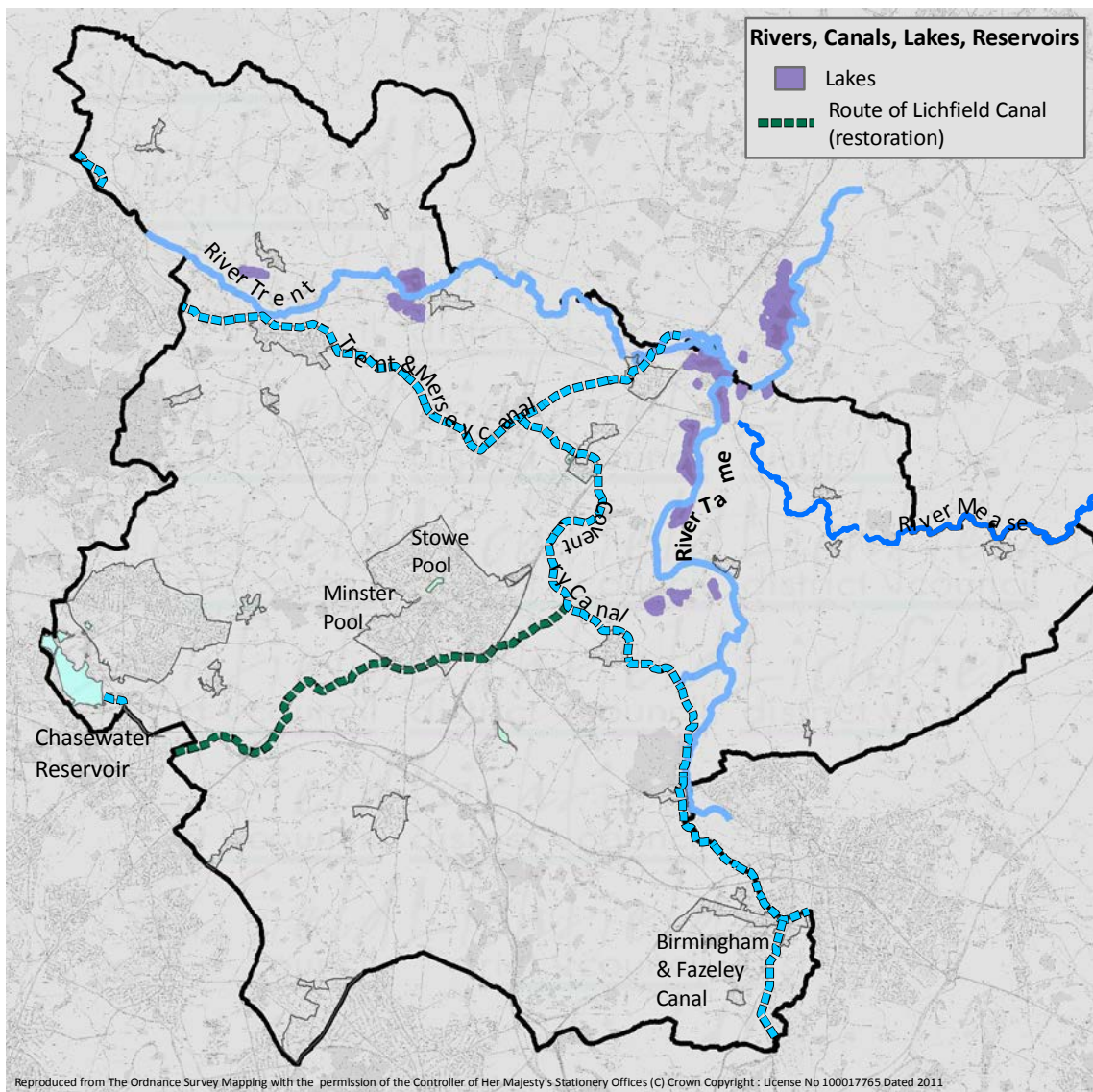
Introduction

11.1 Alongside traditional open spaces, areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity.'

11.2 There are a number of key water spaces located within the district, they include:

- Rivers - Tame, Trent and Mease;
- Canals - Trent and Mersey, Coventry and the Birmingham and Fazeley Canals;
- Lakes at Kings Bromley, Hamstall Ridware, Fisherwick/Elford, east of Alrewas;
- Reservoir at Chasewater; and
- Smaller water areas such as Stowe and Minster Pools, several smaller ponds scattered throughout the district along with numerous brooks.

11.3 Some these water spaces and the land around them are also considered under other open spaces categories such as green corridors, they are considered separately here in relation to how the water areas themselves are used and valued, whether it is for sport, recreation/leisure or biodiversity or a combination.



Map 11.1 Rivers, Canals, Lakes & Reservoirs

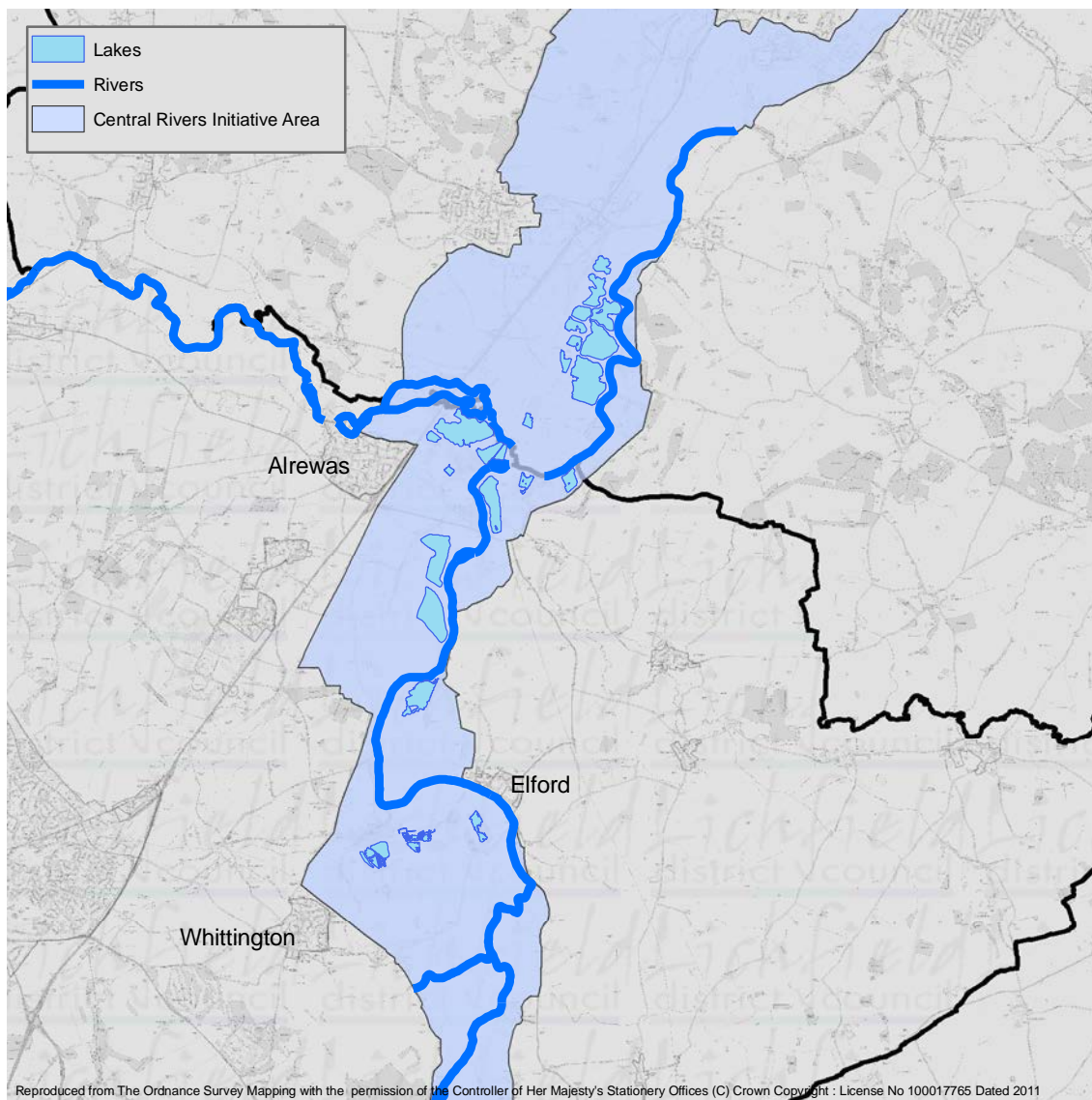
Rivers

11.4 In terms of rivers, areas of public accessibility varies and, in some cases, formal arrangements exist for fishing. The importance of the River Mease for example has been recognised internationally through its designation as a SAC (Special Area of Conservation) due to its high water quality and the presence of rare species of fish. However, the two dominant rivers that have a significant impact on the landscape of the District are the Rivers Tame and Trent.

11.5 Within the corridors of the Tame and Trent several water bodies have been created following extraction of sand and gravel such as Kings Bromley Lake, which is used for sailing and fishing, and other lakes within the Tame Valley, such as those at Alrewas, Elford and Fisherwick/Whittington. With the exception of Kings Bromley, all fall within the Central Rivers

Initiative (CRI) area, which follows the Tame Valley through Lichfield District from East Staffordshire to Tamworth Borough. Lichfield District Council is a Partner in this rural regeneration initiative.

11.6 Some lakes within the CRI area are formally used for fishing and through the CRI the aspirations of landowners for the use of other lakes for water based recreation and leisure are emerging.



Map 11.2 Central Rivers Initiative Area

11.7 It is envisaged that the number of residents living within relatively easy access of the CRI area will increase over coming years along with forecast growth in the need for and use of land and water for recreation and leisure. The CRI is seen as a key project area with potential to deliver leisure and recreational facilities within Lichfield District and could also relieve some of the potential pressures on existing more sensitive areas such as Cannock Chase AONB.

Chasewater Country Park

11.8 Chasewater is a key water feature which is of sub-regional significance set within a developing Country Park. As well as providing for passive recreational and leisure pursuits it also provides:

- The Midlands largest Water-Ski Lake at just over 200 acres of water and caters for 14ft sports boats to Tournament Ski boats. Facilities include 2 slipways and jetty mooring for 30+ craft as well as a full Slalom course and Ski jump. Whilst no standard is to be set in relation to this activity its importance as a water skiing venue is recognised and any recommendations contained in the New National Facility Strategy will need to be considered;
- Chasewater Sailing Club caters for sailboards and all classes of sailing boats;
- Staffordshire County Council outdoor education facility is used by Staffordshire schools;
- A wide range of activities including dinghy sailing, all-terrain cycling, climbing, canoeing and archery which compliments an extensive choice of cross-curricular environmental studies.
- A facility for sub aqua;
- Fishing.

Other Pools & Lakes

11.9 Kings Bromley Lake - The lake at Kings Bromley comprises of two pools, one used by Manor Park Sailing Club and the other by a local angling club for fishing.

11.10 Stowe and Minster Pools -Both these city centre pools are of significant local and historic value with Minster Pool being created in the 12th century. Both provide important water features within the heart of the City. Whilst sailing is no longer permitted on Stowe Pool future consideration may be given as to whether this may be reintroduced in the future. Any potential for sailing in the future will need to be compatible with Stowe Pool's designation as a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). It is also used for fishing.

Canals

11.11 Canals are also considered within the Green Corridors and Urban Fring chapter. Lichfield District is crossed by three canals (Trent and Mersey, Birmingham and Fazeley and Coventry Canals) and work is also underway to restore the Lichfield Canal. As well as providing footpaths alongside the canals themselves are also used for fishing and narrow boating. Use of canals is increasing from those using towpaths (cyclists and walkers) as well as boaters. In addition British Waterways is trying to reduce the amount of boats permanently mooring on the canals themselves, this has resulted an increase in the development of new inland marinas nationally. Within the District, in addition to a marina at Fazeley, a new marina has been built at Kings Bromley Wharf, an application for a marina near Huddlesford was approved in 2008 and enquiries from developers seeking additional marinas have been received.

11.12 In addition to the 3 existing operational canals the restoration of the Lichfield Canal is underway and is being carried out by the Lichfield and Hatherton Canals Trust along certain sections. The Lichfield Canal will eventually cover some 7 miles from Huddlesford

passing to the south of Lichfield City and then towards south Burntwood and follows its original route for the most part. This is a long term project which is recognised will benefit those living and visiting the district in the future, however there are many issues to be resolved before the restoration can be secured in full.

Conclusions

11.13 The District Council will continue to support existing and any future initiatives to improve existing and create future water bodies which seek to provide for a wide variety of uses for open space. However, no standards are to be set for water sports and water based recreation due to the diversity of types, location and uses of existing sites, and proposals for new water sport and recreation uses will be supported having regard to the particular circumstances of each individual proposal.