



Stafford Borough Council

**Open Space, Sport and Recreation
Assessment Update**

June 2013

Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and Recreation
Assessment Update
 June 2013

Contents

	1: Introduction	7
	2: The Greenspace Policy Context	11
	Introduction	11
	The Natural Environment White Paper (2011)	11
	The Biodiversity Strategy for England	12
	The Localism Act 2011	12
	The National Planning Policy Framework	12
	The Natural Environment	16
	Making Space for Nature (MSN)	17
	Natural England Green Infrastructure Guidance	18
	The Green Infrastructure Partnership	18
	Conclusions	19
	3: Sport and Physical Recreation Policy	20
	Conclusions	22
	4: The Local Policy Context	23
	Introduction	23
	Sustainable Community Strategy	23
	Council Corporate Plan	26
	The Plan for Stafford Borough (2012)	26
	Environmental Management Action Plan	34
	Health Strategy	34
	Settlement Assessment of Services and Facilities	34
	Green Infrastructure Strategy	35
	Parish Plans	36
	Implications for the Assessment	38
	5: Allotments	39
	Introduction	39
	The Quantity of Provision	39
	The Quality of Provision	42
	Current Accessibility	43
	Future Accessibility	44
	Trends	45
	Quantity Standard	48
	Application of the Quantity Standard	49

Conclusions	50
6: Artificial Turf Pitches	52
Introduction	52
Types of ATP	52
The Quantity of Provision	52
The Quality of Provision	55
The Current Accessibility of Provision	58
Trends	58
Supply-demand Comparison	60
Quantity Standard	61
Conclusions	65
7: Athletics Facilities	67
Introduction	67
The Use of the Track	67
Competing Facilities	67
The Current Quality of Provision	68
The Future of the Stafford Track	68
Quantity Standard	68
Indoor Training Facilities	68
8: Bowling Greens	70
Introduction	70
Quantity Standard	70
Accessibility	72
Quality and Value Audit Findings	74
Quantity Standard	75
Trends	75
Local Views	75
Conclusions	76
9: Provision for Children	77
Introduction	77
The Quantity of Provision	77
The Current Quality of Provision	78
The Accessibility of Provision	81
Quantity Standard	87
Conclusions	90
10: Golf Courses	93
The Current Quantity of Provision	93
The Current Quality of Provision	93
The Accessibility of Provision	93
Trends	95
Quantity Standard	95
Conclusions	95
11: Grass Pitches	96
Introduction	96
Governing Body Views	96
The Sport England Playing Pitch Model	102
Accessibility	107
Quality and Value	110
Quality, Value and Accessibility	113
Local Views	114

Pitch Economics	119
Conclusions	120
Quantity Standard	122
12: The Green Network	123
Introduction	123
Accessibility	123
Quality and Value	127
Quality, Value and Accessibility	132
Conservation Designations	138
Quality Standards	138
The Quantity of Provision	138
Local Views	140
Trends	141
Quantity Standard	142
Overall Accessibility	145
Secondary Purposes	147
Context Value	148
Nature Conservation Value	150
Amenity Value	150
Recreational Value	153
Play Value	153
Conclusions	156
13: Major Indoor Sports Facilities	157
Introduction	157
Fitness Facilities	157
Ice Rinks	162
Indoor Bowls Halls	162
Indoor Sports Halls	163
Indoor Swimming Pools	171
Indoor Tennis Halls	180
Summary of Quantity Standards	182
14: Multi-Courts	183
Introduction	183
The Current Quantity of Provision	184
The Current Quality of Provision	185
The Accessibility of Provision	185
Local Views	188
Trends	189
Quantity Standard	189
Conclusions	190
15: Tennis Courts	191
Introduction	191
The Current Quantity of Provision	191
The Current Quality of Provision	192
The Accessibility of Provision	193
Local Views	195
Trends	196
Quantity Standard	196
Conclusions	198
16: Teenage Facilities	199

Introduction	199
The Amount of Provision	199
Audit Findings	200
Accessibility	202
Quality Value and Accessibility	203
Quality Standard	203
Local Views	206
Trends	206
Quantity Standard	206
Conclusions	207
17: Revised Provision Standards	210
Introduction	210
Quantity Standards	210
Notes	211
18: Strategic Development Locations	214
Introduction	214
Application of Quantity Standards	214
North of Stafford	215
West of Stafford	223
East of Stafford	229
West and South of Stone	234
19: The Key Service Villages	240
Introduction	240
Existing Commitments	240
Evidence Base Conclusions	240
Barlaston	240
Eccleshall	244
Gnosall	247
Great Haywood	250
Haughton	253
Hixon	255
Little Haywood and Colwich	257
Tittensor	260
Weston	262
Woodseaves and High Offley	264
Yarnfield	267

Appendices (bound separately)

A	Provision Standards
	Introduction
	General Requirements
	MFGS: Amenity Greenspace
	MFGS: Natural Greenspace
	MFGS: Parks and Gardens
	Green Corridors
	Civic Spaces
	Allotments and Community Gardens
	Formal Play Provision
	Multi-sport Courts
	Youth Facilities
	Artificial Turf Pitches

Bowling Greens
Grass Sports Pitches
Tennis Courts
Sports Halls and Swimming Pools
Useful Information

B Survey of Town and Parish Councils

B1 Parish Councils – Quantity and quality
B2 Priorities for more
B3 Priorities for better
B4 Outcomes wanted
B5 Other views

C Population Data

C1 Parish populations
C2 Census data 2011

D Indoor Sports Provision

D1 Indoor sports facilities listing

E Audit Summary

E1 Allotments
E2 ATPs
E3 Bowling greens
E4 Cricket pitches
E5 Equipped play areas
E6 Football pitches
E7 Golf courses
E8 MFGS
E9 Multi-courts
E10 Rugby pitches
E11 Teenage facilities
E12 Tennis courts

F Accessibility Assessment

F1 Walking accessibility
F2 Cycling accessibility
F3 Driving accessibility

G Playing Pitch Model

G1 PPM base Data
G2 Cricket teams
G3 Cricket pitches
G4 PPM cricket – current
G5 PPM Cricket – future
G6 Adult football teams
G7 Youth football teams
G8 Mini-soccer teams
G9 Football pitches
G10 PPM Football - current
G11 Hockey teams
G12 Hockey pitches
G13 PPM Hockey – current

- G14 PPM Hockey – future
- G15 Rugby teams
- G16 Rugby pitches
- G17 PPM Rugby –Current
- G18 PPM Rugby – Future
- G19 Team Generation Rates
- G20 Pitch Quantity Standards

H Quantity Analysis

- H1 Quantity Analysis – allotments
- H2 Quantity Analysis – Bowling greens
- H3 Quantity Analysis – Play areas
- H4 Quantity Analysis – MFGS
- H5 Quantity Analysis – Multi-courts
- H6 Quantity Analysis – Teenagers
- H7 Quantity Analysis – Tennis courts

I Strategic Development Locations

- I1 SDL Calculations

J: Provision in Key Service Villages

- J1 Barlaston
- J2 Eccleshall
- J3 Gnosall
- J4 Great Haywood
- J5 Haughton
- J6 Hixon
- J7 Little Haywood and Colwich
- J8 Tittensor
- J9 Weston
- J10 Woodseaves and High Offley
- J11 Yarnfield

Kit Campbell Associates
Open Space, Sport and Recreation Consultants
12 Cramond Road North
Edinburgh EH4 6HS
June 2013

1: Introduction

- 1.1 This document provides the evidence base that underpins the open space, sports and recreation elements of the *Plan for Stafford Borough*. It is an updated version of the 2009 PPG17 Assessment and responds to the requirements of paragraph 73 of the National Planning Policy Framework:

Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.

- 1.2 Accordingly, it:

- Summarises the national and local policy contexts relating to open space, sport and recreation provision
- Reviews the amount, distribution and quality of existing provision
- Identifies where there is a need for more or better provision and the types of enhancements which will benefit existing facilities and spaces most
- Suggests appropriate provision standards for the Borough Council to use as part of the planning process
- Identifies the new provision that the Council should require developers to provide or fund in Stafford and Stone (including the proposed the strategic development locations to the north, west

and east of Stafford and west of Stone) and the Borough's key service villages

- 1.3 The emphasis in this report is on provision within or immediately adjacent to the Borough's settlements. It therefore complements the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy (2009). However, it also provides part of the evidence base for a high level composite Green Infrastructure, Greenspace and Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy for the Borough.

Typology of Provision

- 1.4 This assessment uses the same typology of provision as the 2009 assessment:

- Allotments
- Artificial Turf Pitches
- Athletics tracks
- Bowling greens
- Indoor sports facilities – fitness facilities, ice rinks, indoor bowls halls, indoor tennis halls, sports halls and swimming pools
- Multi-functional greenspaces, encompassing cemeteries and churchyards; amenity greenspaces (essentially informal recreation spaces, mainly in and around housing areas); natural greenspaces (including woodland and all land with a nature conservation value or designation; and parks and gardens
- Playing fields and grass pitches, including recreation grounds
- Play areas and playgrounds: equipped play areas intended for children up to the age of about 12
- Tennis and multi-sport courts: these facilities are broadly similar, but multi-sport courts are hard surfaced outdoor areas, preferably floodlit, designed for a range of sports including tennis, netball and 5-a-side football
- Teenage facilities – BMX/skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops and other informal areas intended primarily for teenagers

- 1.5 Like the 2009 assessment, this report also refers to the "Green Network" - the network of publicly accessible greenspaces in the Borough's towns and villages that serve important secondary purposes such as providing visual amenity, supporting biodiversity and nature conservation and offering opportunities for informal recreation for people of all ages. In terms of the above typology, the Green Network consists of multi-functional greenspaces plus playing fields and recreation grounds. It therefore

excludes those spaces and facilities with a highly specific use such as allotments, bowling greens and tennis courts.

Parishes and Planning Areas

- 1.6 Map 1.1 below shows the various parishes within the Borough and also the six planning areas used for the assessment.

- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes
- Borough boundary



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 1.1
Parishes and
Planning areas

© Crown copyright and database rights (2013) Ordnance Survey (100018205)

2: The Greenspace Policy Context

Introduction

2.1 The national policy agenda underpinning open greenspace planning has changed considerably over the past few years. This chapter provides a brief overview of current national policy priorities as expressed in:

- The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP)
- The Biodiversity Strategy for England (BSE)
- The Localism Act, 2011
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Making Space for Nature (MSN)
- Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Guidance (GIG)
- DEFRA’s Green Infrastructure Partnership (GIP)

The Natural Environment White Paper (2011)

2.2 The NEWP’s starting point is that the quality of the natural environment is declining, highly fragmented and unable to respond to the pressures that will follow from climate change.

2.3 It is based largely on the concept of “ecosystem services” and the benefits that society gains from natural resources and functioning natural systems – benefits such as food and water, fertile soils and clean air. As many of these systems are in decline the benefits society derives from them are also in decline. As a result the NEWP argues for the creation and maintenance of a “resilient ecological network across England”. Its “2020 mission” is to halt biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning eco-systems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people. It also refers to urban green infrastructure as completing “the links in our national ecological network” and “one of the most effective tools available to us in managing environmental risks such as flooding and heat waves”.

2.4 The White Paper introduced a number of new policy

initiatives, including:

- **Local Nature Partnerships**, intended to work at a strategic scale for a better natural environment
- **Nature Improvement Areas** intended to enhance and reconnect nature on a significant scale
- **Biodiversity offsets**, designed to deliver biodiversity benefits for losses through compensatory habitat expansion or restoration elsewhere
- A **Green Infrastructure Partnership** designed to support the development of GI in England

The Biodiversity Strategy for England

2.5 *Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services* sets out how the Government intends to implement international and EU commitments. It aims to reduce the environmental pressures created by development by "taking a strategic approach to planning for nature" and by retaining "the protection and improvement of the natural environment as core objectives of the planning system".

The Localism Act 2011

2.6 The Localism Act sets out an ambitious aim of "taking power away from officials and putting it into the hands of those who know most about their neighbourhood – local people themselves". It requires changes to strategic, local and neighbourhood level planning; the most significant for greenspace planning relate to the neighbourhood level as it empowers Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Fora to develop Neighbourhood Development Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders.

The National Planning Policy Framework

2.7 The NPPF (published March 2012) is a streamlined version of the former Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements issued by governments over the years. It starts from the premise that the purpose of planning is to achieve sustainable growth and therefore it has an economic role, a social role and an environmental role. In particular, the planning system should seek to deliver positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment and people's quality of life. In more detail, the government's aims for the planning system are that it should help:

- Build a strong, competitive economy
- Ensure the vitality of town centres
- Support a prosperous rural economy
- Promote sustainable transport

- Support high quality communications infrastructure
- Deliver a wide choice of high quality homes
- Require good design
- Promote healthy communities
- Protect Green Belt land
- Meet the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change
- Conserve and enhance the natural environment
- Conserve and enhance the historic environment
- Facilitate the sustainable use of minerals

2.8 As a result, the NPPF is structured around these thirteen objectives. It sets out policies for greenspace and green infrastructure in Section 8, *Promoting Healthy Communities*; Section 9, *Protecting Green Belt Land*; Section 10, *Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change*; and Section 11, *Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment*.

Promoting Healthy Communities

2.9 Open space is a vitally important component of sustainable development and is covered in the NPPF objective of *Promoting Health Communities*. It requires planning authorities:

- To create a shared vision with communities of the residential environment and facilities they wish to see (paragraph 69)
- To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs (paragraph 70)
- To base their planning policies on “robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision” (paragraph 73) - in effect, what was known until recently as a “PPG17 assessment” or “greenspace strategy”
- To protect and enhance public rights of way and access (paragraph 75)

2.10 Paragraph 74 provides highly specific guidance:

Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- *An assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or*
- *The loss resulting from the proposed*

development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- *The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.*

- 2.11 Some national agencies and many local communities interpret this as strongly protectionist, but it is not. It actually promotes change for the better, provided the need for it is clearly evidenced and there will be a net long term gain to local communities in terms of the NPPF's aims. Therefore change has to deliver more sustainable open space, sport and recreation provision that is of at least equivalent quality and quantity to current provision and will do more to enhance the quality of life of local communities. Few would argue with this as a guiding principle, but as with much of the NPPF what it actually means in relation to any specific proposal for change provides those in favour and those against with a good subject for an argument. For many sports participants, for example, the second and third exceptions to in paragraph 74 NPPF provides clear justification for providing an artificial turf pitch on an existing poor quality and poorly used grass playing field in an area where there is spare pitch capacity at the weekend, but a shortage of training space midweek. Those opposed, however, will argue that they want to retain the open space in its present form and therefore the space should be protected. However, by linking the three exceptions with "or", rather than "and", the NPPF makes clear that it is not necessary to satisfy all of the exceptions, but only any one of them.

- 2.12 Paragraphs 76 and 77 introduce a new provision into national planning policy: the possibility that

Local communities through local and neighbourhood plans should be able to identify for special protection green areas of particular importance to them. By designating land as Local Green Space local communities will be able to rule out new development other than in very special circumstances.

- 2.13 This means that many local communities – and at least some of the Borough's Parish and Town Councils - will want local and neighbourhood plans to designate all of their green spaces as Local Green Spaces. The NPPF tries to prevent this by stating that the designation should be used only:

- Where the green space is in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- Where the green area is demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- Where the green area concerned is local in character and is not an extensive tract of land

2.14 The way this paragraph of the NPPF is worded (with “and” rather than “or”) suggests that all three of these criteria should apply before a space can be designated.

Protecting Green Belt Land

2.15 Paragraph 79 of the NPPF states unequivocally that “the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open”. Paragraph 81 requires planning authorities to

“... plan positively to enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt, such as looking for opportunities to provide access; to provide opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation; to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity; or to improve damaged and derelict land”.

2.16 In many ways the NPPF seeks to promote rather than prevent development, even in sensitive areas. Paragraph 89 states that the construction of buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate, although it also highlights a number of exceptions to this general rule. They include the

“... provision of appropriate facilities for outdoor sports, outdoor recreation and for cemeteries, as long as it preserves the openness of the Green Belt and does not conflict with the purposes of providing land within it”.

Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change

2.17 Although interest in Green Infrastructure planning has grown rapidly in the past few years, the NPPF makes only two very limited references to it. The first is in paragraph 99, which states that local plans

should take account of climate change and, where it is likely to have detrimental impacts, plans should include suitable adaptation measures, “including through the planning of green infrastructure”.

The Natural Environment

2.18 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF suggests that the planning system should help conserve and enhance the natural environment by:

- Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils
- Recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services
- Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures
- Preventing both new and existing development from contributing to or being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability
- Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate

2.19 In relation to designated sites, paragraph 113 states that planning authorities should ...

... set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites or landscape areas will be judged. Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.

2.20 The second reference to Green Infrastructure is in paragraph 114, which emphasises that planning authorities should

... set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.”

Provision Standards

- 2.21 The NPPF makes no specific reference to provision standards for green space or sport and recreation provision, although it does require planning authorities to use national standards in relation to the sustainability of buildings. However, paragraph 174, in a sub-section of that part of the Framework entitled “Using a proportionate evidence base”, requires that planning authorities

... set out their policy on local standards in the Local Plan, including requirements for affordable housing. They should assess the likely cumulative impacts on development in the area of all existing and proposed local standards, supplementary planning documents and policies that support the development plan, when added to nationally required standards. In order to be appropriate, the cumulative impact of these standards and policies should not put implementation of the plan at serious risk, and should facilitate development throughout the economic cycle.

- 2.22 Implicitly, therefore, the NPPF continues the approach set out in the former PPG17 of requiring councils to adopt locally-determined standards for open space, sport and recreation provision. However, it also makes clear that planning authorities should not impose so many requirements on developers that plans become undeliverable. It seems to require councils to determine if this will be the case as part of the plan-making process, although this is obviously impractical as it will vary considerably from time to time. Therefore the sensible approach will be for councils to set out all of their potential requirements in their plans, but accept that they will constantly have to determine their priorities and length of their “shopping list” in the light of specific development proposals and what is likely to be affordable when determining a planning application. However, paragraph 174 is also likely to be seen by developers as giving them carte blanche to challenge councils’ demands for both on and off-site infrastructure.

Making Space for Nature (MSN)

- 2.23 MSN also highlights the decline in biodiversity and fragmentation of wildlife habitats, resulting in a reduction in the benefits that ecosystems deliver. It suggests that the overall aim for England’s ecological networks should be to ensure that:

Compared to the situation in 2000, biodiversity is enhanced and the diversity, functioning and resilience of ecosystems re-established in a network of spaces for nature that can sustain these levels into the future, even given continuing environmental change and human pressures.

Natural England Green Infrastructure Guidance

2.24 Natural England has been promoting the concept of green infrastructure (GI) for some years. However, its initial attempts concentrated on trying to persuade local authorities to adopt its Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) which set out an aspiration that everyone should be able to access a range of green spaces of different sizes within fixed maximum distances from their home. ANGSt has three main failings. First, it ignored the requirement in the former PPG17 that provision standards for open space should be locally determined; Second, it treated GI as a land use rather than a method of harnessing natural system and process; and third, it was simply unachievable in many areas. GI thinking has now moved on to focus more on the planned use of natural systems and processes (ecosystems) than what was ultimately an arbitrarily determined set of standards.

2.25 Natural England has published a considerable amount of guidance on green infrastructure. It also publishes a monthly Green Infrastructure Digest giving information on publications relating to GI, a summary of recent GI news, events and training, tools, case studies, and funding.

The Green Infrastructure Partnership

2.26 The Green Infrastructure Partnership fulfils a commitment in the Natural Environment Green Paper. It brings together a wide range of organisations with a remit to:

- Find ways to provide green infrastructure in towns, cities and rural areas
- Address barriers that might prevent this progress
- Develop an evidence base on the condition of England's green infrastructure and how it meets the needs of communities
- Demonstrate the many benefits that green infrastructure can bring
- Look into how communities, planners and decision-makers can best be supported in designing and developing green infrastructure
- Help people to quantify the costs and benefits of investing in green infrastructure and make the

case for green infrastructure projects

2.27 The partnership defines GI as “a planned network of green spaces and other environmental features including street trees, gardens, green roofs, community forests, parks, rivers, canals and wetlands”. It has gone on to commission research on six broad topics:

- How to design and retrofit GI
- How to plan GI for ecosystem services
- How to work with communities
- How to implement GI at the local level
- How to value and make the case for GI
- How to ensure that people have the skills and knowledge to deliver improved GI

Conclusions

2.28 This brief review suggests that Stafford’s approach to greenspace provision should:

- Treat greenspaces as infrastructure that can deliver clear benefits for local people, wildlife and the long term sustainability of the Borough in a cost-effective manner
- Take full account of the opportunities created by the NPPF to rationalise and improve provision, if necessary disposing of some poorly located and used spaces to fund the improvement of others
- Set out clear requirements for developers providing on-site greenspaces and how the Council will seek to use CIL to fund new or enhanced strategic greenspace provision
- Seek to harness and promote the use of ecosystems to make the Borough more sustainable and deliver significant benefits to the local quality of life
- As a general principle, seek to enhance biodiversity across the Borough wherever possible

3: Sport and Physical Recreation Policy

3.1 National policy towards the development of sport and physical recreation has also changed in the past few years, largely as a result of the policy imperative to deliver a lasting legacy from the London Olympic Games. This chapter provides a brief overview of current national policy priorities as expressed in:

- Developing a Sporting Habit for Life (DCMS, 2012)
- A Sporting Habit for Life (Sport England's strategy 2012-2017)

Creating a Sporting Habit for Life (January 2012)

3.2 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Youth Sport Strategy for an unspecified period beginning in 2012 notes that:

Since London won the right to stage the (Olympic) Games in 2005, participation rates amongst young people have fallen, with many of our major sports – including Football, Tennis and Swimming – seeing declines in the proportion of 16-25 year olds regularly taking part. Whilst participation rates remain relatively high in school (where curriculum Physical Education (PE) is compulsory), when young people leave school the proportion who continue to play sport falls dramatically. The problem is starker for girls, with around only a third participating in sport at 18 compared to two-thirds of boys.

3.3 The strategy seeks deliver

“...a long-term step change in the number of people who play sport” and “... to create a

sporting habit amongst our young people that will last a lifetime"

3.4 The Government is therefore seeking a significant, lasting increase in the proportion of young people regularly playing sport, which it aims to achieve by:

- Building a lasting legacy of competitive sport in schools
- Improving links between schools and community sports clubs
- Working with sports governing bodies to focus on youth
- Investing in facilities
- Working with communities and the voluntary sector

3.5 The main foundation of the strategy is the development of school-club links. It notes that:

By 2017 we will have established at least 6,000 new school-club links. Football has pledged that 2,000 of their clubs will be linked to secondary schools, Cricket 1,250, Rugby Union 1,300, Rugby League another 1,000 and Tennis has pledged 1,000. This is a great commitment to the new strategy from our biggest sports.

In addition:

Every secondary school in England will be offered a community sports club on its site and will have a direct link to one or more of the sports' governing bodies. Through their Whole Sport Plans, the governing bodies will have to demonstrate the steps they will take to improve the transition from school to community clubs and County Sports Partnerships will be given new resources to create effective local links between schools and sport in the community.

A Sporting Habit for Life

3.6 Sport England's strategy 2012-2017 very much reflects the DCMS one. It aims to create a meaningful legacy from London 2012 by growing sports participation at the grassroots level and intends that the strategy will:

- See more people taking on and keeping a sporting habit for life
- Create more opportunities for young people

- Nurture and develop talent
- Provide the right facilities in the right places
- Support local authorities and unlock local funding
- Ensure real opportunities for communities

3.7 The strategy has three broad aims:

- Better transitions from school to college, university, work and beyond
- A higher percentage of 14-25 year olds playing sport once a week and reducing the proportion dropping out of sport by age 25
- Year on year growth in adult participation

3.8 In terms of facilities, Sport England intends:

- To build on its Places People Play programme with up to £100M of new investment for the most popular sports plus an additional mid-range funding programme
- To open up school facilities for greater community use, including the development of community clubs on school sites
- To continue to protect playing fields

3.9 Overall, Sport England intends to invest over £1 Billion between 2012 and 2017 or roughly £20 for every person living in England. If it is distributed equitably, therefore, Stafford can expect to receive about £2.5-2.6M over these six years.

Conclusions

3.10 This brief review suggests that Stafford's approach to open space, sport and recreation provision should:

- Promote the development of community sports clubs on secondary school sites
- Concentrate on those sports that are likely to appeal most to young people and ensure that they will find sport enjoyable and attractive; this means that they must be accessible, of high quality and consistently available.

4: The Local Policy Context

Introduction

4.1 This chapter reviews the local policy context – the plans and strategies that apply most directly to the Borough and are relevant to this assessment. They are:

- *Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2020* (Stafford Borough Partnership)
- *Improving Stafford Borough* (the Council's Corporate Plan 2012-2015)
- *The Plan for Stafford Borough* (Pre-submission), 2012
- *Environmental Management Action Plan 2010-2013* (Stafford Borough Council)
- *Health Strategy 2008-2013: Health and Well-being in our Community* (Stafford Borough Council)
- *Revised Settlement Assessment of Services and Facilities* (Stafford Borough Council 2012)
- *Tree Strategy* (Stafford Borough Council 1998)
- A Green Infrastructure Strategy for Stafford, 2009
- *Parish Plans for Doxey, Fulford, the Mid West Stafford Market Towns, Milwich and Salt and Enson*

Sustainable Community Strategy

4.2 The Sustainable Community Plan 2008-2020, *Shaping Our Borough for the Future*, is the most important local strategy relating to the Borough and has been approved by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and endorsed by the Borough Council. It is in three main sections:

- Profile and Baseline
- Sustainability Objectives
- Vision and Themes for 2020

Profile and Baseline

4.3 Relevant facts highlighted about the Borough include:

- The population was 123,400 in 2006. Of this total, 21,300 were aged 0-15 years; 75,600 between 16 and 64; and 26,400 were classed as older people. By 2026 the over 60s population is forecast to increase by 23%. There is also a declining birth rate and by 2021 there is forecast to be a decline of 21% in the number of under 16s. This suggests a significant decline in participation in those sports that appeal most to people in this age group, primarily football, rugby, swimming and gymnastics.
- The Borough' population has an average age of 40.4 years, above the national average of 38.8 years. With the forecast increase in the older age groups, the average age is expected to rise further.
- The Borough is fairly prosperous and (just) in the top half of council areas in England when ranked from those with the lowest to highest multiple deprivation. Average household incomes are slightly higher than for England and Wales.
- Levels of crime are around the British average
- The Borough has two national nature reserves (NNRs); 16 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); 7 local nature reserves (LNRs); and 256 sites of biological importance (SBIs). However, the preceding Sustainable Community Strategy highlighted that between 1980 and 2006 the Borough lost 37% of its SBIs, the biggest casualty being over 50% of the wet grasslands.
- Tackling climate change and preserving the Borough for future generations is a high priority and 78% of residents are concerned about climate change

Vision for 2020

4.4 The LSP vision is of

Improving the quality of life for our communities by making the Borough a safer, healthier, cleaner and more sustainable place for all to live, learn, work and invest in

4.5 By 2020, the LSP wants the Borough:

- To have a vibrant, prosperous, sustainable economy and environment, through
 - Securing the conditions for a thriving economy, where all businesses are supported in their development and long term

- sustainability
 - Promoting innovation and nurturing enterprise so that new businesses are given every opportunity to develop and grow
 - Being a place where the environment is protected and enhanced and a sustainable way of life is promoted, supported and delivered
 - To be a Borough where members of the community are safe and feel safe, through being an area where all members of the community are secure and free from fear of crime in their homes, places of work or study, in the street, town centres and the countryside
 - To have a protected and enhanced environment, through
 - Proactively preparing for and adapting to climate change
 - Increasing the understanding and awareness of sustainable development so that everyone is able to contribute to it
 - To be a Borough in which people feel included in society and live longer, healthier and more contented lives, through
 - The promotion of healthy lifestyles and general wellbeing
 - Being a place where a strong sense of inclusion within the community is promoted – one that enhances the quality of life for all and enables everyone to actively participate in society
- 4.6 The strategy includes an action plan in which the LSP sets out its priority projects and initiatives for the period from 2008-2020. Those that implementation of the *Green Infrastructure, Greenspace and Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy* can best help deliver are:
- **Project PE 1.3:** Biodiversity conservation, measured by the number of actively managed sites
 - **Project PE 1.4:** Increasing the amount of washlands, measured by the number of actively managed sites, the areas of additional wet grassland created and the length of river bank re-profiled
 - **Project HWB 1.1:** Promoting health and wellbeing, measured by participation in regular

- volunteering and adult participation in sport
- **Project HWB 1.4:** Integrating sustainable development and health, measured by access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling, the number of people registered on the Walking for Health programme and the number of number of voluntary walk-leaders trained
- **Project HWB 3.5:** Children and young people provided with good access to high quality, leisure and cultural sport experience, measured by the number of young people aged 16 and under participation in local authority organised sports development programmes and active recreation programmes

Council Corporate Plan

4.7 The Council's Corporate Plan 2012-2015, *Improving Stafford Borough*, has four broad priorities:

- **Prosperity:** a flourishing, thriving, successful Borough where we encourage and nurture economic growth and diversification
- **Clean, Green, Safe:** an attractive environment in which our community feels safe
- **Health and Wellbeing:** happy and healthy residents with an improved sense of wellbeing
- **Leading and Delivering:** a high performing Council that champions the needs and aspirations of its communities

4.8 Unlike the previous version of the Plan (2008-14) there are no actions or targets in the "Clean, Green, Safe" section of the Plan relating to greenspace or sport and recreation provision. However, the Health and Wellbeing priority commits the Council to implementing the action plan in the Health Strategy in terms of healthy lifestyles. There is further information on this below.

The Plan for Stafford Borough (2012)

4.9 The Pre-submission Plan identifies eight "key issues and challenges":

- Delivering and managing the Borough's growth
- Providing affordable homes
- Adapting to local demographic change
- Sustaining the attractive and distinctive quality of the natural and built environment
- Ensuring that the District can prepare for and respond to climate change
- Maximising access to services and reducing the need to travel
- Providing additional employment opportunities that meet local needs, concerns and aspirations for a diverse local economy

- Bringing necessary regeneration benefits to the Borough, including those that will contribute to the success of the town and other settlements

4.10 In terms of this strategy, the main implications of these key issues are the need:

- To ensure that growth does not compromise the quality of life in the Borough: this might happen, for example, if development creates unacceptable harm to sites with a nature conservation designation or fails to include adequate greenspace and sport and recreation provision
- To harness the power of natural systems and processes to respond to the challenges created by climate change
- To respond to the “localism” agenda by ensuring that greenspace and sports and recreation provision is as accessible to local residents as possible, ideally on foot or by bicycle

4.11 The spatial vision in the Plan for the Borough by 2031 includes aspirations that it will have:

- Retained and enhanced its unique character
- Provided high quality designed developments including recreation, open space and sport provision
- Reduced the need to travel, through the provision of increased facilities and services in key locations to sustain the surrounding rural areas
- Improved accessibility to services and facilities by providing safe, attractive and convenient sustainable connections from and to new developments

4.12 The vision also says that the Borough’s villages will have provided new green infrastructure/biodiversity enhancement schemes.

The Plan’s objectives include:

For Stafford

- Create new communities supported by district centres, open space, sport and recreation provision, new health centres including GP surgeries and new primary schools
- Enhance existing, and provision of significant, new green infrastructure and habitats in the area through green links from the surrounding open countryside and the Cannock Chase AONB

into the heart of Stafford

- New open space, sport and recreational facilities, including indoor and outdoor provision, to meet the needs of an increasing population

For Stone:

- New open space, sport and recreational facilities, including indoor and outdoor provision, to meet the needs of the community
- Safeguard and enhance the landscape setting through new green infrastructure provision and habitat creation including supporting the Trent Valley corridor through the town in terms of biodiversity, accessibility, recreation and community uses

For areas outside Stafford and Stone:

- Support increased habitat maintenance, restoration and creation, and the encouragement of a diverse range of species as part of the strategic green infrastructure network
- New open space, sport and recreational facilities, including indoor and outdoor provision, to meet the needs of the community, including through increased multi-use provision such as community halls

- 4.13 The Plan includes a number of Spatial Principles, two of which have implications for the Green Infrastructure, Greenspace and Sport and Recreation Provision Strategy:

Spatial Principle 3: Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy

The majority of future development will be delivered through the sustainable settlement hierarchy of

- County Town of Stafford
- Market Town of Stone
- Key service villages of Eccleshall, Gnosall, Hixon, Great Haywood, Little Haywood/Colwich, Haughton, Weston, Woodseaves, Barlaston, Tittensor and Yarnfield

Spatial Principle 4: Housing Growth Distribution

The targets for the distribution of housing development over the life of the Plan, supported by the necessary infrastructure, will be:

	%	Dwellings
• Stafford	72%	5,560
• Stone	8%	469
• Key service villages	12%	629
• Rest of rural area	8%	297
• Totals	100%	6,955

Note: the number of dwellings shown in this list is the requirement for new dwellings over and above those already committed, less 10%.

Anticipated Population Growth

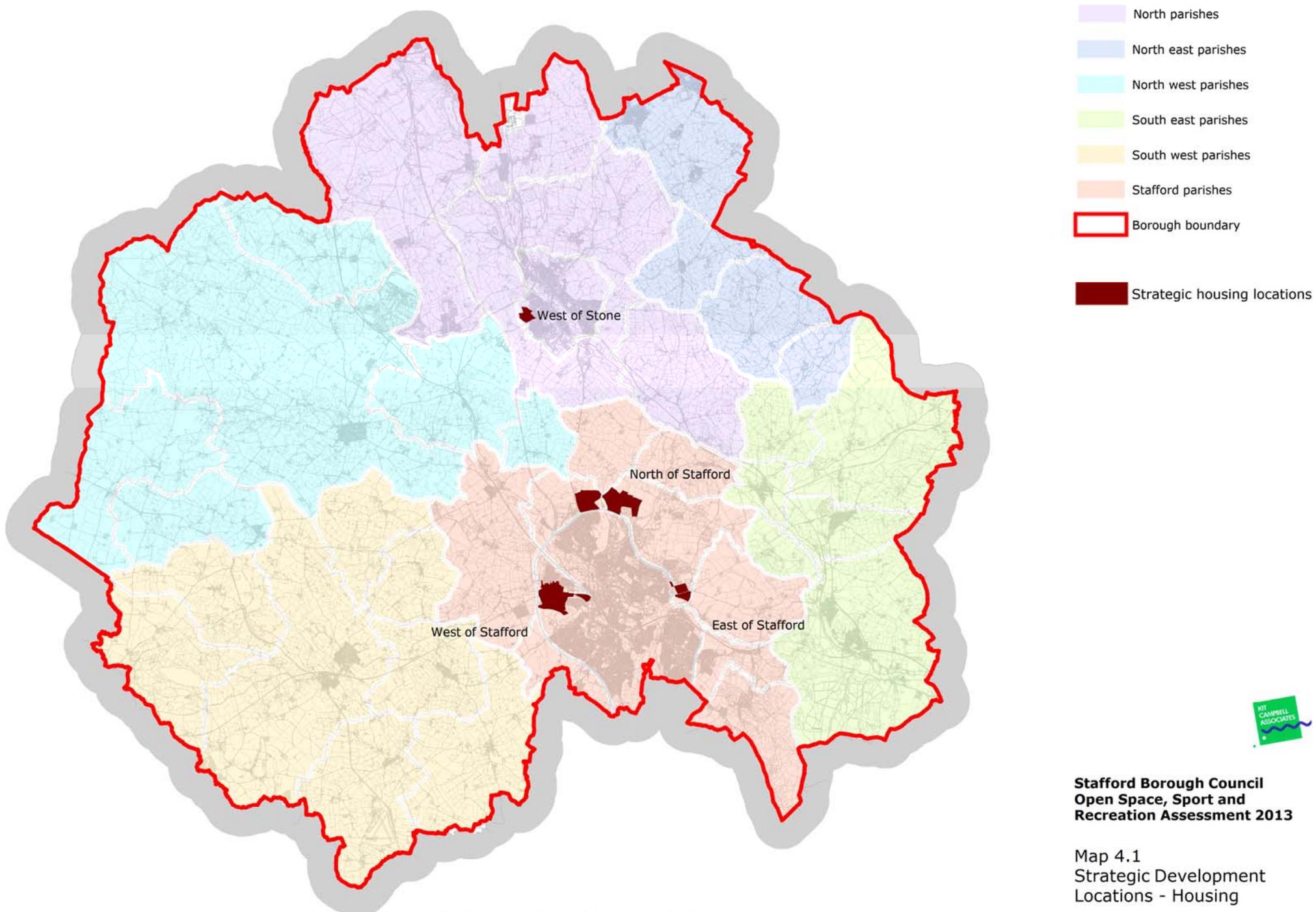
4.14 Overall, the Plan estimates that the population of the Borough will rise from 123,400 in 2006 to 137,900 in 2025 and 138,600 by 2026, an increase of 15,200 or about 12%. However, over this period the population aged 65 and over will grow from 22,100 to 35,300, an increase of 3,200.

4.15 Most of the population growth will be in four Strategic Development Locations shown on Map 4.1 below:

• North of Stafford	3,100 new dwellings
• West of Stafford	2,200 new dwellings
• East of Stafford	600 new dwellings
• West of Stone	500 new dwellings

4.16 The 2011 census identified the population of the Borough as 130,869 and the number of households with at least one resident as 55,703. Therefore the average occupancy of dwellings in the Borough in 2011 was 2.33 people. If the same average occupancy applies to the proposed new dwellings, the population in each of the new dwellings in the Strategic Development Locations (rounded to the nearest 100) will be:

• North of Stafford	7,200
• West of Stafford	5,100
• East of Stafford	1,400
• West of Stone	1,200
• Total	14,900



Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013

Map 4.1
 Strategic Development
 Locations - Housing

- 4.17 Not all of these people will be incomers to the Borough and therefore new residents. Nationally, the average household size is reducing slowly as a result of a range of factors such as later marriage, higher divorce and separation rates and more old people living alone. This means that towns and cities need more dwellings even if their population is static or even declining slightly. The main implication for this assessment is that while the above figures for population in each of the strategic Development Locations can and should be used in order to estimate the demand for open space, sport and recreation provision in these areas, there will be a slight reduction in demand in other areas of the Borough as some existing residents move into the new dwellings.

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision

- 4.18 Policy C7 of the Plan, *Open Space, Sport and Recreation*, states that

Support will be given to sport and recreation by:

a. Retaining, protecting, supplementing or enhancing all types of sport, recreation and open space facilities, in order to address deficiencies of both indoor and outdoor facilities outlined in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment and subsequent revisions

b. Encouraging additional provision, and enhancements to existing provision, which will reduce or prevent deficiencies, and requiring new housing development to contribute to provision, to help meet the Local Standards set out in Appendix G (of the Plan)

c. Supplementing specific open space proposals detailed in the area based policies

As a general principle, there will be a presumption that open space, sport and recreation facilities will be provided on the development site. Only in exceptional circumstances will an off site contribution on another site provided by the developer be accepted, where it is proven that on site provision is not feasible or unviable, Where the developer provides evidence which demonstrates that neither on-site nor off-site provision of sport space, sport and

recreation facilities is appropriate, a commuted sum, based on a calculation from the Local Standards may be considered.

Development that results in the loss of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities will be resisted unless better facilities in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility can be provided or that redevelopment would not result in a deficiency in the local area. New facilities should be located in areas that are accessible by walking, public transport and cycling and such developments will be particularly welcome in areas with identified deficiencies.

Development of recreation activities in the countryside will be supported provided that there is no significant impact on landscape and nature conservation interests, traffic generation, is appropriate in scale, and uses existing buildings where possible. Development associated with recreational activities will be limited to facilities that are necessary and ancillary to the main recreation use.

- 4.19 The Plan also notes that the Council will be preparing a new Supplementary Planning Document on Open Space, Sport and Recreation Provision in order to assist delivery of the policy.

Green Infrastructure

- 4.20 Policy N4, *The Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure*, requires that the Borough's natural environment is protected, enhanced and improved and its green infrastructure network will be protected, enhanced and expanded.

Specific Stafford Town Requirements

- 4.21 The Plan requires that new development in Stafford will deliver:
- New indoor wet-side capacity (ie swimming pools or pools)
 - New indoor multi-use and specialist facilities including opportunities for joint use of educational/community establishments
 - Increased number and quality of allotments across the town
 - Improved safety and accessibility of children's

- play areas
- High quality and adequately sized green spaces
- Adequate access to natural green spaces
- Improved access to multi-sport courts
- High quality range of facilities for teenagers

4.22 More specifically, the North and West of Stafford development areas are to include new “destination parks” including children’s play provision and multi-use games areas. The existing destination parks in Stafford town are defined as Victoria Park, Wildwood Park and Rowley Park.

4.23 In addition the Green Infrastructure Strategy recommends the creation of a Penk and Sow natural parkland and enlarging Stafford Common to create a community park.

Specific Stone Requirements

4.24 The main requirements for Stone with implications for this strategy are:

- New housing in a strategic location to the west of the town, incorporating children’s play areas and multi-use games areas, to be delivered after 2021
- Increased and high quality allotment provision
- A floodlit artificial turf pitch
- Improved quality of play areas
- Increased size of green spaces
- High quality multi-use indoor sports facilities in association with community and educational establishments
- Adequate range of facilities for teenagers

Delivery

4.25 The Council intends to deliver infrastructure requirements through a combination of the Community Infrastructure Levy, planning obligations and s278 agreements. However, in the strategic development locations in Stafford and Stone planning obligations will be the primary source of developer contributions towards environmental infrastructure, including a network of green space and destination parks. The Plan does not state explicitly how the Council intends to fund additional or enhanced sport and recreation provision, but by implication it is through planning obligations.

Local Space Standards

4.26 Appendix G of the Plan, *Local Space Standards*, sets out a range of standards for open space and sport and recreation provision taken from the 2009 version of this assessment. As a result of this updating there will be a need to make a few minor amendments to these standards. The changes required are given in Chapter 17 below.

Environmental Management Action Plan

4.27 The Environmental Management Action Plan 2010-2013, follows on from the Staffordshire Declaration (2006) and the Council's first Low Carbon Initiative (2009). It is based on three main priorities:

- Strong communities
- Risks and adaptation – extreme weather events
- Environmental management

4.28 The strong communities theme includes projects to:

- Encourage and promote healthy lifestyles
- Revamp the sports development programme
- Increase the number of rural initiatives
- Promote positive conservation and management of local nature reserves
- Develop and implement a biodiversity toolkit and address biodiversity data needs

Health Strategy

4.29 This strategy, sub-titled *Health and Well-being for our Community 2008-2013*, states that the Council's vision is to lead a community and Borough which is prosperous, safe, healthy, clean and green. The same vision underpins the Council's Prosperity Strategy and the two are obviously closely linked. The "areas of focus" in the Health Strategy action plan include:

- Reducing the number of adults and children who are overweight or obese
- Development and expansion of the Walking for Health project
- Providing children and young people with good access to quality leisure, cultural and sporting experience
- Investigating the feasibility of introducing green gyms or trim trails

Settlement Assessment of Services and Facilities

4.30 This assessment provides a record of the services and facilities available in each of the Borough's towns and villages as at spring 2012. The facilities listed include village halls, children's play areas, informal recreation areas, sports pitches and other

Green Infrastructure Strategy

sport and recreation provision. It therefore provides a useful checklist for this assessment.

4.31 The Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy is based on a vision that:

Stafford Borough will have a rich natural environment which is resilient to the effects of climate change, is well maintained and enhanced with more people enjoying the areas as a place to live in, work and visit. Our high quality green infrastructure network of accessible green spaces, waterways and landscapes will enhance our local distinctiveness and heritage, making the Borough an exceptional place for business, community and wildlife – now and in the future.

4.32 It also sets out a number of “overarching principles” to govern the planning and delivery of GI for the Borough:

- Networks of open spaces, natural corridors, access routes and watercourses will be enhanced and created to:
 - Protect the setting of landscape, heritage and natural (biodiversity and geodiversity) assets
 - Reverse habitat fragmentation
 - Provide recreation opportunities for new and existing communities
 - Provide planned and designed open breaks between neighbouring residential areas and business developments
- The network of existing access routes will be improved and expanded to allow sustainable commuting, by
 - Linking residential areas, employment centres and the wider countryside
 - Providing safe, attractive and well-signed options for walking and cycling
 - Including shared surfaces to reduce vehicle speeds
- Local landscape and heritage features should:
 - Be retained as focal points for new neighbourhoods
 - Have their historic routes protected
 - Act as attractive green and open spaces

where communities can come together

- To alleviate the effects of climate change:
 - Measures such as sustainable drainage systems and street trees must be included in new developments and should be retro-fitted into existing developments
 - Green spaces will provide a flood storage/management function (where appropriate)
- All new developments will:
 - Be set within a planned green infrastructure setting
 - Provide a variety of spaces to meet the needs of people and nature
 - Provide opportunities for sustainable transport
 - Achieve at least the green infrastructure standards laid out in the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

4.33 The aims of the strategy are:

- To enable the Borough to grow within sustainable means, providing a quality environment for communities
- Protect and enhance the Borough's GI resources, particularly its landscapes, heritage and biodiversity
- Enable the communities of the Borough to adapt to the changing climate
- Ensure that access to quality green space is equitable and widespread throughout the Borough

4.34 The strategy is complemented by a detailed evidence base.

Parish Plans

4.35 A number of the Borough's Parish Councils have produced Parish Plans. The main comments and proposals relating to open space, sport and recreation provision within them are:

Doxey Parish Plan 2007-2012

- 4.36
- There are no facilities for teenagers or children aged about 8 to 11, although local residents have identified teenage facilities as their top priority.
 - The population of the parish is likely to increase significantly and there is a need for the

restoration and improvement of the playing field accessed from Greensome Close plus further recreation, play and park provision

- There is a need for a community centre capable of accommodating up to 300 people for public meetings and a range of indoor sports and cultural activities, including a youth club
- The parish's young residents have suggested there is a need for:
 - A play club for children aged 8-11
 - A youth club for teenagers
 - Better play equipment, including swings, slides, skating/skateboarding and ball games
 - Junior football pitches

Note: since the production of the Parish Plan, developers have provided children's play facilities, a multi-use games area and a BMX track as part of the Castle View development. However, the nearby Social Club and related bowling greens are likely to be lost in the near future.

Fulford (2007)

4.37 The Fulford Parish Plan identifies a need for:

- More activities at village halls
- A fully functional sports pavilion, bowling green and tennis courts
- More play areas and schemes
- Provision for youth activities

The Mid West Stafford Market Towns (2004)

4.38 This plan covers the parish areas of Chebsey, Eccleshall, Gnosall, Stone and Swynnerton. The main open space or sports and recreation requirements identified in it are:

- **Eccleshall:** youth facilities
- **Gnosall:** refurbishment of play area, provision for teenagers (eg bike track/skateboard facilities), additional sports facilities
- **Swynnerton:** more teenage facilities

Milwich Parish Plan (2010)

4.39 This plan identified a need:

- To improve the play area in the centre of Milwich
- To plant more trees and bulbs in the parish
- For more leisure and recreation facilities, including facilities for teenagers and an area for

ball games

Salt and Enson Parish Plan 2010

4.40 The Salt and Enson area includes Salt, Enson, Weston Bank and Sandon Bank. The Plan indicates that there is public support for a children's play area and/or tennis courts, but that the cost of installation and maintenance would be prohibitive.

Implications for the Assessment

4.41 This brief review has the following implications for the assessment:

- The need to focus on making the Borough **safer, healthier, cleaner, more sustainable** and **greener** and in particular more resilient to **climate change**
- The need to ensure that services and facilities are as accessible as possible and generally located in **Stafford, Stone** or the **key service villages**
- The need for guidance on the open space, sport and recreation requirements in the proposed **Strategic Development Locations** and the Borough's **key service villages**
- The integration of **green infrastructure** and the harnessing of natural systems and processes to promote and deliver sustainable development
- The **need for clarity** over how the Council will use planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy

5: Allotments

Introduction

5.1 This chapter reviews the provision of allotments and derives and then applies suitable provision standards. In Stafford town allotment sites are managed by the Stafford Borough Horticultural Committee and in other areas by a mix of town and parish councils and trusts.

5.2 The 2009 assessment covered 26 allotment sites across the Borough. However, this update is based on 31 sites as we have identified a further five sites by using a map search:

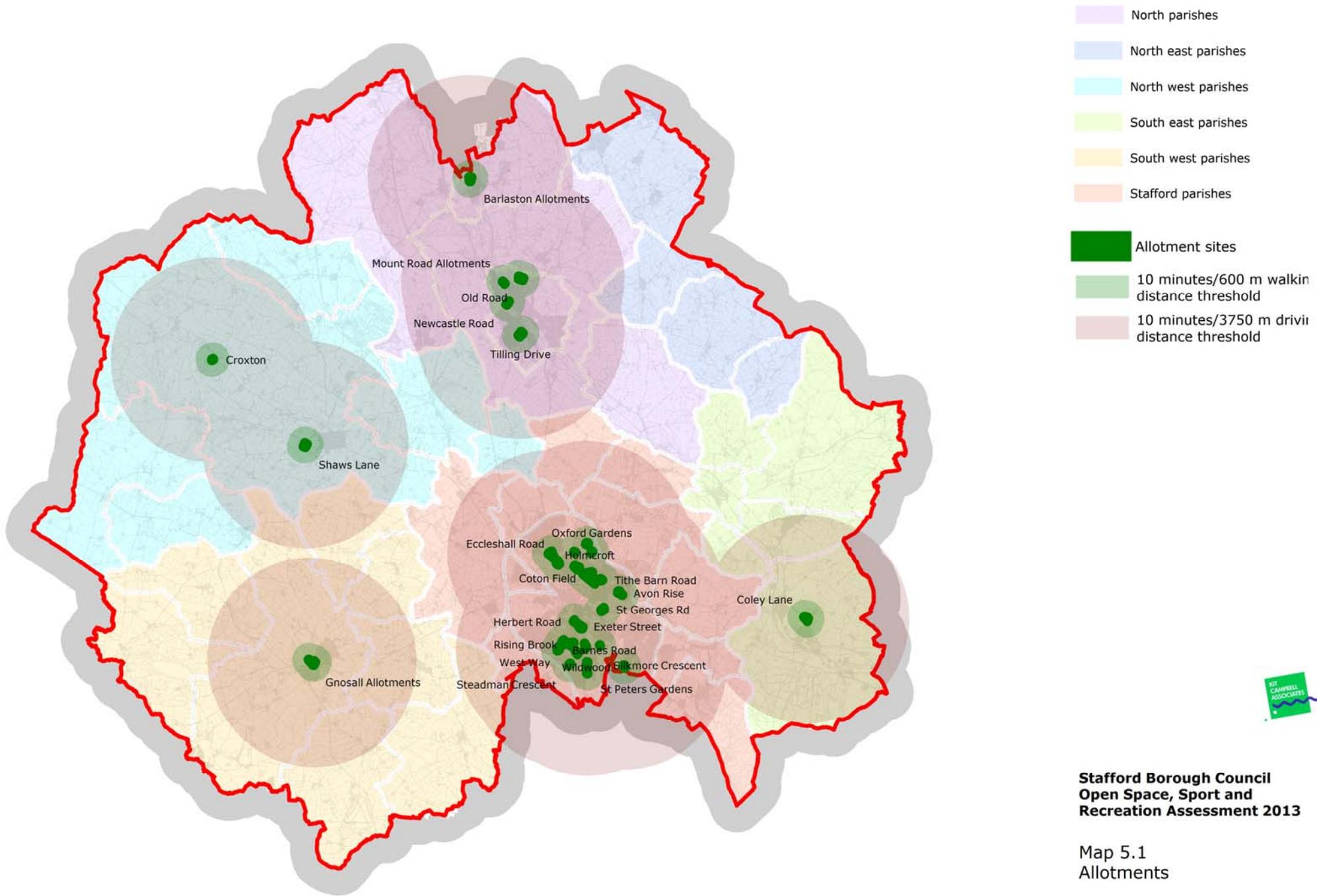
- Coley Lane, Colwich
- Croxton, Eccleshall
- Newcastle Road, Stone
- Silkmore Crescent, Stafford
- Steadman Crescent, Stafford

The Quantity of Provision

5.3 Map 5.1 below shows the location of the various sites. The total area of allotments in each of the six planning areas is:

	Area (sq m)
• North area	55,740
• North east area	0
• North west area	15,440
• South east area	15,175
• South west area	21,430
• Stafford area	262,080
• Total	318,996

Note: this slightly understates the quantity of provision in Stafford as the Council extended the Wildwood site in 2012 to create an additional 17 half plots.



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 5.1
Allotments

Sites shown enlarged for clarity

- 5.4 Appendix H1 calculates the quantity of provision on a per person basis together with the average number of people per plot and average plot size. Across the Borough as a whole, there is approximately 2.8 sq m of allotment per person, although this rises to 3.0 sq m if those parishes with no provision are excluded. Apart from the north east area, where there are no allotment sites, the average level of provision ranges from 2.8 sq m per person in Stone Urban Parish to 4.5 sq m per person in Gnosall.
- 5.5 There are nearly always some vacant plots in any area, even where there is a waiting list, because empty sites may not be acceptable to prospective tenants. The most common reasons for this are size (the plots on offer are seen as too small or too large) or because they have been neglected and are overgrown.

Stafford Borough Horticultural Committee

- 5.6 Within Stafford, the Horticultural Committee has noticed a strong correlation between the extent to which allotments feature in television gardening programmes and the demand for plots. However, it believes that there is still a need for more plots in the town, although waiting lists are lower than a few years ago.

Town and Parish Council Views

- 5.7 The Town or Parish Council for each of the areas with at least one site (with the exception of Stafford town, where there is no town council) regards the amount of provision in their area as “about right”. This confirms that there is sufficient provision in these areas at least, but begs the question of potential or latent demand in those areas with no provision. The parish councils that identified a need for allotments where there are currently none in 2008-9 were:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| • North area | Stone Rural |
| • North east area | Fulford |
| • North west area | High Offley |
| • South east area | Colwich |
| • South west area | Haughton
Norbury |

- 5.8 Stone Town Council is responsible for two of the four allotment sites in the town – Mount Road and Newcastle Road – and states that it has a “healthy” waiting list for plots.

5.9 None of the parishes that responded to the repeat survey in December 2012 gave any details of allotment provision in their area. However, Doxey Parish Council has identified a need for more allotments and is considering a site off Greensome Lane.

Residents' Views

5.10 The table below summarises the views of those local residents that expressed an opinion on the adequacy of the current quantity of allotment provision in the 2008-9 residents' survey. Just under two fifths of respondents saw a need for more allotment provision.

Residents' Attitudes to Allotment Provision

	Percent	Cumulative
A lot more is needed	16.2%	16.2%
Slightly more is needed	22.1%	38.2%
It's about right	55.9%	94.1%
There is more than enough	5.9%	100.0%
Total	100.0%	

5.11 The disparities between the levels of provision in different areas and local views as to the adequacy of provision make it difficult to draw a clear conclusion as to an appropriate Borough-wide quantity standard. In addition, nationally there is anecdotal evidence of a decline in allotment waiting lists, although this may in part be down to the poor summers in 2011 and 2012.

5.12 Combining the views of the town and parish councils with those of residents, it seems that there is likely to be a need for more provision in some parts of the Borough. The Council's Allotment Trustees have expressed an interest in expanding the Avon Rise site in Stafford and the Council is happy with this proposal. The Trustees maintain waiting lists in certain areas and have expressed a desire for additional capacity to be provided at all three Strategic Development Locations around the town. In addition, the Council is currently working with the Trustees to change the use of the former grass tennis courts at Littleworth to allotments.

The Quality of Provision

5.13 There are no audits for the additional sites noted above as their existence has only just come to light. For the other sites, for which the 2008-9 audits are still generally valid, the chart below summarises the quality and value scores:



5.14 We calculated the overall quality score for each site as the average of the scores for:

- The range of facilities available
- General characteristics, such as signage, security and condition
- Accessibility, such as the availability of parking and accessibility for people with disabilities

5.15 Overall, therefore, there is a fairly wide spread of both quality and value scores. The main shortcomings at some sites were:

- **Quality:** inadequate signage and disabled access
- **Value:** lack of amenities such as trading sheds and toilets and a limited range of plot sizes

Current Accessibility

Accessibility Assessment

5.16 Map 5.1 identifies the areas of the Borough that lie within 10 minute/600 m walking and 3750 m driving “as the crow flies” distance thresholds of the various allotment sites. Within the Borough’s main settlements of Stafford and Stone:

- There are a number of walking accessibility deficiencies around the periphery of Stafford town, the most significant of which is in the Queensville and Walton-on-the-Hill area in the south-east
- There are walking deficiencies on the eastern side of Stone

5.17 In summary, the percentage of dwellings in each planning area within the distance thresholds of at least one site is:

	% dwellings within 10 minutes	
	Walk	Drive
Planning area		
North	42%	92%
North east	0%	0%
North west	8%	67%
South east	11%	77%
South west	32%	65%
Stafford	57%	99%
Borough	43%	87%

5.18 Overall, therefore, slightly over two fifths of dwellings across the Borough lie within a 10-minute walk of at least one allotment site. In addition, overall nearly 90% of dwellings lie with a 10-minute drive of at least one site. The only significant settlements outwith the driving threshold are Swynnerton, Weston-upon-Trent, Meir Heath and Blythe Bridge, although these latter two are within a 10-minute drive time of sites in Stoke-on-Trent.

5.19 In relation to the different planning areas, by far the best overall accessibility to sites is in Stafford town and the northern area. There is no provision at all serving residents in the north eastern area and only very limited provision in the north west. This means that on accessibility, quality and value grounds the priorities are for:

- More provision around the periphery of Stafford town (particularly around Baswich), and north Stone; these areas should be the top priority, if suitable sites can be found, because they contain concentrations of population.
- Provision in the north east area of the Borough

Future Accessibility

5.20 Maps 5.2 and 5.3 below show the proposed Strategic Development Locations in Stafford and Stone in relation to existing allotment provision.

5.21 In Stafford town, the west and north of Stafford Strategic Development Locations are well outwith the walking distance threshold of the nearest allotment sites. Therefore it will be desirable for the developments to include some allotments provision, especially as the average density of the housing will be approximately 24 dwellings per hectare and therefore houses are likely to have gardens that are too small for growing produce. The strategic location to the east of the town is only slightly outwith the walking distance of the nearest allotment site (Avon Rise) but as it has only about

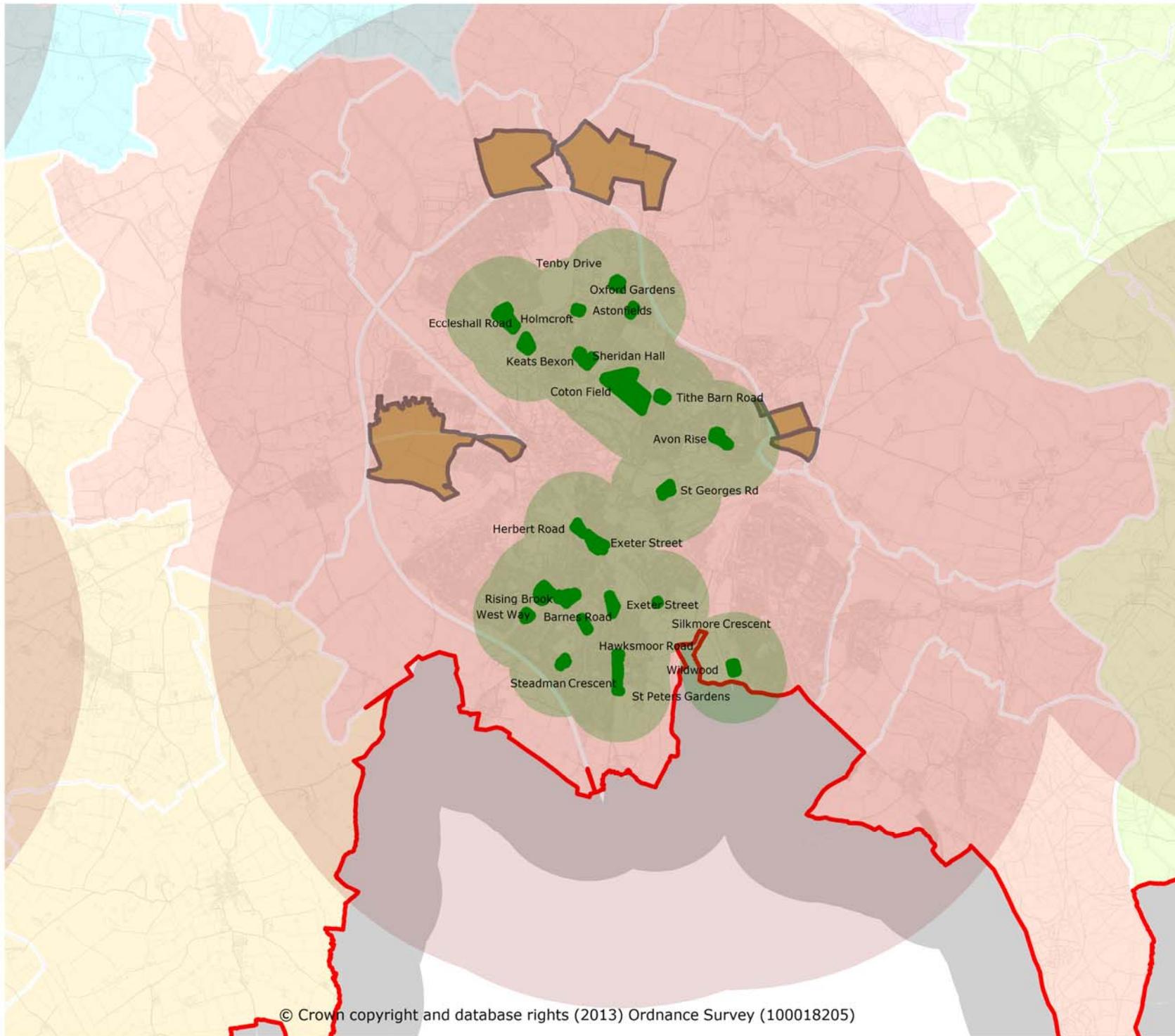
25-30 plots it will be desirable also to require some allotment provision as part of the development.

5.22 Most of the proposed strategic development location to the west of Stone is also just outside the walking distance threshold of the nearest allotments site. The nearest site, Tilling Drive, is quite large but appears to be largely cultivated so there is likely to be a need for more plots once the development to the west of the town is complete.

Trends

5.23 The following national trends are affecting the demand for allotments:

- Rising general interest in gardening and growing produce, fuelled by television programmes, early retirement and environmental concerns. However, after a few years of rapidly rising demand for plots, the growth seems to have been levelling off in many areas.
- Slowly rising demand for allotments, partly as a result of increasing housing densities coupled with smaller gardens, but more importantly by a widening in the range of people wanting to take up allotment gardening. Traditionally, plot holders were predominantly male manual workers, often retired, but more and more plot holders are middle class and women. This has led to demand for smaller plots.
- New plot holders wanting “instantly workable” plots. This often results in a combination of a waiting list and vacant plots, with those on waiting lists not being willing to take on neglected sites that require clearance and double digging. Such plots are an irritation to established plot holders as they become covered in weeds which then spread to adjoining plots.
- A need for facilities such as toilets on sites, driven particularly by the rising number of women plot holders. There is also increased demand for trading sheds and communal purchasing and storage of tools such as rotovators that are best shared by a number of plot holders.
- A reduction in the average plot size. Traditionally, plots have been 10 rods (around 253 sq m) but many have been subdivided into 5 or even 2.5 rod plots. This makes it possible to accommodate more plot-holders without increasing the area of land used for allotments.



- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes
- Allotment sites
- 10 minutes/600 m walkir distance threshold
- 10 minutes/3750 m driiv distance threshold
- Strategic Development Locations



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 5.2
Allotments and Strategic
Development Locations -
Stafford

Sites shown enlarged for clarity



- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes
- Allotment sites
- 10 minutes/600 m walking distance threshold
- 10 minutes/3750 m driving distance threshold
- Strategic Development Locations



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 5.3
Allotments and Strategic
Development Locations -
Stone

Sites shown enlarged for clarity

- 5.24 Within the Borough, the main trends over the past few years have been:
- Rising demand for allotments amongst young professionals and women
 - An increase in lettings
 - A increasing need for better site infrastructure such as storage facilities

Implications

- 5.25 There are still waiting lists for plots in the Borough, but they appear to be lower than in 2008-9. However, without further research it is impossible to know if this is the result of a decline in interest, people getting fed up of being on waiting lists or poor weather. As it will be some time before all developments in the Strategic Development Locations come forward, the Council should establish the extent to which there are spare plots at the nearest sites when preparing planning briefs or supplementary guidance for the new developments.

Quantity Standard National Research Findings

- 5.26 There is very limited research on the amount of allotment provision in England. A survey by the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) and Anglia Polytechnic University in 1997 found that there was then an average of 15 plots per 1,000 households or one plot to 65 households. At that time roughly half were ten rods (250 sq m) and half five rods (125 sq m) in size.
- 5.27 A second survey undertaken by the University of Derby in 2006 found that the then level of provision was about 13 plots per 1000 households, although the results were based on a fairly poor response to the survey.

National Standard

- 5.28 The NSALG recommends that there should a minimum of 20 plots, each of 300 square yards (250 sq m), per 1,000 households. The average household size in England is currently 2.4 people so this equates to 250 sq m per 120 people or nearly 2.1 sq m per person.

Current Provision

- 5.29 It is unlikely that there will ever be the same level

of demand for allotments in the rural areas as in the main towns, simply because gardens tend to be smaller in urban areas and therefore residents have less chance to grow their own produce at home. This suggests a need for separate quantity standards for the Borough's urban and rural areas.

5.30 At present, there are allotments in only six settlements - Barlaston (3.5 sq m per person), Colwich (3.3 sq m per person), Eccleshall (3.5 sq m per person), Gnosall (4.4 sq m per person), Stafford town (4.2 sq m per person) and Stone (3.2 sq m per person). Although there is no guarantee that all of the plots in these settlements are tenanted by residents of them, in each of these areas, other than Stafford town, the relevant Town or Parish Council believes the current level of provision is "about right". In each of them only a handful of plots are untenanted, suggesting that a realistic quantity standard is about **3.5 sq m per person**. In Stafford town the largest site, Coton Field, is reserved for apprentices in the town's industries – of whom there are many fewer than a few decades ago - and appears to be significantly under-occupied. This is likely to result more from the restrictions on who can be a tenant than a lack of demand, but suggests that it may be sensible for the Council to seek to negotiate wider access. In the meantime, the average level of provision in Stafford town is probably higher than necessary and therefore 3.5 sq m per person is likely to be appropriate there also.

5.31 As there are no allotments in most of the Borough's rural areas, there is no firm basis to help determine an appropriate quantity standard. We therefore recommend retaining the 2009 standard of **1.6 sq m per person**.

Application of the Quantity Standard

5.32 Appendix H1 applies these quantity standards, and the minimum size standard, to the various planning areas of the Borough with the results set out in the table below:

Planning area	Existing provision (sq m)	Provision required by quantity standard (sq m)	Surplus (+ve) or (-ve) in sq m	Surplus (+ve) or deficit (-ve) in ha
North	55,740	89,982	-34,242	3.4
North east	0	23,538	-23,538	2.4
North west	15,440	27,461	-12,021	1.2
South east	15,175	21,907	-6,732	0.7
South west	21,430	28,746	-7,326	0.7
Stafford	262,08	264,793	-2,713	2.7
Borough	369,865	410,991	-41,126	-4.1

5.33 Overall, therefore, the greatest need for more allotments is likely to be in the north and north east areas, while there is a surplus of provision in Stafford town.

Conclusions

5.34 This analysis suggests that the Council should adopt four broad objectives relating to allotment provision:

- To protect the current **amount** of provision across the Borough, although not necessarily on all of the existing sites if it is possible to create new sites that will be of higher quality and value and accessible to a greater number of people on foot
- To allocate sites for and promote allotment provision in at least the north and north eastern areas of the Borough, with the priority given to the larger settlements as suggested above
- To enhance the quality and, to a lesser extent, the value of those sites with below average audit scores
- Ensure that the strategic development locations include allotment provision

5.35 The conventional way to deliver against these objectives would be to protect all the existing sites, seek to enhance those requiring enhancement and make additional provision where it is needed. However, this will depend on the availability of funding from developer contributions, the Borough Council or the Town and Parish Councils at a time when they face considerable financial pressures. Accordingly it will be desirable to consider a more radical alternative approach.

5.36 There are clusters of sites fairly close together in both the north and south areas of Stafford town. In order to improve the overall distribution of sites, and therefore the general accessibility of allotment provision, it will be desirable to consider the potential for “moving a limited number of sites around” – ie allowing the redevelopment of some existing sites within these clusters. This will be especially appropriate for low quality and/or value facilities if it is possible to identify replacement sites that will increase the overall accessibility of sites to potential plotters. It should then be possible to develop the new and better sites using capital receipts from the planned disposal of some existing ones for development (assuming this is acceptable in terms of wider planning policies), with the receipts ring-fenced for allotment site provision or enhancement.

- 5.37 This approach will obviously attract opposition from established plotheholders on those sites to be “moved” as they will have invested considerable time and effort in their plots. It will therefore be essential to plan any changes in close consultation with existing plot-holders. Any replacement sites must therefore be developed to a higher standard than the sites that will be lost, with the ground already well prepared, before expecting them to move. They should therefore have excellent infrastructure in the form of parking, provision for people with disabilities, toilets, water supplies, composting arrangements, communal storage and “added value” features such as a communal area with a barbecue.

6: Artificial Turf Pitches

- Introduction** 6.1 This chapter reviews the provision of artificial turf pitches (ATPs) across the Borough and derives and then applies suitable provision standards. ATPs are also sometimes referred to as Synthetic Turf Pitches (STPs) or Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs).
- Types of ATP** 6.2 Broadly speaking, there are currently three main types of artificial turf pitch (ATP):
- **Sand-based or sand-dressed** pitches, usually referred to as second generation (or 2G) pitches. These pitches have a sand fill and are suitable for local league hockey and football training. The pile length is usually around 30 mm. Sand dressed pitches are filled to within 5-8 mm of the tips of the fibres while on sand-filled ones the filling is almost to the top of the fibres. As a result sand dressed pitches are harder than sand dressed ones.
 - **Water-based pitches:** these pitches have a short pile and no fill but are watered before use; as a result they are expensive to operate. The pile length is usually around 25 mm and they are suitable for high level competitive hockey and football training.
 - **Third Generation or 3G pitches:** there are three types of 3G surface, all of which have a rubber crumb filling. A 65 mm pile pitch with a shock pad is suitable for rugby and is referred to as an “IRB22” pitch because it accords with International Rugby Board Regulation 22; a 55-60 mm pitch is the preferred form of 3G pitch for football and has been approved by FIFA, but can also be used for some rugby training; and a 40 mm 3G pitch is acceptable for local football and hockey and touch or tag rugby.
- The Quantity of Provision** 6.3 There is a significant need across the whole of the UK for more 3G ATPs designed for football. This arises primarily from the poor quality of many grass football pitches coupled with the impact of climate

change.

- 6.4 Traditionally, the Football Association (FA) and Sport England have seen 3G ATPs as training rather than match facilities, but this is changing fast. The FA is moving steadily towards regarding 3G pitches as important facilities for amateur matches and even consulted on the desirability of using them for professional matches in 2012. St George's Park, the FA's national training centre at Burton on Trent, includes a full size indoor 3G pitch and an outdoor 3G one the same size as the Wembley pitch. It is inevitable that progressively more and more local teams will want to train and play on 3G pitches, provided they are seen as affordable. Football players, in particular, expect pitches to be low cost and many do not realise that they are highly subsidised.

Governing Body Views

6.5 *Football*

The Staffordshire Football Association supports the use of ATPs for local football and has developed a simple spreadsheet model it uses to assess the need for them in specific local authority areas. It is based on:

- One full size ATP to every 56 teams (whether mini soccer, youth or adult)
- Each team training once per week on a full size 3G pitch or 60 x 40 m training area

- 6.6 On this basis the County FA believes there is a current need for the equivalent of 4.05 full size 3G pitches in the Borough. The FA calculation takes account of the Rowley Park pitch but not the Eccleshall training area and concludes that the Borough needs two additional full size ATPs and two 60 x 40 m training areas. Given that there is a 60 x 40 m pitch in Eccleshall, this reduces to two additional full size 3G pitches and one additional 60 x 40 m training area.

- 6.7 The FA model has four important weaknesses:

- It regards all teams as equal in the sense that a mini team is assumed to generate the same demand per week as an adult one
- It is based only on training and ignores match play (one ATP could not be used by 56 teams for matches if the current pattern of demand with almost all matches being played at the weekend

continues)

- It ignores accessibility
- It ignores potential population growth and therefore growth in the number of local teams.

6.8 The *Plan for Stafford Borough* (see Chapter 4 above) estimates that the population of the Borough is likely to rise by about 15,200 people or some 12%. Assuming that the current rate of team generation continues, this is likely to increase the demand for ATPs by a broadly similar amount. Therefore if the current FA estimate that the Borough should have a total of about 4.05 full size ATPs is correct, by 2026 it will require 4.5 of them. As there are currently about 1.5, it follows that the Council should be planning for the provision of at least an additional three full size pitches simply to accommodate training demand.

Hockey

6.9 The England Hockey Board view is that some of the Borough's hockey clubs have seen a growth in membership of the past year or so. Stafford Men's Hockey Club, for example, has increased its membership from about 80 to 130 adults and the Women's Club from about 60 to 90 adult members.

6.10 The Board maintains that the number of teams that local clubs can run is constrained by the lack of available pitch time on Saturdays for matches and therefore there is a clear need for at least one additional sand dressed ATP. However, both the Beaconside and Alleyne's School 2G pitches lie idle for most of Sunday. The Borough Council's priority should be to maximise the use of existing 2G pitches before building more, especially at a time when public funds are extremely limited.

6.11 The England Hockey Board has also highlighted a lack of halls that can be used for indoor hockey, with the nearest being at Aldersley Leisure Village in Wolverhampton.

Rugby

6.12 Rugby is also rapidly changing its views in relation to the use of 3G pitches. The Rugby Football Union's national facilities strategy has three priorities for investment, the third of which relates to ATPs:

- Increase the provision of changing rooms and clubhouses that can sustain concurrent adult and

- junior male and female activity at clubs
- Improve the quality and quantity of natural turf pitches and floodlighting
- Increase the provision of artificial grass pitches that deliver wider game development outcomes

6.13 The strategy has this to say on artificial turf pitches:

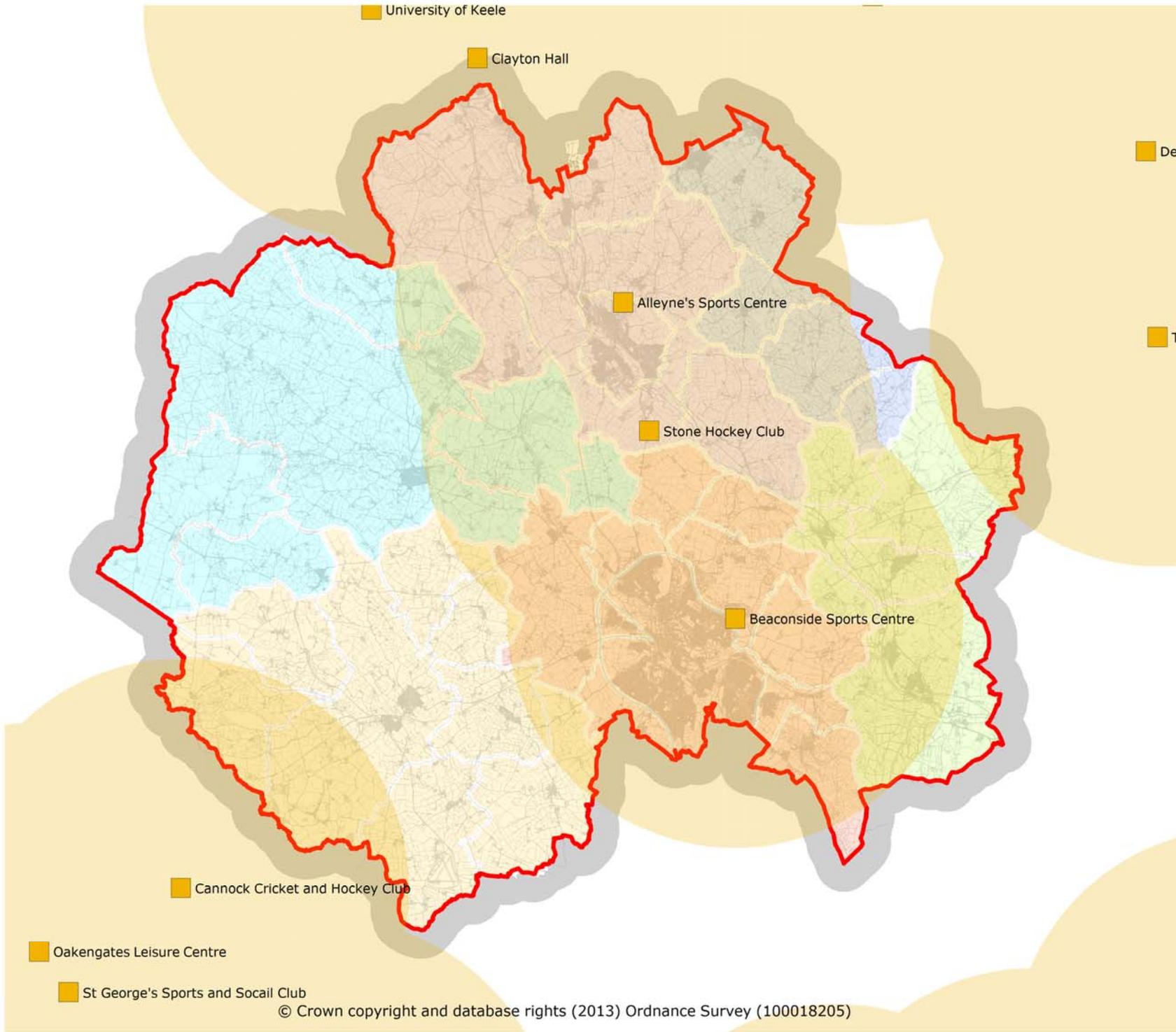
The use of artificial grass pitches and in particular IRB22 compliant surfaces has the potential to offer wider opportunities for the growth of the game, particularly when taken in the context of those communities that do not have access to natural turf facilities or when natural turf facilities are unavailable or unusable. Artificial grass pitches can offer a quality playing surface throughout the year, allowing for increased opportunities for training and match competition at all levels and ages.

Note: IRB 22 compliant surfaces meet the International Rugby Board Rule 22 Specification. In essence, they are 3G pitches with a 65 mm pile length and a shock pad beneath the carpet. Such pitches can also be used for football up to and including international matches.

The Quality of Provision

6.14 Maps 6.1 and 6.2 show the location of the four ATPs in the Borough. There are three full size “2G” pitches – at Alleyne’s School in Stone, Stone Hockey Club and Staffordshire University at Beaconside in Stafford – but only one full size “3G” pitch, at Rowley Park in Stafford. The Alleyne’s and Stone Hockey Club pitches are sand-filled but the University’s pitch is sand dressed.

6.15 The Rowley Park pitch was provided by the Council only recently and is in excellent condition; the University’s pitch is in good condition; and the carpets at the Alleyne’s and Stone Hockey Club pitch will require replacement within the next 2-4 years. The latter is also very exposed to wind and the changing accommodation is poor. However, Stone Rugby Club has recently moved to the Hockey Club site and created a grass rugby pitch. When it sells its existing pitch in Stone it is intending to invest in upgrading the clubhouse.



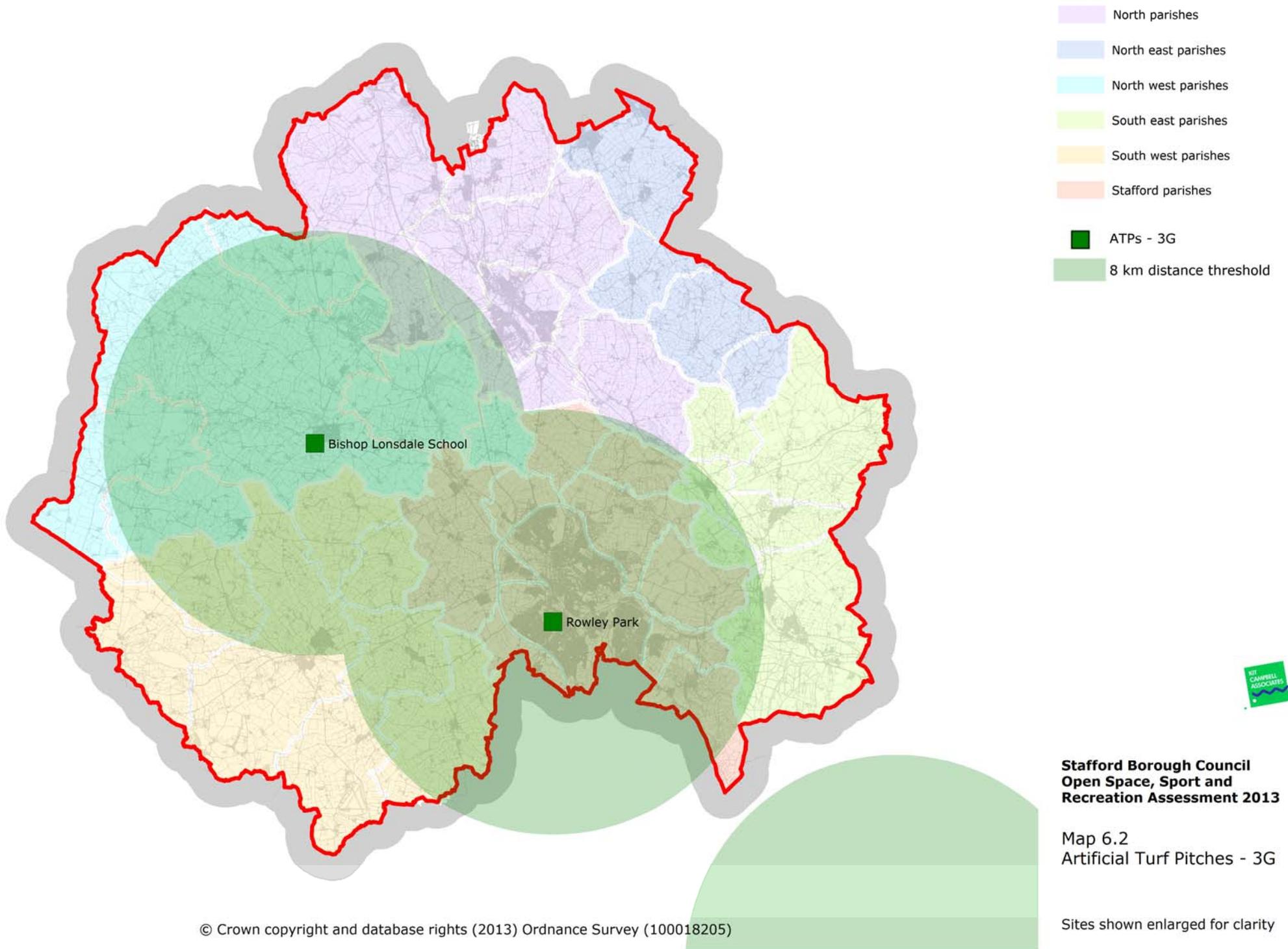
- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes
- ATPs - 2G
- 8 km distance threshold



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 6.1
Artificial Turf Pitches - 2G

Sites shown enlarged for clarity



The Current Accessibility of Provision

6.16 The table below, taken from the Sport England and sportscotland *Synthetic Turf Pitch Study* (2006) summarises the distances that ATP users had travelled:

	Football %	Football Total	Hockey %	Hockey Total
< 1 mile	19%	100%	9%	100%
1-2 miles	20%	81%	14%	92%
2-5 miles	33%	61%	32%	78%
5-10 miles	18%	28%	18%	46%
10-20 miles	6%	10%	12%	28%
> 20 miles	4%	4%	16%	16%

6.17 Accordingly around 75% of football players travelled for a little less than 5 miles and 75% of hockey players for a little over 5 miles, suggesting that the normal effective catchment area of an ATP can be taken as around 5 miles (8 km). The average distances travelled by footballers and hockey players, however, were around 5 and 11 miles respectively (8 and 17 km), with hockey players on average travelling around 16 miles (25 km) to water-based pitches.

Accessibility Assessment

6.18 In summary:

- 89% of dwellings in the Borough lie within 8 km of at least one 2G ATP, thanks in part to 2G pitches outside the Borough but within 8 km of its boundary
- 69% of dwellings in the Borough lie within 8 km of at least one 3G ATP. As map 6.2 shows, there are no 3G pitches around the periphery of the Borough within 8 km of it.

6.19 Overall, therefore, the accessibility of ATPs is good and it is only in the sparsely populated areas of the Borough that local residents will have to travel more than 8 km to one.

Trends

6.20 For some years, ATPs have been used for all non-school hockey matches, some football training and small-sided football games but not rugby. However, the available surfaces have not really been suitable for football or rugby until recently. As a result there is some residual hostility to ATPs amongst some football players and officials.

6.21 This situation is changing rapidly. 3G surfaces are

good for both football and rugby training and, if provided with a shock pad, also for rugby. The Rugby Football Union view remains that a “good” grass pitch remains the best surface for rugby matches, but that not all grass pitches are of good quality, especially as the season progresses. It has adopted a rule that a team cannot refuse to play on an ATP it has assessed as meeting the IRB22 specification.

- 6.22 Climate change is also beginning to have a noticeable impact on the condition and availability of grass pitches. Warmer, wetter winters are resulting in pitches being saturated and unplayable significantly more often, and for longer periods, leading to a backlog of fixtures. When this results in fixtures having to be played after the end of the traditional season there can be a knock-on impact on cricket. In addition, other countries are focusing more and more on artificial surfaces: Norway, for example, with a population of about 4.9 million, currently has around 840 3G pitches, or roughly one to 5,800 people. Translated to the Borough, this would equate to some 24 3G ATPs.
- 6.23 In the short term, the main need for ATPs for football and rugby is for after-school clubs and training; in the longer term, it should be increasingly acceptable for teams to play matches on them. Because of football’s historical rejection of artificial surfaces, the likelihood is that once local leagues endorse their use for matches, demand will grow rapidly as players come to realise their advantages over grass pitches of hugely variable quality. However, in the short term it is unrealistic to expect that all matches will be played on artificial surfaces, not least because of the large number of football fixtures on Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings. At 1430 on a Saturday afternoon, a grass pitch and an artificial one have exactly the same capacity – one match.
- 6.24 There is no reason in principle why football should not take a leaf out of hockey’s book, however, and move away from fixed starting times for league matches. There are two historical reasons for them: the lack of floodlit pitches, making it essential to get matches played in daylight, and league concerns that teams may play tactically towards the end of the season if they can start a game knowing the results of matches involving key rivals for promotion or relegation played earlier in the day.
- 6.25 For rugby, the change to ATPs for match use will

probably follow a shift to the use of artificial surfaces for training areas. Most club training facilities are badly over-used as clubs develop more mini and midi teams and little more than quagmires by halfway through a wet winter. Artificial surfaces are the obvious solution. Longer term, however, climate change and rising acceptability in the professional game probably means that much rugby will probably move to artificial surfaces eventually. The Rugby Football Union draws no distinction between the acceptability of grass and artificial surfaces meeting this specification for match use. In the short term, however, rugby use is likely to be confined to training, mini-and midi-rugby. However, Saracens RFC, a leading professional club, has a 3G pitch at its Allianz Stadium in London and plays its premiership matches there.

Supply-demand Comparison

Football

- 6.26 The result of the Football Association's model for the demand for ATPs for football training is given above. However, it does not provide any guidance on match demand.

Hockey

- 6.27 Appendices G11-G14 give the Sport England Playing Pitch Model for hockey. In summary, it supports both the England Hockey Board view that there is a shortfall of one pitch in Stafford town on Saturdays and the Council's view that there is a significant surplus on Sundays:

Supply-demand Balance		
Planning area	Saturday (senior)	Sunday (junior)
North	2.5	7.5
North east	0.0	0.0
North west	0.0	0.0
South east	0.0	0.0
South west	0.0	0.0
Stafford	-1.0	4.0
Totals	1.5	11.5

Note: this calculation assumes that each 2G pitch can be used for up to four matches in a day

- 6.28 Sport England publishes Team Generation Rates (TGRs) for each of the pitch sports. The TGR is the number of individuals in a particular age-sex group required to “generate” one team and is calculated by dividing the population in each group in an area by the number of teams. Therefore the higher the TGR the greater the number of people required to generate a team, and vice versa. Alternatively, the lower the TGR the greater the popularity of a particular sport. TGRs for hockey in Stafford compared with the median (ie middle value) TGRs from across England published by Sport England are:

	Stafford	England
Men’s teams	3,199	5,175
Women’s teams	7,765	6,387
Boys’ teams	2,784	2,439
Girls’ teams	N/a	3,135

- 6.29 Accordingly, men’s hockey is more popular in Stafford than much of the rest of England; women’s hockey is slightly less popular; and boys’ hockey is broadly comparable.

Quantity Standard

- 6.30 Sport England’s Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC) provides a method of calculating the need for ATPs that will be generated by specific development proposals. However, it is not suitable for use in relation to ATPs in Stafford, or the proposed the Strategic Development Locations. The reason for this is that it the SFC uses historical data on the use of ATPs and therefore does not look adequately to the future when there will be increased demand for ATPs for football and rugby.

- 6.31 The England Hockey and Football Association’s

assessments suggest a current need for one more ATP designed for hockey in Stafford – although this demand could be met by playing more matches on Sundays - and at least two additional pitches designed for football. In addition, there is likely to be a need for at least floodlit artificial turf training facilities for rugby. Taking account of the planned housing growth, this suggests that the minimum overall level of provision that will be sensible is:

	Pitch equivalents
For football	4.5
For hockey	4.0
For rugby	1.0
Total	9.5

6.32 Two main factors should dictate the location of new ATPs in the Borough:

- **First**, ATPs can in theory be used 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Therefore the best location for them is where there will be significant use on weekday mornings and afternoons as well as evening and weekend use. In practice this means linking them with further and higher educational institutions and, in particular, secondary schools where they can be used for both secondary school PE and extra-curricular programmes and local community sport.
- **Second**, it will be desirable to have a network of facilities across the Borough in locations that will maximise their accessibility

6.33 The Borough currently has seven secondary schools, of which only one – Alleyne’s School in Stone - has an ATP. In principle, all of them should have a floodlit ATP. However, floodlighting is unlikely to be acceptable at Stafford Sports College and a non-floodlit pitch will be of relatively little benefit to the local community as use will be limited. From the Borough Council’s perspective, therefore, the College is a low priority site. In addition, the Blessed William Howard School and King Edward VI High Schools are both only a short distance from the existing 3G ATP in Rowley Park. Therefore, in time, each of these schools may want an ATP but in the short to medium term they are also low priority from the perspective of the Borough Council. Therefore the best secondary school sites for additional ATPs are:

- Sir Graham Balfour High School, Stafford
- Walton High School, Stafford

- Weston Road Academy, Stafford

- 6.34 The Weston Road Academy is very close to the Staffordshire University site at Beaconside and therefore an ATP there can be shared with the University. Indeed, it will be sensible for it to be managed by the University as it already manages its current 2G ATP in partnership with the Borough Council.
- 6.35 There is one other site in Stafford that is an obvious location for a an ATP: Riverway Stadium, the home of Stafford Town Football Club. It runs a men's and a ladies' team, four girls' teams, three disabled teams and 14 boys' teams. Inevitably, it has to hire a number of pitches across the Borough including Stafford College, Stafford Sports College, Rowley Park (both grass pitches and the 3G ATP), and Weston Road High School. At present, however, the Club does not want to convert its stadium pitch to a 3G surface, but it is almost inevitable that it will wish to do so at some point in the future. All of its teams will then be able to train at the club's home base and it will save the cost of hiring pitches elsewhere.
- 6.36 Policy Stone 1 of *The Plan for Stafford Borough* also identifies a need for a floodlit artificial turf pitch in Stone while Policy Stafford 2 – North of Stafford identifies a need for a new primary school as well as either a new secondary school or extensions to existing schools. If there is a new secondary in the North of Stafford SDL – or elsewhere for that matter – it should also have a floodlit ATP.
- 6.37 The Staffordshire FA's identification of a need for a second 60 x 40 m ATP can best be met by providing one in Gnosall as the second largest of the key villages in the Borough. It will serve the south western part of the Borough and the best location will be at the St Lawrence Primary School.
- 7.37 In the short term, therefore, the Council should plan on providing or encouraging the provision of the following initial network of floodlit ATPs:

Existing Pitches

Full size	Alleyne's School, Stone (2G) Rowley Park (3G) Staffordshire University (2G) Stone Hockey Club (2G)
60 x 40 m	Bishop Lonsdale PS, Eccleshall

Note: when the Alleyne’s School ATP next requires resurfacing, the Council and school should consider carefully the most appropriate surface in the light of the demand for football and hockey in the area at that time.

Proposed Additional Pitches

Full size	Sir Graham Balfour HS Riverway Stadium Walton High School Weston Road HS/University Westbridge Park, Stone Any new secondary school(s)
60 x 40 m	St Lawrence PS, Gnosall

6.38 Youth football is set to change in the next few years with U11 and U12 teams playing exclusively 9 v 9 matches, while U13-U16 teams may also do so. This has significant implications for pitch providers such as local authorities but at present the full impact is unclear. Therefore it may be desirable for the Council to provide more marked-out ATPs suitable for teams in specific age groups rather than only full size ones.

6.39 Each of the additional ATPs should have a third generation (3G) surface designed for football. It will be desirable also to work with local rugby clubs to decide which of these pitches should also be designed to allow contact rugby training. This requires a 65 mm long pile length (55-60 mm is the normal length for football) and a shock pad in order to comply with International Rugby Board Regulation 22. The best location will be at the University/Weston Road High School. It will then be possible for local rugby clubs to train there, easing the pressure on their grass training areas. In addition, if the size of the pitch is increased to at least 120 x 80 m it will be possible for University teams to play both football and rugby matches.

6.40 This gives an initial network of ten full size floodlit ATPs and two training ATPs each 60 x 40 m. A full size ATP has a carpet area of 106 x 71 m or 7,526 sq m. Therefore ten such pitches will have a total area of 75,260 sq m. Adding the two 60 x 40 m training areas increases this to 80,260 sq m. As the population of the Borough is forecast to be 138,600 by 2026 this gives a quantity standard of **0.6 sq m per person**.

- 6.41 Wherever possible, the Council should seek to ensure that each ATP is the home of a community club. This will maximise use and minimise revenue costs. Therefore if any new ATPs are on the site of schools being procured through public-private partnerships (PPPs), the Council should seek to ensure that the contract for the design, building, financing and operation of the school will allow:
- Community use of all of the sports facilities when not required by the school
 - The Borough Council or, preferably, the community club to manage at least all of the community use – and ideally the school’s use as well
 - Flexible arrangements for the development of an independent community sports club on the school site that will function out of school hours. This should also allow for the club to develop its facilities in the future independently of the PPP contractor for the school.

Conclusions

- 6.42 At present, the Borough has three times as many full size ATPs designed for hockey as for football, but eight times as many football as hockey teams. Therefore the clear priority for the future in terms of ATPs is clearly the provision of more 3G pitches for football. Therefore the Council should:
- Protect the current pattern of ATPs from development, but in such a way that allows redevelopment if suitable compensatory provision of a higher standards and in a suitable location is provided by the developer.
 - Seek to persuade the Staffordshire Hockey Association and the Stafford Hockey Clubs that more hockey matches should be played on Sundays in order to use the spare capacity at existing 2G pitches in the Borough
 - Work with the County Council to ensure that as many of the Borough’s secondary schools as possible have a floodlit ATP. The Council’s preferred playing surface should be long pile 3G suitable for at least football and ideally rugby as well.
 - Develop a 60 x 40 m 3G surfaced training and mini-soccer pitch in partnership with the County Council and the St Lawrence Primary School in Gnosall, with suitable arrangements for community use.
 - Work with the University and/or Weston Road High School to develop a long pile 3G pitch designed for football and rugby at Beaconside.
 - In partnership with the County Council, seek to

take advantage of the Coalition Government's commitment (see Chapter 3 above) to offer every secondary school in England the opportunity to have a community club, with a suitable clubhouse, on its site. This club should be the major user of the school's ATP out of school hours and offer opportunities for participation to players of both sexes and all ages and abilities.

7: Athletics Facilities

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----|--|
| Introduction | 7.1 | The Borough has only one athletics track, Rowley Park in Stafford town. The section briefly reviews its condition and use, comments on alternative facilities in the sub-region and considers the track's future. |
| The Use of the Track | 7.2 | The main use of the track, which has 8 lanes, is floodlit and has 100 uncovered spectator seats, is for club training and school PE lessons. The Cannock and Staffordshire Athletics Club, with around 300 members from the Borough and Cannock Chase District, uses it four nights each week for training all year round, although the club's main base has traditionally been in Cannock. The Stafford Harriers, with around 250 members, also uses it on the same two nights a week. |
| | 7.3 | The Stafford track's status is very clearly that of a training track – although as there is a recently provided 3G artificial turf pitch in its central area, it cannot be used for throwing disciplines - with very limited use for events of mainly club and schools significance. The changing and other support accommodation is poor and the Council has an aspiration to upgrade it, provide covered accommodation and additional facilities for athletics and multi-sports use. It has already submitted an unsuccessful bid for funding to Sport England and will submit a revised bid when the opportunity to do so arises. |
| Competing Facilities | 7.4 | The nearest alternative public synthetic tracks are in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wolverhampton (14 miles): 6 lanes plus 8 lane straight; floodlit; 100 covered seats • Telford (15 miles): 8 lanes; floodlit; 250 covered seats • Stoke-on-Trent (16 miles): 8 lanes; floodlit; 750 covered seats |

- 7.5 Until recently there was also a floodlit track in Cannock (8 miles from Stafford town) with 8 lanes, a 10-lane straight and 260 covered and 500 uncovered spectator seats. However, Cannock Chase District Council has sold the site for development.
- 7.6 This means that Stafford currently has to compete for major events with Telford and Stoke, both of which have better spectator accommodation.
- The Current Quality of Provision**
- 7.7 The Stafford track is in excellent condition. However, as it has no field events facilities in the centre of the track it is only a training track and unable to attract anything more than school and club competition. In addition, its ancillary accommodation is fairly dated and limited, with inadequate drug testing and officials' accommodation.
- The Future of the Stafford Track**
- 7.8 *Athletics Facilities – Planning and Delivery 2007-2012* (UK Athletics, undated) suggests a “firm, but not strict” provision standard for athletics facilities of:
- One synthetic track (6 or 8 lanes) per 250,000 people living within 20 minutes drive time (45 minutes in rural areas)
 - One indoor training centre per 500,000 people living within 30 minutes drive time (45 minutes in rural areas)
- 7.9 Staffordshire, with a population of around 410,000 and synthetic tracks in Stafford, East Staffordshire and Tamworth, comfortably exceeds this guideline.
- 7.10 However, it will clearly be desirable for Stafford to retain a track. In addition, given the recent loss of the Cannock track, it will be desirable to upgrade the ancillary facilities at Rowley Park. However, this will require significant capital investment and generate relatively little additional income.
- Quantity Standard**
- 7.11 There is no need to increase the amount of athletics provision in order to accommodate more residents in the Borough and therefore no need for a provision standard for outdoor provision.
- Indoor Training Facilities**
- 7.12 The Council has always seen Rowley Park as a sub-regional training venue for athletics and it is therefore desirable that it should be able to offer indoor training facilities in the form of at least a 60 m training straight and throwing and jumps facilities. It is unlikely that there will be sufficient

demand to justify these facilities on their own, but if the Council ever provides other indoor sports facilities in the Park it should consider adding indoor athletics training into the facility mix.

8: Bowling Greens

Introduction

8.1 This chapter reviews the provision of bowling greens across the Borough and then derives and applies suitable provision standards. Since the 2009 assessment, one green has closed and three opened:

Closed	Corporation Street, Stafford
Opened	Riverway, Stafford (2 greens) Little Stoke Cricket Club

8.2 Corporation Street was of lower quality than most other greens in the Borough and most of its users have transferred to the excellent new facilities provided by the Council at Riverway. The new green at Little Stoke appears to be popular in spite of the fact that it is only about 200 m from Stone Bowling Club.

8.3 In addition, three greens in Doxey provided primarily for workers employed in the UCM Group factory are currently planned to close in 2014.

Quantity Standard Existing Provision

8.4 Appendix H2 calculates the amount of bowls provision in relation to the estimated population in each of the planning areas. In summary, the results are:

	Greens	Population	People /green
North	5	22,489	4,670
North east	0	6,693	N/a
North west	0	7,475	N/a
South east	0	7,584	N/a
South west	0	8,132	N/a
Stafford area	9	12,321	7,661
Totals	14	120,653	8,619

Demand

- 8.5 Sport England's Market Segmentation Tool estimates that approximately 1,150 Stafford residents currently play bowls and another 250 would like to do so. This gives a total of some 1,400 prospective bowlers. Assuming that participation and the desire to participate is similar across the whole of the Borough, the prospective number of bowlers in each of the planning areas is:

	% of Bowlers population	
• North	20.1%	282
• North east	5.5%	76
• North west	6.0%	85
• South east	6.3%	88
• Southwest	6.3%	89
• Stafford	55.8%	781
• Totals	100.0%	1,400

- 8.6 A typical bowling club will have around 100-125 active playing members. While not all bowlers are members of clubs, this provides a basis for estimating the number of greens required to serve any given number of bowlers and gives the following results for the Borough:

	Potential Bowlers	Greens at 100 /green	Greens at 125 /green
North	282	3	3
North east	76	1	1
North west	185	1	1
South east	88	1	1
South west	89	1	1
Stafford area	781	8	7
Totals	1,400	15	14

- 8.7 In the various planning areas there are the following greens at the moment:

• North	5
• North east	0
• North west	0
• South east	0
• South west	0
• Stafford	14
• Total	19

- 8.8 Accordingly it seems that, in spite of the recent net loss of a green, there is sufficient bowls provision on a Borough-wide basis. However, the distribution of greens could be improved by having fewer greens in

Stafford town and providing a green in each of the planning areas without one. Therefore the pending loss of three greens in Doxey is not particularly significant – indeed it may be beneficial if it leads to the remaining clubs increasing their membership and becoming more financially sustainable as a result.

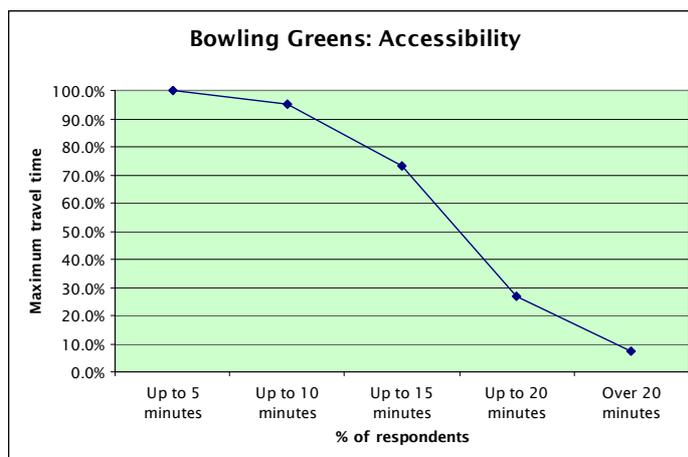
Quantity Standard

8.9 The minimum size for a crown green is 25 m square with no maximum size. However, the recommended size is 37 m square, or 1,369 sq m. Fourteen greens therefore equate to some 19,166 sq m of bowls surface or **0.16 sq m per person**.

Accessibility

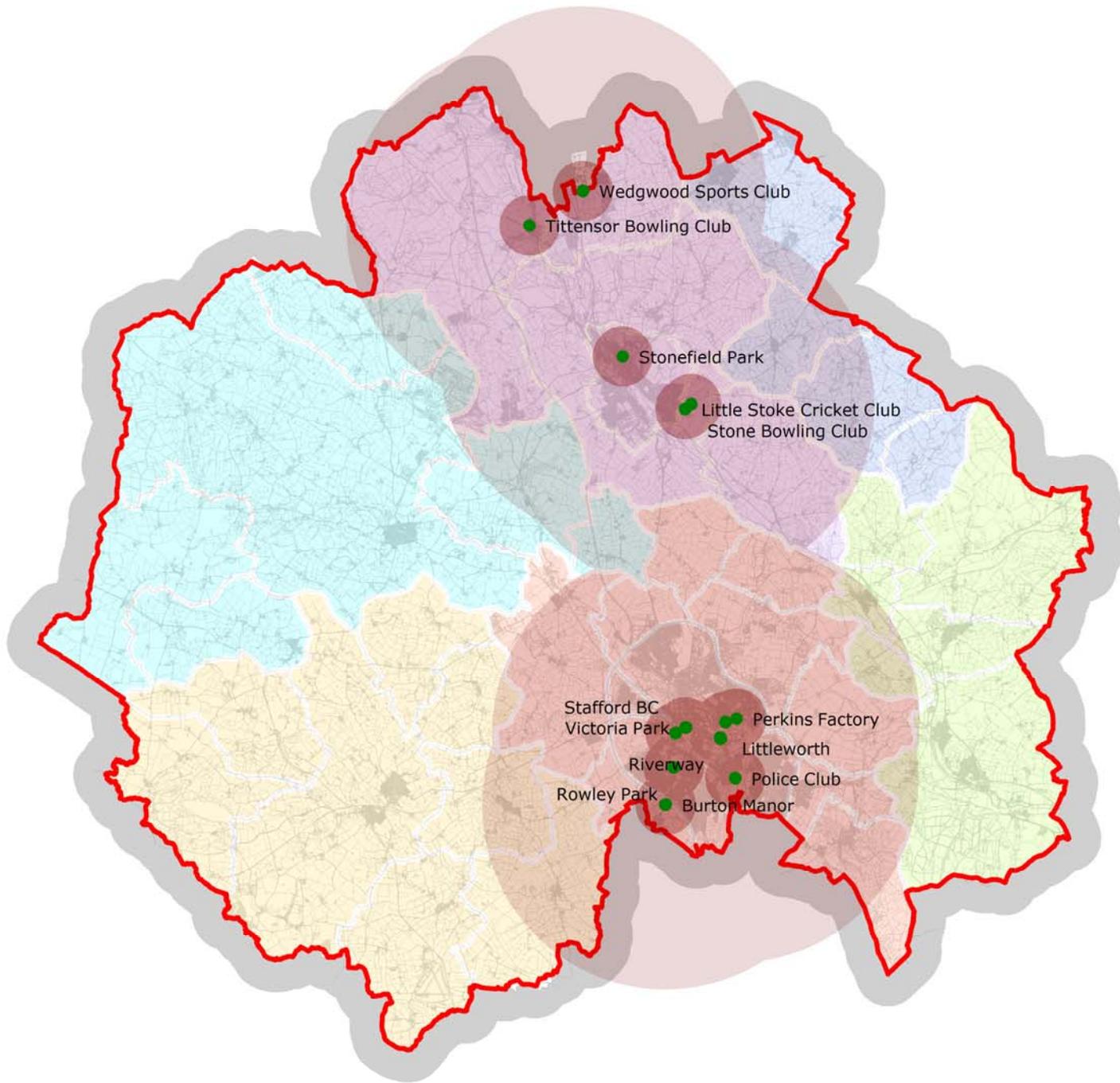
Accessibility Standard

8.10 The chart below, based on the results of our survey of local residents, identifies the percentage of people willing to walk for various times to use a bowling green. It makes clear that a sensible accessibility standard will be 15 minutes as around 75% of respondents indicated that they were willing to walk for this length of time.



Accessibility Assessment

8.11 Map 8.1 shows the location of the existing bowling greens in the Borough together with 15 minute walking and driving distance thresholds. In the Borough as a whole, the percentage of properties within 15 minutes travel of at least one green is:



- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes
- 15 minutes/900 m walking distance threshold
- 15 minutes/5625 m driving distance threshold



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 8.1
Bowling Greens

pavilion (eg the range of accommodation and its condition)

- **Value:** the extent of bowling facilities on the site, whether there is public (or club) use, and whether the facility has a changing pavilion.

8.15 The shortcomings in the Borough's bowling facilities are very minor and relate in the main to fairly easily resolved issues such as the condition of banks and ditches, the adequacy of shelter planting or the condition of paths around the green.

Quality Standard

8.16 Appendix A sets out the proposed quality standard.

Trends

8.17 Many areas of the country are reporting a decline in bowls participation and some clubs are struggling to survive. The decline is confirmed by Sport England's Active People Survey, which found that the number of people across England playing bowls at least once a week for 30 minutes declined fairly steadily from 252,000 to 214,000 from 2005-6 to 2011-12. The reasons for this are likely to include:

- Complacency and lack of effective development work by the governing bodies for bowls and their local clubs
- Middle-aged people being much more active than in the relatively recent past, with the result that they are retaining their other sports interests for longer and so not taking up bowls. This results in many clubs failing to attract sufficient new members to replace those who retire from the game or die.
- Reducing club membership and increasing costs, which together mean that bowls is becoming more expensive and possibly unaffordable for players on the basic pension. However, this does not apply in Stafford, where bowls is heavily subsidised.

8.18 Against this, the UK population is generally ageing and the number of people of retirement age rising rapidly. This means that the recent decline in participation may reverse over the next decade.

Local Views

8.19 In our 2008-9 survey of Town and Parish Councils, the following councils indicated a need for a bowling green:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| • North area | Fulford |
| • North east area | Hilderstone |
| • North west area | Eccleshall |
| • Stafford area | Berkswich
Hopton and Coton |

Conclusions

8.20 The Borough Council should adopt a quantity standard of 0.16 sq m of bowling green per person. However, there will be no need to apply this standard in either Stafford town or Stone for the foreseeable future as there appears to be more than enough provision; the shortages in provision are in the rural parts of the Borough. Accordingly the Borough Council should seek to identify suitable locations for greens in the main settlements in the rural areas. The areas with the greatest concentrations of potential bowlers are:

- North east area Fulford
- North west area Eccleshall
- South east area Colwich
- South west area Gnosall

8.21 The Hilderstone, Berkswich and Hopton and Coton Parish Councils also identified a possible need for a green in their areas. However:

- Hilderstone is likely to have only around 8% of the demand for a green that exists in the north east area, compared with around 80% in Fulford
- Berkswich and Hopton and Coton are within fairly easy travelling distance of greens in Stafford town. The creation of greens in these areas will probably simply divert some current demand from greens in the town, making them less viable. The level of potential demand in both areas is also insufficient to support a green.

8.22 The Borough Council can do little to prevent bowls clubs folding and if there are signs that one or more will, or Council greens become less and less well used, it should work with local bowls interests to investigate the potential to rationalise provision into fewer but better facilities. For the foreseeable future, it is unlikely that there will be a need for more greens as it is likely that new residents of the Borough will be economically active and not particularly interested in the game.

9: Provision for Children

Introduction

- 9.1 This chapter reviews the provision of equipped play areas for children up to the age of about 11 or 12 across the Borough. It analyses the current accessibility, quantity, and quality and value of existing provision and suggests a new approach to provision for play in the future.

The Quantity of Provision

Existing Provision

- 9.2 It is impossible to be definitive about the total area of land used for play. Some sites are not enclosed and many equipped play areas form only a part of larger sites, with the whole of the site available for some form of play as well as other purposes. Nor is it possible sensibly to differentiate the areas used for toddlers and older children because they generally share the same overall play area. However, our best estimate is that the total area of formal equipped play provision is some 43,520 sq m or just below 4 hectares.

Recent and Planned New Provision

- 9.3 There are six sites on which additional play areas have recently been built or are due to be provided by developers or the Council as a result of section 106 agreements:
- Eccleshall (former Bishops Lonsdale School): play area for under and over 12s
 - Milford: new play area
 - Tittensor: new play area beside the village hall (recently completed)
 - Yarnfield (former BT site): play equipment for both under and over 12s, multi-games court and wheeled sports zone
 - Yarnfield (Greenside): extended and refurbished play area
 - St George's Park, Stafford – new equipment provided by a developer

Total Quantity of Provision

9.4 The average size of the existing play facilities across the Borough is approximately 500 sq m. Taking this as the size of the planned play areas gives the following average levels of provision per person in each of the planning areas and the Borough as a whole:

	Existing sq m	Planned sq m	Total sq m
• North	8,208	1,000	9,208
• North area	2,085		2,085
• North west	2,855	1,000	3,855
• South east	917	500	1,417
• South west	2,937		2,937
• Stafford	26,366		26,366
• Borough	43,368	2,500	45,868

9.5 This means that the average level of provision in each of the planning areas will soon be:

• North area	0.40 sq m/person
• North east area	0.31 sq m/person
• North west area	0.50 sq m/person
• South east area	0.23 sq m/person
• South west area	0.37 sq m/person
• Stafford area	0.38 sq m/person
• Borough	0.37 sq m/person

The Current Quality of Provision

9.6 The 84 play areas in the updated database have an average of only 4.01 different types of play equipment. Overall:

- 55 have 1-4 items of equipment
- 28 have 5-7 items of equipment
- 1 has 8 items of equipment

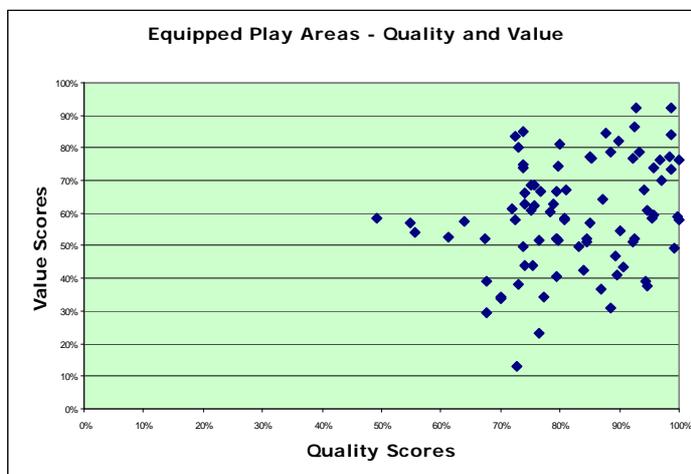
9.7 It follows that many of the play areas are of only limited play value.

9.8 The average quality and play value scores of the equipped parts of the various play facilities in the audit are 81% and 55% respectively – higher scores than in many other areas. On the basis of the audit scores, we have classed:

- 18 as being of above average quality and play value
- 16 as being of below average quality but above average play value
- 18 as being of above average quality but below average play value

- 25 as being below average quality and play value

9.9 The chart below summarises the quality and value scores of the equipped areas of play sites:



9.10 We based the quality and value scores for the equipped parts of play areas on:

- **Quality:** general characteristics (eg the distance to the nearest dwelling window, signage and separation of equipment for children of different ages); pedestrian accessibility (eg for people with disabilities or maintenance equipment); safety and security (eg the type and condition of any safety surface and dog-proof fencing); the condition of play equipment, surfaces and facilities for parents/carers; and management and maintenance
- **Value:** children often have a low attention span and so the wider the range of equipment types on a site the higher the play value

9.11 Most play areas do not consist solely of equipment items but also contain areas in which children can run around, watch birds and insects, sit or whatever. Accordingly the audit also assessed the play value of the non-equipped parts of play sites, using the following criteria:

- Visual stimulation/attractiveness
- Opportunities to run around
- Opportunities to see plants, birds, animals and insects
- Opportunities to sit quietly with adults or friends
- Opportunities to hide
- Opportunities to climb

- 9.12 Combining the scores for the equipped and non-equipped areas of sites raises the average play value score slightly to 59%.
- 9.13 While the average scores are good, therefore, they mask considerable variation in the quality and play value of sites across the Borough. Ideally, all of the scores should be clustered in the top right hand quadrant of the quality and value chart. In the interests of offering provision of consistent quality and value across the Borough, it will be desirable to narrow the range of both quality and value scores by upgrading the worst sites, particularly those which are below average quality and value. This will also raise the average quality and value scores. The best sites are Wildwood Park and Victoria Park, both in Stafford.
- 9.14 The high quality scores indicate more than anything that the Borough Council is doing a very good job of maintaining its play areas. However, some improvements are nonetheless desirable, including:
- **Additional play equipment** or replacement of existing equipment at some sites.
 - **Improving accessibility**, for example by improving disabled access or providing surfaced paths to the entrance to play areas and also within them. It is quite common for users to have to walk across a grassed (and in wet weather often muddy) area in order to get to the entrance gate. This will not bother young children, but will dissuade adults accompanying them who do not want to get their shoes or feet wet. Some play areas also lack a hard surfaced area at the entrance gate, with the result that the entrance can be a sea of mud for at least part of the year. The average accessibility score was 75%.
 - **Enhancing safety**: the type of safety surfacing beneath equipment items varies considerably with the most common surfaces being a wet pour impact absorbing surface, tarmac and bark chips. The first of these has the advantages of staying in place and being easy to clean, but in spite of being point elastic it is not actually particularly safe (it is usually laid on top of tarmac, so tends to minimise cuts and grazes but not a lot else). Bark chips, on the other hand, are better to fall on but tend to become displaced (particularly beneath swings), partly negating their safety properties, and are almost

impossible to clean, for example if fouled by a dog. The use of play areas with bark chips also tends to result in the chips being scattered on paths and grassed areas. The average safety and security score was 79%.

- **Better facilities for parents and carers:** while most sites have at least one seat for adults accompanying young children, a number are in poor condition. Litter bins are also sometimes missing or in poor condition. The average score for facilities was only 69%.
- **Slightly better maintenance:** the average score for management and maintenance is a good 89%, but at a number of sites there is a need for enhanced maintenance.
- **Better signage:** every site should have a sign at the entrance giving the age of children for which it is intended, where to get help in case of an accident or other emergency and details of who is responsible for maintenance so that users can draw attention to any need there may be repairs.

The Accessibility of Provision

Accessibility Standard

9.15 Traditionally, play areas have been very local facilities and councils have generally sought to ensure that there is at least one equipped play area within a few minutes walk of every family house. However, this approach incurs fairly high maintenance costs and is becoming outmoded, thanks to the success of:

- **“Destination” play facilities** offering much more to children and young people than small and often formulaic facilities with very limited equipment and play value. In Stafford, Victoria Park is an excellent example of a destination play area and is extremely successful, attracting large numbers of children and their parents, even though few people live within walking distance.
- **“Natural” play facilities** as part of local greenspaces in residential areas. They are designed to offer good opportunities for children to play creatively through the use of changes of level and natural materials such as logs, sand and rocks rather than traditional fenced and equipment-dominated play areas. Such facilities should have lower long term maintenance costs than traditional equipped play areas – rocks, for

example, have already lasted for millions of years without any maintenance.

- 9.16 The Council's priority for the future should be to develop more of these types of facility. In essence, its long term aim should be to develop a network of high quality destination play facilities complemented by neighbourhood level natural play facilities in residential areas.



Victoria Park, Stafford: a well designed, high quality destination play area that offers facilities for young children, older children and teenagers, but in a way that allows each their own space



Sawyer Way, Stone: a recently built example of a developer-provided natural play area with only a few items of equipment but which nonetheless offers visual stimulation and a reasonable play environment

Neighbourhood Play

- 9.17 This does not mean that the Council should scrap its existing play areas. Instead, it should take the opportunity progressively to create fewer but better sites by rationalising local and neighbourhood provision as sites need investment.
- 9.18 The updated database of play areas contains 84 sites, five more than in the 2009 assessment. Of these, 79 contain equipment designed for children below the age of eight; 73 have equipment designed for 8-12 year olds; and 25 have equipment suitable for children with disabilities. Maps 9.1 to 9.3 below respectively show:
- The location of play areas with equipment for children aged under 8, plus 300 m distance thresholds
 - The location of play areas for children aged 8-12, plus 450 m distance thresholds
 - The location of play areas with equipment suitable for children with disabilities of any age

Accessibility Deficiencies – Younger Children

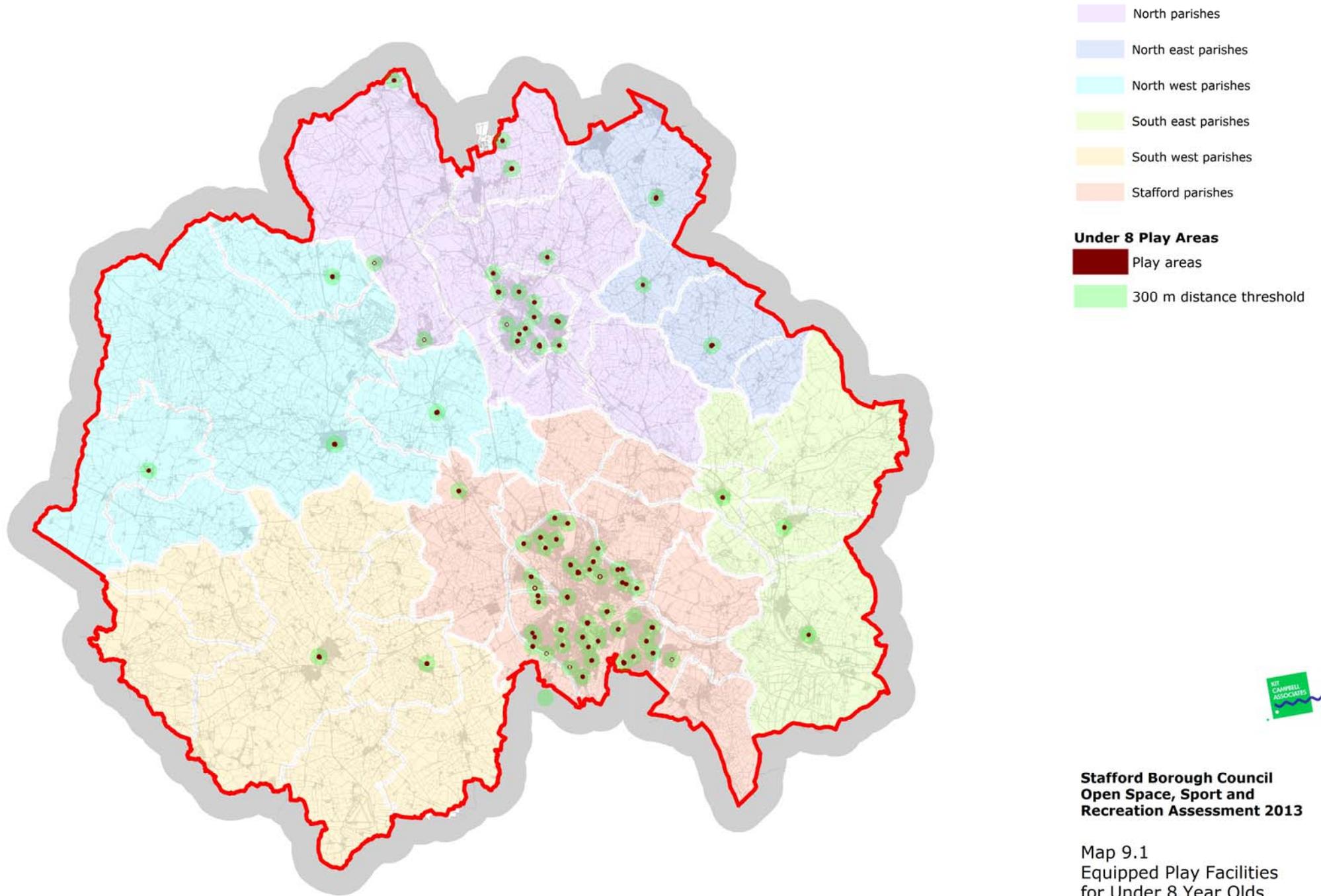
- 9.19 The main accessibility deficiencies in terms of play areas are:

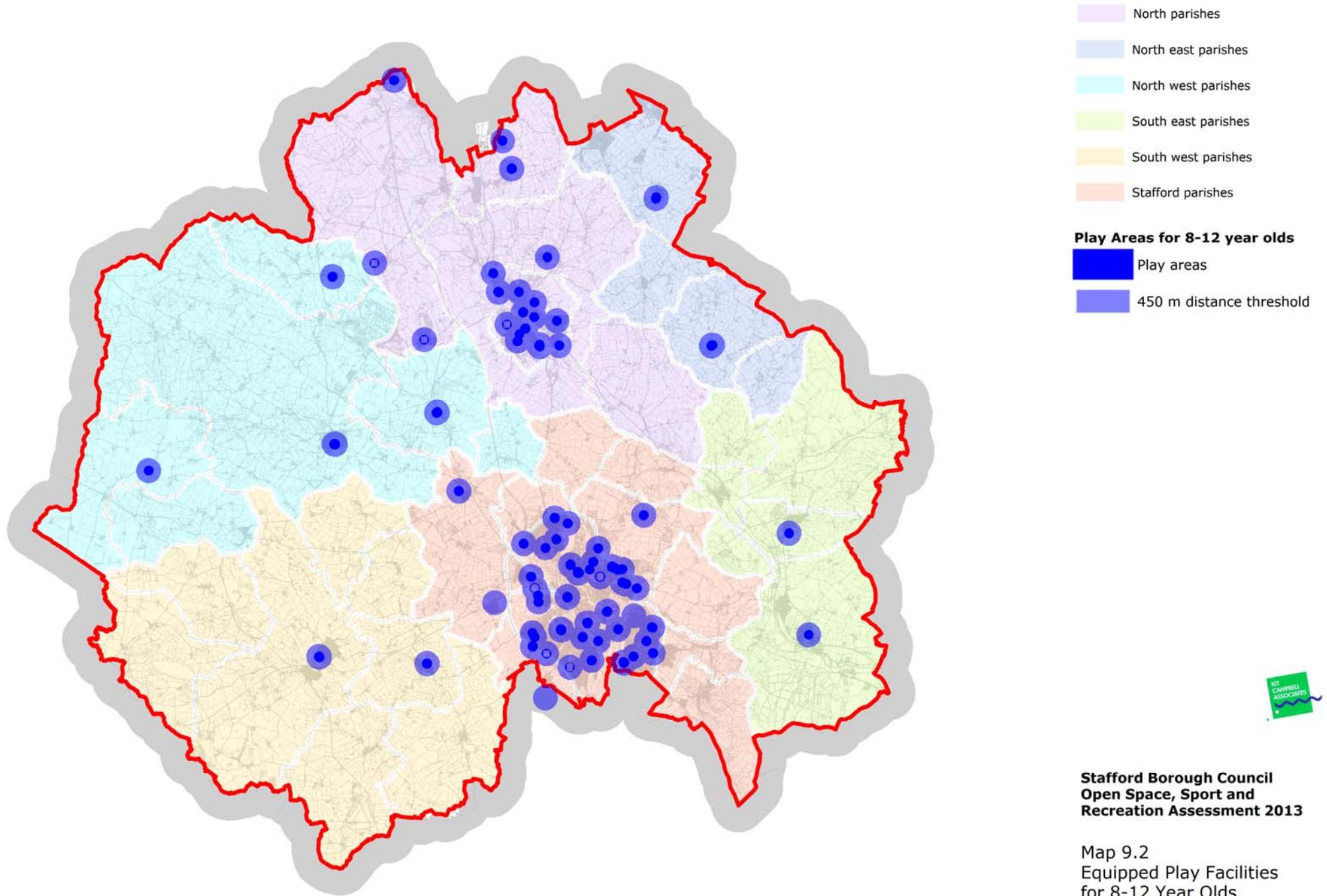
In Stafford town:

- In the Holmcroft area
- North-west Baswich
- Part of Highfields
- Part of the Parkside area
- Part of the Littleworth area
- Part of Weeping Cross
- Part of Wildwood

In Stone and Walton:

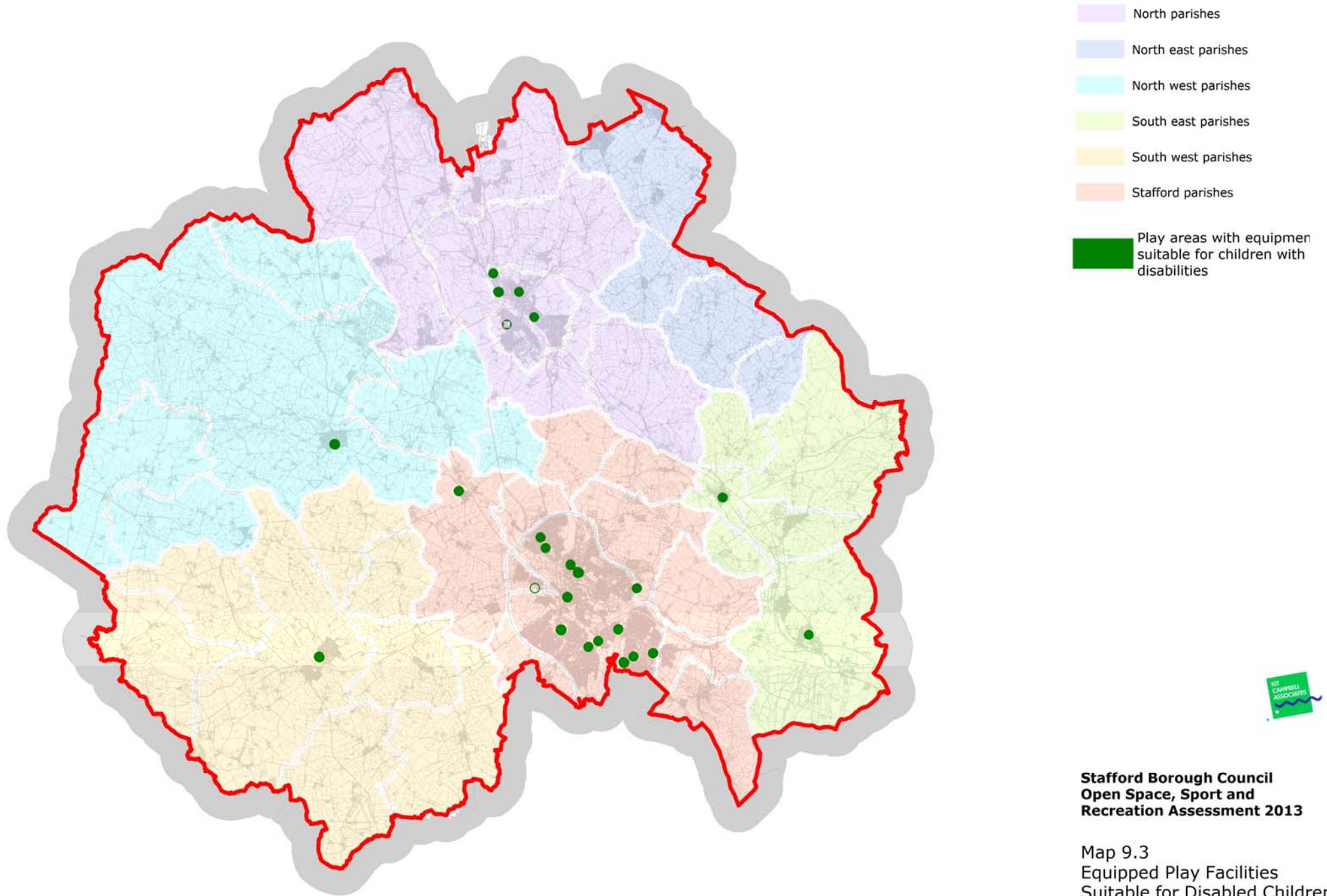
- North west Stone
- North west Walton
- Oulton and Oultoncross
- South west Walton Heath
- The southern part of Stone centred on the Lichfield Road
- West of Little Stoke
- North-west Walton





**Stafford Borough Council
 Open Space, Sport and
 Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 9.2
 Equipped Play Facilities
 for 8-12 Year Olds



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 9.3
Equipped Play Facilities
Suitable for Disabled Children

Quantity Standard

9.20 Against this background, it would be wrong to propose a simple quantity standard for the provision of more traditional equipped play areas in the Borough. Instead, the Council and its Town and Parish Council partners should set three broad objectives for the long term network of play facilities across the Borough:

- To plan and progressively develop a “strategic network” of destination play areas in Stafford and Stone, and possibly the larger key service villages such as Barlaston, Eccleshall and Gnosall, in high profile, major greenspaces such as parks or park-like spaces
- To retain the present equipped play areas for the moment but move to the new approach suggested above whenever new development, or the need to replace an existing play area, creates the opportunity to do so
- To rationalise play provision in those areas where there a number of small play areas with poor play value into a smaller number of larger facilities, with the main emphasis being on accessibility and play value, rather than size

The Strategic Network: Destination Play

9.21 The main opportunities to develop new strategic destination play areas will arise in established parks and the proposed Strategic Development Locations. Play provision should be an important and integral component of planning briefs for the latter with the costs of play provision divided on an equitable basis amongst the various developers involved through the use of planning obligations. The development of a strategic network of destination facilities in other locations will best be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy. The key requirement with destination play facilities is that they should be readily accessible to concentrations of population and therefore the long term network should consist of the sites shown in Map 9.4:

In Stafford Town

- Charnley Road
- Rowley Park (existing)
- Stafford Common
- The Strategic Development Location to the East of Stafford
- The Strategic Development Location to the north of Stafford
- The Strategic Development Location to the west of Stafford

- Victoria Park (existing)
- Wildwood Park

In Stone

- Westbridge Park, Stone

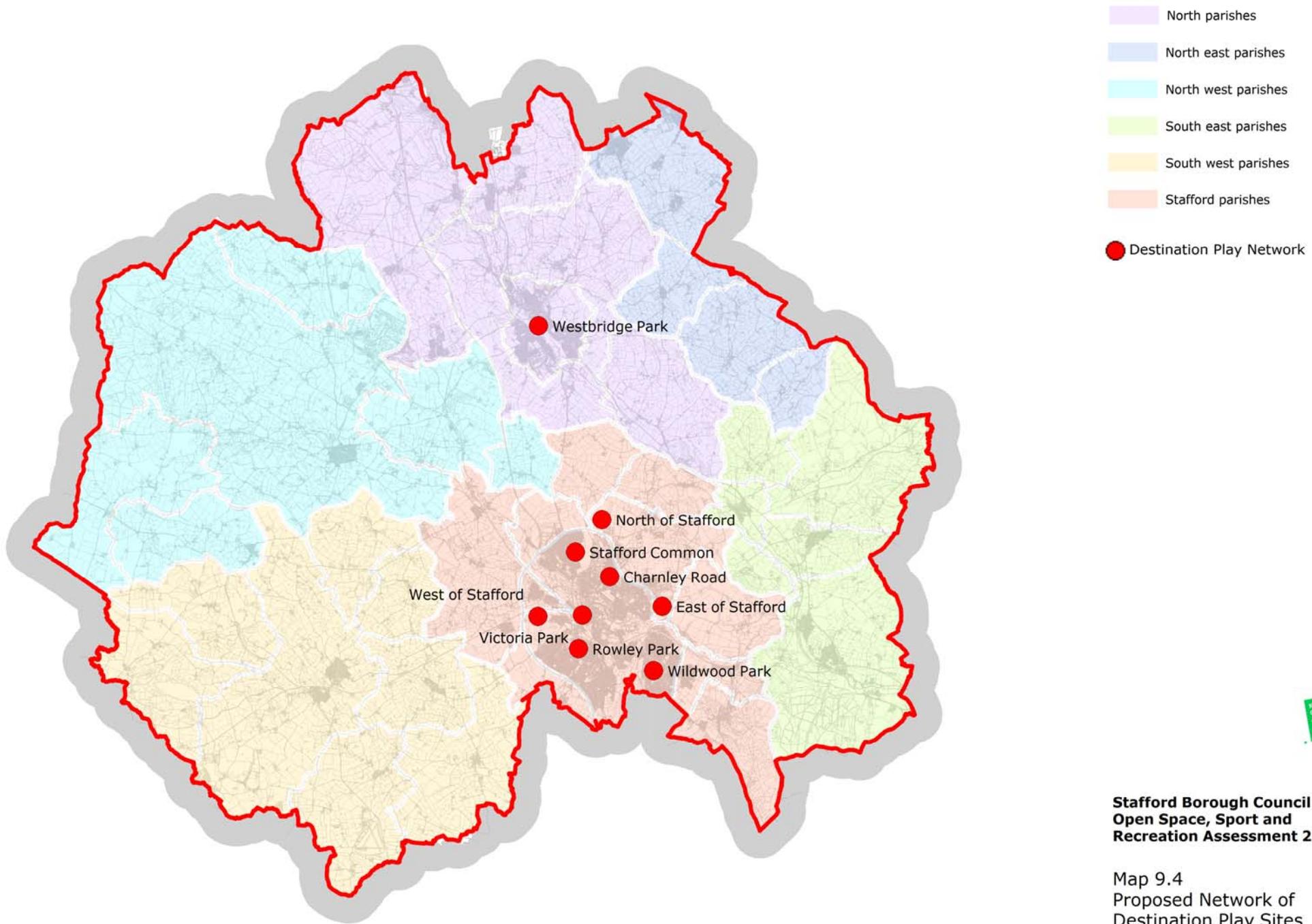
Key Service Villages

- Barlaston
- Eccleshall
- Gnosall

9.22 This gives eight destination play facilities in Stafford. The current population of is about 60,000 people but this will rise to about 70-72,000 as a result of the housing developments proposed in the Plan for Stafford Borough. This suggests an average of one destination play area to 8-9,000 residents. Overall, the one existing destination play area in Victoria Park extends to some 6,000 sq m or about the same area as a football pitch. Of this roughly 1,500 sq m consists of circulation routes around the facilities, 1,500 sq m the children's equipped play, 1,500 sq m the water play facility and the remaining 1,500 sq m the teenage facilities. New destination play areas need not include water play, which is an expensive facility with significant maintenance implications. Therefore they should each have an area of approximately 1,500 sq m plus whatever circulation routes may be necessary. As a very broad guideline the total area of the proposed destination play network in Stafford will therefore be about 4,500 sq (for Victoria Park) plus seven additional sites of about 1,500 sq m each = 15,000 sq m or 0.2 sq m per person.

Neighbourhood Play

9.23 The current average level of provision - derived from the area of existing equipped play areas - is 0.37 sq m per person. As there are some accessibility deficiencies across the Borough, and therefore a need for slightly more play provision, this suggests the need for a slightly higher general quantity standard for local play of 0.4 sq m per person.



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 9.4
Proposed Network of
Destination Play Sites

Sites shown enlarged for clarity

9.24 However, the use of this standard for local facilities will lead to over-provision in areas where there are also destination play areas. A circular area with a radius of 300 m (the distance threshold suggested above for young children's play provision) will have a total area of some 28 ha. At an average density of 25 dwellings per hectare (the average density for the Strategic Development Locations) and an average of 2.33 persons per dwelling, the population will be approximately 1,650 people. As the minimum size of a local play area to serve an area of this size should be at least 400 sq m, this gives a quantity standard for local play of slightly under 0.25 sq m per person, or roughly half the current level of provision.

9.25 Therefore the Council should use a quantity standard of **0.45 sq m per person** for play provision across the Borough. However, in those areas with destination play facilities this will split into:

- Destination play 0.2 sq m per person
- Local play 0.25 sq m per person

Conclusions

9.26 The Pre-submission *Plan for Stafford Borough* includes two quantity standards for play provision, which this updated analysis confirms:

- A Borough-wide quantity standard of 0.4 sq m per person
- One destination/strategic site to 8,000 people, with this provision included in the 0.4 sq m per person overall quantity standard

9.27 This is subject to:

- New greenspaces in new residential areas being designed creatively on natural play principles as much as possible
- The rationalisation of play provision in areas where there are several play facilities of low play value into fewer but larger and better sites

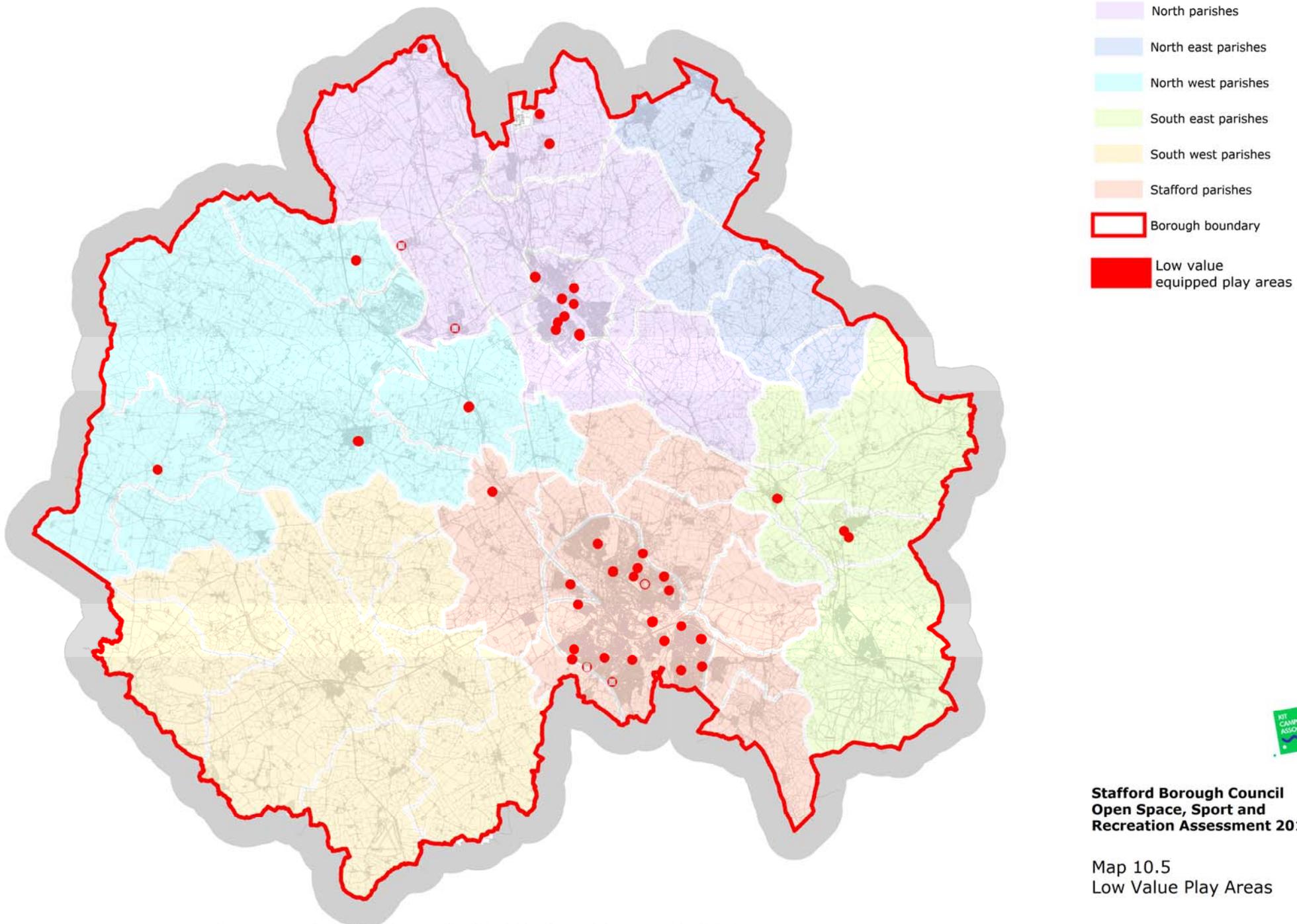
9.28 Map 9.5 below highlights play facilities with low play value and it is in these areas in which this rationalisation should be a priority. The main areas in which this is the case are:

- **Stone:** the proposed destination play area in Westbridge Park should make it possible to remove a number of existing play areas
- **Hixon,** where there are two small play areas close together

- **North east Stafford**, where the proposed destination play area on Stafford Common should make it possible to rationalise provision in the vicinity
- **South west Stafford**, where three play areas are reasonably close together – Torridge Drive, Carrisbrooke and Highfields Community Park. It should be possible to remove Torridge Drive and expand the Carisbrooke site.

9.29 This approach will have three important long term benefits:

- It will result in a slowly but steadily increasing number of more interesting, more attractive and more “playable” greenspaces that should appeal to both children and adults
- It should generate economies of scale in terms of maintenance costs for the Council and the Town and Parish Councils
- It will raise the profile of the Borough’s main parks

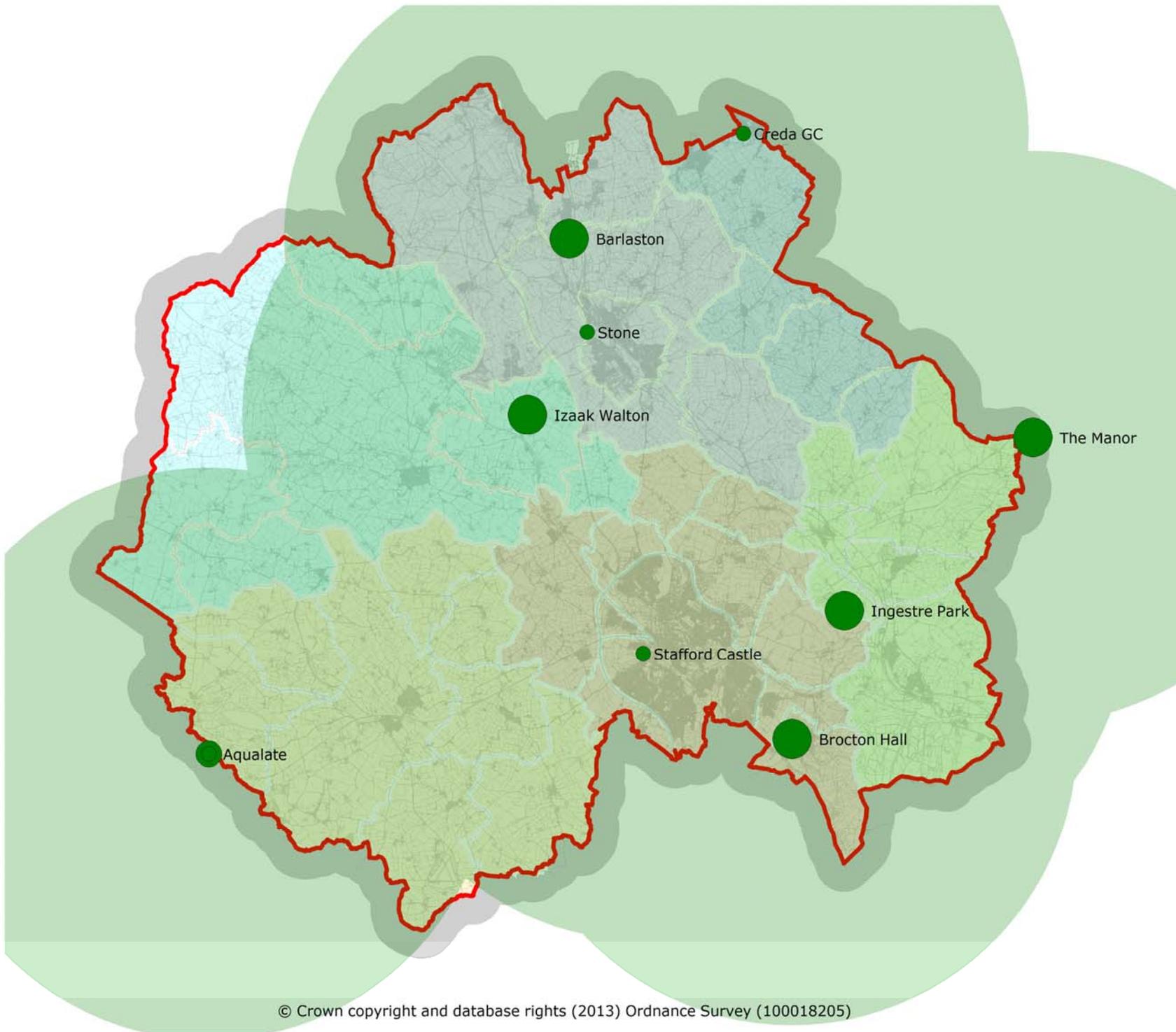


Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013

Map 10.5
 Low Value Play Areas

10: Golf Courses

- | | | |
|--|------|--|
| The Current Quantity of Provision | 10.1 | The Borough has six golf courses within its boundary, providing a total of 109 holes. This does not divide by either 9 or 18, the standard number of holes on a golf course, because one of the courses has 10 holes. |
| The Current Quality of Provision | 10.2 | All of the courses in the Borough are attractively laid out and offer high quality, high value facilities to golfers. There are no particular improvements that are generally desirable from the point of view of playing the game. However, on many of the courses it will be both desirable and possible to enhance nature conservation and biodiversity without detriment to the playing of golf. |
| The Accessibility of Provision | 10.3 | Because of the need to take heavy bags of clubs, most golfers travel by car and so walking and cycling accessibility are not significant. In order to assess accessibility we have used a fairly arbitrary distance threshold of 10 km, which approximates to a little over 20 minutes travel for those who start their journey within either Stafford town or Stone. As Map 10.1 shows, practically the whole of the Borough is within this distance of at least one course, apart from a small area in the north west area and therefore accessibility is very good. There is also the recently built Stone Driving Range and Golf Academy close to the Izaak Walton Golf Club just outside Stone. |



- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes
- Golf courses - 9 holes
- Golf courses - 10 holes
- Golf courses - 18 holes
- 10 km Distance Threshold



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 10.1
Golf Courses

Sites shown enlarged for clarity

Trends

- 10.4 Traditionally, many golfers have been members of clubs and joined the one with the best course they can afford, provided it is within an acceptable travel distance. More recently, however, many clubs have seen a significant decline in membership, although not necessarily a commensurate decline in usage. This has arisen because at least some of those members who played only occasionally have decided that it would be cheaper to “pay and play” rather than purchase an annual membership at the equivalent of a higher cost per round. This has also had the beneficial effect that it has allowed them to play a number of different courses for the same or lower overall cost.
- 10.5 There are two main consequences of this move to “nomadic” golfers:
- None of the clubs within the Borough currently has a waiting list, although waiting lists were common only a few years ago. Several are actively seeking more members.
 - Clubs have lost income and are having to increase their “pay and play” charges which can of course be self-defeating if players start to think they are too high.
- 10.6 Climate change may have a significant impact on golf courses in future if we get the predicted hotter, drier summers, with a need to water not only greens but fairways as well.

Quantity Standard

- 10.7 109 holes equates to one hole to approximately 1100 residents. As all of the clubs in the Borough currently have spare capacity there is no foreseeable need for more golf courses in the Borough, especially as the Stafford Castle Club has planning permission – which it intends to take up - to extend its course from 9 to 18 holes. This should make it more attractive to players who currently travel from the town to an 18-hole course elsewhere and will probably result in some displacement of demand rather than an increase in golf participation overall.

Conclusions

- 10.8 There is no need for any additional provision as existing clubs should be able to accommodate the additional demand likely to arise as a result of the housing development planned for the Borough.

11: Grass Pitches

Introduction

- 11.1 This chapter covers pitches for cricket, football and rugby. Hockey is not included as community hockey teams do not use grass pitches. It is based primarily on the Sport England Playing Pitch Model and a telephone survey of a sample of pitch sport clubs across the Borough. Across the four sports, it is clear that the main constraints on pitch sport participation relate to issues such as the lack of volunteers and match officials or meeting running costs rather than the number or quality of pitches.

Governing Body Views

Staffordshire Cricket Board

- 11.2 The Staffordshire Cricket Board's priorities include:
- Improving the quality of pavilions and support facilities
 - Improving indoor facilities for cricket
 - Strategically located indoor cricket centres

Staffordshire Football Association

- 11.3 The Staffordshire Football Association (SFA) has identified the key local needs as:
- Third generation artificial turf pitches (ATPs)
 - More multi-pitch sites
 - Indoor Futsal facilities (Futsal is a small-sided version of football that originated in South America and football governing bodies generally regard it as superior to five-sides, the most popular form of the game in the UK)
 - More floodlit pitches; however, the carrying capacity of grass pitches is not increased enough by the provision of floodlights to justify the investment. Therefore meeting this need also requires more ATPs.
- 11.4 The SFA believes that participation in football is fairly static. It has provided a list of teams in the

Borough and the table below compares the number of current teams in each age group with the number of teams it believes existed in 2008-9 and suggests an increase of around 30, mainly in youth and adult teams:

	2008-9 teams	2012-13 teams	Change
U7	0	6	+6
U8	25	16	-9
U9	24	12	-12
U10	26	19	-7
U11	3	12	+9
U12	17	16	-1
U13	11	11	0
U14	4	11	+7
U15	5	8	+3
U16	7	12	+5
U17	0	8	+8
U18	0	6	+6
Adult	60	78	+18
Totals	172	215	+33

11.5 Therefore it seems that there has been a decline in participation amongst some of the younger age groups, but growth in the number of teams in the older ones. This suggests that players have continued to play as they grow older, but local clubs have not been successful at attracting more young players to replace those who have moved on to higher age groups. However, the Borough Council's pitch booking statistics do not support the SFA's figures. They indicate that the number of adult teams is static but there has been growth in the number of mini and youth teams.

11.6 The Staffordshire FA regards the quality of pitches in the Borough as generally good, but that there is a need for sites to be more flexible in order to be able to accommodate marked-out pitches of different sizes for different age groups of players. This arises from the fact that the Football Association has decreed that by the start of season 2014-15:

- All U7 and U8 teams will play 5 v 5 matches on 30 x 20 to 40 x 30 yard pitches
- All U9 and U10 teams will play 7 v 7 matches on 50 x 30 to 60 x 40 yard pitches
- All U11 and U12 teams will play 9 v 9 matches on 70 x 40 to 80 x 50 yard pitches (although primary schools may play on 50 x 30 to 60 x 40 yard pitches) and leagues may specify that all age groups up to U16 should play this form of the game

- All U13 and U14 teams will play 9 v 9 or 11 v 11 matches on 90 x 50 to 100 x 60 yard pitches
- All U15 and U16 teams will play 9 v 9 or 11 v 11 matches on 90 x 50 to 110 x 70 yard pitches
- All U17 and U18 teams will play 11 v 11 on 90 x 50 to 110 x 70 yard pitches

11.7 This, and the desirability of multi-pitch sites, has obvious implications for the Council as the main provider of pitches in the Borough. However, what the Staffordshire FA wants and what it is possible to provide at a time of severely limited Council financial resources may well be different. In addition, it is not at present possible to know:

- Exactly how many teams there will be in each age group and therefore the number of pitches of different sizes that will be needed
- The impact of additional 3G artificial turf pitch provision in the Borough, not least because a 3G pitch can be used for up to eight adult matches in a weekend (or slightly more youth or mini matches, which last for less than 90 minutes playing time) compared with two or at most three for grass pitches

11.8 Looking to the future, there may be growing demand for mini and youth football, and in time possibly adult football as well, to move to a March to October or November season. The main reason for this is that most damage to pitches occurs in the middle of winter and with increasing rainfall and milder winters as a result of climate change this damage is likely to increase, leading to more cancelled matches and a backlog of fixtures at the end of the winter season. However, if more and more football moves to artificial turf pitches this will not be necessary.

11.9 In the short term, however, there will be a need for pitches in a range sizes and this has very obvious land use implications. Apart from the secondary schools, the Borough has only a handful of sites with more than two pitches on which it will be possible to mark out a range of pitches in different sizes – Rowley Park (eight pitches), Woodland Road (three pitches), Charnley Road (five pitches), the privately owned Wellbeing Park in Yarnley (seven pitches) and the Shugborough County Sports Ground (3 pitches). One solution will be progressively to move adult football onto ATPs, making it possible to mark out more and more of the available grass pitches for mini and youth football in a range of sizes. However, this is

inherently undesirable: in order to maximise the extent to which young players are attracted to and remain in the game they should be given the best possible facilities – in other words, ATPs. Therefore there may be a case for developing a number of 60 x 40 m ATPs. They will be suitable for matches by teams in the up U12 age group and, with the agreement of leagues, for teams up to U16. In principle a good location for such pitches will therefore be at primary schools.

- 11.10 There will be a need to review the needs of football in detail once the number of teams in each age group becomes clearer as this will dictate the pitches they require. This will require close liaison with both the SFA and local football leagues, particularly those catering for mini-soccer and youth football. In the meantime there are enough pitches to cope with current demand.

Staffordshire Rugby Union

- 11.11 The Staffordshire Rugby Union (SRU) has a facility plan covering the period 2009-12. Although it is now slightly out of date, it is designed:

- To identify the facilities required in the county to meet the SRU Development Plan
- To support the prioritisation of investment and funding
- To identify specific priorities
- To identify and deliver a minimum standard of facility provision

- 11.12 The Plan sets a number of objectives for the future, including an increase in the number of participants in all age groups by not less than 2% per year. It also identifies three facility priorities:

- Improved quality and quantity of grass pitches, changing facilities and floodlit areas
- Improved access to ATPs
- Better social and spectator facilities

- 11.13 The strategy is based around three “model venues” or sets of facilities that support different levels of rugby activity. Model Venue 1 (MV1) is the lowest and MV3 the highest. In relation to criteria relating to clubs’ levels of activity and facilities, the strategy classes the Stafford clubs as follows:

	Activity	Facilities
• Eccleshall	MV1	MV1
• St Leonard’s	MV1	MV1

• Stafford	MV2	MV2
• Stoke	MV2	MV2
• Stone	MV1	MV1

Note: Stafford College is not included in the SRU classification

11.14 The strategy suggests that the requirements of the various clubs are:

- **Eccleshall:** secure 4-pitch site, floodlighting, refurbish changing rooms, access and car park
- **St Leonard's:** floodlighting
- **Stafford:** refurbish changing rooms
- **Stoke:** enhanced drainage and land for additional pitches
- **Stone:** relocation to Stone Hockley Club, two changing rooms and two pitches

11.15 The SRU also has two aspirations for further facilities in Stafford:

- An indoor training area
- An IRB22 pitch, preferably at the Stafford Rugby Club (an IRB 22 pitch is an artificial turf pitch designed for rugby and complying with International Rugby Board Regulation 22).

Stafford Rugby Club

11.16 The Club's site is owned by Lord Stafford and leased to the club, but it would like to relocate to a new site where it can be the master of its own destiny. It has been in negotiation with Lord Stafford for a number of years, so far without any positive results.

11.17 The club is well run and prosperous and has four men's teams; a women's team; U13, U14, U15, U16 and U17 boys' teams; an U15 girls team; and U7, U8, U9, U10, U11 and U12 mini teams. However, it needs more and better pitches drain poorly and the floodlighting is also poor.

St Leonard's Rugby Club

11.18 The Club has its main pitch at the Stafford Cricket and Hockey Club at Riverway in Stafford and also uses a pitch at Stafford College, for which it has a five year lease. It has three men's teams: the First XV plays in the Midlands 5 West North League; the Second XV in the SRU Merit B North; and the Third/vets XV plays only friendly matches. However, the club has no juniors. Membership is rising.

- 11.19 The Cricket and Hockey Club would like to develop a 2G ATP at their Riverway site and if this happens the club will need a replacement pitch elsewhere.

Eccleshall Rugby Club

- 11.20 The Club's ground is at Baden Hall Farm but it has only a five year lease. The pitches are acceptable, although not good, but the changing accommodation is very poor. The club is very keen to find a new site.
- 11.21 The club runs three men's teams. The First XV play in the Mid West North 4 League (training Tuesdays at 1900); the Second XV in the Staffordshire Merit Table – Merit Table C North (training Tuesdays at 1900); and the Third XV plays friendly matches. It also has a good junior section with a colts team playing in the Raging Bull Colts League – Senior Colts League; an U13 team playing friendly matches; an U15 team; an U16 team; and mini teams at U6, U7, U8, U10, U11 and U12.

Stone Rugby Club

- 11.22 Stone is a small club, with a limited number of volunteers. It recently relocated and joined up with Stone Hockey Club on its site at Enson Lane, Aston by Stone. However, it still owns its pitch at Tilling Drive in Stone, which it is hoping to sell to fund better changing accommodation at the Hockey Club to be shared by both clubs.
- 11.23 The club has one men's team that trains at Stone Hockey Club on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1900.

Stoke Rugby Club, Barlaston

- 11.24 This is essentially a Stoke Club, but with its pitches in the north of the Borough. It is a large club which owns the site of its three pitches, a training area and large pavilion. The changing is acceptable, but not good, and the club wants to upgrade it so that it will be possible to have men and women or adults and juniors using the facilities at the same time. The club has done a lot of work to improve its pitches and they are good.
- 11.25 The club runs three men's and two Colts teams; U13, U14, U15 and U16 junior teams; and U7, U8, U9, U10, U11 and U12 mini teams, plus a Rugger Rats team. The First XV plays in Midland Division – Midlands 1 West; the Second XV plays in an unspecified league; and Third XV plays friendly

matches. All men's teams train on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1930. The Senior Colts team plays in Raging Bull Colts League and trains on Thursdays at 1930 but the club's website gives no details of the league in which the junior colts team plays. The U13 team trains on Thursdays at 1830; U14, U15 and U16 on Sundays at 1000 and Wednesdays at 1830. Finally the mini teams train on Sundays from 1000 -1200.

Stafford College

11.26 Stafford College has one team, with close links to Stafford RFC.

The Sport England Playing Pitch Model

11.27 Appendices G2-G5 consist of the Sport England playing pitch model (PPM) for cricket, adult football and rugby. Youth football and mini-soccer are not included because the impact of the introduction of 9 v 9 matches for a number of the younger age groups is currently unknown. The Model uses a standard methodology for each of the pitch sports to compare the number of teams and pitches on the peak match days each week – almost inevitably Saturday and Sundays. We have estimated the number of teams in the Borough by sport, gender and age group, using a variety of sources including league and club websites and contact with club officials. In addition, to estimate the number of pitches, we have used information from our audit of local provision.

Cricket

11.28 The Borough currently has around 15 cricket clubs fielding 65 men's teams (18 more than in 2008-9), two women's teams (five fewer than in 2008-9), six girls teams (one more than in 2008-9) and 42 boys' teams (13 fewer than in 2008-9); and it has at least 16 club or other publicly accessible pitches plus 2 joint use pitches. Over half of the Borough's adult cricket teams are based in the north area although it contains only around 20% of the population.

12.29 The result of using the Playing Pitch Model for the current number of teams and pitches is that there are just enough pitches to accommodate current demand, although some south-west and Stafford teams may have to play more away than home games. However, this assumes that each team plays once a week when in fact some teams (eg veterans' teams) play less frequently than this. The Model estimates the surplus or deficiency in pitches on different peak weekend match days as:

	Saturday PM (adult)	Sunday PM (adult)	Sunday AM (junior)
North	0.7	1.2	5.7
North east	0.0	0.0	0.0
North west	1.1	1.3	2.3
South east	0.8	0.8	1.0
South west	-0.2	-0.1	0.7
Stafford	-1.9	-1.7	0.9
Totals	0.5	1.5	10.5

Note: red figures indicate a deficiency in the number of pitches; black a surplus. There are also midweek matches for both adult and junior teams but ample pitches to accommodate current demand. This calculation ignores school pitches.

- 11.30 When the proposed Strategic Development Locations are built out there are likely to be something like an additional one team in the north planning area and 14 in the Stafford planning area. This calculation ignores the impact of any development programmes by the Staffordshire Cricket Board. Taking account of the additional teams likely to arise in the Strategic Development Locations, and a possible 5% growth in participation, the surplus or deficiency in pitches changes to:

	Saturday PM (Adult)	Sunday PM (adult)	Sunday AM (junior)
North	0.5	1.1	5.6
North east	0.0	0.0	0.0
North west	1.1	1.3	2.3
South east	0.8	0.8	1.0
South west	-0.2	-0.1	0.7
Stafford	-3.8	-3.5	0.8
Totals	-1.6	-0.4	10.4

Note: This calculation ignores school pitches

- 11.31 In the future, therefore, there may be a need for up to an additional three or four pitches in the Stafford area.

Football

- 11.32 The Borough currently has approximately 52 adult football clubs fielding 56 men's teams and four women's teams. Of the men's teams, eleven play on Saturday afternoons and 45 on Sunday mornings. All of the women's teams play on Sunday afternoons. In addition there are 49 boys' and 17

girls teams aged U11 to U18 and 75 mini-soccer teams, a number of which are mixed. The Borough also has 61 publicly accessible adult pitches, 21 youth pitches and 7 mini-soccer ones.

11.33 The current surpluses or deficiencies in pitches are:

	Adult matches Saturday PM	Adult matches Sunday AM	Adult matches Sunday PM	Youth matches Saturday PM	Youth Matches Sunday PM	Mini matches Sunday AM
North	9.7	8.9	9.9	1.9	1.1	-0.50
North east	-0.1	-0.4	-0.0	0.9	0.1	0.00
North west	5.2	2.6	5.7	1.8	-0.3	-6.50
South east	2.7	1.9	2.9	1.0	1.0	0.00
South west	2.9	2.6	3.0	-0.1	-0.9	0.00
Stafford	18.1	5.9	20.6	4.8	-8.8	-23.50
Totals	38.5	21.5	42.0	10.4	-7.9	-30.5

11.34 Accordingly there appears to be a significant surplus of adult pitches throughout the weekend but a major shortage of youth and mini pitches on Sundays. As a result many of the youth and mini matches must currently be played on adult pitches. In total, the Model estimates that there are 89 adult, youth and mini matches per week on a total of 89 pitches or one match per weekend, which is by no means excessive. Therefore there are enough pitches at present, although they are not all of the most appropriate size.

11.35 Even though the number of teams in the Borough will increase as a result of the Strategic Development Locations, there will still be enough pitches. Moreover, as more and more matches move to artificial turf pitches (see Chapter 6 above) it will be possible to concentrate play onto only the best of the grass pitches. In addition, the development of more 3G ATPs may lead to the creation of midweek leagues and change the pattern of participation.

11.36 Overall, it would be possible to accommodate all of the current demand for football matches on a total of approximately 23 ATPs, although this is a theoretical figure as it is very unlikely that all football will transfer to artificial surfaces for a long time to come.

Rugby Union

11.37 The Borough currently has five community rugby clubs fielding 14 men's teams (three more than in 2009), four colts teams (one more than in 2009),

two women's teams (the same as in 2009), 13 midi teams (also the same as in 2009) and 17 mini teams, plus a team fielded by Stafford College which plays in a colleges and universities' league. It also has 11 club or public adult pitches, one club junior pitch and one club mini pitch. The clubs are based mainly in the north and Stafford areas of the Borough.

11.38 The Playing Pitch Model for the current situation suggests that there are more than enough adult pitches but deficiencies in the number of midi and mini ones:

	Adults Saturday PM	Adults Sunday AM	Midis Sunday AM	Minis Sunday AM
North	1.9	3.1	-2.0	-3.0
North east	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
North west	0.3	1.3	-1.5	-2.5
South east	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
South west	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Stafford	1.9	3.7	-2.0	-4.5
Totals	4.0	8.0	-5.5	-10.0

Note: this calculation ignores pitches on school sites. It also ignores the team run by Stafford College as all of its fixtures are midweek.

11.39 It follows that most of the current midi and mini matches are played on adult pitches. However, it is desirable that teams in the various mini and midi age groups should be able to play on marked-out pitches in a range of sizes appropriate to the nature of the matches they play. However, the Model also suggests that as there are more adult pitches than currently needed by adult teams it should be possible to re-mark some of them as mini or midi pitches. The table below summarises how the situation is likely to change when the proposed Strategic Development Locations are built out and also assumes a 5% increase in participation:

	Adults Saturday PM	Adults Sunday AM	Midis Sunday AM	Minis Sunday AM
North	1.7	3.0	-2.2	-3.3
North east	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
North west	0.2	1.2	-1.6	-2.6
South east	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
South west	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Stafford	1.0	3.3	-2.8	-5.7
Totals	2.9	7.5	-6.5	-11.6

Note: this calculation ignores pitches on school sites. It also ignores the team run by Stafford College as all of its fixtures are midweek.

11.40 Accordingly the shortfall in mini and midi pitch provision is likely to be exacerbated by population growth in the Strategic Development Locations, but to a much lesser extent than for cricket.

The Need for a “Strategic Reserve” of Pitches

11.41 All of the above calculations take no account of the need for a “strategic reserve” of pitches. However, there are always times when some football and rugby pitches are likely to be either unplayable or being “rested”. This increases the number of pitches required to meet any given level of demand. However, the increase required is impossible to predict with any degree of certainty as it varies from year to year with the weather. Typically it is desirable to have a sufficient strategic reserve to make it possible for at least 10% of pitches to be out of use at any one time.

Team Generation Rates

11.42 The PPM also calculates team generation rates (TGRs) and this makes it possible to benchmark the number of teams in the Borough in relation to its population against the number of teams in other areas. The TGR is the number of people in a specified age group, defined by Sport England, required to “generate” one team. Accordingly the lower the TGR the higher the rate of participation, and vice versa. TGRs for Stafford Borough, compared with the median (ie middle value) TGRs published by Sport England, are:

	Stafford	England median
Cricket		
Men’s teams	513	910
Women’s teams	15,525	40,550
Boys’ teams	128	339
Girls’ teams	851	4,962
Football		
Men’s teams	457	354
Women’s teams	5,824	12,949
Boys’ teams	91	100
Girls’ teams	1,046	1,853
Mini-soccer teams	69	228
Rugby Union		
Men’s teams	1,333	3,597
Women’s teams	10,843	17,238
Boys’ teams	325	564
Girls’ teams	3,722	5,139

Mini-rugby	394	1,037
------------	-----	-------

Note: the lower the TGR the higher the rate of participation. The median is the “mid point” in any list of values – in other words, there are as many values above the median as there are below it. Average values can be skewed by one or two “outliers” while medians cannot. Accordingly, medians are a more useful guide than averages in terms of TGRs.

11.43 Accordingly, it appears that:

- **Cricket:** participation in men’s and women’s cricket in the Borough is significantly higher than the median for England.
- **Football:** participation in men’s football is lower than the England median, but in women’s football is well above the England median. Participation in boys’ football is broadly comparable with the English median, but in girls’ football and mini-soccer it is much higher than the English median.
- **Rugby:** rugby is significantly more popular in the Borough than the median for England

11.44 This suggests that these three sports are of well above average popularity in the Borough, with the single exception of men’s football. However, the popularity of football amongst young players and the growth in the number of adult teams since 2009 suggests that something of a revival may be coming.

Accessibility

11.45 It is necessary to consider the accessibility of pitches in two ways:

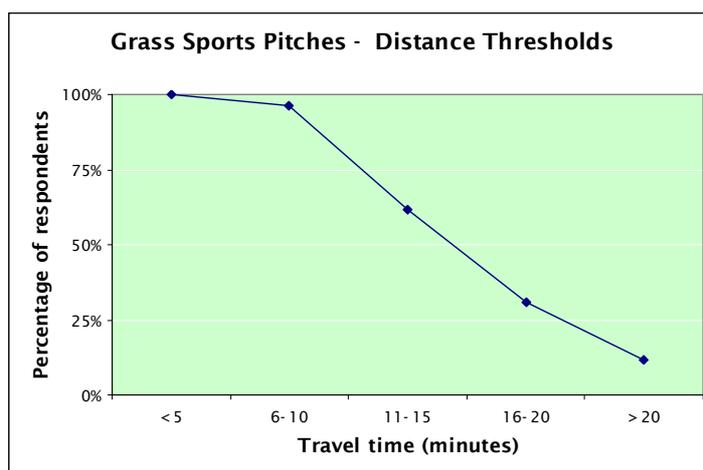
- As local facilities for predominantly **casual use**, which should therefore be “open access” and within walking distance of where potential users live. However, there is no need for marked-out pitches for casual use and any greenspace large and flat enough can be used for a kickabout. This type of accessibility is considered as part of the review of the green network in Chapter 12.
- As facilities used for **matches**, reviewed below. Match pitches can be closed or open access, although the former is preferable to prevent dog walking and its attendant fouling. However, a high level of accessibility on foot or by bicycle from where users live is not particularly important:
 - In any match, half of the players are playing for the “away” team and therefore will almost certainly have had to travel to the

- match venue
- Players choose the club or team they will play for more by the standard of play on offer rather than the location of the club's home ground. Moreover, players often retain a loyalty to a club after moving house and can then end up travelling a significant distance to train and play.
- The higher the league in which players compete, the wider the area from which the league they play in draws its teams

Distance Thresholds

11.46 The move to artificial turf pitches for hockey, football and rugby is likely to result in players having inevitably to travel to a limited number of key sites rather than having a pitch more or less on their doorstep. The greater certainty of being able to play when scheduled that will come from the use of artificial surfaces, coupled with the fact that ATPs should put an end to lucky (or, for the opposing team, unlucky) bounces, should make this acceptable to them. Accordingly distance thresholds will become progressively irrelevant provided the various ATPs in the local network of provision are reasonably accessible and affordable.

11.47 In the meantime, while the Council and its partners develop the ATP network, the chart below identifies the time that respondents in our residents' survey said they would be willing to walk to a grass sports pitch. The effective catchment of local pitches is clearly around 10 minutes travel time:



11.48 Many respondents would not have been pitch sport players and it is reasonable to expect that active players will be willing to travel slightly further than

those who simply want a casual kickabout. Accordingly we have used a 15 minute travel time which gives the following distance thresholds:

- Walking 900 m
- Driving 5625 m

Note: there is no need for a cycling threshold as players – especially for rugby and cricket - generally have to carry their playing kit with them.

11.49 The proportion of properties in the Borough within these distance thresholds of at least one cricket, football and rugby pitch is:

Cricket Pitches		Walking	Driving
North	All	57%	100%
	HQHV	42%	100%
North east	All	55%	99%
	HQHV	24%	96%
North west	All	36%	92%
	HQHV	36%	89%
South east	All	0%	0%
	HQHV	0%	0%
South west	All	7%	96%
	HQHV	5%	88%
Stafford	All	22%	100%
	HQHV	0%	1%
Borough	All	30%	99%
	HQHV	12%	36%

Football pitches			
North	All	58%	100%
	HQHV	56%	100%
North east	All	32%	91%
	HQHV	32%	91%
North west	All	3%	93%
	HQHV	2%	92%
South east	All	10%	97%
	HQHV	0%	4%
South west	All	48%	93%
	HQHV	0%	19%
Stafford	All	93%	100%
	HQHV	46%	100%
Borough	All	70%	99%
	HQHV	39%	88%

Rugby Pitches			
North	All	27%	96%
	HQHV	27%	94%
North east	All	0%	91%
	HQHV	0%	91%
North west	All	2%	84%

	HQHV	0%	7%
South east	All	0%	76%
	HQHV	0%	47%
South west	All	47%	92%
	HQHV	0%	12%
Stafford	All	67%	100%
	HQHV	23%	100%
Borough	All	47%	96%
	HQHV	19%	84%

Note: HQHV = High Quality, High Value pitches as established by the audit

Quality and Value

11.50 Accordingly, the accessibility of cricket pitches is best in the north area of the Borough but football and rugby in the Stafford town area, matching the pattern of participation.

11.51 We have audited a total of 75 pitch sites across the Borough as follows:

	Sites	Adult Pitches	Junior Pitches	Mini Pitches
Cricket	15	15	2	
Football	45	55	17	21
Rugby	15	19	4	

12.51 The factors we audited varied slightly by the type of pitch: for example cricket grounds require scoreboxes, sightscreens, a square and watering system for it, and ideally practice nets, but football and rugby pitches do not. However, we used the same broad categories of audit information for all pitches:

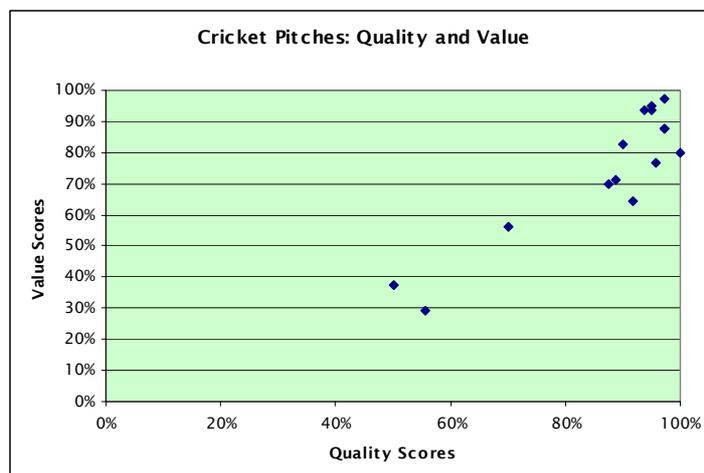
- **Factual information**, such as the number of pitches on the site and availability of on-site parking and the degree of public access
- **Quality:** the adequacy of changing accommodation, pitch condition and negative factors that would lessen the attractiveness of the pitch to potential players such as exposure to wind

11.52 We also derived **value scores** from the range of facilities on each site and its quality score. We designed the method of doing this to reflect what makes sites valuable to players. For example, a pitch site with two or three pitches is more valuable than a site with only one; a site with changing is more valuable than a site without; and a site with full community use is more valuable than a joint use one. All of the value scores are designed to reflect the value of sites in terms of community use;

accordingly, a school site with no community use has zero community use value.

Cricket Pitches

11.53 The average quality and value audit scores for all the sites were 86% and 72% respectively. The chart below shows the various scores:

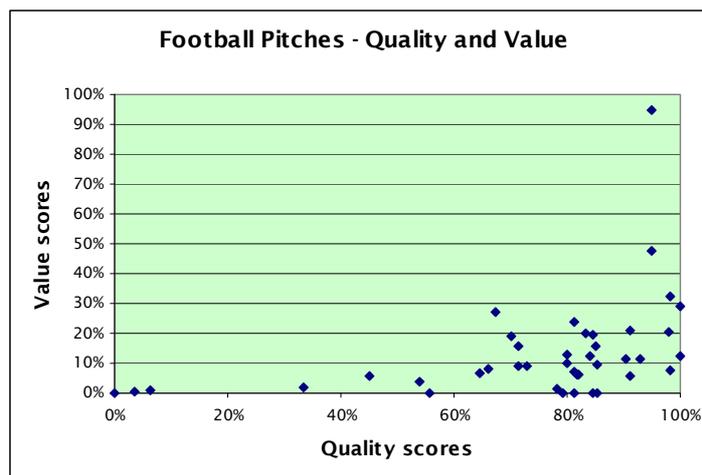


11.54 The improvements that will be desirable to cricket sites are relatively minor and include:

- General levelling
- Better or more changing
- Provision of showers
- Better disabled access
- Umpires changing
- Provision of practice nets
- More artificial wickets
- Longer boundary distances
- Better sightscreens

Football Pitches

11.55 The average quality and value scores for football pitch sites were 75% and 13% respectively and the chart below shows the various scores:



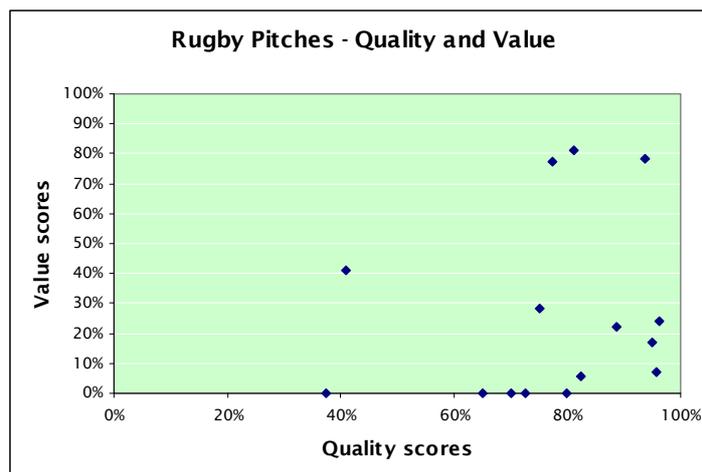
11.56 The average value score for football sites is very low although the best site – Wellbeing Park in Yarnfield – scored very well in terms of both quality and value. This reflects the limited number of pitches on some sites; pitch construction – there is no evidence of sand slits on any of the sites we audited, so the carrying capacity of all of the pitches is very limited; the lack of floodlighting; and the lack of changing on some sites. The zero value scores relate to school sites with no community use.

11.57 The main improvements required to sites include:

- Provision or upgrading of changing
- Levelling of pitches
- Provision of sand slits
- Provision of floodlights
- New goalposts
- Better pitch maintenance
- Shelter planting

Rugby Pitches

11.58 The average quality and value scores for rugby pitch sites were 77% and 25% respectively and the chart below summarises the various scores:



11.59 Again, the zero value sites are school sites with no community use. The lower value sites are generally the smaller ones and therefore unable to accommodate more than a few matches each week. The main improvements desirable to rugby sites include:

- Better drainage
- New goalposts
- Better maintenance
- Floodlighting

Quality, Value and Accessibility

11.60 Maps 11.1 to 11.3 respectively show the location, quality and value of the various cricket, football and rugby pitch sites in the audit. They highlight the following points:

Cricket

- The concentration of cricket pitches in the northern half of the Borough, most of them of both high quality and high value
- The relatively poor quality and value of the pitches in Stafford town and the relatively poor value of the pitches in the southern half of the Borough
- The lack of cricket provision in Gnosall: the Sports and Social Club there had a cricket team at one time but it disbanded
- The fairly good match between the location of pitches and the density of development
- Almost all of the Borough is within the driving threshold of at least one pitch

Football

- The concentration of pitches in Stafford town, but the relatively poor quality and/or value of

- most of them
- The lack of pitches in the north east area of the Borough
- Almost all of the Borough is within the driving threshold of at least one pitch, although not quite as much as for the smaller number of cricket pitches

Rugby

- The concentration of rugby pitches in the Stafford area, although some of them are school pitches that are not available for community use and therefore low value
- Almost all of the Borough is within the driving threshold of at least one pitch, although not quite as much as for cricket or football

Local Views

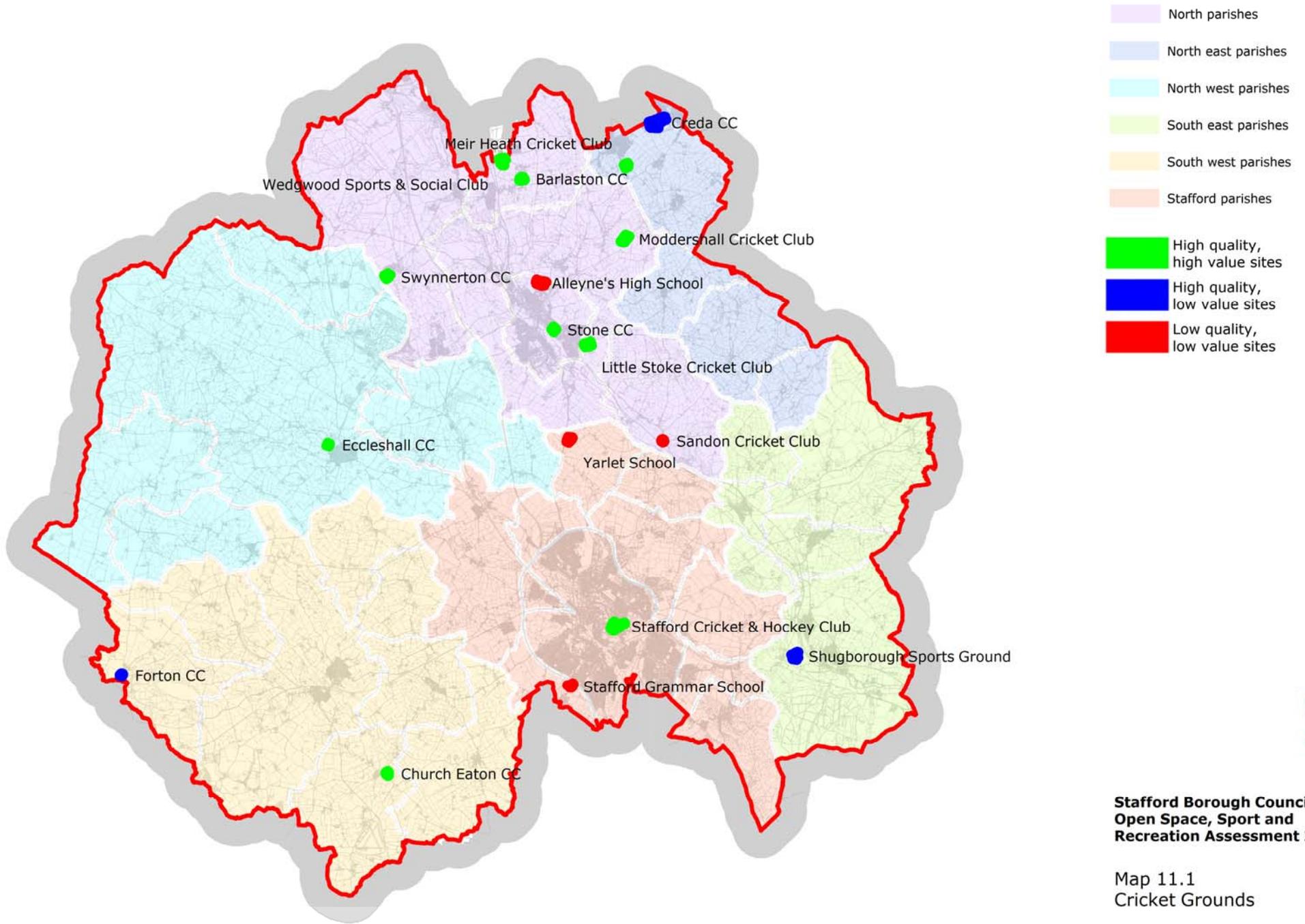
11.61 The following town and parish councils identified a need for more pitches in their areas:

- **Mini-soccer pitches:** Barlaston, Brocton, Church Eaton, Eccleshall, Fulford, Gnosall, Haughton, High Offley and Woodseaves, Hilderstone, Standon and Stone
- **Youth football pitches:** Barlaston, Eccleshall, Fulford, Gnosall, High Offley and Woodseaves, Hilderstone, Standon and Stone
- **Adult football pitches:** Barlaston, Eccleshall, Gnosall, High Offley and Woodseaves, Hopton and Coton, and Norbury
- **Rugby pitches:** Barlaston, Colwich, High Offley and Woodseaves, Hilderstone, Norbury and Stone
- **Floodlit grass pitches:** Colwich, Hilderstone, Norbury and Stone

11.62 Accordingly the most widely identified local needs amongst the Town and Parish Councils are for mini-soccer and junior football pitches, followed by adult football pitches. As it makes sense for all rugby to be played within clubs, and unlikely that the Borough could support another successful rugby club, there is no real point in providing rugby pitches in those parishes without one. None of the Town or Parish Councils highlighted a need for an artificial turf pitch in their area.

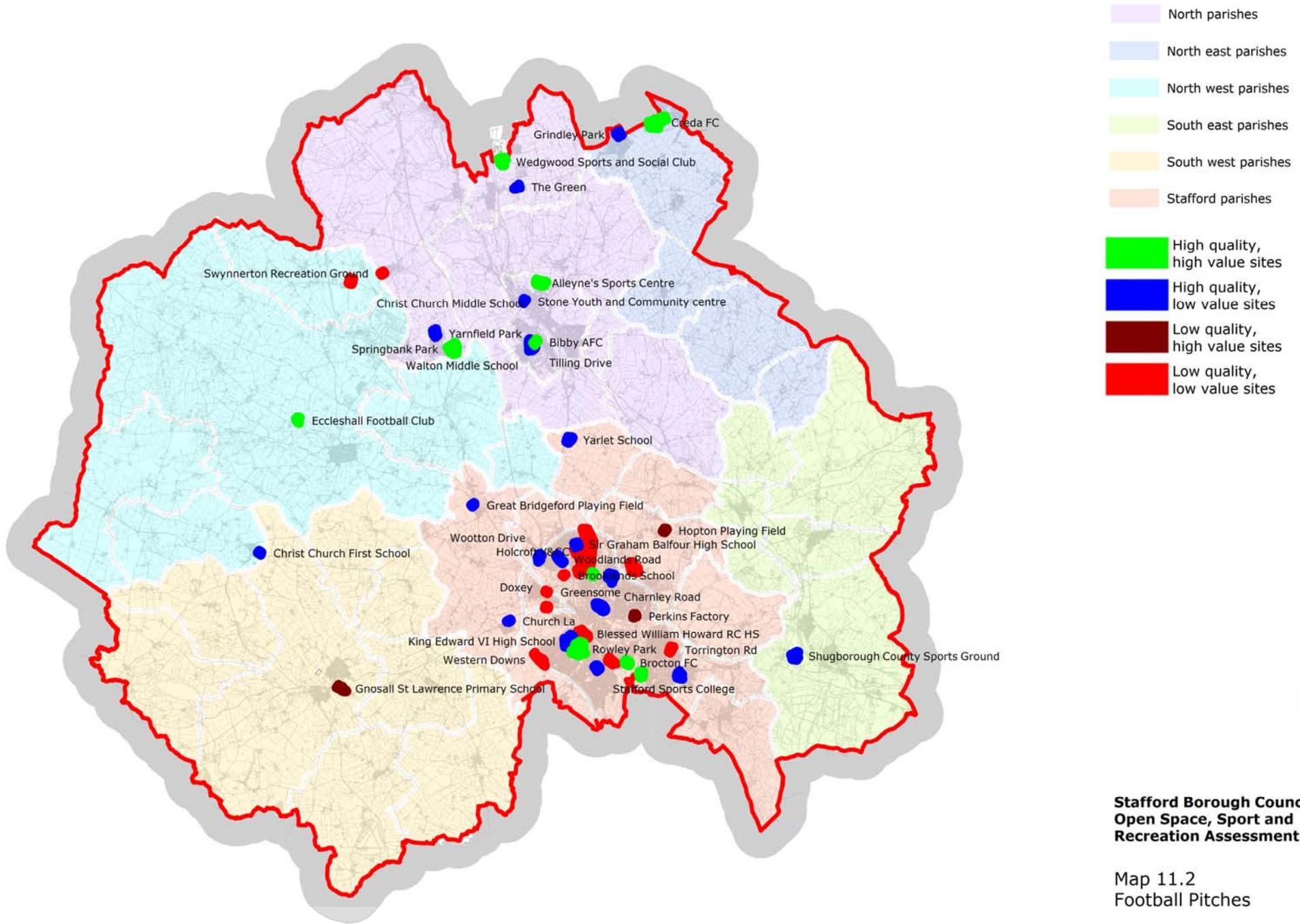
Local Club Views

11.63 In order to establish the views of a cross-section of local clubs, we undertook telephone interviews with a total of 21 of them.



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 11.1
Cricket Grounds

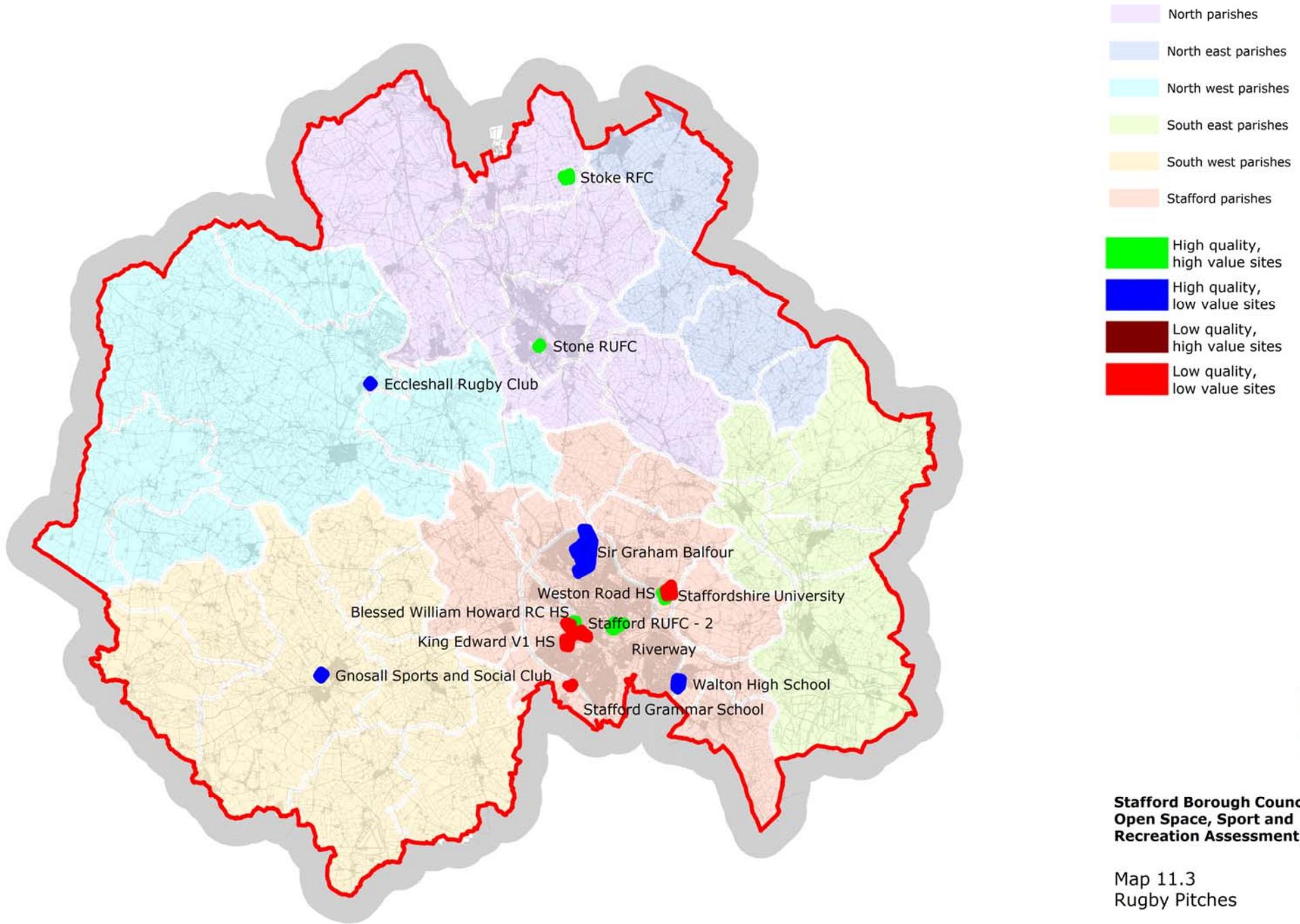


- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes
- High quality, high value sites
- High quality, low value sites
- Low quality, high value sites
- Low quality, low value sites



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 11.2
Football Pitches



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 11.3
Rugby Pitches

Cricket Club Views

11.64 Our telephone survey included three of the Borough's cricket clubs which between them run 31 teams. In summary the main findings were:

- **Current problems:** lack of volunteers (2), lack of female players (1), ageing players (1), getting sponsorship (1)
- **Future plans:** more adult members (3), more junior members (2), more junior teams (2),
- **Views on cricket pitches** in the Borough generally: good (2), poor (1)
- **Constraints on growth in participation** in cricket: lack of volunteers (3), too much football on TV (3), school leavers leave the area (2), young people have too many other interests (2), shortage of match officials (2)

11.65 Although all of the clubs identified some constraints on growth in participation generally, and specific problems facing them in particular, none identified any pitch-related issue as a serious constraint on the development of cricket in the Borough. Accordingly it seems likely that the current level of provision for cricket is about right and the quality of pitches broadly acceptable.

Football Club Views

11.66 Our telephone survey included thirteen football clubs with a total of 21 teams. The main findings, with the number of respondents in brackets, were:

- **Current problems facing the club:** quality of changing (5), meeting running costs (4), quality of pitches (4), lack of volunteers (2), coaching (2), access to pitches (2)
- **Enough match pitches:** 9 of the 13 respondents indicated "yes", 2 said "no" and 2 had no firm opinion
- **Future plans:** more adult members (8), survive somehow (6), upgrade changing (3), more junior members (3), more junior members (3), start junior section/team (2), start a women's section (2), upgrade pitches (2) and more men's teams (2). However, two of the eleven clubs indicated that they "may fold".
- **Views on football pitches in the Borough generally:** four indicated that the general quality of pitches is acceptable and eight that it is poor.
- **Constraints on growth in participation in football:** lack of floodlit pitches (9), shortage of

match officials (9), too few grass pitches (8), quality of grass pitches (8), children have too many other interests (8), quality of changing facilities (7), lack of floodlit training areas (7), cost of hiring pitches (6), lack of volunteers (5), school leavers leave the area (5), parents aren't interested (5), lack of players (5), lack of training opportunities (4), players getting older (4), PE teachers aren't interested (3), match times don't suit players (3), quality of sand-filled ATPs (2), lack of coaches (1)

- 11.67 These findings suggest that a number of football clubs would like to expand, but will find it very difficult to do so successfully. For example, it will be difficult for many to expand without more volunteers, and if they do manage to expand the lack of match officials will place a real constraint on expanding league programmes. On the other hand half of the clubs' ambition is "to survive somehow", which hardly implies confidence in the future. The best ways of increasing participation are likely to be to foster the development of fewer but larger and more viable clubs with good floodlit training and match facilities and changing facilities.

Rugby Club Views

- 11.68 Our telephone survey included three of the Borough's five rugby clubs. The main findings, with the number of clubs citing them in brackets, were:

- **Current problems:** lack of male players, lack of female players, keeping juniors, lack of volunteers (2), quality of changing (2), meetings costs (2), coaching (1)
- **Enough match pitches:** No (1), Yes (2)
- **Future plans:** more members (3), upgrade changing (2), move to new site, more teams (2), upgrade pitches (1)
- **Constraints on growth in rugby participation:** shortage of match officials (3), young people have too many other interests (3), lack of volunteers (2), quality of changing facilities (2), PE teachers aren't interested (2), school leavers leave the area (2)

- 11.69 The main constraints on the development of rugby therefore appear to relate to people and changing facilities rather than pitches.

Pitch Economics

- 11.70 In terms of cost per hour of use, or cost per player, grass pitches require a significantly higher level of subsidy than ATPs, even if user income is ignored.

As a result investing in ATPs makes economic sense while the alternative of investing in the upgrading of grass pitches and related pavilions is economic folly. On the basis of “life cycle costs” of different types of pitch published by Sport England, and assuming that a typical grass pitch can be used for about 4-6 hours per week and a typical 3G ATP for about 30 hours, the annual life cycle costs (excluding any income from users) are approximately;

- Adult grass football pitches: £151 per hour of use if loan repayments on the capital cost are included and £113 if they are excluded; these costs are based on an average of four hours of use per week for 35 weeks per year and exclude income
- 60 mm 3G ATPs: £58 per hour of use if loan repayments on the capital cost are included and £20 if they are excluded; these figures are based on an average of 35 hours of use per week for 45 weeks per year and exclude income

11.71 Details of how these figures are calculated are given in Appendix K. For local authorities, the economic case for concentrating on ATP provision for football is unanswerable.

Conclusions

Cricket

- 11.72
- In the Borough as a whole, there are enough cricket pitches to accommodate all of the demand arising in the Borough, with some limited spare capacity. However, this masks a shortfall of around three pitches in the Stafford town area.
 - The first priority should be to increase the capacity of grounds to accommodate midweek use, particularly by junior teams. This can best be achieved by the provision of artificial wickets, which adult teams will also be able to use for net practice.
 - The second priority is to improve the changing accommodation at a number of grounds
 - The Borough Council should also allocate land in the Stafford area for additional cricket pitches as part of its Local Development Framework.

Football

- 11.73
- Overall, there seems to be an approximate balance between the supply of adult pitches and demand for them, but a need to upgrade some pitches and changing. However, there are significant shortfalls in junior and mini pitches.

This means that junior and mini teams have to use some adult pitches, reducing the availability of adult pitches for adult teams and leagues, most noticeably on Sunday mornings. The future position depends on the extent to which clubs and teams embrace the FA's desire to promote small-sided football for all players up to and including U16.

- Generally speaking, however, the first priority is to provide more facilities for mini-soccer, particularly in the north east and Stafford town areas. This will also free up some adult pitches for more adult use. However, a much better solution will be to move mini-soccer onto "central venue" artificial turf pitches. If the new ATPs are on school sites this will not require any additional land. The ATPs will also provide excellent physical education facilities.
- The second priority is to provide more junior pitches in the Stafford town area. Again, it will be sensible to try to move at least some junior matches onto artificial turf pitches and the more that schools have ATPs, and therefore their pupils get used to playing on them, the better.
- The third priority is to improve the quality of facilities for adult football, primarily by upgrading drainage and changing accommodation. However, the Council should seek first to persuade local leagues to accept that they will move to artificial turf pitches in the future. If this can be achieved, any investment in upgrading grass pitch sites should be confined to as few sites as possible. Spending say £100,000 on reconstructing a pitch to a high specification can increase its capacity from two matches per week to three or perhaps four, but not much more. Climate change is almost certainly going to make grass pitches unplayable more and more often. Therefore there is a strong case for taking a strategic policy decision progressively to move football onto artificial surfaces as suggested in Chapter 6 above.
- The fourth priority is to assist those teams aspiring and with the ability to play at a higher level that will need better facilities meeting appropriate league specifications. The easiest way of achieving this will probably be for two such teams to ground share at a site with a suitable artificial turf pitch. A suitable venue might be created by resurfacing the Riverway Stadium pitch.
- In addition, there is a general need to encourage clubs to come together to form fewer but larger clubs.

Rugby

- 11.74
- There appears to be a more than adequate number of adult rugby pitches in the Borough so the fact that junior and midi teams use adult pitches does not significantly reduce the availability of pitches for adult teams. However, it will be desirable to have more junior pitches, particularly in the north and Stafford town areas.
 - The first priority is to ensure that the Stafford and Eccleshall Rugby Clubs are able to find new homes, sufficiently large to accommodate all of their current teams while also having spare capacity for them to develop additional teams as a result of either rugby development work or population growth.
 - The second priority is to help clubs enhance their facilities, specifically floodlit artificial turf training areas and better changing accommodation, provided their proposals are supported by the Staffordshire Rugby union.

Quantity Standard

- 11.75 Appendix G20 uses the findings of the PPM analysis to derive a quantity standard for grass pitches in the Borough of **14.6 sq m per person**. This is a composite standard that includes grass cricket, football and rugby pitches. It splits into:

• Cricket	30%	4.3 sq m per person
•		
• Mini-soccer	7%	1.0 sq m per person
• Youth football	18%	2.6 sq m per person
• Adult football	26%	3.8 sq m per person
• Football total	51%	7.4 sq m per person
•		
• Mini rugby	3%	0.4 sq m per person
• Midi rugby	7%	1.0 sq m per person
• Adult rugby	10%	1.4 sq m per person
• Rugby total	20%	2.8 sq m per person
•		
• Total	100%	14.6 sq m per person

Note: percentages do not sum owing to rounding

- 11.76 However, the Council's long term aspiration should be to move as much football as possible onto artificial turf pitches and if and when this happens the standard for grass pitches will reduce to about 7 sq m per person.

12: The Green Network

Introduction

12.1 This chapter reviews the Borough's "green network" – its overall provision of accessible multi-functional greenspaces (MFGS) - in two ways:

- First, it reviews the accessibility, quality and value of the components of the network in terms of their primary purpose as amenity greenspaces, churchyards and cemeteries, natural greenspaces and open access playing fields and parks and gardens. It then derives an overall quantity standard for these forms of provision, excluding open access playing fields because pitches have their own provision standard.
- Second, it reviews the network as a whole in terms of its overall accessibility, context value, nature conservation value, amenity value, recreational value and play value

12.2 This analysis ignores allotments, artificial turf pitches, bowling greens, children's play areas, golf courses and teenage facilities as they are provided for highly specific uses and are therefore not multi-functional. Our audit encompassed almost 300 multi-functional spaces as follows:

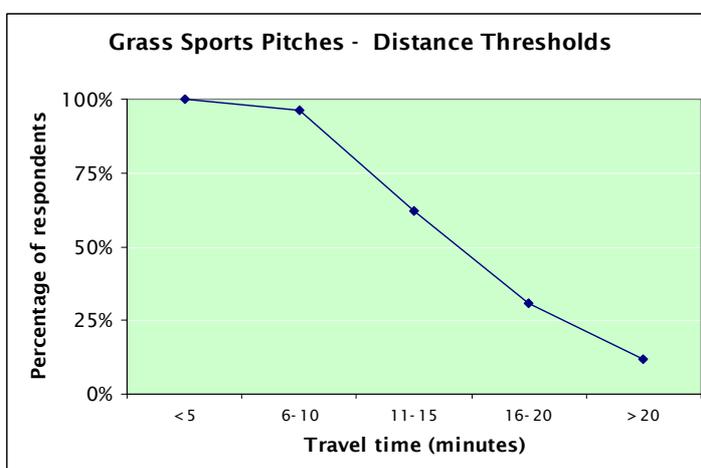
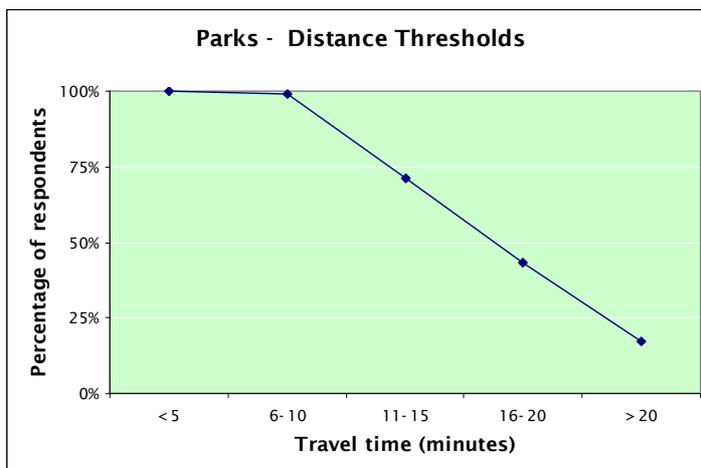
- | | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| • Amenity greenspaces | 180 |
| • Churchyards and cemeteries | 46 |
| • Green Corridors | 11 |
| • Natural greenspaces | 30 |
| • Parks and Gardens | 9 |
| • Open access playing fields | 18 |
| • Total | 294 |

Accessibility

Accessibility Standard

12.3 The charts below, based on the results of the residents' survey, identify the percentage of people willing to travel for various times to visit parks and open access grass pitches. A sensible accessibility standards for both is around 15 minutes, which

translates into a 900 m straight line, or “as the crow flies” distance.



12.4 Accordingly, we have assessed the proportion of properties in the Borough and each of its planning areas within a 5 minute/300 m walk of at least one accessible multi-functional greenspace. This accords with the basic recommendation for local greenspace suggested by Natural England as part of its “Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard” (ANGSt).

12.5 People are obviously willing to travel further to larger or better spaces such as parks or a sport pitch. Accordingly we have adopted the following additional distance thresholds:

- Churchyards and cemeteries 10 minutes
- al greenspaces 10 minutes
- Open access playing fields 15 minutes

12.6 Because users may not only walk but also cycle or

drive to spaces such as parks and playing fields, we have converted these times into distance thresholds for cycling and driving as well as walking.

Accessibility Assessment

12.7 Appendices F1-F3 give the proportion of properties in each of the planning areas of the Borough within the various walking, cycling and driving distance thresholds of different forms of provision. On a Borough-wide basis, the proportions of properties within the various distance thresholds are:

<i>Multi-functional greenspaces</i>	<i>All</i>	<i>HQHV</i>
• 5 minutes/300 m walking	77%	65%
<i>Amenity Greenspaces</i>		
• 5 minutes/300 m walking	69%	29%
<i>Churchyards and Cemeteries</i>		
• 10 minutes/600 m walking	35%	12%
• 10 minutes/1500 m cycling	98%	36%
• 10 minutes/3750 m driving	99%	86%
<i>Natural greenspaces</i>		
• 10 minutes/600 m walking	50%	34%
• 10 minutes/1500 m cycling	69%	59%
• 10 minutes/3750 m driving	85%	56%
<i>Open access playing fields</i>		
• 15 minutes/900 m walking	56%	22%
• 15 minutes/2250 m cycling	72%	46%
• 15 minutes/5625 m driving	86%	60%
<i>Parks and Gardens</i>		
• 15 minutes/900 m walking	25%	17%
• 15 minutes/2250 m cycling	63%	61%
• 15 minutes/5625 m driving	77%	76%

Note: HQHV = High Quality, High value

Amenity Greenspaces

12.8 Amenity greenspaces are the most accessible spaces in the Borough, as they should be. However, as most greenspaces serve an amenity function, any assessment of the accessibility of amenity greenspaces as a specific form of provision is not particularly significant. Instead, what matters is the accessibility of the green network as a whole, summarised later in this chapter.

Churchyards and Cemeteries

- 12.9 Churchyards are important, and not only to church-goers. Many churchyards are oases of peace and quiet and havens for wildlife as well as a collective “memory” of past communities. Many churches and gravestones have a fascinating story to tell, although interpretation is often poor. The good accessibility of churchyards is very much the result of history and where local communities decided they wanted a church at their heart. It follows that their accessibility tends to remain good today. What is remarkable is the level of investment that local communities, and land owners, must have made in building churches in the years gone by. The 46 churchyards and cemeteries that we audited represent one churchyard to only about 2,500 people across the Borough.
- 12.10 The location of cemeteries is significant primarily in terms of making it possible for people to be buried reasonably close to home so that their surviving family members can visit their graves. The need for them is also dictated primarily by the need for graves rather than in response to a specific desire for people to visit cemeteries as such. As individuals move house, however, it is almost inevitable that they will tend to move away from where their family members may be buried and therefore the accessibility of cemeteries as a specific typology is not important.

Natural Greenspaces

- 12.11 A half of properties in the Borough lie within a 10 minute walk of at least one natural greenspace. This is a fairly high figure as we classed spaces as natural only if they appeared to be designed or managed primarily for nature conservation.

Parks and Gardens

- 12.12 It is inevitable that parks and gardens will exist only in larger settlements and therefore not particularly surprising that across the Borough there are only two main parks – Victoria Park in Stafford town and Stonefield Park in Stone. The former has a Green Flag award and the Borough should be seeking to increase the number of such awards. In the course of the audit, we also classed several other spaces in Stafford town as parks because of their nature, specifically:
- Broadeye
 - Falklands Memorial Garden
 - Tithe Barn Road Recreation Ground

- Water Street
- Wildwood Park

Quality and Value

12.13 Full details of the results of our audit of multi-functional greenspaces are given in Appendix E8. In summary, the average audit scores for the various types of space were:

	Quality	Value
• Amenity greenspaces	76%	43%
• Churchyards and cemeteries	85%	74%
• Green corridors	69%	73%
• Natural greenspaces	80%	78%
• Parks and Gardens	90%	53%
• Outdoor access playing fields	82%	44%
• All forms of provision	78%	53%

13.14 We derived our audit forms for multi-functional greenspaces primarily from the Green Flag Award. As well as purely factual information, such as each space's location, the range of facilities present, the degree of public access and predominant nature (eg grass, woodland or whatever) they covered:

Quality

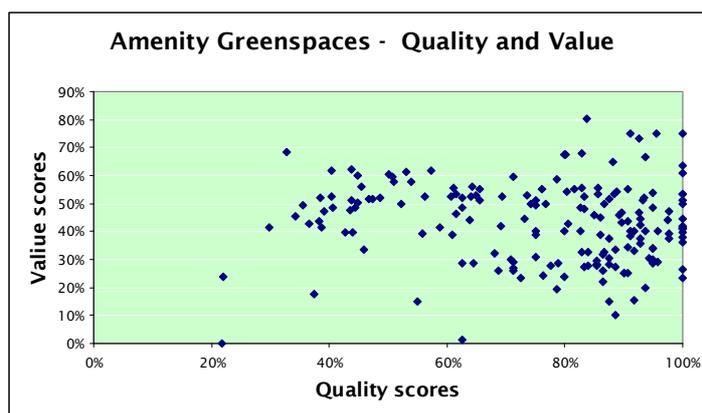
- A welcoming place: signage, physical access, inclusiveness and design and specification
- Healthy, safe and secure: health and well-being, safety and security, control of dogs,
- Well maintained and clean: litter and waste management, grounds maintenance and horticulture, the design, management and maintenance of buildings, and the condition of public toilets and infrastructure such as paths and railings
- Conservation and heritage
- Negative features which detract from the space

Value

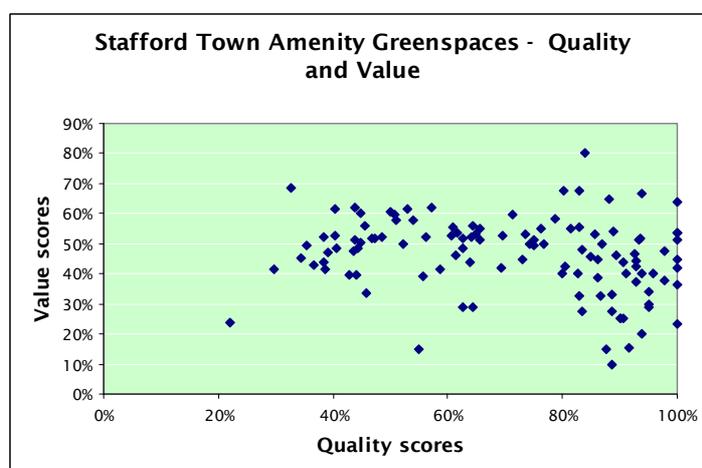
- Context value
- Historical/heritage value
- Contribution to local amenity, vitality and sense of place
- Recreational value
- Play value for children
- Ecological/biodiversity value

Amenity Greenspaces (AGS)

12.15 The chart below summarises the quality and value scores for the Borough's amenity greenspaces:



12.16 The fairly wide spread of scores indicates that the quality and value of spaces across the Borough are far from consistent. This wide a variation is unusual as in most areas the grounds maintenance contractor works to a consistent specification. However, it does not arise simply because the town and parish councils, which are responsible for the maintenance of many spaces in the rural parts of the Borough, use a range of contractors or specifications from the Borough Council in Stafford Town. The chart below summarises the scores for Stafford Town and shows just as much variation as the Borough-wide scores:



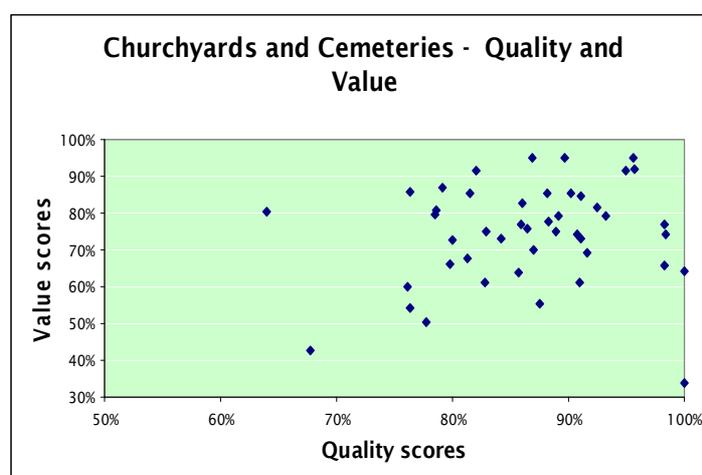
12.17 The main improvements that will be generally desirable to amenity greenspaces in the Borough include:

- Better signage to and within larger spaces: signs in adjacent streets could give directions to them – especially in densely developed areas or where spaces could be linked to create pedestrian routes through the main towns – and signs within spaces, some of which could be worded

- more positively
- Better disabled access, including designated disabled parking bays in appropriate locations
- Better maintenance of seats – a favourite target for vandals
- Larger or more litter bins
- Changes to promote biodiversity and nature conservation and make spaces more attractive to children for play

Churchyards and Cemeteries (CC)

12.18 The chart below summarises the quality and value scores for the Borough's churchyards and cemeteries:

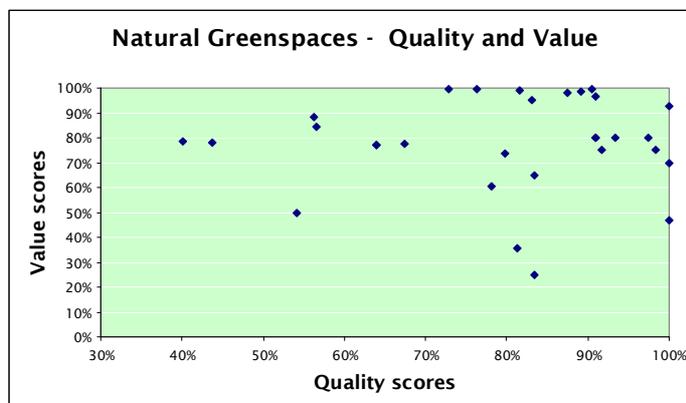


12.19 There is noticeably less variation in scores across the Borough than for amenity greenspaces, with most spaces scoring above 75% for quality, and 60% for value. Much of the maintenance of churchyards is often undertaken by volunteers, and if this is the case in the Borough they are generally doing a good job. The main improvements that will be desirable include:

- Making headstones safe in old churchyards (not a job for volunteers)
- Doing more to promote nature conservation
- More interpretation at historic churches
- Better maintenance of grassed areas
- Better maintenance of gates and fences
- Lighting of paths – needed for evening services in winter
- Better disabled provision – many churchgoers are elderly; for example, designated disabled parking spaces are few and far between

Natural Greenspaces (NGS)

12.20 The chart below summarises the quality and value scores for the Borough's natural greenspaces:

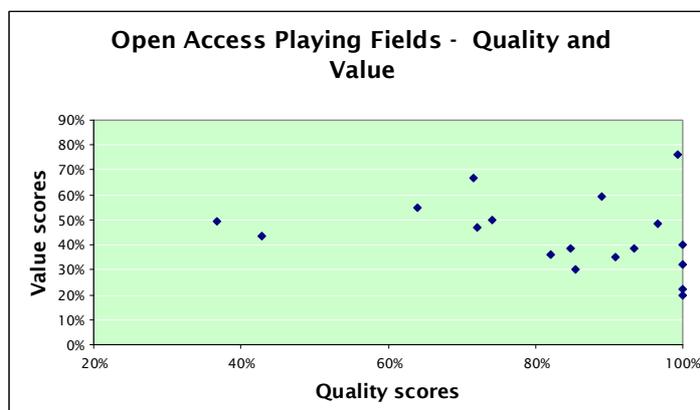


12.21 The Borough has relatively few natural greenspaces in its towns and villages, although many residents have good access to attractive countryside, including Local Nature Reserves and other sites with a natural heritage designation, and there are a few attractive and well kept village ponds. The main improvements required to natural greenspaces include:

- Better signage
- Better interpretation
- Better parking and disabled provision

Open Access Playing Fields (OAPF)

12.22 The chart below summarises the quality and value scores for the Borough's open access playing fields as multi-functional spaces, rather than as sports facilities:

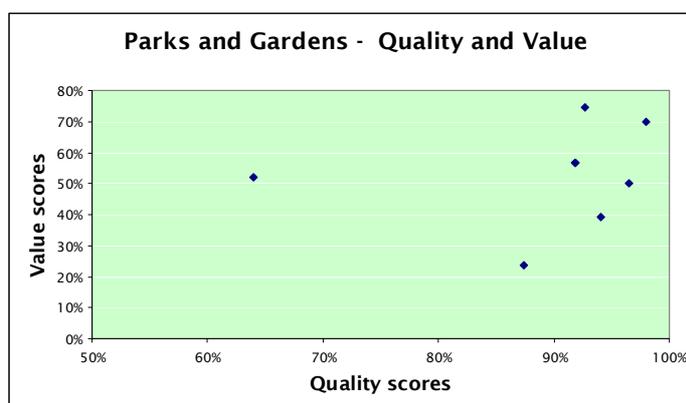


12.23 Playing fields perform an important amenity

purpose, but it is almost inevitable that they are large flat areas of short mown grass with little visual interest or biodiversity value. However, it can often be possible to provide structure planting in a way which both helps to shield them from the wind, so making them better places for sport, and enhances their visual amenity. There are no other specific enhancements that will be desirable without compromising their use for sport.

Parks and Gardens (P&G)

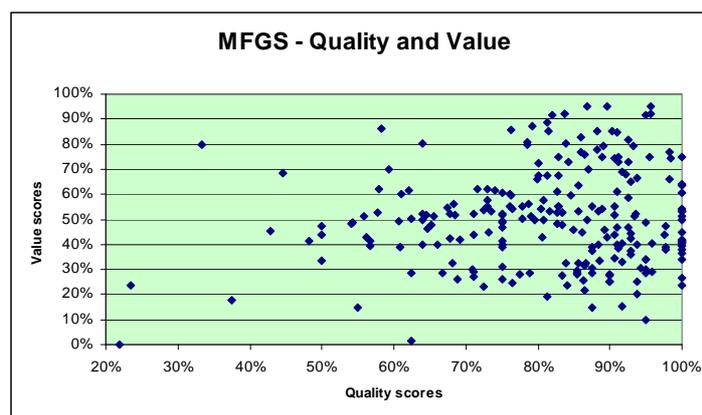
12.24 The chart below summarises the quality and value scores for the Borough’s parks and gardens:



12.25 Parks and gardens should be the Borough’s “Green Flag-ships” and the good scores indicate that they generally are. However, there are some changes that will be generally desirable:

- Greater attention paid to the needs of people with disabilities, especially designated parking spaces
- Better and more welcoming signage
- More horticultural interest
- The incorporation of public art
- Enhanced biodiversity and nature conservation, coupled with interpretive material

12.26 Finally, the chart below brings together all of the various scores:



Quality, Value and Accessibility

12.27 Maps 12.1 to 12.4 show the quality, value and accessibility of greenspaces across the Borough. In order to create the maps, we designated all spaces as being either high or low quality and value on the basis of their audit scores. However, it is important to note that Map 12.1 (the green network) and the other maps are based on a slightly different interpretation of scores:

- Map 12.1 classes all spaces across the Borough as of high or low quality and value on the basis of the average scores for all spaces in the audit, irrespective of typology. This means, for example, that any space which scored above the average for all 295 spaces in the audit is classed as “high” quality or value. These average scores, or cut-off points, were 78% and 53% respectively. Conversely, spaces that scored below the cut-off points are classed as low quality or value.
- Map 12.2 to 12.4 are typology-specific and use a similar method of ascribing a high or low value but the cut-off points reflect the average scores for each specific typology and not the average scores for all spaces in the Borough. The practical effect of this is that the high/low classifications of particular spaces can differ on Map 12.1 from their classifications on Maps 12.2 to 12.4.

12.28 Map 12.1 provides a broad overview of the relative quality and value of all greenspaces in the Borough and therefore helps to identify areas in which there are clusters of particularly good spaces (such as in the north east part of Stafford town) or poor spaces (such as the south west part of Stafford town). Accordingly it suggests that, broadly speaking, the latter area should have a higher priority for investment than the former in order to improve the

consistency of greenspace quality and value across the Borough.

12.29 This map also highlights:

- The paucity of provision outside Stafford town and Stone
- The extent to which Stafford is a “green” town – something we suggest that the Borough Council does not appear to stress sufficiently, although spaces in the south west quadrant and to a lesser extent the south-eastern area are small, fragmented and of limited quality and value
- The major green spine running along the eastern side of Stafford town – the largest set of linked spaces in the Borough
- The huge significance of Westbridge Park in Stone and the land adjoining it along the river and canal, but the relatively fragmented nature and limited quality and value of other spaces in Stone

12.30 Maps 12.2 to 12.4 identify those spaces within a particular typology that offer least to local communities. The key points they demonstrate are:

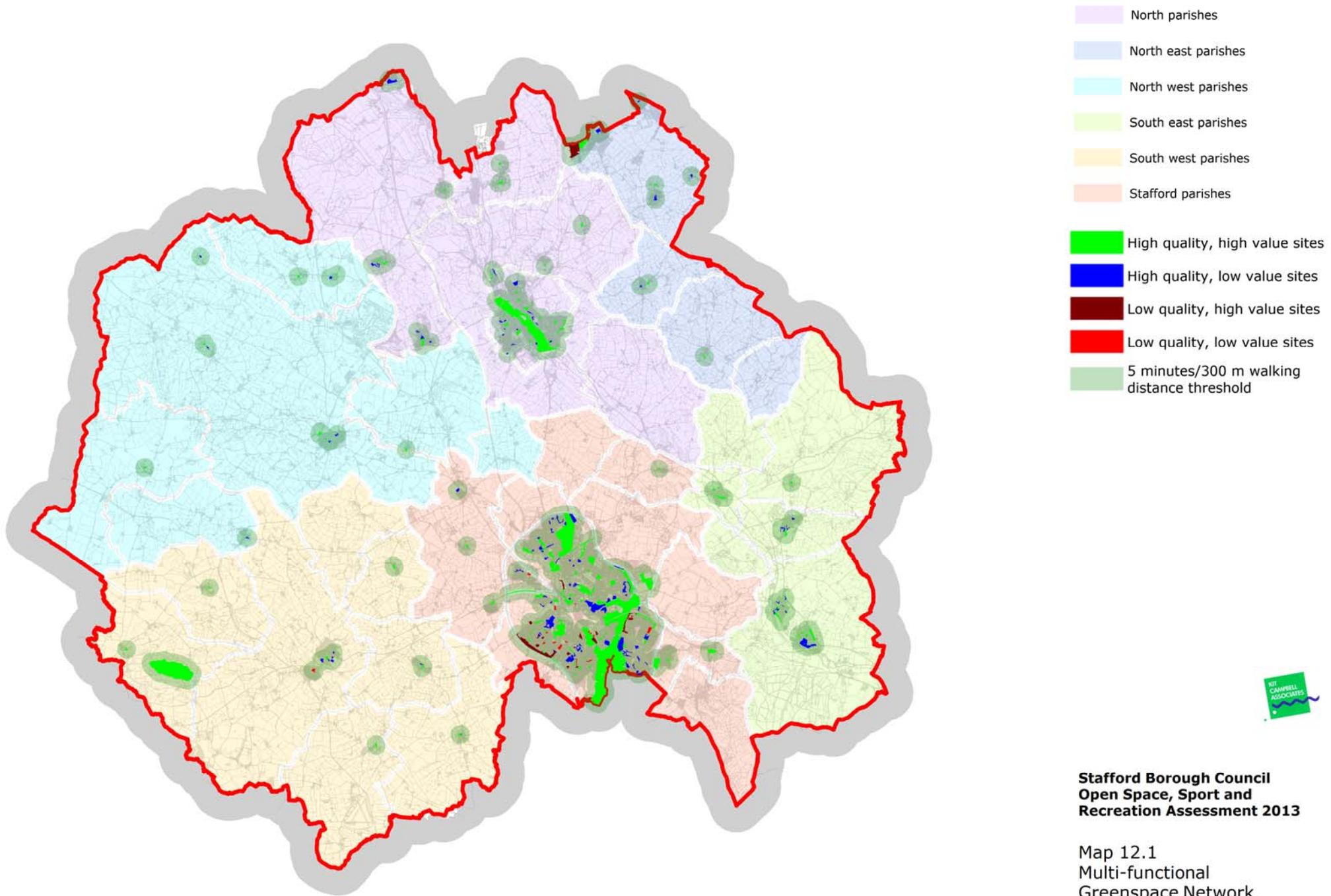
Map 12.2: Natural Greenspaces

- The paucity of natural spaces within settlements other than Rough Close, Stafford town, Stone and Colwich
- The desirability of enhancing the four spaces that are low quality and value – in alphabetical order, Barlaston Common, Stone Meadows, Tillington Marshes and Weavers Walk in Swynnerton.

Map 12.3: Open Access Playing Fields

- The lack of open access playing fields outside the main settlements
- The low quality or value of many open access playing fields as multi-functional spaces

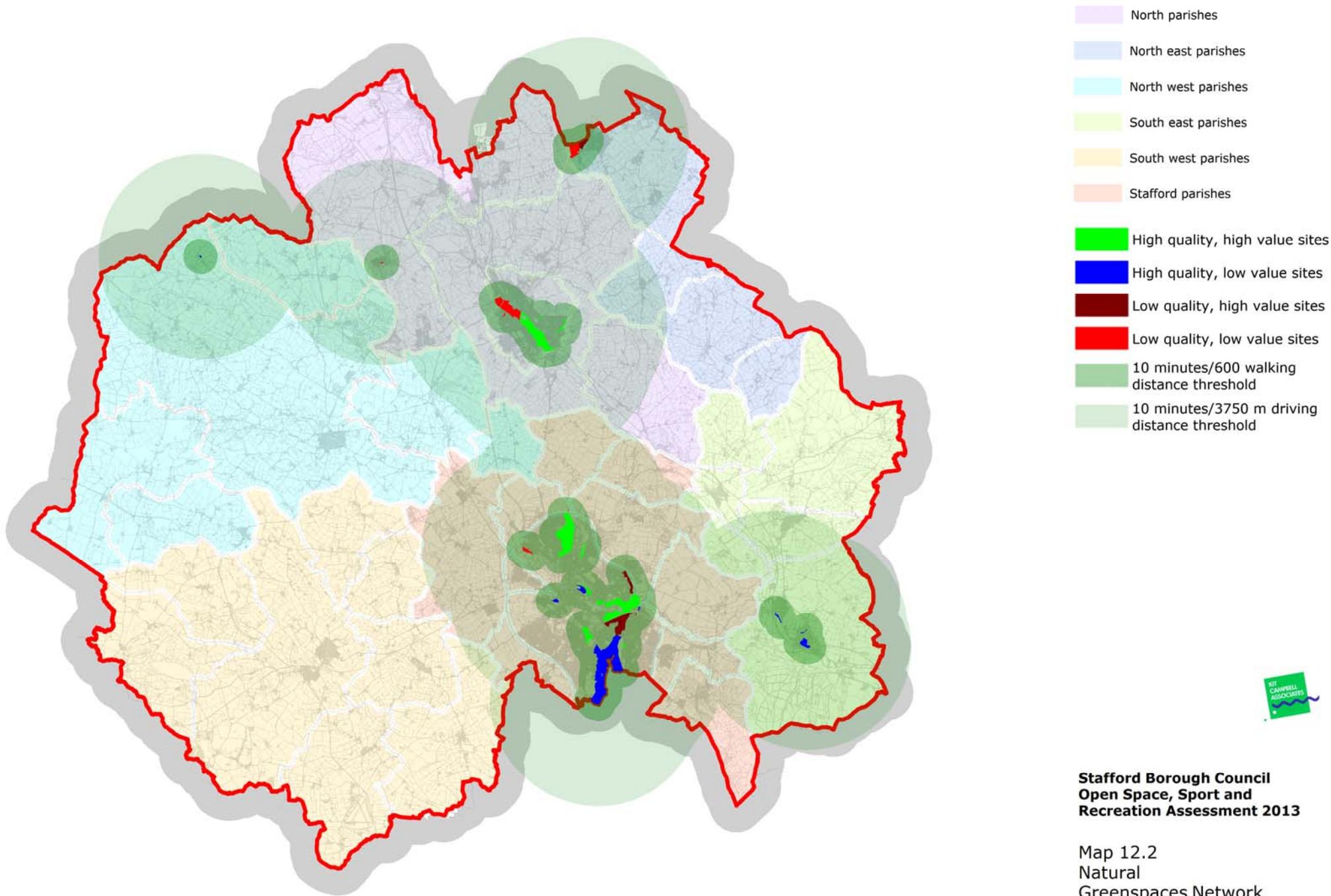
Note: Map 12.3 shows the audit scores for open access playing fields as multi-functional spaces that may be used for a variety of purposes and not only as sports facilities. It does not show pitches sites to which access for non-sport use is limited.



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 12.1
Multi-functional
Greenspace Network

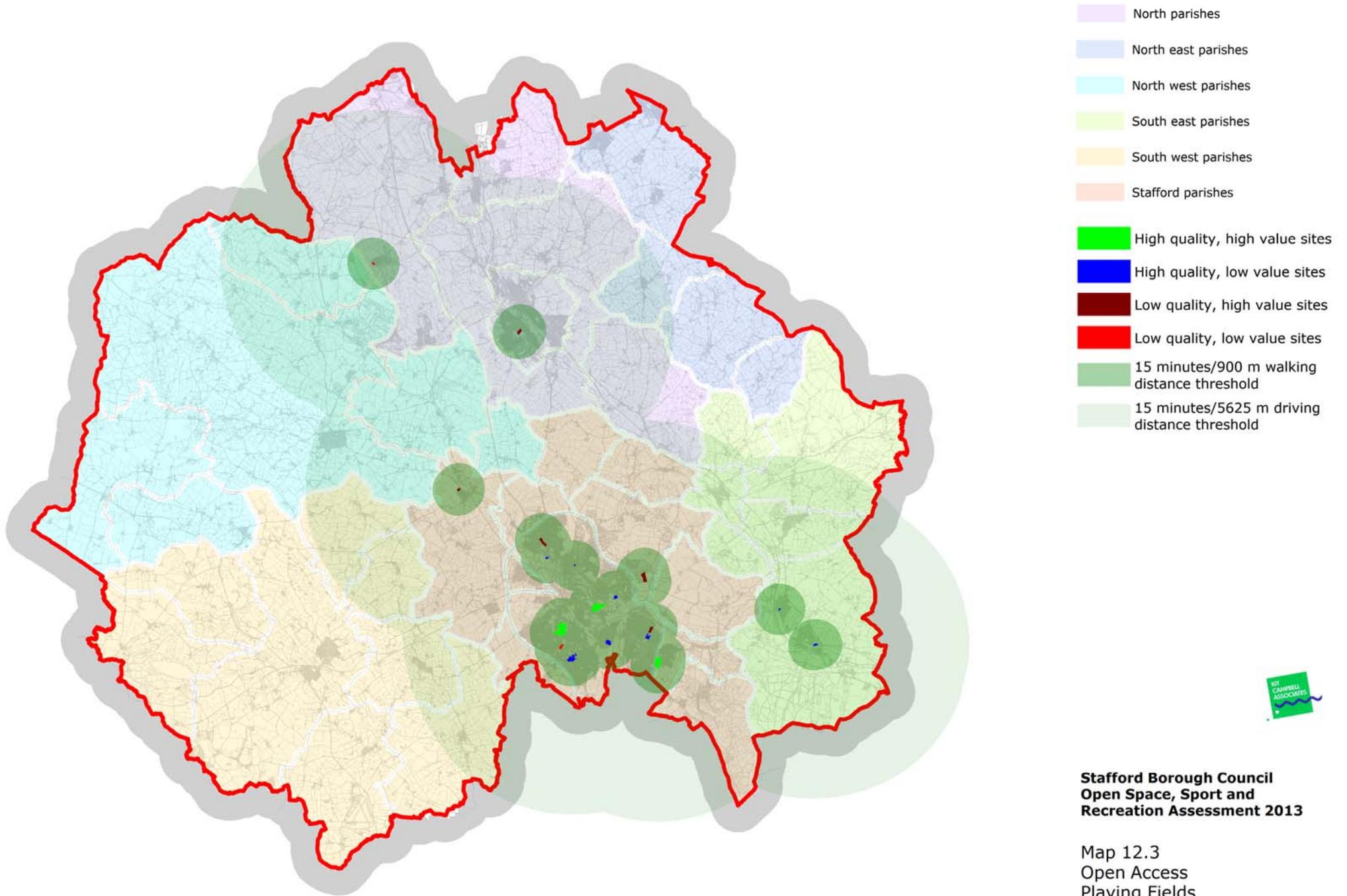
Sites shown enlarged for clarity



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 12.2
Natural
Greenspaces Network

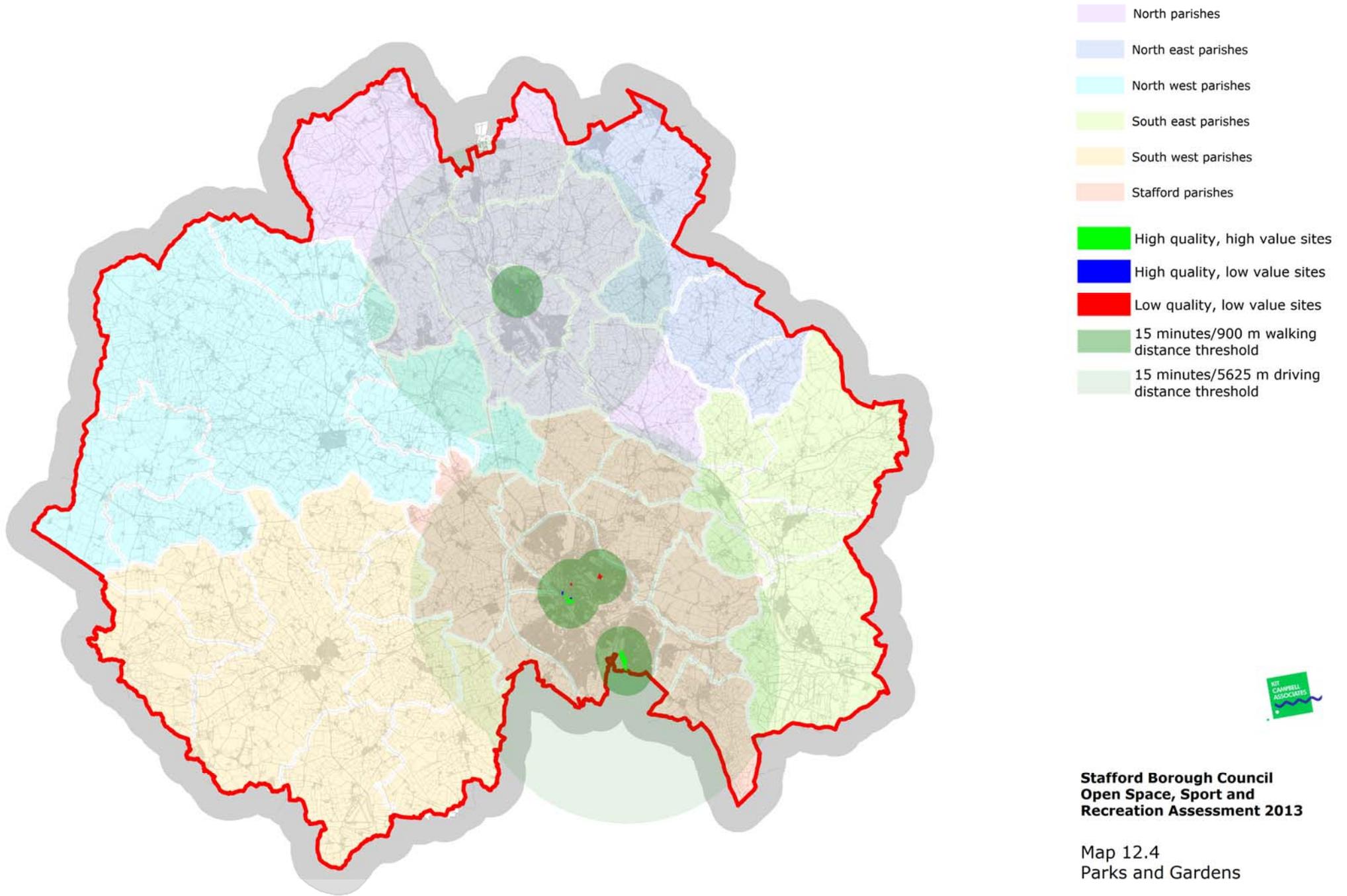
Sites shown enlarged for clarity



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 12.3
Open Access
Playing Fields

Sites shown enlarged for clarity



Map 12.4: Parks and Gardens

- The lack of parks or park-like spaces apart from in Stone and Stafford town, although Brookhouse Road in Gnosall could possibly be classed as a park.

Conservation Designations

12.31 Map 12.5 shows the sites with a conservation designation. Most nature conservation sites are fairly isolated and remote from the main settlements. Those of the greatest strategic significance are:

- Aqualate Mere
- Midland Meres and Mosses
- Tillington Marshes
- Cannock Chase AONB

Quality Standards

12.32 Appendix A sets out proposed quality standards for amenity greenspaces, natural greenspaces, green corridors and urban parks.

The Quantity of Provision

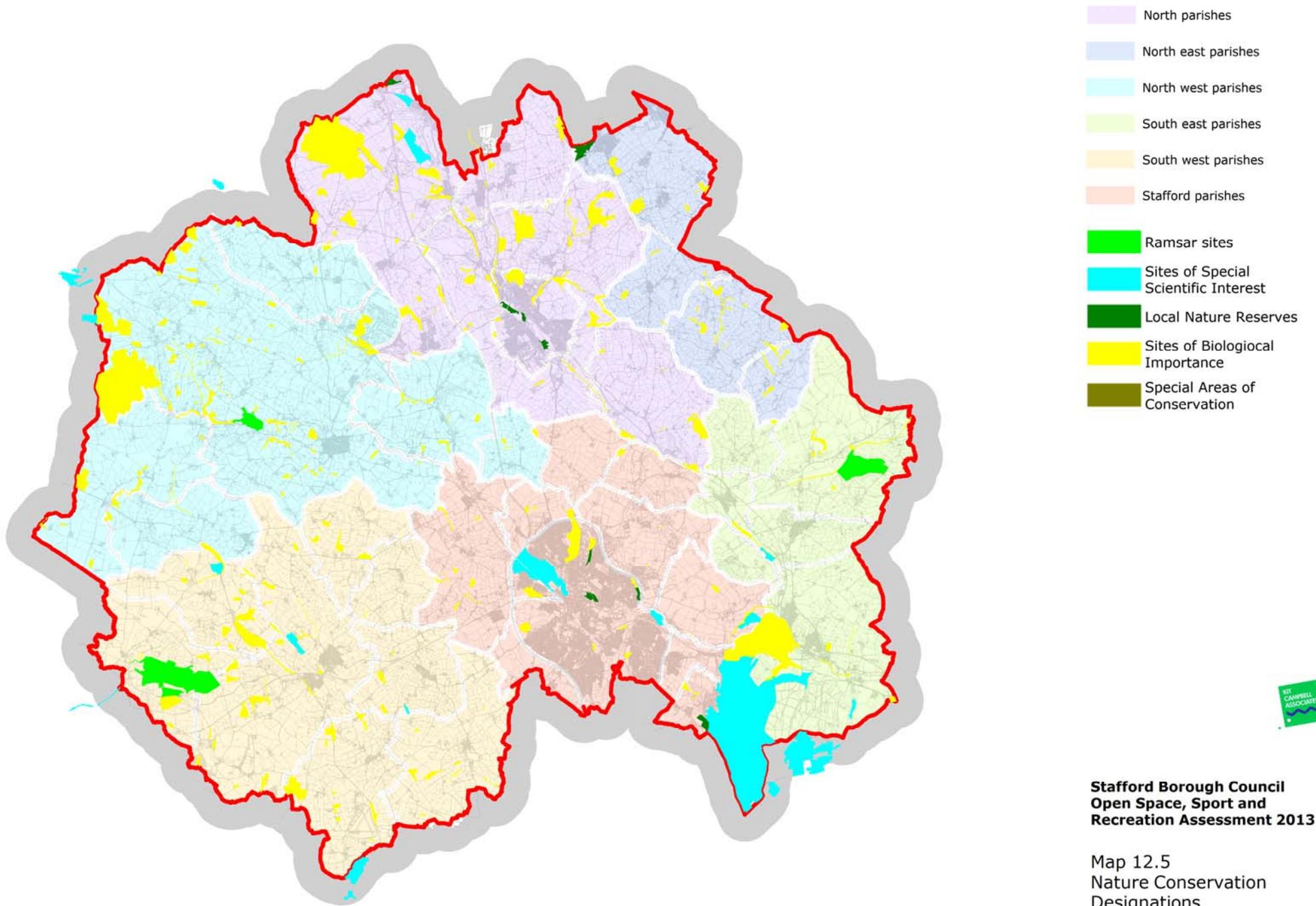
12.33 Appendix H8 calculates the total amount of local and neighbourhood accessible greenspace within settlements across the Borough. In summary, it is:

	AGS (sq m)	CC (sq m)	NGS (Sq m)	OAPF (sq m)	P&G (sq m)	Totals (sq m)	Sq m/person
N area	133,253	69,652	45,711	24,765	7,327	302,708	11.8
NE area	37,850	14,780	0	0	0	52,630	7.3
NW area	10,087	29,235	3,095	0	0	42,417	5.4
SE area	69,451	18,317	16,072	12,280	0	116,120	14.2
SW area	28,718	40,522	0	0	0	69,240	8.4
Stafford area	466,577	212,469	30,315	59,802	35,348	804,511	10.9
Borough	767,869	384,975	95,193	96,847	42,675	1,387,626	10.6
Sq m/person	5.9	2.9	0.7	0.7	0.3	10.6	

Note: AGS = Amenity Greenspace; CC = Churchyards and cemeteries; NGS = Natural Greenspace; OAPF = Open Access Playing Fields; P&G = Parks and Gardens

12.34 This calculation **excludes** strategic provision, which obviously has a much wider than local significance. The total amount of strategic provision is:

	AGS (sq m)	CC (sq m)	NGS (Sq m)	OAPF (sq m)	P&G (sq m)	Totals (sq m)	Sq m/person
N area	0		908,429	0	0	908,429	35.3
NE area	0		0	0	0	0	0
NW area	0		0	0	0	0	0
SE area	27,250		62,867	0	0	90,117	11.0
SW area	0		0	0	0	0	0
Stafford area	589,724		2,839,569	459,003	113,343	4,001,639	54.3
Borough	616,974		3,810,865	459,003	113,343	5,000,185	38.2
Sq m/person	4.7	0	29.1	3.5	0.9	38.2	



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 12.5
Nature Conservation
Designations

Sites shown enlarged for clarity

12.35 The largest element within strategic provision is natural greenspace and six large spaces make up 86% of all natural greenspace provision:

• Barlaston Common	130,827 sq m
• Baswich	1,146,115 sq m
• Fairway Wetlands	504,467 sq m
• Stafford Common	595,764 sq m
• Stone Meadows	212,515 sq m
• Westbridge Park, Stone	451,341 sq m
• Total	3,281,651 sq m

12.36 Some of these sites, for example Aqualate Mere, are remote from the nearest settlement. In addition such spaces are created or designated in response to an opportunity, rather than as a result of the application of provision standards. Accordingly in order to arrive at a sensible local quantity standard we have excluded them from the analysis. The average level of amenity greenspace, churchyards and cemeteries, natural greenspace, open access playing fields and parks and garden provision in Stafford, Stone and the rest of the Borough, in sq m per person, is:

	Stafford	Stone	Rest of Borough
• AGS	7.3	5.8	4.6
• CC	1.9	3.1	4.0
• NGS	0.5	2.6	0.4
• OAPF	0.9	1.1	0.5
• P&G	0.5	0.4	0.0
• Totals	11.2	13.1	9.5

Note: totals may not sum owing to rounding

12.37 Accordingly the amount of provision per person varies considerably across the Borough.

Local Views

Town and Parish Councils Survey

12.38 Opinion varies across the Borough's town and parish councils as to the adequacy of current provision and as a result it is not possible to draw any clear conclusions. For example, and in terms only of amenity greenspace, Berkswich Parish Council, with some 23.3 sq m of amenity greenspace per person, is of the view that it needs slightly more; but Haughton with 1.8 sq m, Barlaston with 4.9 sq m, Gnosall with 5.3 sq m, Fulford with 6.2 sq m and Hopton and Coton with 16.9 sq m, all believe their level of provision is "about right"

Residents Survey

- 12.39 Residents were as divided in their opinions as the town and parish councils, with roughly half thinking the amount of greenspace in housing areas (ie amenity greenspace) and parks and gardens is “about right” and half that slightly more is needed.

Overview

- 12.40 This makes setting a sensible quantity standard very difficult; it is also the case that it is almost impossible to provide more greenspace in established urban areas and so the main purpose of a quantity standard is in relation to new developments.

Trends

- 12.41 There are a few trends worth noting:
- A growing number of councils have concluded that they have been too much concerned with the quantity of provision and too little with its quality over the past twenty or thirty years. This is especially true where development managers in planning departments have required developers to provide on-site open space with only limited reference to the views of their colleagues in leisure services.
 - As it is not easy with limited and often declining budgets to drive up the overall greenspace quality across a council area, many have taken advantage of the funds available from the National Lottery to enhance their major urban parks. The Council sought funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to improve Victoria Park but was unsuccessful and intends to resubmit with an enhanced bid. The success of the Victoria Park destination play area demonstrates clearly the benefit of investing in high quality facilities in parks.
 - More and more councils are beginning to think the unthinkable – selling off part (or all) of poorly located and poorly used spaces in order to generate the capital funding needed to drive up the quality of other provision. The Council is currently investigating ways of improving most of Westbridge Park by disposing of part of it. Experience elsewhere suggests that such proposals normally generate considerable local opposition to the loss of open space, but if well planned can deliver significant improvements that are not achievable in any other way.
 - Broadly speaking, many councils have come to see the development industry as a key source of

capital funding for the enhancement of parks and greenspaces through planning obligations. However, the decline in development over the past few years has largely put an end to this source of funding and the extent to which the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) can make up the difference is as yet unclear. The more it is used to fund major infrastructure the less is likely to be available for local provision and therefore there will remain a need to use planning obligations to mitigate the local impacts of new development. However, developers are likely to resist having to pay both the CIL and contributions required by planning obligations. There is a real danger that enhancing open space, sport and recreation provision will lose out.

- The long term management and maintenance of greenspaces and facilities provided by developers is an issue of rising importance. While most councils have adopted on-site provision and required developers to provide a commuted maintenance sum, such sums run out and when they do councils have to take on responsibility for their maintenance. As a result, more and more are looking for alternative approaches that will not expose them to long term revenue costs.

12.42 The main trends are therefore qualitative rather than quantitative. CABE Space, the former open space arm of the government-funded Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, published considerable evidence to indicate that high quality greenspaces are extremely effective in terms of:

- Boosting land values in their vicinity and therefore promoting economic development
- Helping to absorb atmospheric pollution and particulates
- Absorbing rainfall and therefore helping to avoid or minimise flooding
- Providing opportunities for relaxation and recreation and helping individuals to reduce their stress levels

Quantity Standard

The Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard

12.43 Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) recommends that everyone should have:

- An accessible natural greenspace of at least 2 ha

- of not more than 300 m walk from home
- At least one 20 ha site within 2 km of home
- One 100 ha site within 5 km of home
- One 500 ha site within 10 km of home
- A minimum of one ha of statutory nature reserve per 1000 population

12.44 A circular area with a radius of 300 m has an area of a little over 28 ha. However, if there is a 2 ha accessible natural greenspace at its centre the developed area will be just over 26 ha. At a density of 25 dwellings per hectare (the approximate density proposed in the strategic development locations) and an average occupancy of 2.33 people per dwelling (the current average for Stafford) this 26 ha will be home to approximately 1,650 residents. Therefore the 2 ha site required by ANGSt is equivalent to approximately 12 sq m per person.

12.45 ANGSt is open to criticism on three main grounds: it has no empirical justification; much of England fails to meet it – particularly the bottom 2 ha tier; and it is not possible to retrofit significant amounts of natural greenspace into densely developed areas where arguably more greenspace is needed most. Therefore ANGSt is at best a broad aspiration rather than a sensible standard for established areas. However, given the policy need to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change and enhance biodiversity, it provides a useful starting point for sizeable new developments such as Stafford's proposed Strategic Development Locations.

Locally Determined Standard

12.46 Because of the disparity in the quantity of provision in different areas noted above, it is necessary to consider the components of multi-functional greenspace separately and also sensible to consider a hierarchy of multi-functional greenspaces, consisting of:

- **Local spaces**, intended for use by people who have walked to them. These spaces will normally be less than 0.5 ha, or roughly the size of a football pitch, in area. It will be appropriate for at least one of these spaces to be available in most settlements (other than very small villages) and residential areas in larger towns and villages.
- **Neighbourhood spaces**, intended to serve a wider catchment in towns. These will be between 0.5 and 2.0 ha in area.

- **Strategic spaces:** these will be large spaces to which most users will travel and can be of any size over 2 ha.

12.47 The need for local and neighbourhood spaces should be the basis for a locally determined quantity standard for most settlements. Strategic spaces will be available only in some areas. In these areas, however, they will form part of the local provision but be provided in response to significantly wider-than-local needs or specific opportunities. Therefore it is appropriate to **exclude** them when setting local quantity standards but **include** them when assessing the current quantity of provision against the standard in the areas in which they are set.

Urban Quantity Standard

12.48 While Stafford and Stone are both fairly “green” towns, Map 12.1 above shows that this is very largely because of a handful of large, accessible strategic spaces – for example, Stafford Common, the Western Downs, Baswich and Fairway Wetland in Stafford and Westbridge Park and Stone Meadows in Stone. Strategic provision is equivalent to an average of approximately 65 sq m per person in Stafford and 44 sq m per person in Stone. Therefore for the new Strategic Development Locations (and any other sizeable new developments across the Borough) it will be important to have significantly more local and neighbourhood provision than the current average amounts in the two towns, but nowhere near as much as the aggregate of local plus neighbourhood plus strategic provision. It should also be higher than the 12 sq m per person given by the lowest tier of ANGSt, because a single 2 ha greenspace should not be the only greenspace in a circular area with a radius of 300m: there should also be smaller and incidental spaces and, ideally, green corridors linking them and to further spaces in adjoining areas. To allow for this we suggest adopting a quantity standard that is equivalent to the bottom tier of ANGSt plus approximately 25% ie **15 sq m per person**. This is slightly higher than the current quantity of local and neighbourhood provision in Stafford (11.2 sq m per person) and Stone (13.1 sq m per person).

Rural Quantity Standard

12.49 In rural areas, the bottom tier of ANGSt will rarely apply because of the proximity of the countryside to most village residents. However, a number of rural

parish councils are of the view that the amount of greenspace in their areas is less than needed. Therefore we suggest a quantity standard equal to the current average level of provision in the rural areas of 9.5 sq m per person, rounded to **10 sq m per person**.

- 12.50 The Borough Council should apply these overall standards flexibly. In some areas it will be sensible to have higher levels of provision of or contributions to parks and garden; in other to natural greenspaces; and in some to general amenity greenspaces.

Application of the Quantity Standards

- 12.51 The table below summarises the implications of applying the local quantity standard to the Borough. It gives the overall or aggregate position for local and neighbourhood amenity greenspaces, churchyards and cemeteries, natural greenspaces, open access playing fields and parks and gardens with and without taking account of strategic provision:

	Required provision (ha)	Local and Neighbourhood provision (ha)	Comparison (ha)	Strategic Provision (ha)	Out-turn (ha)
<i>Urban Areas</i>					
Stafford	88.9	66.4	-22.5	386.3	+363.8
Stone	24.6	21.4	-3.2	72.6	+69.4
<i>Planning areas</i>					
North	25.7	30.2	+4.6	90.8	+95.4
North east	7.2	5.3	-1.9	0	-1.9
North west	7.8	4.2	-3.6	0	-3.6
South east	8.2	11.6	+3.4	9.1	+12.4
South west	8.2	6.9	-1.3	0	-1.3
Stafford	73.7	81.8	+8.1	400.2	+408.3
Borough	130.9	140.1	+9.3	500.2	+509.7

Note: a "+" indicates a surplus against the quantity standard and a "-" a deficiency

- 12.52 This analysis therefore suggests a surplus of local and neighbourhood provision in the north, south east and Stafford areas of the Borough and a deficit in the other areas in terms of the total amount of local and neighbourhood provision, including Stafford town and Stone. However, if strategic provision is taken into account as well, both Stafford town and Stone have enough provision but the north east, north west and south west areas continue to have a deficiency.

Overall Accessibility

- 12.53 It is desirable that Borough residents should be able to access attractive greenspaces close to where they

live. The reasons for this include:

- Attractive greenspaces help to create an environment in which people will want to live; they also provide opportunities for children to play and for adults to interact and form friendships. Nothing unites the residents of an area more than a threat to their local greenspaces.
- Attractive greenspaces enhance property values in their vicinity and as a result they help to promote economic development
- Greenspaces have numerous environmental benefits, including a reduction in the temperature of areas in their vicinity, the filtering of various forms of pollution from the air and the soaking up of rainfall
- Time spent in greenspaces has been proven to be an effective means of reducing stress

12.54 Across the Borough, 79% of properties lie within a 5-minute walk of at least one greenspace and 65% within the same distance of one that we classed as being of high quality and value in the audit. These percentages rise to 87% and 81% respectively for a 10-minute walk. The two percentages for the different distances are therefore quite close; if there had been a significant difference between them this would have indicated a need significantly to enhance some spaces in order to ensure reasonably equal access across the Borough to high quality, high value spaces, but this appears not to be the case. However, there are significant disparities between the percentages for access to at least one space and at least one high quality, high value space in some of the planning areas, most noticeably in the north east and south west areas:

		300m	600m
North	All spaces	74%	83%
	HQHV spaces	63%	78%
North east	All spaces	47%	67%
	HQHV spaces	13%	37%
North west	All spaces	46%	57%
	HQHV spaces	27%	45%
South east	All spaces	81%	86%
	HQHV spaces	60%	79%
South west	All spaces	51%	72%
	HQHV spaces	29%	52%

Stafford	All spaces	90%	96%
	HQHV spaces	79%	94%

Secondary Purposes

12.55 Accordingly, this suggests that broadly speaking the north east and north west areas of the Borough should have the highest priority for action to enhance the quality and/or value of local greenspaces while the north east, north west and south west should be the priorities for more accessible provision.

12.56 Multi-functional greenspaces, as their name implies, serve more than one purpose. For example, playing fields can serve an important amenity function for those people who live or work around their periphery and many parks support biodiversity and nature conservation as well as being of high amenity value. In addition, linked networks of greenspaces are increasingly important as walking and cycling routes and green corridors for wildlife as well as people. This part of the chapter reviews the secondary purposes of the green network as a whole, concentrating on:

- **Amenity value:** greenspaces can contribute significantly to local amenity, but only if they are of good quality
- **Context value:** the extent to which greenspaces are significant because of the context within which they are set: for example, the only greenspace in a densely developed area is almost inevitably of value to local residents
- **Nature conservation value:** the extent to which spaces support biodiversity and nature conservation. Map 12.5 shows all the sites in the Borough with a nature conservation designation.
- **Play value:** local greenspaces are critically important as places for children to play, but they must be of good quality and safe
- **Recreational value:** some spaces are suitable for a range of recreational activities from jogging to kickabouts

12.57 Maps 12.6 to 12.10 below provide an overview of the extent to which spaces support these secondary purposes.

12.58 For each of the above characteristics, we have used audit cut-off scores of below 50%, 50-74% and 75-100% in order to differentiate between spaces of greater or lesser value to the Borough and its residents. The significance of these scores is:

- **Scores below 50%:** these spaces are of limited value in terms of a specific secondary purpose and converting them into high value spaces is likely to require both significant capital investment and better management and maintenance
- **Scores of 50-74%:** these spaces are of worthwhile value in terms of a specific secondary purpose and increasing them to high value spaces is likely to require relatively limited capital investment and better management and maintenance. These spaces therefore have the potential to become much more valuable parts of the green network with only limited investment.
- **Scores of 75-100%:** these spaces are of significant value in terms of a specific secondary purpose and any desirable capital investment or changes to management and maintenance required to them is very minor.

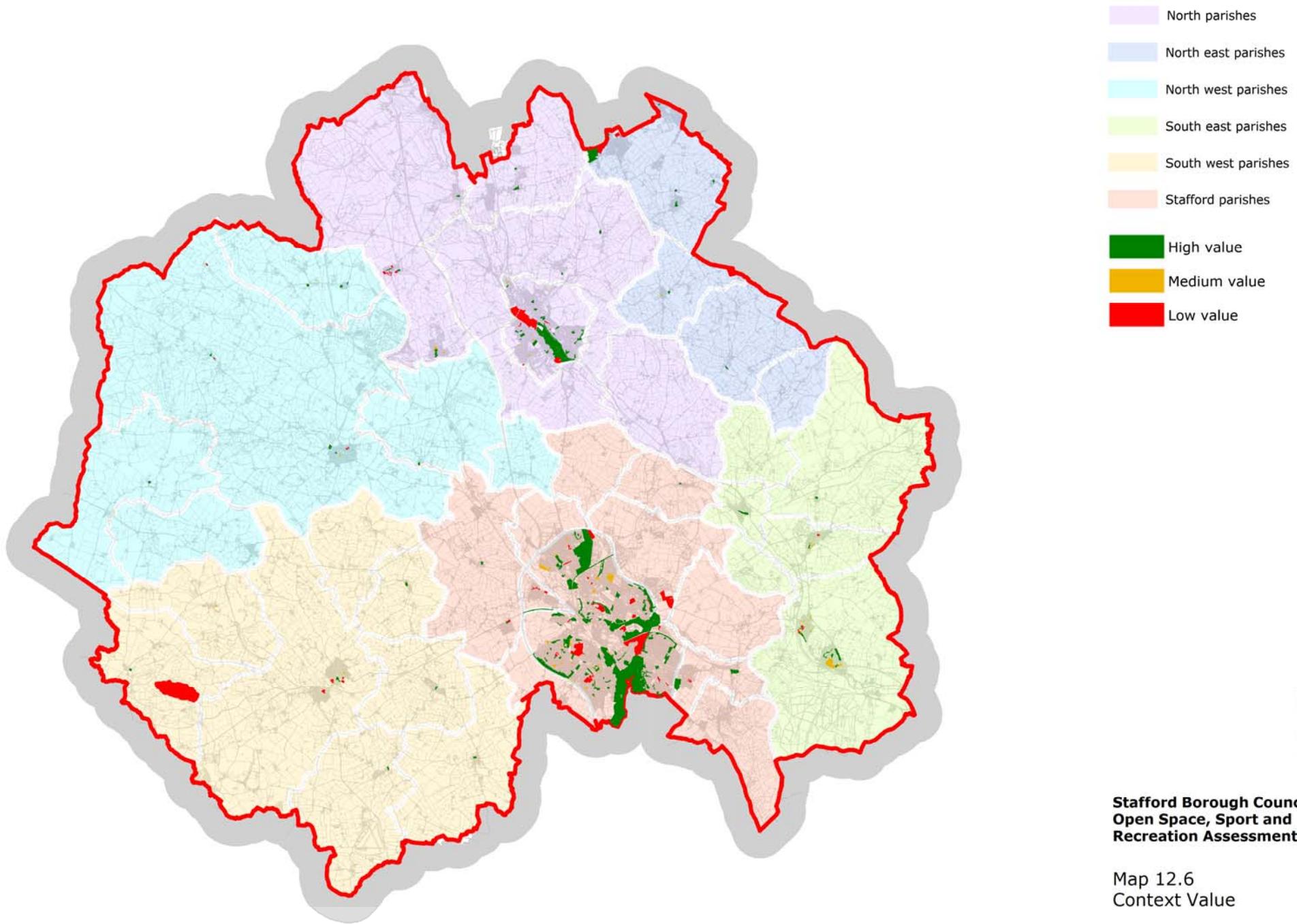
12.59 Although we audited all of the spaces using the same audit form and scoring system, the primary purpose of each space dictates the weighting given to particular characteristics in the overall value scores.

Context Value

12.60 Some spaces can sometimes be quite poor but enormously significant in terms of their context, for example if they are the only greenspace in a particular area. In our audit, we appraised the following aspects of context value:

- Value as a cycle or pedestrian route
- Value in terms of a linked series of green or hard spaces
- Value in terms of open-ness in a densely developed area
- Value in terms of providing a setting for buildings

12.61 Map 12.6 shows the context value of the various spaces in the audit. In general, only the larger spaces show up as having high context value.



- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes
- High value
- Medium value
- Low value



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 12.6
Context Value

Nature Conservation Value

12.62 The UK government and all UK local authorities are keen to support biodiversity and nature conservation, not least because upsetting the balance of nature may have serious but unforeseeable consequences for mankind. The Borough Council has also adopted a Local Agenda 21 which, among other things, seeks to promote wildlife conservation and biodiversity. The aspects of nature conservation value that we appraised through our audit were:

- Value as a green corridor for wildlife
- Value for public enjoyment of nature
- Value of habitats within the space (including water)
- Value of trees to the neighbourhood

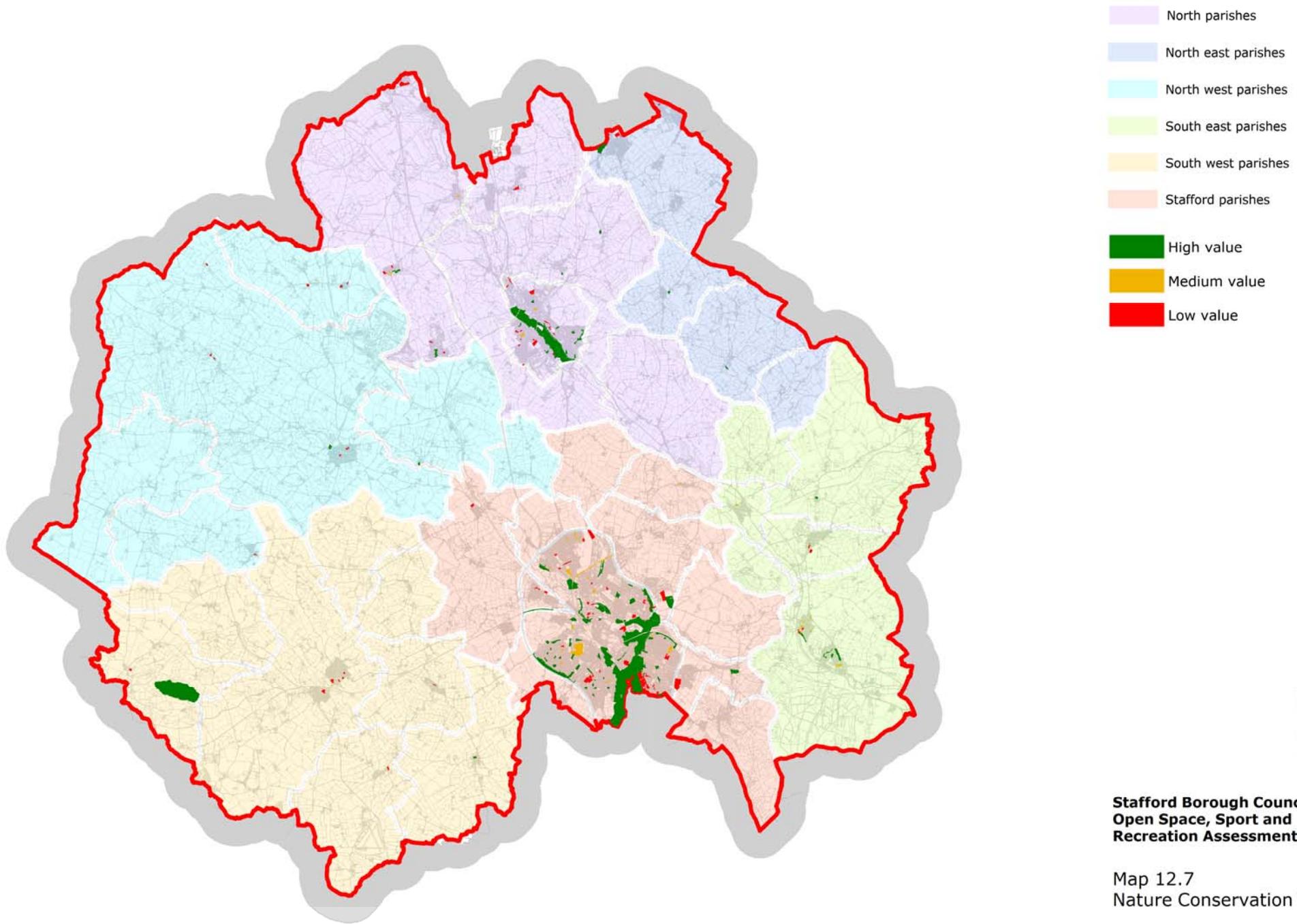
12.63 Map 12.7 summarises the nature conservation value of the various spaces in our audit. It shows that the nature conservation value of most of the small, fragmented spaces in the Borough leaves a lot to be desired, but that the large spaces, such as Westbridge Park and Stafford Common, are good.

Amenity Value

12.64 Greenspaces have the potential to contribute significantly to local amenity and the quality of life. They do this in various ways, depending on the context in which they are set and their design and management, but the characteristics or qualities we evaluated through audit were:

- Contribution to the appearance of the neighbourhood
- Evidence of use for events
- Value as a noise buffer
- Value as a visual screen or buffer
- Value in terms of a "sense of place"
- Value in terms of "busyness" for social interaction
- Value in terms of local air quality and amelioration of pollution
- Value in terms of providing a setting for buildings within the space
- Visual attractiveness

12.65 Map 12.8 summarises the overall amenity value of the various spaces in our audit and also highlights the limited value of the smaller, fragmented spaces across the Borough.

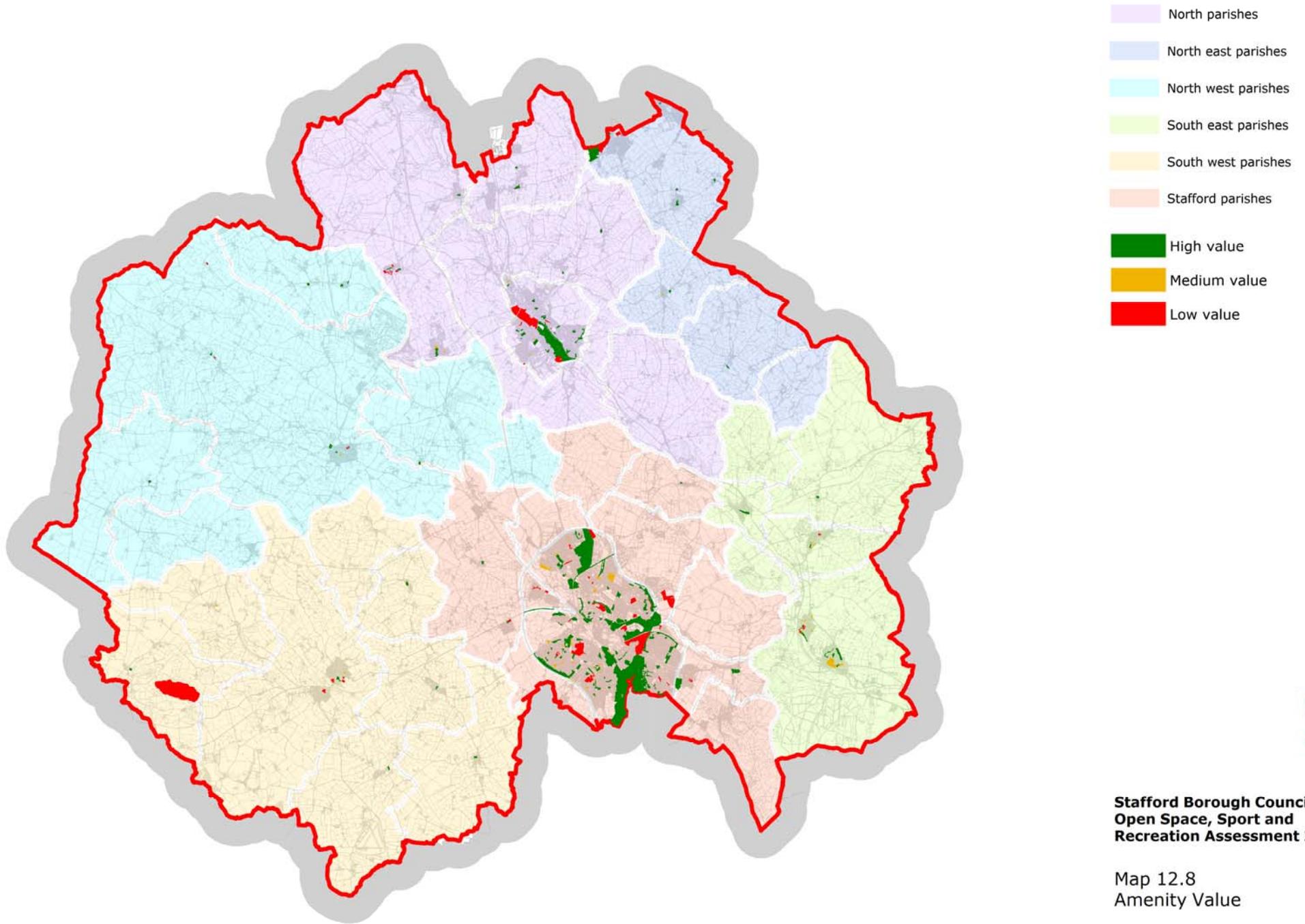


- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes
- High value
- Medium value
- Low value



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 12.7
Nature Conservation Value



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 12.8
Amenity Value

Recreational Value

12.66 Greenspaces offer opportunities to people of all ages and abilities to enjoy a range of activities from various forms of sport to informal ones such as dog walking, attending community events, sitting on the grass, jogging and taking part in informal kickabouts. The characteristics that we reviewed in our audit were:

- The likely appeal of spaces to people of all ages
- Value for community events
- Value for mini-soccer
- Value in terms of health benefits
- Value of formal recreation opportunities
- Value of informal recreation opportunities

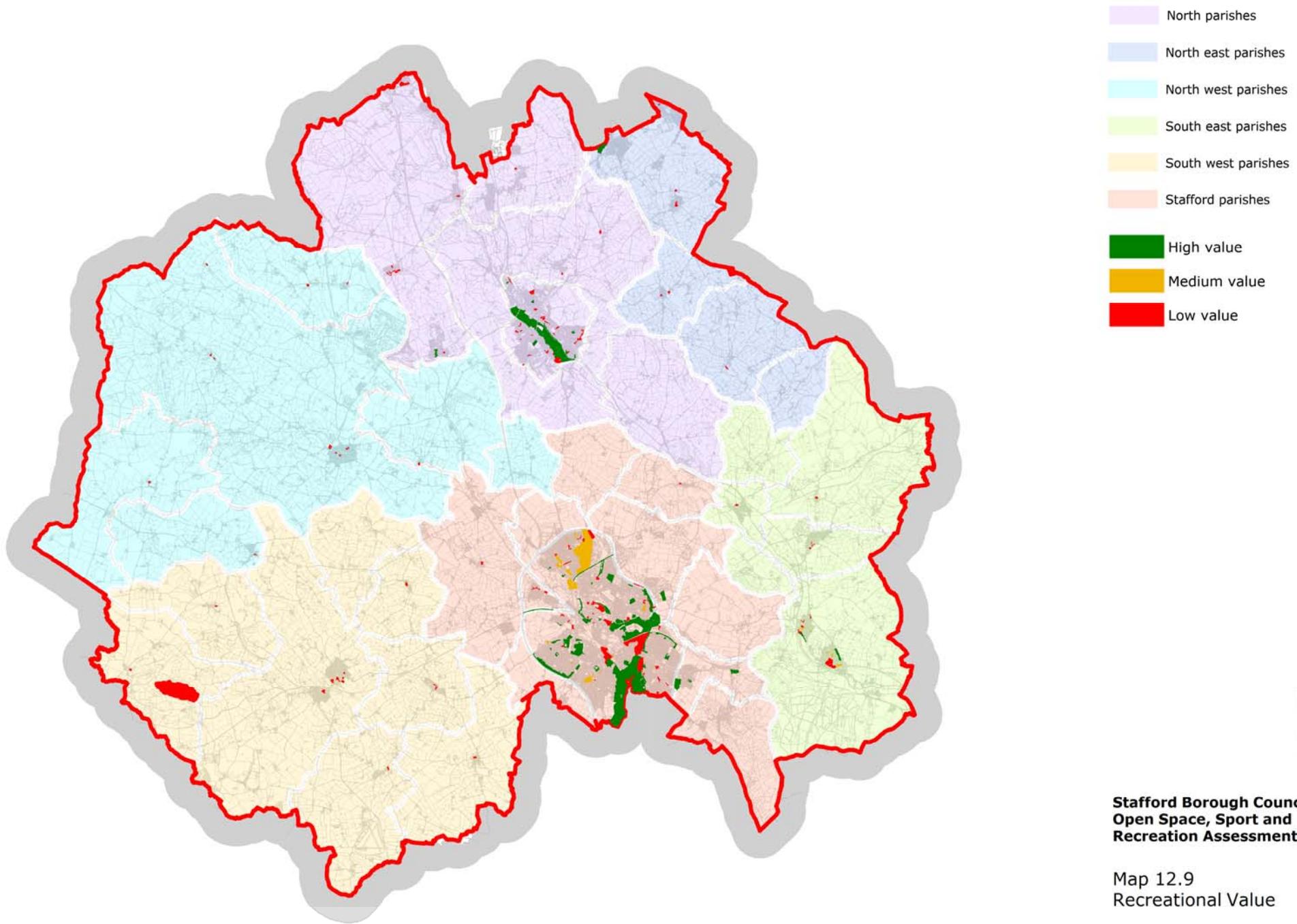
12.67 Map 12.9 shows the recreational value of the various spaces in the Borough. It highlights substantially the same message as the other value maps.

Play Value

12.68 While the Borough has a significant number of play areas for children, and a range of teenage facilities, relatively little play occurs in formal equipped play areas. Most outdoor play occurs in domestic gardens, where they are available, or in local greenspaces. It follows that greenspaces should be designed and managed in such a way as to stimulate children's imaginations. It is possible to achieve this in a variety of ways, but generally they require that spaces should offer children a range of plants, materials and textures and the opportunity to explore the natural world. Probably the best form of play area of all is woodland, although there can be concerns over children's safety and unacceptable behaviour by some adults. The characteristics that we reviewed in our audit were:

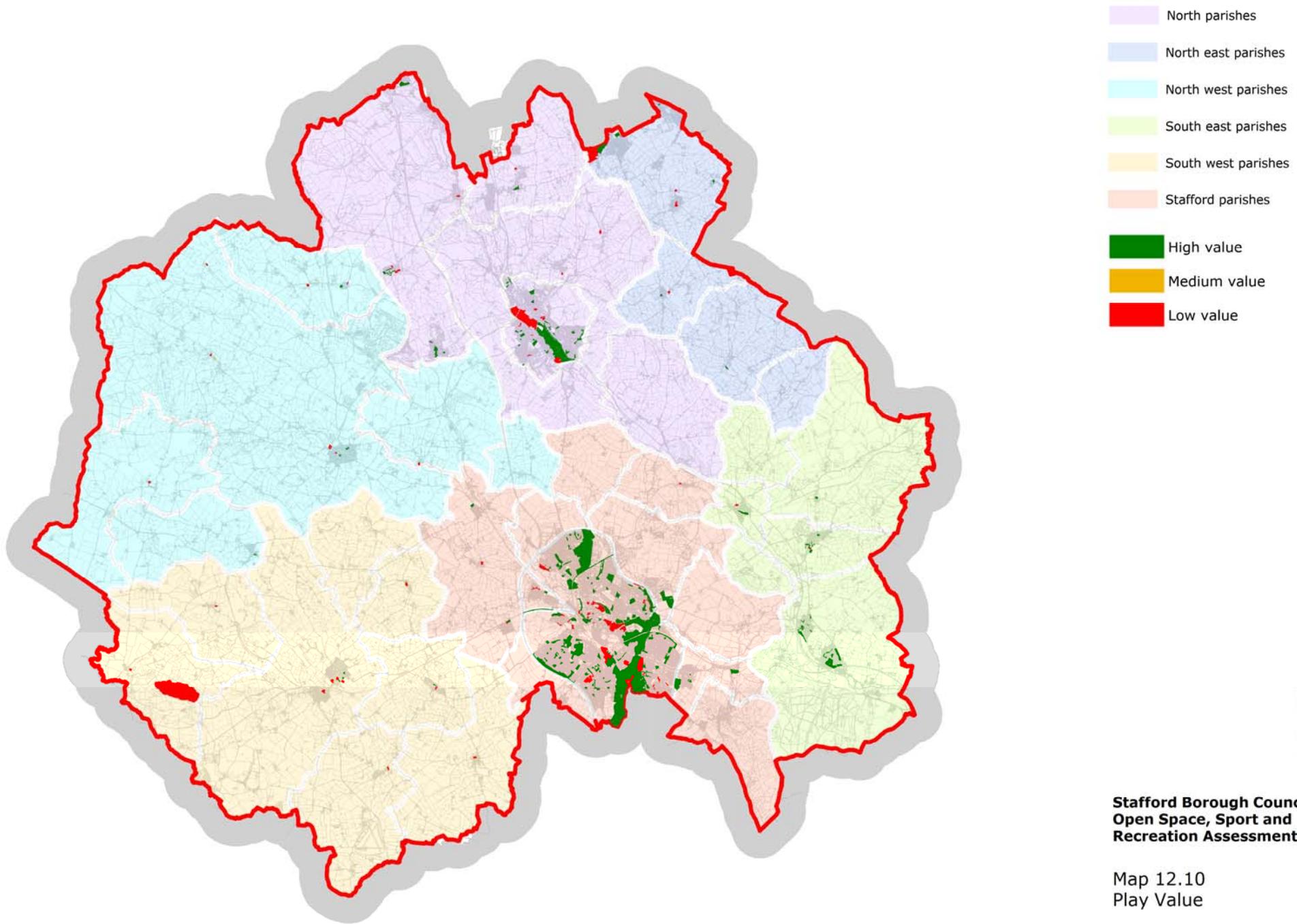
- Value in terms of variety of finishes and experiences
- Value of space for adventure play
- Value of space for kickabout
- Value of space for seeing birds and animals

12.69 Map 12.10 highlights the play value of the Borough's greenspaces and shows that Stafford town, in particular, has a range of spaces that are good for play, as do some of the rural settlements such as Colwich, although Gnosall does not.



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 12.9
Recreational Value



- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes
- High value
- Medium value
- Low value



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 12.10
Play Value

Conclusions

12.70 These assessments point to two inescapable conclusions:

- The Borough's priority should be to work with the town and parish councils to enhance the main spaces in its settlements, but particularly in those most likely to expand through new housing developments
- The main emphasis should be on making spaces more valuable to local communities and, in particular, boosting their nature conservation and biodiversity value

12.71 In addition, the Borough Council and its town and parish council partners should seek to develop networks of linked greenspaces, including the canals network, as walking and cycling routes.

13: Major Indoor Sports Facilities

Introduction 13.1 This chapter reviews the provision of major indoor sports facilities across the Borough. For the purposes of the assessment they are:

- Fitness facilities
- Ice rinks
- Indoor bowls halls
- Indoor sports halls
- Indoor swimming pools
- Indoor tennis halls

Fitness Facilities 13.2 The Health and fitness (H&F) market is served by a mix of public, private and voluntary sector providers. They all compete for substantially the same customers and although private sector facilities have tended to be more expensive, public facilities often offer a comparable quality and range of equipment and classes.

13.3 Since the 2009 assessment, two fitness facilities - the small Alpha Leisure facility at Tillington Hall Hotel and the Stafford Sports Arena - have closed and the former Esporta Club in Stafford is now a Virgin Active one. In addition, a new commercial fitness centre, *Gym & Tonic*, has opened close to Stafford Rugby Club and a smaller fitness centre has opened at the Stafford Sports College.

Demand

13.4 Sport England's Market Segmentation Tool estimates that there are approximately 17,700 people in the Borough who take part in keep fit and gym activities, including aerobics, yoga and classes, and nearly 7,000 individuals who would like to do so. Therefore the potential market is approximately 25,000 people.

13.5 Most of the fitness provision is located in either Stafford or Stone, which between them contain about 70% of the Borough's population. In these

two areas there are likely to be about 17,500 actual or prospective fitness participants, with about 13,500 in Stafford and 4,000 in Stone.

- 13.6 Not everyone who takes part in fitness activities uses cardio-vascular or resistance training fitness equipment. Therefore the potential number of gym participants will be less than 25,000 across the two towns.
- 13.7 Stafford Leisure Centre is the main “public” gym in the town and it has about 2,500 members for its 100 fitness machines – an average of about 25 machines per member. Westbridge Park in Stone, on the other hand, has about 1,000 members for about 100 items of equipment, or ten members per machine. However, the exterior of the building is outmoded and it will be desirable either to upgrade or replace it as part of the Council’s plans to provide modern indoor and outdoor sports facilities at the Park.

Existing Provision

13.8 *Commercial facilities – Stafford*

• Gym & Tonic	35 stations
• Elite 2000	49 stations
• Fit4Life	5 stations
• Gymphobics	10 stations
• LS Fitness	2 stations
• Virgin Active	90 stations
• Sub-total	171 stations

Commercial Facilities - Stone

• Stone House Hotel	7 stations
---------------------	------------

Higher Education Facilities - Stafford

• Staffordshire University	50 stations
----------------------------	-------------

School and Public Facilities - Stafford

• Sir Graham Balfour School	6 stations
• Stafford Leisure Centre	100 stations
• Stafford Sports College	16 stations
• Sub-total	122 stations

Note: Stafford Sports College is planning to remove its fitness facilities

School and Public Facilities - Stone

- Westbridge Park 64 stations

Other

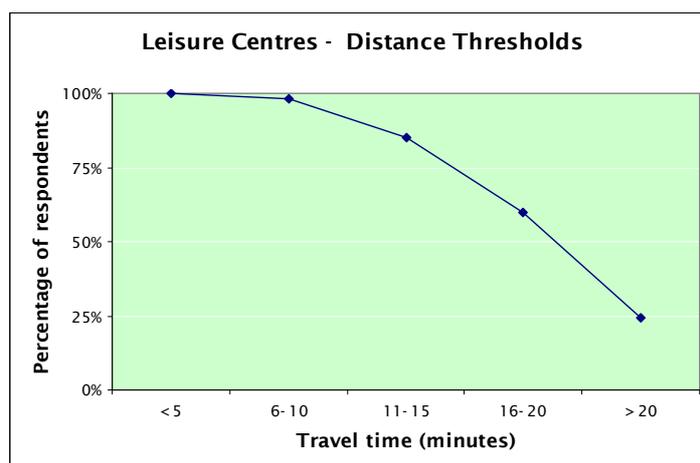
- Moddershall Oaks 24 stations
- Stoke on Trent RUFC 20 stations
- Yarnfield Park 20 stations

Supply-Demand Comparison

13.9 Overall, therefore, the fitness centres in Stafford and Stone have a total of about 340 and 100 fitness machines respectively. The fact that one of the larger facilities – Stafford Sports Arena, with about 100 machines – has closed since the 2008-9 assessment suggests that there is little if any unmet demand in Stafford. Proportionally, Stone has slightly more members per head of population so there is also likely to be little unmet demand there as well. If there is unmet or latent demand in either town, commercial operators are likely to enter the market and there is no need for any additional public sector provision.

Accessibility

13.10 The chart below shows the time for which respondents in the residents’ survey indicated they were willing to travel to a leisure centre. From this it is clear that a sensible distance threshold is between 15 and 20 minutes.



13.11 Map 13.1 shows the location of the various fitness facilities in the Borough together with 20-minute distance thresholds. It highlights the concentration of fitness provision in Stafford town and the lack of provision in the western part of the Borough and on its eastern fringe. It also identifies that provision outside the Borough is likely to be used by at least some residents of the rural areas.

13.12 The proportions of properties in the Borough within the walking and driving distance thresholds of at least one fitness centre are:

	Walking	Driving
• North	63%	100%
• North east	0%	97%
• North west	0%	70%
• South east	0%	74%
• South west	0%	72%
• Stafford	59%	100%
• Borough	46%	95%

13.13 Accordingly, accessibility to fitness facilities is fairly good throughout the Borough, although most residents of the north east, north west south east and south west areas have to travel by car if they wish to use any of them. Therefore there is likely to be some demand for reasonably small fitness facilities in these areas.

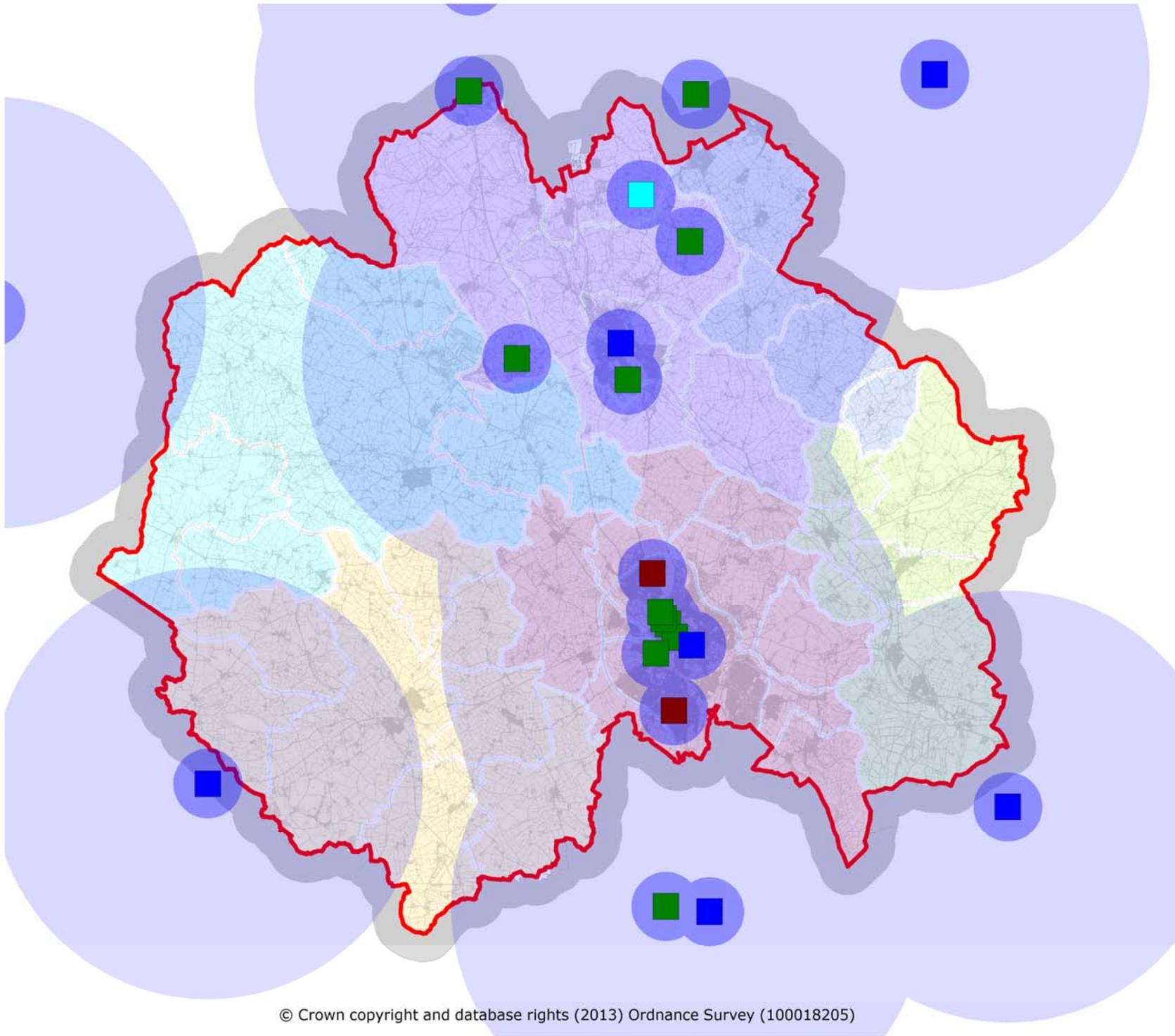
Trends

13.14 After a number of years of fairly strong growth, the demand for fitness facilities has levelled off and a number of the larger commercial clubs are beginning to struggle slightly, not least because a number of “cheap and cheerful” competitors have emerged. Across the country it seems likely that there will be further closures as households cut back on non-essential expenditure.

Local Views

13.15 The following councils Town and Parish Councils have identified a need for more public fitness facilities in their areas:

- North west area High Offley and Woodseaves
- South east area Colwich
- South west area Church Eaton
- Stafford area Berkswich
Brocton



- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes

- Voluntary club facilities
- Commercial facilities
- Joint use facilities
- Public facilities
- 20 minutes/1200 m walking distance threshold
- 20 minutes/7500 m driving distance threshold



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 13.1
Fitness Facilities

Sites shown enlarged for clarity

- 13.16 Among the Town and Parish Councils that responded to our survey seeking their views, only High Offley and Woodseaves regarded the quality of health and fitness provision in its area as poor.

Quantity Standard

- 13.17 There is no need for a quantity standard as the Council can rely on the commercial sector to identify and fill any gaps in provision.

Ice Rinks

Demand

- 13.18 Sport England and the ice sports governing bodies (excluding curling) developed a rule of thumb for ice rinks provision some years ago which suggested that the population needed to support a full size rink is 250,000 people within 5 miles or 300,000 within 45 minutes travel time. The Borough certainly cannot meet the first of these criteria although 45 minutes travel extends into Birmingham.

Existing Provision

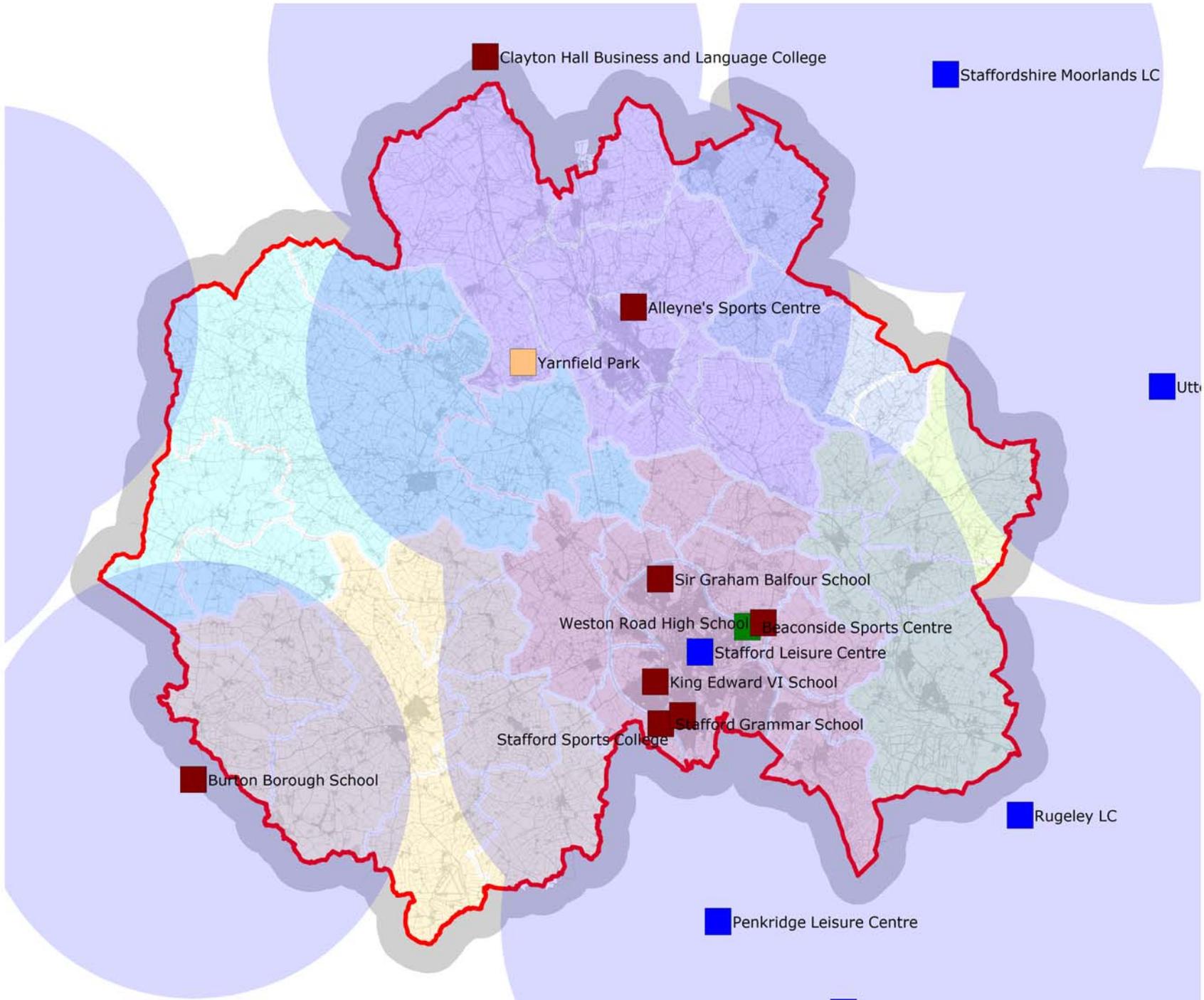
- 13.19 There are no ice rinks in the Borough, but the nearest ones are the Silver Blades Rink in Cannock (20 x 20 m ice pad, 9 miles from Stafford town) and the Telford Ice Rink (26 x 56 m ice pad, 16 miles from Stafford town).

Trends

- 13.20 Across the country, many ice rinks are struggling financially, not least because of recent significant rises in energy costs. Because of their net revenue costs, and especially high maintenance requirements, the UK is likely to lose a number of its rinks in the next decade. This can be interpreted in two ways: an opportunity for Stafford Borough to develop a facility that has the potential to attract users from a fairly wide area, thanks to its good rail and road links north and south, or something that will be extremely risky. We take the latter view. Most ice rink users (in England at least – Scotland is different because of the popularity of curling) are teenagers and therefore depend to a significant extent on public transport. Accordingly it makes sense for ice rinks to be located in major cities. Accordingly there is no need for provision standards.

Indoor Bowls Halls

- 13.21 Sport England has developed a Sports Facilities Calculator (SFC) that local authorities and others can use to help them determine the appropriate



- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes
- Sports halls - commercial
- Sports halls - public
- Sports halls - school
- Sports halls - university

Utt

Rugeley LC

Penkridge Leisure Centre

Chase LC

**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 13.2
Sports Halls

Sites shown enlarged for clarity

Supply	England	West Midlands	Staffordshire County	Stafford
Number of halls	5,598	569	90	15
Number of hall sites	4,000	409	65	11
Supply of total hall space in courts	21,283	2,189	330	51
Supply of publicly available hall space in courts (scaled with hours available in the peak period)	16,853	1,693	257	40
Supply of total hall space in VPWPP	3,412	342,844	51,957	8,155
Courts per 10,000	4.01	3.97	3.93	3.98

Note: VPWPP = Visits per week in the peak periods

Supply

13.27 Stafford has 15 sports halls across 11 sites most of which are on school sites and over half of which are over 20 years old. In terms of the number of courts per 10,000 population Stafford is comparable to the other benchmarks.

Demand	England	West Midlands	Staffordshire County	Stafford
Population	53,095,986	5,514,800	840,000	128,300
Visits demanded - VPWPP	2,429,723	259,734	36,936	5,615
Equivalent in courts – with comfort factor included	14,998	1,542	228	35
% of population without access to a car	19.5	19.5	13.3	12.7

Demand

13.28 Demand is based on the population size and profile and is equivalent to over 5,600 visits per week in the peak period and 35 badminton courts. Stafford residents have relatively high levels of car ownership and therefore access is relatively better than the England/County average

Supply/Demand Balance	England	West Midlands	Staffordshire County	Stafford
Supply – hall provision (courts) scaled to take account of hours available for community use	16,853	1,693	257	40.27
Demand – hall provision (courts) taking into account a 'comfort' factor	14,998	1,542	228	34.66
Supply/Demand balance	1,855	151	29	5.61

Note: numbers may not sum owing to rounding

Supply/Demand Balance

13.29 Simply comparing Stafford's demand from its own population with its supply within the Borough boundary there would appear to be an apparent 'surplus' of nearly 6 badminton courts (note however this takes no account of location/accessibility). Some 'surplus' is desirable to provide a cushion/flexibility in meeting demand or growth in participation/population.

Satisfied Demand	England	West Midlands	Staffordshire County	Stafford
Total number of visits which are met	2,210,554	226,914	34,501	5,248
% of total demand satisfied	91	90.9	93.4	93.5
% of demand satisfied who travelled by car	75.4	76.3	83	84.6
% of demand satisfied who travelled by foot	15.8	14.1	11.2	9.8
% of demand satisfied who travelled by public transport	8.8	9.6	5.9	5.6
Demand Retained	2,209,502	224,197	27,574	4,336
As % of Satisfied Demand	100	98.8	79.9	82.6
Demand Exported	1,051	2,718	6,927	912
As % of Satisfied Demand	0	1.2	20.1	17.4

Satisfied Demand

13.30 When spatial factors (eg the location of sports halls just outside the Stafford area), quality, opening hours and accessibility are taken into account the model indicates that some 93.5% of demand generated by Stafford residents is being satisfied by facilities in and around the Borough. This is higher than the England and regional figure and marginally

higher than the County figure. The level of satisfied demand therefore appears to be good.

13.31 Of that satisfied demand, some 83% is retained demand ie demand from Stafford residents met by Stafford's facilities. This shows a good level of self sufficiency with some 17% of demand (912 vpwpp) being met by residents travelling outside of the Borough to use facilities (most likely to Stoke or Newcastle near to the north border). Stafford also attracts some users from outside the Borough which equates to some 339 vpwpp. Overall more visits are exported than imported.

Unmet Demand	England	West Midlands	Staffordshire County	Stafford
Total number of visits in the peak, not currently being met	219,170	22,820	2,435	367
Unmet demand as a % of total demand	9	9.1	6.6	6.5
Equivalent in courts- with comfort factor	1,352.9	140.86	15.04	2.26
% of Unmet Demand due to:				
Lack of Capacity	20.7	15.9	5.4	2.5
Outside Catchment	79.3	84.1	94.6	97.5
Outside Catchment:	79.3	84.1	94.6	97.5
% Unmet demand who do not have access to a car	71	77.3	83.9	81
% of Unmet demand who have access to a car	8.3	6.8	10.6	16.5
Lack of Capacity	20.7	15.9	5.4	2.5
% Unmet demand who do not have access to a car	18.7	15.1	4.4	1.6
% of Unmet demand who have access to a car	2	0.8	1	0.9

Unmet Demand

13.32 The mirror image of satisfied demand is unmet demand and Stafford has some 6.5% of demand from its residents for sports hall use unmet. This is equivalent to just over 2 badminton courts. However, most (97.5%) of the unmet demand is caused by residents being too far away from a facility to access a sports hall (more than a 20 minute drive/1 mile walking catchment) and is not due to lack of capacity. Of those residents who cannot access a sports hall it is the people who don't have access to a car that make up over 80%

of the unmet demand - ie people who live more than a mile away from their nearest sports hall, don't have a car and rely on being able to walk to a sports hall to participate.

13.33 The unmet demand is spread across the Borough with no specific hotspots where new provision could realistically address that unmet demand. This reflects the rural nature of the population and the fact that unmet demand is as a result of residents without a car living too far away from a facility as opposed to any lack of capacity.

Used Capacity	England	West Midlands	Staffordshire County	Stafford
Total number of visits used of current capacity	2,210,933	226,819	31,655	4,675
% of overall capacity of halls used	64.8	66.2	60.9	57.3
% of visits made to halls by walkers	15.8	14.1	12.2	10.88
% of visits made to halls by road	84.2	85.9	87.8	89.2
Visits Imported				
Number of visits imported	1,431	2,622	4,081	339
As a % of used capacity	0.1	1.2	12.9	7.2
Visits Retained				
Number of Visits retained	2,209,502	224,197	27,574	4,336
As a % of used capacity	9.9	98.8	87.1	92.8

Used Capacity

13.34 Stafford's sports halls overall are utilised to some 57% of their available capacity. As a benchmark Sport England use an 80% figure to balance comfortable usage with viability. Overall the utilisation of Sports Halls appears a bit low and therefore might illustrate some unused/spare capacity. However it is important to look at individual facilities as this can vary widely. The utilised capacity by facility shows that Alleyne's (84%), Graham Balfour (98%) and Stafford Leisure Centre (100%) appear to be too busy whereas others, in particular the largest (5 court) hall at Stafford Sports College only appears to have 43% of its potential capacity utilised. School facilities can have some under utilised capacity due to the community opening hours but the Sports College does appear to have more limited opening hours than other school sites which might be worth reviewing to take some pressure off other public leisure centres in the town.

Conclusions

- 13.35 Stafford appears to have a relatively good supply of sports halls with a high level of satisfied and retained demand. Any unmet demand is caused by poor access for those reliant on walking and could not be addressed by any new provision .
- 13.36 Some facilities are over-utilised and others under utilised so improving access to those Stafford based facilities could be an objective to take the pressure off public centre leisure centres which appear to be under pressure.
- 13.37 Investment options could focus on improving the quality of older facilities (or replacing them if required). If further population and participation growth is intended then further modelling is recommended.

Comments on the FPM Analysis

- 13.38 The 2011 census gave the population of the Borough as 130,800 or 2,500 more than the figure used for the Facilities Planning Model analysis. Therefore the demand for halls in 2011 should be about 1.95% higher than the FPM estimate. This increases the number of halls required from 34.7 to 35.3, but makes no material difference to the overall conclusions of the analysis.
- 13.38 The Council does not accept the conclusion that there are enough halls in the Borough. However, in large part this is predicated on the fact that the governing bodies and local clubs catering for athletics, cricket and netball have indicated a desire for indoor practice facilities of a better standard than would normally be available in multi-purpose halls. Ideally, they would each like a purpose-designed hall for their sport. Therefore the FPM conclusion and the Borough Council's views are not necessarily contradictory. However, if these sports really require specialist halls they will have to include them as high priority projects in their plans for the future and be willing to fund at least part of their costs.
- 13.39 The detailed output from the Model identifies four "hot spots" in which there is unmet demand for sports halls, although the level of unmet demand in all of them is very low:
- Eccleshall – equivalent to well under 0.1 badminton court in aggregate
 - Gnosall – also equivalent to well under 0.1

- badminton court in aggregate
- Stafford – equivalent to about one badminton court in aggregate
- Stone – equivalent to well under half a badminton court in aggregate

13.40 For all practical purposes, therefore, the amount of unmet demand is insufficient to justify any more provision at present.

13.41 This position will change when the new strategic development locations are built out. The population structure in each of the Strategic Development Locations will depend to a large extent on the types of dwellings in them. Therefore it is possible at present to do only a fairly crude estimate of the potential demand that will arise in each of them. Sport England's Sports Facility Calculator provides a quick and easy way to do this and suggests that the four Strategic Development Locations will generate sufficient demand to justify the following provision:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| • East of Stafford | 0.43 courts |
| • North of Stafford | 2.31 courts |
| • West of Stafford | 1.63 courts |
| • West of Stone | 0.38 courts |
| • Total | 4.75 courts |

13.42 Therefore residents in the Strategic Development Locations in the Stafford town area are likely to generate a demand for sports halls with something like 4.4 badminton courts, while the West of Stone SDL will generate a demand for less than half a badminton court.

Quality

13.43 Appendix a gives a quality standard for sports halls and related facilities. Of the public facilities in the Borough, the new Stafford Leisure Centre is obviously the best hall. Some of the joint use school facilities, however, are of relatively poor quality. However, until the County Council's proposals for new or upgraded schools are clear there is no point in suggesting any upgrading.

Local Views

13.44 The following Town and Parish Councils identified a need for greater community access to school sports facilities or public leisure centres in their areas:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| • North area | Barlaston |
| • North east area | Fulford |

- Stafford Leisure Centre 420 sq m water a
- Alleyne's Leisure Centre 313 sq m water a
- Virgin Active, Stafford 250 sq m water a
- Total 983 sq m water a

13.50 Map 13.3 shows the location of the various swimming pools in and around the Borough and the tables below give the detailed output from the Model and Sport England's comments on it, set against a light grey tone.

Table 1 - Supply	England	West Midlands	Staffordshire	Stafford
Number of pools	3,063	303	44	4
Number of pool sites	2,176	222	35	3
Supply of total water space in sq m	679,150.1	66,812.8	10,153.4	1,082.5
Supply of publicly available water space in sq m (scaled with hours available in peak periods)	562,459.43	52,908.74	8,305.69	1,024.82
Supply of total water space in VPWPP	4,874,648	458,542	7,1983	8,882
Water space per 1000 (sq m)	12.79	12.12	12.09	8.44

Note: VPWPP = Visits per week in the peak periods

Supply

13.51 Stafford Borough has four swimming pools located on three sites (two pools, a main and learner pool, being located at the Stafford Leisure Centre site). Two pool sites are in Stafford one public sector Leisure Centre and a Virgin Active private sector facility, the third is at Alleyne's High School in Stone. The two facilities in Stafford are relatively new but the pool at Alleyne's was built in 1970 and is now over 40 years old.

13.52 Supply in terms of water space per 1,000 indicates that in simple terms the supply of water space is below the benchmarks provided by the national/regional and county figures by a significant amount.

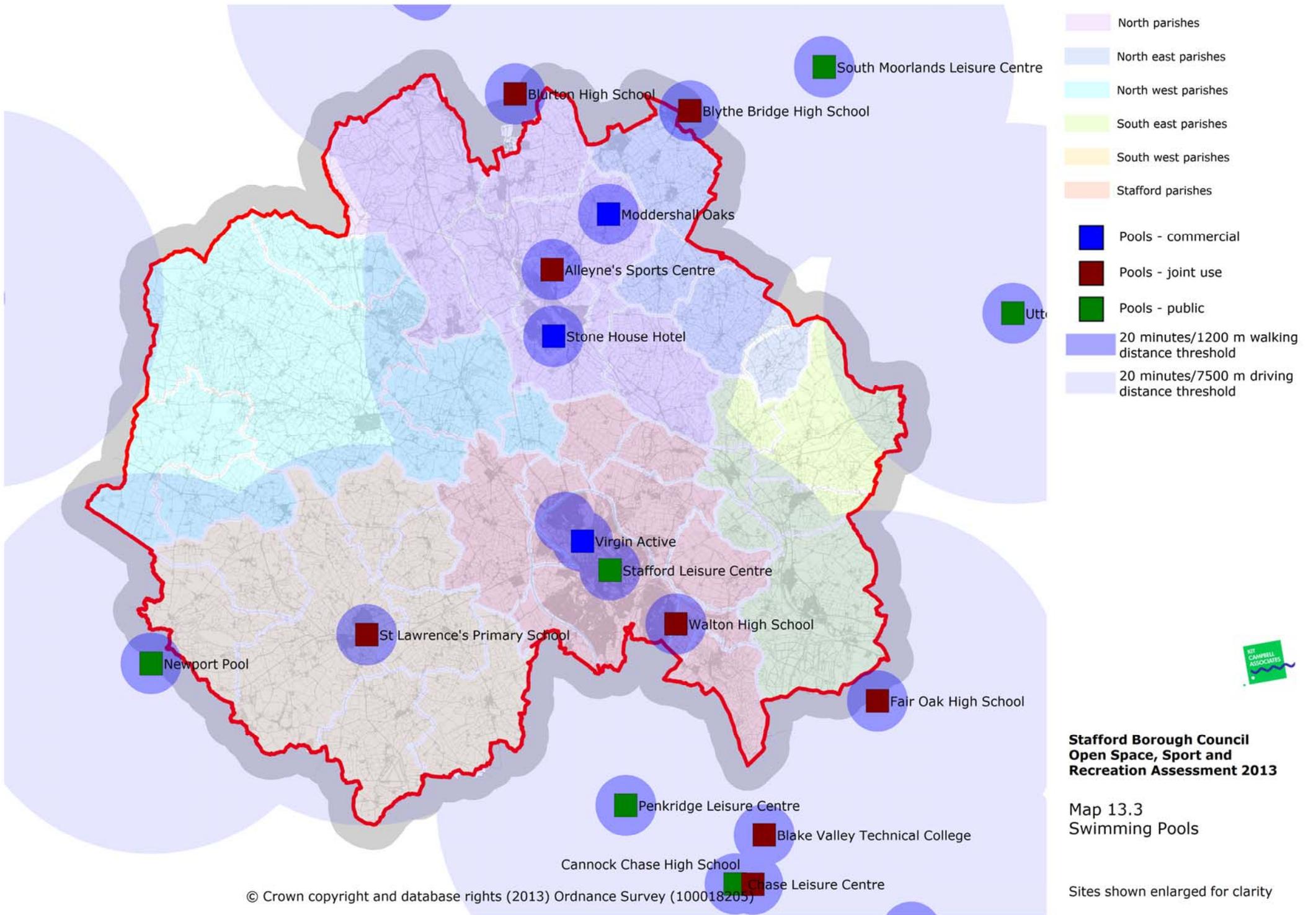


Table 2 - Demand	England	West Midlands	Staffordshire	Stafford
Population	53,095,986	5,514,800	840,000	128,300
Swims demanded – vpwpp	3,429,384	354,586	53,055	8,005
Equivalent in water space – with comfort factor included	565,283.14	58,448.17	8,745.27	1,319.54
% of population without access to a car	19.5	19.5	13.3	12.7

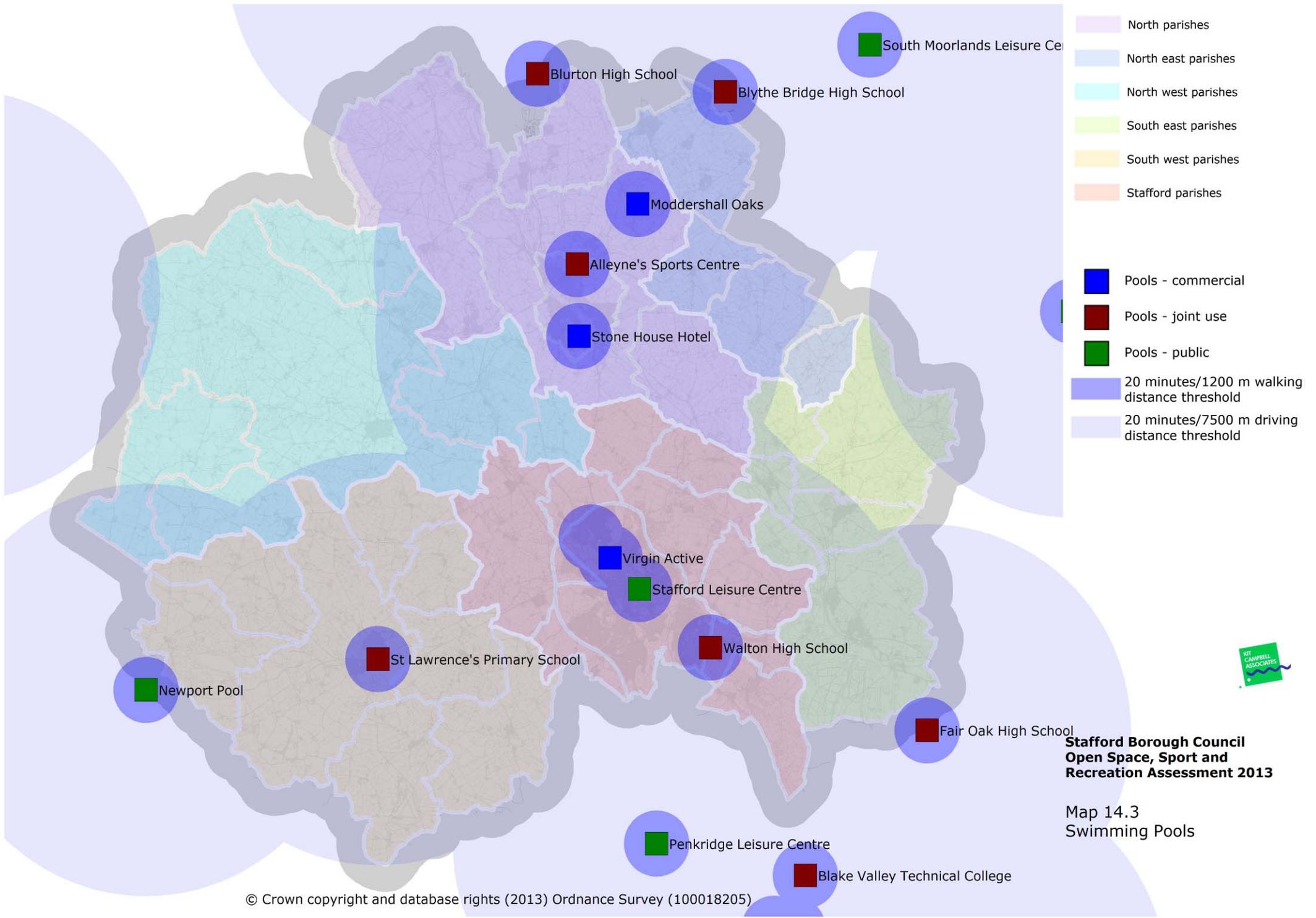
Demand

13.53 The population of Stafford demand some 8,000 swim visits per week in the peak period which is equivalent to a supply of around 1,320 sq m of water space (see Sports Hall comments re car ownership)

Table 3 – Supply/Demand Balance	England	West Midlands	Staffordshire County	Stafford
Demand - Swimming pool provision (sq m) taking into account a 'comfort' factor	565,283.14	58,448.17	8,745.27	1,319.54
Supply - Swimming pool provision (sq m) scaled to take account of hours available for community use	562,459.43	52,908.74	8,305.69	1,024.82
Supply/Demand balance - Variation in sq m of provision available compared to the minimum required to meet demand	-2,823.71	-5,539.43	-439.58	-294.72

Supply/Demand Balance

13.54 The supply/demand balance indicates a significant shortfall in water space equivalent to nearly 300 sq m (a 4 lane 25 x 10 m pool is equivalent to 250 sq m, therefore the shortfall appears to be larger than the Virgin Active pool in Stafford) - however note the limitations of this calculation as explained in the sports hall assessment.



- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes

- Pools - commercial
- Pools - joint use
- Pools - public
- 20 minutes/1200 m walking distance threshold
- 20 minutes/7500 m driving distance threshold



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 14.3
Swimming Pools

Table 4 Satisfied Demand	England	West Midlands	Staffordshire County	Stafford
Total number of visits which are met	3,105,056	320,281	48740	7164
% of total demand satisfied	90.5	90.3	91.9	89.5
% of demand satisfied who travelled by car	74	75.3	83.7	87.5
% of demand satisfied who travelled by foot	15.7	13.4	9.5	6.4
% of demand satisfied who travelled by public transport	10.3	11.3	6.7	6.1
Demand Retained	3,103,173	316,367	3,7403	5,837
As % of Satisfied Demand	99.9	98.8	76.7	81.5
Demand Exported	1882	3914	1,1337	1,327
As % of Satisfied Demand	0.1	1.2	23.3	18.5

Satisfied Demand

13.55 The amount of demand from Stafford residents which can be met by facilities within and around Stafford is 89.5% of all demand. This is below the national/regional/county benchmarks. Most of Stafford's demand is retained (81.5%) with around 18.5% being exported.

Table 5 Unmet Demand	England	West Midlands	Staffordshire County	Stafford
Total number of visits in the peak, not currently being met	324,329	34,305	4314	841
Unmet demand as a % of total demand	9.5	9.7	8.1	10.5
Equivalent in Water space sq m - with comfort factor	53,460.79	5,654.6	711.13	138.6
% of Unmet Demand due to:				
Lack of Capacity -	10.6	15.5	4.6	0.1
Outside Catchment -	89.4	84.5	95.4	99.9
Outside Catchment:	89.4	84.5	95.4	99.9
% Unmet demand who do not have access to a car	70.6	71.9	77	74.8
% of Unmet demand who have access to a car	18.7	12.6	18.3	25.1
Lack of Capacity;	10.6	15.5	4.6	0.1
% Unmet demand who do not have access to a car	8.4	13.7	2.9	0
% of Unmet demand who have access to a car	2.3	1.8	1.8	0.1

Unmet Demand

- 13.56 Unmet demand is correspondingly higher than the benchmarks but it is very noteworthy that almost all of the unmet demand is not due to lack of capacity but pools being inaccessible. As with sports halls this is primarily for those who do not have access to a car and have to walk to a pool but some 25% of unmet demand is as a result of lack of capacity.
- 13.57 The supply/demand balance above appeared to indicate a shortfall of some 300 sq m of water space but when you take account of facilities outside of the Borough which can and will meet some demand, the shortfall reduces to 140 sq m of water space. However, it is noteworthy that this level of unmet demand is based on a utilised capacity (see below) at the main Stafford Leisure Centre of 90% which is above the recommended threshold. Realistically unmet demand might therefore be higher than predicted as the model continues to allocate visits to a facility until it is 100% full.
- 13.58 The location of most of this unmet demand does show up as being primarily located to the south of Stafford (Highfields, Rising Brook and Rickerscote area). There is some unmet demand however also

located around Gnosall, Eccleshall and Stone but insufficient to merit additional provision.

Table 6 Used Capacity	England	West Midlands	Staffordshire County	Stafford
Total number of visits used of current capacity	3,105,945	321,564	46,462	6,693
% of overall capacity of pools used	63.7	70.1	64.5	75.4
% of visits made to pools by walkers	15.7	13.3	10.2	6.8
% of visits made to pools by road	84.3	86.7	89.8	93.2
Visits Imported				
Number of visits imported	2772	5,197	9,058	856
As a % of used capacity	0.1	1.6	19.5	12.8
Visits Retained				
Number of Visits retained	3,103,173	31,6367	37,403	5,837
As a % of used capacity	99.9	98.4	80.5	87.2

Used Capacity

13.59 The recommended threshold for utilised capacity for pools is around 70% to give enough space during peak times to swim whilst ensuring throughput maximises viability. On average the pools across Stafford are over 75% utilised and this is likely to reflect the shortfall in supply. A look at individual facilities shows some variation however with Alleyne's School operating at 72% used capacity (despite its age and restricted hours), Stafford Leisure Centre (the only public sector pay and play facility) operating at 90% used capacity (too busy and some visits likely to be turned away) and Virgin Active at 52% utilised capacity (a reflection of the cost/restricted member only membership).

13.60 In terms of Virgin Active the model predicts it is actually well utilised for a private sector facility. Nonetheless, Stafford Leisure Centre appears to be far too busy and therefore the unmet demand in the Stafford area is likely to be higher than identified above. The pool at Alleyne's is also very well used for such an old facility.

Conclusions

13.61 There is a shortfall of swimming pool space in Stafford Borough, likely to be higher than the level of unmet demand predicted (140 sq m) due to Stafford Leisure Centre operating above the recommended level of utilised capacity. Some unmet demand arises from lack of access as the

distribution of pools is limited to Stafford and Stone with some rural residents (and some urban) unable to walk to facilities due to distance. Some unmet demand is also due to lack of capacity and this is primarily located in the populated areas of south Stafford.

- 13.62 It is recommended that the quality of the pool at Alleyne's is maintained (or the facility replaced) as this is key to access in this area and consideration given to additional provision in the south of Stafford. This shortfall will become more acute if further population/participation growth is planned. Growth can be modelled using the Facility Planning Model should this be considered appropriate.

Comments on the FPM Analysis

- 13.63 This analysis is obviously useful but does not necessarily reflect reality:

- It excludes the learner pool at the Stafford Leisure Centre. This increases the water area by 100 sq m or almost 25% and therefore increases its capacity to accommodate demand. Therefore either the pool is not as busy as the FPM estimates or it is able to accommodate additional demand.
- The Borough has nine pools in total, not only the four included in the FPM analysis, and all have some degree of public access. Therefore the FPM understates supply capacity and overstates the deficiency in provision. This is most significant in Gnosall, where the pool at the St Lawrence Primary School, while small, is well used by the local community.

- 13.64 Once again, the higher population of the Borough in the 2011 census makes only a very minor difference to the overall conclusions of the Model run.

- 13.65 When the proposed Strategic Development Locations are built out the resulting increase in population will also increase the demand for pools. Sport England's Sports Facilities Calculator suggests that the demand generated in each of them is likely to require the following provision:

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| • East of Stafford | 16.5 sq m water |
| • North of Stafford | 87.8 sq m water |
| • West of Stafford | 62.0 sq m water |
| • West of Stone | 14.5 sq m water |
| • Total | 180.8 sq m water |

- 13.66 Adding this additional provision to the 140 sq m deficiency in water area determined by the FPM analysis suggests that the Borough will need another pool with a water area of around 320 sq m ie 25 metres by 6 lanes.

Trends

- 13.67 Swimming has declined in popularity over the past few years. Sport England's Active People survey has identified a decline from 2005-6 to 2011-12 of approximately 15% in the number of adults going swimming at least once a week for not less than 30 minutes.

Quantity Standard

- 13.68 The Sport England Facilities Planning Model estimate of the demand for pools is equivalent to 10.3 sq m of water area per 1,000 residents. As the total floor area of 25 m pools is generally around 4 times the water area, this gives an overall quantity standard of around 41.2 sq m of pool building per thousand residents or 0.04 sq m of pool building per person.

Conclusions

- 13.69 There will be a need for more water area in the Borough as the population increases with the greatest need in Stafford town. There are two obvious potential locations: any new secondary school in a Strategic Development Location and Walton High School, which has a small outmoded pool and spare land that could be used for a joint use leisure centre with both "wet" and "dry" facilities. Its other physical education facilities are also extremely poor so a development of this kind will benefit both the school and the local community, including new residents in the East of Stafford Strategic Development Location. A new pool in this location will also be in the southern part of the town as suggested by Sport England.

- 13.70 The pool at Alleyne's School in Stone is doing a valuable job in terms of providing opportunities for local residents to swim, but appears to be underperforming in relation to its potential market.

Indoor Tennis Halls

- 13.71 Sport England's Active People survey has found that the number of adults playing tennis for at least 30 minutes once a week declined by approximately 8% from 2005-6 to 2011-12.

- 13.72 There is no guidance available on the percentage of

regular players who play indoors and in addition it appears that the development of indoor centres generally attracts new players to the game. Overall, therefore, it appears as though there could be a significant market for indoor tennis in the Borough. For obvious reasons, the capacity of indoor tennis courts is fairly low. As the maximum normal usage is four players per court (although more juniors can be accommodated on a court for coaching) and bookings last for at least an hour, a four court centre operating on the basis of 35 peak hours per week can accommodate a maximum of only 560 players per week. This is likely to be the equivalent of at least a quarter of players in the Borough.

Existing Provision

- 13.73 There are two sites with indoor courts in the Borough: St Dominic's Priory School in Stone and the Stafford Sports College. St Dominic's has two indoor courts. It built them about 25 years ago with the help of some funding from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and they were at one time used by the Staffordshire County squad for training and practice. However, the LTA no longer runs County squads and the agreement between the school and LTA has expired.
- 13.74 The courts have a fairly low profile as they have been squeezed in at the back of the site, half hidden by a school hall. Use is also fairly limited. The school generally lets them out in 90-minute per week slots to groups for 27 weeks at a time, so there is no real casual use and a fairly small band of users play regularly.
- 13.75 Stafford Sports College has three indoor courts which have been built since the 2008-09 assessment. They are well used and there is a comprehensive coaching programme in place, plus a tennis academy. However, pay and play use is limited to between 0900 and 1500 on weekdays, 1600-1900 on Fridays and 1300-1600 on Sundays. Therefore pay and play use for those who work during the day is very restricted and there must be unmet demand. The manager of the centre wishes he had more courts but the site is not large enough to accommodate them without the loss of outdoor courts.
- 13.76 The nearest alternative indoor courts outside the Borough are at the Draycott Sports Centre, with two indoor courts 11 miles from Stafford town and 6

miles from Stone. The next nearest courts are in Wolverhampton.

Aspirations

13.77 The Stone Lawn Tennis and Squash Club has aspirations to cover two or three of its six outdoor courts. However, the club probably has more pressing needs in terms of keeping its existing clubhouse in a reasonable condition. Nonetheless this appears to be a sensible project which could attract a high level of use.

Quantity Standard

13.78 Assuming that six indoor courts are desirable, this gives a quantity standard of one court to roughly 20,000 people. A court takes up an area of 666 sq m (36.5 x 8.25 m), and therefore the quantity standard should be 0.033 sq m of court per person. Indoor tennis centres require relatively little by way of ancillary accommodation; in a typical four court centre, the ancillary areas account for around 20% of the total floor area. Accordingly a sensible quantity standard is 0.04 sq m of indoor centre per person.

Summary of Quantity Standards

13.79 Health and Fitness Facilities

- No standards required

Ice rinks

- No standards required

Indoor bowls halls

- No standards required

Indoor sports halls

- Quantity: 0.09 sq m of dry sports building per person

Indoor swimming pools

- Quantity: 0.04 sq m of pool building per person

Indoor tennis halls

- Quantity: 0.04 sq m per person

14: Multi-Courts

Introduction

14.1 This chapter reviews the provision of multi-courts (also known inelegantly as MUGAs, or multi-use games areas) across the Borough. It covers quality, accessibility and quantity and also derives and then applies a quantity standard to identify deficiencies and surpluses in provision.

Definitions

14.2 Multi-courts take two forms:

- Courts at least the size of a tennis court (roughly 36.5 x 18.25 m) and therefore complying with standard court sizes for sports such as 5-a-side football, basketball and netball
- Courts smaller than a tennis court and intended primarily for informal use by teenagers. For the purposes of this assessment we have classed courts of this type as “ball courts” and considered them to be teenage facilities. As a result they are discussed in Chapter 16

14.3 Multi-courts should have some form of all-weather surface marked for sports such as tennis, basketball, netball and possibly other sports as well. They can have a number of different playing surfaces, although the most common is probably bitmac or tarmac. Such courts are unpleasant to play on in hot weather, however. The surface also causes considerable wear and tear on balls and players’ shoes. Other surfaces include poured polymeric finishes and artificial turf. Multi-courts can be open access and therefore intended for use primarily by teenagers on an informal basis, or controlled and intended for use for sport by people of all ages. The latter approach tends to result in lower levels of vandalism and litter.

The Current Quantity of Provision

14.4 The Borough has 52 multi-courts on 21 sites. Appendix e9 gives full details of them while the table below provides summary information:

	Non floodlit courts	Floodlit courts	Total courts
North	6	0	6
North east	0	0	0
North west	0	0	0
South east	2	0	2
South west	2	0	2
Stafford	38	4	42
Borough	48	4	52

14.5 The north and Stafford areas of the Borough therefore have by far the highest overall levels of provision of multi-courts.

14.6 The ownership of the various courts is:

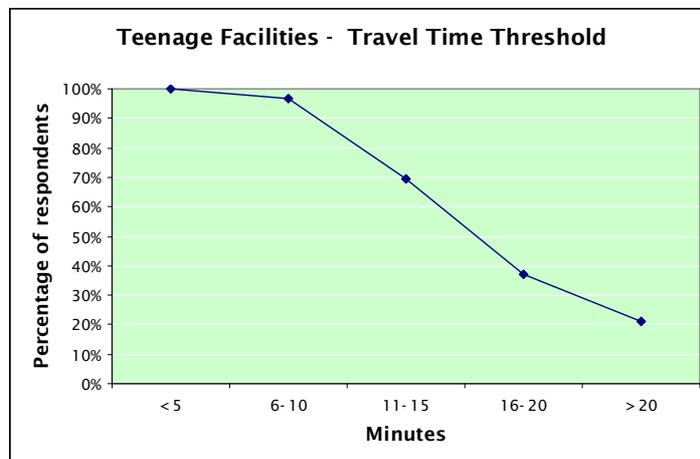
Clubs	0
Commercial	0
MoD	2
School	40
Stafford BC	4
Town/Parish Council	2
University	2
Other	1
Totals	51

14.7 It follows that some of the courts are not publicly available or access is restricted. Taking a joint use school court as equivalent to half of a public or club court, the overall level of provision of “public equivalent” courts is:

	Non floodlit courts	Floodlit courts	Total courts
North	2	0	2
North east	0	0	0
North west	0	0	0
South east	2	0	2
South west	0	0	0
Stafford	15	3	18
Borough	19	3	22

14.8 Therefore the vast majority of multi-courts are concentrated in and around Stafford town. There are no courts at all in the north west and north east areas and the only floodlit courts are in Stafford town.

percentage of people willing to walk for various times to teenage facilities. It makes clear that a sensible accessibility standard is around 15 minutes as around 75% of respondents indicated that they were willing to walk for this length of time to use a court.

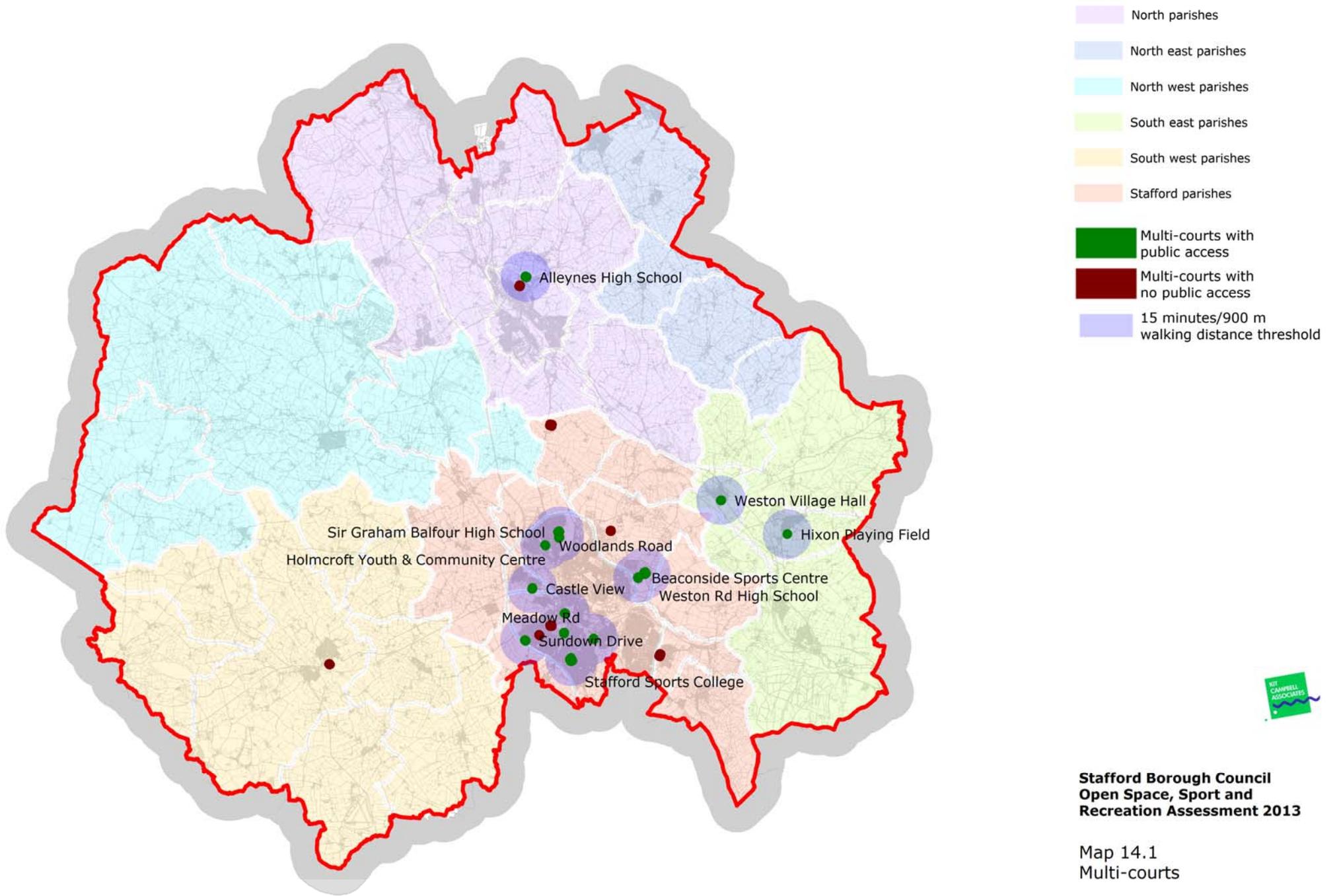


14.13 Map 14.1 below show the location of the various publicly accessible multi-courts across the Borough plus 15 minutes 900 m walking distance threshold.

14.14 Because multi-courts can be used for a range of sports, it is obviously desirable that as many people as possible should have ready access to at least one. Accordingly there is a need for more multi-courts across the Borough, with the most obvious locations for additional courts being:

- Colwich
- Eccleshall
- Meir Heath
- Yarnfield (already planned)

14.15 In addition there are obvious opportunities to create additional multi-courts at the Westbridge Sports Centre in Stone and Rowley Park in Stafford town and possibly Great Bridgford and Church Eaton. In all of these locations there are hard tennis courts that could be converted to multi-courts fairly easily. The addition of floodlights at Alleyne's High School in Stone and Church Eaton Tennis Club will also benefit tennis and increase the availability of floodlit facilities across the Borough.



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 14.1
Multi-courts

Local Views

Borough Councillors' Views

14.16 In our 2008-9 survey of Council Members, they identified a need for more courts in the following wards:

North	Barlaston and Oulton Walton and Stone
North west	Eccleshall
South east	Haywood and Hixon
Stafford	Coton Forebridge Highfields and Western Downs Holmcroft Tillington

Survey of Town and Parish Councils

14.17 The following town and parish councils identified a need for more courts in 2008-9:

North	Barlaston Stone
North east	Fulford
North west	High Offley and Woodseaves Standon Whitgreave
Stafford	Berkswich Brocton Hopton and Coton
South west	Church Eaton Haughton Norbury

14.18 Because of the limited populations in the rural parishes, it will be sensible for some parish councils to work together – and with their local communities - to develop new multi-courts where there is clear local demand. The parishes that this might apply to are:

- Barlaston and Fulford
- Berkswich, Brocton and Hopton and Coton
- Church Eaton and Haughton

Trends

14.19 There are no obvious trends in the demand for multi-courts in general. Across the country, some are well used while others lie idle and neglected most of the time. As with tennis courts, the better facilities appear to be the best used (and vice versa) although floodlighting is obviously very important in terms of winter use. However, one of the results of climate change is that grass pitches are likely to be less playable for at least part of the year. Appropriately surfaced multi-courts can provide a valuable substitute to allow to teams at least to continue training and practising even when pitches are unplayable.

14.20 By and large, most multi-courts are open access. However, they can also be popular local sports facilities if well managed. Having several courts together makes it possible to develop netball or football leagues and play tennis matches. There are also several companies that develop and manage commercial 5-a-side soccer centres based on courts surfaced with artificial turf.

Quantity Standard

14.21 There is no consistent or clear evidence on the demand for multi-courts in the rural areas of the Borough; some are well used and others less so. A pragmatic approach will therefore be to ensure that there is at least one court in each of the key service villages. Those without at least one court are:

- Great Haywood
- Haughton
- Hixon
- Little Haywood/Colwich
- Tittensor
- Woodseaves
- Yarnfield (already planned)

14.22 This suggests at least 8 new multi-courts in addition to those that currently exist, giving a total of 59, or one court to approximately 2,000 residents. As a court should be a minimum of 36.5 x 18.25 m, so as to be usable for tennis, this gives a quantity standard of **0.3 sq m per person**.

14.23 Whenever the Borough Council, or one of the Town or Parish Councils, provides one or more courts to reduce these deficits, they should be multi-purpose and floodlit in order to maximise use. Wherever possible, they should also be on or close to school sites so as to be available for physical education classes.

Conclusions

14.24 The Council should:

- Encourage parish councils to work together, where appropriate, to identify the need for and where appropriate develop additional multi-courts.
- Encourage tennis clubs and parish councils (a) to provide floodlighting for existing tennis and multi-courts, where acceptable in planning terms, and (b) to convert existing under-used tennis courts into multi-courts

15: Tennis Courts

Introduction

15.1 This chapter reviews the provision of tennis courts across the Borough. It covers quality, accessibility and quantity and also derives and then applies a quantity standard to identify deficiencies and surpluses in provision.

The Current Quantity of Provision

15.2 The Borough has 46 tennis courts on 16 sites. Appendix E12 gives full details of them while the table below provides summary information:

	Non floodlit courts	Floodlit courts	Total courts
North	7	7	14
North east	0	0	0
North west	1	2	3
South east	0	0	0
South west	2	0	2
Stafford	8	16	24
Borough	18	25	43

15.3 The north and Stafford areas of the Borough therefore have by far the highest overall levels of provision of courts. There are also two derelict courts at the Stone House Hotel which have not been used for some years and are not included in the totals above.

15.4 The ownership of the various courts is:

Clubs	17
Commercial	1
MoD	0
School	13
Stafford BC	12
Totals	43

15.5 Some of the courts are not publicly available or access to them is restricted. Taking a joint use school court as equivalent to half of a public or club court, the overall level of provision of “public

equivalent" courts is:

	Non floodlit courts	Floodlit courts	Total courts
North	8	7	15
North east	0	0	0
North west	1	2	3
South east	0	0	0
South west	2	0	2
Stafford	7	11	18
Borough	18	20	38

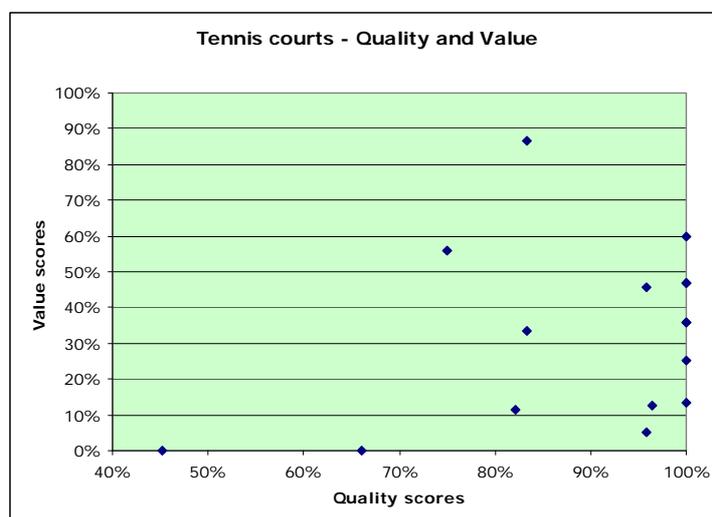
The Current Quality of Provision

15.6 Accordingly only slightly over half of all the courts are floodlit, thereby minimising the potential use in winter.

15.7 Across the Borough we have audited each of the tennis sites. The characteristics that we audited included:

- **Quality:** access, signage, the size and condition of the playing surface, surround netting and fencing and the availability and adequacy of changing provision
- **Value:** the number of courts on the site, the nature of their playing surface and the availability of floodlighting and changing

15.8 The charts below summarise the various quality and value audit scores:



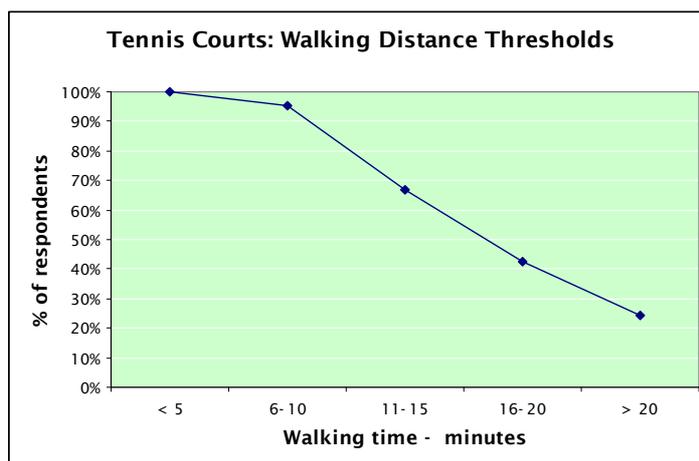
15.9 The quality scores are generally fairly good but a number of courts are of low value in terms of community tennis. This arises mainly where courts are on school sites and there is only limited community access. If there is no community access

the value score for community tennis is 0%. The other main reasons for poor scores – and therefore the things that require attention - are:

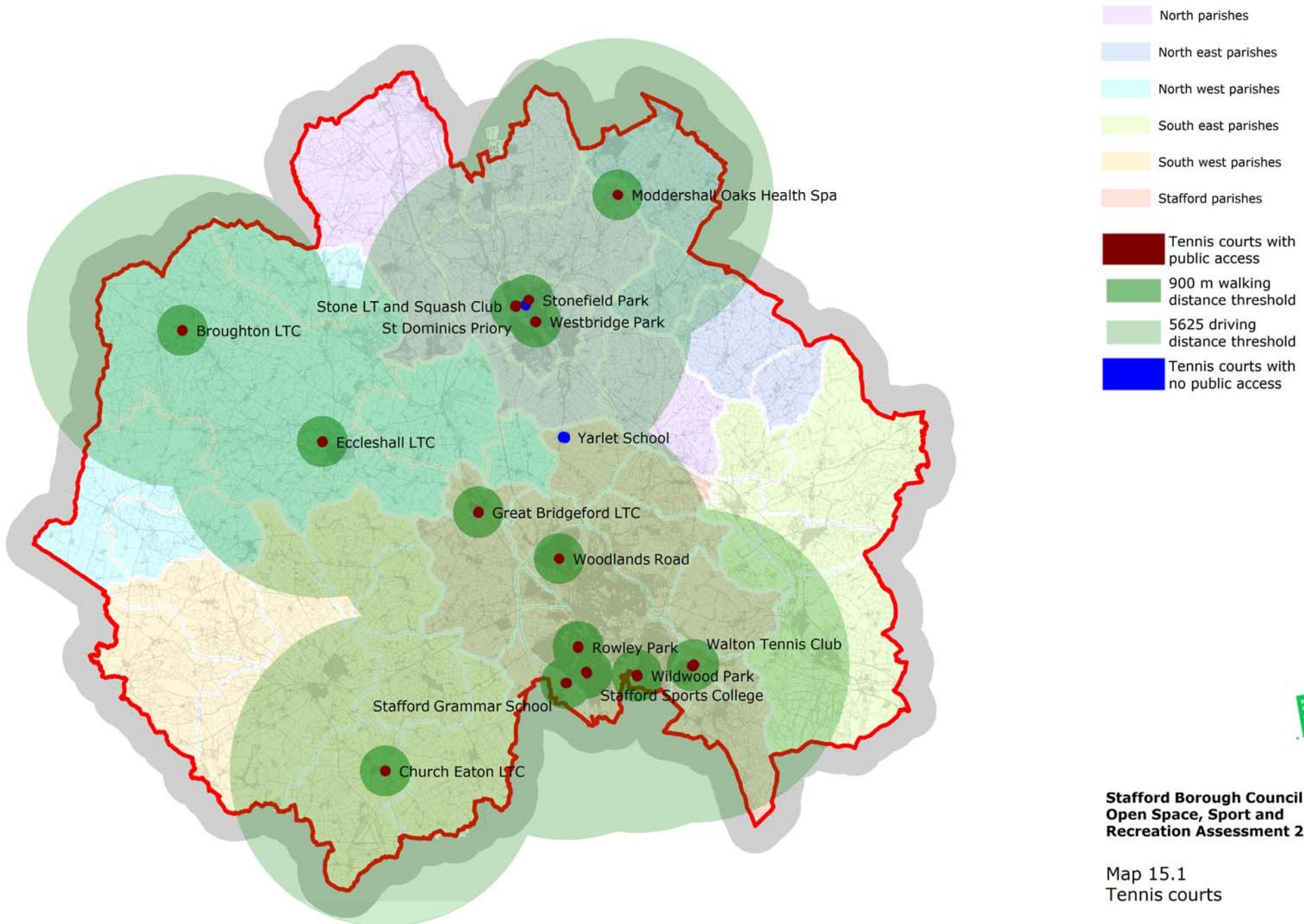
- **Quality:** condition of surround netting and entrance gates, line markings
- **Value:** playing surfaces that are not particularly good to play on (especially tarmac/bitmac) or not all-weather (eg grass), limited number of courts on a site (three courts are needed for matches but many sites have only one or two), lack of changing

The Accessibility of Provision **Accessibility Standard**

15.10 The chart below, based on the results of the results of the 2008 residents survey, identifies the percentage of people willing to walk for various times to tennis courts. The sensible accessibility standard is about 15 minutes as around 75% of respondents indicated that they were willing to walk for this length of time to use a court.



15.11 Maps 15.1 below shows the location of the various publicly accessible tennis courts across the Borough plus 15 minute walking and driving distance thresholds of 900 m and 5,625 m respectively. A number of tennis players are likely to drive to a club.



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 15.1
Tennis courts

15.12 From this map it is clear that most of the Borough's residents live within the driving distance threshold of at least one tennis court, but only a relatively small proportion within walking distance of one. The main settlements without easy access to a court are Barlaston, Colwich and Hixon. In addition, significant parts of Stafford town and Stone lie outwith the walking distance threshold of a court.

Local Views

Borough Councillors' Views

15.13 In our 2008-9 survey of Council Members, they identified a need for more courts in the following wards:

North	Barlaston and Oulton Walton and Stone
North west	Eccleshall
South east	Haywood and Hixon
Stafford	Coton Forebridge Highfields and Western Downs Holmcroft Tillington

Residents' Survey

15.14 56% of those residents that expressed an opinion identified a need for more public tennis courts and 47% a need for more club courts. In terms of quality, 63% and 66% rated public and club tennis courts as either good or very good.

Survey of Town and Parish Councils

15.15 The following town and parish councils identified a need for more courts in 2008-9:

North	Barlaston Sandon
North east	Fulford
North west	Standon
Stafford	Colwich
South west	Haughton Norbury

15.16 Because of the limited populations in many of the rural parishes, it will be sensible for some parish councils to work together – and with their local communities - to develop new tennis (or multi-court) provision where there is clear local demand. The parishes that this might apply to are:

- Barlaston and Fulford
- Berkswich, Brocton and Hopton and Coton
- Church Eaton and Haughton

Trends

15.17 With milder winters, the number of people playing tennis outdoors all year round is slowly rising, but this obviously depends to a large extent on floodlit courts.

15.18 The other obvious trend is that better courts – and especially the development of good quality indoor courts - tend to result in more players. As a result, it makes sense to concentrate tennis provision at a limited number of high quality venues, each with a number of courts. This facilitates coaching and junior development programmes and enhances the viability of clubs and other centres.

15.19 The main centres for tennis in the Borough are currently:

- Eccleshall Lawn Tennis Club (2 floodlit courts)
- Great Bridgford Lawn Tennis Club (2 floodlit courts)
- Rowley Park, Stafford (4 courts)
- Stafford Sports College (four indoor courts and six floodlit outdoor ones, although one is also marked for netball and so is really more of a multi-court)
- Stone Lawn Tennis and Squash Rackets Club (6 floodlit courts)
- Walton Tennis Club (5 courts, 4 of them floodlit)

Quantity Standard

15.20 Tennis is one of only five sports for which Sport England's Active People survey found that participation increased between October 2010--2011 and October 2011-2012. However, this followed a decline of just over 25% from October 2007-8 to October 2010-11 and took the total number of adult participants across England to some 12,000 **fewer** than in 2005-6. Tennis is also one of the sports funded by Sport England to tackle a drop off in participation amongst 16-18 year olds.

15.21 Sport England's Market Segmentation Tool estimates that approximately 2,100 Borough Council adult residents currently play tennis and about an

additional 2,400 would either like to do so or would like to play more. Both of these estimates seem unrealistically high, not least because in 2007 the total membership (ie adults plus juniors) of tennis clubs in the Borough – with 17 of the 43 available outdoor courts, and likely to be more popular than public or school courts - was a little under 650, with two thirds of them in the Stone and Walton Clubs. Given that the number of adult and junior players in most tennis clubs is either about equal or biased in favour of juniors, it seems unlikely that there were much more than about 300 adult members. On the other hand, the indoor courts at Stafford Sports College are well used, although pay and play community access and therefore the total weekly throughput is quite low.

- 15.22 The popularity of the Stone and Walton Clubs, and the Stafford Sports College indoor courts, suggests that there is latent demand for tennis which can be converted into participation if good quality facilities are available. However, of the sixteen outdoor tennis sites, only six are of high quality and value.
- 15.23 Given the proposed growth of Stafford, and the location of the Walton Club on the eastern edge of the town, it may be desirable to investigate the potential demand for a tennis club in the North of Stafford development. The population of the development is likely to be approximately 8,500 and this is more than sufficient to support a viable club. The Stone Lawn Tennis and Squash Club, for example has nine courts and something like 200 members. The population living within the 5,625 m driving threshold of the club is approximately 30,000 so there is one court to about 3,300 residents. This suggests that a new club to serve the North of Stafford Strategic Development Location should have three courts. As it is likely also to attract some additional members from nearby areas it will be sensible to plan on the basis of at least four courts and a clubhouse plus possible room for expansion.
- 15.24 The Lawn Tennis Association has a guideline for clubs of up to 40 members per non-floodlit court and 60 members per floodlit one. With more members that this per court members will find it difficult to play as much as they might wish. On this basis the Stone Club has spare capacity and therefore there should be no need for it to expand as a result of the strategic development to the west of the town.

- 15.25 In the rural parishes, however, any unmet demand there may be for tennis will best be met by the provision of more multi-courts. Chapter 14 above suggests where it will be desirable to develop additional multi-courts.
- 15.26 The current level of tennis provision ranges from one court to just under 2,900 people in the northern area to one court to 8,500 people in the south west area. In Stafford and Stone it is one court to just over 4,000 and under 1,200 respectively. Across the Borough as a whole there is one court to approximately 4,300 people, or the equivalent of 0.16 sq m per person.
- 15.27 However, the Council should not use this quantity standard on its own, but instead combine it with the quantity standard for multi-courts of 0.3 sq m per person to create a rounded composite standard of **0.45 sq m per person** for both tennis and multi-courts.

Conclusions

- 15.28 The Council should therefore:
- Encourage parish councils to work together, where appropriate, to identify the need for and where appropriate develop additional tennis or multi-courts. In rural parishes, these two facilities should be combined, which means that courts should normally be 36.5 x 18.25 m or larger. In addition, wherever possible, they should be managed by a local club so as to maximise use and minimise revenue costs to the parish councils.
 - Encourage tennis clubs and parish councils (a) to provide floodlighting for existing tennis and multi-courts, where acceptable in planning terms, and (b) to convert existing under-used tennis courts into multi-courts

16: Teenage Facilities

Introduction

16.1 This chapter reviews the provision of teenage facilities across the Borough, defined as areas intended primarily for informal use by teenagers and containing one or more of the following: a shelter, a skateboard area, a BMX track, basketball hoops, an open access ball court, ball rebound wall or an aerial runway. Good teenage provision is desirable in its own right, but it can also help to reduce anti-social behaviour and the social and economic costs of vandalism.

The Amount of Provision

16.2 The 24 teenage sites across the Borough appear to have an aggregate area of around 17,861 sq m, or just less than 1.8 ha, although it is not possible to identify the area of teenage provision definitively because many are not enclosed in any way. This equates to an average of 0.15 sq m per person and the average size of a single teenage area is around 750 sq m. The table below summarises the quantity of provision in the Borough:

Area	Sites	Area (sq m)	People per site
North	2	955	11,245
North east	0	0	N/a
North west	1	99	/Na
South east	2	421	7,584
South west	2	1,287	4,066
Stafford	17	15,099	4,877
Borough	24	120,653	6,350

16.3 Overall, there has been a significant increase in teenage provision in the few years since the 2009 assessment, with one site lost – the poor quality ball wall in Wildwood Park – and seven new sites created:

- Abberley Grove, Stafford: ball wall
- Castle View, Doxey: BMX track and multi-court
- Cotes Heath: ball wall
- Brazenhill Lane (Jim Jarvis Playing Field),

Haughton: skateramp, basketball goal and aerial runway

- Meadow Road, Stafford
- Sundown Drive, Stafford: BMX track, skate ramp and aerial runway
- Victoria Park, Stafford: major skateboard area and play equipment

Planned Provision

16.4 The Council has approved proposals for three changes to teenage provision:

- An extension with wheeled sports provision and an outdoor gym to the Meadow Road teenage area in Stafford
- A multi-court on the car park area adjacent to the Victoria Park teenage area, also in Stafford. This facility should be popular with students from the nearby Stafford College.
- A facility on the former BT training centre site in Yarnfield to include wheeled sports, play provision for children of all ages and a multi-court

Audit Findings

16.5 The 24 sites provide the following facilities:

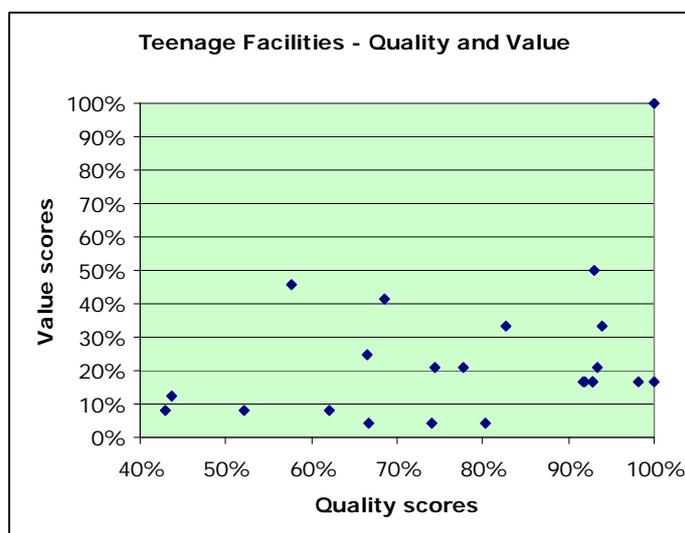
- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| • Ball courts (floodlit) | 2 |
| • Ball courts (not floodlit) | 10 |
| • Ball walls | 7 |
| • Basketball goals | 14 |
| • BMX tracks | 5 |
| • Shelters | 4 |
| • Skateboard areas | 4 |
| • Aerial runways | 3 |
| • Other | 3 |
| • Total | 56 |



Victoria Park Skateboard area, Stafford

16.6 On average, therefore, each teenage area has around 2.3 facilities. It follows that teenage provision is generally fairly limited. The best site, by far, is Victoria Park in Stafford. It is very popular and should set the standard for any future major teenage facilities in other areas of the Borough.

16.7 The average quality and value scores across the Borough were 79% and 20% respectively, and the chart below gives the individual quality and value scores:



16.8 We based the quality and value scores on:

- **Quality:** general characteristics (eg the distance

to the nearest dwelling window, signage); accessibility (eg for people with disabilities); safety and security (eg the condition of surfaces, the availability of informal surveillance and lighting); the condition of the various facilities on the site; and management and maintenance (eg freedom from litter and vandalism)

- **Value:** the type and range of facilities on the site

16.9 Most of the teenage facilities are very limited and we classed only four of the 24 as high quality and value on the basis of the audit scores.

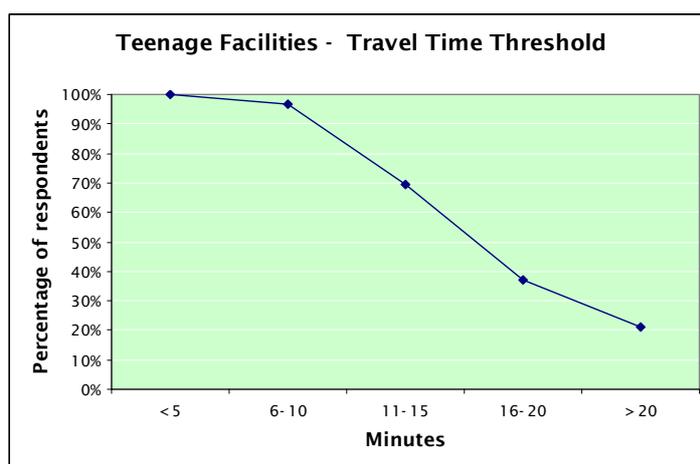
16.10 The main improvements required to sites include:

- More and better equipment
- Lighting
- Better safety features
- Better accessibility, including for young people with disabilities
- Better signage
- Better maintenance
- Better ancillary facilities, such as seats and bicycle racks

Accessibility

Accessibility Standard

16.11 The chart below, based on the results of the 2008-9 residents' survey, identifies the percentage of people willing to walk for various times to teenage facilities. The sensible accessibility standard will be about 15 minutes as around 75% of respondents indicated that they were willing to walk for this length of time to suitable provision.



16.12 Many teenagers have bicycles and so the main distance threshold should relate to cycling. 15

minutes cycling equates to about 2,250 m. For walking, 15 minutes equates to about 900 m.

Accessibility Assessment

16.13 The proportions of properties within the distance thresholds vary considerably across the Borough. In relation to the walking threshold, they are:

		Walking	Cycling
North	All	38%	77%
	HQHV	0%	0%
North east	All	0%	0%
	HQHV	0%	0%
North west	All	4%	12%
	HQHV	0%	0%
South east	All	20%	78%
	HQHV	0%	0%
South west	All	56%	64%
	HQHV	0%	0%
Stafford	All	74%	92%
	HQHV	31%	85%
Borough	All	54%	76%
	HQHV	17%	47%

Note: HQHV = High Quality, High Value

16.14 Maps 16.1 (the whole Borough) and 16.2 (the Stafford town area) show the location of teenage facilities and highlight:

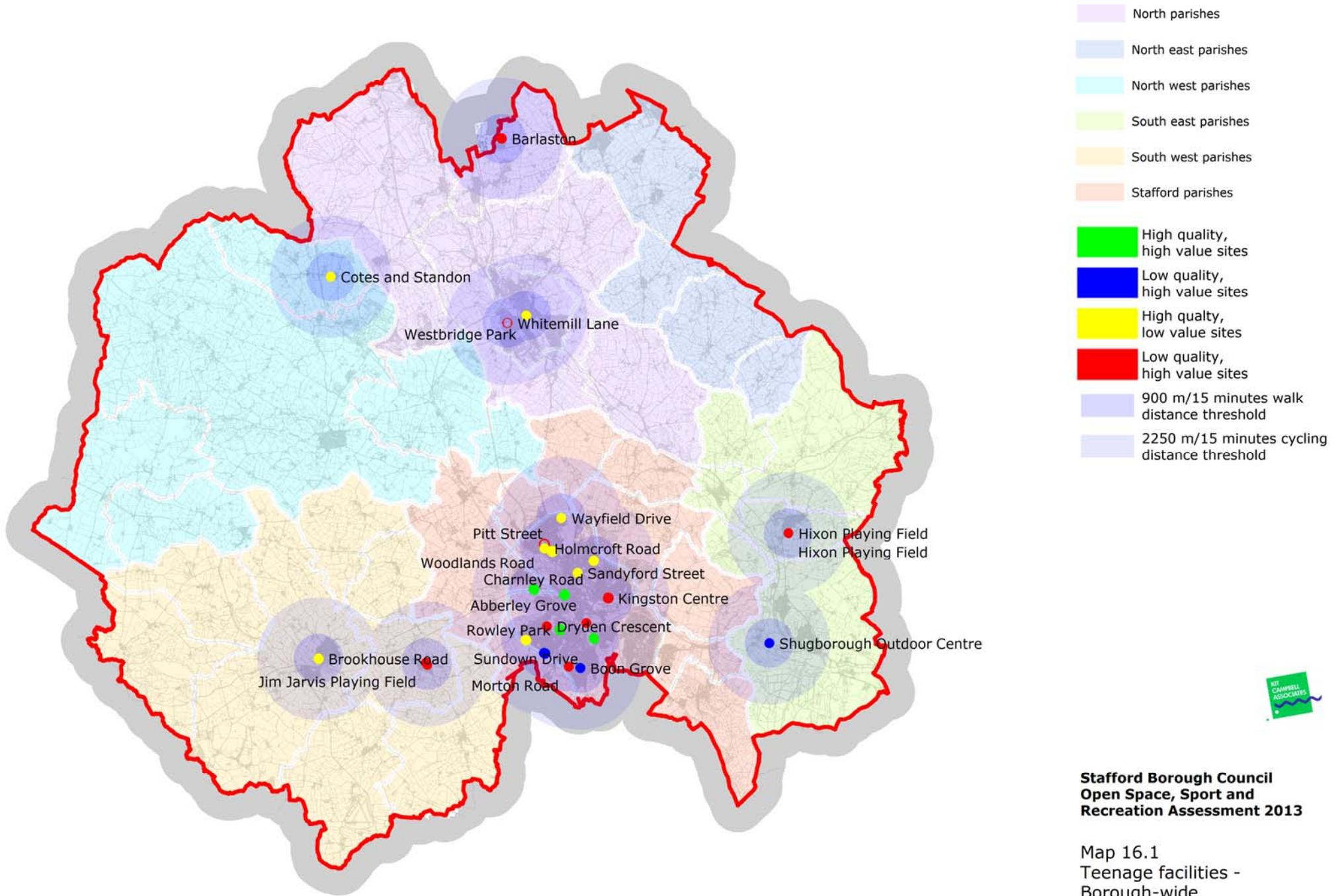
- The paucity of facilities in the north east and north west areas
- The poor quality and value of the provision in Stone and Hixon
- The poor quality and/or value of the provision in the northern part of Stafford town, compared with the southern area

Quality Value and Accessibility

16.15 The greatest need for more teenage provision is in the north eastern and north western planning areas, while it will also be desirable to create additional “destination” facilities, on the lines of Victoria Park, in the proposed new Strategic Development Locations.

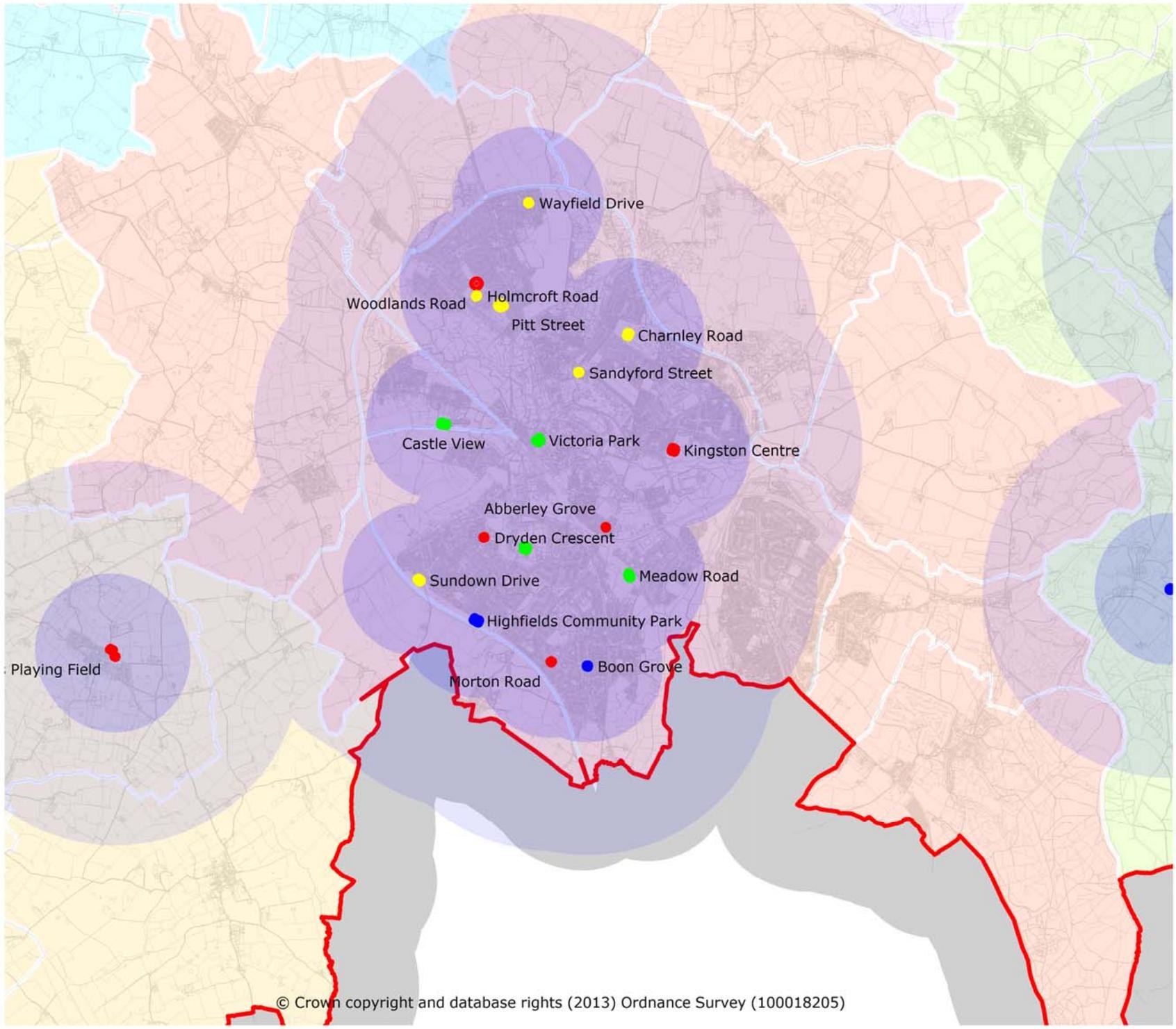
Quality Standard

16.16 Appendix A contains a proposed quality standard for local teenage facilities based on a facility with a notional area of around 500 sq m, ie around three quarters the size of a tennis court. This is large enough to accommodate one or two basketball hoops or a skateboard area and a shelter. Destination teenage areas should be both larger and have a wider range of facilities.



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 16.1
Teenage facilities -
Borough-wide



- North parishes
- North east parishes
- North west parishes
- South east parishes
- South west parishes
- Stafford parishes

- High quality, high value sites
- Low quality, high value sites
- High quality, low value sites
- Low quality, high value sites
- 900 m/15 minutes walk distance threshold
- 2250 m/15 minutes cycling distance threshold



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 16.2
Teenage facilities -
Stafford Town

Sites shown enlarged for clarity

Local Views

Residents' Survey

- 16.17 89% of those respondents expressing a view identified a need for more teenage facilities in their neighbourhood while 76% classed the quality of provision as poor or very poor. Both of these were the highest percentages of respondents to identify a need for more or better for any form of provision – something that also occurs in other areas of the country. There is a widely-held view that better teenage provision is likely to result in less anti-social behaviour and especially vandalism.

Survey of Town and Parish Councils

- 16.18 Of the 22 town and parish councils that responded to the 2009 survey, all but five - Gnosall, Ingestre with Tixall, Milwich with Fradswell, Sandon and Burston, Stone Rural - identified a need for more teenage facilities in their area. Amongst the eight parishes that responded to the 2013 survey, Brocton, Eccleshall, Fulford, Haughton and Ranton identified a need for more teenage provision, while Brocton, Creswell and Ranton identified the quality of provision in their areas as poor.

Trends

- 16.19 There are no specific trends in relation to teenage activities, although teenagers are very fickle and interest in any particular form of activity can rise and fall rapidly. However, the experience from the recent provision of teenage areas in the Borough suggest a need for two types of teenage provision:
- "Destination" facilities, similar to the excellent facility in Victoria Park. However, the number of such facilities will inevitably be limited because of their cost
 - "Local" facilities, consisting of a BMX track and a skateboard facility and shelter, broadly similar to the Highfields Community Park in Stafford (also known as Larkin Close)

Quantity Standard

Destination Facilities

- 16.20 The destination teenage area in Victoria Park has an area of approximately 1,500 sq m but this will increase to around 2,250 sq m when the proposed multi-court is added.
- 16.21 The desirable network of "destination" teenage facilities is:

In Stafford town:

- Meadow Road
- Rowley Park
- Victoria Park (existing, although the Council wishes to add a multi-court)
- Wildwood Park, where the Council is already committed to a £225,000 investment in youth and play facilities
- The East of Stafford Strategic Development Location
- The North of Stafford Strategic Development Location
- The West of Stafford Strategic Development Location

In other parts of the Borough:

- Barlaston
- Westbridge Park, Stone

16.22 Using Stafford town as a guide, seven destination teenage areas each with an area of about 2,250 sq m will have a total area of some 1,570 sq m. As the future population of Stafford is likely to be approximately 72,000, gives a quantity standard of 0.2 sq m per person. Map 16.3 shows the desirable network of destination facilities plus a 2250 m/15 minutes cycling distance threshold.

Local Facilities

16.23 Across the Borough the current levels of provision equates to 0.15 sq m per person. However, it is clear that there is a need for more provision in the rural areas of the Borough and therefore it will be sensible to adopt a quantity standard of 0.2 sq m per person. In the urban areas, however, the main emphasis should be on destination facilities and therefore it will be appropriate to have a lower quantity standard of 0.1 sq m per person for local facilities.

Urban and Rural Areas

16.24 This therefore suggests two quantity standards:

- An urban standard of 0.3 sq m per person (made up of 0.2 sq m per person for destination facilities and 0.1 sq m per person for local ones)
- A rural standard of 0.2 sq m per person

Conclusions

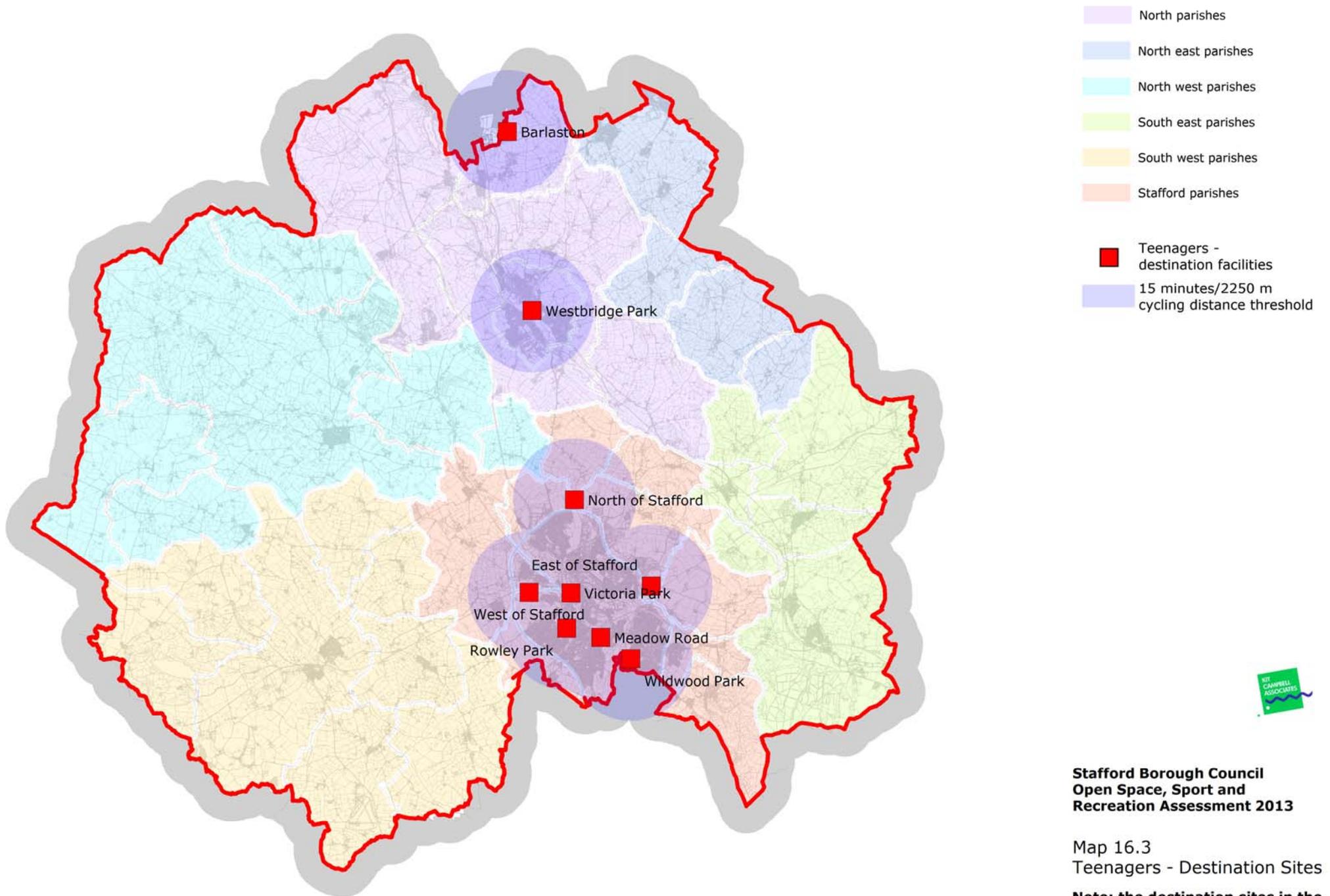
16.25 It is clear that the Borough needs more and better teenage provision throughout its area in spite of the significant boost to provision in the past few years.

As a first step, we therefore suggest that the Borough, Town and Parish Councils should aim to plug the obvious gaps in cycling accessibility to at least one teenage area in each of the main settlements and then follow up with further provision in those other settlements with a significant number of teenagers. The initial priorities for additional provision should be:

- Barlaston (there is already a small site which it will be desirable to enhance)
- Eccleshall
- North Stone
- South-east Stone

Application of the Quantity Standard

- 17.26 With the Town and Parish Councils, the Borough Council should seek to identify acceptable and accessible locations for teenage facilities where they do not already exist and then use the quantity standard to determine the approximate size of each facility.



17: Revised Provision Standards

Introduction 17.1 This update of the 2009 assessment has resulted in some changes to the recommended standards in *The Plan for Stafford Borough* summarised in the table below.

Quantity Standards	Standard in <i>The Plan for Stafford Borough</i>	Recommended Revised Standard
Allotments		
Urban	4 sq m/person	3.5 sq m per person
Rural	1.6 sq m/person	1.6 sq m per person
Artificial Turf Pitches		
Borough-wide	0.53 sq m/person	0.6 sq m per person
Athletics		
No Standard	No standard	No standard
Bowling greens		
Borough-wide	0.18 sq m per person	0.16 sq m per person
Play Provision		
Borough-wide	0.4 sq m per person	0.45 sq m per person
Golf		
Borough-wide	1 hole to 1100 people	1 hole to 1100 people
Grass pitches		
Cricket	3.2 sq m per person	5.0 sq m per person
Mini-soccer	1.5 sq m per person	1.0 sq m per person
Junior football	2.4 sq m per person	2.6 sq m per person
Adult football	3.8 sq m per person	3.8 sq m per person
<i>Football sub-total</i>	<i>7.7 sq m per person</i>	<i>7.4 sq m per person</i>
Mini-rugby		0.4 sq m per person
Midi rugby		1.0 sq m per person
Adult rugby		1.4 sq m per person
<i>Rugby sub-total</i>	<i>2.4 sq m per person</i>	<i>2.8 sq m per person</i>
Total	13.3 sq m per person	14.6 sq m per person
Greenspace		
Amenity	16 sq m per person	
Parks and Gardens	1 sq m per person	
Urban total	17 sq m per person	15 sq m per person
Rural all types	8.5 sq m per person	10 sq m per person
Tennis and multi-courts		
Borough-wide	0.35 sq m per person	0.45 sq m per person

Teenage Facilities		
Borough-wide	0.15 sq m per person	
Urban		0.3 sq m per person
Rural		0.2 sq m per person
Indoor Sports		
Sports halls	0.1 sq m per person	0.09 sq m per person
Swimming pools	0.06 sq m per person	0.04 sq m per person
Tennis courts	0.028 sq m per person	0.04 sq m per person

Notes

Use of the Standards

- 17.2 Each of these standards is “stand-alone” – in other words, there is no double counting within them. Therefore the Borough Council should apply each of them as appropriate to a proposed development. If it will be desirable to combine two or more types of provision into a single space (eg a multi-functional greenspace might also contain any combination of pitches, a play area, teenage facilities and tennis or multi-courts) the provision required by the separate application of each of the standards to the various component parts should be aggregated to determine the total provision required.

Allotments

- 17.3 The lower urban standard reflects a slight decline in the demand for allotments nationally plus the increase in the Borough’s population from 2001-2011.

Artificial Turf Pitches

- 17.4 The slightly higher standard reflects the need for a slightly more comprehensive network of ATPs. The standard relates only to the area of pitch required per person but any new pitches should be accompanied by suitable changing and social accommodation for community users.

Bowling Greens

- 17.5 The slightly lower standard for bowling greens reflects recent growth in the Borough’s population and decline in the popularity of bowls.

Play Provision

- 17.6 Although the total quantity standard is unchanged, in urban areas it now splits into destination play facilities (0.2 sq m per person) and local facilities (0.2 sq m per person). In rural areas the 0.4 sq m per person is appropriate for local provision.

Grass Pitches

- 17.6 The changes to the quantity standards reflect recent changes to participation in the pitch sports, the desirability of providing marked-out pitches for mini and youth football and rugby (reducing the number of adult pitches needed to accommodate them) and the Borough's population. In particular there are now more men's cricket and rugby teams than in 2009.
- 17.7 The standard relates only to the area of pitch required per person but any new pitches should be accompanied by suitable changing and social accommodation for community users.
- 17.8 As the Borough develops more third generation (3G) artificial turf pitches and they become used more and more for football training and matches it will be possible to reduce the quantity standard for football. In broad terms, each full size artificial turf pitch will reduce the number of adult football pitches required in the Borough. In broad terms, one ATP is equivalent to three or four grass pitches in terms of its capacity to accommodate matches. Accordingly, each ATP that is provided will make it possible to reduce the quantity standard for adult football pitches by approximately 0.15 sq m per person.
- 17.9 In general it will be better for the Council to agree an amount of provision with developers based on the composite quantity standard of 14.6 sq m per person and then decide how best to lay out the land to meet local needs rather than apply the sport-specific quantity standards. This will make it possible, for example, to create multi-pitch sites for a sport such as football or rugby which will be much better in sports development terms than a number of pitches for different sports.

Multi-functional Greenspace

- 17.10 The composite standard for multi-functional greenspace reflects a need for greater flexibility in the balance between different types of provision that the Borough Council can ask developers to provide. The urban and rural standards also vary slightly from the earlier standards primarily as a result of changes to the Borough's population.

Tennis and multi-courts

- 17.11 The higher standard reflects the desirability of a more extensive network of courts across the Borough than in 2009.

Teenage Facilities

17.12 The revised higher standard reflects the success of the Borough Council's development of "destination" teenage facilities in Victoria Park and the desirability of providing a network of similar facilities, particularly in Stafford and Stone.

Indoor Sports Facilities

17.13 The revised standards reflect the most recent Facilities Planning Analysis for sports halls and pools from Sport England and the success of the recently provided Baseline indoor tennis centre in the Borough.

17.14 Each of the quantity standards relates to the total area of building and not only a specific sports facility. The area of sports facility "activity area" required by application of the quantity standards is given by dividing:

- The quantity standard for sports halls by 2
- The quantity standard for pools by 4
- The quantity standard for indoor tennis courts by 2

18: Strategic Development Locations

Introduction 18.1 *The Plan for Stafford Borough* sets out an initial broad statement of the open space, sport and recreation provision that will be required in each of the proposed strategic development locations (SDLs). This chapter provides additional detail on these needs.

Application of Quantity Standards 18.2 Appendix I and the table below summarise the provision required in each of the SDLs on the basis of the recommended quantity standards:

	North of Stafford	West of Stafford	East of Stafford	West of Stone
Proposed dwellings	3,100	2,200	600	500
Average occupancy	2.33	2.33	2.33	2.33
Residents	7,223	5,126	1,398	1,165
Allotments (ha)	2.5	1.8	0.5	0.4
3G Artificial turf pitches (sq m)	4,335	3,075	840	700
3G Artificial turf pitches (pitches)	0.6	0.4	0.1	0.1
Local Play (sq m)	1,800	1,300	350	290
Destination play (sq m)	1,445	1,025	280	235
Grass pitches (ha)	10.6	7.5	2.0	1.7
Multi-functional greenspace (ha)	10.8	7.7	2.1	1.8
Tennis and multi-courts (sq m)	3,250	2,300	630	525
Teenagers – local (sq m)	1,445	1,025	280	233
Teenagers – destination (sq m))	720	515	140	120
Sports halls (sq m)	650	460	125	105
Swimming pools (sq m)	290	205	60	50
Indoor tennis courts (sq m)	290	205	60	50

Note: these requirements are round to the nearest 5 sq m or 0.1 ha

North of Stafford Allotments

- 18.3 There are no allotments within easy walking distance of the North of Stafford SDL. Therefore the Council should require developers to provide or fund a site of approximately 2.5 ha.

Artificial Turf Pitches

- 18.4 The only SDL to justify an artificial turf pitch is North of Stafford, although the application of the quantity standard requires only 0.6 of a pitch. Therefore, if there is a new secondary school in the Strategic Development Location the Council should require developers to provide an artificial turf pitch for it and ensure that adequate arrangements are in place for community use, in particular appropriate changing and floodlighting if they are not already included. However, as an ATP is almost certain to be a requirement of the County Council for any new secondary school in the area, the Council should instead require developers in the SDL to fund stand-alone changing and social accommodation for community teams.
- 18.5 If there is not a new school in the SDL, it may be better to require developers in the North of Stafford SDL to contribute to the wider network of ATPs through either planning obligations (subject to CIL Regulation 123) or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Bowling Greens

- 18.6 There is already ample provision of bowling greens in the Stafford area and therefore no need for any additional provision in the SDL.

Provision for Children's Play

- 18.7 Map 18.1 shows that the Lawnsfield Walk play area in Parkside is within an acceptable walking distance of part of the western area of the SDL, provided potential users are able easily to cross Beaconside Road. However, it contains only five pieces of equipment and so will probably not attract many users from the SDL. Therefore the Council should require developers to provide or fund a destination play area in the new park with an area of around 1,400-1,500 sq m plus a number of smaller play facilities within the housing areas totalling approximately 1,800 sq m. At least some, if not most, of this local play provision should take the form of natural play within multi-functional

greenspaces (see below).

Grass Pitches

- 18.8 Application of the quantity standard for pitches suggests a need for some 10.6 ha. The Playing Pitch Model in Appendix G indicates that the main shortfalls in the Stafford area are for cricket grounds, youth and mini football pitches and midi and mini rugby pitches.
- 18.9 However, 10.6 ha of playing fields will represent a significant land take within the SDL, especially when added to the requirement for approximately 10 ha of multi-functional greenspace (see below). Therefore it will be desirable for the Council to seek to negotiate:
- The provision of a cricket ground, with pavilion: a cricket ground with nine wicket strips requires a site of approximately 120 x 115 m, plus additional land for a pavilion, roads and parking, giving a total area of approximately 2 ha.
 - Contributions to an ATP at an appropriate location in lieu of the balance of grass pitch provision. This will allow the provision of a full size ATP, possibly plus a secondary, smaller ATP suitable for mini-soccer, instead of the contributions to 0.6 of an ATP suggested above.
- 18.10 However, if the County Council decides there is a need for a secondary school in the SDL it is likely to include both some grass pitches and an ATP. It will then be desirable for the Council to use the quantity standard in negotiations with developers in order to persuade them to fund a significantly higher specification for these pitches than would be required for purely school use so that they are suitable for community use as well, plus the provision of stand-alone changing and social accommodation for community users.

Multi-functional Greenspace

- 18.11 Map 18.2 shows that a significant proportion of the SDL is within walking distance of Stafford Common, although separated from it by Beaconside Road (the A513). As the area in between the two parts of the SDL and immediately to the north of the Common is planned as future green infrastructure/destination park of approximately 10 ha (potentially including joint use playing fields with any new secondary school that might be needed in the SDL), this will provide a sizeable green wedge from the countryside to the north of the SDL north from the

Tillington area. Therefore the Council should require that:

- Developers create attractive, safe green corridors from the two housing areas roughly parallel with Beaconside Road that link to a new destination park in between the two housing sections in the SDL and then across Beaconside Road into the Common. They should also link north to the proposed local centre and any new school(s).
- If there is a need for a new secondary school in the Strategic Development Location, the new destination park can incorporate the school's playing fields and a floodlit artificial turf pitch provided they are accessible to the local community. They should also include a stand-alone changing pavilion and clubhouse intended for community use, so that it will be possible to create a new pitch sports club that will be able to operate without the need for a school janitor to be on duty
- There is a network of secondary greenspaces within the housing areas, designed for informal activities such as kickabouts, and linked by green corridors. The total area of these secondary spaces plus the area of the community park should be not less 12.3 ha.
- As many dwellings as possible should look out onto a greenspace

Tennis and Multi-courts

18.12 Application of the quantity standard suggests that the Council can require developers in the SDL to provide between four and five tennis or multi-courts. At least one should form part of each teenage facility (see below) and others might be provided within greenspaces across the SDL in locations where floodlights and noise will not be unacceptable to nearby residents.

Provision for Teenagers

18.13 Map 18.3 shows that there is a teenage facility in Parkside, Wayfield Drive, that is within walking distance of much of the western part of the SDL. However, it contains only a non-floodlit ball court so will not be particularly attractive to teenagers living in the SDL. Therefore the Council should require developers also to make or fund provision for teenagers, ideally as part of the new park. It will probably be sensible to combine the "local" and "destination" components of 720 and 1,445 sq m respectively into a single teenage area with at least

a floodlit multi-court, a skateboard area and a shelter.

Sports Halls

18.14 The current deficiency in sports hall provision in Stafford town is equivalent to about one badminton court. However, the three SDLs will increase the population of the town by up to about 13,500-14,000 people. This number of people will generate sufficient demand to justify at least a three court hall. Adding the current deficiency of a little less than one badminton court suggests that the Council should plan for the provision of an additional 4-court hall. The best location for another hall will be on a secondary school site as it will then be usable by both the school for curricular PE and extra-curricular activities and the local community.

18.15 If there is a secondary school in the North of Stafford SDL it will require a sports hall and therefore the Council should require developers in all three Stafford SDLs to fund enhancements to it that will make it suitable for community use. They are likely to include:

- An additional small hall, approximately 12 x 12 m or (better) 12 x 18 m, suitable for activities such as martial arts, fencing, table tennis and exercise to music
- Larger and better equipped changing rooms, with lockers
- Reception and management staff accommodation
- Additional space for equipment storage
- Social facilities
- At least one meeting room
- A space that can be used by a playgroup, with its own toddlers' toilet provision

18.16 If there is not a new school in the SDL, the Council should require developers to contribute to a hall elsewhere in the Borough, such as at the Weston Road Academy, through either planning obligations (subject to CIL Regulation 123) or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

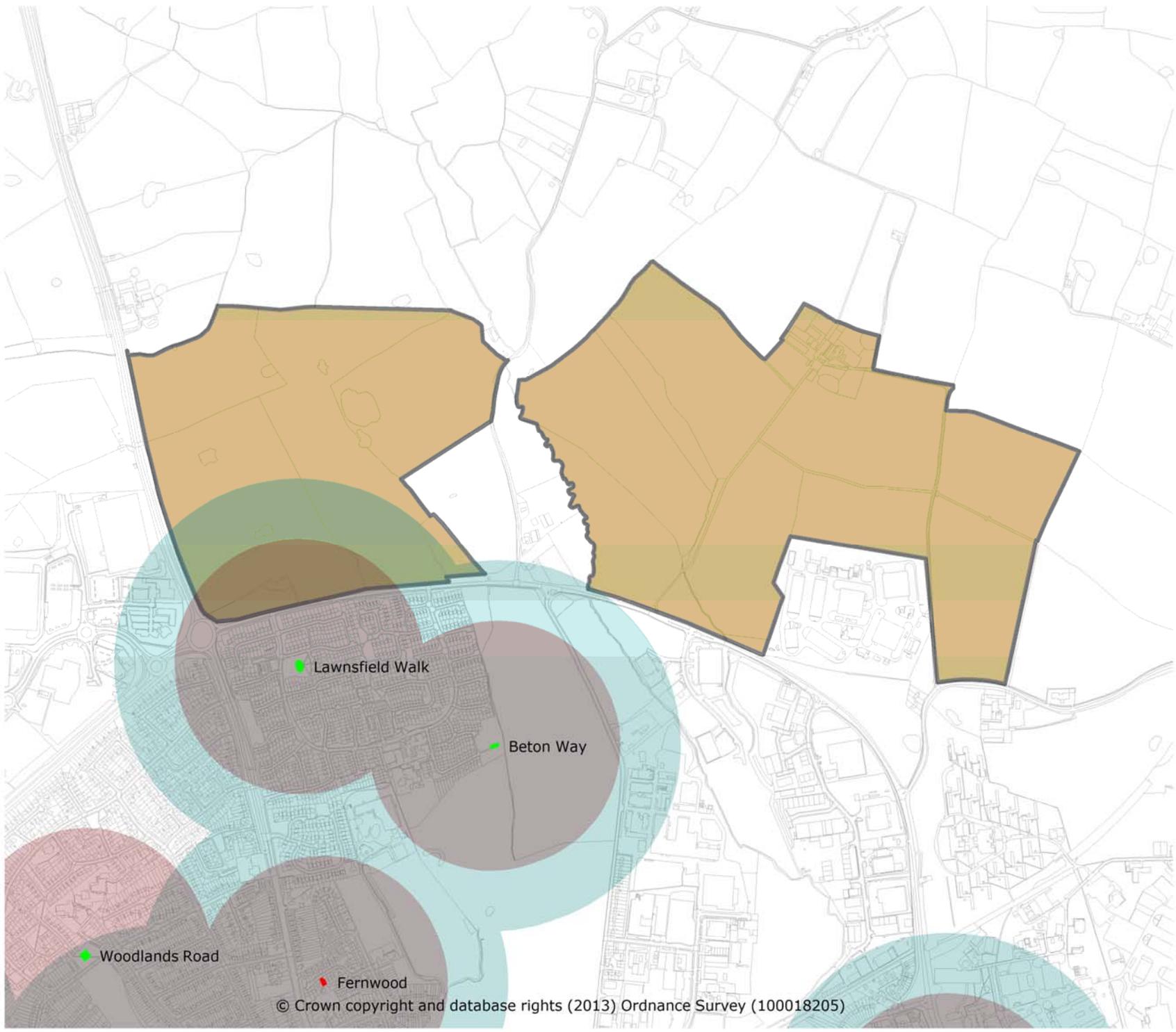
Swimming Pools

18.17 There is likely to be a need for an additional 25 m pool in the town but the number of people in the SDL will justify the provision of only about 75 sq m of water or 300 sq m of pool building. Therefore the Council should require developers to contribute to a new pool in an appropriate location through

planning obligations (subject to CIL Regulation 123) or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Indoor Tennis Courts

- 18.18 The population of the SDL will justify the provision of only about a quarter of a court and the Council should regard indoor tennis provision as a low priority when compared with other sports provision.



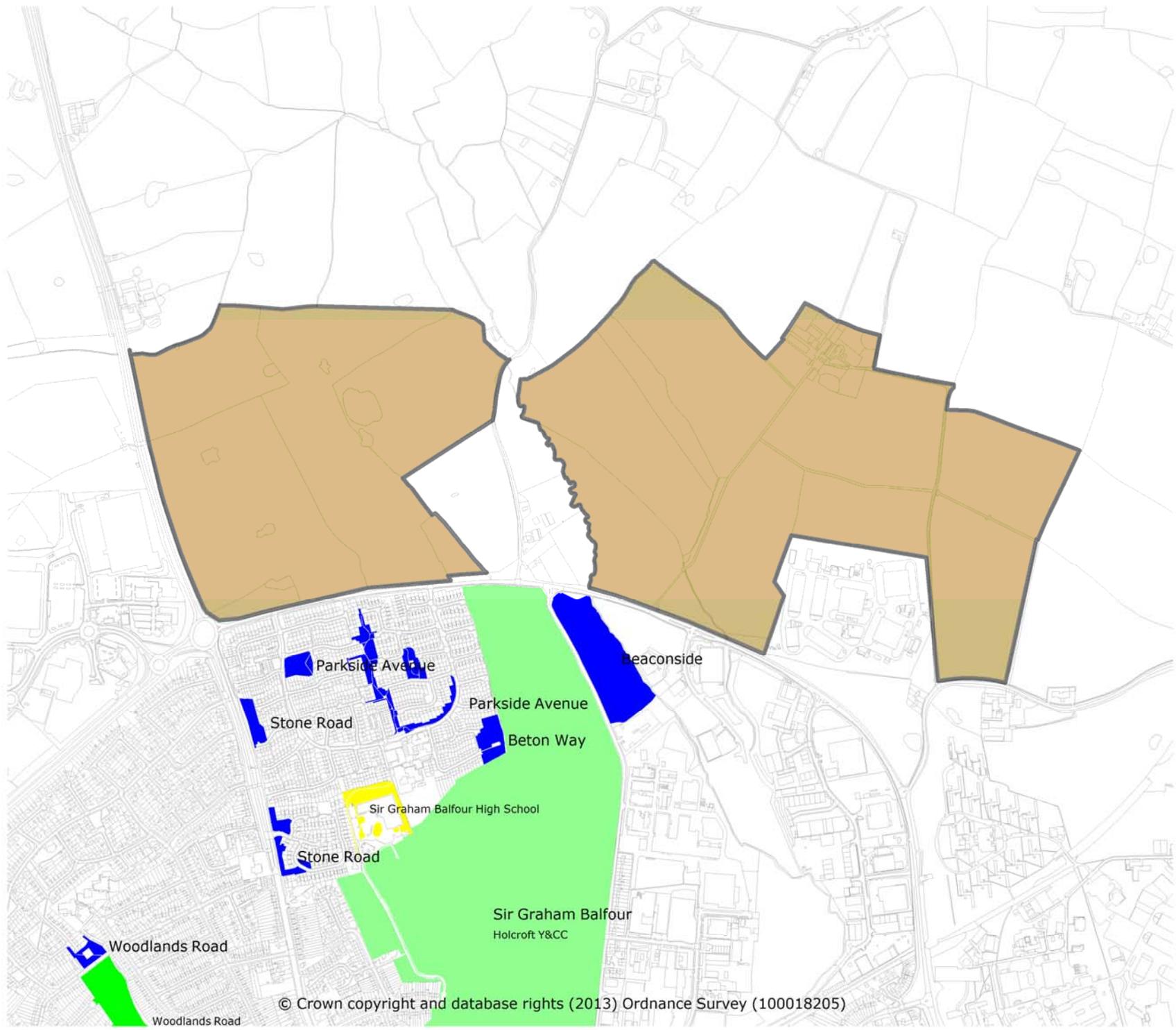
- High quality, high value sites
- Low quality, high value sites
- High quality, low value sites
- Low quality, low value sites
- 300 m distance threshold for U8 play facilities
- 450 m distance threshold for 8-12 play facilities
- Strategic Development Location



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 18.1
North of Stafford SDL
Children's Play Facilities

Sites shown enlarged for clarity



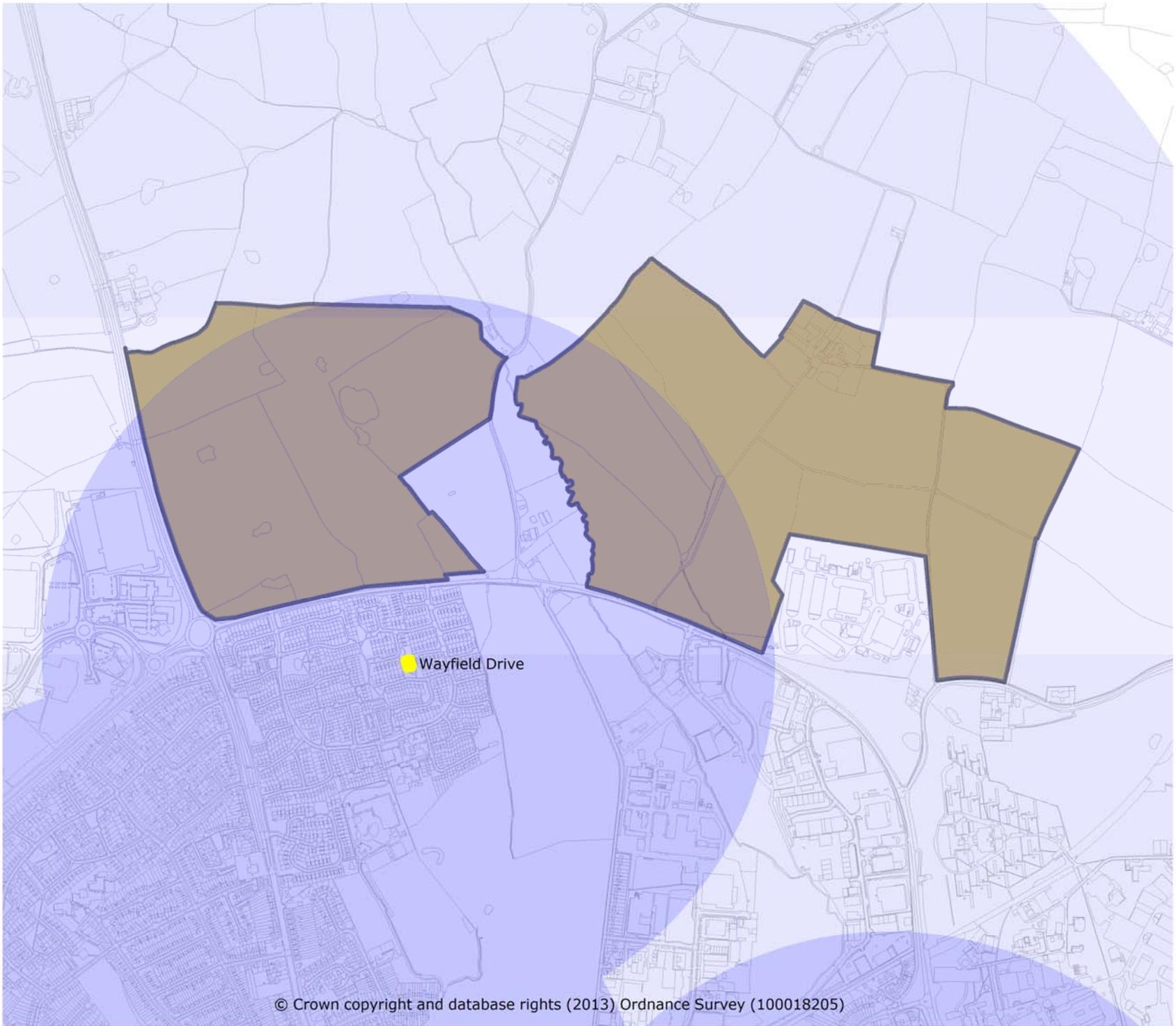
- Amenity greenspaces
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and Gardens
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Rugby Pitches
- Strategic Development Location



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 18.2
North of Stafford SDL
Multi-functional Greenspace

Sites shown enlarged for clarity



- High quality, high value sites
- Low quality, high value sites
- High quality, low value sites
- Low quality, low value sites
- 15 minutes/900 m walking distance threshold
- 15 minutes/2250 m cycling distance threshold
- Strategic Development Location

● Wayfield Drive



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 18.3
North of Stafford SDL
Teenage Facilities

Sites shown enlarged for clarity

West of Stafford Allotments

18.19 There are no existing allotments within walking distance of the West of Stafford SDL. Therefore the Council should require developers in the SDL to provide or fund at least one allotments site with an area of not less than 1.8 ha.

Artificial Turf Pitches

18.20 The population of the SDL is insufficient to justify an artificial turf pitch. Therefore the Council should require developers in the SDL to contribute to the wider network of ATPs through planning obligations (subject to CIL Regulation 123) or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Bowling Greens

18.21 There is already ample provision of bowling greens in the Stafford area and therefore no need for any additional provision in the SDL.

Provision for Children's Play

18.22 Map 18.4 shows that there are several children's play areas close to the east edge of the western part of the SDL and that residents of the extreme eastern part of the SDL will be able to access the destination play area in Victoria Park. Therefore the Council should require developers to make suitable on-site provision. This should take the form of either:

- A "destination" play area of approximately 1,000 sq m in the central greenspace suggested below plus two or three natural play facilities with an aggregate area of approximately 1,300 sq m in other greenspaces within the SDL; or
- A larger destination play area of approximately 1,500 sq m plus one or two natural play facilities in other greenspaces with an aggregate area of approximately 800 sq m in other greenspaces in the SDL

Grass Pitches

18.23 Application of the quantity standard suggests a need for approximately 7.5 ha of grass pitches. Given the need for more cricket grounds, youth and mini football pitches and midi and mini rugby pitches in the town, as in the North of Stafford SDL it will be more sensible to require developers to provide:

- A cricket ground of approximately 2 ha, complete with pavilion
- Contributions to the strategic ATP network secured through planning obligations (subject to CIL Regulation 123) or the Community Infrastructure Levy
- Contributions to additional rugby pitch provision secured through planning obligations (subject to CIL Regulation 123) or the Community Infrastructure Levy. In order to minimise long terms costs to the Borough Council, it will be desirable to use these contributions to provide additional pitches at a new site for Stafford Rugby Club, assuming such a site can be identified.

18.24 The sooner that the Council can develop the strategic network of ATPs for football the more it will be possible to convert existing football pitches to use for rugby. Given the economics of grass pitches (see paragraphs 12.69 and 12.70 above) this approach will be much more cost effective than requiring developers to provide more grass pitches for football and rugby.

Multi-functional Greenspace

18.25 Map 18.5 shows that residents of the eastern section of the SDL will be able easily to access local amenity greenspaces, at least in theory. However, the area is bounded by the rail line to the north and Martin Drive to the south, which will become a much busier road once the SDL is built out. Therefore the Council should require developers to include some local greenspace provision, ideally at the heart of this part of the SDL.

18.26 In the main (western) part of the SDL there are two amenity greenspaces which will be within easy walking distance of residents on the extreme eastern edge of it. However, other existing greenspaces around the perimeter of the SDL are too far from it to be used regularly by new residents. Therefore the Council should also require developers to provide or fund suitable greenspace provision in this area. This should ideally take the form of a park of about 5 ha close to its centre, with green corridors extending radially outwards to link to a series of smaller spaces within housing groups.

Tennis and Multi-courts

18.27 Application of the quantity standard suggests a need for up to four tennis or multi-courts in the SDL. At least one should be co-located with the proposed

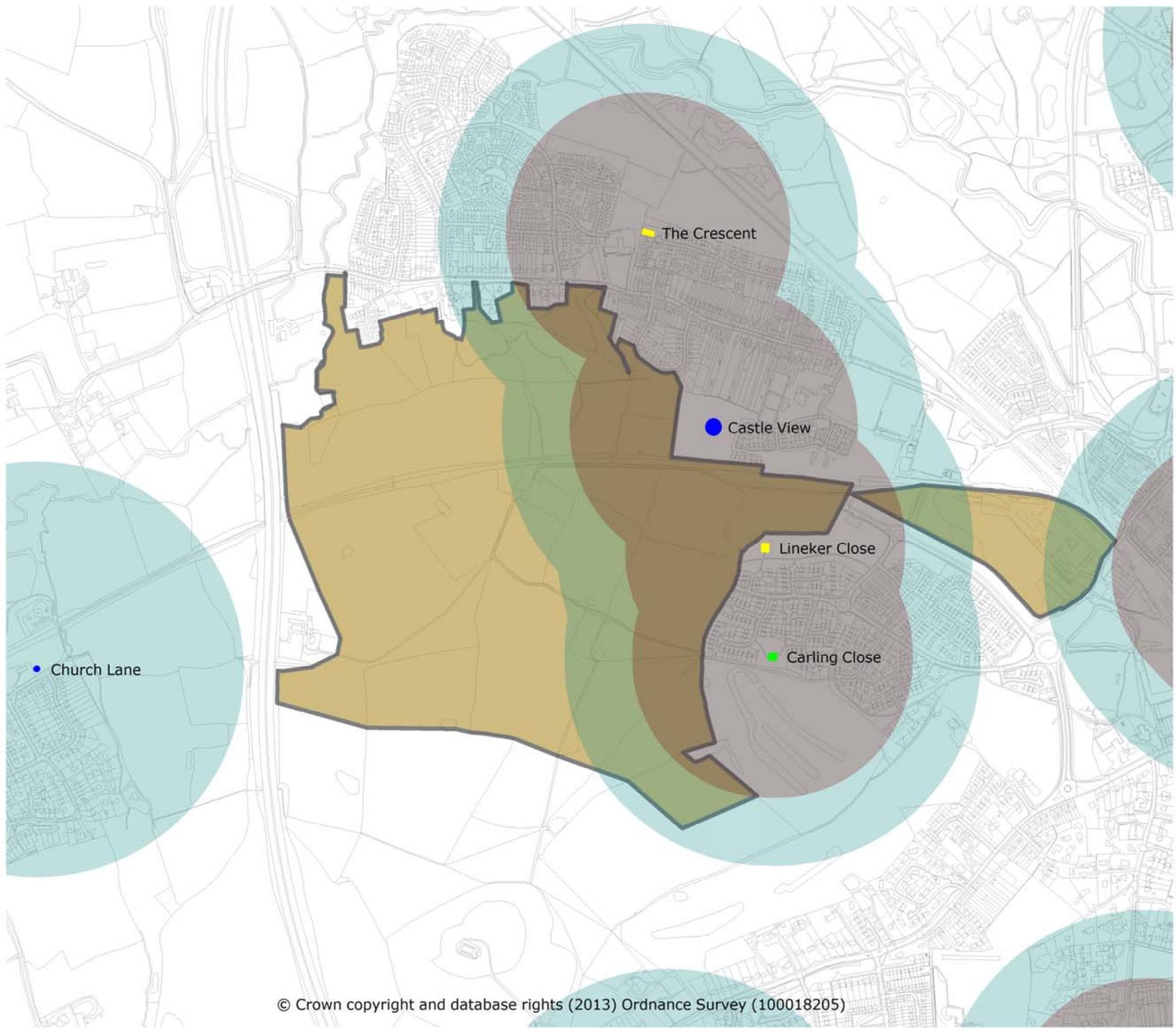
primary school and designed for community as well as school use, another at the destination play provision for children. In addition, teenagers in the eastern part of the SDL will be able to access Victoria Park, where the Council is considering expanding the teenage facilities into the adjacent car park to create a ball court. Therefore the Council can reasonably require developers in at least part of the SDL to contribute to this court.

Provision for Teenagers

18.28 Map 18.6 shows that the recently constructed BMX track and Multi-court at Castle View in Doxey will be accessible to almost all of the teenagers living in the SDL. Therefore, instead of providing a new teenage site, it will be better for the Council to require developers considerably to enhance the existing facilities at Castle View as this will then improve provision for teenagers living in Doxey as well as the SDL. The existing play and teenage area is pretty soul-less and windswept at present.

Indoor Sports Facilities

18.29 The population in the proposed SDL will be insufficient to justify indoor sports provision. Therefore the Council should require developers to contribute to indoor facilities elsewhere through planning obligations (subject to CIL Regulation 123) or the Community Infrastructure Levy, with priority given to sports halls and swimming pools.



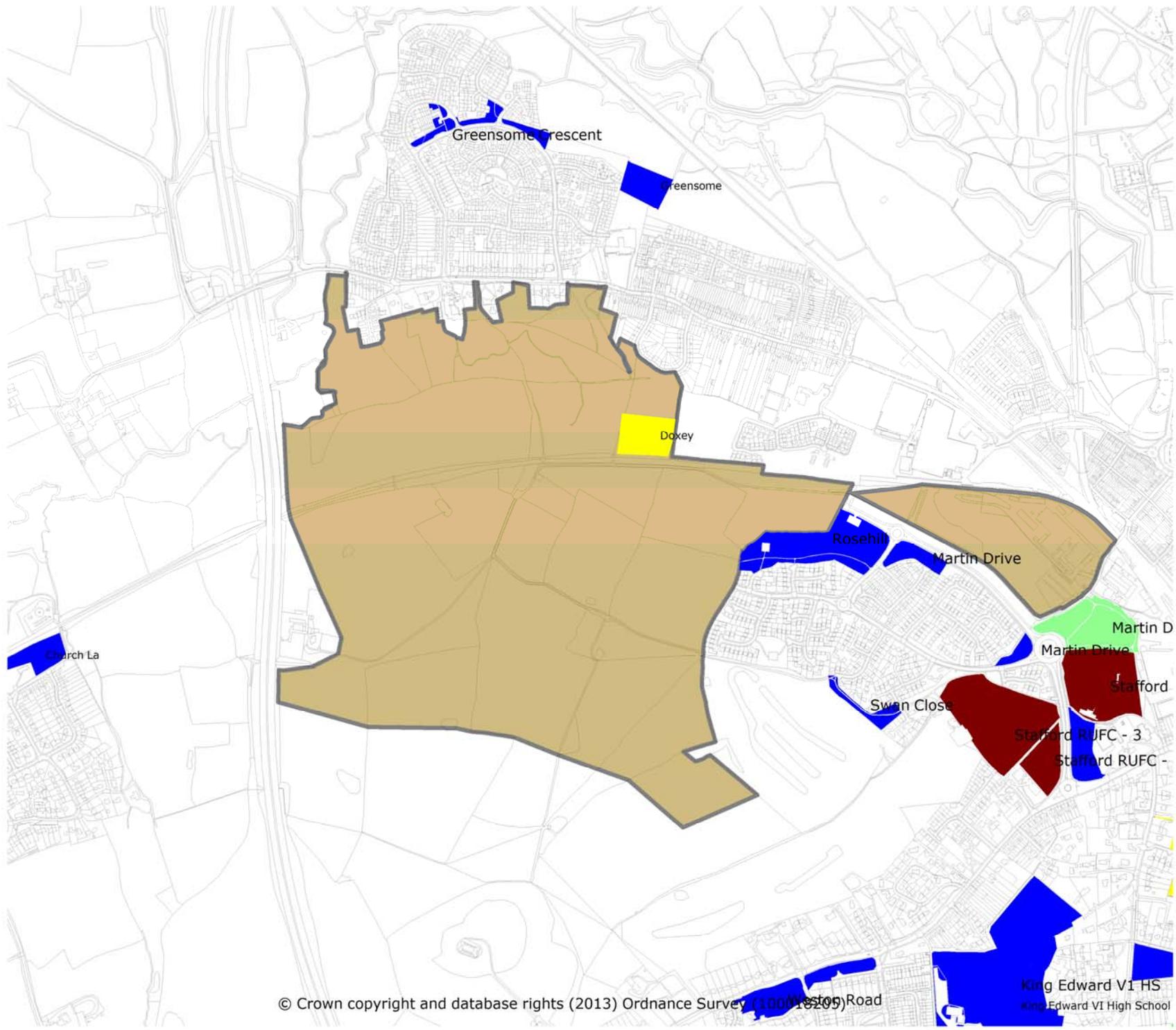
- High quality, high value sites
- Low quality, high value sites
- High quality, low value sites
- Low quality, low value sites
- 300 m distance threshold for U8 play facilities
- 450 m distance threshold for 8-12 play facilities
- Strategic Development Location



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 18.4
West of Stafford SDL
Children's Play Facilities

Sites shown enlarged for clarity



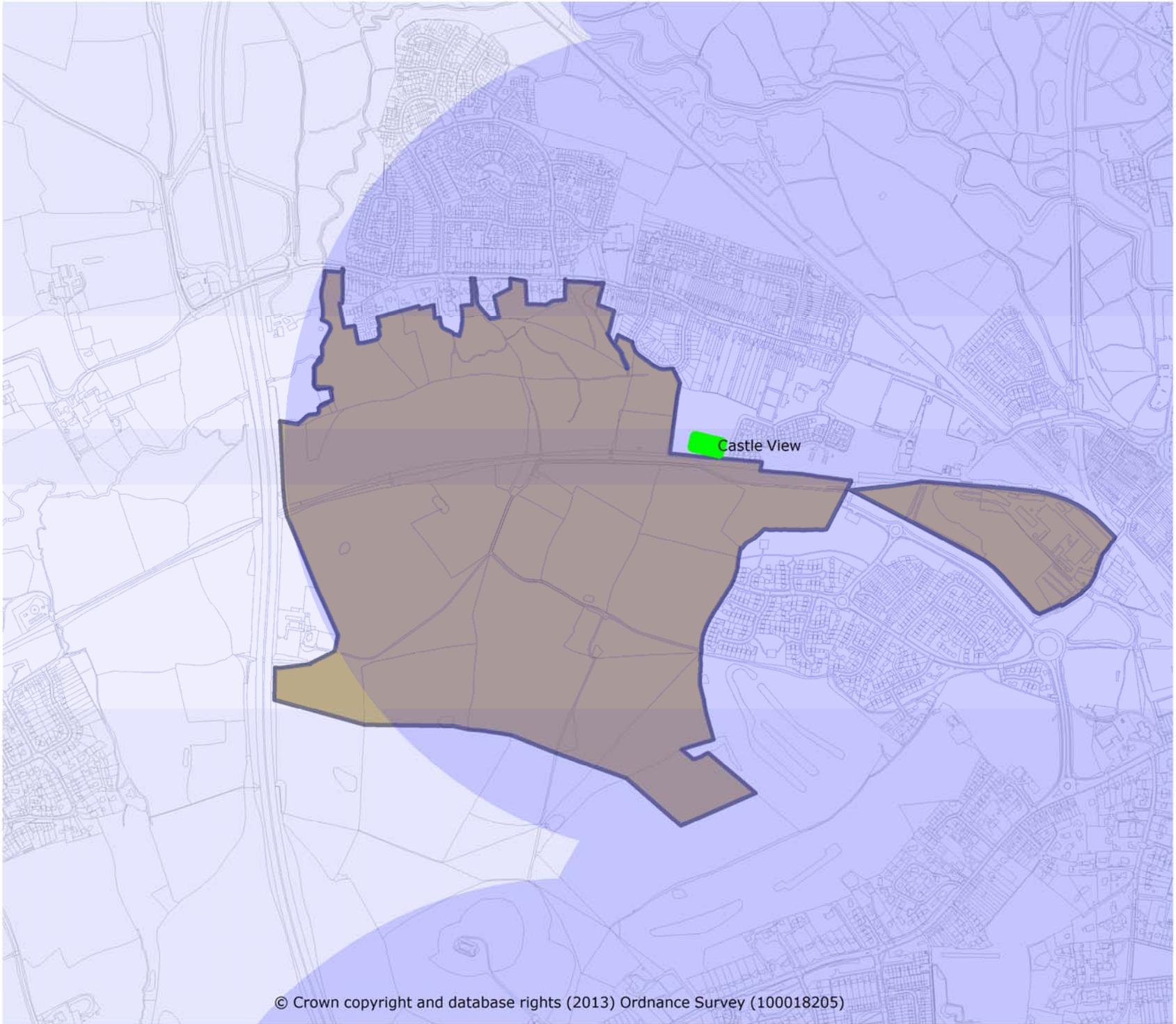
- Amenity greenspaces
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and Gardens
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Rugby Pitches
- Strategic Development Location



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 18.5
West of Stafford SDL
Multi-functional Greenspace

Sites shown enlarged for clarity



-  High quality, high value sites
-  Low quality, high value sites
-  High quality, low value sites
-  Low quality, low value sites
-  15 minutes/900 m walking distance threshold
-  15 minutes/2250 m cycling distance threshold
-  Strategic Development Location



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 18.6
North of Stafford SDL
Teenage Facilities

Sites shown enlarged for clarity

East of Stafford Allotments

- 18.30 A very small part of the housing element of the East of Stafford SDL is within walking distance of the Avon Road Allotments. The amount of provision within the SDL justified by the quantity standard is only 0.5 ha. There may be no need for such a small allotments site in the East of Stafford SDL if the Council can negotiate wider access to the Tilling Drive site, but if not the Council should require developers to provide or fund this provision. The best course of action will probably be to require developers to allocate at least this area of land for allotments and provide contributions to the Council sufficient to lay out the land as allotments, but include in the planning obligation that the Council may use the land and contribution for another community purpose if there is insufficient demand from the new residents.

Artificial Turf Pitches

- 18.31 The population of the SDL is insufficient to justify an artificial turf pitch. Therefore the Council should require developers in the SDL to contribute to the wider network of ATPs through planning obligations (subject to CIL Regulation 123) or the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Bowling Greens

- 18.32 There is already ample provision of bowling greens in the Stafford area and therefore no need for any additional provision in the SDL.

Provision for Children's Play

- 18.33 Map 18.7 shows the various children's play facilities in the vicinity of the SDL and that the northern and central sections of the SDL are within easy walking distance of the Longhurst Drive and Kensington Drive play areas. Therefore the Council should seek contributions from developers to enhance them and create a destination play area off Kensington Drive. It might also rationalise the Alice Close/Longhurst Drive sites into a single site. The southern section, however, is surrounded by roads and should have its own local play area of around 350 sq m.

Grass Pitches

- 18.34 The population of the proposed SDL requires a approximately 2 ha of grass pitch provision.

However, it will be desirable for the Council to require contributions secured through either planning obligations (subject to CIL Regulation 123) or the Community Infrastructure Levy for use outside the SDL. The best use of these contributions will be either to enhance existing pitch sites outside the SDL or support the provision of the strategic network of ATPs.

Multi-functional Greenspace

- 18.35 Map 18.8 shows that the SDL adjoins two strategically important natural greenspaces – Fairway Wetland and Kingston Pool Covert. Therefore the Council should require developers to ensure there are good pedestrian links to both sites from the SDL and ideally require contributions to allow it to upgrade the footpath beside the River Sow to the town centre to a surfaced cycleway.
- 18.36 This apart, the Council should require developers to create a network of fairly small linked greenspaces throughout the housing areas with a total area of approximately 2.4 ha. In addition, as many dwellings as possible should be located next to greenspaces.

Tennis and Multi-courts

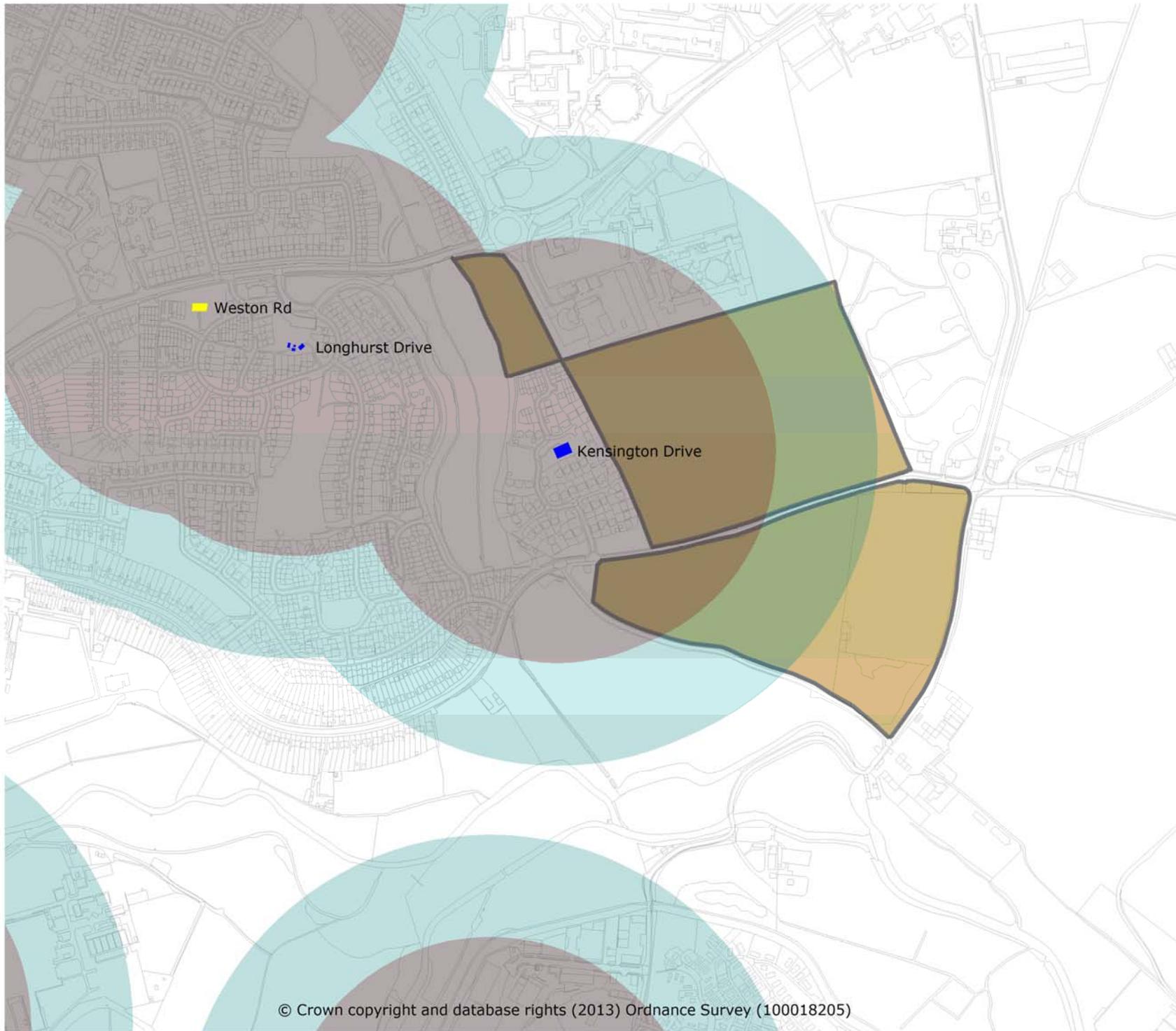
- 18.37 The population of the SDL requires the provision of a single tennis or multi-court. As there is no point in a single tennis court, it should be a multi-court. The best location for this will be adjacent to teenage provision (see below) within a multi-functional greenspace.

Provision for Teenagers

- 18.38 The whole of the SDL is outwith the distance threshold of the nearest teenage facilities at the Kingston Centre. Therefore the Council should require developers to provide approximately 400 sq m of teenage facilities, excluding the multi-court referred to above.

Indoor Sports Facilities

- 18.39 The population in the proposed SDL will be insufficient to justify indoor sports provision. Therefore the Council should require developers to contribute to indoor facilities elsewhere through planning obligations (subject to CIL Regulation 123) or the Community Infrastructure Levy, with priority given to sports halls and swimming pools.



- High quality, high value sites
- Low quality, high value sites
- High quality, low value sites
- Low quality, low value sites
- 300 m distance threshold for U8 play facilities
- 450 m distance threshold for 8-12 play facilities
- Strategic Development Location

◆ Weston Rd

◆ Longhurst Drive

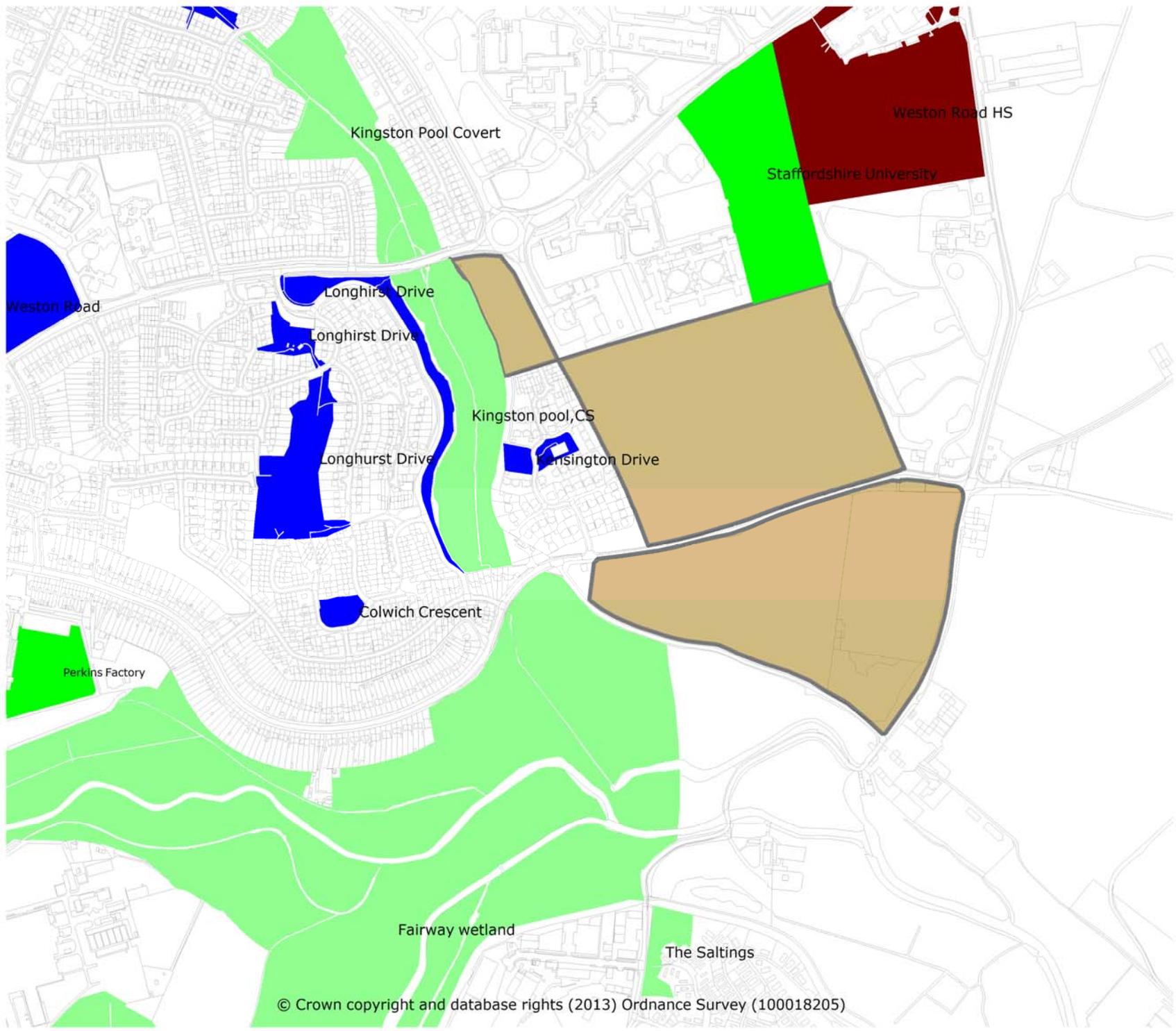
◆ Kensington Drive



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 18.7
East of Stafford SDL
Children's Play Facilities

Sites shown enlarged for clarity



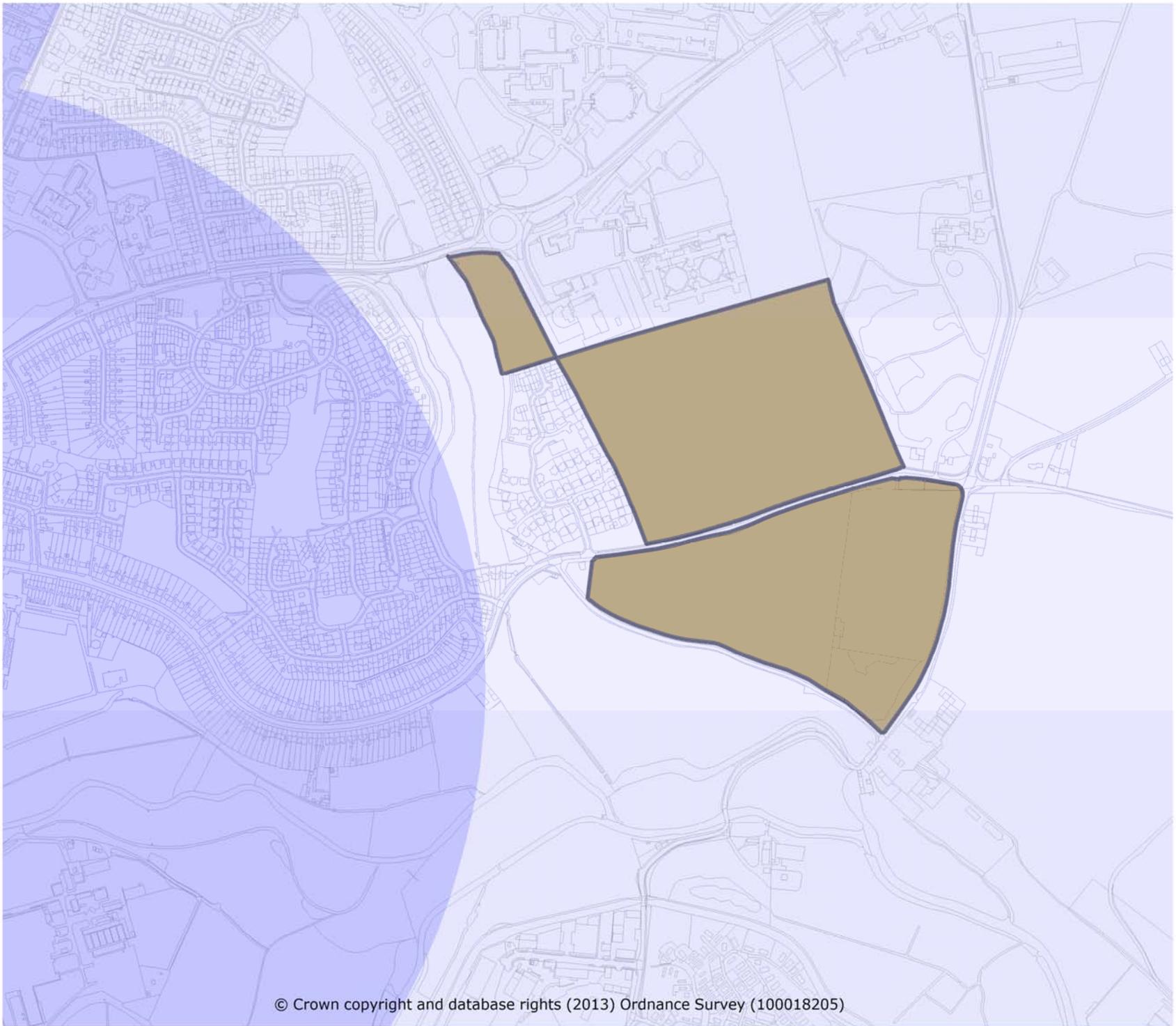
- Amenity greenspaces
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and Gardens
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Rugby Pitches
- Strategic Development Location



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 18.8
East of Stafford SDL
Multi-functional Greenspace

Sites shown enlarged for clarity



- High quality, high value sites
- Low quality, high value sites
- High quality, low value sites
- Low quality, low value sites
- 15 minutes/900 m walking distance threshold
- 15 minutes/2250 m cycling distance threshold
- Strategic Development Location



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 18.9
North of Stafford SDL
Teenage Facilities

Sites shown enlarged for clarity

West and South of Stone

- 18.40 The SDL to the west and south of Stone is not due to come forward for development until after 2021. Therefore the following requirements can be taken only as a very broad guide. All of the residential components of the SDL are to the west of the town.

Allotments

- 18.41 Almost all of the residential component of the SDL is outwith the walking distance threshold of the nearest allotments sites. Therefore the Council should check the extent to which current sites in the town are tenanted before preparing a planning brief for the development and include up to 0.4 ha of allotments if there is a shortfall in local provision.

Artificial Turf Pitches

- 18.42 The population of the proposed SDL will require access to the equivalent of only about 0.1 of an ATP. Therefore the Council should require developers in the SDL to contribute to the wider network of ATPs through planning obligations (subject to CIL Regulation 123) or the Community Infrastructure Levy. However, as suggested in Chapter 6 above, it is desirable that there should be a 3G ATP in the Stone area.

Bowling Greens

- 18.43 There is already ample provision of bowling greens in the Borough and therefore need for any additional provision in the SDL.

Provision for Children's Play

- 18.44 Map 18.9 shows that residents of the eastern part of the SDL should be able to access the Whitemill Lane children's play area fairly easily, but residents of the remainder will require local play provision. Accordingly the Council should require developers to provide a play facility with an equipped area of at least 230 sq m, ideally as part of the small park suggested above. Developers should also contribute to a destination play area in Westbridge Park.

Grass Pitches

- 18.45 The Playing Pitch Models in Appendix G indicates that the key pitch needs in the north of the Borough are likely to be mini-soccer pitches and mini and midi rugby pitches while population growth in the SDL will generate a need for approximately 1.7 ha

of grass pitches.

- 18.46 As the Playing Model for football suggests that there is a surplus of adult football pitches in the area it should be possible to convert some of the existing adult football pitches to mini-soccer ones. Therefore the key needs relate to rugby.
- 18.47 Stone Rugby Club recently moved to the Stone Hockey Club site at Aston by Stone. There is ample space on the site for a mini and midi rugby pitch and therefore the Council should seek to negotiate contributions towards enhancing the site rather than the provision of grass pitches within the SDL.

Multi-functional Greenspace

- 18.48 Map 18.10 shows the multi-functional greenspaces close to the proposed residential component of the SDL. About half of the SDL is within the 10 minutes walking distance threshold of the Stone Meadows LNR and Westbridge Park so there is no need for any strategic greenspace provision. Most of it, apart from the western edge, is also within 5 minutes walk of at least one amenity greenspace, although Bushberry Close and Barnfield Close are very small. Therefore it will be desirable for the Council to require developers to provide some amenity greenspace or, better, a small park with an area of about 2 ha on the western side of the development with links into the surrounding countryside and towards the town.

Tennis and Multi-courts

- 18.49 Although the application of the quantity standards suggests a need for slightly less than one additional tennis or multi-court, the Stone Tennis Club is a thriving organisation which should be able to accommodate any tennis players who move into the SDL. Therefore there is no need for an additional tennis court. As teenage facilities in the town are poor (see below) it will be desirable for the Council to require developers to provide a multi-court as part of teenage provision.

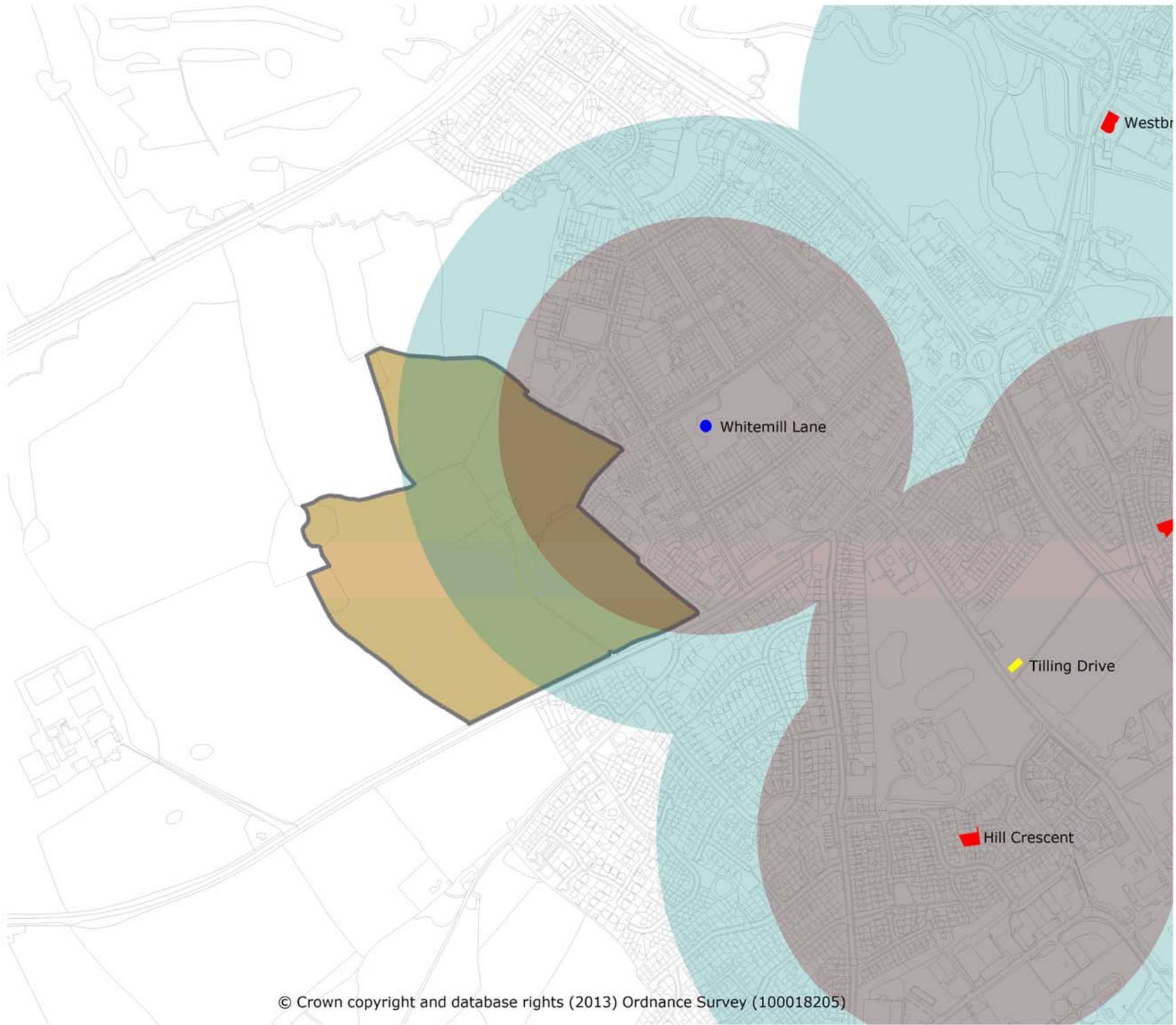
Provision for Teenagers

- 18.50 Map 18.11 shows that the whole of the SDL lies within an acceptable walking distance of the teenage facilities at Whitemill Lane. However, its facilities are limited to a ball wall and basketball goal. Therefore it will probably be desirable for the Council also to require developers to provide on-site

teenage facilities. Application of the quantity standards suggest this should have an area of at least 350 sq m.

Indoor Sports Facilities

- 18.51 Sport England's FPM analysis assesses the current deficiency of sports halls in Stone as equivalent to less than half a badminton court, although this is probably an underestimate as the sports hall at Alleyne's Schools is used to 90% of capacity during community times. The FPM assumes that anything over 80% occupancy means that some potential users are unable to book a court when they wish to do so. The population of the proposed SDL will increase the unmet local demand to about one badminton court – not enough on its own to justify additional provision. In addition, if there is a new hall in the SDL to the north of Stafford, people living between Stafford and Stone, and even in the southern part of Stone, will have a choice of which hall to use.
- 18.52 There is a current proposal to redevelop the Westbridge Park Fitness Centre as a multi-purpose sports centre with a 25 m pool, a sizeable fitness gym and various multi-purpose rooms. The Facilities Planning Analysis supports this proposal. However, application of the quantity standard suggests that the Council can reasonably require only a very small contribution – equivalent to some 47 sq m of pool building - from developers in the SDL towards it.



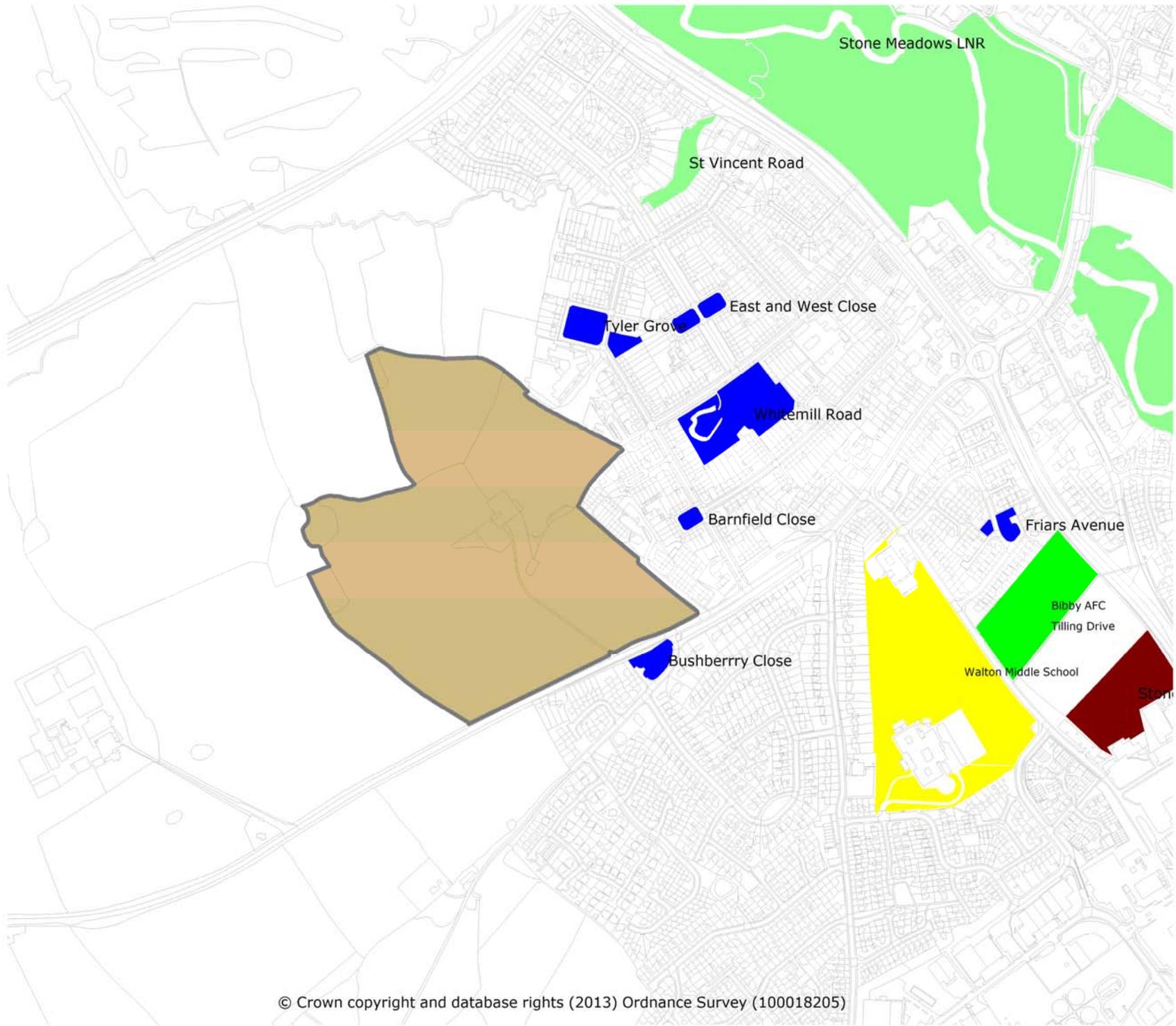
- High quality, high value sites
- Low quality, high value sites
- High quality, low value sites
- Low quality, low value sites
- 300 m distance threshold for U8 play facilities
- 450 m distance threshold for 8-12 play facilities
- Strategic Development Location



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 18.10
West of Stone SDL
Children's Play Facilities

Sites shown enlarged for clarity



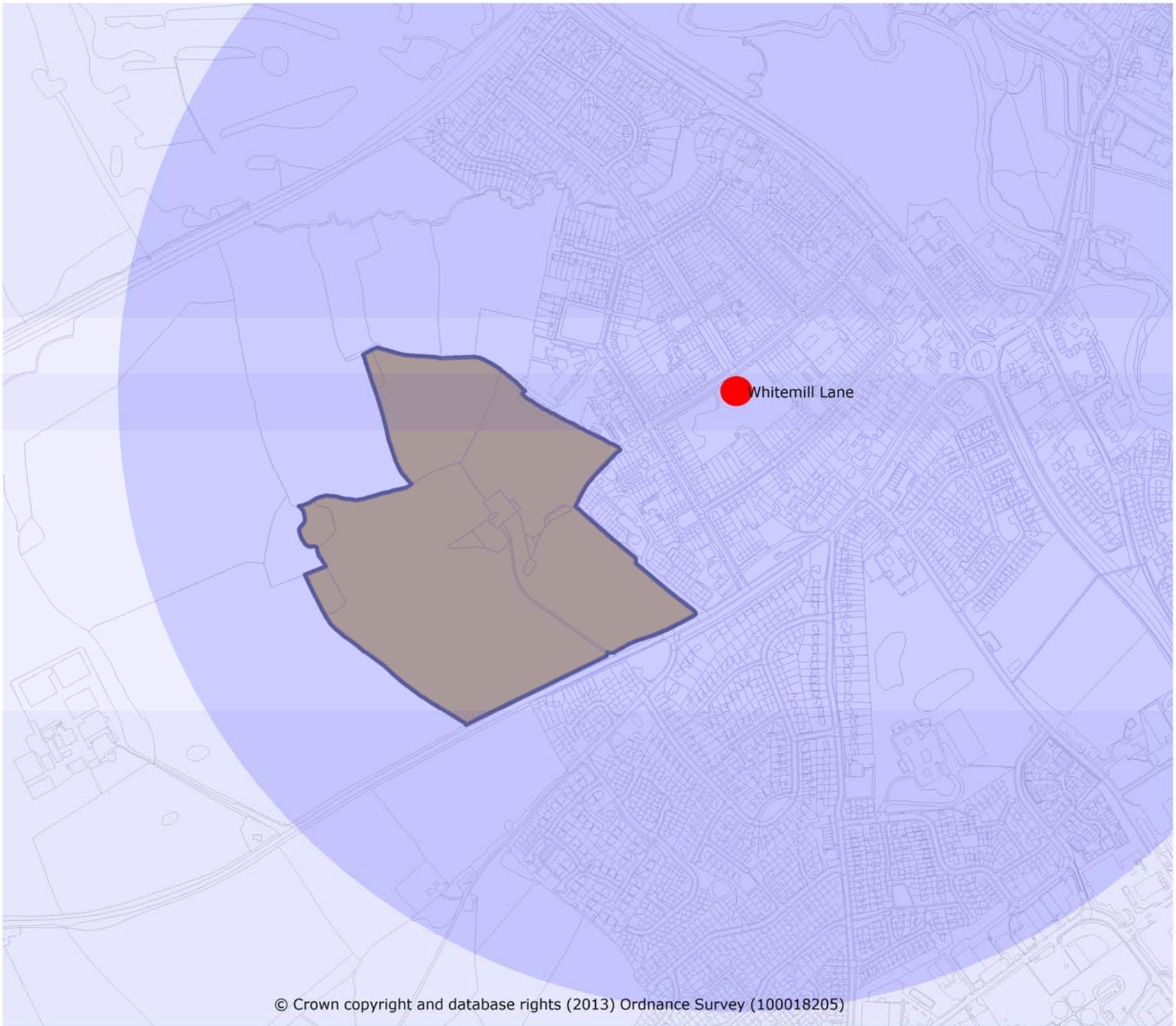
- Amenity greenspaces
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and Gardens
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Rugby Pitches
- Strategic Development Location



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 18.11
West of Stone SDL
Multi-functional Greenspace

Sites shown enlarged for clarity



- High quality, high value sites
- Low quality, high value sites
- High quality, low value sites
- Low quality, low value sites
- 15 minutes/900 m walking distance threshold
- 15 minutes/2250 m cycling distance threshold
- Strategic Development Location



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 18.12
West of Stone SDL
Teenage Facilities

Sites shown enlarged for clarity

19: The Key Service Villages

Introduction 19.1 *The Plan for Stafford Borough* identifies eleven key service villages – Barlaston, Eccleshall, Gnosall, Great Haywood, Haughton, Hixon, Little Haywood/Colwich, Tittensor, Weston, Woodseaves and Yarnfield - in which the majority of development outside of Stafford and Stone will occur. This final chapter of the Evidence Base summarises the amount of provision in each of the parishes in which these village are the main settlements compared with the amount required by application of the quantity standards.

Existing Commitments 19.2 The Council and/or relevant parish council have already agreed to provide two facilities in Yarnfield:

- Play facilities on the former BT Training Centre site i, consisting of play facilities, a multi-court and wheeled sports facilities
- Enlarged and enhanced play facilities at Greenside

Evidence Base Conclusions 20.3 In addition, earlier chapters of this evidence base include a number of suggestions for provision in the key service villages:

- Gnosall: 60 x 40 m 3G artificial turf pitch
- Bowling greens in the north-west planning area (possibly Eccleshall); the south-east planning area (possibly Colwich); and the south-west planning area (possibly Gnosall)
- A multi-court in each of the key service villages

Barlaston

Parish Council Views

19.4 Barlaston Parish Council believes there is a local need for more:

- Recreation grounds
- Children’s play facilities (all ages)
- Football pitches (all ages)
- Rugby pitches

- Multi-courts and tennis courts
- Changing pavilion
- Teenage facilities
- Community centre facilities

19.5 Against this:

- The Green is used as a recreation ground, but also as an amenity greenspace. Such “doubling up” makes good use of land and is acceptable in villages.
- Stoke Rugby club is approximately 2.5 km from the centre of the village and as rugby is club-based it would not be sensible to have a rugby pitch in the village.

19.6 The Parish Council also believes there is a need to enhance the quality of available:

- Amenity greenspaces
- Play facilities for young children
- Recreation grounds

19.7 The Green has fairly good audit scores and we classed it as high quality and value. However, both play areas at Beechcroft and Flaxman Close scored poorly and require enhancement.

Application of Quantity Standards

19.8 Appendix J1 applies the quantity standards to Barlaston with the following results:

	Required (sq m)	Available (sq m)	Surplus or Deficiency (sq m)
Allotments	3,894	9,232	5,338
ATPs	1,460		-1,460
Bowling greens	389		-389
Children's Play	1,095	718	-377
Grass pitches	35,536	33,742	-1,794
MFGS	24,340	13,136	-11,204
Tennis/multi-courts	1,095	0	-1,095
Teenage facilities	487	476	-11

Note: in this calculation, The Green is classed as both football pitches and amenity greenspace

19.9 Accordingly application of the quantity standards generally supports the Parish Council’s view that the village needs more provision for children and one or two tennis or multi-courts – the nearest courts are in Stone. As for the significant deficiency in multi-functional greenspace, rather than make more provision it will be better to improve access to the countryside. Finally, the area of ATPs and bowling

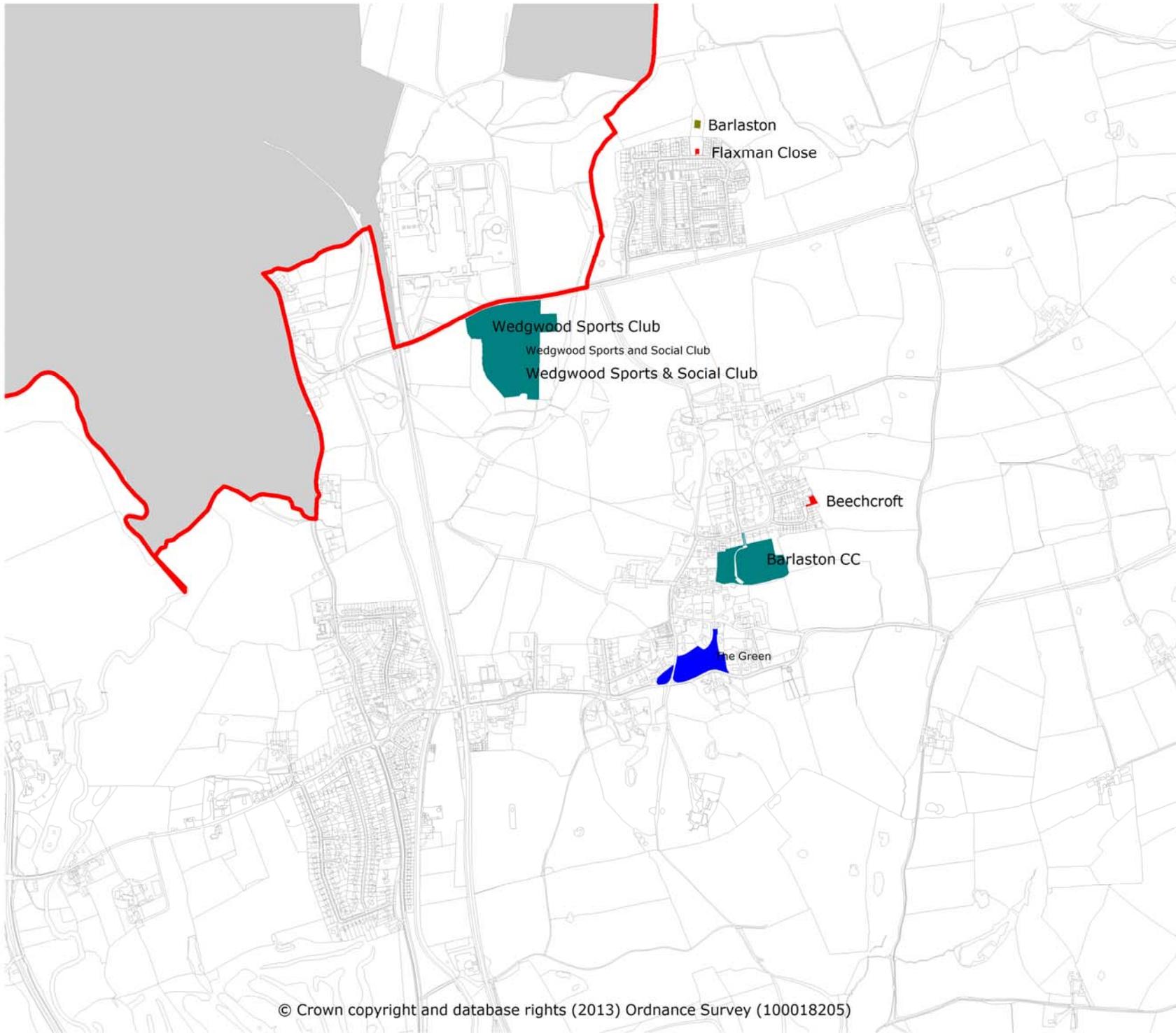
greens required is well below the minimum size of suitable provision.

- 19.10 While the total amount of multi-functional greenspace in the village is well below the amount required by application of the quantity standard, rather than provide more it will be better to promote better access to the nearby countryside and increase the biodiversity of existing spaces within the village wherever possible.

Conclusions

19.11 The priorities for Barlaston are therefore:

- More and better play provision for children, including the enhancement of Beechcroft and Flaxman Close. The best location for new provision will be in the eastern part of the village which is remoter from both of the existing sites.
- At least one and ideally, given the dispersed nature of the village, two multi-courts
- Teenage facilities – although the quantitative deficiency is very small, the single teenage facility at Flaxman Close is very limited and located well away from the main part of the village



- Amenity greenspace
- Bowling greens
- Children's Play
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Multi-courts
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and gardens
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 19.1
Key Service Villages:
Barlaston

Eccleshall

Parish Council Views

19.12 Eccleshall Parish Council believes there is a need for more:

- Amenity greenspaces
- Local recreation grounds
- Bowling greens
- Children's play facilities (all ages)
- Grass sports pitches (all ages)
- Multi-courts and tennis courts
- Teenage facilities

19.13 It also believes there is a need to enhance the quality of available:

- Amenity greenspaces
- Local recreation grounds
- Children's play
- Grass pitches

19.14 The Parish Council's priorities for additional provision are:

- Bowling green
- More public open space
- Multi-court
- Play area all ages
- Teenage facilities, including skatepark
- Youth centre

Mid West Stafford market Towns Plan

19.15 This plan identifies only a single priority need in Eccleshall, youth facilities.

Application of Quantity Standards

19.16 Appendix J2 applies the quantity standards to Eccleshall with the following results:

	Required (sq m)	Available (sq m)	Surplus or Deficiency (sq m)
Allotments	4,066	13,110	9,044
ATPs	1,525	2,400	875
Bowling greens	407	0	-407
Children's Play	1,143	1,504	361
Grass pitches	37,099	11,159	-25,940
MFGS	25,410	6,104	=19,306
Tennis/multi-courts	1,143	1,265	122
Teenage facilities	508	0	-508

19.17 The deficiency in bowling greens is significantly less than one green but there is no green in the whole of

the north west planning area, in which Eccleshall is the largest village. Therefore it will be desirable for the Parish Council to work with other parish councils in the area to assess the potential demand for a green. The other deficiency is in multi-functional greenspace but the priority should be to enhance the value of existing spaces, which the audit classed as high quality but low value. It will also be desirable to maximise access to the countryside around the town.

- 19.18 As there is no teenage provision in the town this is an obvious need, although the amount of provision justified by the application of the quantity standard is very limited.
- 19.19 The audit classed the Beech Road play area as low quality and low value and therefore it will clearly be desirable to enhance it. Although it is quite large it has only six items of play equipment. It is also not particularly accessible as it is located in the middle of a housing area to the south of the town centre and at the end of a cul-de-sac.
- 19.20 While all of the grass pitch provision consists of the Eccleshall Cricket Club, the 60 x 40 m artificial turf pitch at the Bishop Lonsdale School provides an extremely valuable facility for football. It is also suitable for training use by the Eccleshall Rugby Club, which is located about 2.5 km from the centre of the town.

Conclusions

- 19.21 The priority needs for Eccleshall are therefore:
- Additional and better children's play facilities
 - Teenage facilities
 - A potential need for a bowling green in the village to serve the north west planning area



- Amenity greenspace
- Bowling greens
- Children's Play
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Multi-courts
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and gardens
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 19.2
Key Service Villages:
Eccleshall

Gnosall

Parish Council Views

19.22 Gnosall Parish Council believes there is a need for more:

- Football pitches (all ages)
- Tennis courts

Mid West Stafford Market Towns Plan

19.23 This plan identifies three priority needs in Gnosall, refurbishment of the play area, provision for teenagers and additional sports facilities.

Application of Quantity Standards

19.24 Appendix J3 applies the quantity standards to Gnosall with the following results:

	Required (sq m)	Available (sq m)	Surplus or Deficiency (sq m)
Allotments	6,053	21,430	15,377
ATPs	2,270	0	-2,270
Bowling greens	605	0	-605
Children's Play	1,702	1,413	-289
Grass pitches	55,232	87,843	32,611
MFGS	71,225	16,965	33,395
Tennis/multi-courts	1,702	1,197	-505
Teenage facilities	757	640	-117

19.25 In relation to these findings:

- It is likely that Gnosall is providing allotments for a number of smaller villages in the vicinity
- The proposal in chapter 6 above for a 60 x 40 m ATP in Gnosall will remove the deficiency in ATP provision
- The demand for a bowling green in the village is likely to be limited but there is no green in the whole of the south west planning area. Therefore it will be desirable for the Parish Council to work with other parish councils in the area to assess the potential demand for a green.
- The Parish Council's desire for more sports facilities will best be met by a 60 x 40 m 3G pitch, This will provide training opportunities for local football teams and may help revive the former Gnosall Rugby team.
- The land off Brookhouse Road with a teenage multi-court and play area is effectively a local park
- There is a small multi-court off Brookhouse Road but it is a teenage facility and not suitable for tennis. There is also a tennis court at the St

Lawrence Primary School but it is fairly poor.

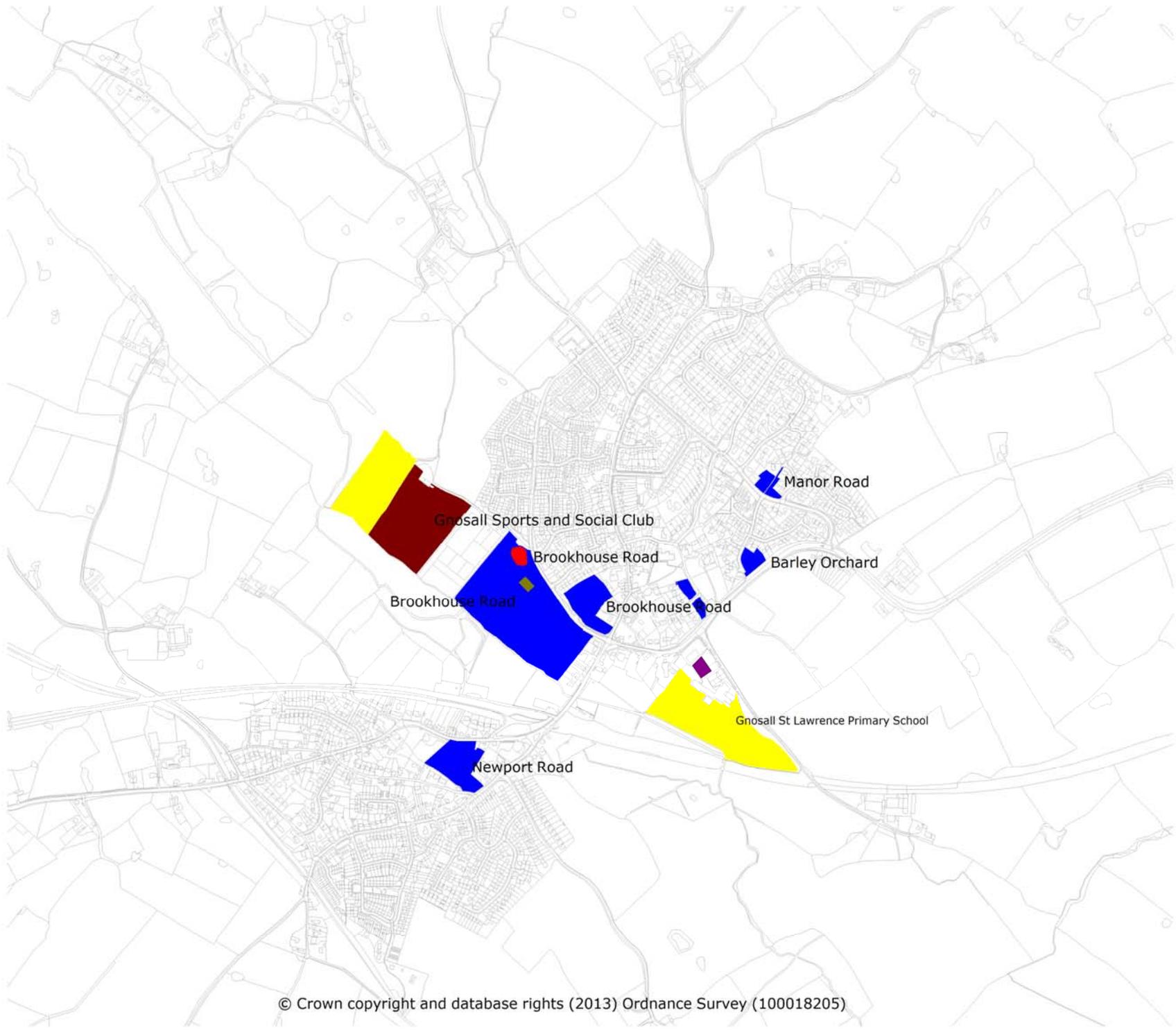
- There may be scope to develop a tennis club in Gnosall and the Parish Council should consider fostering one if there is sufficient local interest

19.26 The audit classed the smaller amenity greenspaces in Gnosall as high quality but low value. Therefore it will be desirable to enhance them, particularly in relation to their play value for children and biodiversity.

Conclusions

19.27 The priority needs in Gnosall are:

- A floodlit 60 x 40 m 3G ATP, ideally at the St Lawrence Primary School or the Gnosall Sports and Social Club
- Enhancement of the small greenspaces in the town (Manor Road, Barley Orchard and Sellman Street)
- A possible tennis club
- A potential need for a bowling green in the village to serve the south west planning area



- Amenity greenspace
- Bowling greens
- Children's Play
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Multi-courts
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and gardens
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 19.3
Key Service Villages:
Gnosall

Great Haywood Parish Council Views

19.28 Colwich Parish Council believes that in the parish generally there is a need for more:

- Amenity greenspaces
- Local recreation grounds
- Allotments
- Rugby pitches
- Floodlit pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts

19.29 It also believes there is a need to enhance the quality of available:

- Local recreation grounds
- Football pitches
- Teenage facilities

Application of Quantity Standards

19.30 Appendix J4 applies the quantity standards to Great Haywood with the following results:

	Required (sq m)	Available (sq m)	Surplus or Deficiency (sq m)
Allotments	2,966	0	-2,966
ATPs	1,112	0	-1,112
Bowling greens	297	0	-297
Children's Play	834	0	-834
Grass pitches	27,068	3,477	-23,591
MFGS	18540	27,214	8,674
Tennis/multi-courts	834	0	-834
Teenage facilities	371	0	-371

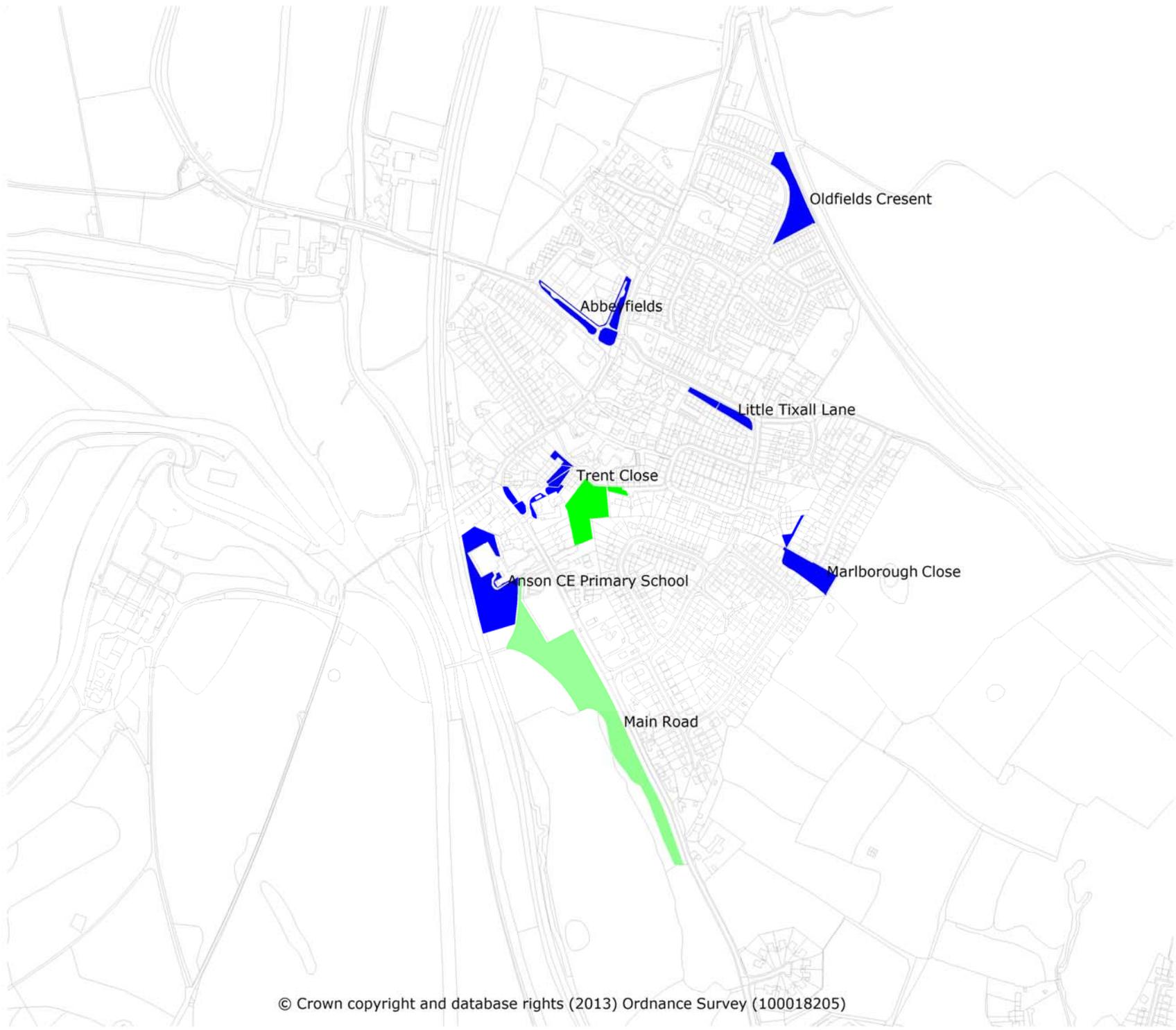
19.31 In relation to these findings:

- There may be a need for allotments in the village and this is something the Parish Council should investigate
- There is unlikely to be sufficient demand for an ATP or bowling green
- There is a clear need for play facilities for children and also some facilities for teenagers
- The village is only a short distance from Stafford where there is an ample supply of grass pitches and when the Borough Council develops more 3G pitches they will be the main venue for much football and some rugby.
- It will be desirable to provide a multi-court in the village, ideally at one of the primary schools

Conclusions

19.32 The priority needs in Great Haywood are therefore:

- Allotments
- Children's play facilities
- A floodlit multi-court
- Facilities for teenagers



- Amenity greenspace
- Bowling greens
- Children's Play
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Multi-courts
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and gardens
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 19.4
Key Service Villages:
Great Haywood

Haughton

Parish Council Views

19.33 Haughton Parish Council believes that there is a need for more and better quality amenity greenspaces. The only sizeable space in the village is the Jim Jarvis Recreation Ground and it could be enhanced considerably to make it more attractive to more people.

Application of Quantity Standards

19.34 Appendix J5 applies the quantity standards to Haughton with the following results:

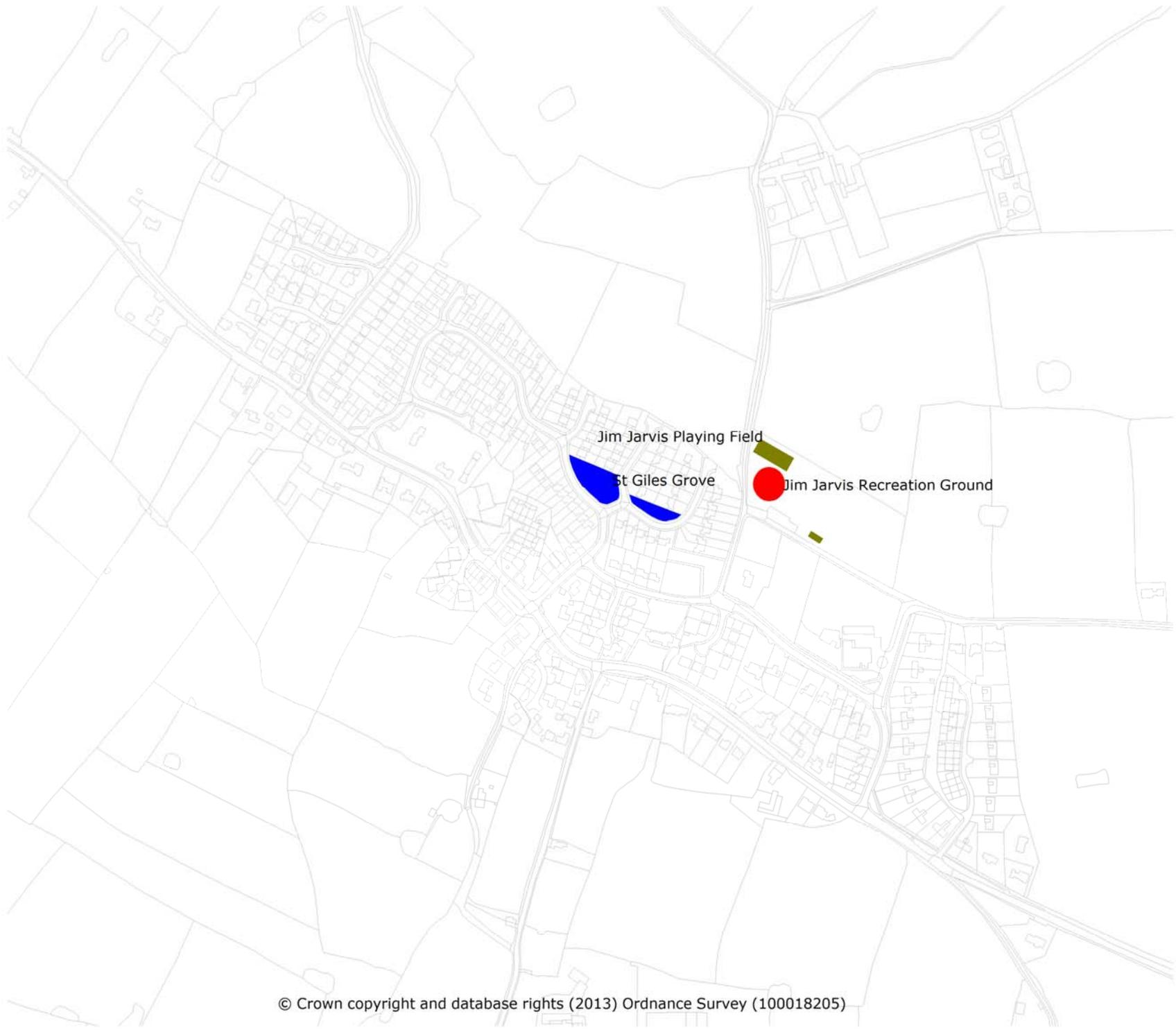
	Required (sq m)	Available (sq m)	Surplus or Deficiency (sq m)
Allotments	1,268	0	-1,268
ATPs	475	0	-475
Bowling greens	127	0	-127
Children's Play	356	1,524	1,168
Grass pitches	11,566	0	-11,566
MFGS	7,922	1,783	-6,139
Tennis/multi-courts	356	0	-356
Teenage facilities	158	647	489

19.35 In relation to these findings:

- The significant surplus of allotment provision in Gnosall (only about 3 km away) means that there is no need for allotments in Haughton
- The village is too small to support an ATP, bowling green or tennis/multi-court but if these facilities are provided in Gnosall Haughton residents will be able to use them
- The children's and teenage facilities off Brazenhill Lane (the Jim Jarvis Recreation Ground) are adequate for local young people
- There are no pitches in the village but those interested in the pitch sports are likely to join the Gnosall Sports and Social Club
- While there is a deficiency in multi-functional greenspace provision, no-one in Haughton lives more than about 200 m from adjoining countryside

Conclusions

19.36 It will be desirable to maximise access to the surrounding countryside from the village and ideally provide a walking and cycling route to Gnosall and also enhance the Jim Jarvis Recreation Ground, particularly in relation to biodiversity and visual appeal.



- Amenity greenspace
- Bowling greens
- Children's Play
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Multi-courts
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and gardens
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 19.5
Key Service Villages:
Haughton

Hixon

Parish Council Views

19.37 Hixon Parish Council did not respond to the Parish Councils' survey.

Application of Quantity Standards

19.38 Appendix J6 applies the quantity standards to Hixon with the following results:

	Required (sq m)	Available (sq m)	Surplus or Deficiency (sq m)
Allotments	2,741	0	-2,741
ATPs	1,028	0	-1,028
Bowling greens	274	0	-274
Children's Play	771	188	-583
Grass pitches	25,101	0	-25,101
MFGS	17,130	20,864	3,734
Tennis/multi-courts	771	702	-69
Teenage facilities	343	261	-82

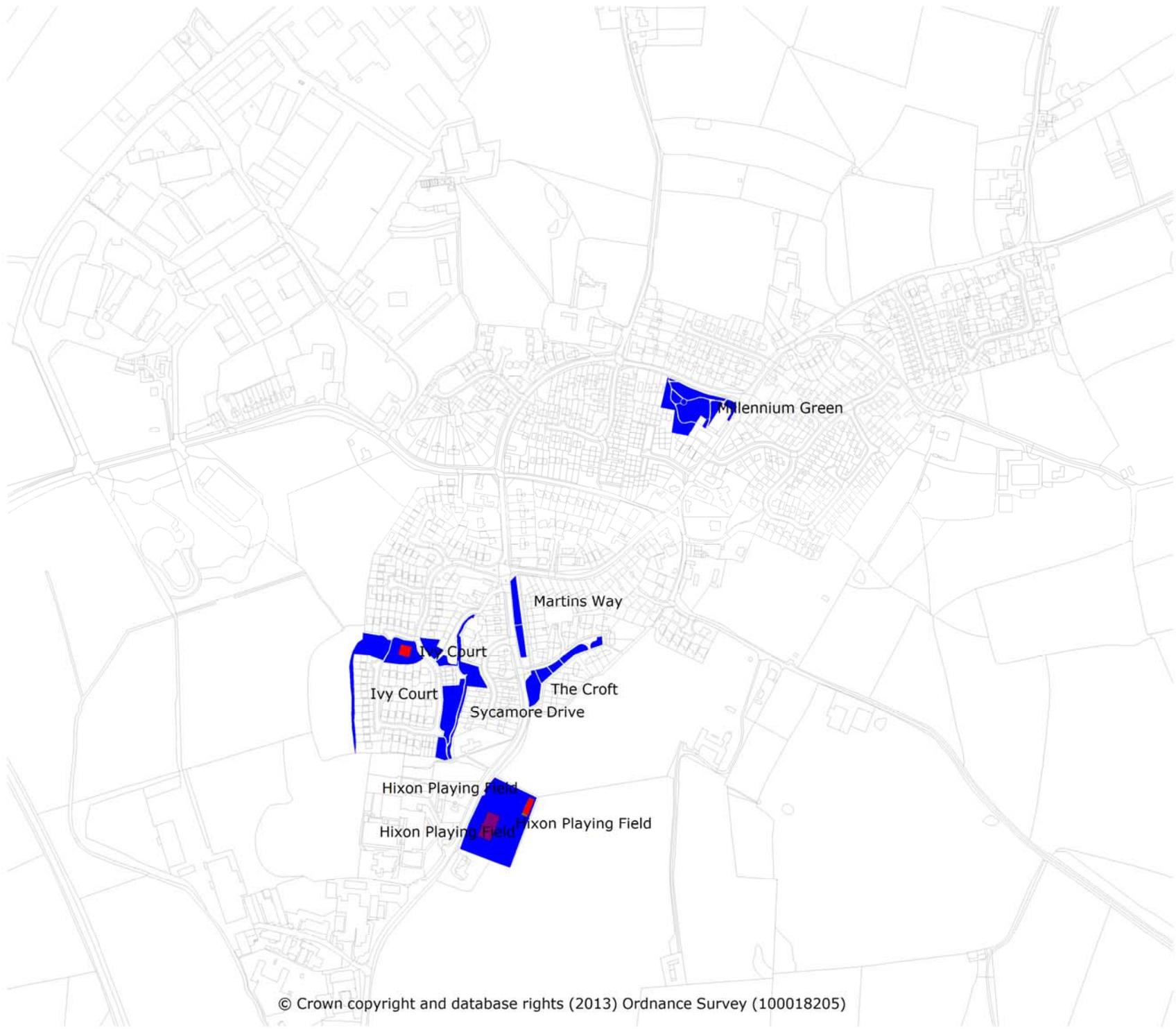
19.39 In relation to these findings:

- The Parish Council should investigate whether there is any demand for allotments
- The potential demand for an ATP or bowling green is insufficient to justify provision
- The single play area in the villager (Ivy Court) is well off centre and likely to benefit mainly children living in the south western part of the village. It will be desirable for there to be additional provision in the north east.
- While there are no grass pitches in the village, it is only a short distance from Stafford. Alternatively it may be possible to lay out a pitch on land to the east of the multi-court off Church Lane.
- The multi-court is not floodlit and it will be desirable to provide lights if possible.

Conclusions

19.40 The priority needs in Hixon are therefore:

- To investigate the potential demand for allotments
- A second children's play area in the north-east of the village
- To investigate floodlighting the multi-court off Church Lane



- Amenity greenspace
- Bowling greens
- Children's Play
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Multi-courts
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and gardens
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 19.6
Key Service Villages:
Hixon

Little Haywood and Colwich

Parish Council Views

19.41 Colwich Parish Council believes that there is a general need in the Parish for more:

- Allotments
- Amenity greenspaces
- Floodlit pitches
- Local recreation grounds
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts

19.42 It also believes there is a need to enhance the quality of available:

- Football pitches
- Local recreation grounds
- Teenage facilities

Application of Quantity Standards

19.43 Appendix J7 applies the quantity standards to Little Haywood and Colwich with the following results:

	Required (sq m)	Available (sq m)	Surplus or Deficiency (sq m)
Allotments	2,741	0	-2,741
ATPs	1,028	0	-1,028
Bowling greens	274	0	-274
Children's Play	771	136	-635
Grass pitches	25,010	8,803	-16,207
MFGS	17,130	106,676	89,546
Tennis/multi-courts	771	0	-771
Teenage facilities	343	0	-343

19.44 In relation to these findings:

- The parish Council should investigate the possible need for allotments
- The demand for ATPs and bowls is insufficient to justify provision, but as there is no bowling green in the whole of the south east planning area it will be desirable for the Parish Council to work with other parish councils in the area to assess the potential demand for a green.
- While there is only a single small play area, off St Mary's Road, the audit classed it as high quality and value and it is also reasonably close to the centre of Colwich. However, it will be desirable to increase its size as there is ample land available on the site.
- While there is only a small area of playing field at Chilwell Avenue in Colwich (marked out for

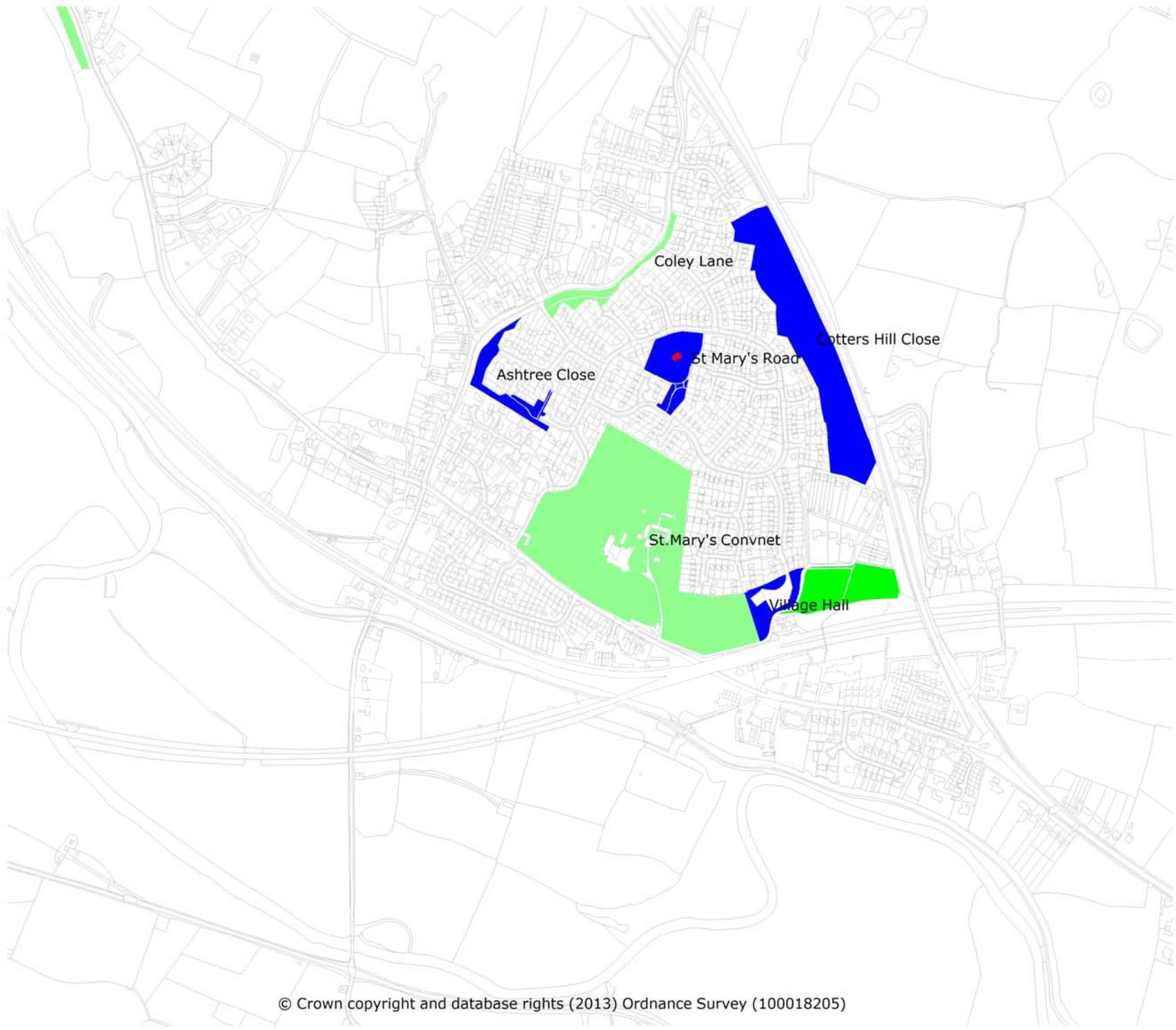
rounders in summer), both settlements are only a short distance from the Shugborough Outdoor Centre which has about 5 ha of grass pitches

- Almost three fifths of the multi-functional greenspace is a site at St Mary's Convent with no public access. However, even without this there is sufficient provision. The second largest space is at Cotters Hill Close but its amenity value is reduced by being adjacent to the busy A51.
- It will be desirable for there to be both a multi-court and teenage facilities, which can usefully be combined. The best site will probably be the playing field off Chilwell Avenue as it is adjacent to the village hall.

Conclusions

19.45 The priority needs in Little Haywood and Colwich are therefore:

- To investigate the possible need for allotments
- To investigate the need for a bowling green to serve the whole of the south east planning area
- To increase the size of the play area off St Mary's Road
- A multi-court and teenage facilities, possibly close to the village hall off Chilwell Avenue



- Amenity greenspace
- Bowling greens
- Children's Play
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Multi-courts
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and gardens
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 19.7
Key Service Villages:
Little Haywood and Colwich

Tittensor

19.46 Swynnerton Parish Council did not respond to the Parish Councils' survey.

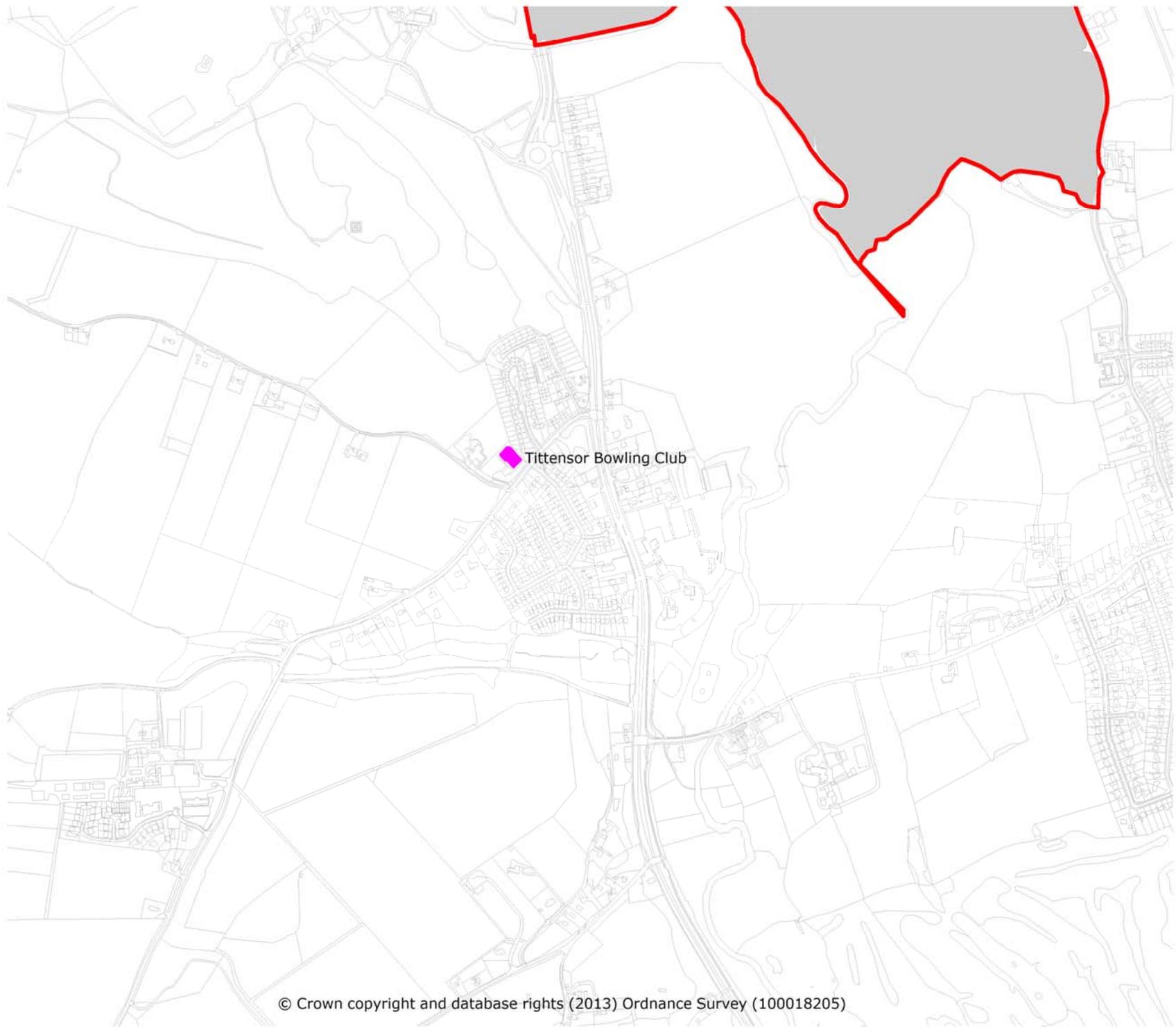
Application of Quantity Standards

19.47 Appendix J8 applies the quantity standards to Tittensor with the following results:

	Required (sq m)	Available (sq m)	Surplus or Deficiency (sq m)
Allotments	1,137	0	-1,137
ATPs	426	0	-426
Bowling greens	114	1,062	948
Children's Play	320	300	-20
Grass pitches	10,375	0	-10,375
MFGS	7,107	0	-7,107
Tennis/multi-courts	320	0	-320
Teenage facilities	142	0	-142

Conclusions

19.48 Tittensor has no provision other than a bowling green and recently provided play area beside the village hall. However, with a population of well under 1,000, it has only limited needs and its residents probably look more to Stoke-on-Trent than Stafford or Stone for access to sports facilities. In terms of access to greenspace, while there is no provision actually within the village there are areas of woodland to the south and north of it with public access. As a result Tittensor has no great need for more provision, although it will be desirable for it to have a ball court suitable for teenagers.



- Amenity greenspace
- Bowling greens
- Children's Play
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Multi-courts
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and gardens
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts

Tittensor Bowling Club



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 19.8
Key Service Villages:
Tittensor

Weston

19.49 Weston Parish Council did not respond to the Parish Councils' survey.

Application of Quantity Standards

19.50 Appendix J9 applies the quantity standards to Weston with the following results:

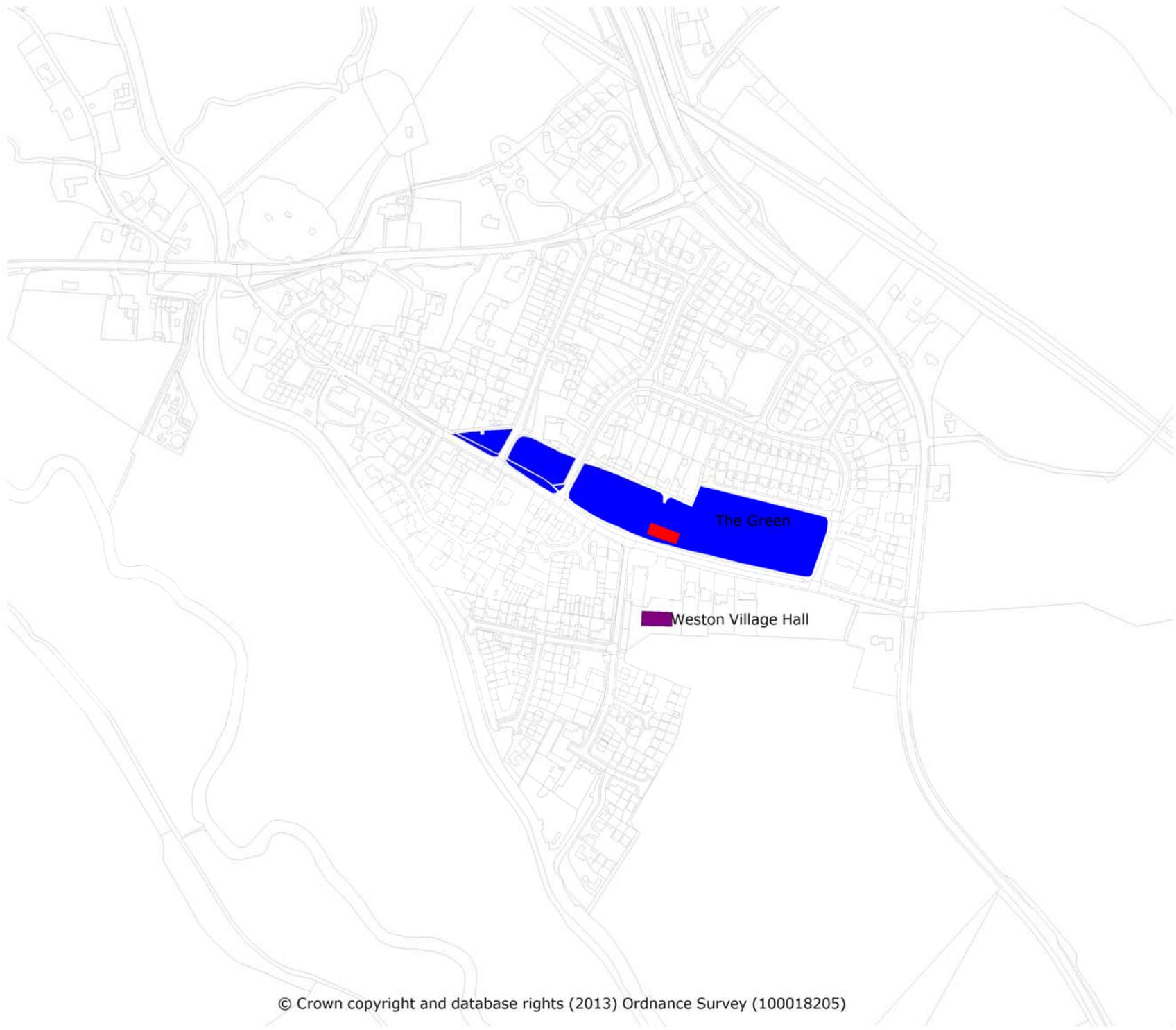
	Required (sq m)	Available (sq m)	Surplus or Deficiency (sq m)
Allotments	1,741	0	-1,741
ATPs	653	0	-653
Bowling greens	174	0	-174
Children's Play	490	358	-132
Grass pitches	15,886	0	-15,886
MFGS	10,881	16,613	5,732
Tennis/multi-courts	490	433	-57
Teenage facilities	218	0	-218

19.51 In relation to this analysis:

- Weston is fairly close to Stafford where there are enough allotments to accommodate ploholders form the village
- There is likely to be insufficient demand to justify an ATP or bowling green
- There is one children's play area, on The Green and pretty much in the centre of the village. All of the village lies within 500 m of it so there is no need for a second site.
- There are no pitches in the village but it will be possible to use The Green for mini-soccer. The nearest playing fields are in Stafford and as the Borough Council develops the proposed network of ATPs more and more football will be played on them. There are also cricket and rugby clubs in Stafford which will be able to accommodate any players fro Weston. Therefore there is no need for any pitches in the village.
- The Green is a large and attractive multi-functional greenspace in the centre of the village and there is no need for more.
- The recently built multi-court beside the village hall is slightly too small for tennis but is nonetheless a valuable local facility.
- There is likely to be a need for some limited provision for teenagers, although the multi-court will also appeal to them and they will probably congregate close to it.

Conclusions

19.52 The only potential priority need in Weston is for additional teenage provision.



- Amenity greenspace
- Bowling greens
- Children's Play
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Multi-courts
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and gardens
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 19.10
Key Service Villages:
Woodseaves and High Offley

Woodseaves and High Offley Parish Council Views

19.53 High Offley Parish Council believes that there is a need for more:

- Allotments
- Amenity greenspaces
- Changing pavilions
- Children's play facilities (all ages)
- Football pitches (all ages)
- Local recreation grounds
- Multi-courts
- Rugby pitches

19.54 It also believes there is a need to enhance the quality of available:

- Amenity greenspaces
- Changing pavilions
- Football pitches
- Local recreation grounds
- Multi-courts
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities

Application of Quantity Standards

19.55 Appendix J10 applies the quantity standards to Woodseaves and High Offley and gives the following results:

	Required (sq m)	Available (sq m)	Surplus or Deficiency (sq m)
Allotments	1,256	0	-1,256
ATPs	471	0	-471
Bowling greens	126	0	-126
Children's Play	353	0	-353
Grass pitches	11,464	5,167	-6,297
MFGS	7,852	2,460	-5,392
Tennis/multi-courts	353	0	-353
Teenage facilities	157	0	-157

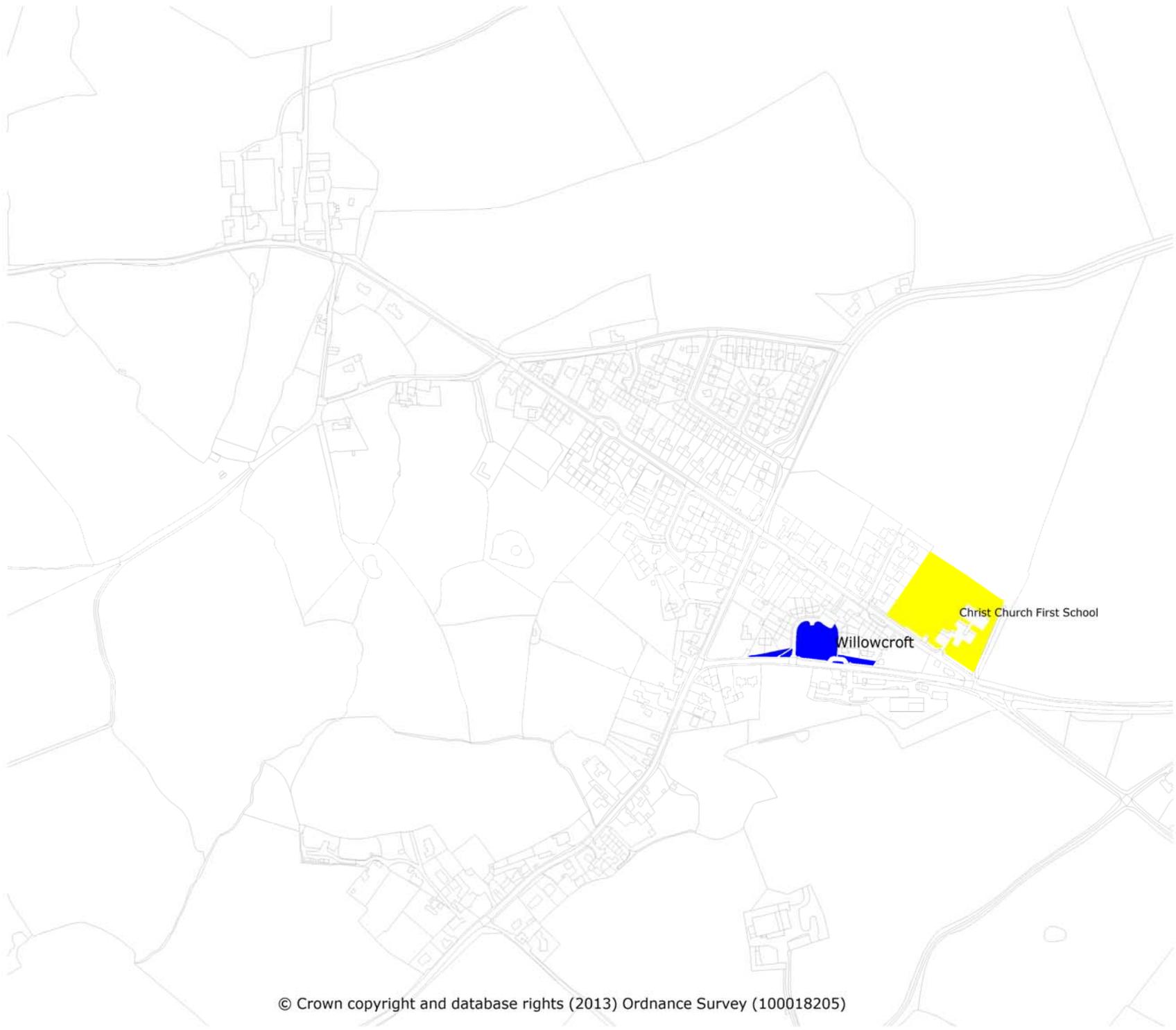
19.56 In relation to this analysis:

- All of the available provision is in Woodseaves, with none in High Offley. However, High Offley has only a very small number of residents.
- The potential demand for allotments, ATPs and bowling greens is likely to be too low to justify provision
- There is no children's play provision but a fairly small local area is desirable. However, this could consist of some natural play features in the main multi-functional greenspace in the

- village, Willowcroft.
- Christ Church First School has a grassed area that it uses as a mini-soccer pitch and also marks out for athletics in summer. The goal closer to Dickys Lane is much more heavily worn than the one further away, suggesting that it may be used informally by local young people for kickabouts. The village is probably too small to have a football team so the lack of a full size pitch is not particularly serious.
 - The only publicly accessible greenspace in the village is Willowcroft, a featureless green desert without even a tree. It will be desirable to enhance it by planting as well as the natural play features suggested above.
 - The school playground is marked out for netball but is not fenced and so not really suitable for use as a multi-court. It will be desirable to provide a proper multi-court and this will also double up as a teenage facility.

Conclusions

- 19.57 The only significant need in Woodseaves is for a floodlit multi-court.



- Amenity greenspace
- Bowling greens
- Children's Play
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Multi-courts
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and gardens
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 19.10
Key Service Villages:
Woodseaves and High Offley

Yarnfield

Parish Council Views

19.58 Swynnerton Parish Council did not respond to the Parish Councils' survey.

Application of Quantity Standards

19.59 Appendix J11 applies the quantity standards to Yarnfield with the following results:

	Required (sq m)	Available (sq m)	Surplus or Deficiency (sq m)
Allotments	1,965	0	-1,965
ATPs	737	0	-737
Bowling greens	196	0	-196
Children's Play	553	310	-243
Grass pitches	17,927	88,260	70,333
MFGS	12,279	30,498	18,219
Tennis/multi-courts	552	0	-553
Teenage facilities	246	0	-246

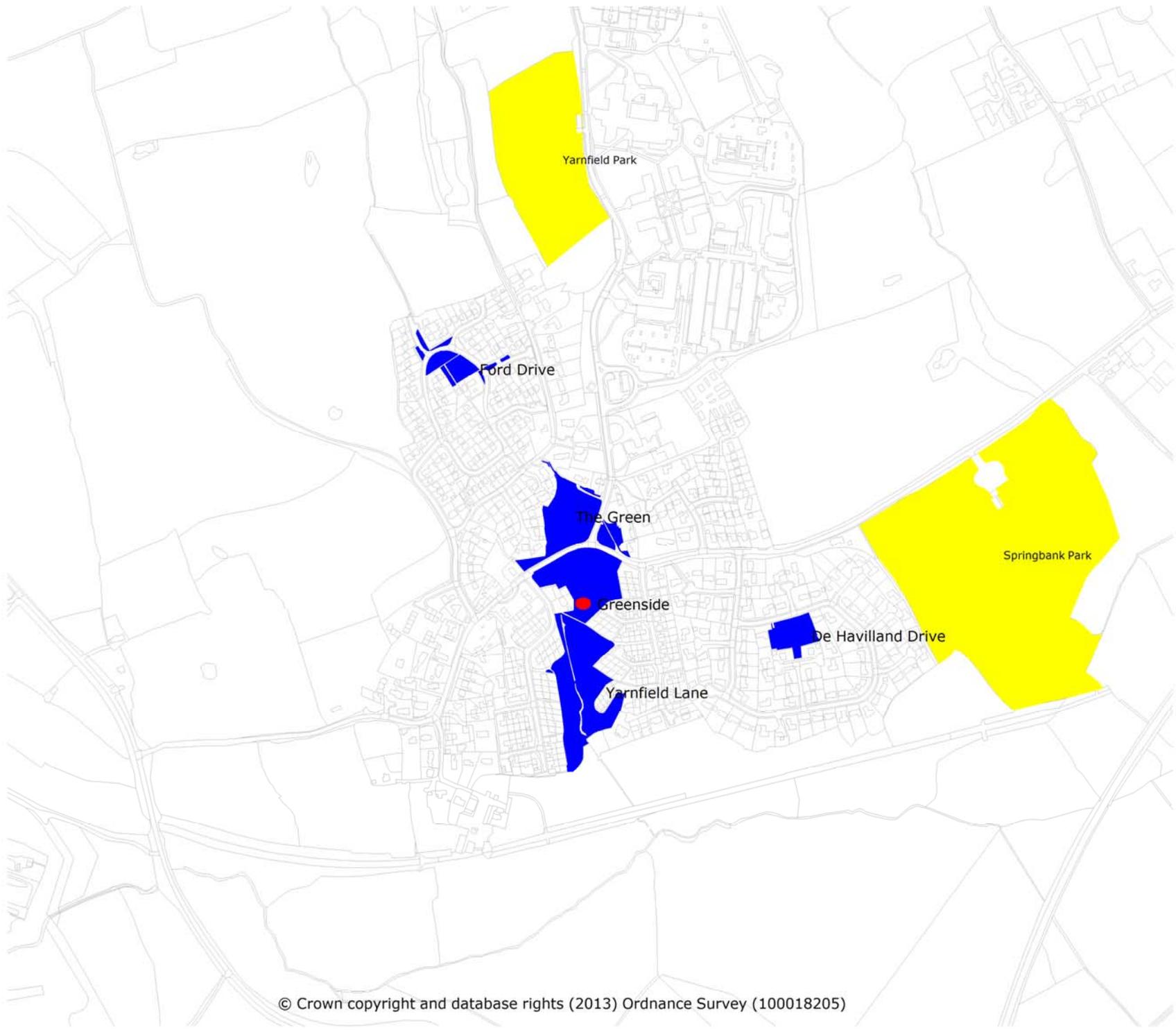
19.60 In relation to this analysis:

- There may be a need for a fairly small allotments site, especially if the former BT training centre to the north of the village is developed with a significant amount of housing
- The privately owned Wellbeing Park football centre on the eastern edge of the village has four adult football and four mini-soccer pitches. It is by far the best football complex in the Borough and as the Borough Council develops its network of 3G ATPs the owners may decide to provide a similar pitch, or at least a 60 x 40 m 3G pitch, in order to remain popular. However, Yarnfield on its own does not justify an ATP.
- There is unlikely to be sufficient demand to justify the provision of a bowling green.
- While the single Greenside children's play area is of limited play value, the Borough and Parish Councils have plans to extend and upgrade it.
- In addition to Wellbeing Park, the former BT training centre also used to have a football pitch.
- The village has a green spine running north-south down the central part of the southern section. Although its area is less than required by the quantity standards, its components are large enough to be valuable spaces. There is also a sizeable greenspace off De Havilland Drive. As a result there is probably no need for more multi-functional greenspace at present. However, any development of the former BT Training centre should include on-site greenspace.

Conclusions

19.61 The priority needs in Yarnfield are:

- To investigate the potential need for a small allotments site
- To extend and enhance children's play provision (already in hand)
- To provide a floodlit multi-court and nearby teenage facilities (already in hand)



- Amenity greenspace
- Bowling greens
- Children's Play
- Cricket pitches
- Football pitches
- Multi-courts
- Natural greenspaces
- Open access playing fields
- Parks and gardens
- Rugby pitches
- Teenage facilities
- Tennis courts



**Stafford Borough Council
Open Space, Sport and
Recreation Assessment 2013**

Map 19.11
Key Service Villages:
Yarnfield