



Borough of Poole

Open Spaces Strategy

**Helping to plan and prioritise the management and improvement of
Poole's public open spaces**

A suggested vision for Poole's open spaces:

“ A network of open space of the highest quality, diversity and beauty that underpins the culture, prosperity and quality of life in Poole for existing and future residents, and that is managed in a way that provides a refuge for wildlife, benefits the environment, and provides a free, accessible recreational resource to residents and visitors. ”

Leisure Services
Borough of Poole 2004

CONTENTS

PAGE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4-5

PART 1 BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

6

OBJECTIVES

6

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

7

DEFINING WHAT IS MEANT BY PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

7

THE DTLR OPEN SPACE TYPOLOGY

8

FIGURE 1 - OPEN SPACE MAP OF POOLE

9

PART 2 POLICY CONTEXT TO THE STRATEGY

PUBLIC POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR OPEN SPACE

10-11

THE LEGAL BACKGROUND

12

TOWN PLANNING BACKGROUND

13-14

OTHER STRATEGIES AND PLANS

14

A PLANNING CLASSIFICATION FOR OPEN SPACE

15-17

PART 3 AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

PPG17

18

THE VALUE OF OPEN SPACE - KEY ATTRIBUTES

18

ACCESSIBILITY

18-19

QUANTITY

20

FIGURE 2 DISTRIBUTION OF ALL OPEN SPACE BY WARD

21

FIGURE 3 AMENITY AND CASUAL PLAY SPACE BY WARD

22

FIGURE 4 YOUTH AND ADULT PLAY FACILITIES

23

FIGURE 5 NATURAL GREENSPACE BY WARD

24

QUALITY

25

MULTIFUNCTIONALITY

26

PRIMARY PURPOSE

26

USING KEY ATTRIBUTES TO ASSESS OPEN SPACE

27

SUCCESSFUL OPEN SPACE

27-28

FAILING OPEN SPACE

29

CASE STUDIES

30

CONTENTS

PAGE

PART 3 AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION	31
FINANCIAL RESOURCES	32

PART FOUR : EVALUATION AND ISSUES

THE STRATEGIC APPROACH TO OPEN SPACE	33
OUTCOMES	33
EVALUATING THE CURRENT SITUATION	34
KEY ISSUES	35
VISION AND POLICY FOR OPEN SPACE	35

PART FIVE : REALISING THE STRATEGY

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACTION PLAN	36
AIM 1 PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT	37-41
AIM 2 CARE AND SUSTAINABILITY	42-44
AIM 3 PARTICIPATION AND USE	45-48

APPENDIX 1 : LOCAL PLAN POLICY	49
---------------------------------------	-----------

APPENDIX 2 : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT OF MAJOR OPEN SPACES IN POOLE	50-59
--	--------------

APPENDIX 3 : INVENTORY, CLASSIFICATION AND AREAS OF OPEN SPACE BY WARD	60-70
---	--------------

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Open Space Strategy is an important tool to assist planning for leisure activity, services and facilities. It is intended to help to manage and improve open spaces according to community aspirations and needs, within resource constraints. (It is closely linked to another document – the Sports and Recreation Strategy).

The Open Space Strategy sets out to:

- develop and promote a better understanding of the role of open space in delivering major policy objectives
- provide the groundwork for a robust audit and review of the use, distribution, function, quality and accessibility of open space in Poole
- assess community needs and opportunities for the provision of open space and related recreational facilities
- formulate policy for effective planning of open space for local communities
- make recommendations for an action plan with clear and measurable outcomes

The strategy states the value of open space to the community in terms of quality of life and well-being through exercise and enjoyment, also sustainability, biodiversity and the protection of natural habitats. It also sets out the policy context of this work. Financial constraints are discussed, particularly the difficulty in investing capital funding in maintaining and refurbishing the infrastructure of our open spaces. The importance of community in the management and improvement of open space is stressed - as demonstrated by the Council's partnership with existing 'Friends' groups.

A preliminary audit and qualitative assessment of open space has been carried out to provide a strategic overview of existing facilities of in Poole. This assists development of a prioritised action plan. A continuing process of audit and evaluation of existing facilities should be an integral part of the Council's programme for developing open space provision in Poole. Reliable information on accessibility, use and quality of open space in relationship to public need is required.

It is intended that the strategy should demonstrate compliance with the Government's Planning Policy Guidance note for Open Space, Sport, and Recreation (PPG17), which suggests that a "robust assessment of existing and future needs" is needed to plan for open space and recreational facilities.

Definitions and criteria for evaluation of open space are discussed, and applied to case studies to demonstrate their application. PPG 17 recommends that local authorities should develop local standards for open space, based on identified community needs, that are appropriate and achievable.

Emerging issues include:

- Although Poole has a beautiful natural environment and some high quality parks, the amount of public open space in some of the older and more densely urban areas is limited and does not meet Local Plan standards for provision.
- Where practicable in areas of deficiency, acquisition of additional land will be a priority. Where this is not possible, the shortfall will be addressed by focusing on the overall “fitness of purpose” of existing space. Well thought out upgrading can do much to increase the capacity and utilisation of recreational land.
- Although some open spaces are ‘successful’ in terms of their fitness for purpose, others are clearly failing as recreational facilities.
- The “traditional” reasons for providing public open space – physical and spiritual health, social cohesion and identity, environment, economic and cultural value, recreation and physical exercise – are still valid. These benefits support Governments objectives of improving “liveability” in towns.
- The strategy suggests that to improve open space for the enjoyment of the people of Poole, we can often make more difference to the quality of open space than we can to quantity.

It is suggested that there should be three main aims for the strategy:

1. PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT

Providing enough open space of the right type and quality, where it is needed, for the use of existing and future residents and visitors.

2. PARTICIPATION AND USE

Enabling people to get more use and enjoyment of open space, and ensuring that the community derives maximum benefit from its resources.

3. CARE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Looking after the open space assets of Poole in an efficient and effective manner that takes account of its social, heritage and wildlife value, and makes a contribution to the delivery of wider public policy objectives.

Part 5 of the document, “Realising the strategy”, suggests how we might put these concepts and findings into practice. Objectives and policy guidelines are suggested to address these aims and actions are proposed. Consultation is needed to see if we have gauged the issues correctly and to explain to our customers why the strategy is needed, and how it will be used. This should help the Council prioritise its proposals to manage and improve Poole’s open spaces.

PART ONE : THE BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Eighty per cent of the population of England lives in towns and cities. Even if we desire to live in the green countryside, few of us can choose to do so. From economic or social necessity most people live in urban areas. Life in town is exciting, challenging, and offers social, educational and employment opportunities, but it may also be crowded, noisy, stressful and lonely. Green open space offers accessible places for people to find calm, relax, take exercise, socialise, and to enjoy respite from the pressures of urban life.

1.1.2 The network of open space is a significant part of the visual and physical environment and gives towns much of their distinctive character. The quality of this open space is fundamental in meeting wider public policy objectives such as 'liveability' sustainability, biodiversity, protection of natural resources and habitats. Green open space is the most significant component of the 'public realm' that helps to sustain stable and cohesive communities

1.1.3 Open space is increasingly subject to stress and damaging influences : from overuse or inappropriate use, from development pressure, from social and technological change, and from insufficient resources to care for it as it should be. Even the largest, best designed and most robust "traditional" public open spaces (such as Poole Park) are now under new pressures, and may need restoration and new facilities. Unless open space in Poole is planned, managed and cared for **strategically**, it is unlikely that it will serve its intended function properly.

1.2 OBJECTIVES The primary objectives of the strategy are:

- To develop and promote a better understanding of the role of open space in the delivery of major public policy objectives.
- To provide the groundwork for a robust audit and review of the use, distribution, function, quality and accessibility of open space in Poole.
- To assess existing and future needs of the community for open space.
- To identify opportunities for the provision of new open space and recreational facilities to meet deficiencies, or to make increased use of existing open space through better design, management and maintenance.
- To formulate Council policy for effective planning of open space for local communities.
- Make recommendations for an action plan to deliver strategic objectives, with clear measurable outcomes.

PART ONE : THE BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY

1.3 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STRATEGY

1.3.1 The methodology should include:

- **a review of the national and local policy context for open space**
- **an audit and assessment of the quantity, quality, accessibility of facilities**
- **evaluation of the available information and issues**
- **an examination of the needs of the community for open space**

1.3.2 It is necessary to set a realistic scope for the strategy. “Open space” is a concept that can be interpreted in many ways. In its broadest sense it is *“the part of the urban area that contributes to its amenity, either visually (by contributing positively to the urban landscape) or by virtue of public access.* However, to ensure we understand what the strategy is intended to deliver, a more clearly focused definition is needed,

1.4 DEFINING WHAT IS MEANT BY PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

1.4.1 The strategy primarily focuses on *publicly owned* green open space in Poole. This land is usually (but not necessarily exclusively) used for amenity, leisure and recreational purposes. In Poole, almost all public open space is owned and managed by the local authority.

1.4.2 English Nature regard green open space as being further divided between “natural greenspace” and “more formally managed recreational sites. An open space typology is found in the DTLR report *“Green Spaces, Better Places”* and in Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PP17) “Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation” This is widely accepted as a useful system for categorising and understanding open space and is reproduced below.

1.4.3 Green open space is characterised by being predominantly unsealed, permeable and softened by soil, grass, shrubs and trees. (“predominantly”, because green open space may include some buildings and hard surfaced areas) The definition therefore includes all public parks and gardens, recreation grounds, play areas, greenways and incidental amenity land, as well as other open space with different origins and use. For example, in Poole, it also includes large areas of heath and semi natural woodland, to which the public have access, but which may not be physically very accessible. (The equivalent of the English Nature “natural green space” category) It also includes a few school playing fields, where there is be a formal access agreement.

NOTE : Although private open space is not given extensive consideration in the strategy, it is recognised as providing a contribution to the urban landscape. Pockets of private green space may sometimes be used for recreation by all or some of the population. Most large areas of private green space lie within the Green Belt, where public access is limited to footpaths and bridleways. In this context, the importance of rights of way to recreational use must be emphasised.

PART ONE : THE BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY

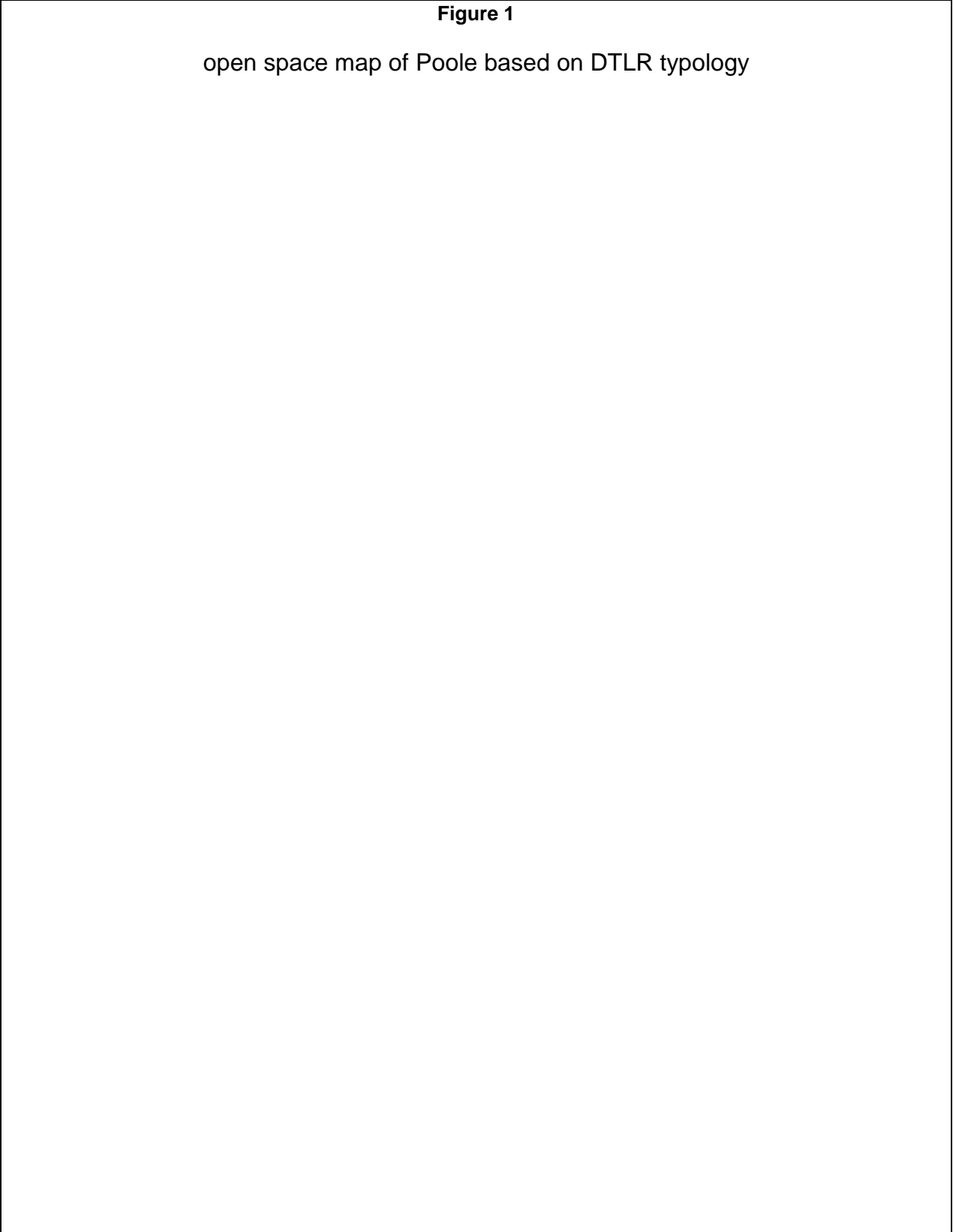
1.5 DTLR OPEN SPACE TYPOLOGY

GREEN OPEN SPACE			
	TYPE	DEFINITION / EXAMPLE	PRIMARY PURPOSE
GS 1	PARKS AND GARDENS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban parks, Formal public gardens, Country parks 	Accessible, high quality open space that offers opportunities for informal recreation and community events
GS 2	AMENITY GREENSPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal recreational open space Green space in residential development Highway verges in residential areas Village greens Other incidental landscaped areas Private greenspace that has visual or other value, even if no physical public access is possible 	Opportunity for informal activities close to home or work. Even when amenity green space has have no potential for active recreation, it is often of visual importance, and it enhances the appearance of the area.
GS 3	OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sports pitches Tennis courts Bowling greens Golf courses (if public) Athletics tracks School playing fields * 	<p>Participation in outdoor sports and healthy living. The strategy primarily considers publicly available facilities.</p> <p>* This includes local authority school playing fields where community use is permitted, or possible in future.</p>
GS 4	PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipped play facilities Wheeled sports facilities (skateparks) Ballcourts Meeting places and youth shelters 	Play and social interaction involving children and young people.
GS 5	CEMETERIES, CHURCHYARDS AND BURIAL GROUNDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> public cemeteries burial grounds churchyards crematoria grounds 	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead. Cemeteries may be the only large areas of open space in some inner urban areas. Provision is linked to historical and cultural values. Sites may have value as refuges for wildlife
GS 6	ALLOTMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> allotments community gardens city farms 	Provides the opportunity for people to grow their own food. Promotes sustainability, healthy living and social inclusion. Public access usually restricted to plot holders
GS 7	NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heathland and nature reserves woodland wetlands water course and ponds unimproved grassland cliffs sand dunes 	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity, environmental education and awareness. Nature conservation will usually take priority over recreational uses in determining management regimes. Where the land is subject to a statutory designation such as SSSI, SAC or SPA, the Council has a duty to proactively manage it for nature conservation purposes.
GS 8	GREEN CORRIDORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> linear open space river banks verges to main traffic routes leisureways / greenways off road cycle and pedestrian routes. 	Walking, cycling ,running, horse riding, for both recreation and urban travel. May be part of a wider alternative network of non vehicular transportation routes, and provide links that integrate fragmented local open spaces into a borough wide system of green open space.
CIVIC SPACE			
	TYPE	DEFINITION / EXAMPLE	PRIMARY PURPOSE
CS1	BEACHES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> promenades beaches 	Informal recreation and enjoyment. Summer tourism and holidaymaking. Local Economy
CS2	URBAN SPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> civic squares plazas pedestrianised precincts quayside 	Setting for civic buildings, markets, public demonstrations and community events.

PART ONE : THE BACKGROUND TO THE STRATEGY

Figure 1

open space map of Poole based on DTLR typology



PART TWO : POLICY CONTEXT TO THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

2.0 WHY PUBLIC OPEN SPACE IS NEEDED

An understanding of why public open space exists in towns is required : why it is important, and how national and local policies affect or guide its provision. These issues are reviewed in this section.

2.1 PUBLIC POLICY OBJECTIVES FOR OPEN SPACE

2.1.1 The government has set out many of its national policies for open space in a recently published paper : ***Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17 : Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation***. This document recommends that local authorities prepare open space strategies. A brief summary of these public policy objectives is set out below.

2.1.2 **Urban renaissance** The Government believes that improving the “liveability” of large towns and cities is a high priority. Good quality open space is a vital element in the success of regeneration projects. In the context of Poole, creating open space will be a significant part of the town centre regeneration project (linked to the second opening bridge), and in making Poole an attractive and beautiful place for the twenty first century. To do this, the Council and its partners will also have to make effective and efficient use of available land.

2.1.3 **Economic prosperity** Open space has economic importance. Good quality parks, open spaces and accessible countryside supports property values and increases the attraction of the town as a desirable place in which to live, work and invest. The green setting, natural environment and recreational facilities of Poole are important resources that influence the valuable tourism and visitor market.

2.1.4 **Culture and Diversity** PPG 17 recognises that “*open spaces, sports and recreation all underpin people’s quality of life*”. The Cultural Plan for Poole (“Whatever Floats your Boat”) confirms the importance of open space to the cultural life of the town. It is a resource for formal recreational activities such as organised sports, it is used for events and celebrations, and as a setting for a wide range of informal, less structured leisure pursuits. Open space has educational and historical value, and is a component of the distinct character that makes Poole a “beautiful place”.

2.1.5 **Social inclusion and community cohesion:** Open space is one of the most significant, widely distributed, flexible and accessible recreational resources available to residents and visitors. Urban parks and open spaces are inclusive facilities that offer no barriers or restrictions to entry. No-one should be excluded for reasons of age, gender, race, sexuality, disability, education or poverty. Provision of good quality open space aligns well with the Council’s aims and values, and needs to be an integral part of the Community Plan that is currently being prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership

PART TWO : POLICY CONTEXT TO THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

2.1.6 Healthy living Open space has an important role in the health of individuals and communities. It should be available and accessible to everyone, whether for active sport (e.g. playing pitches) or unstructured recreational use (e.g. walking, jogging or casual games). Even passive enjoyment of open space may contribute to stress reduction. Availability of open space is a key factor in the delivery of national health strategies. Attractive, accessible outdoor facilities will encourage people to take regular exercise - a proven factor in reducing obesity and counteracting effects of a sedentary and stressful lifestyle. Appropriate venues (such as open space, which is free to all) are the key to the success of many health initiatives, particularly those targeted at children and disadvantaged members of the community .

2.1.7 Quality of Life Opportunities for fresh air, exercise and the psychotherapeutic benefits of contact with the natural environment should be freely available to everyone living in urban areas. The importance of open space as a “green lung” for urban living was a historical ideal that underlay the creation of many of our finest parks and gardens. This concept is still valid today and supported by modern scientific evidence. Even without direct access for active use, public open space can be passively enjoyed for its visual, spiritual and environmental qualities. Everyone in Poole, directly or indirectly, derives benefit from open space. Provision of open space and quality of urban life are closely related issues.

2.1.8 Environment, biodiversity and climate change Biodiversity is not something of interest only to naturalists - it is a good indicator of wider environmental health. Positive measures taken to improve open space as a habitat for wildlife will assist the achievement of other environmental objectives. European legislation now makes it a duty for owners of some types of wildlife habitats to actively manage them properly. The importance of open space to the environment of urban areas should not be underestimated. It is now generally accepted that global warming is a real phenomenon that will significantly affect most of us within our lifetime. Green open space (particularly where it has tree cover) is one of the most effective agents in moderating the extreme effects of climate change in towns. Although visual amenity and recreational use are often seen as the primary benefits of open space, there are wider environmental reasons for maintaining and increasing the amount of green open space in Poole.

2.1.9 Sustainability. The important role played by open space in meeting sustainability objectives should be recognised.

- Open spaces integrated into a borough wide network of “green corridors” containing safe and attractive pedestrian routes and cycle ways that link important destinations can help to reduce dependence on cars for short journeys
- Open space has an important role in the delivery of “sustainable urban drainage schemes”.
- Allotments are a good example of a sustainable land use that also provides social and health benefits to the community.

PART TWO : POLICY CONTEXT TO THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

2.2 THE LEGAL BACKGROUND TO OPEN SPACE PROVISION

2.2.1 There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide public open space, However, there are Acts of Parliament that empower local authorities to provide and manage land for purposes of public health, enjoyment, recreation and amenity. Most local authorities choose to use these powers.

2.2.2 For owners of open space, there are many principles of common law that can influence the way in which it is managed.

2.2.3 There is specific legislation that has a significant impact on the way open space should be managed in Poole. Some of these are noted below:

- **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW)**

A complex and important piece of recent legislation that contains requirements that are of direct relevance to the open space strategy. These include the requirement to map and define "Access Land" and the duty to prepare and publish a 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan' (ROWIP). The Borough of Poole is required to prepare and publish a ROWIP by November 2007 covering:

- the whole borough
- assessment of the extent to which local ROW meet present and future public needs
- opportunities for exercise and outdoor recreation provided by local ROW
- footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways.
- assessment of accessibility for visual and mobility impaired people (Including prams)
- statement of action with costing.

The preparation of the ROWIP clearly has implications for public parks and open spaces.

- **European Union Directives on wildlife conservation**

Among other things these place a legal obligation on the land owner of designated and protected sites to actively manage the land in order to maintain and enhance its value for wildlife. Many of the semi-natural open spaces in Poole are subject to these directives.

- **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

The final statutory instruments of this Act (which come into force next year) require "physical adjustments to premises and the delivery of services" of which access to public parks and outdoor recreational provision (e.g. children's play facilities) must be considered a service.

A Code of Practice offers guidance on the practical implications of this act to local authorities

PART TWO : POLICY CONTEXT TO THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

2.3 THE TOWN PLANNING BACKGROUND

2.3.1 The Poole Local Plan contains a number of important land use policies relating to open space in the chapter dealing with “Leisure and Recreation “. This provides part of the context to the Open Space Strategy. However, land use and planning policy cannot supply the necessary detail to guide the management of local open space.

2.3.2 The Local Plan puts considerable emphasis on the quantitative aspects of provision, but it is less able to deal with the design and qualitative attributes of public open space. Because it is a straightforward exercise to measure quantity, it is the most easy attribute for which to set standards for provision. The Poole Local Plan identifies the following quantitative standards of provision for recreational open space.

AMENITY OPEN SPACE	0.8 HECTARES PER THOUSAND POPULATION
CASUAL AND EQUIPPED PLAY	0.6 - 0.8 HECTARES PER THOUSAND POPULATION
YOUTH AND ADULT PLAY FACILITIES (SPORTS PITCHES)	1.6 - 1.8 HECTARES PER THOUSAND POPULATION
TOTAL	3.2 HECTARES PER THOUSAND POPULATION

It should be noted that there is no standard for provision of “natural green space”

2.3.3 Local Plan standards are aimed primarily at new residential development. They obviously cannot be applied retrospectively to existing provision. In many older parts of Poole these quantitative standards will never be achievable. It may be necessary to set more realistic *local targets* in some particularly deficient areas. However, the Local Plan standards are a useful benchmark with which to compare the levels of provision in different parts of Poole.

2.3.4 Most of the borough is urban in character, but there are significant remaining areas of greenbelt that reflect its original rural setting. The expansion of Poole in the late twentieth century was comparable to some of the most rapid urban growth anywhere in England, but within tighter boundary constraints and with far fewer resources than many designated new towns. To the west of Poole, there is access to unspoilt countryside.

2.3.5 Between 1960 and 1990 the urbanised area of Poole roughly doubled. Most of the undeveloped land that was not designated green belt, SSSI or public open space was built over. The development of this period was often on a large scale, and many new open spaces were created during the planning process to provide recreational facilities.

PART TWO : POLICY CONTEXT TO THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

2.3.6 However, provision of resources to manage and maintain this land was not always commensurate with the increased responsibilities, with a result that some of this open space has not been cared for to an acceptable standard. Some catching up of the revenue budget has recently been agreed, but more resources may be necessary if public needs for quality open space are to be met.

2.3.7 In the future there will be fewer large areas of new homes built in Poole, and less opportunity to provide new open spaces through development on site. But this does not mean that development will cease, or that additional recreational facilities will not be required. There will be more infill, conversion of large houses, plot subdivision, and recycling of brownfield land, all generating a need for recreational facilities.

2.3.8 Where new development does not provide new open space on site, planning obligations may be used to secure developer contributions for off site provision to meet the recreational needs of the development this could be used to provide new facilities. It would also be possible to use contributions for qualitative improvements designed to improve the ability of existing facilities to meet additional demand.

2.3.9 Census projections estimate that the population of Poole in the next ten years will increase from approximately 140,000 (2001) to 145,500 (2011) It is predicted that demographic and cultural changes will create a demand for several thousand more new homes, many of which are expected to be built within the existing developed urban areas. Higher densities of development will increase recreational pressures and aspirations for open space.

2.3.10 It is obviously not possible to summarise all planning policy in this document but the detailed local plan policies that directly affect the provision and management of public open spaces in Poole are noted in **APPENDIX 1**

2.4 OTHER STRATEGIES AND PLANS

2.4.1 There are a number of other existing local strategies and plans that will have land use and policy implications to the open space strategy. These include

- **Poole Nature Conservation Strategy**
- **Sports and Recreation Strategy (in preparation)**
- **Poole Playing Pitch Strategy (in preparation)**
- **Children's Play Strategy**
- **The Cultural Strategy for Poole**
- **The Community Plan**
- **The Local Transport Plan**
- **Local Agenda 21 and Sustainability**

2.4.2 All of these need to be reviewed in the context of the open space strategy. Where there are key elements contained in other strategies that can be delivered through an open space action plan, it is important that they are identified.

PART TWO : POLICY CONTEXT TO THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

2.5 A PLANNING CLASSIFICATION FOR OPEN SPACE PROVISION

A slightly different system for describing open space provision in urban areas is often used for strategic planning purposes. The value of this approach is that shows how open space can be assessed in terms of a hierarchy, using the concept of an ‘access threshold distance’ to link attributes of quantity, quality and purpose to accessibility. This is a nominal catchment area, which needs to be interpreted carefully, because it may be influenced by local factors and the overall distribution of open space

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION AND TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS	ACCESS THRESHOLD DISTANCE
<p>DISTRICT PARK</p> <p>or</p> <p>MAJOR PARK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A large open space (10 - 50 hectares) with clearly defined boundaries. • Specifically laid out or adapted for recreational purposes • Contains a good range of opportunities for recreation • Has a varied landscape. • Information, interpretation and maps at all access points. • Usually has public conveniences • Good infrastructure and furniture • All main paths hard surfaced • Main pedestrian / cycle routes should have lighting. • Often has catering facilities • High standards of horticultural and/or conservation maintenance, with some showpiece features. • Heavily used, particularly by local people • Accessible by foot, cycle and public transport • Should have some dedicated car parking on site. • Should have some maintenance staff based on site • Should have a large and well equipped children’s play area • Usually will have some sports facilities • Dogs allowed subject to controls • Should have a detailed management plan formulated specifically for the site 	<p>Maximum 1.2 kilometre walk of every household for a district park</p>
<p>LOCAL PARK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A medium sized open space (2 -10 hectares) with clearly defined boundaries. • Varied landscape, laid out or adapted for recreational use. • Good standard of maintenance • Reasonable range of interest and facilities • Some hard surfaced paths • Unlikely to have public conveniences • Unlikely to have catering facilities on site • Should have site information at access points • Usually should have a children’s play area • Heavily used, mostly by local people • Unlikely to have dedicated parking on site • May have limited sports facilities • Unusual to have maintenance staff based on site • Dogs allowed subject to controls 	<p>Maximum of 0.4 kilometres walk from every household</p>

PART TWO : POLICY CONTEXT TO THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION AND TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS	ACCESS THRESHOLD DISTANCE
<p>RECREATION GROUND</p> <p>(primarily sports pitches)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be any size, but typically 5 - 20 hectares • Unenclosed, or defined by roads and residential property • Lacks variety of landscape and interesting features, and tends to be dominated by mown grass - “green desert” • Planting usually peripheral and non structural, often only a few mature trees. • Laid out as sports pitches, but not otherwise designed for wider recreational use • Primary use is for active team sports • Other recreational uses may be limited by the lack of attractive features, perceived bleakness and few inclusive facilities • Limited ancillary facilities, usually related to active sports use (i.e. changing rooms, pavilions) • Usually has dedicated on site parking • Few (if any) hard surfaced paths • Very limited park furniture • Conveniences usually only available to sports users • Occasionally may have equipped play facilities • Medium to low intensity of use by local people, outside of the times when formal games are played • Horticultural maintenance often related only to turf care • Very rare to have staff present except when routine maintenance carried out 	<p>The access threshold is not specified since adult sports users are generally willing and able to travel to use pitches</p>
<p>SMALL LOCAL PARK</p> <p>or</p> <p>amenity open space</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small open spaces (0.2 - 2 hectares) • Often in residential areas • Formal boundaries rare, usually defined by the surrounding roads or residential development. • “Backland” sites and SLOAP with poor configurations may be of limited recreational value and underused. • Design and landscape quality very variable • Horticultural maintenance usually to lowest acceptable standard • Prominently located areas may be horticultural showpiece sites. • Site information is usually regulatory or restrictive (e.g. byelaws) rather than interpretative and enabling. • Sites at lower end of size range useful primarily for passive recreation and visual amenity. • Sites at lower end of size range may be subject to conflicts of use (eg. ball games close to residential property) • Sites at upper end of size range may be multifunctional, and permit a wide range of facilities / activities such as equipped play, informal sports use. • May be of nature conservation value • Unlikely to have public conveniences • Very unlikely to have site based maintenance staff. 	<p>0.4 kilometres of every household</p>

PART TWO : POLICY CONTEXT TO THE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION AND TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS	ACCESS THRESHOLD DISTANCE
<p>NATURE RESERVE</p> <p>or</p> <p>natural greenspace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non - hierarchical in terms of size and location • May be any size, but often medium/large open spaces (> 5 hectares) Some sites very large (> 300 hectares) • Usually open boundaries and unrestricted public access • Landscape character largely determined by habitat management • Primary function is to provide a refuge / habitat for wildlife with emphasis on promoting biodiversity • Recreational use of the land is a secondary priority in relation to its conservation value and may be limited to informal low intensity / low impact activities such as walking • Public access is generally encouraged, but may be constrained by the potential risk of damage to habitats • Most reserves are subject to EC directives and legislation • Visitor facilities are often limited to signage, ownership identification and interpretation • Misuse and arson may be problems 	<p>Access threshold not relevant because the location is usually determined by ecological factors and historical land uses.</p>
<p>BEACHES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique category of non 'green' recreational public open space. • High economic tourism importance to Poole • May be any length, but major coastal beaches > 3 km. • High year round visitor numbers but especially in summer holiday period. Many are repeat visitors • Visitors may stay for long periods (e.g. half / all day) • Good access and car parking essential • Users expect high quality ancillary services such as signage, catering, beach huts, showers, traditional pastimes and games • Provision of child centred facilities important intervals on promenades • Cleanliness and presentation important. Blue Flag designation very significant to success in attracting users • Active and passive recreational uses • Public safety measures and monitoring of behaviour required • Permanent on-site staff required during summer period and at other peak times • Good public transport links essential 	<p>Access threshold not relevant,</p> <p>Attracts large numbers of visitors from a distance, using cars, public transport and other personal transport, pedestrians and cyclists</p>

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

3. VALUING OPEN SPACE

3.1 PPG 17

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG 17) : Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation recommends that local authorities should “undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sports and recreational facilities”. It also suggests that they should carry out “audits of existing open space.... and opportunities for new open space” and that these should consider both quantity and quality. Clearly, this audit and assessment should inform an effective strategy and the way this may be carried out is considered below.

3.2 QUALITY AND VALUE

Quality is not the same thing as value. Good quality open space may have little value to the community if it is inaccessible. A poor, run down open space may be valuable, if it is the only recreational facility available. PPG 17 suggests that there are five key attributes that determine the value of all open space and recreational facilities - **accessibility, quantity, quality, multifunctionality, and primary purpose**. Each of these attributes needs to be considered when formulating detailed policy and planning open space. They are also criteria for a systematic audit and assessment, and are discussed in more detail below.

3.2 ACCESSIBILITY

This is probably the most important attribute for public open space. Without good access for those who want to use it, other attributes of quantity, quality, functionality and purpose are largely irrelevant. Research suggests that 80% of users visit open space on foot, and that distance is the major factor in determining use. A distance of approximately 5-6 minutes walk (about 400 metres) from home seems to be a threshold, beyond which the frequency of use sharply declines.

3.2.1 In most urban areas the availability of new land for open space is extremely limited. Encouraging better use of existing open space by improving accessibility may be more realistic and economically achievable than new provision.

3.2.2 The companion map to the strategy shows **existing** open spaces in Poole that meet the criteria for district and local parks, with accessibility calculated using the threshold distances referred to in 2.5.1. The map also shows opportunities - other existing open space of appropriate size, that has potential meet the criteria for a local or district park, if the necessary qualitative improvement were to be carried out.

3.2.3 The evaluation of accessibility focuses on formally managed recreational open space, and does not attempt to consider natural and seminatural greenspace. It is recognised that access to this type of land is also important but it is difficult in practice to set realistic standards of provision. Also, at a local level, a finer grain of mapping may be required in relation to smaller open spaces and equipped play facilities.

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

- 3.2.4 Access to youth and adult play facilities (i.e. grass playing pitches) needs to be specially considered, using rather different criteria. This is dealt with in the separate Poole Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 3.2.5. Play and recreational facilities for children and young people need to be carefully located. Play facilities need to be easily accessible in residential areas where there is demand, but suitable locations can be difficult to find in urban areas. Equipment for children's play and similar activities is expensive and resources are limited. Play provision therefore needs to be considered on a borough wide strategic basis, and is dealt with in more detail in the existing Play Strategy. The action plan for provision of new play facilities should be reviewed.
- 3.2.6 The concept of an "access threshold distance" for different types of open space is a useful tool for measuring accessibility, but should not be applied too rigidly. The recommended distances of a local park (within 400 metres of every household) and a district park (within 1200 metres) are guidelines, not absolute standards. In some urban areas, these figures may not be achievable. Physical barriers to access such as watercourses, major roads, railways, "impenetrable" land uses may mean that straight line distances are irrelevant
- 3.2.7 Quality is also a factor in considering access. A high quality open space with many interesting facilities and features will attract visitors from considerable distances, while a poor quality open space will be largely unused, even by those who live near it.
- 3.2.8 As a measure of accessibility, distance is obviously more relevant to some sections of the community than others. For children, elderly people, lower income groups, people with disabilities and those without access to a car, distance may be the critical factor that influences use.
- 3.2.9 Local community identity will also influence perceptions about which open spaces and facilities are accessible.
- 3.2.10 The allocation of "planning obligations" funds collected from developers for recreational facilities" (particularly for some categories of contribution e.g. equipped play, casual play and amenity open space) is currently determined on a ward basis. Although ward boundaries may approximate to open space catchments, there may be inconsistency. Wards reflect political administrative boundaries and do not necessarily correspond to local communities or local geography. It is very doubtful whether members of the public base their decisions on which recreational open space to visit on the electoral map for Poole.
- 3.2.11 For administrative reasons, ward boundaries may have to continue to be used as the primary basis for the collection of developer funding for recreation and open space (planning obligations) a more flexible approach needs to be developed for assessing catchment areas of some types of open space and the allocation of funding. Some refinement of the system is needed to reflect accessibility and value.

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

3.3 QUANTITY is an easily measurable attribute. Poole has approximately 1067 hectares of publicly owned open space (using the categories contained in Table 1). This equates to about 17% of the total land area of the borough. This figure does not include golf courses, agricultural land, the green belt, or school playing fields. In terms of provision, this corresponds to about 7.7 hectares of public open space per thousand population, well above the Local Plan policy standard of 3.2 ha. / 1000.

3.3.1 Statistics always need to be looked at critically. The overall high level of provision in Poole is largely due to 643 hectares (60% of the open space total) of publicly owned natural and semi-natural land, nature reserve and woodland (“natural greenspace”). A further 81 hectares (8% of the open space total) is cemeteries, burial grounds, highway verges or other operational land. Although some of this land can be used for informal recreational activities such as walking, it is unsuitable for intensive or active recreational use. It may also be peripheral to development and physically inaccessible to many people. There is no Local Plan standard for provision of “natural greenspace”. Nevertheless, access to this type of lands should be taken into account, as an important factor in quality of life and sense of well being. English Nature have suggested that there should be targets for provision of “accessible natural greenspace” in urban areas.

3.3.2 If the amount of land that is specifically dedicated to outdoor sports facilities, children’s play, parks and gardens, amenity landscaping and beaches is considered, a different picture emerges. Using this “traditional “ definition, there are approximately 343 hectares of formal recreational open space in Poole. This equates to 2.4 hectares per thousand population - some way short of the Local Plan Standard.

3.3.3 For individual categories of open space provision, there are even greater variations from the Local Plan standard. For instance, the overall figure for youth and adult outdoor sports facilities (i.e. sports pitches) in Poole is 0.38 ha. /1000 population, less than one third of the Local Plan standard of 1.6 to 1.8 ha./1000.

3.3.4 Overall figures for open space in Poole do not take into account *local availability*. The borough wide statistics do not provide useful information about local distribution and accessibility of open space. On the next pages, provision of different types of open space is looked at in detail on a ward by ward basis.

Figure 1 Total provision for all open space (excluding highway verges)

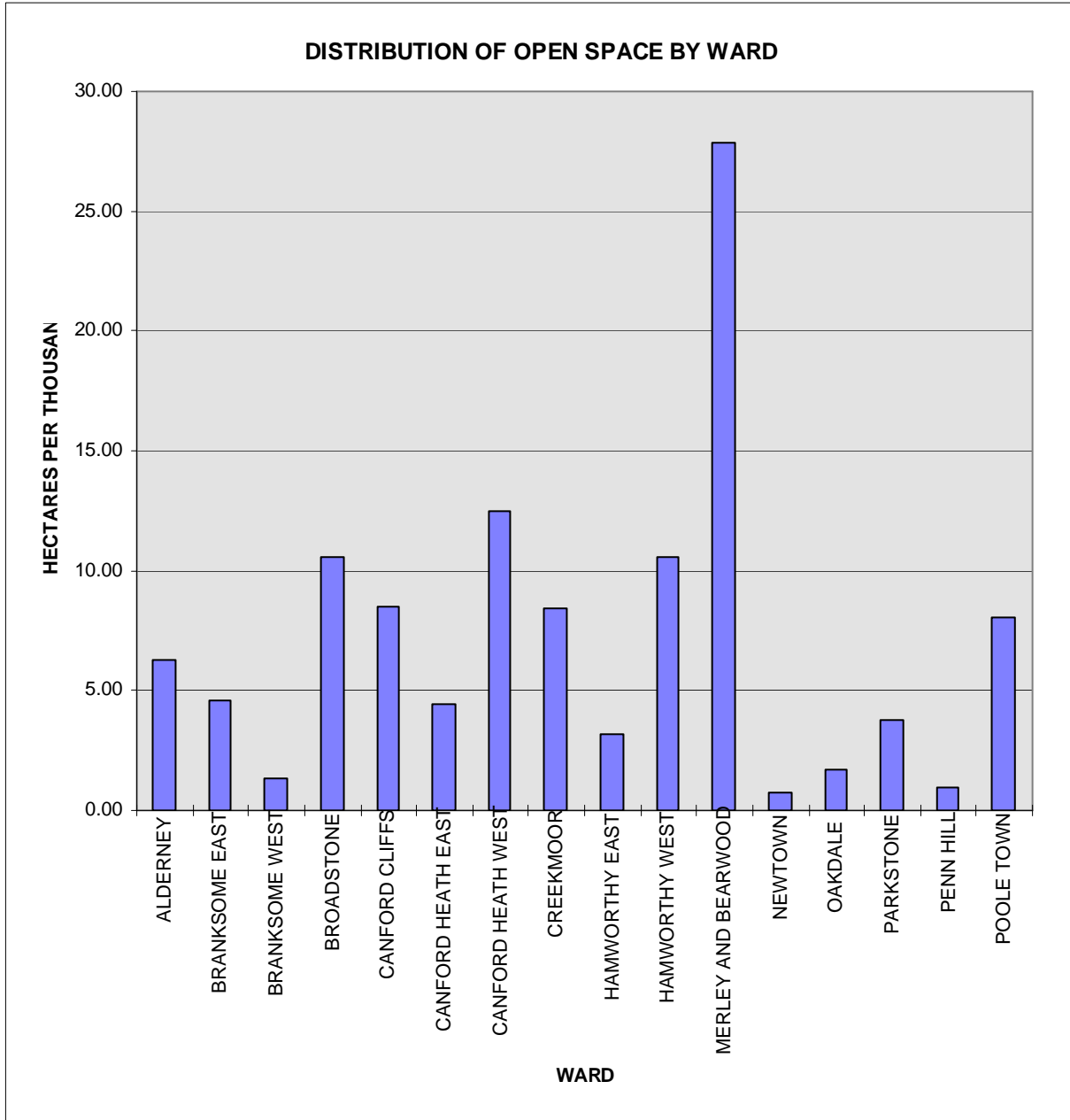
Figure 2 Provision of amenity open space and casual play (the combined figure is referred as “parks and gardens)

Figure 3 Youth and adult play facilities (i.e. usually grass playing pitches)

Figure 4 Natural, seminatural and woodland

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

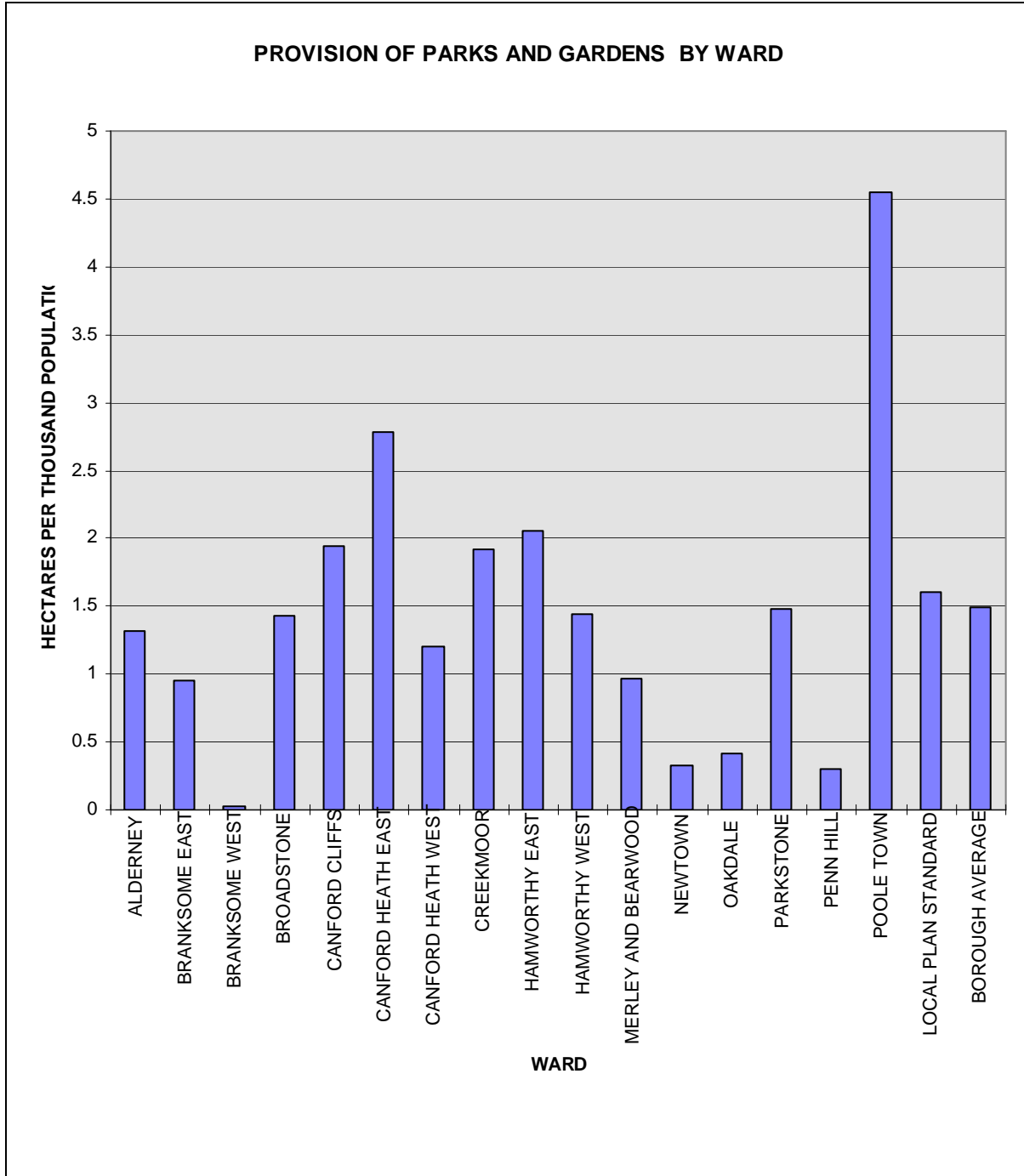
Figure 2 ALL OPEN SPACE IN POOLE



Even including all types of open space within the DTLR typology, it can be seen that Branksome West, Newtown, Oakdale and Penn Hill wards fall substantially below the Local Plan standard of 3.2 hectares per thousand population. At the other end of the scale, overall open space provision in Merley and Bearwood is exaggerated by the presence of the huge Canford Heath Local Nature Reserve, the majority of which falls with the ward boundary.

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

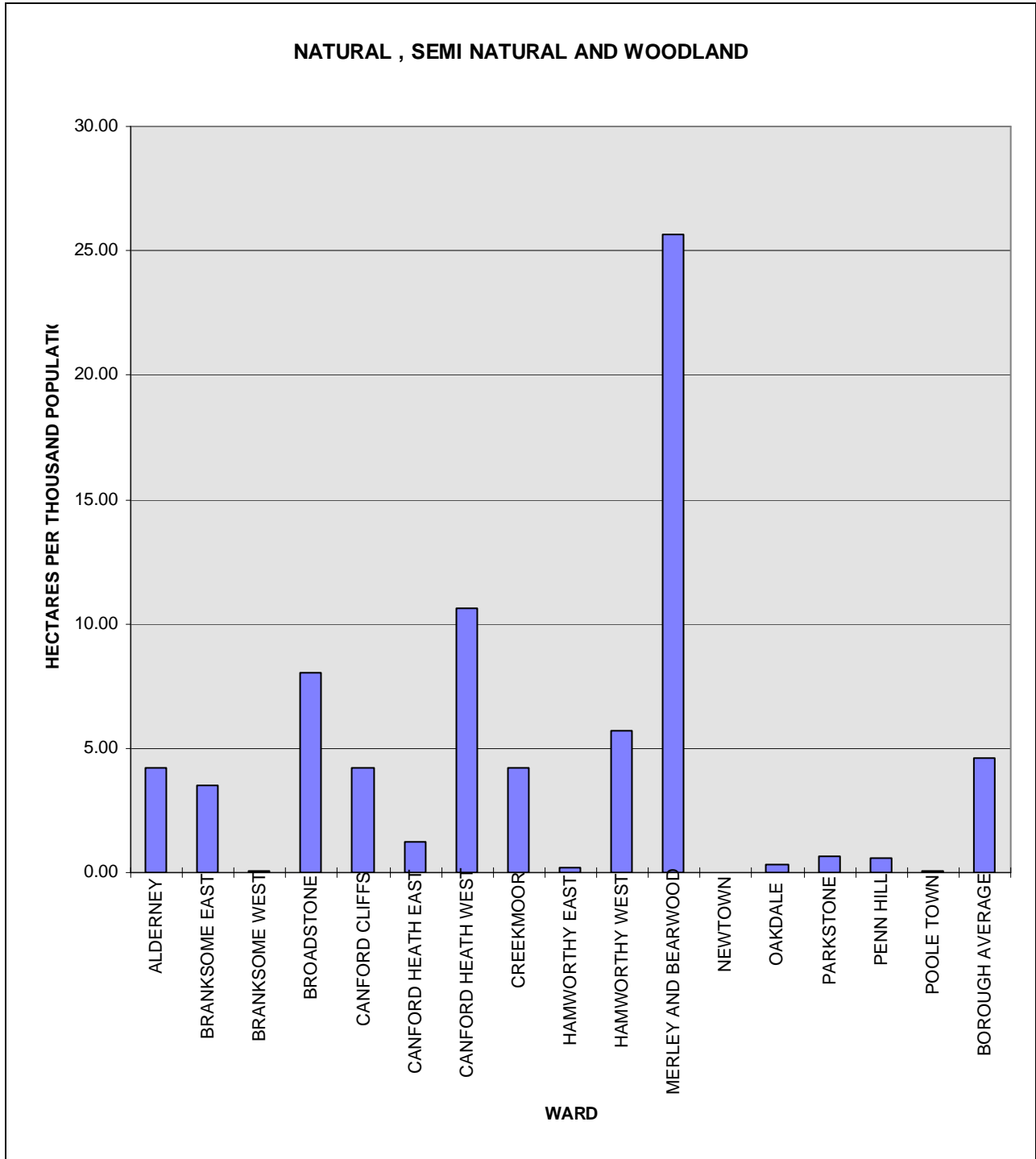
Figure 3 PROVISION OF AMENITY AND CASUAL PLAY SPACE (parks and gardens) BY WARD



The whole borough average almost meets the Local Plan figure, but at ward level only Canford Cliffs, Canford Heath East, Creekmoor and Hamworthy East exceed the minimum standard, and Alderney, Broadstone, Hamworthy West and Parkstone do not quite meet it. The deficiencies in **Branksome West, Newtown, Oakdale and Penn Hill** wards are striking.

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

Figure 5 NATURAL GREENSPACE BY WARD



The imbalances of local provision are emphasised, with seven wards almost wholly deficient in accessible natural greenspace. Three wards (Broadstone, Canford Heath West, Merley and Bearwood) enjoy exceptionally high levels of provision.

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

3.4 QUALITY is a relationship between the needs and expectations of users, and the design, management and maintenance of the open space. This can be summarised as **“fitness for purpose”**. Understanding the quality element requires clarity about the purpose and function of open space. In developed urban areas, the possibility of creating new open spaces of sufficient size to address quantitative deficiency is fairly remote. Quality, however, can be addressed - realistically, we can do more about quality than quantity.

3.4.1 Assessing “fitness for purpose” requires robust methods to measure the quality and performance of open space. Information about quality is needed to if we are to formulate meaningful proposals to develop open space.

3.4.2 The following attributes have been used to evaluate the quality of amenity open space and recreational land. This is shown in **APPENDIX 2** : it will be realised that this type of evaluation is most appropriate to formal recreational open spaces

QUALITY INDICATORS

POSITIVE

- good physical access
- public focus and multifunctionality
- centrally located in neighbourhood
- coherent and appropriate design
- well maintained infrastructure such as paths, buildings and furniture
- adequate basic facilities for users
- perceived to be safe and secure
- interesting features (e.g. horticultural, architectural, historical, wildlife)
- varied, intelligible, healthy landscape
- integrated into a network of open space by planned and legible linkages

NEGATIVE

- poor physical access
- back land, limited functionality
- peripheral location
- fragmented, no purposeful layout
- inadequate or neglected infrastructure
- few or no basic facilities
- users feel uneasy and insecure
- boring, few features
- landscape designed primarily for cheap and easy maintenance, often in decline
- isolated from network, no discernible or effective linkages

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

3.5 MULTIFUNCTIONALITY is a desirable attribute, particularly in areas of open space deficiency. It describes the ability of open space accommodate a range of activities without conflict between users, or damage to the land. Open space in urban areas can enable the delivery of a wide range of public policy objectives : strategic town planning, promotion of health and well being, a refuge for wildlife and biodiversity, a resource for sport, recreation and community development, visual amenity and economic advantage. In response to the government objectives for urban renaissance, improving and diversifying open space will be an important aim of the open space strategy

3.5.1 Intensity of use of recreational open spaces (such as urban parks, gardens and amenity land) needs to be considered . Such spaces are intrinsically likely to be more multifunctional in character than semi - natural open spaces, and are therefore under more pressure from users. In densely urban settings, open space may be the only free, accessible and inclusive recreational resource available to the community.

3.5.2 To assess intensity of use there needs to be both an understanding of the concept of quality and “fitness of purpose” and an effective monitoring process in place to collect and analyse information about the actual use of open space. Without this, there is going to be insufficient reliable information on how much it is used, who uses it, and what it is used for. From monitoring and recording use it is possible to determine if open space is actually serving the communities in which they are located. This helps to identify the potential for improvements through design, management and provision of new facilities.

3.6 PRIMARY PURPOSE has been used as an attribute because there otherwise would be difficulty in auditing and assessment. It avoids “double counting” the same open space in different functional categories or typologies. A quantitative survey and inventory of open space would be confusing if it recorded each activity as a separate unit or area, and so a primary purpose is used to describe each open space.

3.6.1 However, primary purpose is a concept, not a prescription for rigid classification. In most cases for larger open spaces the idea of primary purpose needs to be the starting point for considering how best to deliver the important attribute of multi functionality. For instance although grass sports pitches are **primarily** used for organised team games, they are also used for other purposes such as children’s games, dog walking or community fetes.

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

3.7 USING KEY ATTRIBUTES TO ASSESS OPEN SPACE

3.7.1 Measuring performance Using these key attributes as criteria, it is possible to make an initial judgement about how well an open space is performing. Poole has examples of successful open space, but it has others that are mediocre and underachieving, and some that are clearly failing. The criteria for certain types of open space will vary and influence the assessment : a well landscaped and visually prominent open space may be successful, if all that is required from it is a passive visual amenity.

3.7.2 For multi functional types of open space, we need to be clear what the measure of success will be. Appendix 2 shows in more detail the kind of visual, physical and cultural factors that contribute to the success or failure of complex open space.

3.8 SUCCESSFUL OPEN SPACE : The most obviously successful types of open space in Poole include existing district parks, some (but not all) local parks, most nature reserves, and the beaches.

3.8.1 District Parks Poole has successful multifunctional open spaces in Poole Park / Baiter / Whitecliff Recreation Ground, and Upton Country Park, which are used by large numbers of residents, and visitors from beyond the Borough boundary. The key features that contribute to their success are size, visual diversity, wildlife, setting, good access and parking, an excellent range of visitor facilities, catering (high quality food is available daily throughout the year) and the presence of site based staff. There is significant involvement with the community in the form of active “friends groups” or Residents Associations. But, the sustained maintenance of this success is resource intensive.

3.8.2 Local parks There are good examples of small local parks such as Parkstone Park and Coy Pond Gardens, and larger (but still distinctly local) parks such as Hamworthy Park and Alexandra Park. These local parks are diverse in character but share common strengths - visual amenity , accessibility, sense of place and character, range of facilities and experience, good infrastructure. They are a geographic focus of the neighbourhood, with a sense of welcome and involvement. This is reflected in their popularity and use made by residents.

3.8.3 Nature reserves and semi - natural space Providing that there is a reasonable level of informal public access, the success of local nature reserves is likely to be measured and understood primarily in terms of nature conservation and visual character. Using this test, Poole has several successful major reserves (Canford Heath, Ham Common, Bourne Valley) and a diversity of more local reserves (one of which, at Alder Hills, is managed in partnership with the Dorset Wildlife Trust). The success of these reserves is partly due the use of a systematic management planning process for each site, and the regular presence of wardens, working with community volunteers to implement these plans. It has also been possible to secure external funding for the management of these sites.

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

However, evaluation of a nature reserve as “good” needs to be qualified. Such sites are particularly vulnerable to damage from arson, misuse, fly tipping, erosion etc. Their nature conservation value can only be guaranteed by a continuing and dedicated application of specialised management processes, which may be highly demanding in terms of staff time and resources.

3.8.3 Beaches The whole environment of beach, ancillary facilities, promenade, gardens, parking, beach huts and cliffs is one of Poole’s most successful outdoor leisure facilities. As an attraction to visitors, the beaches are a major economic asset to the town. The coastal beach from Sandbanks to Branksome Dene Chine has been the most consistent winner in the UK of the European Blue Flag award for cleanliness and facilities. However, the beaches also have an important role in coast protection, and the remnant sand dunes and exposed cliffs have some ecological value and scientific interest.

3.8.4 During the summer, visitor numbers to the beaches may reach saturation point, with effects on parking, traffic and facilities. The management of the beaches is a complex matter, and there are potentially controversial issues that need recognition. Even apparently minor matters, such as cycling on the promenade, physical improvements to the beach (e.g. groynes and coast protection) and resource issues (such as the painting and maintenance of beach huts) can polarise opinions, particularly among local residents. The beach is very much a borough wide amenity, and maintaining the balance between local feeling and the wider needs of the community will be important. These potential areas of conflict require the formulation of detailed policies for the beaches.

3.8.5 A balanced picture of current success would also record factors such as over use and under - investment in facilities, lack of innovation, and a seriously deteriorating infrastructure, which may greatly compromise the long term future of this important resource. If Poole’s main beaches are to retain their importance to the borough and continue to be a success story, clear strategies are needed for their management, reinvestment in new facilities and provision of appropriate services

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

3.9 FAILING OPEN SPACE : failing open spaces also tend to fall into distinct types:

3.9.1 Recreation Grounds : land dominated by sporting use. This open space may be statistically adequate in size for the local population, but does not meet the reasonable standards and aspirations of the community. This is because it suffers from a narrow focus on use. Many large recreation grounds consist almost entirely of grass sports pitches, primarily used by a small group of people once a week. If they offer little else of value and interest to the wider community, they are failing.

3.9.2 Green deserts Open space that is primarily a bleak, two dimensional expanse of windswept grass without diversity, interesting recreational facilities or distinguishing landscape features. No matter where it is located, such land is unlikely to be greatly valued or enjoyed by the community. In some cases, the management of such sites is determined by the need for simple and cheap maintenance regimes, rather than the needs of the community

3.9.3 “Unfit for the purpose” i.e. poor quality - for smaller open spaces the size, shape and content are often critical factors that determine success or failure

- A small local park or amenity open space intended for informal recreational use in a residential area needs to be at least two hectares in area, to accommodate a range of activities without generating conflict, disturbance or visual intrusion.
- A linear site with irregular boundaries is unlikely to be as useful for active recreation as a compact, simply defined site of similar area.
- Open space that is primarily water, woodland or a steep slope may be visually attractive, but is not generally useable for more active recreation.
- Open space fragmented by roads or interrupted by residential development into smaller blocks is less useable than an integral site of equivalent area.
- A lack of basic facilities and infrastructure will not encourage positive use.

3.9.4 Poor configurations Open space that is largely defined by the rear garden boundaries of residential property or other development has no “public face” or identity. This configuration does not get casual supervision or encourage a sense of community ownership. Even when of sufficient size, these open spaces are sometimes little more than forgotten back land (“SLOAP” - space left over after planning). Such configurations attract misuse and antisocial behaviour. Open space like this is often perceived to be unsafe by potential users, and a nuisance to adjacent property owners.

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

3.10 CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1 : SUCCESS

Holes Bay Road - A linear open space.

The construction of the Holes Bay Road in the late eighties generated two kilometres of continuous green corridor on the edge of the bay. The corridor contains a cycleway that provides an uninterrupted 'off the road' link between the town centre, Upton Country Park and the residential areas of Creekmoor and Hamworthy. Because of good access, it is well used by walkers, joggers, anglers and birdwatchers. Despite its proximity to a busy dual carriageway, the open space works well because the landscaping is visually simple and effective, generous in scale and ecologically appropriate, providing a good habitat for wildlife. It is also an accessible amenity to nearby industrial and retail areas that employ large numbers of people. The space also succeeds because the harbour frontage is a large scale landscape with tremendous visual interest.

CASE STUDY 2 : FAILURE

St. Georges Field, Oakdale - Green desert.

This site illustrates many of the attributes of failure described above. The open space is essentially back land, with little to encourage use. Ironically, this is one of the few significant areas in a ward that is seriously deficient in open space, but it is clearly underused. Consisting of 1.2 hectares of mown grass, it is partly bounded by rear gardens and a disused dairy. The open space lacks a public face or character and has no facilities other than a small and unimaginative children's play area. The only redeeming landscape features are mature boundary trees. One of the most interesting original natural features - a stream - has been "lost" under ground in a culvert. The most consistent user group appears to be dog walkers.

Yet, the site is well located and has obvious potential for boundary reconfiguration and redesign. Even the stream could be brought back to see the light of day.

CASE STUDY 3 : FAILURE

Branksome Recreation Ground - dominated by a single sporting use

This is the only large open space available to residents of one of the mostly densely settled parts of Poole. Despite its size (nine hectares) it would be difficult to call this an inclusive community park. This is primarily a collection of poorly drained sports pitches grouped around a large, utilitarian changing pavilion. The impression of a flat green desert is relieved only by a few mature trees on the boundary. The only non sporting recreational facility on the site is a children's play area. Apart from footballers in winter, and cricketers in summer, the most frequent regular users appear to be dog walkers. As with St. George's Field, the original stream on this site, a potentially interesting feature, has been buried in a pipe.

This site needs a completely new vision for the twenty first century.

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

3.11 THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- 3.11.1 Open space and its ancillary facilities are services directly provided to local communities, and active engagement with both users and non users is essential. The Council should seek to promote and strengthen participation by the community in the planning, creation, management, use and care of open space. Without this involvement, the service is in danger of becoming irrelevant, or an end in itself. The provision and management of open space will be an important factor in meeting the objectives of the Community Plan
- 3.11.2 “Failing” open spaces may be accepted by the community in a way that would not be tolerated for other types of service. The reasons for this need to be understood in the strategy. If open space is taken for granted, poor quality may be regarded as normal, either because the community has nothing better to compare it with, or in the belief that nothing can or will be done to improve the situation. But, as PPG 17 makes clear, poor quality and under use should not be taken as indicating absence of need.
- 3.11.3 Although residents will react to obvious problems on local open space (such as litter, fly tipping, motor cycling, horse grazing, anti social behaviour), their focus is generally on a perceived need for “policing” of the land. Residents rarely demand better designed open spaces, and may regard proposals to significantly change or restore a site with scepticism or suspicion.
- 3.11.4 When the community is consulted about open space, the most commonly articulated demands are for “improved maintenance standards”. This is quite understandable, but there is a need to promote public awareness and perception of deeper issues. The long term effects of design and layout, declining landscape features, worn out infrastructure and inappropriate management of the open space are not going to be remedied by maintenance. It requires good communication skills to explain to the community the need for major initiatives to restore and regenerate open space. Gaining the acceptance of the community for innovation is often the single greatest challenge facing the Council when trying to create a new vision for failing open spaces.

PART THREE : AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT

3.12 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- 3.12.1 Existing maintenance** The amount that the Council can afford to spend on the management and maintenance of open space has declined in real terms in the last ten years, although the total area of open space for which it is responsible has increased substantially in that period. The Council has introduced measures to make these services more efficient, but a conspicuous effect has been to greatly reduce the number of permanent “site based” staff. There is widespread public perception that this has contributed to a decline in the standard of open space provision
- 3.12.2 Revenue** For the foreseeable future, revenue expenditure (that is, the Council’s main regular income stream, which it uses to provide services) will be severely constrained. Because of this, it is highly unlikely that there will any significant growth in the budget for open space maintenance.
- 3.12.3 Capital for re - investment** Capital funding (“one off” expenditure from reserves for new facilities) is equally constrained. Because of other Council priorities, it is unlikely that much capital will be available for improvement of open space. On the rare occasions that capital funding is allocated to open spaces, it is likely to be “reactive” emergency funding required for the repair of infrastructure in the interests of health and safety. The difficulty faced by the Council is that much existing open space clearly needs major reinvestment in infrastructure and facilities to make it more “fit for purpose”
- 3.12.4 Planning obligations funding** In the near future, the main source of funding for new or enhanced open space facilities is likely to come in relation to new residential development (planning obligations). Contributions are being collected from developers in relation to provision of a number of specific types of open space facility (e.g. equipped play, sports pitches). In some instances, this can be a substantial source of funding, but it is not a free “pot” from which any desired works can be financed at will. Only those schemes that clearly meet the criteria for which contributions were taken can be considered. In addition, much of the available funding is locally and unevenly distributed, and the rules do not allow it to be transferred to support schemes elsewhere in the Borough.
- 3.12.5 External Funding** Other sources of finance for open space restoration or enhancement may also be available from the government or lottery distributors, for initiatives that meet specific policy objectives. The Council needs to be pro-active in pursuing external funding.
- 3.12.6 Staff Skills** The professional and technical skills of those engaged in the management and maintenance of open space are often overlooked as a key resource. They are a vital factor in the quality of the service. A particular problem associated with the “compulsory competitive tendering” (CCT) of grounds maintenance was loss of staff with experience, qualifications and craft skills due to cost cutting. This needs to be addressed in the strategy.

PART FOUR : EVALUATION AND ISSUES

4. A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO OPEN SPACE

4.1 DEVELOPING AN OPEN SPACE STRATEGY FOR POOLE

- The wealth of issues described above requires a mechanism by which they can be assimilated and then acted upon.
- Developing an open space strategy for Poole provides the opportunity for that process to take place and for a series of well considered, coherent policies to be developed and a programme of action to be recommended.
- By involving the community in the detailed action plan, there will be better awareness of the value of open space and its potential for enhancing the quality of life.
- The strategy will form a major contribution to the Council's commitment to services that are effective, efficient and economic. It will assist the Council in demonstrating how it achieves Best Value in open space management.
- It will also be an important document that helps the Local Strategic Partnership produce a Community Plan for Poole.
- It is intended that the strategy remains relevant for the next ten years although changing circumstances will require a review before expiry of that period.

4.2 OUTCOMES

The open space strategy should:

- Prioritise the care and development of open space according to Council policies and community aspirations.
- Enable realistic and measurable targets to be set for improving what the Council does with its open space assets
- Be brave and innovative in tackling systemic inertia, resistance to change and obstacles to success
- Encourage the development of detailed policy guidance notes for a variety of important specific issues, such as acquisition and disposal of open space, children's play, management of trees and woodland, nature reserves and beaches.
- Provide the focus and tools to deliver a better service to the community

PART FOUR : EVALUATION AND ISSUES

4.3 EVALUATING THE CURRENT SITUATION

4.3.1 We have looked at the policy context and background information to the open space strategy. Before making recommendations for action it is worth briefly summarising the conclusions that can be drawn from Parts 1, 2 and 3.

- Open space is an important asset to Poole which supports the image, ‘liveability’ and prosperity of the town. It is a tool for regeneration and a vital component of a high quality sustainable urban environment.
- Open space is valuable to residents because it enhances quality of life and promotes community health and well being.
- Open space promotes social inclusion and equality of opportunity by providing free and accessible community facilities for amenity, outdoor sport and recreation.
- Although there is enough open space in Poole, it is of uneven quality and distribution.
- By Local Plan standards, Poole is quantitatively deficient in grass playing pitches. There are also qualitative concerns about their playability, the condition of their ancillary facilities, and utilisation. Whether considered only as sports facilities, or as multifunctional recreation grounds, the quality of public pitches in Poole is low. However, supply and demand for pitches is a complex issue which is examined in a separate document, the Poole Playing Pitch Strategy
- Land designated as local nature reserves forms a very significant part of the total area public open space in Poole. For a compact urban authority, the proportion of such sites is unusually high. The nature conservation value of much of this land is of international importance. Location in an urban area puts this land under pressure from overuse and damage.
- Poole has some excellent parks that are well used and valued, but it also has a number of “failing” open spaces that do not meet the needs of the community.
- Provision of good open spaces will be a factor in urban regeneration, and in the delivery of wider social, cultural and economic initiatives.
- There is currently insufficient information available about the use, performance and quality of open space in Poole. The condition and utilisation should be continuously monitored to determine existing and future needs.
- The resources currently available for management and maintenance of existing open space are very constrained, and do not always ensure the quality of service delivery that is needed by users.

PART FOUR : EVALUATION AND ISSUES

4.4 KEY ISSUES

The strategy needs to focus on a number of key issues:

- Improving quality and accessibility of open space at a local level.
- Providing for existing and predicted future needs.
- Links to national public policy objectives
- Caring for open space within existing resources and procuring new resources.
- Improving community participation and involvement with open space.
- Improving public understanding of the policy and management issues that affect open space.

4.5 VISION AND POLICY FOR OPEN SPACE

It is suggested that we need a vision for public open space in Poole: This could read: “A network of open space of the highest quality, diversity and beauty that underpins the culture, prosperity and quality of life in Poole for existing and future residents, and that is managed in a way that provides a refuge for wildlife, benefits the environment, and provides a free, accessible recreational resource to residents and visitors”. To realise this vision, it is recommended that the Council should review some policies relating to provision of open space, particularly focusing on the following issues:

- Addressing deficiencies by either acquisition of land or qualitative improvements
- Although there is a presumption against net loss in the aggregate area of open space, a flexible approach is needed towards the possibility of disposal of small amounts of land where there are material and compelling considerations that would enable significant improvements to the configuration or recreational value of remaining areas.
- In the exceptional cases where open space is disposed of, the capital receipts should be ring fenced for future acquisition or qualitative improvement of the remaining assets.
- Review of the current Supplementary Planning Guidance on Planning Obligations Recreational Facilities, to take into account the findings and priorities of the Open Space Strategy
- To maximise the effective use of planning obligations funding in a way that addresses the existing and future needs of residents and visitors.

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

5 IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1 It is essential that the open space strategy does not become an end in itself. There should be demonstrable outcomes, and measurable targets for improving the service to the community. To address this, this part of the strategy contains the basic aims, objectives and policies, that should translate into an action plan.
- 5.2 Part 5 is based on three key aims, listed below. From these, more detailed objectives have been set, and specific policies are proposed to deliver them.
- 5.3 The strategy should be seen as a holistic approach to the management of open space.
- 5.4 There will be strong cross cutting links between the aims and objectives.

AIM 1 PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT

To provide sufficient open space, of the right type and quality, where it is needed, that meets the existing and future needs of residents and visitors for active sport, recreation, nature conservation, cultural activities, community and social development.

AIM 2 CARE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Look after the open space assets of Poole in an efficient and effective manner, that takes account of its social, heritage and wildlife value, and reflects its contribution to the delivery of wider public policy objectives.

AIM 3 PARTICIPATION AND USE

Recognise the special contribution that open space makes to the culture and quality of life in Poole, and promote more use and enjoyment, ensuring that the community derives maximum benefits from the assets and resources that it owns.

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

AIM 1. PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT	
<p>To provide sufficient open space, of the right type and quality, where it is needed, that meets the existing and future needs of residents and visitors for active sport, recreation, nature conservation, cultural activities, community and social development.</p>	
POLICY OBJECTIVE	ACTION
<p>PO1 Provide a district park (normally 10 -20 hectares) with an inclusive and comprehensive range of recreational facilities, within 1200 metres walking distance of every household</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare management / improvement plans for the existing district parks : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poole Park • Harbourside Park • Upton Country Park 2. Upgrade to meet district park standard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alderney Recreation Ground • Branksome Chine + Pinecliff Gardens • Broadstone Recreation Ground + Plainfield Farm • Canford Heath Parkway + Sherborne Crescent + Haymoor Bottom • Hamworthy Park • Turlin Moor Recreation Ground
<p>PO2 Provide a local park (2-10 hectares) with an appropriate range of facilities, within 400 metres walking distance of every household.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare improvement plans for existing local parks : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alexandra Park • Coy Pond Gardens • Haskells Recreation Ground 2. Upgrade to meet local park standard <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branksome Recreation Ground • Bearwood (playing field + open spaces) • Canford Cliffs Chine +Cliff Drive • Canford Heath (Learoyd Road +Warburton Road • Millfield Recreation Ground • Sandbanks Recreation Ground • Sterte Esplanade 3. Provide new local park to serve town centre regeneration scheme. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamworthy East

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

AIM 1. PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT	
<p>To provide sufficient open space, of the right type and quality, where it is needed, that meets the existing and future needs of residents and visitors for active sport, recreation, nature conservation, cultural activities, community and social development.</p>	
POLICY OBJECTIVE	ACTION
<p>PO3 Provide a small local park (1 - 2 hectares) suitable for active informal recreation within 400 metres walking distance of every household that does not have access to district or local parks.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve existing small local park: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springdale Recreation Ground (Broadstone) • Parkstone Park 2. Upgrade to meet the standard of small local park : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turners Field (Newtown) • St Georges Field (Oakdale) • Fenners Recreation Ground (Merley) • Hamworthy Recreation Ground • Christopher Crescent (Oakdale) • Hatchards Field (Alderney) • Selkirk Close (Merley) • Parkstone Heights • Arne Avenue (Alderney)
<p>PO4 Provide high quality informal open spaces, particularly in residential areas and local centres.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out an asset review and audit of other small open spaces (i.e. those between 0.2 - 1.0 hectares in area) 2. Identify and prioritise sites where improvement will deliver greatest community benefit. 3. Where appropriate, use Section 106 agreements to secure “on site” open space of at least 0.2 hectares within new residential developments.
<p>PO5 Promote more inclusive community use of sites currently dominated by single sporting use.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use Playing Pitch Strategy to prioritise improvements to the quality of sports pitches and ancillary facilities. 2. Facilitate multifunctional use of under used pitches 3. Review Play Strategy to prioritise provision of additional facilities to encourage active use of open space by children and young people.

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

AIM 1. PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT	
<p>To provide sufficient open space, of the right type and quality, where it is needed, that meets the existing and future needs of residents and visitors for active sport, recreation, nature conservation, cultural activities, community and social development</p>	
POLICY OBJECTIVE	ACTION
<p>PO6 Reduce inequalities in the local provision, quality and distribution of open space in Poole</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Acquire land to remedy deficiencies 2. Prioritise qualitative improvements to proposed district and local parks in deprived wards. 3. Investigate “shared use” of other open space such as housing, education or highway land
<p>PO7 Provide and protect open space as a habitat and refuge for wild life and nature conservation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manage and improve existing nature reserves and semi -natural woodland to maintain and promote biodiversity. 2. Secure additional land for nature reserves and habitats, prioritising the more densely developed areas of Poole. 3. Review the management and maintenance regimes of formal parks and open space to create more biodiverse habitats. 4. Protect and create more urban woodland, particularly on major traffic corridors, or where it acts as a strategic link between other types of open space.

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

AIM 1. PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT	
<p>To provide sufficient open space, of the right type and quality, where it is needed, that meets the existing and future needs of residents and visitors for active sport, recreation, nature conservation, cultural activities, community and social development</p>	
POLICY OBJECTIVE	ACTION
<p>PO8 Manage coastal and inner harbour beaches as important recreational and economic resources for residents and visitors.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a detailed improvement plan for coastal “blue flag” beaches 2. Actively seek external commercial partners to provide high quality beach facilities and services 3. Recognise coastal and harbour beaches in Poole as a special type of public open space, and collect planning obligation funding to enable improvement and development of facilities for residents and visitors. 4. Protect and manage existing special coastal habitat types such as cliffs, dunes and salt marshes for wild life conservation purposes. 5. Work with DEFRA, adjacent local authorities, external agencies and partners to ensure that coast protection, beach stabilisation and regeneration is given a high priority in Poole
<p>PO9 Provide and create high quality civic spaces</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure active involvement of specialist arboricultural, landscape design, and open space management officers in urban regeneration projects. 2. Ensure direct involvement of Leisure Services in the design and maintenance of outdoor civic spaces.

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

AIM 1. PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT	
<p>To provide sufficient open space, of the right type and quality, where it is needed, that meets the existing and future needs of residents, and visitors, for active sport, recreation, nature conservation, cultural activities, community and social development</p>	
POLICY OBJECTIVE	ACTION
<p>PO10 Reconfigure existing open spaces to improve “public face”, sense of ownership, liveability and perceptions of security</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where opportunity exists and it is necessary for the achievement of the objective, acquire land for this purpose. 2. Identify opportunities to achieve better configuration of open space through negotiated land exchange or redevelopment, prioritising : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turners Nursery (Newtown) • St Georges Field (Oakdale) • Turlin Moor Recreation Ground (Hamworthy West) • Millfield Recreation Ground (Creekmoor) • Alderney Recreation Ground 3. Investigate opportunities for partial disposal of open space, in exceptional circumstances where the resulting configuration will produce significant qualitative improvements and better utilisation of the site. 4. Work with Planning Services and Property Services to review policy relating to disposal of open space in circumstances where it is necessary to facilitate improvement.

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

AIM 2 : CARE AND SUSTAINABILITY	
<p>Look after the open space assets of Poole in an efficient and effective manner, that takes account of its social, heritage and wildlife value, and reflects its contribution to the delivery of wider public policy objectives.</p>	
POLICY OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
<p>PO11 Improve public understanding about open space management and maintenance</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop informative web sites. 2. Make use of the Local Strategic Partnership 3. Develop partnerships with “friends groups” for disseminating information 4. Provide better signage and site information. 5. Publish a regular open spaces newsletter.
<p>PO12 Improve standards of routine maintenance, recognising that some variations in service delivery are acceptable between different types of site, and in different locations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out major review of grounds maintenance contract as part of re - tendering of services. 2. Clarify existing maintenance objectives, and identify public priorities through the proposed open space user forum 3. Investigate possible service improvements to be gained through efficiencies in partnership working with other Council units, and with other agencies and bodies.
<p>PO13 Seek to directly involve volunteers and community groups with some types of hands on maintenance operations.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is already established practice on some nature reserves, and the principle could be extended to some grounds maintenance tasks on a trial basis, making use of friends groups. 2. Provide training and facilities to volunteers. 3. Increase staff, or re-deploy existing staff resources, in community liaison or warden role to facilitate public involvement and ownership.

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

AIM 2 : CARE AND SUSTAINABILITY	
<p>Look after the open space assets of Poole in an efficient and effective manner, that takes account of its social, heritage and wildlife value, and reflects its contribution to the delivery of wider public policy objectives</p>	
POLICY OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
<p>PO14 Promote sustainable management practices for open space</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carry out environmental audits of management practices at key sites and relate to Local Agenda 21 objectives. 2. Regularly monitor the condition and use of key sites, collecting and analysing information to assess the effectiveness of current management techniques. 3. Where economically practicable, implement environmentally beneficial management practices, such as green waste recycling, use of grey water / water harvesting, reuse of durable materials, non polluting lighting. 4. Examine ways to reduce use of pesticides and fossil fuels 5. Develop local performance indicators for open space management that clearly measure improvement over time. 6. Investigate use of alternative energy resources (e.g. solar power for lighting and heating buildings)
<p>PO15 Where appropriate, address resource deficiencies by attracting external financial investment in open space</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attract commercial partners to provide services, facilities and concessions in open spaces 2. Proactively pursue external grant aid to enable improvement and restoration of parks and recreational facilities.

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

AIM 2 : CARE AND SUSTAINABILITY	
<p>Look after the open space assets of Poole in an efficient and effective manner, that takes account of its social, heritage and wildlife value, and reflects its contribution to the delivery of wider public policy objectives</p>	
POLICY OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
<p>PO16 Ensure buildings, structures and surfaces in open space are safe, useable and well cared for</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Utilise competent professionals to carry out a condition survey and structural assessment of all relevant features in open spaces. Ensure that a record is kept and updated to allow monitoring of structures 2. Prioritise sites and structures with known health and safety concerns, particularly cemeteries 3. Determine costs of remedial works, and bid for resources to undertake a programme of remedial and restoration works 4. Where resources cannot be identified for remedial works to buildings or structures, and retention is not a fundamental requirement, examine alternatives including removal or disposal for other purposes.
<p>PO17 Ensure that trees on open space are in a healthy and safe condition</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Survey and prepare an inventory of trees and woodland on open spaces 2. Carry out risk assessment and prioritise bid for resources to undertake planned maintenance programme. 3. Develop a policy guidance note that explains the management of trees and woodland relating to property

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

AIM 3 . PARTICIPATION AND USE	
<p>Recognise the special contribution that open space makes to the culture and quality of life in Poole, and promote more use and enjoyment, ensuring that the community derives maximum benefits from the assets and resources that it owns.</p>	
POLICY OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
<p>PO18 Make positive use of open space to deliver wider environmental objectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manage open spaces to control and moderate urban climate and create more urban forestry for air pollution reduction purposes particularly in the town centre, in association with major traffic corridors and high density development. 2. Allocate and/or redesign open space to assist with implementation of sustainable urban drainage schemes, where this does not conflict with their amenity or recreational use. 3. Review the contribution made by open space to biodiversity strategies, and improve habitat creation and wildlife conservation in parks. 4. Better integration of open space to create pedestrian and cycle networks and reduce need for car journeys. 5. Promote “Access Land” and linkage of PROW network with tourism and health objectives
<p>PO19 Encourage community participation in the creation, design, maintenance of open space.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support the setting up and operation of neighbourhood and “friends of” groups with a special interest in particular sites. 2. Through LSP set up an ‘open space user forum’ to bring together representatives from all local interest groups to focus on common issues for open space such as access, antisocial behaviour, crime reduction, parking, misuse, contract standards. 3. Ensure local consultation and involvement on the upgrading of specific sites.

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

AIM 3 . PARTICIPATION AND USE	
<p>Recognise the special contribution that open space makes to the culture and quality of life in Poole, and promote more use and enjoyment, ensuring that the community derives maximum benefits from the assets and resources that it owns.</p>	
POLICY OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
<p>PO20 Use open space to promote community development, healthy living, social cohesion and inclusion</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Actively promote open space as a venue for community purposes, outdoor events and activities. 2. Reduce the dependence on traditional but over used venues for events (e.g. Poole Park) by offering support and resources to encourage the use of other open spaces for events. 3. Subject to funding, improve facilities, vehicle access and infrastructure (e.g. lighting and surfacing) on designated sites to facilitate community use.
<p>PO21 Encourage ethnic minorities, disadvantaged and under - represented groups to make more and better use of open space</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement measures to make open space more secure and welcoming to potential users. Use design, focused maintenance and operational staff presence to contribute to a sense of security 2. Investigate possibility of more regular “on site” presence of managers (e.g. decentralised area offices in some district parks ?) 3. Provide innovative targeted facilities for currently under represented users such as single parents, low income groups, people with disabilities
<p>PO22 Widen the public access to other types of open space</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Negotiate agreements with schools for use of playing fields and facilities in areas where there is a deficiency of public open space and outdoor sports facilities.

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

AIM 3 . PARTICIPATION AND USE	
<p>Recognise the special contribution that open space makes to the culture and quality of life in Poole, and promote more use and enjoyment, ensuring that the community derives maximum benefits from the assets and resources that it owns</p>	
POLICY OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
<p>PO23 Improve “fitness of purpose”</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop local quality benchmarks and criteria using DTLR typology and classification. 2. Prepare detailed inventory of open spaces in Poole. 3. Consult with communities to identify local deficiencies 4. Develop a programme to improve open spaces, based on the access thresholds and criteria for district / local parks provision.
<p>PO24 Improve community health and well being</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide outdoor facilities that support and encourage individual participation in sport and physical activity, particularly among target groups such as women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities.
<p>PO25 Improve accessibility and use by creating an integrated and linked system of open space in Poole</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with Transportation Services to produce the Rights of Way Improvement Plan required by the CROW Act 2. Identify opportunities for linkage of open space through negotiation, land acquisition or planning gain 3. Use open space resources to contribute to Council initiatives for healthy living walking, cycling and other sustainable forms of transport. 4. Produce a borough Access Map showing all significant open spaces and rights of way.

PART 5. REALISING THE STRATEGY

AIM 3 . PARTICIPATION AND USE	
<p>Recognise the special contribution that open space makes to the culture and quality of life in Poole, and promote more use and enjoyment, ensuring that the community derives maximum benefits from the assets and resources that it owns.</p>	
POLICY OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS
<p>PO26 Support crime reduction programmes and preventative strategies for children and young people</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review existing policies and contribute to Council Preventative Strategy 2. Provide more targeted outdoor recreational facilities for children and young people 3. Work through LSP / Youth Offending Team to identify opportunities for multi agency programmes using open space for skills training, sports development, offender rehabilitation and community development 4. Identify training and job opportunities relating to open space redevelopment as part of neighbourhood renewal programmes 5. Develop closer and more meaningful links with schools and educational institutions 6. Work with the Council’s Community Safety team to raise awareness of common objectives and issues and to identify potential sources of funding (both internal and external) to tackle problems.
<p>PO 27 Encourage better use of open space by children and young people.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review existing “Play Strategy” action plan and work to identify additional resources for implementation. 2. Integrate the provision of children’s and young people’s facilities with the improvement and development programme for strategically significant open spaces such as district and local parks. 3. Work with Children’s Services to make use of open space to deliver wider outcomes for children, young people and families

APPENDIX 1

LOCAL PLAN POLICY

Key land use policies are detailed in the Local Plan, particularly the chapters on the Built Environment (BE), Natural Environment (NE), Transportation (T), and Leisure and Recreation (L). All of these directly affect and emphasise the importance and uses of open space and offer specific policies on a number of issues which are listed below.

POLICY	SUBJECT
BE24	Historic Parks and Gardens
NE 3-5	Green belt
NE 9-9A	Agricultural Land (countryside)
NE 13	Upton Country Park
NE14	Sites of International Importance
NE15	Sites of Special Scientific interest
NE 16	Development adjacent to heathland
NE18	Sites of Nature Conservation Interest
NE 21	Coastal Zone and Shoreline Character
NE 26	Individual and grouped trees
NE27	Tree Preservation Orders
NE 28	Development adjacent to open space
NE29	Network of Urban Greenspace and Open Spaces
NE 30	Stour Floodplain
T1A	Cycleways
T2A	Pedestrians
LI.	Public Open Space (loss to development)
L2	Urban Greenspace (value and loss to development)
L4	Leisure Development (development within parks and open spaces)
L5	Playing Fields
L7	Ancillary Facilities on Recreation Sites
L11	Golf Courses
L12	Recreation and Leisure Facilities
L14	Public access to the shore
L17	Outdoor Recreation - Canford Heath
L18	Access and Links to Open Space
L21	Provision for Recreation Facilities (open space standards)

A.2 In a number of cases, these policies are clarified by specific Council documents called “Supplementary Planning Guidance”. These include:

“Landscape Design Code”

“Planning Obligations - Recreation Facilities”

“Sustainable Urban Drainage”

APPENDIX 2

AUDIT AND ASSESSMENT OF MAJOR OPEN SPACES IN POOLE

For a discussion of the methodology used in assessment of quality, see part 3. para 3.4