

**AUDIT OF OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION  
FACILITIES AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL NEEDS**



**A  
REPORT  
BY  
PMP**

**MARCH 2006**

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## **Introduction and background**

### **The study**

- 1.1 Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (the Council) appointed PMP to undertake an audit of open space, sport and recreational facilities and assessment of local needs across the Borough. The study includes an audit of all open space provision throughout the Borough, provides a clear vision, priorities for future open space, recreation and sport provision and a direction for the allocation of future resources.
- 1.2 The report has covered the following areas (taken from the project brief section 3.3):
- an assessment of the effectiveness of existing policies on open space and recreation contained in the adopted Local Plan [see Section 14 of this report]
  - a recommendation for local standards concerning the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities within the Borough in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility (taking into consideration areas severed by main roads etc) of facilities for inclusion within the Local Development Framework as required by PPG17. Thorough workings and justifications for the recommendations of local standards to meet future open space, sport and recreational needs of residents and visitors to the District to 2017 [see Sections 5 to 12 plus Appendices I, J and K]
  - identification of any shortfall of either open space or specific facilities within the Borough (taking into consideration facilities in neighbouring districts) and suggestions as to where and how these may be delivered to address this deficit, with costings [see Sections 5 to 12 plus Section 15]
  - identification of outstanding maintenance - itemised and costed [see Sections 5 to 12 plus Appendix Q]
  - a recommendation of appropriate s106 obligations/charges and thresholds, both for residential (preferably set at one dwelling and to take account of dwelling size) and commercial development [see Section 14]
  - identification of external sources of funding the Council could realistically utilise in conjunction with developer contributions to maximise any identified works [see Sections 5 to 12 plus Section 13]
  - establish guidelines on how and where uses can be decanted and/or reconfigured to maximise utilisation of some sites, or be converted/equipped to meet an identified deficiency [see Sections 5 to 12]
  - provide advice for any rationalisation, having regard to any surplus capacity, areas of demand, site quality and facilities (bearing in mind any particular features and/or habitat on the site), potential for alternative use (including adjacent uses and access arrangements), relative costs of running each site, any long term investment that a particular site might require, and any legal restraints [see Sections 5 to 12 plus Appendix P]
  - a set of suggested policies for the 'Preferred Options' stage of the emerging Local Development Framework, including identification of key sites and facilities for protection [see Section 14].

## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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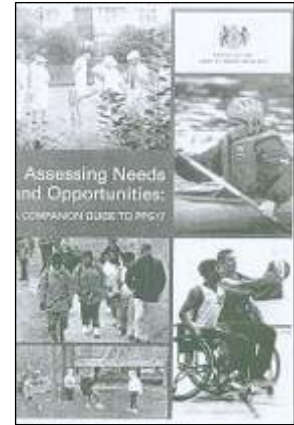
- 1.3 The study is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the latest Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation, July 2002) and its Companion Guide (September 2002).

### National policy context

#### ***“Assessing Needs & Opportunities” National Planning Policy Background***

- 1.4 PPG17 states *“the government expects all local authorities to carry out assessments of needs and audits of open space and sports and recreational facilities”*.

- 1.5 The major change in the policy guidance from the previous version is the requirement for local authority decisions regarding open space to be **informed by local needs assessments and an audit of existing provision**. Such audits should incorporate qualitative, quantitative and accessibility considerations as well as the overall non-monetary value of the land including the level of use. National standards are no longer considered to meet local needs, although they may be used as benchmarks.



- 1.6 Other changes in this planning policy document are:
- the definition of open space as all open space of public value
  - a greater emphasis is placed on qualitative considerations – this is particularly important as it will allow local authorities to identify potential for increased use through better design, management and/or maintenance of open space
  - it advocates the setting of local standards appropriate to the local area rather than assessment by national standards. The Government believes that national standards are inappropriate, as they do not take into account the demographics of an area, the specific needs of residents and the extent of built development
  - it provides further guidance on the constituent elements of open space typologies
  - it acknowledges the multiple functions that open spaces can perform.
- 1.7 The policy guidance sets out priorities for local authorities in terms of:
- assessing needs and opportunities – undertaking audits of open space, sport and recreational facilities
  - setting local standards
  - maintaining an adequate supply of open space
  - planning for new open space.
- 1.8 The companion guide sets out the process for undertaking local assessments of needs and audits of provision. It also:
- indicates how councils can establish the needs of local communities and apply provision standards
  - promotes a consistent approach across different types of open space.

1.9 PMP and the Council have followed the recommendations of PPG17 throughout the study. By following these recommendations, this study has the potential to make a real difference to the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces in Epsom and Ewell Borough.

### **Need for local assessments**

- 1.10 This assessment of open space and local needs will enable the Council to:
- plan positively, creatively and effectively in identifying priority areas for improvement and to identify the types of open space required
  - ensure an adequate provision of high quality, accessible open space to meet the needs of the local community
  - ensure any funding is invested where there is the greatest need and identify where such funding is to come from given the need to make the maintenance and improvement of the site sustainable
  - lead Section106 negotiations with developers from a position of knowledge with evidence to support.
- 1.11 Where no assessment exists, developers can undertake their own independent assessment to demonstrate that open space is surplus to requirements. It is therefore desirable for the Council to have robust data to protect the most valuable open space within the Borough and to identify where others can be released.

### **Why public open space?**

- 1.12 PPG 17 states that well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives, which include:
- supporting an urban renaissance
  - supporting a rural renewal
  - promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion
  - health and well being
  - promoting more sustainable development.
- 1.13 Open space and recreation provision in the Borough, therefore, has an important role to play in supporting the implementation of these objectives.

### ***Function of open space***

- 1.14 Open spaces can provide a number of functions within the urban fabric of cities, towns and villages. These include, for example, the provision for play and informal recreation, a landscaping buffer within and between the built environment and a habitat for the promotion of biodiversity. Each type of open space has various benefits. For example, allotments for the growing of one's own produce, play areas for children's play and playing pitches for formal sports events. Open space can additionally perform a secondary function. For example, outdoor sports facilities have an amenity value in addition to providing for sport and recreation.

## SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.15 There is a need to provide a balance between different types of open space in order to meet local needs. For example, not all areas will show a demand for open space in the form of playing pitches or allotments. Some areas will have specific local demand for green corridors such as nature walks or bridleways.
- 1.16 Changing social and economic circumstances, changed work and leisure practices, more sophisticated consumer tastes and higher public expectations have placed new demands on open spaces. They have to serve more diverse communities and face competition from various developers including sport and leisure. Open spaces can promote community cohesion, encourage community development and stimulate partnerships between the public and private sector.
- 1.17 Parks and open spaces are more accessible to a wider range of people than some sport and leisure facilities and are better able to realise the aims of social inclusion and equality of opportunity. The provision of open spaces and recreation is central to a sustainable and thriving community.
- 1.18 It is widely recognised that with secure resources to invest, the provision of high quality public realm can help promote an area as an attractive place to live, and can result in a number of wider benefits. These are set out in Appendix A.

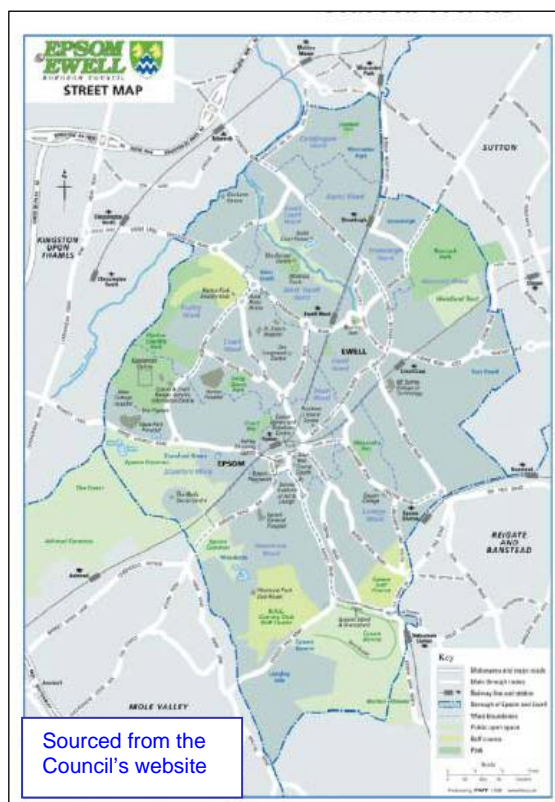
### Local Features and Demographics

1.19 Epsom and Ewell Borough is located in Surrey, on the south-west outskirts of London.

1.20 Despite being a compact urban area, The Green Belt encompasses some 42% of the Borough of which 40% is publicly accessible.

1.21 The mid 2003 population estimates indicate a population of 67,800 residing in Epsom and Ewell Borough.

1.22 Population density of Epsom and Ewell Borough from the mid 2003 estimates averaged 1,960 people per square kilometre, compared with an average of 421 for the region and 380 people per square kilometre for England overall. This further highlights the importance of open space acting both as local recreation provision and as a break in the urban area.



- 1.23 The number of people in the age category 5-15 years is lower than the average for England and Wales and the number of people 45 years and above is higher than the average for England and Wales. This suggests a slightly aging population that may have different requirements for the provision of open space.
- 1.24 Further information on the demographics of Epsom and Ewell Borough can be found in Appendix B.

**Summary**

1.25 This study:

- provides an evaluation and summary of the local needs assessment, which has assisted in identifying areas of high and low priority throughout the Borough
- presents a set of quantity, quality and accessibility standards for each type of open space
- provides an analysis of existing provision and appropriate policies and actions for each type of open space. This will enable the Council to plan effectively the provision of open space to meet the current and future needs and enhance existing open spaces where required
- enables the Council to ensure the most effective and efficient use of open spaces within the Borough and plan and respond appropriately to development pressures
- provides the necessary information to be used in developing a strategy for the future management and development of open space, which includes specific proposals for future funding.

### Undertaking the study

#### Introduction

- 2.1 The Companion Guide to PPG17 emphasises the importance of undertaking a local needs assessment. The four guiding principles in undertaking a local assessment are:
- (i) local needs will vary within local authority areas according to socio-demographic and cultural characteristics
  - (ii) the provision of good quality and effective open space relies on effective planning but also on creative design, landscape management and maintenance
  - (iii) delivering high quality and sustainable open spaces may depend much more on improving and enhancing existing open space than new provision
  - (iv) the value of open space depends primarily on meeting local needs and the wider benefits it generates for people, wildlife and the environment.
- 2.2 PPG17 recognises that individual approaches appropriate to each local authority will need to be adapted as each area has different characteristics. The conclusions and recommendations of this study are therefore representative of the needs for Epsom & Ewell Borough.

#### Types of open space

- 2.3 The overall definition of open space within the government planning guidance is:  
*“all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity”.*
- 2.4 This study covers eight typologies of open space plus indoor sport and recreation.
- 2.5 The study includes open spaces, sport and recreation facilities provided and managed by other organisations. This provides a more accurate picture of current provision within the Borough. Full details of these typologies, their definitions and primary purpose are outlined in Appendix C.

### **PPG17 – 5 step process**

- 2.6 The PPG17 Companion Guide sets out a five step process for undertaking a local assessment of open space, sport and recreation facilities.
- 2.7 The 5 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.
- 2.8 Although presented as a linear process below, in reality, Steps 1 and 2 were undertaken in parallel.

### **Our process**

- 2.9 The following steps indicate how the study has been undertaken in accordance with PPG17.

#### ***Step 1 – Identifying local needs***

- 2.10 In order to identify the local need, a series of consultations were carried out. These included:
- 1044 household questionnaires were sent to the Citizens' Panel, the Council's consultation forum. The questionnaire explored user and non-user attitudes to the range of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities available near to consultees' homes and their views on quantity, quality and accessibility. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix D.
  - 'drop-in' neighbourhood sessions across the Borough to elicit the views of a wide range of the local population
  - press releases, a dedicated email address and text messaging service were set up to allow the general public to provide comments on open space, sport and recreation facilities
  - sports club survey to ascertain the views of local clubs
  - one-to-one consultations with Council officers
  - a review of existing youth consultation including relevant sections of the Sport and Active Leisure Survey, June 2004.

### ***Step 2 – Auditing local provision***

- 2.11 The Council had an existing audit of open space, which was provided to assist with the project.
- 2.12 Over 200 sites were visited and assessed for quantity, quality, accessibility and value using a standard matrix and definitions. This can be found in Appendix E.
- 2.13 As part of the site assessment, a cross-checking exercise was undertaken to ensure the audit was as comprehensive as possible. This included ensuring consistency of categorisation of open space sites into the PPG17 typologies used for this study.
- 2.14 Each open space site was then digitised as a polygon using GIS software and its associated ratings and characteristics were recorded on an Access database. Indoor sport and recreation facilities were recorded as point data rather than as polygons.
- 2.15 This report is supplemented by the Access database, which will enable further updates of open spaces information and varying forms of analysis to be undertaken. This allows a dynamic reporting and assessment mechanism and enables individual sites or specific geographical locations to be examined in detail where necessary.

### ***Steps 3 and 4 – Setting and applying provision standards***

- 2.16 Within the analysis of the data collected and site ratings in terms of quality, quantity, accessibility and value of the sites we are able to:
- determine a set of provision standards for each type of open space, sport and recreation facility
  - apply such standards for each type of open space, sport and recreation facility
  - identify gaps in provision across the different types of open space, sport and recreation facility and therefore the areas of priority.
- 2.17 The analysis has therefore been undertaken by type of open space, sport and recreation facility across the Borough.
- 2.18 Setting robust local standards based on assessments of need and audits of existing facilities will form the basis for addressing quantitative and qualitative needs through the planning process.
- 2.19 Further detail regarding the process for setting and application of each type of provision standard is outlined in Appendix F.

### ***Step 5 – Drafting policies - recommendations and strategic priorities***

- 2.20 The study identified sites for protection and enhancement, areas of new provision and opportunities for relocating provision on a type-by-type basis. Looking across all typologies, this study will also identify if there are areas of the Borough where there is an over-provision of facilities. Importantly, the study includes specific proposals for future funding to ensure sustainability of high quality open space.
- 2.21 The study provides a planning overview, which reviews the relevant planning policies and provides recommendations and guidelines on the drafting of policies for the LDF.

### Strategic context

- 3.1 This section sets the local needs assessment in the wider context.
- 3.2 For the purposes of this study, Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 and the Companion Guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities are the key overarching documents (see Section 1).
- 3.3 However, there are a large number of other national documents and agencies that provide the strategic context to open spaces, sport and recreation facilities across the country and as such influence the provision of facilities in Epsom and Ewell Borough and the findings of this report.
- 3.4 Appendix G sets out the national strategic context, including *Living Spaces: Cleaner, Safer Greener* which was produced by the Office of the Deputy Minister in 2002 and led to the creation of CABI Space, a national government agency which has the overall aim “to bring excellence to the design, management and maintenance of parks and public space in towns and cities”.
- 3.5 The rest of this section sets out the local strategic context for Epsom and Ewell Borough based on the following documents:
- County Structure Plan
  - Community Strategy
  - Corporate Plan
  - Best Value Performance Plan
  - Local Plan
  - Leisure Strategy.

#### County Structure Plan Policy

- 3.6 The Surrey County Structure Plan states that open land in urban areas is to be protected. Development in areas of open land which contribute to the separate identity of communities and the structure of urban areas should not normally be permitted other than for the essential needs of suitable outdoor sport and recreation. Development in other areas of open space should not normally be permitted, other than for the essential needs of suitable outdoor sport and recreation, where the land:
1. contributes to the character, environment and amenity of the surrounding area, or
  2. provides essential social, community or recreational use, or
  3. is of high ecological value.

- 3.7 The Structure Plan states that exceptionally, limited development of a small part of this land may be permitted where it ensures the retention and enhancement of public access on the remainder and does not materially undermine the contribution made as open space by the land.
- 3.8 The plan goes on to state that local authorities should encourage development for recreation use, particularly where it overcomes deficiencies in existing provision and [the local authority should] resist the loss of land, water or buildings which are or have been used for recreation, or are proposed in a local plan for such use, except where suitable alternative provision is made.

**The Community Strategy for Epsom and Ewell, July 2003**

- 3.9 The aim of the Community Strategy is to focus on what the Local Strategic Partnership believes to be the key issues in the Borough. The Community Strategy states how the members of the LSP will work together to tackle economic, social and environmental issues. A governing factor is that the strategy is founded upon the needs and wishes of local people, whilst protecting the interests of future generations.
- 3.10 The vision of the Community Strategy is:
- “To improve the quality of life for those who live and work here by balancing environmental, social and economic factors.”*
- 3.11 The Community Strategy forms the framework of each of the partners’ own strategies and plans.
- 3.12 The following issues are relevant to this Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study:
- the Surrey Structure Plan requires an additional 3,000 dwellings in the Borough from April 2001 up to March 2016
  - the Housing Strategy aims to provide 350 additional affordable houses by 2006
  - the community has said that:
    - the Borough’s open spaces are greatly valued not only by local residents but also by nearby Londoners.
    - it is important to make these open spaces relevant to community needs.
  - vision by 2016:
    - the quality and biodiversity of public open space will be improved and will answer the needs of those who have access to it
    - the Green Belt will remain protected.

**The Epsom and Ewell District-wide Local Plan**

- 3.13 The Epsom and Ewell District-wide Local Plan was adopted in May 2000 and covers the whole of the administrative area of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. It sets out the Borough Council's policies and proposals for the development and other use of land within the Borough for the period up to April 2006.

***Open Space and Recreation***

- 3.14 The Borough contains many areas of open space, much of which is available for public use. Epsom Common, Nonsuch Park and Epsom and Walton Downs are large areas of open space which have long been popular locations for walking, rambling, horse riding, picnicking and other informal activities. In more recent years, other areas such as the Hogsmill open space and Horton Country Park have become popular as the Council has improved public access. There are numerous recreation grounds and public parks particularly in the northern half of the Borough which are also popular. They all provide relief to the urban character of residential areas and provide opportunities for informal or formal recreational use.
- 3.15 Most of the areas of open space within the Borough lie within the Metropolitan Green Belt and are subject to Green Belt policies. There are, however, many open spaces within the Borough which do not perform a Green Belt function, but which nevertheless make an essential contribution to the amenities of the Borough and merit protection.
- 3.16 The provision of recreational facilities can be viewed as a means to improve the quality of individual and community life and, in this context, the Borough Council plays an important role as provider of a whole range of facilities such as open spaces, playing fields, children's playgrounds, a country park, a swimming pool and halls. The Borough also contains many private leisure facilities, including gyms, tennis courts and golf courses. The role of the private sector is expected to grow rapidly and an important function of the local plan is to provide guidance for the private commercial sector on the use of land and buildings for recreational purposes.
- 3.17 The Council attaches great importance to the retention of recreational and amenity open space in urban areas. Demand is concentrated there, and it is important that people of all ages should have access to open space close to where they live.
- 3.18 The Council has identified the following objectives for open space and recreation:
- to ensure that all open space in the Borough which makes a significant contribution to amenity is retained as open space
  - to encourage the provision of facilities to meet deficiencies in the Borough's provision of recreation facilities
  - to provide for changes in requirements of all local residents for recreation facilities.

### **The Council's Ambition and Priorities: Corporate Plan**

- 3.19 In 2003, the Council set out its ambition for the four years from 2003 to 2007 in its Corporate Plan. The plan demonstrates how the Council will support the Borough's Community Strategy and respond to the Government's priorities. It sets out the Council's key priorities and, together with its family of supporting plans and strategies, shows how it will resource them and manage the organisation to secure their achievement and deliver continuous improvement.
- 3.20 The Council's ambition and key priorities are based on the needs and aspirations of local residents, as well as taking into consideration both the interest of its local partners, through the Community Strategy, and national government priorities.
- 3.21 The Council's ambition is:
- "To maintain and develop those distinctive characteristics that make living and working in Epsom and Ewell something our residents do as a matter of conscious choice, by working with others to provide quality and innovative services that are based on the identified priorities of our residents."*
- 3.22 The Council set six priorities for 2003-04 to 2007-08, of which one, *to improve the visual appearance of the local environment*, is particularly relevant for this study.

### **Best Value Performance Plan: achievement of Key Service Priorities in 2003/04**

- 3.23 In 2003/04, the Council agreed a set of priorities for the specific services that it delivers to local residents. Achieved priorities which are relevant for this open spaces study are:
- to conduct an audit of the major parks and open spaces; to survey users, and achieve Green Flag award for Alexandra Park
  - to take steps to improve safety in parks and to assess and improve the public perception of safety
  - to open the skate boarding facility in Long Grove Park
  - to negotiate with contractors over access arrangements to toilets on their sites, and erect signs to show availability
  - to agree non-financial monitoring targets with Greenwich Leisure Limited and establish arrangements for Leisure Development work at the Rainbow Centre.
- 3.24 The Council set its service priorities and two continued commitments in September 2003, for the next four years. The priorities relevant for this study are set out below:
- to improve public perception of the safety of parks and open spaces
  - to improve the public perception of the environmental and maintenance standards in parks and open spaces
  - to ensure that the Rainbow Centre is accessible to all sections of the community, including young people in particular
  - to provide a range of activities for the Borough's young people, both direct and in partnership with other agencies that meet the greatest need

- to improve the public perception of safety of the parks and open spaces.

**Leisure Strategy 2002-2007**

3.25 The Leisure Strategy addresses all seven of the Council's key priorities: Publicity and Marketing, Health, Environment, Access, Young People, Community Safety and Sport. In addition, the Leisure Strategy is vital to delivering key objectives under the Community Strategy and the work of the Strategic Partnership.

3.26 The overall aim of the Leisure Strategy is to:

*“provide a framework of planned policies, objectives and actions that will guide the provision and opportunities for leisure over the next five years. In so doing, it will take into account county, regional and national objectives but consider them with a local perspective. It will also link to other Borough strategies, plans and policies and support the aims of the Borough's Community Strategy and the work of the Strategic Partnership.”*

3.27 The main aims of the Leisure Strategy are:

1. To ensure that there is a co-ordinated range of leisure and cultural activities in the Borough
2. To ensure services are provided to a good standard and are accessible to all
3. To encourage people living, working and visiting the Borough to enjoy and participate in activities which enhance their quality of life.

3.28 The Leisure Strategy sets out objectives related to the three aims. Objectives relevant to this study are listed below:

- Environment - production of a Biodiversity Action Plan
- Access - increasing access to everyone living, working and visiting the Borough to promote participation by the whole community
  - ensuring access to all facilities is as good/comprehensive as it can be for people with any disability
  - assessing access to open spaces, sport and recreational facilities against the needs of residents and visitors
  - work with people in the community to identify any opportunities they would like to have at leisure venues and also to look into any barriers which prevent them participating in mainstream activities
  - identify any other barriers to the use of facilities (eg transport, quality of the venue or facility etc)
- Young people - endeavour to meet some of the needs of young people, at different ages, through projects that have been carefully researched
  - provide a varied programme of formal and informal activities for young people when the new Rainbow Centre opens
  - plan and programme the use of other facilities to meet the needs of young people, where possible

- encourage youth organisations to use sport and the arts as a particularly valuable tool of social development and integration
- Community safety - to improve users' and non-users' perceptions of safety within the Borough's parks and open spaces:
  - review the 'Parks for All' principle (which promotes a presence in parks and open spaces) and work with partners to improve the public's perception of safety.

### **Consultation findings**

#### **Introduction**

- 4.1 A series of consultations were carried out as part of the local needs assessments to establish the views on open space provision amongst both users and non-users across the Borough.
- 4.2 The key consultations included:
- Citizens' Panel survey – surveys were distributed to 1044 residents across the borough. There were 926 returned surveys, yielding a response rate of 89%, which provides a substantial evidence base
  - sports club surveys to all sports clubs in the Borough
  - a review of existing youth consultation including relevant sections of the Sport and Active Leisure Survey June 2004.
  - drop-in sessions – residents were invited to two 'drop-in' sessions in Epsom and Ewell Borough to informally discuss their issues regarding open space, sport and recreation
  - internal consultations with Council officers
  - consultations with external agencies including Sport England, Countryside Agency and Local Development Trusts
  - consultation with the Friends of Parks Group.
- 4.3 The information gained from these consultations has been used to inform the strategy and to help understand:
- the key issues facing different Council departments and external agencies
  - the needs and requirements of local residents
  - the attitudes and expectations for open space within the Borough
  - good and bad points about the existing provision
  - existing open space, sport and recreation provision at a strategic level.
- 4.4 The key findings from all consultations are described in this section and have been categorised under key headings. Findings relating to each type of open space and sports facilities will be discussed in more detail in the specific sections of this report.

#### **Citizens' Panel survey**

- 4.5 The returned Citizens' Panel questionnaires (926 returns) have been analysed with SNAP survey software. More detailed analysis, by PPG17 typologies, is undertaken in the subsequent sections of this report. The following information summarises the views of residents with regards to quantity, quality, accessibility and usage:

### **Quantity**

- a significant proportion of respondents (greater than 80%) felt all the open space typologies were important to them
- 45% of respondents felt that allotments were important (with 17% of respondents having no opinion on this typology) and 63% of respondents felt that cemeteries and churchyards were important
- provision for children and young people was considered the least well provided for, with 40% of respondents feeling the current provision was 'not enough'
- only 4% of respondents felt there was 'more than enough' provision across any of the typologies
- the percentage of respondents who thought that the quantity of open space was 'about right' is set out below:
  - parks - 75%
  - natural open spaces – 62%
  - green corridors – 46%
  - amenity greenspaces – 37%
  - play spaces – 25%
  - outdoor sports facilities – 38%
  - allotments – 27%
  - cemeteries & churchyards – 43%.

### **Quality**

- when rating the quality factors that respondents were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with, these factors included pathways (75% of respondents), planted and grassed areas (69% of respondents), boundaries (56% of respondents) and maintenance and management (56% of respondents)
- with regards to quality factors, 34% of people were dissatisfied with the provision of toilets. Other areas of concern included a lack of dog waste bins (22% of respondents), a lack of litter bins (21% of respondents) and a lack of seats/benches (19% of respondents).

### **Accessibility**

Regarding the type of open space that they visited most frequently:

- 87% of respondents were 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' that it was accessible by foot
- 78% of respondents were 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' with visibility of the site entrance

## **SECTION 4 – CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

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- 67% of people were 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' with opening times
- the level of dissatisfaction with accessibility was relatively low with 9% 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' with the signage, 6% with accessibility by cycleways and 5% with accessibility by pushchairs or wheelchairs
- the highest average number of respondents (28%) would expect to travel 10-14 minutes to open spaces
- only an average of 3% of respondents would expect to travel over 30 minutes to open spaces and 13% between 0-4 minutes. 43% of respondents expected to travel 0-4 minutes to an amenity greenspace
- the most popular mode of transport to amenity greenspace was walking (86%)
- the most popular mode of transport to cemeteries and churchyards was driving (60%).

### ***Usage***

- 23% of respondents stated they used parks and gardens on a daily basis in the last 12 months
- weekly usage of open space was greatest for parks (44% of residents use a park/public garden each week), with 35% of residents using natural greenspaces on a weekly basis
- monthly usage of open space was greatest for natural greenspaces (25%), followed by parks and gardens (15%) and green corridors (14%)
- visits to cemeteries and churchyards represented the highest amount of occasional use and allotments the lowest
- parks and public gardens were visited most frequently by 48% of respondents, followed by natural greenspaces (21%) and green corridors (12%)
- 37% of respondents stated that they had not visited any type of open space in the last 12 months
- 92% of respondents do not use allotments
- the most popular reasons for using open space was 'for fresh air' (13% of respondents), 'to take exercise' (13%) and 'to walk' (11%)
- the main reasons stated for non usage of open space included 'lack of interest' (26%) and 'lack of time' (16%). 7% of respondents feel unsafe using open spaces. 9% listed other reasons such as being too old and/or infirm or having no children.

### **Sport and recreation facility provision**

#### **Quantity**

- there is the greatest demand for multi-use games areas with 283 respondents saying they would like to see more of them, 188 feel there is demand for more swimming pool provision and 148 would like to see more outdoor tennis courts. Least demand was attributed to squash courts (47 respondents). The most popular 'other' responses stated more facilities for young children and teenagers and more rugby and football pitches.

#### **Quality**

- for the facilities used most frequently by respondents, 50% were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their overall quality.
- the greatest number of respondents (58%) were most satisfied with the range and quality of facilities and the greatest number of respondents either 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' was attributed mostly to car parking (13%) and security (7%) with the majority of dissatisfied comments relating to parking (lack of, cost and security) and outdoor tennis courts (lack of and poorly maintained)
- many comments were attributed to the Rainbow Centre in particular, ranging from poor parking to expensive facilities and programming issues.

#### **Accessibility**

- 60% of respondents were 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' with the opening times of the facility they visit most frequently
- 43% of respondents were 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' with ease of booking at their chosen facility
- 41% of respondents were 'satisfied' and 'very satisfied' with pricing at their chosen facility
- the level of dissatisfaction with accessibility was relatively low with 11% 'dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied' that their chosen site was accessible on foot, 10% with accessibility by cycleways to their chosen sport and recreation facility and 10% 'dissatisfied' and 'very dissatisfied' with the accessibility by public transport
- the highest average number of respondents (30%) would expect to travel 10-14 minutes to sport and recreation facilities
- only an average of 2% of respondents would expect to travel over 30 minutes to sport and recreation facilities and 1% between 0-4 minutes
- the most popular mode of transport to outdoor tennis courts was walking (26%)
- the most popular mode of transport for indoor bowls and indoor tennis was driving (60%).

**Usage**

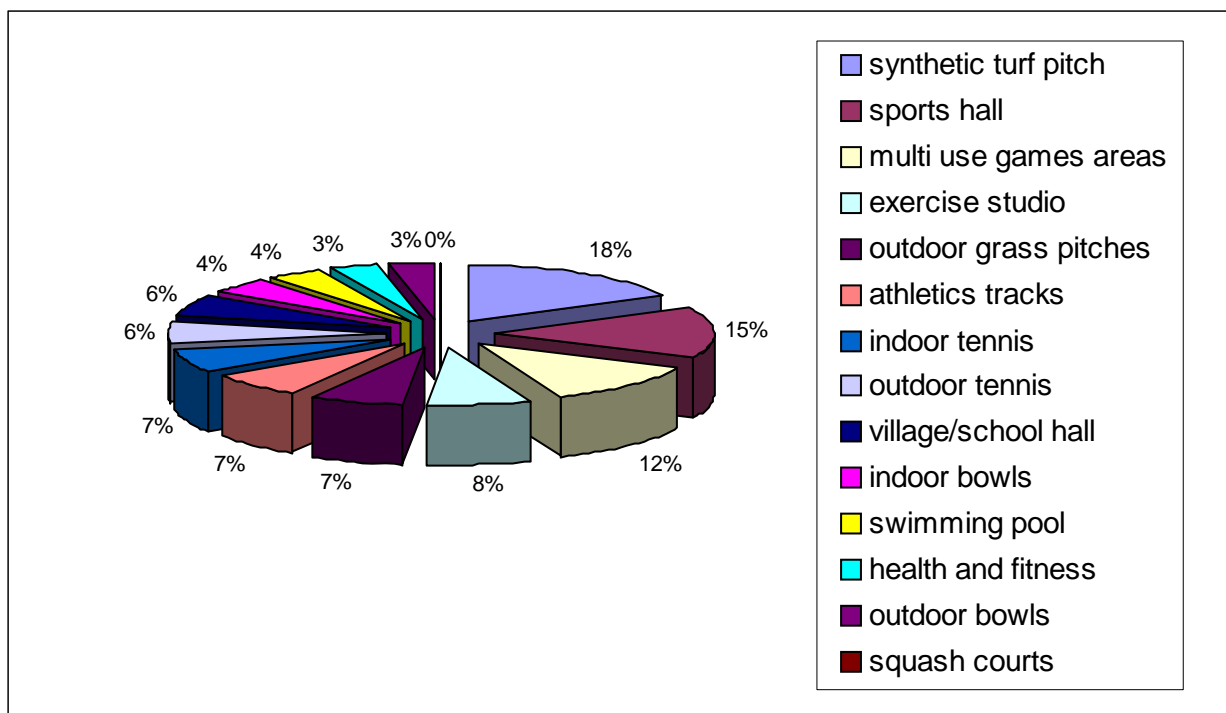
- the type of leisure facilities that respondents use most frequently are swimming pools (32%) followed by health and fitness (17%). ‘Other facilities’ yielded a 20% response with the most popular answers being outdoor bowls, children’s playgrounds, golf courses and general open space areas
- an average of 75% of respondents stated that they had not visited any indoor or outdoor sport and recreational facility in the last 12 months
- for all the facilities used in the last 12 months, the greatest number of respondents used them less than once a month (20%)
- the most frequently used facilities used by respondents in the last 12 months were swimming pools (49%), health and fitness (36%), sports halls (24%), and outdoor tennis (20%). The least frequently used facilities in the last 12 months were indoor tennis (2%), skate facilities (7%), indoor bowls (9%) and squash courts (10%).

**Sports club survey**

4.6 Sports club surveys were sent out to all sports clubs and organisations (provided by the Council) in Epsom and Ewell Borough, with a response from 47 clubs. The details and analysis of this information has been summarised below. A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix D.

**Existing leisure provision and usage**

- the most popular sports facilities were sports halls (29% of respondents) followed by outdoor sports pitches (14%), indoor bowls (10%) and synthetic turf pitches (10%). Least popular facilities were indoor tennis (0%), squash courts, Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and health and fitness centres (all 1%).
- 18% of responding clubs identified a demand for Synthetic Turf Pitches



(STPs) and sports halls (15%) as the following graph illustrates:

- the majority of respondents commented that the overall levels of satisfaction were good, with 44% of those surveyed satisfied or very satisfied with the facility they use most frequently. Specific comments from sports clubs, regarding the quality of the leisure facilities suggests that the provision and quality is satisfactory but these are areas for improvement
- the quality of facilities was the highest rated positive factor with 42% of respondents 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'
- the main areas of concern were car parking with 24% dissatisfied to some degree with parking provision at their chosen leisure facility, and customer care where only 26% of respondents were satisfied with the service they received. There was also dissatisfaction with changing facilities
- the overall provision of leisure facilities (quantity) within the local areas were rated good or average by the majority of respondents (49%), although 26% of respondents also stated that accessibility to leisure facilities was poor or very poor
- the quality of leisure facilities for the club's specific sport was rated good by the majority of respondents (27%) but poor or very poor by 22%
- accessibility to facilities in chosen sports was considered good or average by 53% of respondents
- only 38% of respondents felt that existing sports facilities met the needs of their club with the most frequent criticisms being cleanliness, appearance, maintenance and cost.

4.7 General comments and themes emerging from the sports club surveys include:

- the quality of the Council owned bowling greens has fallen below the standard recommended by the English Bowling Association
- demand for synthetic turf pitch in the area
- children to be actively encouraged to experience a wide range of sports through development programs
- the standard of changing facilities, pitches and pavilions have deteriorated and need to be improved.

### ***Young people's survey***

4.8 In 2004 the Borough commissioned a survey of young people in secondary schools in the Borough to ascertain their views on the current provision of local services and facilities for young people. The quantitative research included a sample of 506 young people from three schools in the Borough all interviewed via self-completion questionnaires in school. The qualitative sample included face-to-face interviews with young people in pairs and in groups across six local schools and two youth groups.

4.9 The young people were grouped into three areas: Years 7 – 9 (aged 11 – 14), Years 10 – 11 (aged 14 – 16) and Years 12 – 13 (aged 16 – 18).

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4.10 The results of this survey are summarised below:

- young people were more aware of parks than other services and facilities in the Borough
- most parks were used more by males
- however, Nonsuch Park was more popular amongst females (adjacent to Nonsuch School for Girls)
- there is not much difference between the parks in the Borough, so people tend to choose the park nearest to their home
- parks are used for football, tennis, basketball, meeting friends and sitting on the grass.

### ***Site specific information***

#### **Alexandra Recreation Ground**

- one in five young people were aware of this park
- one in ten young people had used it in the last six months
- awareness that there were facilities for basketball and football and some also thought there were tennis courts.

#### **Martial Arts centre**

- 15% had heard of it.

#### **Gibraltar Recreation Ground**

- only 9% aware of the park
- only 3% had used it in the last six months
- assumption that 'it was not different from any of the other parks in the Borough'.

#### **Auriol Park**

- one third of young people had heard of the park
- 19% claim they use it and 10% said it was the facility they used most often
- Epsom & Ewell High School use the sports facilities in the park for PE lessons, therefore awareness/usage was greater amongst their pupils (49% males, 42% females in the last six months)
- reasons for using the park include: socialising, tennis, basketball, football, play park
- some concerns raised over safety/security.

#### **King George V Playing Field**

- only 16% aware of the park
- 9% had used it in the past six months

## **SECTION 4 – CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

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- 5% said was the facility they used most often
- well known by respondents that the park has an athletics track and tennis courts, few would use it out of school.

### **Court Recreation Ground**

- 12% recognised the facility
- 9% had used it in the last six months
- confusion over the Ground's identity, some people thought it was known as Ewell Court Park.

### **Long Grove Park**

- 89% had not heard of this park
- 3% males used the park, 0% females used the park
- many people who used the adjacent skate-park, knew of the park, but assumed the main facility, the play park was for 'little children'.

### **Long Grove Skate Park:**

- 11% had heard of the skate park
- only 5% had used it in past six months
- highly rated facility
- some would travel by bus to get there.

### **Horton Country Park**

- 44% aware of the park
- only 5% said they used it most often
- young people were positive about the park, however the consensus was that it is for younger children, due to the 'Park farm'
- golf range was highlighted as a regularly visited facility.

### **Nonsuch Park**

- 79% had heard of the park
- 60% females and 38% males had used the park in last six months (most extensive of all facilities)
- many used the park as a meeting place and for cycling
- Nonsuch Mansion does not hold events for young people.

### **Rainbow Leisure Centre**

- best known facility in the Borough. Two thirds of the young people were aware of it
- 28% said they used the centre, representing the second most used facility

- young people did not think it had ‘special or different’ facilities and that there was no particular reason to visit beyond the swimming pool.

### **Drop-in sessions**

- 4.11 Two neighbourhood drop-in sessions were held in what was considered the most widely used locations in Epsom and Ewell Borough – Bourne Hall in Ewell and outside the Ebbisham Centre in Epsom.
- 4.12 The sessions were publicised via a press release and posters and were open to all members of the public. The purpose of the sessions was to gain information from local residents on the main aspects of the open spaces study – quality, quantity, accessibility, usage and the wider value of open space in Epsom and Ewell Borough.
- 4.13 The sessions also gave the residents an opportunity to discuss any key issues relating to open space in their area (including site specific and general issues), as well as the opportunity to comment on good and bad examples of open spaces.
- 4.14 The findings of these consultation sessions are set out below:

### **Quality**

- more planting needed in the parks, Ewell Court was mentioned as a good example
- tarmac in a number of parks and on pavements (in Epsom town centre) is in poor condition
- rough ground and cambers, which are not good for wheelchairs
- several people mentioned that Rosebery Park is well maintained – “a great space in the middle of town”
- Priest Hill requires general maintenance and clearance of scrubland. Would be ideal space for a nature reserve
- Horton Country Park very good for walking and cycling and its quality suggests that it is well maintained
- Drug dealers in parks so not safe for children – need more park wardens
- Ruxley – very good quality paths
- the pond in Rosebery Park contains stagnant water and spoils an otherwise lovely park
- Alexandra Park – not as nice or well maintained as it used to be
- Hook Road (by Stamford Green School) “needs tidying up.”

### ***Quantity***

- lack of outdoor sports facilities, specifically tennis and basketball
- not enough facilities for children and young people and what is available in terms of equipment needs adding to
- provision of greenspace was in most cases considered sufficient and should be preserved.

### ***Accessibility***

- a wheelchair user mentioned that Rosebery Park had good disabled access, however getting to some areas of open space is difficult due to the lack of dropped kerbs (especially on Downs Road crossing over to Epsom Downs
- Hogsmill walks, although muddy provide good pathways that are signposted
- lack of maps to show walking routes and shortcuts.

### ***General***

- there was a consistent feeling that there is a lack of facilities for young people
- behind the town hall there is a huge area of green which is not used
- St Martin's Churchyard – Alexandra Rec – needs far more supervision
- Priest Hill – clearance of scrub and general maintenance, is an ideal space for a nature reserve
- green corridors – good for nature conservation and encourage wildlife
- Epsom Common – the best thing about living in Epsom – “moved here for it”
- Rosebery School – building on playing fields is a concern
- Rainbow Centre is considered a “real asset” and appears to be well used.

### ***Opportunities and methods for improving open spaces***

- need for improving and upgrading the playground equipment at specific sites such as Rosebery Park and Alexandra Recreation Ground
- greater provision for older children such as installing adventure play equipment and skateparks
- greater staff supervision in parks
- more provision for outdoor sports such as tennis and basketball.

### **Internal consultations**

- 4.15 A number of the Council officers have been consulted with regards to the current provision and potential need of open spaces, sport and recreation.
- 4.16 The following points summarise the main issues, which emerged from consultations with Council officers.

### **Strategy and vision**

- 4.17 Many of the officers shared the vision of a Borough with better quality facilities rather than additional provision, bringing open spaces up to a high standard and using them as a benchmark to improve other areas.
- 4.18 The Council currently works with many organisations to manage and maintain open spaces. Partnerships, such as with the police in the provision of Parks Community Safety Officers, with Epsom Common Association and the Friends of Parks Group, are of great benefit to the Council and they wish to continue using this way of working and developing the local open spaces.
- 4.19 Further evidence of the emphasis the Council puts on the value of parks is the production of Parks Management Plans, part funded by English Nature.

### **Quantity**

- 4.20 There was a general feeling that the quantity of open space available is sufficient and within the prescribed level, which reflects the high quantity in relation to the size of the Borough. There is a relatively large amount of open space and it is only a 10-15 minute drive from the north of the Borough to Epsom Downs in the south. However there are areas that could be improved and enhanced.
- 4.21 It was reported that there are good occupancy levels for allotments and 77% of plots are currently taken. Allotments at Stones Road and Elmstead are the only ones underused. It was reported that some allotment sites are too large.
- 4.22 It was reported that the burial ground at Epsom Cemetery has capacity to meet demand for the next 25-30 years with an option to purchase the adjoining field.
- 4.23 There is a vision for the future whereby a wider variety of facilities are used for games. There is adequate open space but a lack of sports pitches in general.
- 4.24 There has been a significant rise in junior football, especially mini soccer, resulting in a high demand for pitches. There are four/five clubs operating approximately 20 teams in the Borough. This is having an impact on the need for an increased and co-ordinated sports pitch provision (especially mini and training pitches). There is only one training pitch at Court Recreation Ground and although there is one synthetic turf pitch (STP) at Blenheim School, this must be booked through the school and is generally at capacity. Public access will be lost entirely at this venue within a few years. Two STPs are located at Epsom College and one at Nonsuch High School.
- 4.25 The opening of the Rainbow Centre has been welcomed and it was reported that the sports hall is at capacity at peak times and after school. The bowls hall is at 90% capacity Monday-Friday during the day and 60%-70% in the evenings. The catchment of users is wider than usual due to the majority being part of a club.

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4.26 There is a demand for swimming, with the Rainbow Centre being the only public pool in the Borough. Private pools are located at Holmes Place and the two David Lloyd Centres.

4.27 In terms of other sports facilities, other comments of note were:

- four outdoor bowls greens are well used by eight teams
- four cricket pitches have been reduced to two at Gibraltar Recreation Ground and Alexandra Recreation Ground. These are both well used. The pitch at Auriol Park has been taken out
- lack of archery facilities has had a knock on effect on membership of the local club
- lack of rugby provision although there are very good developmental links with Sutton & Epsom Rugby Club which has its own ground
- well catered for golf courses, with three private and one public course.

### **Quality**

4.28 Rosebery Park and Bourne Hall provide a varied number of spaces within one central geographical area meeting the needs of various age ranges. They are very well used. Recent investment in these sites has improved their overall quality. Quality issues at Shadbolt Park and Ewell Court are to be addressed next. There is considered to be a lack of investment at satellite parks such as Warren Recreation Ground.

4.29 Outdoor bowls greens are of excellent quality and are ranked in the top 25% in terms of playability. The standard needs to be continually monitored with a new grounds maintenance contract in place. There have been suggestions to remove bowling greens from the main contractor to safeguard quality.

4.30 Sports pitches are well used although the quality of football pitches in particular is only average, with use higher than drainage can cope with. There are conflicts with the maintenance programme and because of the changeover from football in the winter to cricket in the summer. The season cannot be extended to address this. Poor drainage is a particular problem at Auriol Park although Football Foundation funding allocated to this park should rectify this problem. The quality of cricket pitches is considered good with no complaints made by participating teams.

4.31 The Rainbow Centre has a wide range of facilities and activities on offer and has received good feedback from customers. The latest customer survey reported that 98% of customers rated the Centre as 'average', 'good' or 'very good'. The Centre is also registered through Quest – the UK quality scheme for sport and leisure facilities.

4.32 Epsom Golf Club has recently been nominated by the English Golf Union for the Central Council of Physical Recreation's (CCPR) 'sports club of the year' award. The Council benefits from a very good relationship with the club and works with it to improve school and community links.

4.33 Horton Country Park has been awarded nature reserve status by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council in conjunction with English Nature.

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- 4.34 The dedication of the Rangers and the Friends of Parks groups working together has improved the quality of the parks. In addition, all Rangers are accredited community support officers who are involved in various meetings and community events all of which improve overall awareness of quality issues.
- 4.35 Improved quality of open space is key in order to attract visitors.
- 4.36 Poor housekeeping, such as plot holders dumping rubbish, is a problem at some allotment sites. The Council recognises that it needs to educate plot holders on good practice although regular liaison with plot holders in the past was considered unproductive. A solution could be self managed allotments, which generally works well and can improve the quality of the allotments. Park Avenue West, Kingston Road and Hessele Grove are good examples of where self management has been successful.
- 4.37 There is an over-riding problem of anti-social behaviour by teenagers in play areas and other open spaces. This often discourages usage of open spaces by other people. Particular problems have been identified at Rosebery Park and Court Recreation Ground. It was suggested that the latter could be addressed through the adoption of the Recreation Ground as an environmental action area.
- 4.38 Linked to the above point is the issue of vandalism and graffiti. Many allotments have suffered from vandalism, including sheds being burnt down. Security and fencing at the Barn Elms sites is problematic. Further problems at Stones Road allotments have been cited due to the travellers encroaching on the site.
- 4.39 The quality of the parks is considered good in terms of grass cutting and vegetation.
- 4.40 Poor quality pavilions have been identified at Alexandra Recreation Ground and Auriol Park. Borough-wide ancillary provision is also considered poor.
- 4.41 The overall quality of Auriol Park is considered much improved since the introduction of closed circuit television (CCTV), however some consultees felt CCTV was a 'double edged sword' and should be discouraged.
- 4.42 Teenage seating areas and the dispatch of 'Rangers' bins throughout the Borough have contributed to the quality of open spaces.
- 4.43 The public expectation is that they need to have a feeling of security in parks but this cannot be achieved without a greater staff presence.

### ***Accessibility***

- 4.44 There is generally thought to be a good level of accessible open space in the Borough although there are issues in the form of:
- a lack of public transport in Langley Vale
  - lack of accessibility to playgrounds and Alexandra Recreation Ground and Court Recreation Ground
  - accessibility to new hospital sites
  - lack of sports provision in the north of the Borough.
- 4.45 There is disabled access in the majority of parks.

## **SECTION 4 – CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

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- 4.46 Allotments are available to a wide proportion of people and they are well spaced throughout the Borough (although there are no allotments in East Ewell). Travelling time to an allotment is at most 15 minutes by car.
- 4.47 Linked to allotments, one of the plot holders at the Kingston Road site is actively involved in making the allotments more 'disabled friendly'. She has recently been awarded various grants and constructed raised beds for the elderly and disabled.
- 4.48 The Rainbow Centre provides a number of sporting and non sporting opportunities that benefit the community as a whole - the 'Rainbow Club' for those aged 55 years is a good example.
- 4.49 It was reported that clubs have difficulty getting programmed swimming time at the Rainbow Centre. The clubs have also highlighted high prices as a problem.
- 4.50 Improved signage is needed in parks as it would encourage healthy walks.
- 4.51 Linked sites for walking is needed, providing a similar function to that of the cycleways network.
- 4.52 In terms of accessibility to community use sites, users have experienced problems with caretaking and opening up of facilities for booked in activities. Other issues relating to community use are:
- The STP at Blenheim is considered expensive and the community will be losing access to it in a few years as it is reverting back to school use only
  - the sports hall at Epsom College is booked all day every day
  - Epsom and Ewell High School is working towards School Sports College status and as a result will benefit community use.

### ***Management***

- 4.53 It was mentioned that 'policy' and 'operations' need to form a better and more co-ordinated approach to drive plans forward.
- 4.54 The role of the Friends of Parks group enables the community to get involved in the management of open spaces bringing with it a 'sense of ownership' by the local public – something that is proven to enhance the quality of open spaces and is encouraged by CABE Space.
- 4.55 Recreational conflicts are prevalent, for example between dog walkers and recreational users on Epsom Downs.
- 4.56 Management of the parks should fit in with recreational needs. It was proposed that a better relationship is formed with the football clubs in particular to achieve higher quality pitches.
- 4.57 It was considered that there are too few wardens to cover all the sites and this has resulted in difficulty managing issues such as cleanliness and graffiti.
- 4.58 Other management points raised were:
- Rangers are not empowered to make quick decisions that might improve the overall quality of open spaces

## **SECTION 4 – CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

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- there are high expectations from the Friends of Parks Group; these need to be realistic and managed effectively
- maintenance needs to be improved and increased. For example the amount of shrubbery can affect safety and this should be addressed
- the 'no play policy' is not professionally managed
- lack of revenue to address requirements relating to open space and as a result resources need to be managed effectively
- the Council's knowledge base is decreasing. Plans need formulating while the experience is still there
- realising the value of Section 106 monies and making sure they are appropriately targeted to areas of need.

### ***Opportunities***

- 4.59 The provision of a wide range of open spaces within the Borough is not fully utilised mainly due to a lack of investment and available funding. With the allocation of Section 106 monies, the potential of the chosen venues will be realised in part. Plans include the resurfacing of the tennis courts at Gibraltar Recreation Ground. It was suggested that major playgrounds should be defined and a rolling programme of replacement commenced with Section 106 monies directed to the nearest playground.
- 4.60 The management of Streetcare is changing, resulting in an amalgamation with operational services. This will help free up some of the Rangers time enabling them to work more closely with the Friends of Parks group and to concentrate more on project work.
- 4.61 Other opportunities exist with the following:
- Hook Road Arena – the Council has inherited this key site, prime for development but would need extensive funding
  - relocate playgrounds at Alexandra Recreation Ground and Court Recreation Ground to make the open space more welcoming and accessible
  - drainage improvements to the entire field will take place at Auriol Park before Christmas 2005 as part of a Football Foundation bid. This will address overall quality of the pitches
  - Rangers to have more of a park's policing role to enable them to address such issues as dog fouling through issuing fixed penalties
  - a recent school's survey revealed that transport and associated costs to the Rainbow Centre were a key issue. The Council is working with the management of the centre to alleviate this
  - there have been opportunities to develop pitches in Long Grove park (hospital cluster) but this has not come into fruition due to lack of money to invest in the site. It now stands as grassland

## **SECTION 4 – CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

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- the Council is intending to repair paths at Mounthill Gardens, Ewell Court, Gibraltar Recreation Ground and Auriol Park as a high priority
- development of open space area at Priest Hill, which has not been realised in the past due to lack of investment
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest to achieve less favourable/ improving status
- sports pitch bookings reverting to in-house management.

### ***General comments***

4.62 Other comments raised from the internal consultations are:

- lack of capital resource for countryside areas
- the value of locking the Council owned parks was questioned
- the Parks/Countryside department would like guidance on the thoughts of the general public and for these to inform the decisions that are made.

### **Friends of Parks Group: Members' workshop**

4.63 Members of the Epsom and Ewell Friends of Parks Group were consulted with in May 2005. The feedback from this workshop session has been summarised into quantity, quality and accessibility with general comments below:

#### ***Quantity***

- the majority of delegates agreed that Epsom and Ewell Borough is very well provided for in terms of natural open spaces
- it was overwhelmingly agreed that there was not enough provision for children and young people, especially for the 12-18 year old age group. There are no playgrounds in Nonsuch or Stoneleigh Wards
- there are many small, underused open spaces just used as a meeting ground
- some recreation grounds are overused. There is also a perceived lack of football pitches but a question over whether there is really a need for more or should more be provided for different sports (eg rugby). There has been a reduction in the number of cricket pitches from four to two
- there is a need for further synthetic turf pitches in the Borough.

### ***Quality***

- security and safety is desirable. Adequate supervision is important at night as well as during the day. Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) has been installed in Auriol Park but it is expensive. Mock CCTV is an option but this brings its own problems
- there is a lack of staff to provide a presence in the parks. This presence is seen as important to thwart anti-social behaviour. The Ranger service also helps to maintain contact with the Friends Groups
- nature conservation and biodiversity is important and should be encouraged
- problems with dog fouling puts families off using the parks
- varying quality of footpaths
- problems with people misusing motorcycles
- boundary hedges not maintained, giving easy access to vandals who cause arson damage and graffiti (Gibraltar Recreation Ground)
- graffiti is a problem at most urban open spaces and parks (for example Bourne Hall and Court Recreation Ground). Litter and graffiti is not cleared quickly enough
- many trees need better maintenance for health and safety reasons
- the change of grounds maintenance contractor needs to be monitored to ensure quality is maintained.

### ***Accessibility***

- there are large areas of Green Belt/open space in the south of the Borough but these are less accessible to residents in north of the Borough
- many people are unaware of open spaces near to them or have no interest
- lack of public transport provision to Horton Country Park
- lack of linkage between open spaces, for example Royal Avenue via Hogsmill
- root damage has caused some paths to be inaccessible
- there is no disabled access at Alexandra Recreation Ground
- access to Gibraltar Recreation Ground involves steps, which are very difficult to negotiate with pushchairs
- the lack of toilets makes most parks and open spaces inaccessible to many especially those with young children
- the needs of disabled people have not been considered in the design of playground equipment
- many indoor sport and recreation facilities are considered as inaccessible due to their membership policies and rates charged (for example David Lloyd)

- some open spaces could be divided into areas to meet the needs of the wider population who wish to use them.

### External consultations

4.64 A number of external agencies have been consulted with regards to the current provision, the potential need of open spaces, sport and recreation and views on any sites owned by the particular agencies. These comments are summarised below:

#### ***Epsom and Ewell Environment Forum's Open Spaces Group***

- it is a fundamental part of the Borough's character to retain its open space and the semi-rural character of part of its area. The quantity of open space is not excessive, and should not be reduced
- there is a good quantity of greenspace but it is heavily used by outside visitors - Epsom Downs, Horton Country Park and Nonsuch Park in particular. Some allowance should be made for this additional pressure caused by the Borough's proximity to London
- the quality of the Epsom Common SSSI was criticised by English Nature but a continuing programme of remedial work is now underway and the Borough, in partnership with English Nature and the Epsom Common Association, is putting substantial resources to bring it into good condition. A management plan has been approved
- Epsom Downs is in generally good condition. There is an approved management plan. A program of work is underway to improve the few small Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) here
- Horton Country Park is in generally good condition and has recently been declared a Local Nature Reserve. A management plan should shortly be approved. Occasional vandalism occurs, and there is not much litter.
- litter and vandalism are problematic in smaller urban parks
- there is a litter problem in parts of the Hogsmill Open Space and Bonesgate Stream. Dumping in the river also occurs. There are illegal discharges into the river at more than one site near the Watersedge Estate.
- the balance of open spaces is a tremendous benefit to the Borough and to local people.
- there are a large number of different habitat types, and a relatively healthy level of biodiversity. The existence of natural areas, and those where management is conservation-oriented, are of immense value in this. The group is preparing a Biodiversity Action Plan for the Borough
- a small regular spending program will probably save more money in the long term. Epsom Common is a good example. It was allowed to deteriorate and now needs large sums of money for restoration
- the group may be able to work in conjunction with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council in obtaining funds for partnership working.

### **Other consultees**

- The Woodland Trust has developed a standard and aspires:
  - no person should live more than 500m from at least one areas of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size
  - that there should be also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people's homes
- applying these standards set out above show that there is a high proportion of people living outside a 500m catchment of an accessible woodland of at least 2ha and only a very small proportion of people live within a 500m catchment of an accessible woodland (of at least 2ha). Applying the 4km catchment for an area of woodland no more than 20ha illustrates that more people are in an accessible woodland area, however there are still deficiencies in some areas.
- Sport England advocates that local standards for quality and quantity are established by an assessment of need based on PPG17. They also recommend standards on the layout and design of facilities. Accessibility standards should consider larger strategic facilities that may overlap with adjoining local authority catchments
- issues over anti-social behaviour at the skatepark and Rosebery Park
- limited use of pitches between Stamford Green and the Wells Estate
- reinstatement of sports pitch at Manor Park
- better upkeep of cycleways and footpaths - water logging affects cycleways and horse riding damages footpaths
- good indoor sports facilities at the Rainbow Centre - although there is a lack of car parking - and well provided for in terms of bowling greens
- the Council could do more to advertise the advantages of Epsom Downs
- lack of youth facilities, provision should encourage the playing of team sports.

### **Summary**

- 4.65 Through the qualitative and quantitative consultation, the public priority (in terms of a typology of open space) is parks and gardens, followed by provision for children and young people and natural and semi-natural open space. The open space typologies considered least important were cemeteries and churchyards and allotments.
- 4.66 Consultations have extracted similar key issues across the Borough resulting in three main priority factors for the public:
- health and safety – including anti-social behaviour, supervision, quality of footpaths, maintenance of trees and buildings, upgrading of equipment and provision of dog bins
  - accessibility – including transport issues to Langley Vale, disabled access, access to Alexandra Recreation Ground and Court Recreation Ground, provision of toilets, provision of car parking
  - quality – toilet provision, encouraging biodiversity, improving the quality of sports grounds and facilities.

## **SECTION 4 – CONSULTATION FINDINGS**

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- 4.67 In terms of delivering the aspirations of the public, the issue of affordability is important. Developer contributions and grant funding could provide some capital but it is unlikely that these will meet all of the costs associated to meet the public's priorities and expectations. The other option for generating capital is through the selective disposal of surplus open spaces sites although this will depend on the development and application of local quantity and accessibility standards as shown in the typology specific sections of the report.
- 4.68 As to whether this approach is acceptable, the majority of people consulted generally feel that the Borough is very well provided for in terms of the quantity of open space and it appears that the majority of issues are qualitative rather than quantitative. However, it is acknowledged that this view results from a general Borough wide analysis as opposed to site specific. Furthermore, the Citizens' Panel survey, sports club survey and drop-in sessions concluded that there were some quantitative undersupplies within the Borough. The option of disposal is revisited in subsequent chapters.
- 4.69 The quality of the sites is important to all who use them. It is clear that in general, problems at open space sites are related to misuse rather than to poor management and maintenance.
- 4.70 There were a number of examples of good practice that were flagged up both verbally at the drop-in sessions and through the Citizens' Panel questionnaire in addition to comments relating to specific sites. These are highlighted in the sections that follow.
- 4.71 It is clear from the Young People's Survey that the majority of young people are not aware of many open space sites. Educating young people as to existence of open space sites may improve their awareness and use of the areas in question.
- 4.72 Community involvement is critical to the management and quality of open space. This may help to reduce instances of anti-social behaviour and damage to sites. Where the community and friends groups have been involved in the management of open space sites elsewhere, this has provided a sense of ownership and proved successful in providing good quality open spaces. This should be promoted across the Borough where appropriate.

## **Parks and gardens**

### **Definition**

- 5.1 This type of open space includes urban parks and formal gardens that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events.
- 5.2 This typology also has many wider benefits as supported by the site assessments. Parks provide a sense of place for the local community, ecological and education benefits, help to address any social inclusion issues and also provide structural and landscaping benefits to the local area.

### **Picture 5.1 – Rosebery Park**



### **Strategic context and consultation**

- 5.3 A national survey commissioned by Sport England, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage was undertaken during 2003, looking at the provision of parks within England. The aims of the survey were to establish:
  - how many adults in England use parks?
  - what activities people take part in when visiting parks?
  - the reasons people visit particular parks
  - the levels of satisfaction with the amenities on offer
  - why non-users do not use parks?
- 5.4 The definition of a park used in the national survey was very broad and included both formal provision such as town parks, country parks, recreation grounds and also less formal provision such as village greens and common land.

5.5 The findings of the study were:

- just under two thirds of adults in England had visited a public park during the previous 12 months
- there is a distinct bias in the use of parks by social groups, with almost three quarters of adults from the higher social group visiting a park compared with only half of those from the lower social group
- people from black and ethnic minority communities also have relatively low participation as well as adults with disabilities
- over 8 in 10 adults who had used a park in the previous 12 months did so at least once a month during the spring and summer with almost two thirds visiting a park at least once a week. Women tended to visit parks more often than men
- it is estimated that the 24.3 million adults who use parks make approximately 1.2 billion visits to parks during the spring and summer months and 600 million visits during the autumn and winter months – a total of 1.8 billion visits a year
- the most popular type of park visited was an urban or city park.

### **Local consultation**

- 5.6 It should be recognised that the local consultations highlighted that many people referred to recreation grounds as parks and gardens, for example Auriol Recreation Ground and Gibraltar Recreation Ground.
- 5.7 The majority of respondents from the Citizen's Panel survey felt that there were sufficient quality of parks and gardens. Nearly a quarter of respondents stated that they had used them daily during the last 12 months. Parks and gardens were the most frequented type of open space.
- 5.8 Many people made comments relating to the quality of the existing parks with some better maintained than others. Rosebery Park and Bourne Hall were examples of better quality sites benefiting from recent investment. The quality issues of existing parks need to be addressed before considering new provision. This can be helped by the production of parks management plans.
- 5.9 Security of the parks was a key issue and linked to this the need for a greater staff presence.
- 5.10 There is an attitude shown by young people that there is not much difference between the parks in the Borough so they tend to choose the park nearest to their home.
- 5.11 A wheelchair user consulted at the drop-in session at Bourne Hall was happy with the disabled access in Rosebery Park.

**Current position**

- 5.12 There are currently seven parks and gardens within Epsom and Ewell Borough. As previously stated, there are also a number of recreation grounds, which offer some park and garden function and are recognised as such by residents.
- 5.13 The seven parks and gardens within Epsom and Ewell Borough are:
- Bourne Hall Garden (Site ID 17)
  - Elizabeth Welchman Gardens (Site ID 20)
  - Ewell Court (Site ID 21)
  - Rosebery Park (Site ID 24)
  - Shadbolt Park (Site ID 37)
  - Mounthill Gardens (Site ID 59)
  - Nonsuch Palace and Gardens (Site ID 228).

**Setting provision standards**

- 5.14 In setting local standards for parks and gardens there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other local authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs. Full justifications for the local standards are provided within Appendices I, J and K.

**Quantity**

- 5.15 The audit of parks and gardens shows there is 23.52 hectares of parks and gardens in total across the Borough. The current provision of parks and gardens per 1,000 population equates to 0.35ha.
- 5.16 There are no definitive national or local standards for parks and gardens.
- 5.17 There is a general feeling that the existing level of provision of parks and gardens is “about right” with 75% of respondents to the household questionnaire. Only 10% felt that there is not enough provision and 12% felt that there was “nearly enough” provision. This is a comparatively high level of satisfaction with the existing provision and suggests that the quantitative standard should be set around the existing level.
- 5.18 Other forms of consultation undertaken as part of the study also indicated that people seemed happy with the existing level of provision but that areas could benefit from enhancement and improvement.
- 5.19 Other authorities, where PMP have set standards, have quantitative standards in the range 0.3 to 1ha per 1000 population.
- 5.20 It is therefore recommended that a standard in line with the existing provision at 0.35ha per 1000 population is set for parks and gardens in Epsom and Ewell. Any locational deficiencies should be highlighted through the application of the

<p><b>RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD</b></p> <p><b><i>0.35ha per 1,000 population</i></b></p>
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## SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

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accessibility standards and the future focus for parks and gardens should be on improving the quality of the existing provision.

### Quality

- 5.21 The Green Flag Criteria states the benchmarks for parks as a welcoming facility, healthy, safe and secure environment.
- 5.22 Of the sites that were assessed, the overall quality of parks and gardens across the Borough is considered poor to average. Both Bourne Hall Park (Site ID 17) and Mounthill Gardens (Site ID 59) rated only 40% (the lowest of all parks and gardens). Elizabeth Welchman Gardens (Site ID 20) scored the highest for quality with 71.1%.
- 5.23 From the consultations undertaken as part of the study, Rosebery Park (Site ID 24) was considered to be an example of good practice and a site that is well used due to its location.
- 5.24 Through the Citizens' Panel survey, respondents indicated that the highest rated aspirations were clean and litter free, toilets, well-kept grass, flowers, trees and shrubs (ie appropriate landscaping) and seating.
- 5.25 There is an emphasis on the provision of gardens rather than multi purpose parks, with the drop-in sessions supporting this through the requirement for more planting in parks. Ewell Court (Site ID 21) was mentioned as a good example.
- 5.26 The Friends of Parks Group highlighted concerns with incidences of litter, dog fouling and anti-social behaviour. The drop-in session supported this viewpoint with people complaining about drug dealers in parks. Additional wardens were highlighted as an aspiration for some parks.
- 5.27 The recommended local quality standard for parks and gardens should therefore include elements of these aspirations to meet the needs of the public, and also other local and national standards.
- 5.28 The recommended standard provides the vision for any new provision and also a quality benchmark for existing parks.

#### **RECOMMENDED QUALITY STANDARD**

***“A clean and litter free site providing varied and well-kept vegetation and nature features and appropriate ancillary accommodation, including benches, toilets, litter bins and well signed to and within the site.*”**

**Accessibility**

- 5.29 With regards to accessibility there are also no definitive national or local standards.
- 5.30 The accessibility of parks and gardens across the Borough varies considerably, from 36.7% to 80%. Rosebery Park (Site ID 24) has the highest rating and Mounthill Gardens (Site ID 59) the lowest. The remaining sites scored around average.
- 5.31 Of those respondents who stated that the most frequently used open space was parks and gardens, levels of satisfaction with accessibility are relatively high. The highest level of dissatisfaction was with signage (30%). Accessibility by public transport and by cycleways also rated relatively highly in levels of dissatisfaction. However, there were also high levels of respondents stating “don’t know/not applicable.”
- 5.32 Other consultations indicated that tarmac in a number of the parks was not in good condition and was a problem for wheelchair users. There is however, disabled access in the majority of parks. Other access issues identified include that Rosebery Park (Site ID 24) and Bourne Hall Park (Site ID 17) provide an excellent central resource, while other more remote parks suffer from a lack of investment.
- 5.33 Standards set for other local authorities range from 10 – 15 minutes, with a large number set at 15 minutes walk.
- 5.34 Based on the Citizens’ Panel survey, the most popular mode of transport to parks and gardens is on foot. The 75% level was 10 – 14 minutes. Overall, 90% of respondents would expect to walk up to 14 minutes to use a park and garden facility. Therefore, in line with PPG17 Companion Guide, which recommends the use of the 75% threshold level, the standard and catchment has been set at 14 minutes (1.2km).

<p><b>RECOMMENDED LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD</b></p> <p><b>14 minute walk (1.2km)</b></p>
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**Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas**

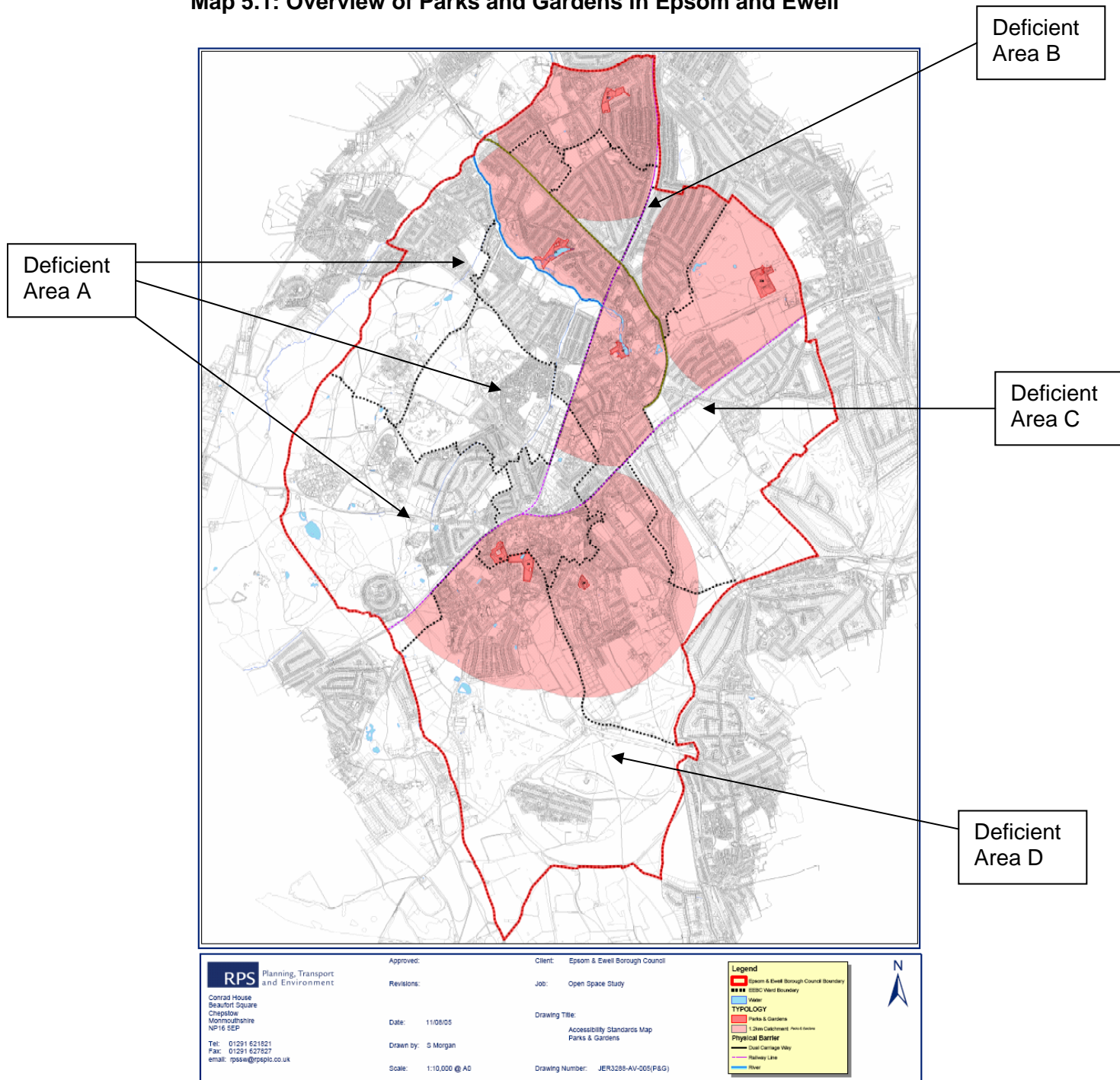
- 5.35 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with unmet local needs, we apply the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards help identify areas which do not meet the minimum provision standards while the accessibility standards determine where those deficiencies are important.
- 5.36 As the standard for parks and gardens is set at the existing level of provision, there is no identified level of deficiency for the parks and gardens typology. The existing level of provision should however be protected.
- 5.37 The following map shows an overview of the application of the accessibility standards to Epsom and Ewell Borough. We have plotted straight line catchment areas, based on the recommended accessibility standard, around each open space site. These catchment areas have then been modified to take account of significant physical boundaries such as dual carriageway roads, railway lines and rivers. The maps are interpreted as follows:
- If a residential area is located within one of these catchment areas (shaded areas on the map), then it can be assumed that it has reasonable access to this type of open space

**SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS**

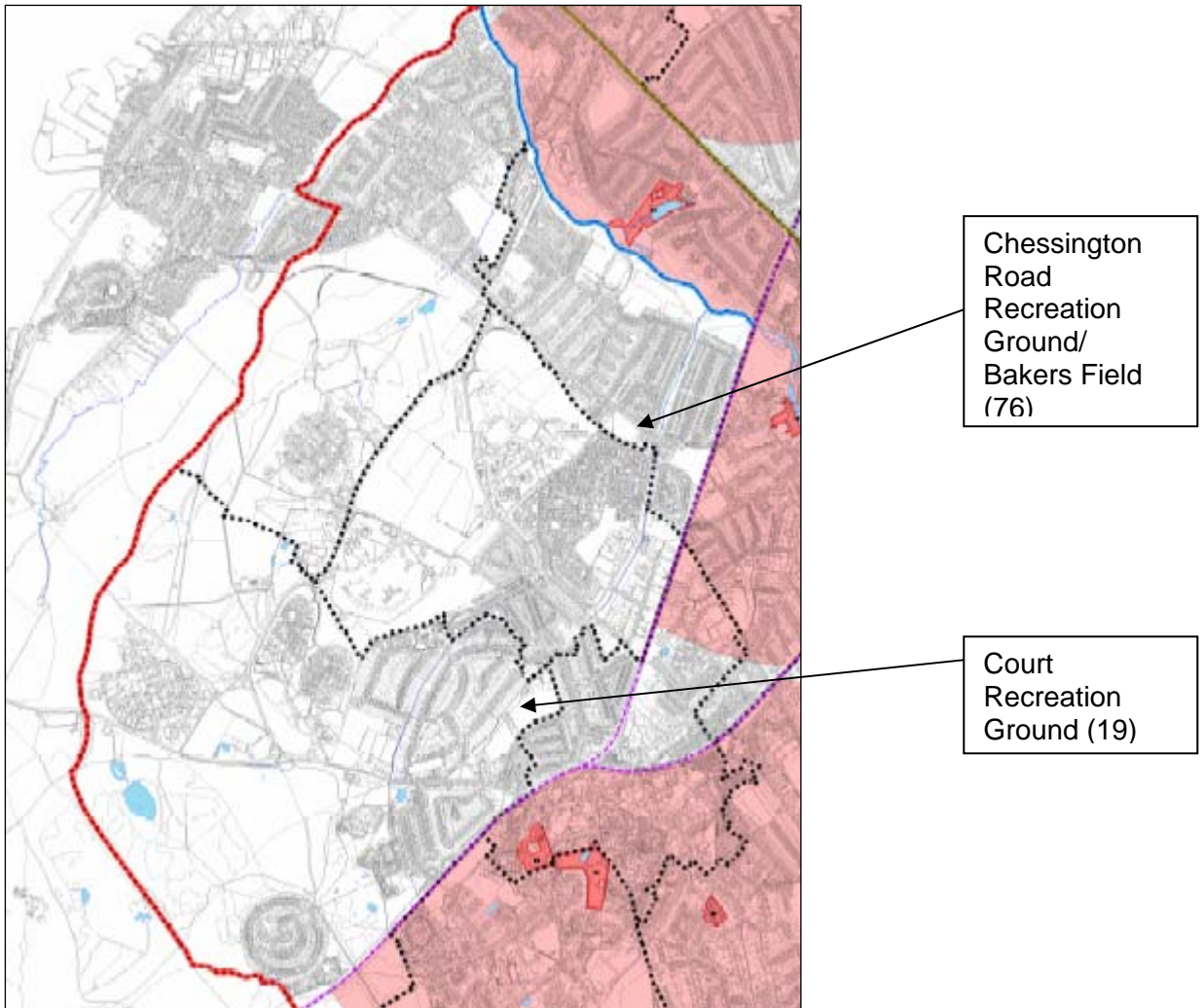
- If a residential area is located outside of these catchment areas (unshaded areas on the map), then it can be assumed that it does not have reasonable access to this type of open space.

5.38 Map 5.1 shows that there are significant residential areas of deficiency in parks and gardens. Four areas labelled A – D are identified as not currently having access to parks and gardens.

**Map 5.1: Overview of Parks and Gardens in Epsom and Ewell**



**Map 5.2: Deficient Area A**



- 5.39 Deficient Area A is deficient in terms of access to parks and gardens. An analysis has therefore been undertaken to assess whether other types of open space can fulfil this function and whether new provision is required in certain areas.
- 5.40 The most significant resource within this area is Horton Country Park (Site ID 13) at 127.13ha. Country parks are seen as a more informal form of parks and gardens and at such a large size provides a site of strategic importance for the whole Borough and indeed this Area A. A large proportion of Area A would have access to Horton Country Park within the 10 – 14 minute walking catchment.
- 5.41 Epsom Common (Site ID 12) is also located within this area and again is of strategic significance for the Borough and will provide some informal park and garden function, alleviating the identified deficiency.
- 5.42 As the recreation grounds can in some instances be considered to provide some park and garden function, these could be a significant resource in terms of alleviating the accessibility deficiency.
- 5.43 Chessington Road Recreation Ground/Bakers Field (Site ID 76 - amenity greenspace) and Court Recreation Ground (Site ID 19 - outdoor sports facilities) are

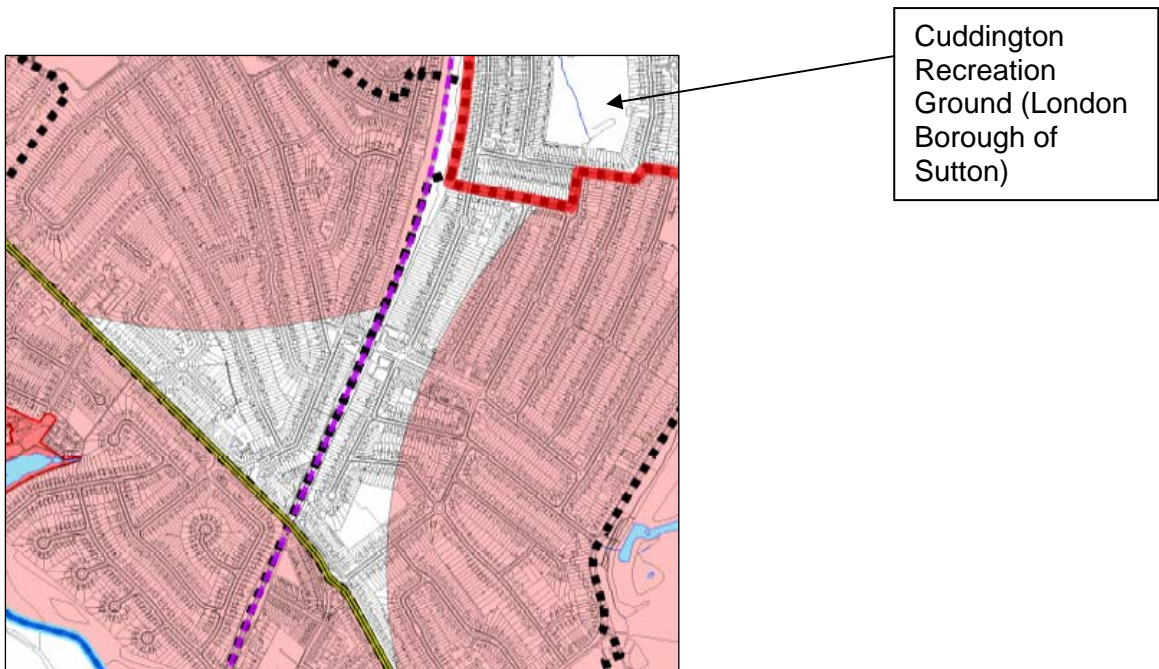
## SECTION 5 – PARKS AND GARDENS

both located within the area of deficiency. Further investigation should be undertaken as to the level of park and garden function they currently offer. Additional formal facilities provided (such as formal planting) should also be considered. King George V Playing Fields (Site ID 39) is also located within this area and its existing function and potential for improved facilities should be considered.

- 5.44 In addition, there is a significant amount of amenity greenspace in Area A. Large areas of amenity greenspace could be formalised to provide some parks and garden function eg provision of additional seating, formal planting, art sculptures or some play equipment to offer a more formalised environment that could offer a variety of recreational uses. This would only need to involve some minor intensification of the existing use of sites as amenity greenspace. As the quantity standard indicates no quantitative deficiencies, new provision is not recommended.
- 5.45 Hook Road Arena (Site ID 82) at 11.68ha, AGS hospital cluster (Site ID 251) at 8.58ha and Long Grove Park (Site ID 31) at 6.09ha are all significant areas of amenity greenspace that could be considered for improvements as indicated above.
- 5.46 Finally, Longmead (Site ID 71 - an amenity greenspace) at 4.04ha could provide a slightly different resource in the form of a linear park.
- 5.47 There is a small area within Deficient Area A that is bounded on two of three sides by the railway track. This physical barrier means that it is difficult to improve the provision in this area. An area of amenity greenspace, Stone Road Pond (Site ID 51) is located within this area and should be improved and intensified as appropriate to provide residents with access to a park and garden. In terms of priorities, it should however be noted that there are only limited number of residents in this area.

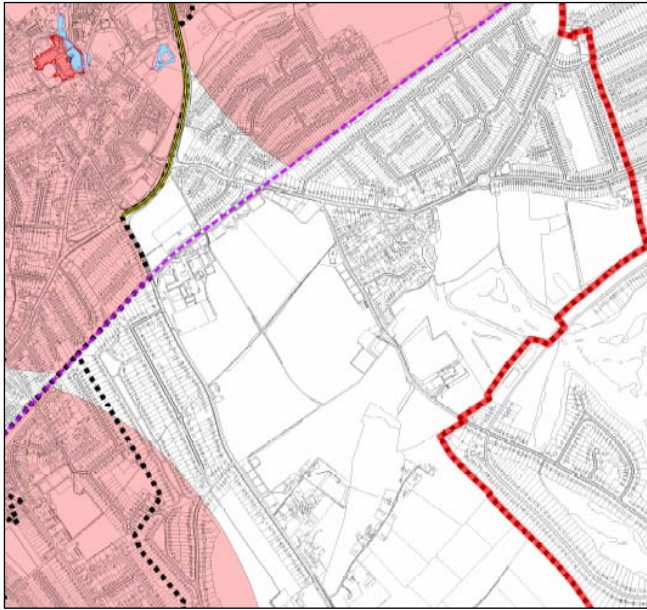
<b>PG1</b>	Protect the current level of provision of parks and gardens across Epsom and Ewell Borough.
<b>PG2</b>	Protect and improve Horton Country Park as a natural and semi natural site that has a park and garden function and a strategic Borough-wide facility. Improve local access within Deficient Area A.
<b>PG3</b>	Investigate and improve (where appropriate) the park and garden function of the recreation grounds within the Borough, in particular Chessington Road Recreation Ground/Bakers Field (Site ID 76) and Court Recreation Ground (Site ID 19).
<b>PG4</b>	Investigate and intensify the park and garden function of the larger areas of amenity greenspace within deficient area A.

**Map 5.3: Deficient Area B**



- 5.48 Deficient Area B is a comparatively small area of deficiency but is located within an intensely urban area and should therefore be analysed to alleviate the accessibility deficiencies identified.
- 5.49 Cuddington Recreation Ground in the London Borough of Sutton offers a park and garden within the 10 –14 minute accessibility catchment of a significant proportion of area B. Residents of the Borough will not be affected by administrative boundaries in terms of the sites they use and as such this site can be considered to meet the deficiency in this area. Deficient Area B is not therefore considered a priority for any improvements.

**Map 5.4: Deficient Area C**



- 5.50 Deficient Area C consists of a strip of housing to the south west of the area and a larger residential area south of Nonsuch Park (Site ID 14).
- 5.51 There is little potential for alleviating the deficiency in parks and gardens for the strip of housing to the south west of the deficiency area. There is a long strip of amenity greenspace within this area, The Green off Ewell Downs Road (Site ID 178). However this is unlikely to serve more than an amenity greenspace function. Improvements to access to existing facilities should be the priority for this part of the area, as the population is not large enough to sustain any new provision.
- 5.52 Within the larger urban area there are a number of outdoor sports facilities and some natural and semi natural open space. However, these are inappropriate sites for improvements due to the fact that they are in private ownership, or are school facilities.
- 5.53 Nonsuch Park, a natural and semi natural open space (Site ID 14) and Nonsuch Palace and Gardens, a park and garden facility (Site ID 228), are directly north of the area of deficiency. However access is restricted by the railway line despite pedestrian access at the junction of Bramley Road and Holmwood Road to Nonsuch Park. There are no feasible alternatives in this area.

**Map 5.4: Deficient Area D**



- 5.54 To the south of the main area of housing is The Warren Recreation Ground (Site ID 245). As this area is fairly self contained, it is not feasible to improve access to existing facilities elsewhere. This site should therefore be considered as to its park and garden function and any potential for improvements in this area. In addition, to provide a variety of open spaces, there are large areas of natural and semi natural open space. In particular, Langley Vale (Site ID 204), The Warren (Site ID 202), Natural and Semi Natural site adjacent to the Warren Recreation Ground (Site ID 29) and Epsom Downs (Site ID 155). Epsom Downs, in particular is a large open space resource that is a significant strategic asset to the Borough.
- 5.55 The less densely developed strip of housing to the south of the Borough also has a large natural and semi natural open space (Epsom Common – Site ID 12) resource in close proximity. Langley Bottom Wood (Site ID 205) is also located in close proximity. Although this will provide a very informal type of open space, the natural and semi natural open space is an important resource in the absence of a park and garden.

<b>PG5</b>	Warren Recreation Ground (Site ID 205) should be assessed for its park and garden function and improved where appropriate to provide a greater variety of facilities
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**Value assessment**

- 5.56 Most sites that have a high level of use would typically have a good or very good quality and accessibility rating. Most sites with a low level of use would typically have an average or poor quality and accessibility rating. This is because the factors are related and interlinked.
- 5.57 Despite having an average/poor quality and accessibility ratings, the usage of parks and gardens is on the whole high and significant. This suggests a high value to the sites and the need to address the quality and accessibility issues on each of the sites.
- 5.58 As demonstrated through the application of the accessibility standards there are a limited number of parks and gardens across the Borough, with substantial areas outside of the accessibility catchments. A number of recreation grounds have been identified that may serve a parks and gardens function. The quantity standard has been set at the current level of provision on the basis that residents are satisfied with this level of provision. However with a high value placed on the existing parks and gardens it is essential that the quality of sites are improved, particularly to encourage those people outside of the accessibility catchments to travel a little further to a high quality site.
- 5.59 Of the lowest quality sites, Bourne Hall Park (Site ID 17) rated poor for all aspects of the assessment, as did Mounthill Gardens (Site ID 59). For Bourne Hall Park, some of the issues included, graffiti and vandalism being evident and poor condition of pathways. Particular issues with Mounthill Gardens were litter problems, signage and again the poor condition of pathways. Both of these sites also have a poor accessibility rating, which should also be addressed.
- 5.60 Shadbolt Park (Site ID 37) also has both a poor quality rating with an average accessibility rating, yet a high/significant usage rating and again the quality and accessibility of this site should be addressed.
- 5.61 Rosebery Park (Site ID 24) has an average quality rating, a good/very good accessibility rating and a high usage rating. As such, the quality of Rosebery Park should be the priority, particularly the cleanliness and maintenance and vegetation.
- 5.62 Elizabeth Welchman (Site ID 20) on the other hand has a good quality rating and an average to good accessibility rating. As such, the priority in this case is improving the accessibility to this site.

<b>PG6</b>	Prioritise improvements to parks and gardens across the Borough to ensure residents continue to use this type of open space. In particular prioritise Bourne Hall Park (Site ID 17), Mounthill Gardens (Site ID 59) and Shadbolt Park (Site ID 37). Particular focus should be given to the safety and security of sites.
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**Site visits – maintenance and capital works**

5.63 From the visits to Council-owned sites, we have identified various capital and maintenance works required for each site. The costs of these works are set out in the table below and a full breakdown of these costs is set out in Appendix Q.

Site ID	Site name	Capital work required (£)	Maintenance required (£ pa)
17	Bourne Hall Park	146,000	13,500
20	Elizabeth Welchman Garden	56,000	
21	Ewell Court	140,000	4,000
24	Rosebery Park	32,000	7,000
37	Shadbolt Park	72,000	25,500
59	Mounthill Gardens	7,000	20,500
	<b>Total</b>	<b>453,000</b>	<b>70,500</b>

<b>PG7</b>	Improvements to Rosebery Park, Bourne Hall Park, Mounthill Gardens, Shadbolt Park, Elizabeth Welchman Gardens and Ewell Court Gardens (see Appendix Q for details)
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**Summary and conclusions**

- 5.64 The quantity standard is set at the existing level of provision at 0.35ha per 1000 population. As such, there is no quantitative deficiency across the Borough but a need to address quality and accessibility issues.
- 5.65 There are a number of areas that are not within the accessibility catchment of a park and garden but Epsom and Ewell Borough offers alternative provision in the form of Horton Country Park and the large number of recreation grounds across the Borough. To ensure residents’ access to parks and gardens, further consideration should be given to the ability of these sites to offer elements of a park and garden function.
- 5.66 Existing parks and gardens should be protected and prioritised for improvements to quality and accessibility as they are a highly valued resource.

**Summary of recommendations**

<b>PG1</b>	Protect the existing level of provision of parks and gardens across Epsom and Ewell Borough.
<b>PG2</b>	Protect and improve Horton Country Park as a natural and semi natural site that has a park and garden function and a strategic Borough-wide facility. Improve local access within Deficient Area A.
<b>PG3</b>	Investigate and improve (where appropriate) the park and garden function of the recreation grounds within the Borough, in particular, Chessington Road Recreation Ground/Bakers Field (Site ID 76) and Court Recreation Ground (Site ID 19).

<b>PG4</b>	Investigate and intensify the park and garden function of the larger areas of amenity greenspace within deficient area A.
<b>PG5</b>	Warren Recreation Ground (Site ID 205) should be assessed for its park and garden function and improved where appropriate to provide a greater variety of facilities
<b>PG6</b>	Prioritise improvements to parks and gardens across the borough to ensure residents continue to use this type of open space. In particular prioritise Bourne Hill Park (Site ID 17), Mounthill Gardens (Site ID 59) and Shadbolt Park (Site ID 37). Particular focus should be given to the safety and security of sites.
<b>PG7</b>	Address the backlog of works at Rosebery Park, Bourne Hall Park, Mounthill Gardens, Shadbolt Park, Elizabeth Welchman Gardens and Ewell Court Gardens (see Appendix Q for details)

**Funding options relevant to this typology**

5.67 In order to maintain and enhance the quality of the Borough’s parks and gardens, the following funding options may be considered:

**1. Sale of Council Land**

- this is discussed in greater detail in Section 13. Generating and reinvesting resources obtained from land, which is surplus to requirements is likely to be a long process, and ultimately may prove difficult to achieve but if considered feasible at some future stage, reinvestment would:
  - secure political credibility for the sale of land
  - provide sufficient funding to carry out significant rather than purely minor open space improvements. It should, however, be realised that the process may take two or three years to introduce, owing to planning, legal and other restrictions which could delay its introduction
  - also, this mechanism is likely to be create public controversy and its success depends on how the process and sale of land is conveyed to the public in terms of benefits and outcomes.

**2. Section 106 planning agreements**

- **Section 106 agreements** can be used to achieve environmental improvements. Once a strategy framework has been established, the process of obtaining these improvements will be enhanced because they can be used to achieve specific purposes such as obtaining open space in areas of deficiency and funding improvements relating to outdoor sports facilities depending on the site in question.

**3. Lottery Funding**

- **Heritage Lottery Fund** provides for whole-park projects, the conservation of park features or park activities. Grants are available from £50,000 to £5 million for a period of up to five years
- **The Lottery Small Grants Scheme** offers Awards for All grants of between £500 and £5,000 for small projects, which involve people in their community. These can include local environmental work and community park projects

**4. Local Heritage Initiatives**

- **Local Heritage Initiatives** - a community group could investigate and celebrate a historic park, prepare a public exhibition in a park, and repair a feature. Up to 100% of project costs between values of £3,000 and £25,000 are payable.
- **Your Heritage Grants** are available from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and are for projects of between £5,000 and £50,000 in value.
- **English Heritage** supports the Heritage Grant Fund for historic parks and gardens where there is a significant risk of losing important landscape features

**5. The Esmee Fairburn Foundation**

- **The Esmee Fairburn Foundation** aims to improve quality of life, particularly for people who face disadvantage. Eligible activities include the preservation and enhancement of open space including management of gardens. The size of grant is not limited.

5.68 Other sources of funding include business/funding sponsorships and partnership arrangements with the voluntary sector. These are discussed in greater detail in Section 13, which also expands on the funding opportunities mentioned here.