

Background

- i. PMP were appointed to undertake an Open Space, Recreation and Sport Strategy across East Northamptonshire in accordance with the requirements of the latest Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002).
- ii. The Companion Guide sets out a five step logical process for undertaking a local assessment of open space. Although presented as a linear process below, in reality, many stages were undertaken in parallel.
- iii. The five step process 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 – Drafting Policies – recommendations and strategic priorities.
- iv. The study considers eight typologies of green space in addition to indoor sports facilities, namely:
 - parks and gardens
 - natural and semi natural open space
 - amenity greenspace
 - provision for children and young people
 - outdoor sports facilities
 - allotments and community gardens
 - green corridors
 - churchyards and cemeteries.
- v. The study includes an audit of all accessible open spaces of these typologies (regardless of ownership) throughout East Northamptonshire, providing a robust baseline of data, indicating priorities for future open space, recreation and sport provision and supporting the future development of appropriate strategies and planning policies.
- vi. The key elements of the study include:
 - a comprehensive audit and quality assessment
 - a detailed assessment of local needs (user and non-user) assessed through various consultation methods including a household survey, internet survey, neighbourhood drop in sessions and user surveys

- recommendations for local provision standards (quantity, quality and accessibility) for each type of open space where appropriate in accordance with local needs and PPG 17
 - identification of geographical areas where specific open space types need to be protected, enhanced, relocated or areas where new provision is required and site specific recommendations
 - recommendations for the future planning and implementation of open spaces.
- vii. Full details of the methodology and standard setting process can be found in sections 2 – 12 of the report. The recommended local standards, key issues and recommendations for each typology are summarised below alongside key issues and actions resulting from the application of the recommended standards.

Parks and gardens

Standards

- Quantity Standard 0.6 ha per 1000 population
- Accessibility Standard 15 minute walk (720m)
- Quality Vision A welcoming and well kept clean and litter free park providing a range of leisure, recreational and enriched play opportunities for all ages, varied and well-kept vegetation including flowers, trees and shrubs. This should be combined with natural areas and appropriate ancillary accommodation (including toilets, benches and litter bins). Good signage both to and within the park should be ensured and a warden presence at larger sites should be considered
- Quality Benchmark 86%

Key issues and actions

- viii. Consultation highlights the perceived importance of parks and gardens to local residents, and provides an evidence base that parks are used on a regular basis.
- ix. Site assessments and quality benchmark scoring shows that the quality of parks within East Northamptonshire is good. Both Barnwell Country Park and Rushden Hall Park achieve the quality vision score and a further three parks are close to attaining this score. There are no sites falling within the poor category.
- x. The quantity standard of 0.6ha is marginally above the current level of provision (0.58ha) reflecting public perception that parks and gardens are of high importance in addition to locational deficiencies identified. This standard should be considered in conjunction with the provision of local pocket parks. Application of the quantity and accessibility standards highlights that there are a number of deficiencies evident, specifically located in the Northern area of Oundle, the western fringe of the south urban area and the eastern tip of Thrapston in addition to the rural area.
- xi. Key recommendations for parks and gardens are highlighted below, and recommendation PG8 highlights areas where deficiencies should be prioritised.

Recommendations

PG1	Produce an action plan for the protection, development and improvement of parks and gardens within East Northamptonshire, prioritising those areas outlined in the specific recommendations below. This should include realistic actions with an indicative timeframe and should involve all partners and providers.
PG2	Consider simultaneously working towards the green flag awards for parks – a national benchmark of quality which Barnwell Country Park has already achieved. The main areas of improvement for parks and gardens should include toilets, lighting, parking, information and signage and pathways. Consideration should also be given to naturalising small areas of park, in order to provide natural areas and address deficiencies in other typologies.
PG3	Consider to support the development of the Nene Valley Regional Park.
PG4	The function of the pocket parks in rural areas should embrace formal areas for play and seating to encapsulate the park function within its multi functional nature, where appropriate.
PG5	The pocket parks initiative has a vitally important role to play in the provision of parks and gardens particularly in the rural area. This scheme provides local amenities and ensures that all residents have access to parks. Where possible, the provision of one pocket park in each rural community should be considered.
PG6	Promote community involvement and ownership at parks and gardens sites, including the implementation of friends groups and promote the development of partnerships. This has proved particularly successful as part of the pocket parks initiative.
PG7	<p>Protect and enhance the existing provision of parks and gardens within both the urban and rural area. Parks of particular value include:</p> <p>Barnwell Country Park (Site ID 784)</p> <p>Rushden Hall Park (Site ID 203)</p> <p>Thrapston Memorial Park (Site ID 23)</p> <p>Fettleddrive Park, Irthlingborough (Site ID 327)</p> <p>Fermyn Woods Country Park (Site ID 1974)</p>
PG8	<p>Address the key areas of deficiency including:</p> <p>South West Irthlingborough – opportunities to formalise the small natural area off Thomas Flawn Road (Site ID 102) to provide a dual function</p> <p>Rushden - consider the appropriateness of formalising Heats</p>

	Green (Site ID 247) or Melloway Road Green (Site ID 248) in order to address the deficiency in the western side of Rushden Stanwick – Cleborne Amenity Green Space (Site ID 681) should be formalised to offer a more formal recreation opportunity for the village.
PG9	Continue to support the provision of new parkland in areas of major growth.
PG10	Outside areas of deficiency, focus on the existing provision of parks and gardens and pocket parks to ensure formalised facilities (play areas, benches, pathways) are available where appropriate.
PG11	Seek to achieve the 86% quality aspiration for all parks and gardens.
PG12	Consider Barnwell Park as a good practice site.
PG13	Prioritise quality and access improvements to those sites that currently score lowest, Ennerdale Road Park (quality and access), Chichele College Garden (access)

Natural and Semi Natural Open Space

Standards

- Quantity Standard 1.30 ha per 1000 population (urban areas) and 8.79ha per 1000 population (rural)
- Accessibility Standard 15 minute walk (720m)
- Quality Vision “A spacious, clean and litter free site with clear pathways and natural features including vegetation, ponds and flowers that encourage wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.”
- Quality Benchmark 78%

Key issues and actions

- xii. There is a good geographical dispersion of local natural and semi natural sites across East Northamptonshire. This is supplemented by a number of high quality large sites of regional significance. Ongoing development of these sites from both a biodiversity and recreational perspective is vital.
- xiii. The quality of local natural and semi natural sites is varied, with one site achieving the quality benchmark and four considered to be poor. Improvements to the access to natural sites should be prioritised and it is also important to raise the awareness of the presence of strategic sites within East Northamptonshire.
- xiv. Consultation indicated that natural and semi natural sites were perceived to be of high importance to residents and are the most frequently visited type of open space.

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- xv. Due to the nature of the rural area, the close proximity of nearby countryside and the differences between rural and urban areas in East Northamptonshire it is considered inappropriate and onerous to apply the same standards to the urban and rural areas. Given the overall consensus in both the urban and rural areas that the level of provision is about right, standards equivalent to current levels of provision (1.30 and 8.79 ha respectively have been set).
- xvi. The application of the defined accessibility standards (15 minute walk) alongside the quantitative standards highlights that there are few deficiencies where new provision is required. Almost all residents are within the appropriate catchment of a natural and semi natural site or an alternative.
- xvii. The provision and access to green corridors, linking these types of natural and semi-natural open spaces together, will create better access to woodlands, scrublands and countryside. This was highlighted as a priority for residents.
- xviii. Key recommendations arising from the study relating to natural and semi natural open space sites are highlighted below:

Recommendations

NSN 1	Promote community involvement and ownership of natural and semi natural open space sites
NSN 2	Devise plans (including the development of the green corridor network) to enhance the access to natural and semi natural sites within the urban area and accessible countryside on the urban fringe. This should link with the North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Project and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan and should incorporate key projects such as the development of Stanwick Lakes
NSN 3	Develop partnerships with key external agencies including the Environmental Agency, National Trust, Countryside Commission to improve the natural environment
NSN 4	Consider the development of educational / school programmes promoting natural and semi natural sites and raising awareness of their wildlife and habitat values
NSN 5	Continue to prioritise development of sites of regional significance such as Stanwick Lakes and Tywell Hills.

Amenity Green Space

Standards

- Quantity Standard 0.8ha per 1000 population
- Accessibility Standard 5 minute walk (240m)

- Quality Vision “A clean and well-maintained dog fouling free amenity greenspace site with well-kept grass, which is easily accessible with clearly marked footpaths. In addition to the provision of flowers, trees and shrubs, sites should contain appropriate ancillary accommodation (litter and dog bins) and strategic landscaping ensuring the site provides not just an amenity benefit, but wider benefits of enhancing the environment around it.”

- Quality Benchmark 76%

Summary

- xix. Amenity greenspace sites were found to be varied in value, either large useful areas of land or small sporadic sites within housing estates that are too small to have any recreational value. Despite this variation in perception, the visual amenity function of these spaces was recognised by residents.

- xx. Overall, amenity greenspaces within East Northamptonshire are good quality. Five sites exceed the quality benchmark, although in contrast there are two sites considered to be poor / very poor.

- xxi. The quantity standard set reflects the current level of provision in East Northamptonshire as a whole whilst highlighting locational deficiencies across the district.

- xxii. When applying the recommended accessibility standard there are few significant residential areas outside of the appropriate catchment for amenity green space. The majority of these are located in the South Urban area (southern and western areas), which also has the largest deficiency when applying the quantity standard (0.80ha per 1000 population). All of these areas are however served by open spaces of other typologies offering amenity value. Recommendations for future provision of amenity green space are summarised below and areas where the deficiency should be addressed as a priority are highlighted in AGS 4.

Recommendations

AGS 1	<p>Protect sites identified as having high value (in terms of quality and accessibility) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navisford Close Amenity Greenspace in Thrapston (Site ID 36) • Townsend Court Green Area in Upper Benefield (Site ID 572) • Hill House Garden in Stanwick (Site ID 695)
AGS 2	<p>Enhance the quality of sites currently considered to be poor, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keswick Drive AGS in East Rushden (Site ID 307) • Green Space in Lowick (Site ID 404) • Hemington Village Hall Green Space (Site ID 354)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trafford Road Recreation Ground (Site ID 306)• Kings Cliffe AGS (Site ID 722)
AGS 3	Improve the quality of amenity green space sites to achieve the quality benchmark of 76%
AGS 4	Address the areas of deficiency as a priority including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pytchley Road Area (Rushden West)• North Eastern Oundle
AGS 5	Ensure that amenity green space provision is considered in relation to new developments. The Council should ensure that the area is large enough to provide informal recreational value as well as aesthetic value within the new development.

Children and Young People

Standards

- Quantity Standard: 0.1 ha per 1000 population (urban areas) and 0.14ha per 1000 population (rural)
- Accessibility Standard: 10 minute walk (480m)
- Quality Vision: “A site providing a clean and well-maintained, dog free enriched play environment which is free from litter and vandalism. The site should contain a variety of formal equipment tailored to meet the needs of users of varying ages and should be in a safe and secure location near to housing or on a multi purpose site. Seating for supervising adults should be provided. The management and development of the site should involve the community, and in particular young people wherever possible.”
- Quality Benchmark: 80%

Summary

- xxiii. Lack of provision for children and young people was a key theme throughout consultation, not only in terms of a lack of facilities, but also regarding the impact that this has on the vandalism and subsequent quality of neighbouring facilities. There is perceived to be a particular deficiency in terms of provision for young people and teenagers.
- xxiv. Quantity standards set reflect this perception of insufficient provision, with standards in both the rural area (current provision 0.13ha per 1000) and urban area (current provision 0.7ha per 1000) higher than existing levels.

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- xxv. Although the geographical dispersion of facilities for children and young people is good, the locational deficiencies expressed through consultation were evident when applying the accessibility standard (10 minute walk) and quantitative standards (0.1 for the urban area and 0.14 in the rural area). Specifically, there are a few locations outside the South Urban analysis area are currently outside the catchment in terms of provision for children and young people.
- xxvi. Despite some negative comments regarding the quality of play facilities, there are six play areas which currently exceed the aspirational quality benchmark. In contrast, there are also three play areas considered to be poor and one falls into the very poor category. It is important to ensure that any decisions regarding the need for new play provision are undertaken in the context of local demand and ongoing maintenance requirements.
- xxvii. Key recommendations for future provision, including areas where deficiencies should be treated as priority are highlighted below:

Recommendations

CYP1	Produce an action plan for the protection, development and improvement of play areas within East Northamptonshire. This plan should incorporate provision owned by all providers, involve all providers and should identify indicative timeframes and priorities. This may be developed in the form of a play strategy. This work should link in with work underway as part of the Market Towns Health Check Initiative.
CYP 2	Capitalise on the funding received for adventure playgrounds in the rural area. The funding should be distributed to ensure maximum benefit, with a specific focus in the North West of the district. Support should also be given to Parish Councils / community groups wishing to develop facilities in the rural area, such as localised Multi Use Games areas or ball courts.
CYP 3	Consider the appropriateness of new provision. In areas where there are facilities for children, consider providing facilities for young people too in order to reduce vandalism and ensure that there is sufficient to occupy all young children. Much of the identified deficiency focused on provision for young people as opposed to children.
CYP 4	A full assessment of the level of usage of play areas should be undertaken in order to ascertain the sites which are not highly valued by the community. Following this, consideration should be given to strategic improvements to ensure all sites are used to their maximum potential and ensure that protection is afforded to those play areas identified as highly valued resources
CYP 5	Given the strong community feelings regarding provision for children and young people, consideration should be given to developing community ownership and management of play areas. The establishment of a youth forum may also be considered appropriate. This is reflective of ideas outlined in consultation.
CYP 6	Consideration should be given to the protection of play facilities within the LDF. Recommendations set out within the Planning

	Implementation section should also be incorporated, particularly with regards new provision.
CYP 7	Strive to achieve the quality benchmarks at all sites (80%) and adhere to good practice guidance for the provision of play areas including NPFA and ROSPA, and target the achievement of the quality benchmark for all sites.
CYP 8	Protect sites identified as high value (high quality and accessibility) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donne Close Play Area (Rushden West Site ID 1997) • Play Area off John Street in Thrapston (Site ID 966) • Peace Memorial Park Play Area, Thrapston (Site ID 822) • Barnwell Country Park Play Area (Site ID 1981)
CYP 9	Enhance the quality and accessibility of sites receiving low ratings including: <p>Sylmond Gardens Play Area in Rushden (Site ID 322)</p> <p>Old Bowls Green Skate Park, Irthlingborough (Site ID 2019) – this is of particular importance given the deficiency in this area</p> <p>The Hedges Play Area, North of Rushden (Site ID 243)</p> <p>Higham Ferrers Play Area (Site ID 901)</p>
CYP 10	Address the priority deficiencies including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South and West Rushden (Queen Street / Griffith Street, Manor Road, Park Avenue) – this shortfall could be reduced by providing a facility for young people and children in Rushden Hall Park • North Rushden (George Street, Newman Street and Upper Kings Avenue, Station Road, Kings Meadow Lane – development of The Wroe Amenity Greenspace (Site 169) • Raunds – Heritage Way and Butts Road – although Windmill Road Play Area is a large site with a potentially wider catchment area, site ID 81 or 73 could be considered as opportunities to provide small areas of formal provision • Raunds South West / Stanwick – Development of a small formal facility on Site ID 61 or 62 may help to address this shortfall • Irthlingborough – A small facility on Drayton Close AGS (Site ID 149) would address the shortfall in this area • North Oundle – St Peters Road, Wentworth Drive and Creed Road.

Outdoor Sports Facilities

- Quantity Standard: 1.69ha per 1000 population (excluding golf courses)
- Accessibility Standard: 15 minute drive (5 miles)
- Quality Vision: “A well-planned, clean, litter and dog fouling free sports facility site which is fit for the purpose intended. The site should include sufficient good quality changing provision and level and well-drained good quality surfaces, appropriate toilets and car parking. The site should have appropriate management ensuring community safety and awareness.”
- Quality Benchmark: 84%

- xxviii. Consultation highlights that outdoor sports facilities are highly valued. Despite this, some quality issues were identified and facilities were considered to be of varying quality. This was supported through both internal consultations and the existing playing pitch strategy.
- xxix. In comparison with other typologies, access to outdoor sports facilities is considered to be relatively poor. This is primarily of the reflection of the inclusion of school facilities, many of which are relatively inaccessible to the local community. The quality of outdoor sports facilities is perhaps also more varied than other typologies, although the quality of bowling greens was rated particularly positively. Although six sites exceeded the quality benchmark standard (set at 84% for outdoor sports facilities) four sites were also considered to be of poor quality.
- xxx. Due to the wide-ranging nature of the outdoor sports facilities typology, quantitative standards have been set for broad planning need only. The standard equates to the current provision (2.69 ha per 1000 population). The application of the recommended accessibility standards (15 minute drivetime) however indicates that all residents of East Northamptonshire are within an acceptable catchment of an outdoor sports facility, and therefore future priorities should be demand led. Priorities for outdoor sports facilities are highlighted below:

OSF1	<p>Support the protection of formal outdoor sports facilities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultation with Sport England • identifying and protecting playing fields and surrounding grounds that either currently or potentially could provide opportunities for enhancing and promoting biodiversity <p>In accordance with PPG17, any proposal to dispose of open space land should be put in the context of the overall analysis of open space across East Northamptonshire, and in the context of sports specific studies.</p>
OSF2	Protect and enhance the existing level of provision
OSF3	Encourage dual use of school facilities where possible

OSF4	Seek to achieve the 84% quality aspiration for all outdoor sports facilities.
OSF5	<p>Prioritise for improvement, those sites that have a high usage but have quality or access issues and prioritise all low quality sites. Low quality sites include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higham Ferrers Tennis Courts (Site ID 903) • Huxlow Science College Tennis Courts, Irthlingborough (Site ID 160) • Tennis Courts In Recreation Ground, Irthlingborough (Site ID 2018)
OSF6	Consider the demand for Coronation Park bowling green (ID 2149) in its current use and determine whether improvements or re-designation as another open space type are more appropriate
OSF7	Continue to address the findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy

Indoor Sports Facilities

- xxxi. A quality vision reflecting the views and aspirations of local residents in addition to supporting national benchmarks has been set for indoor sports facilities and is set out below:
- xxxii. A clean and welcoming indoor sports facility that is well-maintained and provides a wide range of indoor sports facilities and activities. Indoor sports facilities should provide adequate secure car-parking facilities, ease of booking and welcoming staff.
- xxxiii. Supply and demand modelling has been undertaken for sports halls, swimming pools and health and fitness facilities based on demand parameters and the age population breakdown for East Northamptonshire. Additionally, quantity and accessibility standards have been set. Where facilities are dual use or have restricted access, supply at these sites has been reduced to reflect this.

Sports Hall Provision:

Calculated demand	Current supply	Surplus/Deficiency
22 badminton courts (49.52m ² per 1000 population)	13.25 badminton courts	Shortfall of 8.75 badminton courts.

- xxxiv. As can be seen above, the current supply of sports halls does not meet the recommended quantitative standard, with a shortfall of approximately two four court halls. Club use facilities are excluded from calculations as they do not offer casual public access.
- xxxv. Consultations indicate that there are accessibility deficiencies in Thrapston and Oundle. This is supported by the application of the accessibility standard (set at a 15

minute drivetime to reflect local needs and expectations) which supports this perception, indicating that these areas are outside the catchment. Consideration should therefore be given to generating dual use agreements in these areas.

Swimming Pool Provision

Calculated demand	Current supply	Surplus/Deficiency
798m ²	836m ²	Surplus of 38m ²

- xxxvi. An accessibility standard of 20 minutes was set for swimming provision in East Northamptonshire, reflecting national standards in addition to local needs and expectations.
- xxxvii. Supply of swimming pools almost equals demand within East Northamptonshire hence the quantitative standard is met. When applying the recommended accessibility standard only residents living in the rural north of East Northamptonshire are outside the catchment area. The majority of these residents are however within the catchment area of facilities just outside the authority, specifically Stamford Leisure Centre.
- xxxviii. Although many residents of Oundle are also within an appropriate catchment area, permitting increased access for the public to Oundle School Pool would enhance the number of residents who can access pools and reduce potential programming issues at the Nene Centre (Thrapston).

Health and fitness provision

Calculated demand	Current supply	Surplus/deficiency
247 stations (14.58m ² per 1000 population)	189stations	Shortfall of 58 stations

- xxxix. An accessibility standard of 15 minutes drivetime, reflecting local needs and expectations was set. Application of this standard highlights that there are some residents within the rural north of the district outside of the catchment (who can access facilities in other authorities) in addition to some residents in Rushden and Raunds. This area should be considered priority for any new development.

Allotments

- Quantity Standard: 0.34ha per 1000 population
- Accessibility Standard: 15 minute walk (720m)

- Quality Vision: “A clean and well-kept site with good quality soils which encourages sustainable development, bio-diversity, healthy living and education objectives. The site should include appropriate ancillary facilities to meet local needs, clearly marked pathways and should be easily accessible. The site should be spacious providing appropriate lighting and security. Management of local sites should involve the community where possible.”

- Quality Benchmark: 70%

Key issues and actions

- xli. Consultation highlights that less importance is placed on allotment provision by residents, although they remain an important type of open space. The quantity standard reflects the existing level of provision across East Northamptonshire, although it highlights locational deficiencies.

- xlii. These locational deficiencies are reinforced by the application of the accessibility standard, which illustrates that many residents in Thrapston and Oundle are outside appropriate catchment areas.

- xliii. Allotments are primarily demand led and therefore provision of new allotments sites should only be considered following extensive and specific local consultation. Recommendations for the future provision of allotments are highlighted below:

Recommendations

A1	When dealing with any identified surplus of allotments, follow the “Good Practice Guide for Allotment Managers” which indicates that although it is not unreasonable to put surplus allotment land to other uses, ideally it should be possible to return the land to allotment usage if demand arose. Careful consideration should be given to the individual circumstances of each site prior to the disposal.
A2	Investigate the demand for allotments in Thrapston and Oundle
A3	Aim to achieve the quality benchmark standard at all allotment sites within East Northants (70%)
A4	Develop educational/school programmes promoting usage of allotments and raising awareness of the wider benefits of allotment provision. Careful promotion should be considered to also increase knowledge of provision.
A5	Investigate further: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • development of partnerships by establishing allotment associations at other sites to improve usage levels, independent working and the sense of ownership of the site • improving accessibility to sites through providing opportunities for small plot sizes and upgrading on-site signage and information.

Cemeteries and Churchyards

- Quantity Standard: None Set (as recommended by PPG17)
- Accessibility Standard: None set (as recommended by PPG17)
- Quality Vision: “A clean and well-kept site with good quality soils which encourages sustainable development, bio-diversity, healthy living and education objectives. The site should include appropriate ancillary facilities to meet local needs, clearly marked pathways and should be easily accessible. The site should be spacious providing appropriate lighting and security. Management of local sites should involve the community where possible.”
- Quality Benchmark: 76%

Key issues and recommendations

- xliii. Cemeteries and churchyards can be a significant open space provider in some areas particularly in rural areas. In other areas they can represent a relatively minor resource in terms of the land, but are able to provide areas of nature conservation importance and are often among the few areas of greenspace where the local community is able to have some contact with the natural world.
- xliv. In general the quality of sites is good in East Northamptonshire, although this does vary considerably. Whilst six sites meet the quality benchmark (set at 76%) there are five sites which are considered to be poor or very poor.
- xliv. PPG17 suggests that setting and applying quantitative and accessibility standards for cemeteries and churchyards is inappropriate. It is therefore not appropriate to state any areas of deficiency or need. New provision should be considered on an opportunity led basis. It is however important to consider the quality and value of current provision.

Recommendations

CC1	Produce a cemeteries and churchyards action plan, accounting for all provision, not just that owned and managed by the Council
CC2	Work in partnership with other providers to improve the quality of cemeteries and churchyards in line with the quality vision and benchmark
CC3	Promote the nature conservation value of cemeteries and churchyards and begin to develop more awareness of ecological management of cemeteries and churchyards.

Green Corridors

- xlvi. PPG17 highlights that there is no sensible way of stating a provision standard in terms of quantity or accessibility for green corridors. It is therefore inappropriate to make any statements regarding areas of deficiency or need. Quality is however important and a vision for green corridors in East Northamptonshire has been developed:
- xlvii. “A clean, well-maintained, safe and secure natural corridor reinforced by well kept and controlled natural vegetation with defined, level and well drained pathways that links major open spaces together and provides ancillary facilities such as bins and seating in appropriate places. Major green corridor routes should be appropriately signed both to and within the sites.”
- xlviii. A number of recommendations for the future development of green corridors and strategic linkages are also set out below:

GC1	Green corridors provide opportunities close to peoples homes for informal recreation, particularly walking and cycling, as part of every day routines, for example, travel to work or shops. The development of a linked green corridor network will help to provide opportunities for informal recreation and improve the health and well-being of the local community.
GC2	Future development needs to encompass linkage provision between large areas of open space, create opportunities to develop the green corridor network and utilise potential development sites such as dismantled railway lines and cross country nature trails that already exist across East Northamptonshire.
GC3	The provision and promotion of green corridors are central to the wider strategic context, meeting with the priorities of both East Northamptonshire Community Plan and Regional Spatial Strategy.
GC4	The County Council funding scheme represents an important opportunity to improve the quality of green corridors and the awareness of the Public Rights of Way Networks. This scheme should be supported.
GC5	The North Northamptonshire Green Infrastructure Study will set out the key priorities and areas for development for both North Northamptonshire, and specifically for East Northamptonshire.

Planning and Implementation

- xlix. This open space sport and recreation study is an invaluable tool in the formulation and implementation of planning policies. This relates to both the protection and enhancing of existing open space and the framework for developing planning obligations.
- i. The study provides the tools in which the value of an open space can be assessed on a site by site basis, as and when a development proposal is submitted for an existing piece of open space. Similarly, this approach can be the basis for determining what type of open space provision is appropriate to be provided within a housing development. The study also allows a broad area analysis that aids decisions in terms of priority areas and areas of over provision.

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- li. The use of a standard formula for open space provision in new housing developments will greatly aid the negotiation process and provide a transparent approach in line with Circular 05/2005.
- lii. There are many other factors to consider in administering planning obligations such as determining occupancy rates, costings and on versus off site provision. The Council's approach should be set out clearly within a Supplementary Planning Document. Maintenance sums are also an important element of open space provision
- liii. It is not considered reasonable to expect maintenance in perpetuity, however the authorities reviewed are requiring between 10 and 20 years maintenance.
- liv. Recommendations for future policy development set out within the study include:

PLAN1	Use the methodology provided for the application of the study for site-by-site proposals and informing policies in the LDF
PLAN2	Use the overarching framework of quantity and accessibility in conjunction with the quality standard/assessment to inform policy decisions, particularly the application of planning contributions
PLAN3	Redraft existing policies to take account of local standards, the evidence base of all existing sites and the local needs assessment
PLAN4	Consider the recommendations set for each open space typology when re-drafting planning policies and incorporate into policies where appropriate
PLAN5	<p>Publish Supplementary Planning Document on open space provision in new developments, using the recommendations of the open space assessment and planning overview. In particular consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the use of a flow diagram for determining the process for planning contributions - the use of a formula devise a matrix providing thresholds for on versus off site provision - set up the use of pooled funds with clear administrative boundaries that ensure it is related to the development - set out maintenance (commuted sums) required and the period of time that they are required for