



THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

OPEN SPACE STUDY

STANDARDS PAPER

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QUALITY, INTEGRITY, PROFESSIONALISM

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Open Space Standards Paper prepared by Knight, Kavanagh & Page (KKP) for Three Rivers District Council (TRDC). It follows on from the preceding Open Space Assessment Report. Together, the two documents provide an evidence base to help inform the future decision-making process for provision of open spaces across Three Rivers.

This study is intended to assist in the Council's process of creating a new Local Plan for the area. Given the potential scale of growth in the area, and the implications such growth may have on existing provision, it is important for the Council to have clarity over existing levels of open space and what types of provision should be delivered.

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

Scope

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

Table 1.1: Open space typologies

Typology	Primary purpose
Parks and gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.
Amenity greenspace	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, MUGAs, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
Allotments	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
Cemeteries and churchyards	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

This study should be read in conjunction with the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) which is also being updated by KKP (provided in a separate report). The associated PPS covers the provision and need of formal outdoor sports. The PPS is undertaken in accordance with the methodology provided in Sport England's Guidance 'Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance' for assessing demand and supply for outdoor sports facilities (October 2013).

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Overview

Audit Assessment

All known open space sites (including provision for children and young people) are identified and mapped. Each site is classified based on its primary open space purpose, so that each type of space is only counted once. A total of 200 accessible sites are identified and included within the study.

Within Three Rivers, there is a total of approximately 1,073 hectares. The largest contributor to provision is natural and semi natural (558 hectares); accounting for 81%.

Table 1.2: Overview of open space provision

Open space typology	Number of sites	Total amount (hectares)*
Park and gardens	5	20
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	75†	870
Amenity greenspace	43	148
Provision for children & young people	51	7
Allotments	17	12
Cemeteries	9	16
TOTAL	200	1,073

A total of 199 out of the 200 sites have been assessed and receive a quality and value score. Hubbards Road allotments does not receive a quality or value score due to being inaccessible at time of site assessment

Table 1.3: Quality scores for assessed open space typologies

Typology	Threshold	Scores (%)			No. of sites	
		Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low	High
Park and gardens	60%	55%	63%	72%	1	4
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	40%	15%	43%	86%	35	40
Amenity greenspace	50%	40%	68%	90%	5	38
Provision for children & young people	65%	37%	73%	91%	9	42
Allotments	50%	38%	58%	70%	3	13
Cemeteries	50%	16%	53%	68%	2	7
TOTAL		15%	60%	91%	55	144

There is generally a reasonably good level of quality across most open space sites. This is reflected in nearly three quarters (72%) of sites scoring above their set threshold for quality.

* Rounded to the nearest whole number

† If inaccessible sites are included; a total of 118 sites equivalent to 1,320 hectares exists

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There is proportionally more amenity greenspace (90%) and provision for children and young people (85%) sites scoring above the threshold.

In contrast, proportionally more natural and greenspace sites (47%) score below the threshold than other typologies

The typology proportionally scoring lowest on quality is natural and greenspace sites with 47% of assessed sites scoring below the threshold for quality. This often reflects the wide-ranging characteristics of provision. For instance, natural and semi-natural sites can be intentionally without ancillary facilities in order to reduce misuse/inappropriate behaviour whilst encouraging greater conservation.

Table 1.4: Value scores for assessed open space typologies

Typology	Threshold	Scores			No. of sites	
		Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	<20%	>20%
Park and gardens	20%	22%	47%	59%	0	5
Natural & semi-natural greenspace		19%	32%	64%	1	74
Amenity greenspace		23%	36%	55%	0	43
Provision for children & young people		22%	45%	64%	0	51
Allotments		17%	27%	33%	1	15
Cemeteries		16%	39%	50%	1	8
TOTAL		16%	-	64%	3	196

All but three sites are assessed as being above the threshold for value, reflecting the role and importance of open space provision to local communities and environments.

A high value site is considered to be one that is well used by the local community, well maintained (with a balance for conservation), provides a safe environment and has features of interest; for example, good quality play equipment and landscaping. Sites that provide for a cross section of users and have a multi-functional use are considered a higher value than those offering limited functions and viewed as unattractive.

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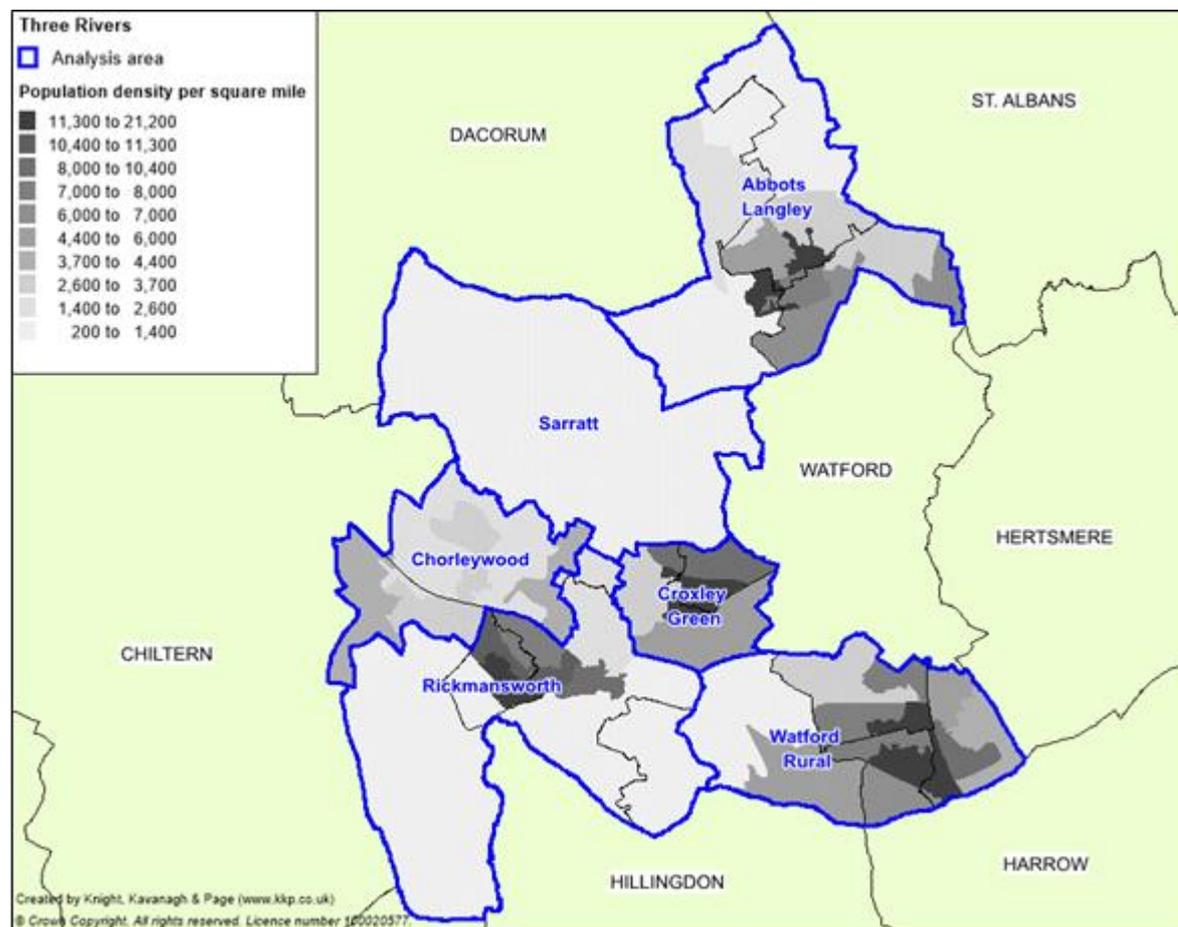
Analysis areas

For mapping purposes and audit analysis, Three Rivers has been divided into six analysis areas. These allow more localised examination of open space surpluses and deficiencies. Use of analysis areas also allows local circumstances and issues to be taken into account. The analysis areas and their populations are shown in the table below.

Table 1.5: Population by analysis area

Analysis area	Population (2017)*
Abbots Langley	21,298
Chorleywood	10,108
Croxley Green	13,568
Rickmansworth	17,883
Sarratt	1,888
Watford Rural	27,896
THREE RIVERS	92,641

Figure 1: Analysis areas



* ONS Mid-Year Estimates 2017

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PART 2: ASSESSMENT REPORT SUMMARY

A summary from the Assessment Report on a typology by typology basis is set out below.

2.1 Parks and gardens

- ◀ There are five sites classified as parks and gardens totaling over 20 hectares. This is an equivalent to 0.21 ha per 1,000 population.
- ◀ FIT suggests a standard of 0.80 ha per 1,000 population. Three Rivers is below this.
- ◀ The largest contributors to provision is Leavesden Country Park (19.84 ha) located in the Abbots Langley Analysis Area. In contrast, the Chorleywood, Sarratt and Watford Rural analysis areas do not have any formal park provision.
- ◀ There are catchment gaps in parks provision in some areas of high population density. This is most prominent in the Watford Rural analysis area. Despite gaps being present, all are met by other types of open space provision including amenity greenspace and natural and semi natural greenspace.
- ◀ With the exception of one site; Dickinson Square, all parks in Three Rivers score above the 60% quality threshold. The highest scoring site is Leavesden Country Park, with an overall score of 72%. The site is a Green Flag Award holder.
- ◀ All assessed sites score highly for value, with the important social interaction, health benefits, ecological value and sense of place sites offer being recognised.

2.2 Natural and semi-natural greenspace

- ◀ There are 118 natural and semi-natural greenspace sites covering over 1,320 hectares. This includes all sites including those considered as inaccessible. There are 75 sites considered accessible; an equivalent to 9.39 ha per 1,000 population.
- ◀ FIT suggests a standard of 1.80 ha per 1,000 population. Three Rivers (and all individual analysis areas) are well above the FIT standard.
- ◀ There is a good distribution of natural and semi-natural sites across the area.
- ◀ A total of 53% of sites rate above the threshold set for quality with 35 sites rating below the quality threshold. This is mainly due to a lack of ancillary features. However, this is often intentional in order to reduce inappropriate uses whilst encouraging greater conservation.
- ◀ All but two sites rate above the threshold for value. This demonstrates the added benefit natural and semi-natural greenspaces can provide especially in terms of contributing to flora and fauna. Larger sites may also provide a good level of recreational offer.

2.3 Amenity greenspace

- ◀ There are 43 amenity greenspace sites equating to over 147 hectares of provision. This is an equivalent to 1.60 ha per 1,000 population.
- ◀ FIT suggests a standard of 0.60 ha per 1,000 population. Three Rivers is above this.
- ◀ Mapping demonstrates that all areas of greater population density are generally well served by amenity greenspace provision based on a 480m catchment. However, there are some gaps observed to the east of the Watford Rural Analysis Area and north of Croxley Green Area.
- ◀ Over three quarters (88%) of assessed amenity sites rate above the threshold for quality. The majority of sites to score lower for quality are observed as being basic, small pockets of green space and lack ancillary features.
- ◀ In addition to its multifunctional role, amenity greenspace makes a valuable contribution to visual aesthetics for communities – hence all sites rate above the value threshold.

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2.4 Provision for children and young people

- ◀ There are 51 play sites identified; a total of over seven hectares.
- ◀ Fields In Trust (FIT) suggests 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard. Three Rivers has a current provision level of 0.08 hectares per 1,000 population.
- ◀ The mapping highlights that all areas of greater population density across the District have access to at least one form of play area. Small gaps are noted in the densely populated areas of Abbots Langley Analysis Area as well some densely populated parts on the north east of Croxley Green Analysis Area.
- ◀ A greater proportion of play sites (83%) rate above the threshold for quality. Lower quality scoring sites tends to reflect a lack in and/or range of equipment and/or its general condition.
- ◀ All play provision rates above the threshold for value; reflecting the social, healthy and developmental benefits provision can provide.

2.5 Allotments

- ◀ There are 17 allotment sites: equating to more than 12 hectares.
- ◀ Current provision of 0.13 hectares per 1,000 population is below the NSALG recommended amount (0.25 hectares per 1000 people).
- ◀ Most allotment sites across the District are owned by the Local Authority but managed by either allotment associations or Parish Councils.
- ◀ The majority of allotment sites (80%) score above the threshold for quality.
- ◀ All allotments rate above the threshold for value except for one site. This reflects the associated social inclusion and health benefits, amenity value and the sense of place offered by such forms of provision.

2.6 Cemeteries

- ◀ There are nine cemeteries and churchyards, equating to over 16 hectares. The largest contributor to provision is Carpenders Park Cemetery (7.64 hectares).
- ◀ No standards are set for cemeteries. The need for additional cemetery provision should be driven by the requirement for burial demand and capacity.
- ◀ Over three quarters of cemeteries in Three Rivers (78%) score above the quality threshold.
- ◀ Those sites scoring below the threshold tend to be smaller sites, which as a result have fewer ancillary features including bins.
- ◀ All but one identified cemeteries and churchyards are assessed as being of high value.

PART 3: SETTING PROVISION STANDARDS

3.1 Developing and setting standards

The following section derives and details the proposed local standards recommended for Three Rivers District Council. It details how current provision levels identified as part of the assessment compare to existing standards such as national benchmarks and whether any adjustments to the proposed standards are required.

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

An overview of the proposed standards in terms of quality, accessibility and quantity is set out below. Further information on the evidence used to inform these standards is provided in the associated Assessment Report. The proposed standards are then used to determine deficiencies and surpluses for open space in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility (as recommended by best practice).

No quantity or accessibility standards are suggested for cemeteries. Provision of this type should be informed by information such as burial demand.

3.2 Quality

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by guidance), the results of the site assessments are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The primary aim of applying a threshold is to identify sites where investment and/or improvements are required. It can also be used to set an aspirational quality standard to be achieved at some point in the future and to inform decisions around the need to further protect sites from future development (particularly when applied with its respective value score in a matrix format).

The baseline threshold for assessing quality can often be set around 66%; based on the pass rate for Green Flag criteria (site visit criteria also being based on Green Flag). This is the only national benchmark available for quality of parks and open spaces. However, the site visit criteria used for Green Flag is not appropriate for every open space typology as it is designed to represent a sufficiently high standard of site. Quality thresholds are, thus, adjusted to better reflect average scores for each typology. In our experience this works effectively as a locally reflective method to distinguish between high and low quality sites. Consequently, the baseline threshold for certain typologies is amended to better reflect this.

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

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For value there is no national guidance on the setting of thresholds. The 20% threshold applied is derived from our experience and knowledge in assessing the value of sites. Whilst 20% may initially seem low, it is a relative score - designed to reflect those sites that meet more than one aspect of the criteria used for assessing value.

Table 3.2.1: Quality benchmark standards

Typology	Quality threshold	Value threshold
Parks and gardens	60%	20%
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	40%	20%
Amenity greenspace	50%	20%
Provision for children and young people	65%	20%
Allotments	50%	20%
Cemeteries	50%	20%

3.3 Accessibility

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

Guidance on walking distance and times is published by Fields In Trust (FIT) in its document *Beyond the Six Acre Standard* (2015). These guidelines have been converted into an equivalent time period.

FIT also offer appropriate accessibility distances for children's play provision. These vary depending on the type of play provision (children's play or older age ranges).

These are presented in Table 3.3.1 and are applied to help inform deficiencies in each form of open space provision.

Table 3.3.1: Accessibility catchments

Open space type	FIT guideline	Time equivalent
Parks & Gardens	710m	9-minute walk time
Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	720m	9-minute walk time
Amenity Greenspace	480m	6-minute walk time
Play areas & provision for young people	LAP	100m
	LEAP	400m
	NEAP	1,000m
	Youth	700m
Allotments	n/a	n/a

For the purposes of this study, using the accessibility catchments suggested by FIT is recommended as the most up to date form of benchmarking.

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3.4 Quantity

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

To set a quantity standard it is useful to compare existing levels of provision identified as part of the assessment against national benchmarks. The current provision levels are initially detailed in the Assessment Report.

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

Table 3.4.1 sets out the quantity figures for current provision levels identified and the national benchmarks.

Table 3.4.1: Comparison of current provision and national benchmarks

Typology	Hectares per 1,000 population	
	Current provision levels	National benchmarks
Parks & gardens	0.21	0.80
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	9.39	1.80
Amenity greenspace	1.60	0.60
Provision for children & young people	0.08	0.25
Allotment	0.13	0.25

Recommendation for quantity standards

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

The national benchmark quantity standards are not deemed as appropriate for use as they do not take into consideration the local circumstances, distribution and historical trends of the area.

An approach using locally derived quantity standards ensures more reflective standards are set as they are based on and take consideration to current local provision levels.

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PART 4: APPLICATION OF PROVISION STANDARDS

The provision standards used to determine deficiencies and surpluses for open space are set in terms of quality, accessibility and quantity.

4.1: Quality and value

Each type of open space receives a separate quality and value score. This also allows for application of a high and low quality/value matrix to further help determine prioritisation of investment and to identify sites that may be surplus as a particular open space type.

There is a need for flexibility to the enhancing of sites within proximity to sites of low quality. In some instances, a better use of resources and investment may be to focus on more suitable sites for enhancement as opposed to trying to enhance where it is not appropriate or cost effective. Appendix One provides a breakdown of the matrix.

Quality and value matrix

Assessing the quality and value of open spaces is used to identify those sites which should be given the highest level of protection, those which require enhancement and those which may no longer be needed for their present purpose. The high/low classification gives the following possible combinations of quality and value:

High quality/low value

The preferred policy approach to a space in this category should be to enhance its value in terms of its present primary function. If this is not possible, consideration to a change of primary function should be given (i.e. a change to another open space typology).

High quality/high value

All open spaces should have an aspiration to come into this category and the planning system should then seek to protect them. Sites of this category should be viewed as being key forms of open space provision.

Low quality/low value

The policy approach to these spaces or facilities in areas of identified shortfall should be to enhance their quality provided it is possible also to enhance their value.

For open spaces in areas of sufficiency a change of primary typology should be first considered. If no shortfall of other open space typologies is noted than the site may be redundant/ 'surplus to requirements'.

If there is a choice of sites of equal quality to declare surplus, and no need to use one or part of one to remedy a deficiency in some other form of open space or recreation provision, it would be best to consider the one of lowest value to be more disposable.

Low quality/high value

The policy approach to these spaces should be to enhance their quality to the applied standards. Therefore, the planning system should initially seek to protect them if they are not already so.

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4.2: Accessibility

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

Results of the community survey have been used to set initial accessibility catchments. These are presented in Table 4.2.1 and are applied to help inform deficiencies in each form of open space provision.

Table 4.2.1: Accessibility catchments

Open space type		FIT guideline	Time equivalent
Parks & Gardens		710m	9-minute walk time
Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace		720m	9-minute walk time
Amenity Greenspace		480m	6-minute walk time
Play areas & provision for young people	LAP	100m	1-minute walk time
	LEAP	400m	5-minute walk time
	NEAP & Youth	1,000m	12.5-minute walk time
Allotments		n/a	n/a

Identifying deficiencies

If an area does not have access to the required level of provision (consistent with the catchments) it is deemed deficient. KKP has identified instances where new sites may be needed, or potential opportunities could be explored in order to provide comprehensive access to this type of provision (i.e. a gap in one form of provision may exist but the area in question may be served by another form of open space).

The following sections summarise the deficiencies identified from the application of the accessibility standards together with the recommended actions. Please refer to the associated mapping data to view site locations.

In determining the subsequent actions for any identified catchment gaps, the following key principles are adhered:

- ◀ Increase capacity/usage in order to meet increases in demand, or
- ◀ Enhance quality in order to meet increases in demand, or
- ◀ Commuted sum for ongoing maintenance/repairs to mitigate impact of new demand

These principles are intended to mitigate for the impact of increases in demand on existing provision. An increase in population will reduce the lifespan of certain sites and/or features (e.g. play equipment, maintenance regimes etc). This will lead to the increased requirement to refurbish and/or replace such forms of provision. Consequently, the recommended approach is to increase the capacity of and/or enhance the existing provision available.

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Abbots Langley

Table 4.2.2: Abbots Langley Accessibility Summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◀ Some gaps in 710m catchment to west	◀ Gap served by other forms of provision such as South Way Playing Fields and Manor House Grounds as well as smaller sites such as School Mead, Hazelwood Lane and Upper Highway.
Amenity Greenspace	◀ No gaps in 480m catchment	◀ Levels of accessibility should be retained
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◀ No gaps in 720m catchment	◀ Levels of accessibility should be retained
Provision for children and young people	◀ Some gaps in densely populated areas of Abbots Langley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Gaps served by existing forms of provision such as Manor House Play Area, South Way Play Area and Tanners Wood Lane Play Area ◀ Ensure quality and explore opportunities to enhance/expand equipment range at existing sites to further their appeal.

Chorleywood

Table 4.2.3: Chorleywood Accessibility Summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◀ Gaps in 710m catchment	◀ Gap served by other forms of provision such as Swillett Playing Field, Chorleywood Bottom, Chorleywood Common and Chorleywood House Estate.
Amenity Greenspace	◀ Gaps in 480m catchment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Gaps served by provision such as Carpenter's/Whitelands'/ Hillas Woods, Chorleywood Common, Chorleywood House Estate and Little Lady's Wood (inaccessible) ◀ Opportunities to enhance access to Little Lady's Wood should be explored
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◀ No gaps in 720m catchment	◀ Levels of accessibility should be retained
Provision for children and young people	◀ Significant gaps in walk time catchments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◀ Existing provision i.e. Swillett Play Area serves area to south. Ensuring its quality is recommended. ◀ Gaps in provision could be served through exploring opportunities to create new play provision at other sites in Chorleywood

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Croxley Green

Table 4.2.4: Croxley Green Accessibility Summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◀ Some gaps in 710m catchment in areas of high population density to north.	◀ Gap served by other forms of provision such Baldwins Lane Playing Field and Barton Way Playing Field.
Amenity Greenspace	◀ Some gaps in 480m catchment to south and north.	◀ Gap served by other forms of provision such Dickinson Square, Croxley Hall Wood, Croxley Green and Grand Union Canal.
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◀ Minor gaps in 720m catchment to east	◀ Gap served by Grand Union Canal (majority of which falls outside local authority).
Provision for children and young people	◀ No significant gaps in catchments	◀ Levels of accessibility should be retained

Rickmansworth

Table 4.2.5: Rickmansworth Accessibility Summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◀ Some gaps in 710m catchment in areas of high population density to centre/west.	◀ Gap is served by other forms of provision such as King George V Playing Fields, Mead Place/Berry Lane and Coombe Hill.
Amenity Greenspace	◀ No significant gaps in 480m catchment	◀ Levels of accessibility should be retained
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◀ Minor gap in 720m catchment in area of high population to centre	◀ Gap is served by other forms of provision such as King George V Playing Fields.
Provision for children and young people	◀ No significant gaps in catchment mapping	◀ Levels of accessibility should be retained

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Sarratt

Table 4.2.6: Sarratt Accessibility Summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◀ Gaps in 710m catchment as no provision of this type.	◀ Gap is served by other forms of provision such as King George V Field.
Amenity Greenspace	◀ Gaps in 480m catchment	◀ Areas are of lower population density unlikely to warrant forms of provision.
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◀ No gaps in 720m catchment	◀ Levels of accessibility should be retained
Provision for children and young people	◀ Gaps in catchment mapping	◀ Areas are of lower population density unlikely to warrant forms of provision.

Watford Rural

Table 4.2.7: Watford Rural Accessibility Summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◀ Gaps in 710m catchment as no provision of this type.	◀ Gap is served by other forms of provision such as South Oxhey Playing Fields, Romilly Drive/Oulton Way and Chilwell Gardens.
Amenity Greenspace	◀ No significant gaps in 480m catchment	◀ Levels of accessibility should be retained
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◀ No significant gaps in 720m catchment	◀ Levels of accessibility should be retained
Provision for children and young people	◀ No significant gaps in catchment mapping	◀ Levels of accessibility should be retained

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4.3: Quantity

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

Setting quantity standards

The setting and application of quantity standards is necessary to ensure new developments contribute to the provision of open space across the area.

Shortfalls in quality and accessibility standards are identified across the District for different types of open space (as set out in Parts 4.1 and 4.2). Consequently, the Council should seek to ensure these shortfalls are not made worse through increases in demand as part of future development growth across the District.

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

The recommended quantity standards for Three Rivers are:

Table 4.3.1: Recommended quantity standards

Typology	Recommended Quantity Standard (hectares per 1,000 population)
Parks & gardens	0.21
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	9.39
Amenity greenspace	1.60
Provision for children & young people	0.08
Allotment	0.13

Implication and recommendations

The current provision levels can be used to help identify where areas may have a shortfall against the recommended quantity standards for Three Rivers. Table 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 shows the position for each sub-area as to whether it is sufficient or identified as having a shortfall against the recommended quantity standards for each type of open space. A comparison benchmark against the FIT guideline standards are also presented.

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Table 4.3.2: Current provision against recommended quantity standards

Analysis area	Parks and gardens		Natural & Semi-natural (Hectares per 1000 population)		Amenity greenspace		Allotments	
	0.21		9.39		1.60		0.13	
	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -
Abbots Langley	0.93	+0.72	1.62	-7.77	2.31	+0.71	0.08	-0.05
Chorleywood	-	-0.21	17.17	+8.43	0.14	-1.46	0.32	+0.19
Croxley Green	0.01	-0.20	7.18	-2.21	0.47	-1.13	0.28	+0.15
Rickmansworth	0.01	-0.20	10.08	-0.69	1.90	+0.30	0.10	-0.03
Sarratt	-	-0.21	137.81	+128.42	1.21	-0.39	0.53	+0.40
Watford Rural	-	-0.21	4.22	-5.17	1.92	+0.32	0.03	-0.10

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Table 4.3.3: Current provision against FIT guideline standards

Analysis area	Parks and gardens		Natural & Semi-natural (Hectares per 1000 population)		Amenity greenspace		Allotments	
	0.80		1.80		0.60		0.25	
	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -
Abbots Langley	0.93	+0.13	2.19	+0.39	2.31	+1.71	0.08	-0.17
Chorleywood	-	-0.80	17.17	+15.37	0.14	-0.46	0.32	+0.07
Croxley Green	0.01	-0.79	7.18	+5.38	0.47	-0.13	0.28	+0.03
Rickmansworth	0.01	-0.79	10.08	+8.28	1.90	+1.30	0.10	-0.15
Sarratt	-	-0.80	137.81	136.01	1.21	+0.61	0.53	+0.28
Watford Rural	-	-0.80	4.22	2.42	1.92	+1.32	0.03	-0.22

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All analysis areas are observed as having shortfalls in some form of open space against recommended standards.

Against the recommended standards Croxley Green, Rickmansworth and Watford Rural are identified as having quantity shortfalls against three types of open space. Only the Abbots Langley Analysis Area is identified as not having a shortfall in parks and gardens.

Provision for children and young people

Table 4.3.4 shows the position for each sub-area as to whether it is sufficient or identified as having a shortfall against the recommended standard in terms of provision for children and young people.

Table 4.3.4: Current play provision against recommended quantity standard

Analysis area	Hectares per 1000 population	
	Current provision	Sufficiency/deficiency against 0.08 recommended standard
Abbots Langley	0.11	+0.03
Chorleywood	0.01	-0.07
Croxley Green	0.07	-0.01
Rickmansworth	0.08	Level
Sarratt	0.05	-0.03
Watford Rural	0.08	Level

The Abbots Langley Analysis Area is the only sub-area to be above the recommended standard for play provision. Rickmansworth and Watford Rural are both level with the recommended quantity standard. Croxley Green is only just below the recommended standard for play provision. Both Chorleywood and Sarratt are below.

Identifying priorities

The focus for areas identified as being sufficient against the recommended quantity standards will be for priorities to ensure quality and accessibility standards are being met. Table 4.3.2 and 4.3.3 also highlights those areas of the District with shortfalls in provision.

The recommended quantity standards should also be used to determine the open space requirements as part of new housing developments. In the first instance, all types of open space provision should look to be provided as part of new housing developments.

If this is not considered viable, the column signalling whether an analysis area is sufficient or has a shortfall against the recommended quantity standards may be used to help inform the priorities for each type of open space within each analysis area (i.e. the priorities will be where a shortfall has been identified).

For example, in the Chorleywood Analysis Area, shortfalls are highlighted in parks and amenity greenspace provision. On this basis, these open space types should be a priority for new forms of provision. If not feasible, then ensuring contributions to enhancing the quality and accessibility of key existing open space provision will be necessary.

PART 5: POLICY ADVICE AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Strategic recommendations

The following section provides a summary on the key findings through the application of the quantity, quality and accessibility standards. It incorporates and recommends what the Council should be seeking to achieve in order to address the issues highlighted.

Recommendation 1

- ◀ *Explore low quality sites and their potential for enhancement*

The policy approach to these sites should be to enhance their quality to the applied standards (i.e. high quality) where possible. This is especially the case if the site is deemed to be of high value to the local community. Therefore, they should initially be protected, if they are not already so, in order for their quality to be improved.

Identified low quality sites (p27-35) should be given consideration for enhancement if possible. Priority sites should be those highlighted as helping or with the potential to serve gaps in provision (see Recommendation 2).

Recommendation 2

- ◀ *Sites helping or with the potential to serve areas identified as having gaps in catchment mapping should be recognised through opportunities for enhancement*

The implications summary for the accessibility catchment mapping (p12-14) highlights those sites that help or have the potential to serve gaps in provision. Furthermore, there are some sites across Three Rivers with a multi-functional role which may serve (to some extent) the wider areas of the District.

The Council should seek to ensure the role and quality of these multi-functional sites through greater levels and diverse range of features linked to those types of open space. This is in order to provide a stronger secondary role as well as opportunities associated with other open space types. This may also help to minimise the need for new forms of provision in order to address gaps in catchments or as a result of potential new housing growth developments. This may particularly be the case in areas where the space to create new forms of provision is not a viable option.

Recommendation 3

- ◀ *Recognise areas with sufficient provision in open space and how they may be able to meet other areas of need*

If no improvements can be made to sites identified as lower quality (p27-35), then a change of primary typology should be considered (i.e. a change of role).

If no shortfall in other open space types is noted (p16-18), or it is not feasible to change the primary typology of the site, only then the site may be redundant/ 'surplus to requirements'.

5.2 Implications

The following section sets out the policy implications in terms of the planning process in Three Rivers. This is intended to help steer the Council in seeking contributions to the improvement and/or provision of any new forms of open space.

How is provision to be made?

The requirements for on-site or off-site provision will vary according to the type of open space to be provided. Collecting contributions from developers can be undertaken through the following two processes.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Planning Obligations are the two main mechanisms available to the Council to ensure future development addresses any adverse impacts it creates. If required, Planning Conditions can be used to ensure that key requirements are met.

Planning obligations

Planning Conditions and Obligations (often known as Section 106 Agreements) require individual developments to provide or pay for the provision of development specific infrastructure requirements. They are flexible and deliver a wide range of site and community infrastructure benefits.

A development should make appropriate provision of services, facilities and infrastructure to meet its own needs. Where sufficient capacity does not exist, the development should contribute what is necessary either on-site or by making a financial contribution towards provision elsewhere.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The CIL is a method of requiring developers to fund infrastructure facilities including open spaces. Charges are based on the size and type of new development. It will generate funding to deliver a range of local authority wide and local infrastructure projects that support residential and economic growth.

CILs are to be levied on the gross internal floor space of the net additional liable development. The rate at which to charge such developments is set out within a council's Charging Schedule. This will be expressed in £ per m².

Seeking developer contributions

This document can inform policies and emerging planning documents by assisting in the Council's approach to securing open spaces through new housing development. The evidence should form the basis for negotiation with developers to secure contributions for the provision of appropriate facilities and their long-term maintenance.

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The wider benefits of open space sites and features regardless of size should be recognised as a key design principle for any new development. These features and elements can help to contribute to the perception of open space provision in an area, at the same time as also ensuring an aesthetically pleasing landscape providing wider social, environmental and health benefits. Sport England's Active Design looks at the opportunities to encourage sport and physical activity through the built environment in order to support healthier and more active lifestyles. It is therefore important for planning to consider the principles of Active Design.

In smaller, infill, development areas where open space provision is identified as being sufficient in terms of quantity and subsequently, provision of new open space is not deemed necessary it may be more suitable to seek contributions for quality improvements and/or new offsite provision in order to address any future demand.

Off site contributions

If new provision cannot be provided on site it may be more appropriate to seek to enhance the quality of existing provision and/or improve access and linkages to existing sites. In some instances, a development may be located within close proximity to an existing site. In such cases, it may be more beneficial for an offsite contribution to avoid creation of small incremental spaces so close to existing sites.

Standard costs for the enhancement of existing open space and provision of new open spaces should be clearly identified and revised on a regular basis.

Maintenance contributions

There will be a requirement on developers to demonstrate that where onsite provision is to be provided, it will be managed and maintained accordingly. In some instances, the site may be adopted by the Council, which will require the developer to submit a sum of money in order to pay the costs of the site's future maintenance. Often the procedure for councils adopting new sites includes:

- ◀ The developer being responsible for maintenance of the site for an initial agreed establishment period.
- ◀ Sums to cover the maintenance costs of a site (once transferred to the Council) should be intended to cover an agreed set period.

Calculations to determine the amount of maintenance contributions required should be based on current maintenance costs. The typical maintenance costs for the site should also take into consideration its open space typology and size.

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5.3 Approach to developer contributions

KKP advocates that the requirement for open space should be based upon the number of persons generated from the net increase in dwellings in the proposed scheme. We also promote the use of quantity provision standards (in hectares per 1,000 population) in calculating the open space requirements of new housing development.

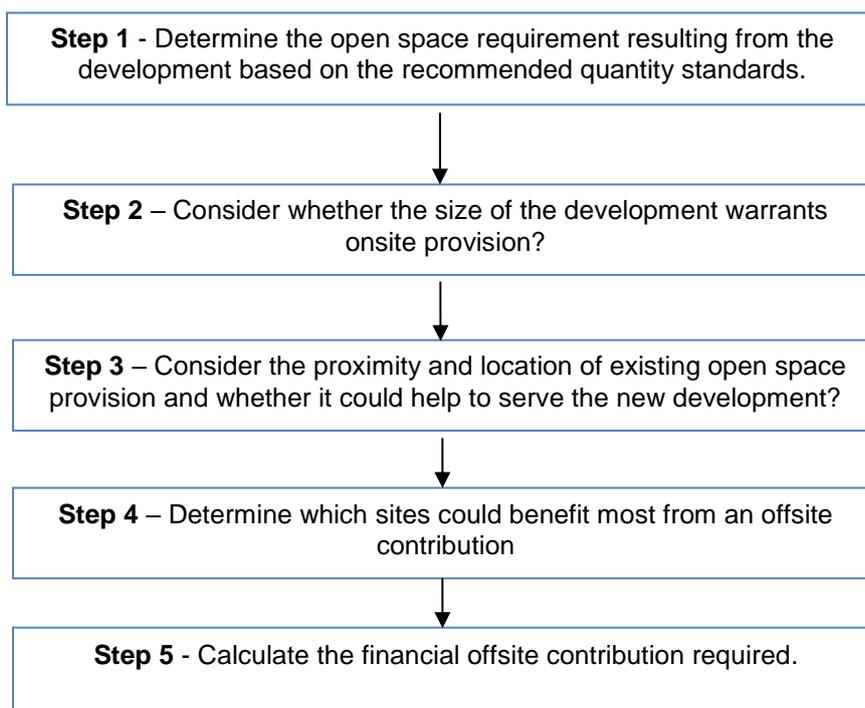
Flexible approach

A focus of this study has been to recognise the role quality and accessibility has in terms of open space provision. Future need should not just centre on quantity requirements of new residential developments. For instance, a new residential development may not warrant onsite provision but contribution to an existing site within close proximity could be required and justified.

The flowchart (Figure 5.3.1) sets out the process that could be considered when determining contributions in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. For larger scale developments, the provision standards should be used to help determine the requirements for open space provision as part of a development.

The figure below sets out the processes that should be considered when determining developer contributions towards open space provision.

Figure 5.3.1: Determining developer contributions



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Determining onsite or offsite contributions

The requirement for on or off-site provision should be undertaken in conjunction with the accessibility and quality of existing open space provision. For instance, if an existing form of open space is located within access to the development there may not be a requirement to provide onsite provision.

Small sized onsite contributions should be avoided on developments smaller in size where necessary. It is recognised that open spaces of a particular small size hold less recreational use and value. The presence of additional smaller sites will also add to the existing pressures of maintenance regimes and safety inspections. It is therefore suggested that a minimum threshold is used to determine if provision should be provided on or off site.

Both the GLA and FIT offer some guidance to the potential minimum threshold size of sites (Table 5.3.1). New open space provision should look to be provided as offsite contributions if the calculated open space requirement for the proposed development falls below the size threshold. If the requirement is above the threshold, it should look to be provided onsite as part of the development.

Table 5.3.1: Minimum size threshold for contributions:

Classification		Minimum size of site
Allotments		0.4 ha (0.025 per plot)
Amenity greenspace		0.4 ha
Natural and semi natural		0.4 ha
Parks and gardens		2 ha
Play areas*	Equipped	0.04 ha
	Informal/casual	0.10 ha

Source: GLA Open space strategies: Best practice guidance (2009)

Play area recommendation

Residential developments should normally be required to meet the need for play provision generated by the development on site, as an integral part of the design. Where this is not feasible, payment of a development contribution will be used to install or upgrade play facilities in the vicinity of a proposed development.

A play area must be sited within an open space sufficient to accommodate the provision and its required buffer zone to ensure residential amenity is maintained. Buffer distances ensure that facilities do not enable users to overlook neighbouring properties, reducing possibility of conflict. Any play requirements should be counted as additional to any other onsite open space requirement (e.g. provision of amenity greenspace should not also be counted as informal play provision).

Fields in Trust (FIT) offer guidance to the appropriate buffer zone areas dependent upon the type of play provision (i.e. the larger the scale of play provision, the greater the buffer zone recommended).

* Minimum recommended size for play areas by Fields In Trust

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FIT also recommend minimum site areas for different levels of formal play; LAP (Local Area for Play) is approximately 0.01ha, or 100 sq. metres (0.01ha), LEAP (Local Equipped Area for Play) is approximately 0.04 hectares, or 400 sq. metres per 1,000 population, and for larger forms of play i.e. NEAPs (Neighbourhood Equipped Area of Play), FIT recommends an area of 0.10 hectares per 1,000 population.

On this basis, a development of 417 dwellings* or more would be required to warrant on-site provision of play equipment. This means that for a significant number of developments, play provision may take the form of developer contributions to up-grade and expand the local equipped play provision in the vicinity of the development. However, play provision may still need to be made on sites in locations where the nearest existing play site is deemed too far away.

The extent to which the amount of the required provision should be made on site by way of informal provision would be determined on a case by case basis subject to site size, shape, topography, the risk of conflict with existing neighbouring residential properties and feasibility. Any informal provision can include useable informal grassed areas but should not include landscaping areas as these are regarded as formal provision. Opportunities to provide inclusive forms of play equipment at sites should be encouraged.

* Based on national household occupancy rate of 2.4 people per dwelling

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PART 6: FUTURE GROWTH SCENARIO

Future need for open space will arise from the population increases from potential housing growth developments. The Council currently has three scenarios for estimating the potential future housing growth across Three Rivers:

- ◀ Scenario One: Using 2016 ONS projections
- ◀ Scenario Two: Using 2014 ONS projections
- ◀ Scenario Three: Using 15% increase on 2014

Each scenario uses a different per annum housing figure requirement (provided in terms of the number of dwellings). The indicative population figure per annum assumes that population growth will average 2.4* persons per dwelling. The table also shows the accumulative housing figures and populations up to 2036.

Table 6.1: Future growth scenarios summary

Scenario	Per annum housing	Per annum population	Accumulative housing up to 2036	Accumulative population up to 2036
2016 ONS projections	496	1,190	8,432	20,237
2014 ONS projections	620	1,488	10,540	25,296
15% increase on 2014	713	1,711	12,121	29,090

The recommended quantity provision standards for Three Rivers are applied in order to determine the requirement for open space provision if the current levels of provision are to be maintained.

On this basis, the following open space requirements are calculated as a result of future housing growth. These are presented for each scenario.

Scenario 1: 2016 ONS projections

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth scenario (from 2019 – 2036) is 20,237. This is based on 8,432 dwellings being delivered with an average of 2.4 persons per dwelling.

Table 6.2: Scenario 1 - open space requirement

Open space type	Quantity standards (per 1,000 population)	Future requirement (hectares)
Parks & gardens	0.21	4.25
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	9.39	190.03
Amenity greenspace	1.60	32.38
Allotment	0.08	1.62
Provision for children & young people	0.13	2.63

* Source: ONS Families and Households Release 2017

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Scenario 2: 2014 ONS projections

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth scenario (from 2019 – 2036) is 25,296. This is based on 10,540 dwellings being delivered with an average of 2.4 persons per dwelling.

Table 6.3: Scenario 2 - open space requirement

Open space type	Quantity standards (per 1,000 population)	Future requirement (hectares)
Parks & gardens	0.21	5.31
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	9.39	237.53
Amenity greenspace	1.60	40.47
Allotment	0.08	2.02
Provision for children & young people	0.13	3.29

Scenario 3: 2014 ONS projections (+15% increase)

The estimated additional population derived from housing growth scenario (from 2019 – 2036) is 29,090. This is based on 12,121 dwellings being delivered with an average of 2.4 persons per dwelling.

Table 6.4: Scenario 3 - open space requirement

Open space type	Quantity standards (per 1,000 population)	Future requirement (hectares)
Parks & gardens	0.21	6.11
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	9.39	273.16
Amenity greenspace	1.60	46.54
Allotment	0.08	2.33
Provision for children & young people	0.13	3.78

The figures provide an initial indication to the levels of open space provision required as a result of new housing growth in order for the current levels of provision to be maintained. It should be treated as a starting point for further exploration and negotiation to ensure new populations are served by adequate open space provision.

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APPENDIX ONE: QUALITY AND VALUE MATRIX

The following tables are part of the application of the quality and value matrix as set out earlier in the report (Section 4.1). GIS mapping supports this report in locating sites.

Sites that are colour coded green represent scoring above the thresholds for quality and value. Conversely, red scoring sites are those which rate below the quality and value thresholds.

A1.1: Abbots Langley Analysis Area Summary

A1.1a: Allotments

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Primrose Hill allotments Manor House allotments King Fields allotments Shepherd Close allotments	
	Low		

A1.1b: Amenity greenspace

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Toms Lane, Bedmond Leavesden Aerodrome, Leavesden The Horse's Field Leavesden Green open space Langlebury Playing Fields School Mead, Abbots Langley Primrose Hill, Abbots Langley Hill Farm Avenue, Leavesden Hill Farm open space Hazelwood Lane Kitters Green, Abbots Langley South Way Playing Fields Upper Highway Love Lane Amenity Manor House Grounds	
	Low		

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A1.1c: Natural and semi-natural greenspace

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Hazel Wood Grand Union Canal/River Gade Kings Langley Lake Great Notley Tanners Wood	Furtherfield, South Way Long Spring Wood Long Wood Brickfield Spring
	Low		

A1.1d: Parks and gardens

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Leavesden Country Park South Leavesden Country Park North Millennium Gardens, Abbots Langley	
	Low		

A1.1e: Provision for children and young people

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Toms Lane play area Leavesden Country Park North play area Leavesden Aerodrome play area Horsefield play area Langleybury Playing Fields play area Lemonfield Drive play area Love Lane play area Primrose Hill play area South Way play area Ridge Hurst Avenue play area Dowding Way play area Ovaltine Drive play area south Ovaltine Drive play area north Manor House play area 1	Tanners Wood Lane play area
	Low		

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A1.1e: Cemeteries

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Abbots Langley Churchyard	St Paul's Churchyard, Langleybury
	Low		East Lane Cemetery (North)

A1.2: Chorleywood Analysis Area Summary

A1.2a: Allotments

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Swillet allotments	Dog Kennel Lane allotments
	Low		

A1.2b: Amenity greenspace

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Chorleywood House Estate 1	Chorleywood Bottom (wood and meadow)
	Low		

A1.2c: Natural and semi-natural greenspace

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Carpenter's/Whiteland's/Hillas Woods Chorleywood Common Chorleywood House Estate 2 Pheasant's Wood Groveswood Close	River Chess Bullscroft Spring Waring's Field
	Low		

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A1.2d: Provision for children and young people

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	The Swillet play area	
	Low		

A1.2e: Cemeteries

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Chorleywood Lawn Cemetery	
	Low		

A1.3: Croxley Green Analysis Area Summary

A1.3a: Allotments

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Barton Way allotments Croxleyhall Woods allotments Frankland Road allotments	Lavrock Lane allotments
	Low		

A1.3b: Amenity greenspace

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Baldwins Lane Playing Field Cassiobridge Recreation Ground	
	Low		

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A1.3c: Natural and semi-natural greenspace

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Grand Union Canal Stones Orchard Croxley Green Long Valley Wood/Buddleia Walk Croxley Common Moor	Bateman Road Croxley Hall Wood
	Low		

A1.3d: Parks and gardens

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High		Dickinson Square
	Low		

A1.3e: Provision for children and young people

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Baldwins Lane play area Croxley Green skate park Barton Way play area Barton Way MUGA Cassiobridge Recreation Ground play area	
	Low		

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A1.4 Rickmansworth Analysis Area Summary

A1.4a: Allotments

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Springwell Avenue allotments Ebury Road allotments	
	Low		

A1.4b: Amenity greenspace

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Fortune Common Coombe Hill, Mill End Mead Place / Berry Lane Bury Meadows, Riverside Drive Rickmansworth Park River Chess Valley Walk Ornamental Garden Scotsbridge Playing Field Maple Cross Playing Field King George V Playing Fields Hornhill Recreation Ground	Neild Way, Maple Cross Jordans Road, Mill End Queen's Drive
	Low		

A1.4c: Natural and semi-natural greenspace

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Solomon's Wood Shepherds Close Dell Greenbroom Spring/Juniper Dell Stockers Lake Nature Reserve Rickmansworth Aquadrome Batchworth Heath Bishops Wood Croxley Hall Lakes Lime Tree Avenue Franklin's Spring, Maple Cross	Beechen Wood The Grove, Rickmansworth Swamp by River Chess Bottom Wood Lavrock Lane Parkland White Hill
	Low		

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A1.4d: Parks and Gardens

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Basing Gardens, Northway	
	Low		

A1.4e: Provision for children and young people

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Skidmore Way play area Mead Place play boulder Scotsbridge Playing Field play area Scotsbridge Playing Field MUGA King George V Fields play area KGV MUGA, Mill End Hornhill Recreation Ground play area Longcroft Road play area Ebury Rec play area Queen's Drive play area	Curtis Close/Fearney Mead play area Denham Way play area
	Low		

A1.5 Sarratt Analysis Area Summary

A1.5a: Allotments

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Church Lane allotments	
	Low		

A1.5b: Amenity Greenspace

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	King George V Field, Sarratt	
	Low		

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A1.5c: Natural and semi-natural greenspace

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Dawes Common Sarratt Bottom Sarratt Green Harrock's Wood Grand Union Canal (Old Mill House) Commonwood Common Penmans Green Whippendell Wood	Woodmans Wood Debardine and Plough Woods Frogmore Meadow Limeshill and Hanginglane Woods Oldcroft Wood Sandfield Wood Valley Farm Meadows - West Great Wood Welling Grove High Spring Upper Plantation and Long Spring Scouts Camp (CWHE) Templepan Wood River Gade Birch Spring Dell Wood Waterdell Spring Sawpit Spring
	Low		Juniper Hill Wood Quickmoor Common

A1.5d: Provision for children and young people

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	King George V Field (Sarratt) play area	
	Low		

A1.6 Watford Rural Analysis Area Summary

A1.6a: Allotments

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Newport Mead allotments	South Oxhey Allotments (Prestwick Road)
	Low	Ashford Green allotments	

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A1.6b: Amenity Greenspace

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	The Mead/Foxleys Hallows Crescent, South Oxhey South Oxhey Playing Field Woods Romilly Drive / Oulton Way Eastbury Playing Fields Northwick Rd/Moortown Rd Otley Way	Mary Way
	Low		

A1.6c: Natural and semi-natural greenspace

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Prestwick Road Meadows LNR Pond Wood Hartsbourne Wood Oxhey Woods LNR (north) Oxhey Woods LNR (centre) Oxhey Woods LNR (south) Withey Beds	St Georges Drive/Harrow Way Wenta Site South Oxhey
	Low		

A1.6d: Provision for children and young people

		Quality	
		High	Low
Value	High	Carpenders Park play area Hampermill/Ashburnham Drive play area Hayling Road A, play area Hayling Road Street Gym Oulton Way, Carpenders Park Eastbury Playing Fields play area Moortown Road play area Mary Way play area Mary Way MUGA Oaklands Avenue play area Ashbridge play area Wentworth Drive play area	Hillcroft Crescent basketball area South Oxhey Playing Fields football area South Oxhey Playing Fields skate park Lincoln Drive play area
	Low		

