

Stroud District Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation Study (2019)



Community and Stakeholder Consultation Report FINAL

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Glossary of Terms (to be completed)

Term	Meaning
AGLV	Area of Great Landscape Value
ANGSt	Accessible Natural Green Space Standard
AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ATF	Ancient Tree Forum
ATP	Artificial Turf Pitch
EA	Environment Agency
GI	Green Infrastructure
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NGB	National Governing Body
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
PAWS	Planted Ancient Woodland Site
PC/TC	Parish Council/Town Council
PPG17	Planning Policy Guidance Note 17
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
PROW	Public Rights of Way
RA	Ramblers Association
SAMM	Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy
SANG	Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace
SNCI	Site of Natural Conservation Interest
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
STP	Synthetic Turf Pitch
TPO	Tree Protection Order
WASSt	Woodland Access Standard
WFD	Water Framework Directive

Acknowledgments

Many individuals, groups and organisations have provided information, views and support in preparing this study. Input from these stakeholders is fundamental to the report, and provides the basis for the evidence in supporting the standards, options and recommendations in relation to open space, sport and recreation facilities. The study has been carried out by Ethos Environmental Planning in conjunction with associates Leisure and the Environment and Bennett Leisure and Planning.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is one of four reports provided within the overall *Stroud District Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation Study*. It is a supporting document to the three main reports: The Green Infrastructure and Open Spaces audit and assessment, the Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPS) and the Indoor Sports Facilities audit and assessment. It provides consultation findings from various stakeholders and feeds into other aspects of the study as explained below. The consultation process was undertaken in accordance with the District Council's Statement of Community Involvement¹ (SCI).

1.1 Study Overview

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local planning authorities to set out policies to help enable communities to access high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation. These policies need to be based on a thorough understanding of local needs for such facilities and opportunities available for new provision.

In view of the above, in 2018 Stroud District Council appointed Ethos Environmental Planning to undertake a Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation Study – to provide a robust audit and assessment evidence base of open space and sport and recreation areas set within a Green Infrastructure network, enabling a coherent strategy approach to policy and development management recommendations. The study will also inform the Council's health and well-being plans and its investment and infrastructure funding processes.

The main outputs for the study are to provide:

- a full audit of all accessible open spaces across the district categorised by their primary purpose in line with any typologies identified.
- Production of a GI mapped network encompassing urban areas, and in the countryside extensive habitats, major landscape features such as river corridors and flood meadows landscapes, and the identification of wide green corridors and ecological networks.
- Production of local provision standard recommendations in accordance with relevant guidance and local needs.
- Application of such proposed provision standards enabling the identification of surpluses and deficiencies based on quality, quantity and accessibility.
- Application of Green Infrastructure networks enabling the identification of any gaps in said network, the potential to protect key network areas and enhance the network function.
- A review of current Local Plan policy including recommendations to address the key findings and drive future development management decisions and policy as part of the Review. This will include the potential for Green Infrastructure as well as Local Green Space policies that could accord with the NPPF.

In order to meet this brief Ethos are providing:

- A Green Infrastructure and Open Spaces audit and assessment²
- A Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy
- An Indoor Sports Facilities audit and assessment

As such the overall outcome of the study will comprise of three main reports drawing upon an evidence base comprised of:

¹ See <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/environment/planning-and-building-control/planning-strategy/planning-strategy-consultations>

² Including play space and natural green space/recreation

- Consultation and engagement with all relevant key stakeholders, agencies and organisations as well as the wider community and general public.
- A detailed audit of all facilities within the scope of the study.
- Analysis and assessment of the adequacy of current and future facility provision based on recommended methodologies such as Sport England's "Assessing Needs and Opportunities" national planning guidance and Playing Pitch Strategy guidance.

1.2 The Community and Stakeholder Needs Assessment

This report makes a cross-cutting contribution to the overall study in providing evidence that will be used in all three of the main study reports³. It primarily relates to the Open Spaces Assessment but relevant findings and information will also be carried forward in the PPS and Indoor Sports Study.

In the three main reports the consultation findings will be combined with other evidence, findings and assessments such as that completed in the audit, mapping and analysis process.

Undertaking comprehensive consultation and engagement with all relevant stakeholders and the wider community is an essential part of the overall process. It is an expectation of the National Planning Policy Framework and is needed to ensure that the study is robust in relation to recommended national guidance such as that recommended by Sport England.

The report examines local need for a wide range of different kinds of GI, open space, sport, and recreation facilities. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques including a review of consultation findings from relevant play, sports, leisure and open space studies. It outlines the community consultation and research process that has been undertaken as part of the study as well as the main findings.

The report is made up of 4 main sections:

- General community consultation
- Neighbouring local authorities; and parish councils and council members
- Green Infrastructure, parks, green spaces, countryside, and rights of way
- Play and youth facilities

Each section provides additional detail on the consultation process relevant to that section and at the end of each section there is a short summary of the key findings.

The consultation and research programme was undertaken from April to August 2018. The extent of the research reflects the breadth and diversity of the study and a consequent need to engage with as wide a cross section of the community and stakeholders as possible⁴.

In summary, questionnaire surveys were undertaken as below:

- A general household survey (postal and online)
- A survey of town and parish councils
- Local groups and organisations' surveys

³ Additional consultation has also been undertaken in relation to pitch sports and indoor facilities as advised in Sport England guidance. These additional findings will be included in the main reports as appropriate.

⁴ It should be noted that this report provides consultation evidence in the form of the observations and views/opinions sourced from many different organisations, individuals and studies. On occasion the views and observations expressed by individuals and groups may not be consistent with each other, nor are such individual contributions necessarily accurate or up to date.

In addition to the above a number of one to one stakeholder interviews/surveys were undertaken with key stakeholders and strategic organisations.

The result of this consultation and other analyses will help amongst other things to inform the content of the recommended local standards as appropriate. This will be explained further in the three main reports.

The consultation report also helps the study to understand stakeholder and local people's appreciation of open space, sport and recreation facilities, and the wider green infrastructure and the values attached by the community to the various forms of open spaces and facilities. This appreciation will have clear implications for the way in which GI, open space, sport and recreation facilities are considered in relation the Local Plan and relevant services strategies.

2.0 GENERAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

This section provides consultation findings that covered all aspects of open space, sport and recreation facility provision. In this sense it provides a useful overview across all these aspects rather than simply from groups and organisations with specific interests in just one aspect of open space, sport and outdoor recreation. This contrasts, for example, with the other sections of the report which supply findings from individuals, groups and organisations with specific interests in individual elements of open space, sport and recreation.

The section also includes engagement with public health stakeholders who have an interest running across all aspects of recreation facility provision, whatever activity that may be (in relation to encouraging an increase in physical activity - with associated health benefits).

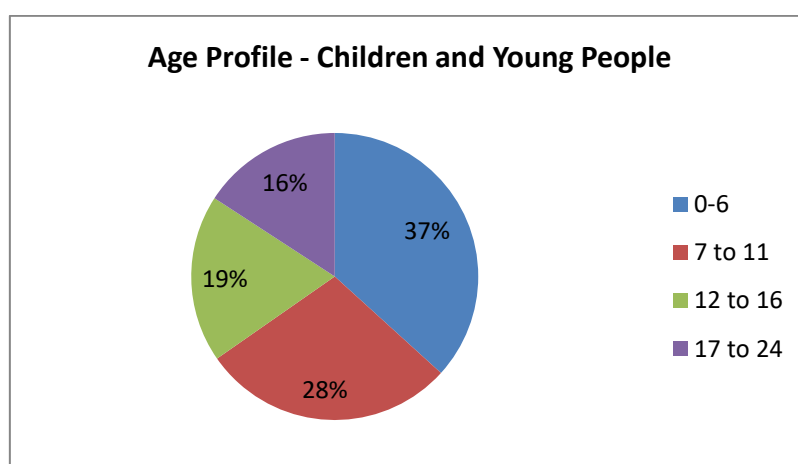
2.1 Residents' Household Survey

2.1.1 Introduction

The open space, indoor and outdoor sports and recreational facilities study needs to secure a general understanding of how residents of Stroud District currently make use of the various kinds of open space, sport and recreation facilities; in particular whether they think there are enough of such facilities; what they think of the quality of those facilities; how accessible they are; and what kind of facilities they think are priorities for future development and improvement. A good way of securing this general overview is to secure responses from a broad cross section of Stroud District households.

A questionnaire survey was therefore designed by Ethos and agreed by the Borough Council. It was distributed to a random sample of 4000 households. In addition, an online version was promoted by the Council. Respondents were asked to respond to provide a view on behalf of their household, rather than simply as individuals. 516 surveys were completed. The total number of people represented through the household survey was 1,135 and the average household size of the households was 2.2 – slightly lower than the UK average and Stroud District as a whole (2.3)⁵.

Just over 30% of households who responded had children (representing household views on behalf of 246 children and young people) with ages spread across the age range:



The full questionnaire is included in Appendix 2 and the following provides some of the key findings⁶.

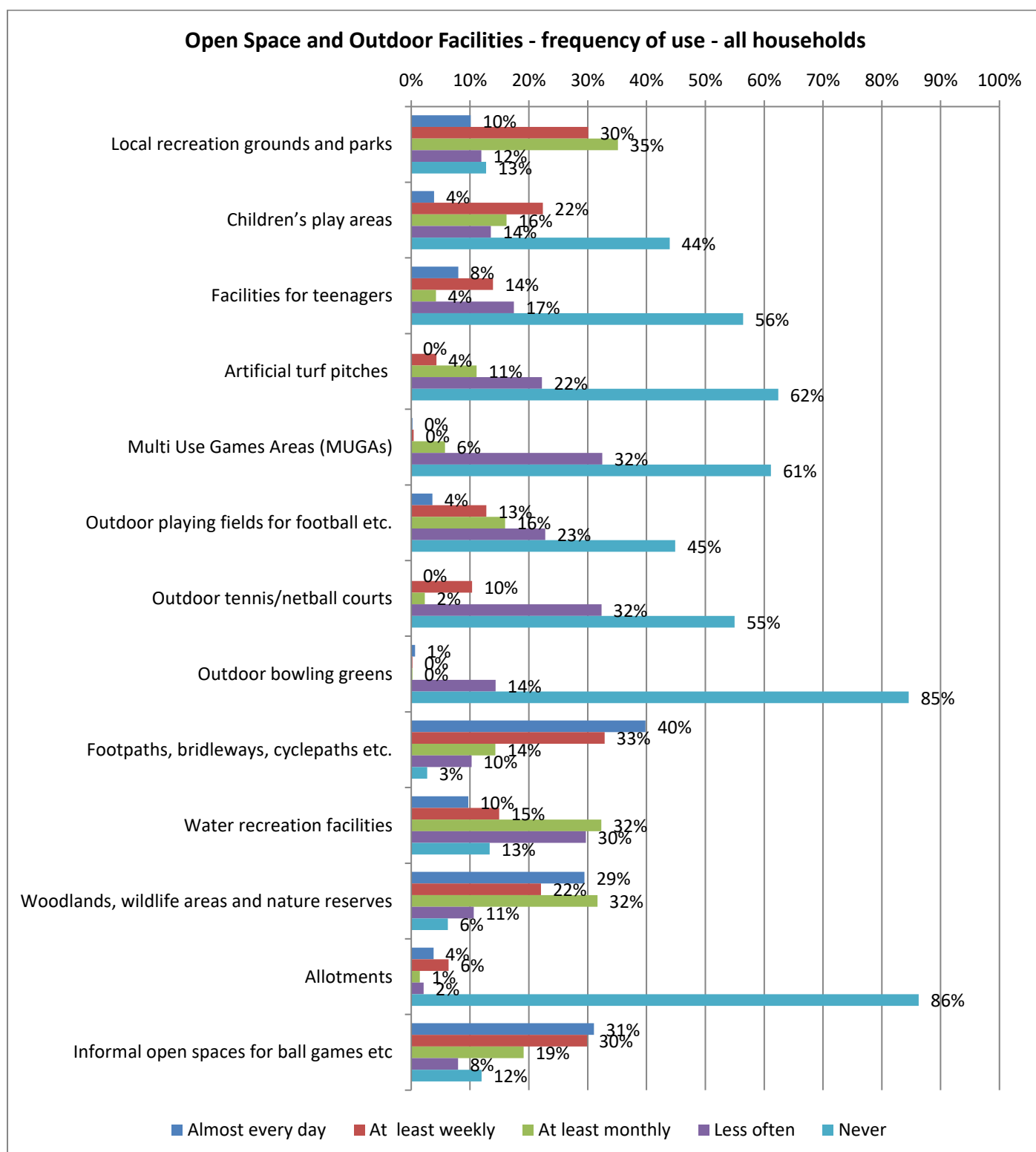
⁵ 2011 census figures

⁶ The findings are further considered - in detail - in the main reports.

2.1.2 Frequency of use – All households

Respondents were asked to state how often they visited or used each of the following types⁷ of open space, sport and recreation facilities within the study area and the results are shown on the charts below⁸:

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities



⁷ It should be noted that the categories in the survey are quite broad and respondents choose the category that is most appropriate, for example, visits to the Commons are likely to be categorised under the natural green space category – woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves.

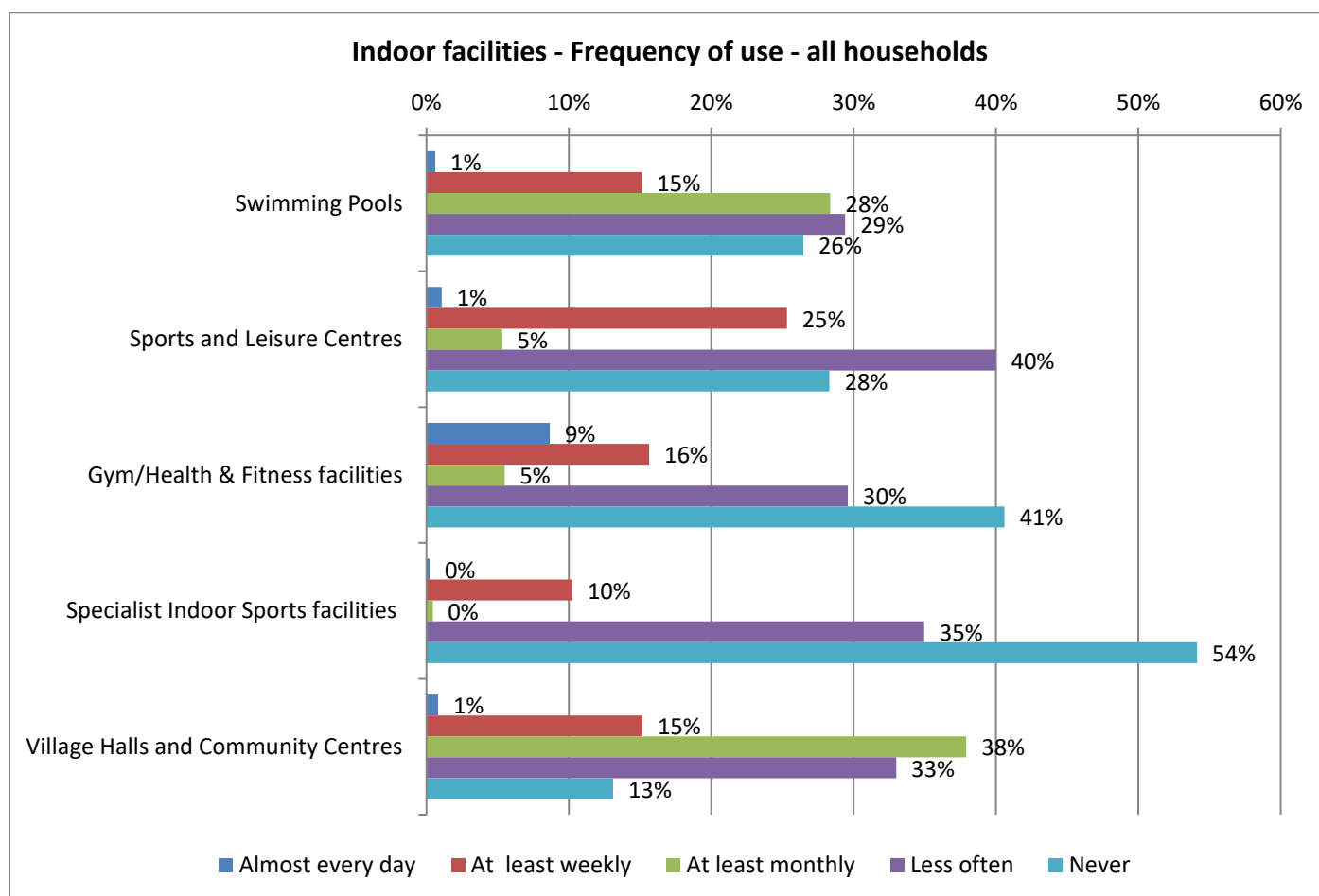
⁸ Please note that percentages have been rounded up or down to the nearest full percentage. This means that on some occasions the total percentages may vary slightly from 100%.

It is the District's footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths that are most commonly used by most households at least monthly (87%); followed by woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (83%), informal open spaces (80%) and parks and recreation grounds (75%).

Footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths are also by far the most frequently used facility on both a weekly and daily basis (73% - of which 40% use them almost every day); followed by informal open spaces e.g. for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc (80% - of which 31% visit almost every day); and woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (51% - of which 29% visit almost every day). Parks and recreation grounds are visited at least weekly by 40% of local residents (of which 10% visit almost every day).

Areas for water recreation and play spaces and are also fairly frequently used but by fewer households. At least 40% use them on a regular basis - at least monthly (including those who are more regular users).

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



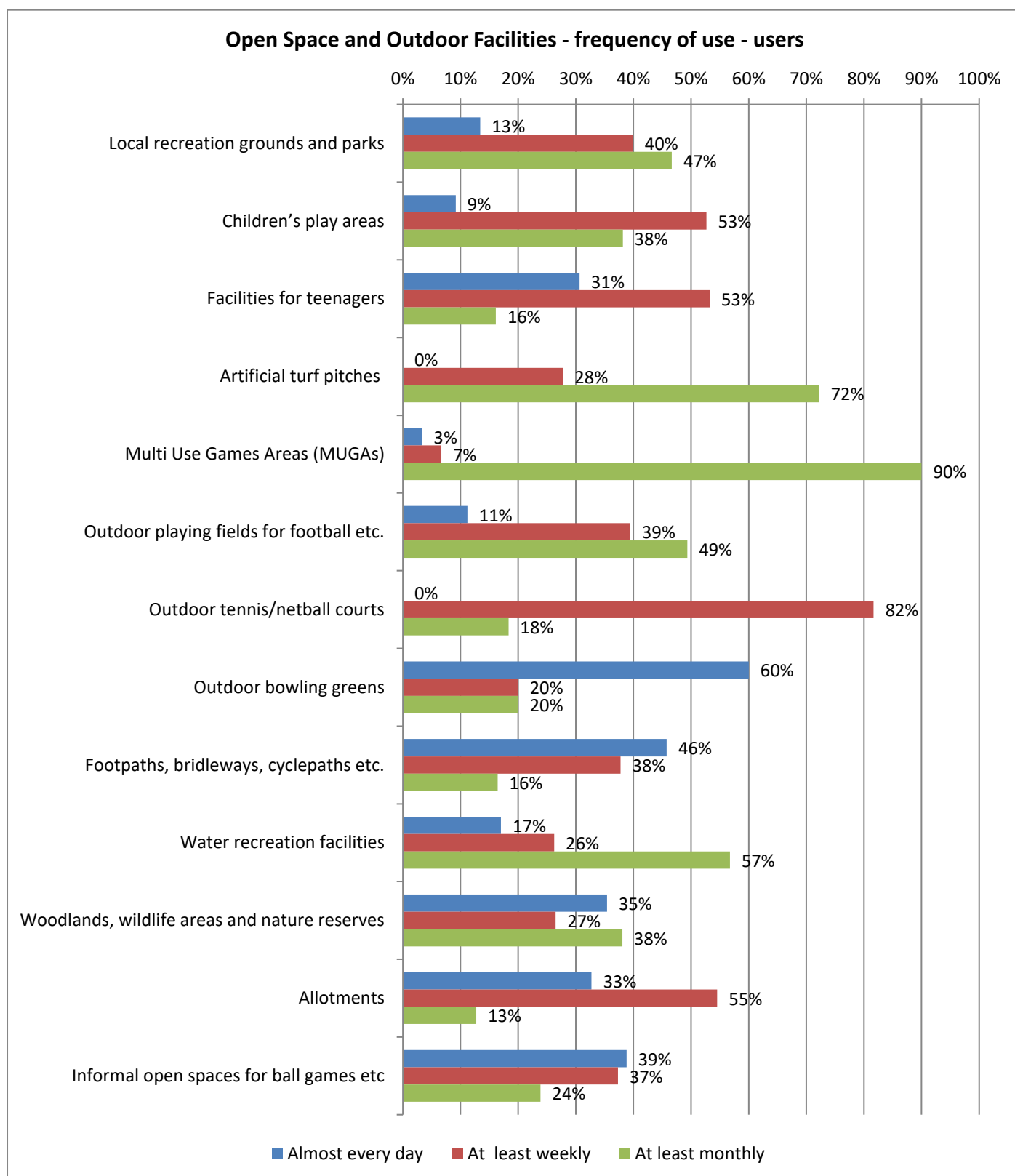
Village halls/community centres are used regularly by a majority of households (54% report using them at least monthly). Swimming pools also see regular use by many households at least monthly (44%). These facilities also see the most frequent use – 16% are used at least weekly.

Sport/leisure centres and Gym/health and fitness centres are also used regularly by many households but to a lesser extent. At least 30% of households visit such facilities at least monthly. It is also notable that these facilities are used very frequently – 26% of households visit sport/leisure centres at least weekly and 25% gym/health and fitness centres (of which 9% visit almost every day).

2.1.3 Frequency, regularity and times of use – Regular Users⁹

It is interesting to look at the frequency with which regular users of facilities visit them as for some facilities this is not immediately obvious from looking at the overall figures.

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

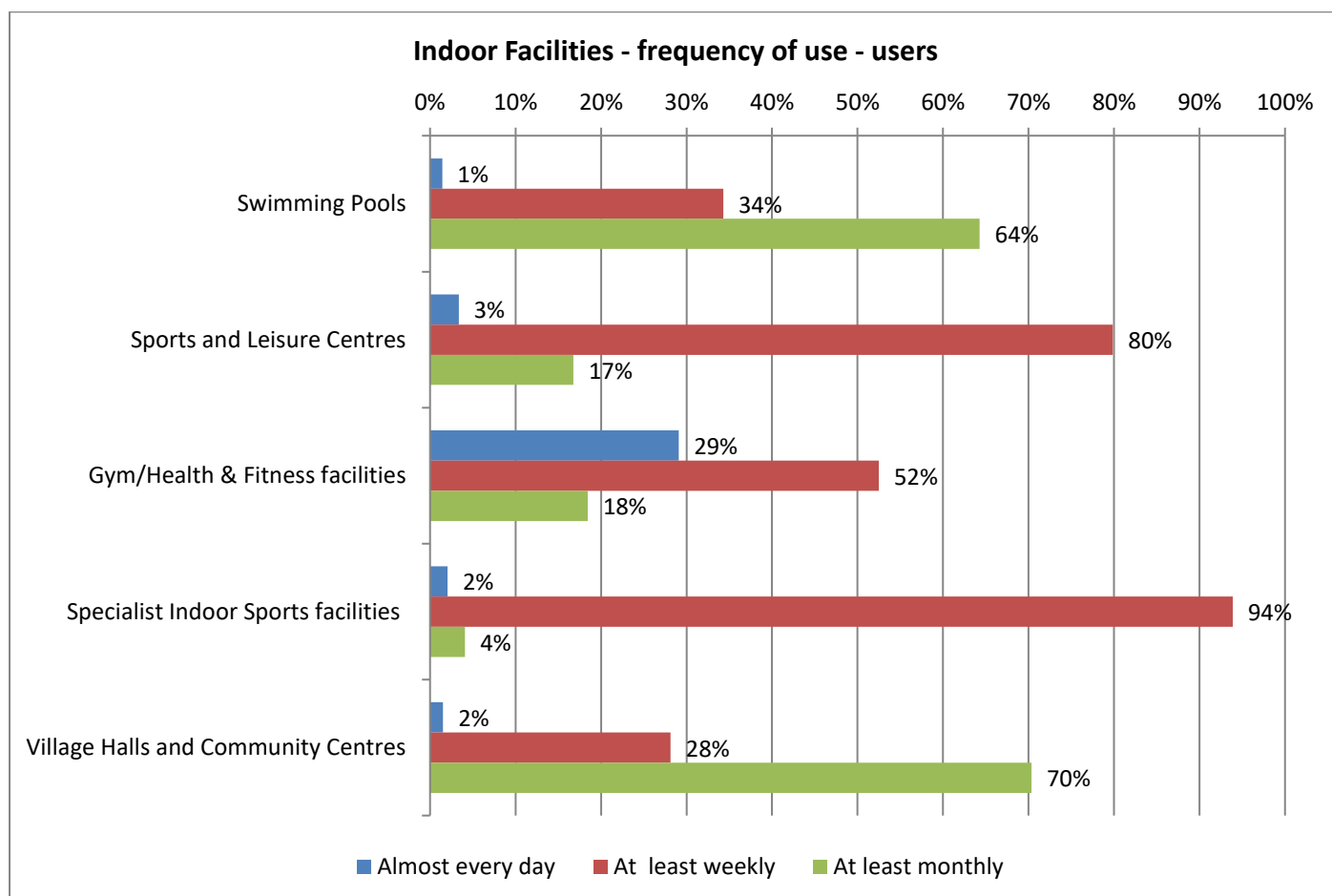


⁹ By regular users we mean those households where open spaces/facilities are used/visited at least monthly.

It can be seen that:

- 88% of allotment holders visit their allotment at least weekly (of which 33% visit almost every day).
- 84% of users visit teen facilities e.g. skateparks at least weekly (31% nearly every day); and 62% visit play spaces at least weekly (9% nearly every day).
- 82% of users of outdoor tennis/netball courts use them at least weekly; and 80% use bowling greens at least weekly (60% nearly every day).

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



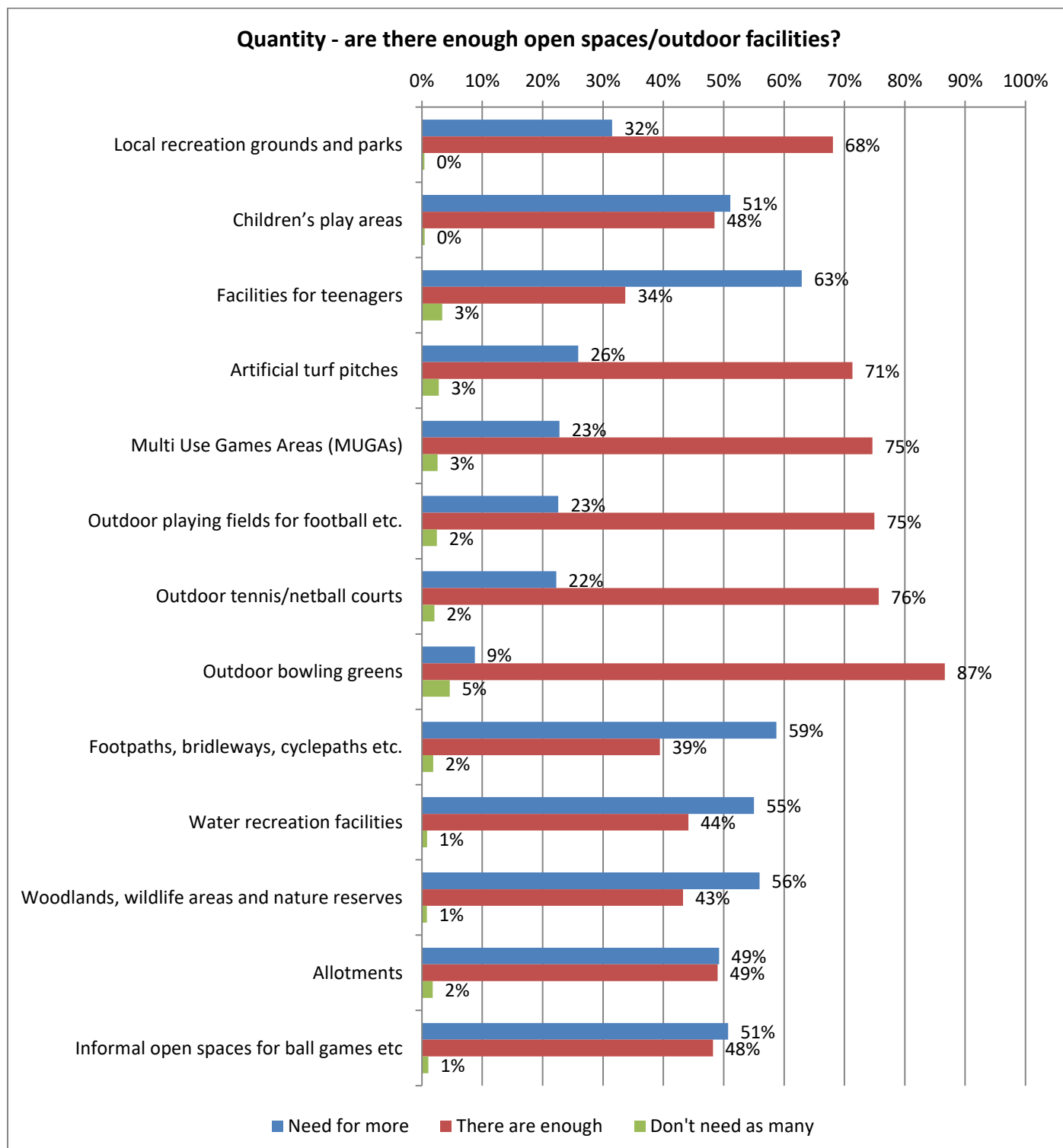
In terms of indoor facilities the most frequently visited by regular users (at least weekly) are specialist indoor facilities such as indoor bowls centres (96%).

83% of regular users visit sports and leisure centres at least weekly; and 81% use gym/health and fitness centres (of which 29% visit nearly every day).

2.1.4 Quantity of open space, sport and recreation facilities

Residents were asked if they needed more, the same or fewer of different types of open space and recreational facilities. Findings are illustrated in the chart below and will influence the “quantity” component of local standards as appropriate (this will be explained further in the 3 main reports).

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

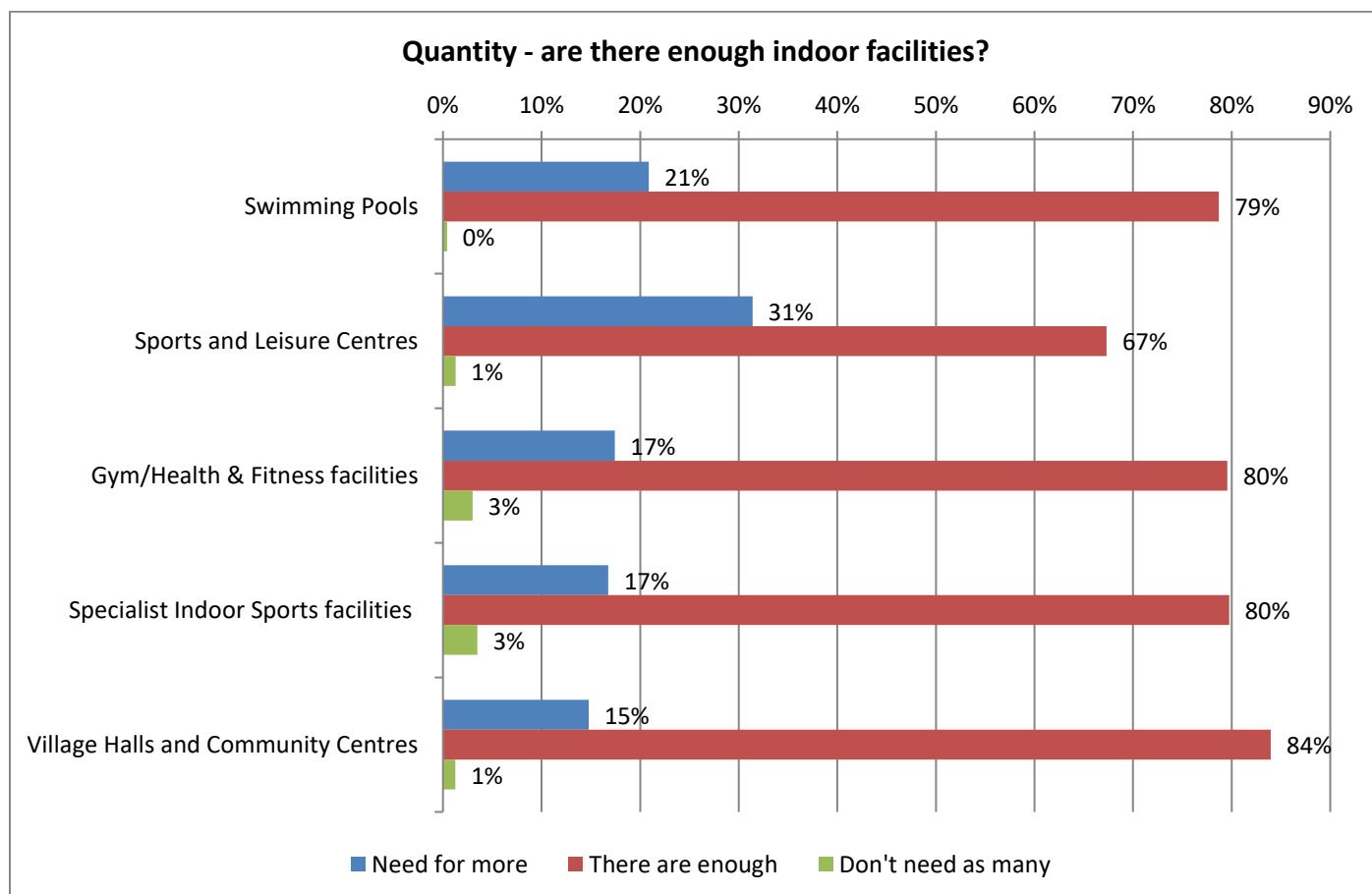


A clear majority of households (63%) reported a general need for more facilities for teenagers across the district. A significant majority also note a need for more footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths (59%). In addition, there were notable majorities indicating a general shortfall of woodland, wildlife and nature reserve sites (56%) and facilities for water recreation (55%).

A large majority thought that overall there are enough outdoor bowling greens (87%) and an additional 5% said that the district doesn't need as many. Substantial majorities (around 75%) think that in general there are enough outdoor tennis courts, MUGAs, and playing pitches.

For some typologies there is no clear view on general quantity needs, for example with allotments, informal green space, and children's play areas.

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



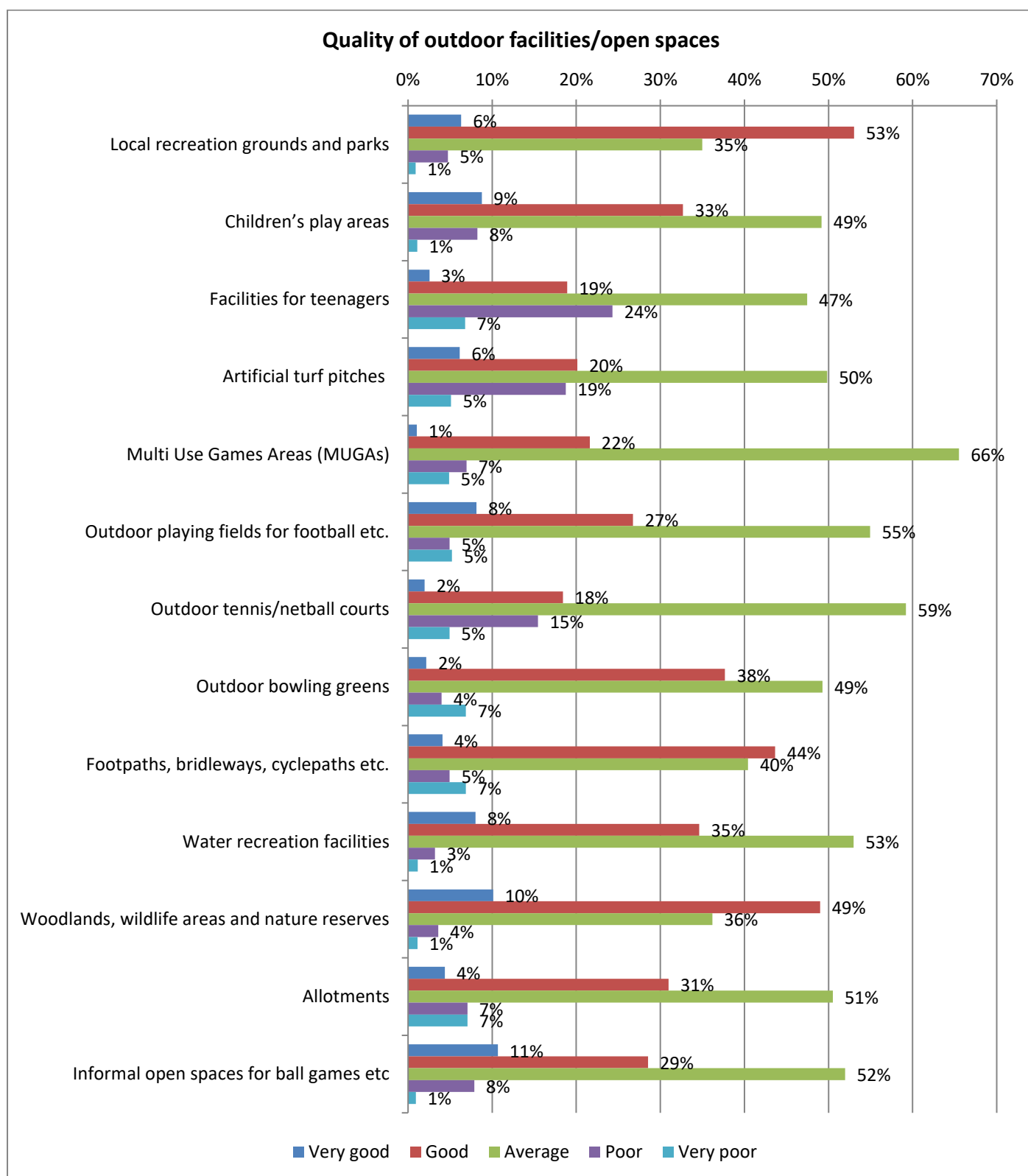
A clear majority of households reported that overall there are currently enough of all kinds of indoor sport and recreation facilities; most notably in relation to village halls/community centres (84%).

31% suggest a need for more sports and leisure centres.

2.1.5 Quality of open space, sport and recreation facilities

Respondents were asked how they rated various types of facilities in the study area in terms of quality. The responses of those expressing an opinion on specific categories of facility are illustrated below:

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities



For most kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general they were of average or better quality (though the most common rating tended to be only "average"). However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality as noted below.

31% of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor. The quality of artificial turf pitches and tennis/netball courts was rated as poor or worse by at least 20% of respondents.

In contrast some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated highly in terms of quality. These include: parks and recreation grounds (59% rate quality in general as being good or very good); woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (59%); and footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths (48%).

Green Infrastructure - Building with Nature

The District Council is supportive of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's Building with Nature initiative. The Trust is working with developers and planners to create a common understanding of what constitutes high-quality green infrastructure (GI)¹⁰. The aim is to secure the benefits to people and wildlife, without provision for the natural environment being regarded as a hold up to development.

Building with Nature provides a clear set of standards and a technical user guide to help applicants secure evidence on how their development or policy meets the benchmark standard for high-quality green infrastructure.

The three elements on which the standards are based are:

- Promote health and wellbeing
- Ensure effective water management
- Protect and enhance wildlife

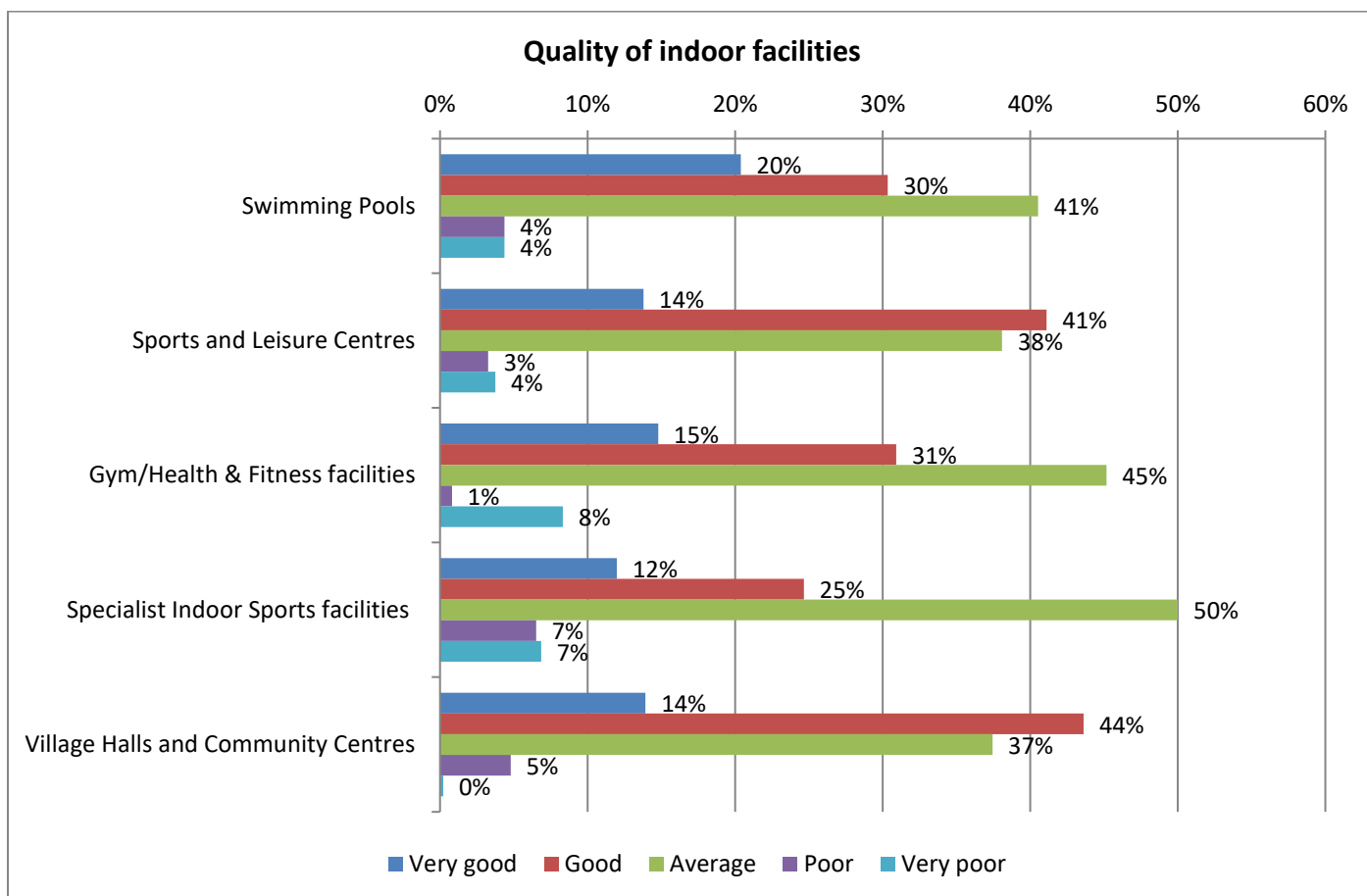
In partnership with the Trust specific questions were developed to secure the degree of local resident's support for these three elements of quality. Responses are shown in the table below:

Factor	Very Important	Quite Important	Neutral	Not very Important	Not at all Important	No opinion
<i>Promote health and wellbeing:</i> by ensuring that public open and green spaces are accessible for all, and close to where people live and work - to optimise use and enjoyment.	430	73	3	1	1	2
<i>Ensure effective water management:</i> by securing a commitment to improve water quality; reduce the risk of flooding; and manage water naturally for maximum benefit of people & wildlife.	422	76	4	1	1	2
<i>Protect and enhance wildlife:</i> by ensuring green/open spaces provide areas where nature can flourish; and linking up spaces to the wider green network to promote better wildlife habitats and improve biodiversity.	414	77	12	1	1	2

¹⁰ It should be noted that in this report and in the main reports the term GI is used to cover both 'land and water' features e.g. water features such as canals, rivers, lakes etc. (sometimes referred to as "blue infrastructure").

It is clear from the above that local residents strongly support provision of green infrastructure that promotes health and wellbeing; ensures effective water management; and protects and enhances wildlife.

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



In broad terms respondent households appear quite satisfied with the quality of indoor sports and recreation provision. All are commonly rated as being of average or better quality.

The indoor facilities most commonly regarded as being of good or very good quality are village halls/community centres (58%); and sports and leisure centres (55%).

Specialist indoor facilities e.g. indoor bowls are not rated quite as highly – 37% rating them as good or very good with 14% of those rating them as poor or very poor.

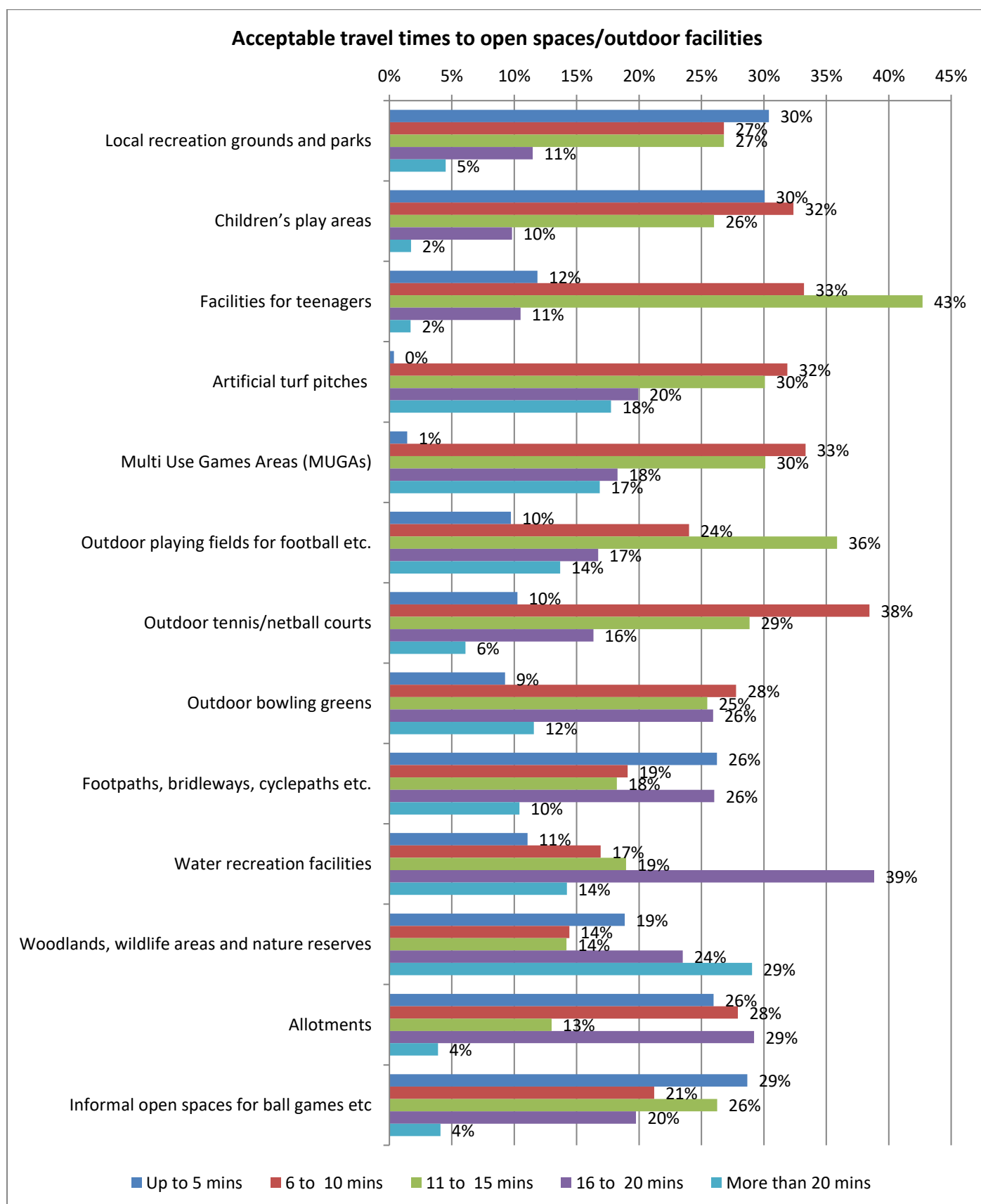
The detailed findings regarding quality will be useful in relation to reviewing the “quality” aspect of local standards.

2.1.6 Access Issues (Geographical)

An important component of this study is to develop and recommend a series of local standards of provision for different types of open space, sport and recreation opportunity. The following provides a means to gauge people’s willingness to travel to use different types of facility/open space (which might be by car, foot, bike, public transport etc). Where appropriate, these results will feed into the determination of the “access” element of local standards.

In looking at the travel times in the first set of charts below it should be noted that these do not specify the mode of preferred travel (this is covered by the next set of charts).

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities



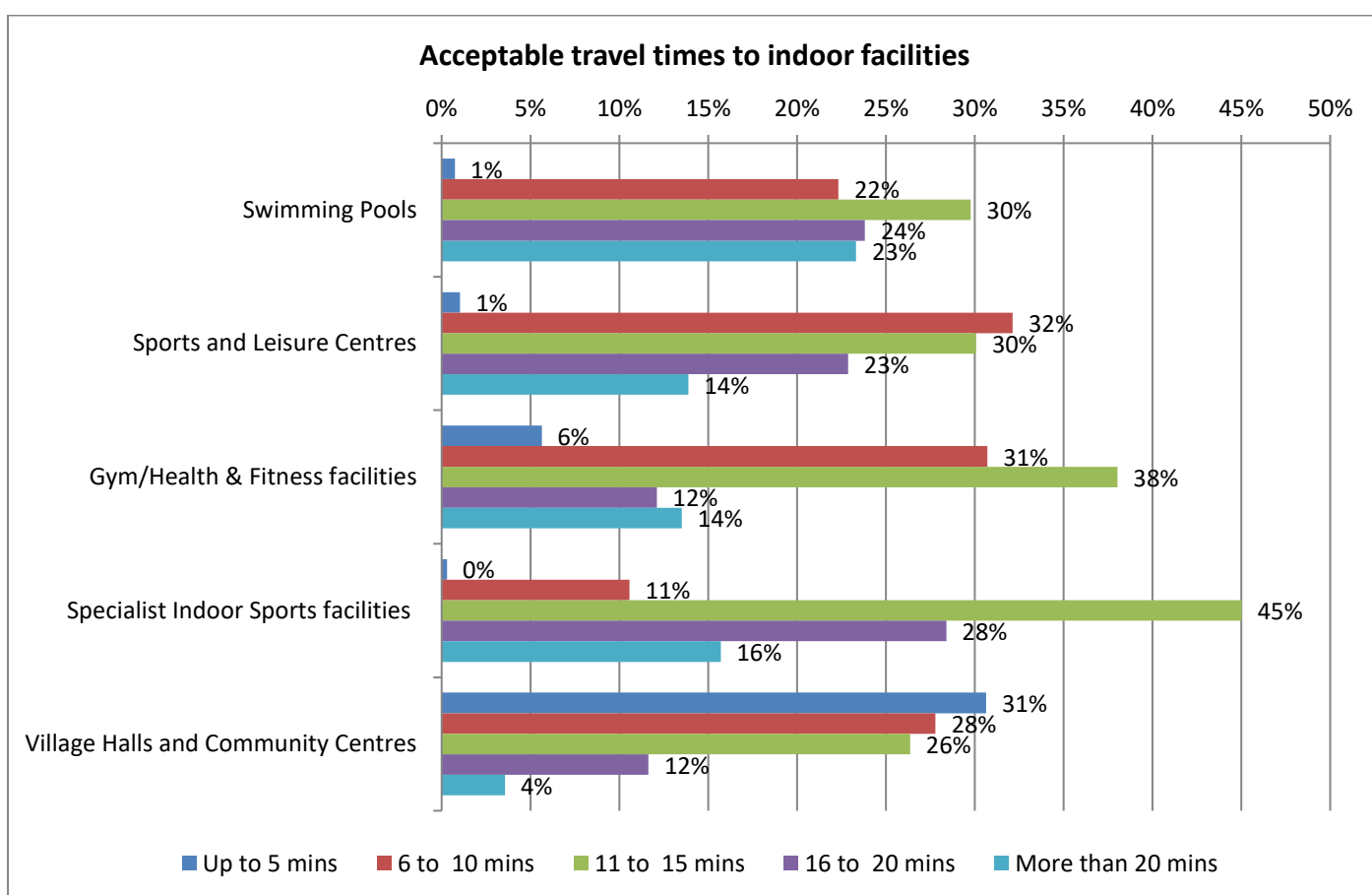
In general, a majority of household respondents report that they would not normally travel more than 15 minutes to visit most kinds of open spaces and outdoor facilities. There is considerable variation however between the typologies. For example, 53% of households are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to visit woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (of which 29% would travel more than 20 minutes) and 53%

of households are prepared to travel that long to visit water recreation facilities (14% of those would travel more than 20 minutes).

In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, parks and recreation grounds, and informal open space areas - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc).

- 62% of users would expect play areas to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 30% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 57% of users would expect local parks/recreation grounds to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 30% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 54% of users would expect allotments to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 26% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



Where households make use of the opportunities identified 89% of users are prepared to travel up to 15 minutes to use specialist sports facilities. 28% of these would travel up to 20 minutes and 16% more than 20 minutes.

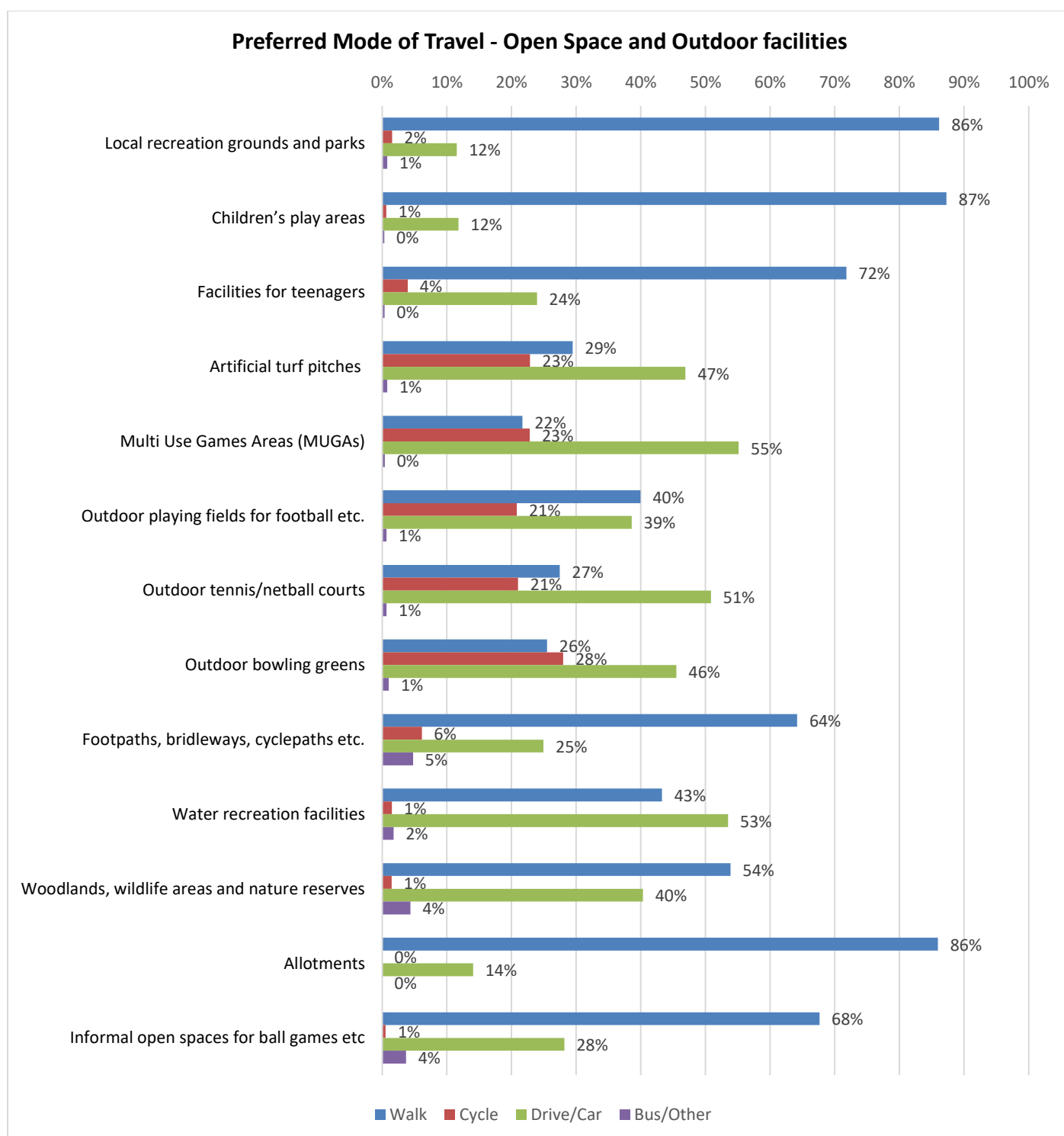
In the case of swimming pools 77% of users are prepared to travel up to 15 minutes to make use of such facilities. 24% of these would travel up to 20 minutes and 23% more than 20 minutes.

In contrast, 59% of users of village halls and community centres would not wish to travel more than 10 minutes, of which 31% would expect to travel 5 minutes or less.

It is clear from the above that for both indoor and outdoor facilities there is great variance in respondents' apparent willingness to spend time travelling to different types of opportunity. In drawing up the "access" element of specific local standards for different kinds of open space/facility it is clearly very important to take careful note of all of these findings (combined with the preferred mode of travel options discussed below).

An accompanying question asked what mode of transport respondents were likely to use to get to such opportunities (where they would use them).

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

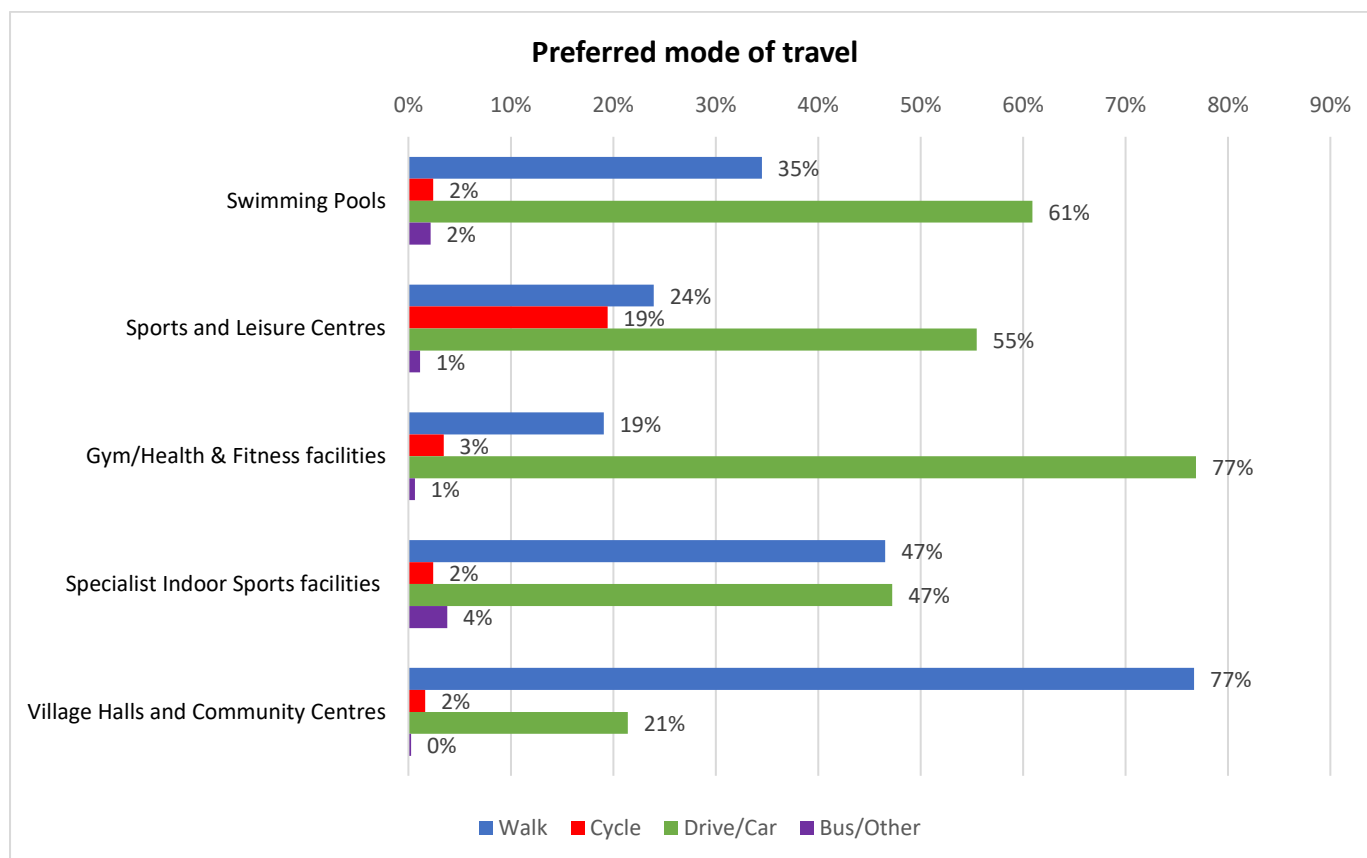


For most typologies walking/cycling is the norm, most notably for facilities such as play areas (87%); recreation grounds and parks (88%); and teen facilities (76%). However, a small majority of respondent

households would normally drive rather than walk to MUGAS (55%); water recreation facilities (53%); and tennis courts (51%). Significant number would also drive to artificial turf pitches (47%); outdoor bowling greens (46%) and woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (40%).

It is notable that for some typologies cycling is a significant mode of travel (around 20%) e.g. MUGAs, artificial turf pitches, playing pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens.

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



For most indoor sports and recreation facilities respondents are more likely than not to drive rather than walk/cycle - most notably for gym/health and fitness centres (77%); swimming pools (61%); and sports/leisure centres (55%).

Walking is the preferred mode of travel for a clear majority of respondent households accessing village halls and community centres (77%) plus an additional 2% who cycle.

For a significant number of households access by cycling is important to sports/leisure centres (19%).

It is not surprising that in broad terms walking is the predominant mode of travel to facilities such as local parks, children's play areas, recreation grounds, and other informal recreation areas. In contrast, motorised transport is more common for larger facilities such as swimming pools and leisure centres. It is however of great importance when it comes to drawing up the access element of local standards in terms of whether access thresholds should primarily be provided in terms of walking, cycling or drive times.

The main implications for deriving access standards are that, in general, walk times would be more appropriate for:

- Parks and recreation grounds
- Play areas for children
- Teenage facilities
- Rights of way
- Allotments
- Informal open space
- Village halls/community centres

Based on the above drive times would, in general, be more appropriate for Swimming Pools, Sports/Leisure Centres, and gym/health and fitness facilities.

The two main reports will also discuss in detail the way different typologies should be treated in relation to spatial planning standards. For example, recommendations for footpaths' bridleways and cyclepaths may not be focused on specific quantity or distance/time threshold standards.

Importance of Footpath/cycle access

Residents were asked if they would cycle or walk further or more often if the quality of their journey by foot or bike to a nearby open space or facility was improved.

- 83% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved
- 84% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.

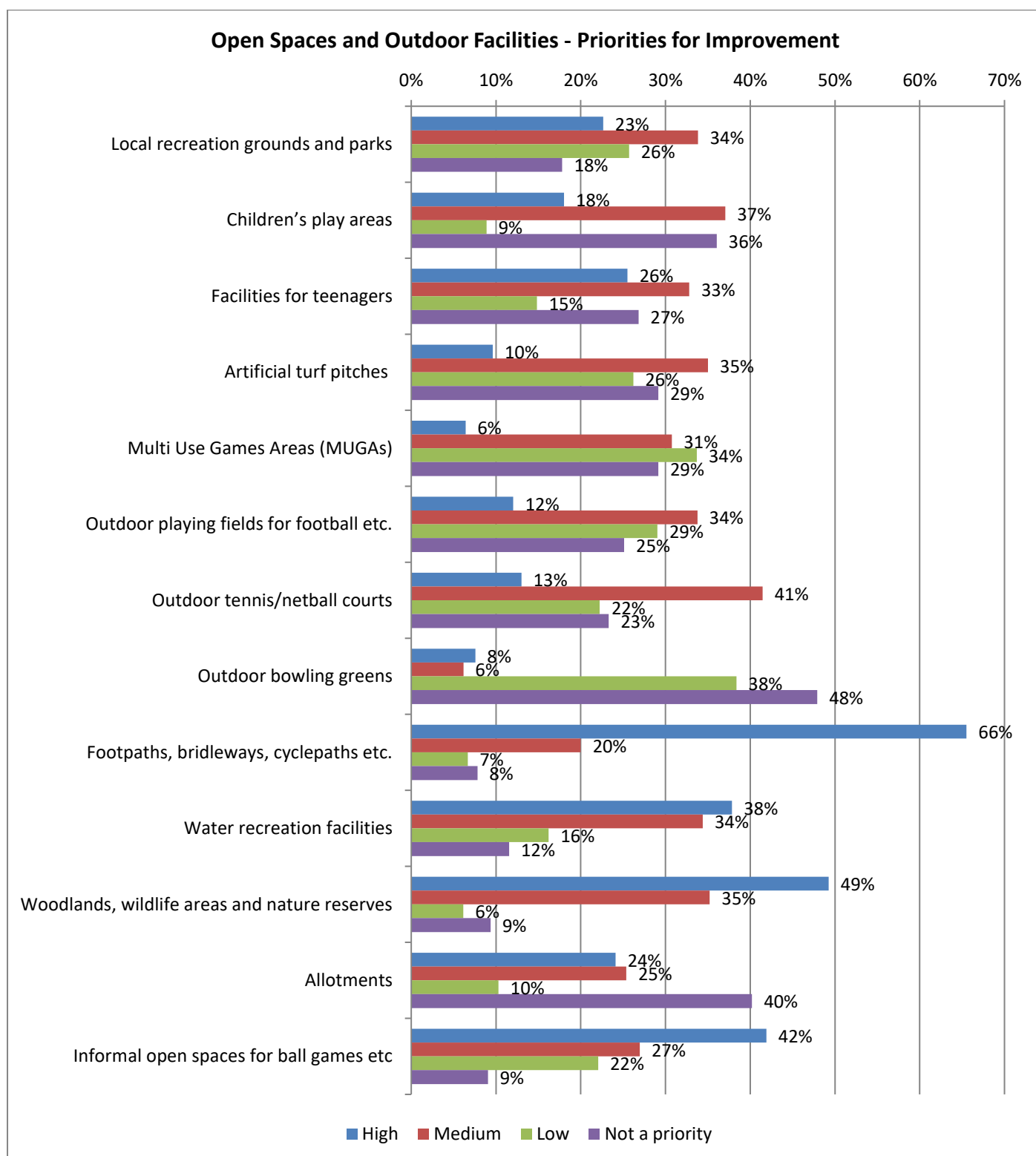
This is a significant finding in terms of illustrating the potential benefit of ensuring good foot and cycle path access to facilities.

The detailed findings from this section will be used when drawing up the access elements of relevant standards for different kinds of open space elsewhere in the study.

2.1.7 Key Issues and priorities for improvement

Households were also asked what their priorities for improvement in provision were. Findings are illustrated on the table below. Respondents were asked to rate the need for new or improved facilities by indicating priorities at three levels – high, medium or low.

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

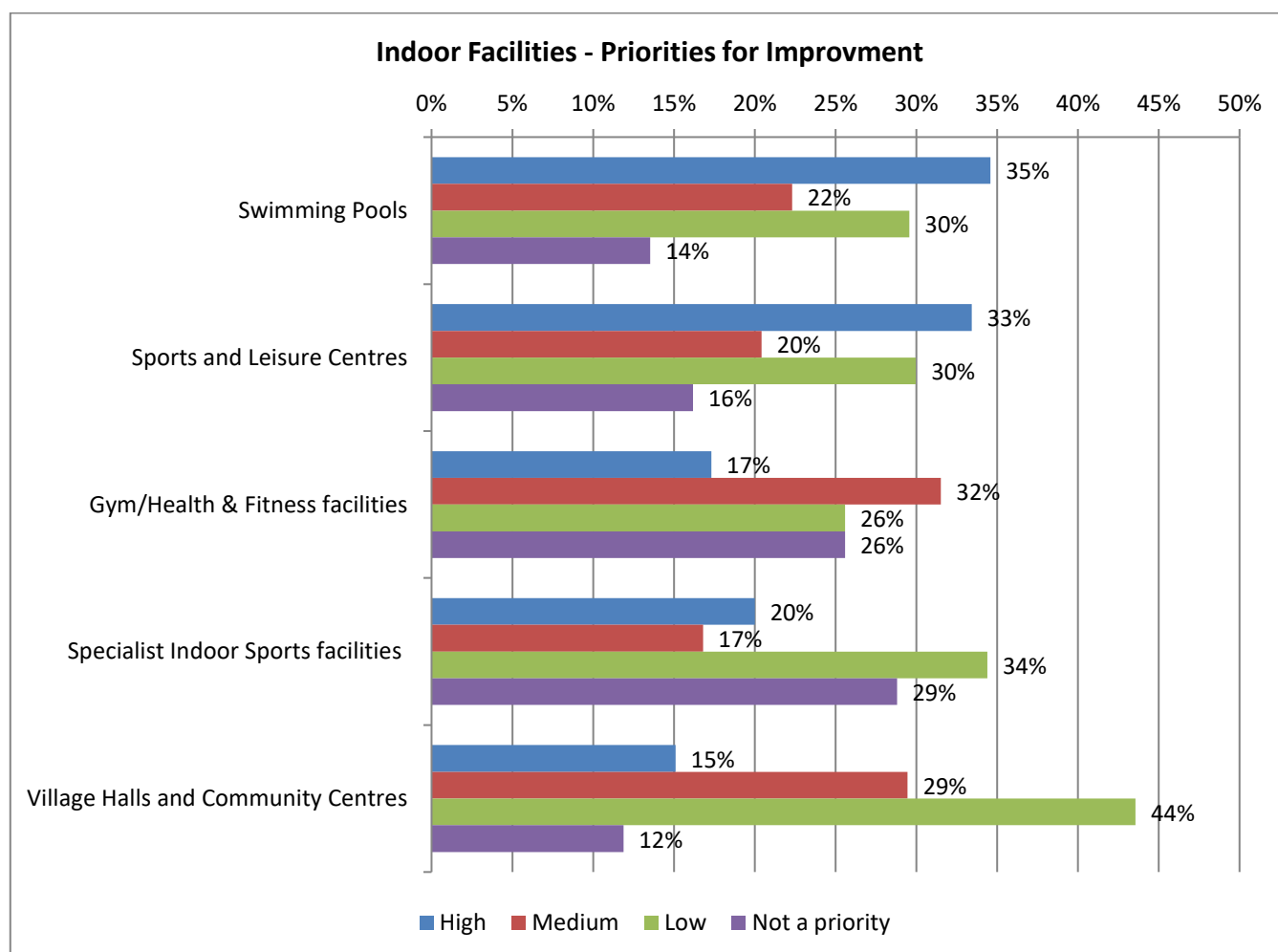


In relation to Open Space and Outdoor Facilities the category highlighted by the largest number of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision was better footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision (66%); followed by woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (49%); and informal open space for ball games, picnics, dog walking etc (42%).

Other notable high priorities for improvement noted by significant numbers were water recreation facilities (38%); facilities for teenagers (26%); and allotments (24%).

Parks and recreation grounds and children's play areas also score quite highly as a priority need (with combined high/medium priority choice of 55% or more).

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities

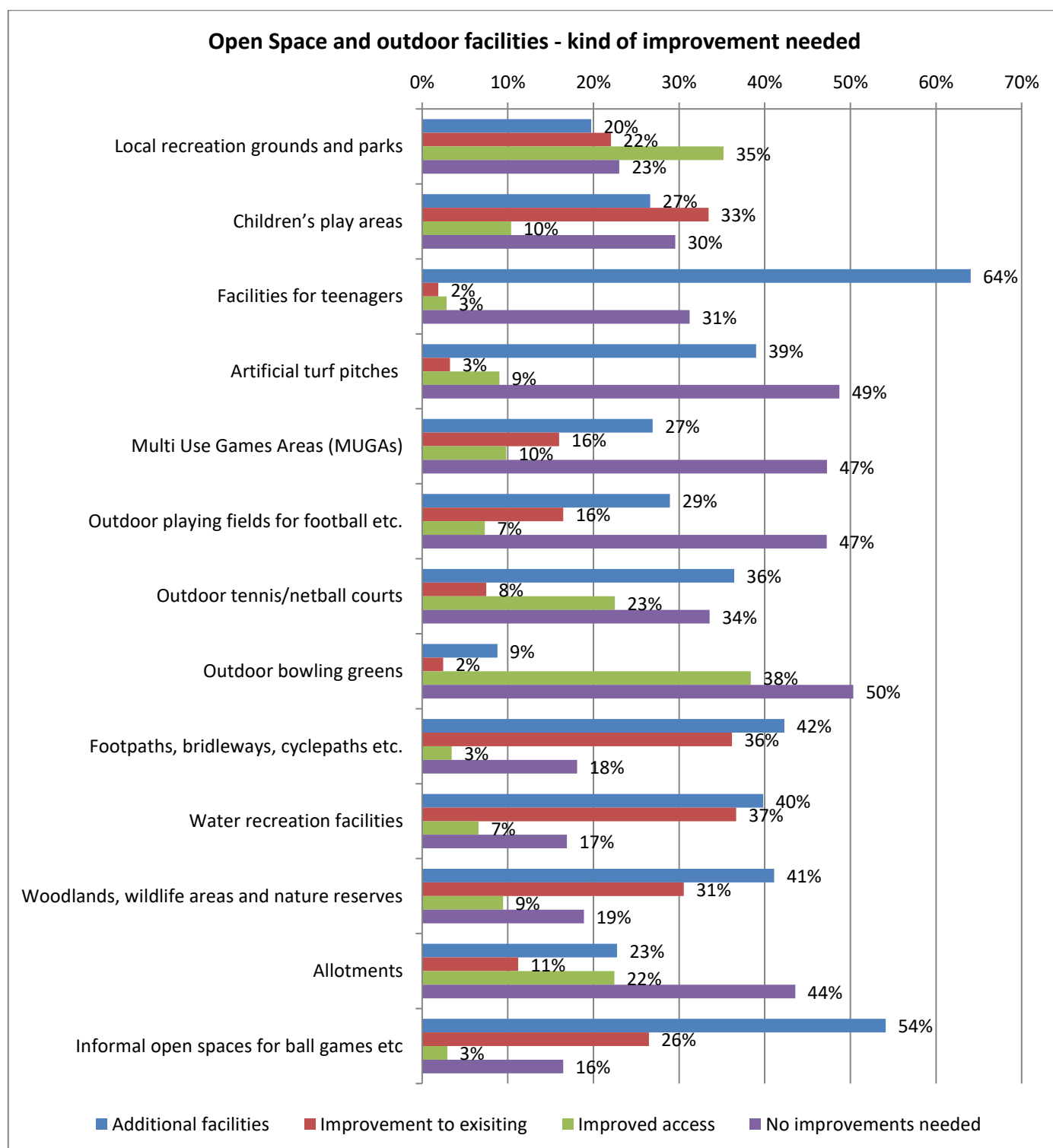


For indoor sports and leisure facilities in general, fewer households highlighted high priority needs. Improvements to swimming pool provision gained the highest proportion of high priority ratings (35%) closely followed by improvements to sport and leisure centres (33%).

Kind of Improvement Needed

Associated questions asked households to indicate whether the kind of priority need was primarily for more facilities, improved quality of existing, or improved access. In relation to the priorities noted above these findings are shown in the charts below:

Open Space and Outdoor Facilities

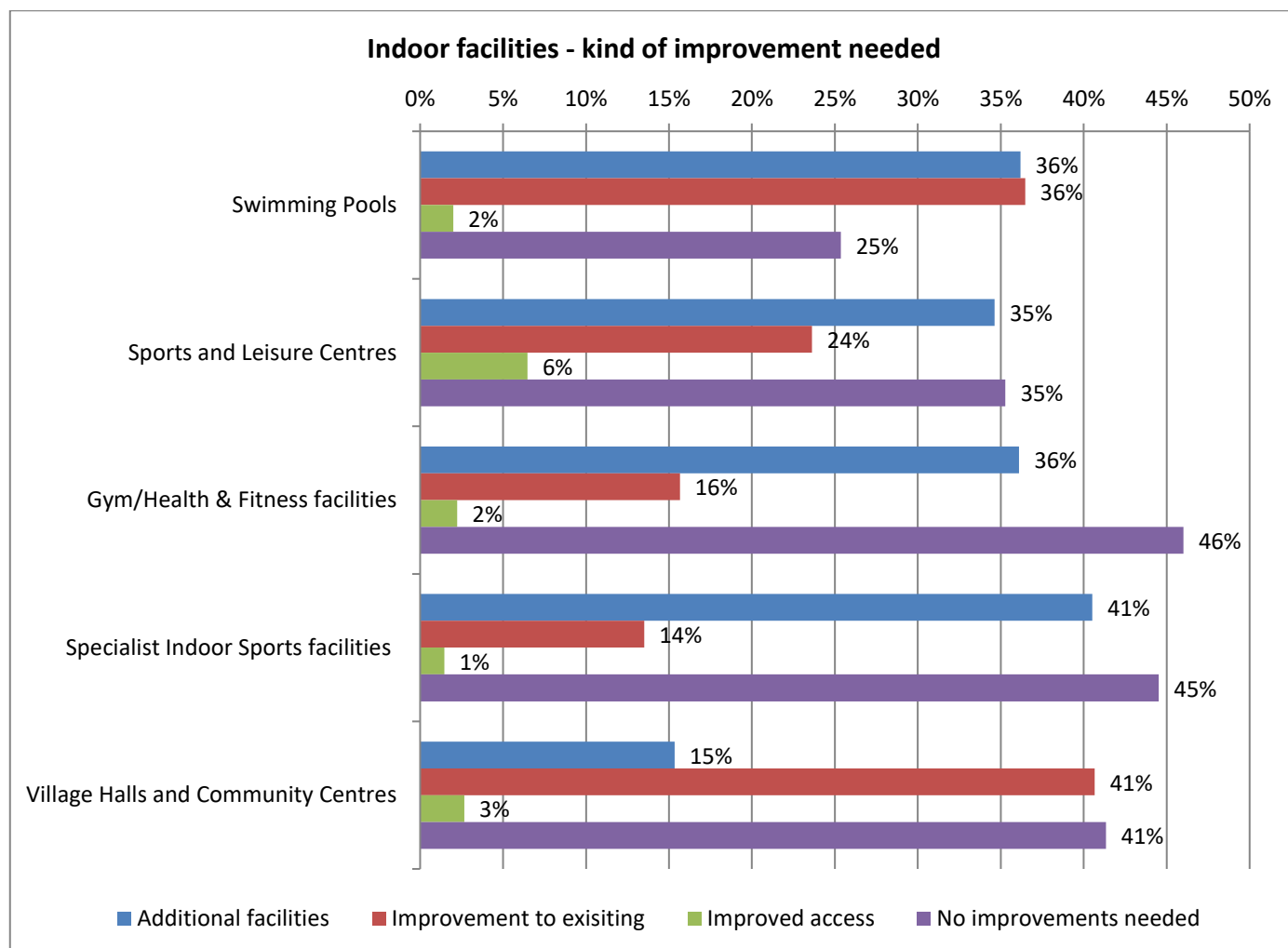


From this it can be seen that:

- The category where it is particularly clear cut that the primary need identified is for more facilities is provision for teenagers (64%).
- The other typology with a majority indicating a need for more rather than improvements in quality is informal open spaces for ball games, picnics, dog walking etc (54%).
- Typologies where quality improvements to existing provision is the more common kind of improvement need (rather than new provision are local recreation grounds/parks and children's play areas).

- Improved access was deemed important by significant numbers for bowling greens (38%); and parks/recreation grounds (35%).

Swimming Pools and indoor Sports and Recreation Facilities



From this it can be seen that:

- For specialist indoor sports provision, sport and leisure centres and gym/health and fitness facilities considerably more households thought that providing more facilities was the primary need rather than improvements to existing.
- For village halls and community centres a clear majority of households suggested that improvements to existing facilities was the primary need rather than new provision.
- For swimming pools, slightly more respondents identified the primary need as being improvements to existing facilities (rather than suggesting new provision is the main issue).

2.2 Stakeholder Views - Public Health

2.2.1 Introduction

This section highlights stakeholder views on the value of open space to the wider public health agenda. This includes national perspectives from organisations such as the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) and Public Health England. It also provides feedback from the Stroud DC Sport & Health Development Service, Stroud DC Health & Wellbeing Co-ordinator and Gloucestershire County Council Public Health service.

Stroud District Council have representatives on the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board - GHWB (a sub-committee of the GHWB). This group leads and advises on the development of the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Integrated Commissioning Strategy and Plan. It ensures effective local engagement and monitors local outcomes. It focuses on improving the health and wellbeing of the people living in their CCG area through joined up commissioning across the NHS, social care, district councils, public health and other relevant services.

2.2.2 National perspectives on the value of open spaces and physical activity to health and wellbeing.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) have pointed out that "physical activity is not only fun and enjoyable, it is essential for good health, helping to prevent or manage over 20 conditions and diseases. This includes heart disease, diabetes, some cancers and obesity. It can also help improve people's mental health and wellbeing¹¹."

NICE Local Authority Briefing - Public health

Supporting people of all ages to be more physically active can help local authorities meet their new public health responsibilities. Specifically, it will impact on a range of indicators identified in the public health and the adult social care outcomes frameworks including:

- use of green space for exercise/health reasons
- child development
- excess weight in children and adults
- proportion of physically active and inactive adults
- self-reported wellbeing and health-related quality of life
- falls and injuries in the over-65s
- mortality from cardiovascular diseases (including heart disease and stroke), cancer and respiratory diseases.

More specifically in relation to the Open Spaces Study, Public Health England has provided a health equity briefing: *Local action on health inequalities: Improving access to green spaces*.

Public Health England - health equity briefing: Local action on health inequalities: Improving access to green spaces. Summary of key points

- There is significant and growing evidence on the health benefits of access to good quality green spaces. The benefits include better self-rated health; lower body mass index, overweight and obesity levels; improved mental health and wellbeing; increased longevity.
- There is unequal access to green space across England. People living in the most deprived areas are less likely to live near green spaces and will therefore have fewer opportunities to experience the health benefits of green space compared with people living in less deprived areas.

¹¹ NICE Local government briefing [LGB3] - April 2013

- Increasing the use of good quality green space for all social groups is likely to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities. It can also bring other benefits such as greater community cohesion and reduced social isolation.
- Local authorities play a vital role in protecting, maintaining and improving local green spaces and can create new areas of green space to improve access for all communities. Such efforts require joint work across different parts of the local authority and beyond, particularly public health, planning, transport, and parks and leisure.

Providing opportunities for physical activity by developing and maintaining appropriate facilities such as parks and open spaces is therefore very important in relation to promoting better public health. Public Health services nationally therefore tend to have an interest in all aspects of active recreation facility provision; and this is reflected in the views of the team in Stroud District.

2.2.3 Stroud District Council Sport, Health & Wellbeing Development Service

Stroud District Council fully recognises the value of open space, sport and physical activity in relation to promoting health and wellbeing and public health objectives. The team noted that:

- Health and wellbeing is a key priority in the District Council’s 4 Year Corporate Delivery Plan (2018 – 2022). The Plan aims to “promote the health and wellbeing of our communities and work with others to deliver the public health agenda”.
- One key action noted in the corporate plan is to “deliver new ‘walking sports’ and ‘healthy lifestyle’ programmes. Another key action noted is to “Implement the cycling and walking plan focused on Saul – Stonehouse - Stroud - Brimscombe, Stroud - Nailsworth and Cam – Dursley – Uley”.
- The corporate plan also highlights that membership at both leisure centres is “at record levels -good for health and wellbeing, good for income”.
- The District Council is currently updating its Health and Wellbeing Plan which contributes to the delivery of the Gloucestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. One of the elements of the plan is to implement schemes targeted at helping to reduce obesity/overweight levels.
- The Health and Wellbeing Plan specifically aims to work towards a reduction in adult and childhood obesity. The importance of providing access to open spaces, sport and recreation facilities is a key element of pursuing this objective. The plan notes that physical activity amongst 5-16 year olds is worse than the national average.
- The Council also convenes and support the Stroud District Health and Wellbeing Partnership which is a forum for any person or organisation with an interest in health and wellbeing in the Stroud District. The group meets quarterly to share information and keep up to date on health developments and partnership opportunities.
- The Council’s Sport and Health Development Service offers a varied programme of physical activity, sport, health and wellbeing initiatives including:
 - Active for Life - a district wide event aimed at encouraging older adults to get active within their local communities.
 - Healthy Lifestyles Scheme - including GP Exercise on Referral, Cardiac Rehab, Respiratory Rehab, Falls Prevention, Health Walks - suitable for all abilities lasting between 30mins-60mins and Cycling4Health – weekly guided cycle rides
 - Advice to sports clubs, Town and Parish Councils, schools, FE/HE and organisations for capital builds development plans, funding and revenue projects district-wide.

2.2.4 Gloucestershire County Council – Public Health

The Health and Wellbeing Board leads and advises on work to improve the health and wellbeing of the people of Gloucestershire through joined up commissioning across the NHS, social care, public health and other services. The Board's statutory functions are to:

- Prepare a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and a Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Encourage integrated working between health and social care commissioners including making arrangements under Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006

The County Council supports the Board and their Public Health team produce a county-wide Health Inequalities Action Plan which the District Council's own plan supports. The importance of active lifestyles and open space, sport and recreation is noted. The County Council Healthy Lifestyles team also promotes a number of initiatives under a number of themes relevant to this study including "Healthy Weight" and "More Active".

2.3 General Community and Public Health – Key Findings

This section provides some key consultation findings from the Stroud District household survey and public health stakeholders.

2.3.1 Quantity

Open Space

- A clear majority of households reported a general need for more facilities for teenagers across the district.
- A significant majority also note a need for more footpaths, bridleways and cyclepaths. In addition, there were notable majorities indicating a general shortfall of woodland, wildlife and nature reserve sites and facilities for water recreation.
- A large majority thought that overall there are enough outdoor bowling greens. Substantial majorities think that in general there are enough outdoor tennis courts, MUGAs, and playing pitches.

Indoor Facilities

- A clear majority of households reported that overall there are currently enough of all kinds of indoor sport and recreation facilities; most notably in relation to village halls/community centres (84%).
- 31% suggest a need for more sports and leisure centres.

2.3.2 Quality

Open Space

- For most kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces a majority of households suggested that in general open spaces and outdoor facilities were of average or better quality (though the most common rating tended to be only "average").
- However, for some typologies there were notable levels of dissatisfaction with general levels of quality. Nearly one third of households highlighted the overall quality of outdoor facilities for teenagers as being either poor or very poor. The quality of artificial turf pitches and tennis/netball courts was rated as poor or worse by at least 20% of respondents.
- By contrast some kinds of facilities/open spaces were rated highly in terms of quality. These include: parks and recreation grounds; woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves; and footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths.
- Local residents strongly support provision of green infrastructure in line with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's Building with Nature quality standards i.e. open space that promotes health and wellbeing; ensures effective water management; and protects and enhances wildlife.

Indoor Facilities

- In broad terms respondent households appear quite satisfied with the quality of indoor sports and recreation provision. All are commonly rated as being of average or better quality.
- The indoor facilities most commonly regarded as being of good or very good quality are village halls/community centres; and sports and leisure centres.

- Specialist indoor facilities e.g. indoor bowls are not rated quite as highly – 37% of households rate them as good or very good with 14% of those rating them as poor or very poor.

2.3.3 Access (Geographical)

Open Space

In general, a majority of household respondents report that they would not normally travel more than 15 minutes to visit most kinds of open spaces and outdoor facilities. There is considerable variation however between the typologies. For example, 53% of households are prepared to travel 16 minutes or more to visit woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves (of which 29% would travel more than 20 minutes) and 53% of households are prepared to travel that long to visit water recreation facilities (14% of those would travel more than 20 minutes).

In contrast, for significant numbers of residents, facilities need to be much more locally accessible before they will be used (for example, play areas, parks and recreation grounds, and informal open space areas - for ball games, picnics, hobbies, dog walking etc).

- 62% of users would expect play areas to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 30% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 57% of users would expect local parks/recreation grounds to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 30% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 54% of users would expect allotments to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 26% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.

For most typologies walking/cycling is the norm, most notably for facilities such as play areas; recreation grounds and parks; and teen facilities.

However, a small majority of respondent households would normally drive rather than walk to MUGAs; water recreation facilities; and tennis courts. Significant number would also drive to artificial turf pitches; outdoor bowling greens and woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves.

It is also notable that for some typologies cycling is a significant mode of travel e.g. MUGAs, artificial turf pitches, playing pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens.

Indoor Facilities

- 89% of users are prepared to travel up to 15 minutes to use specialist sports facilities. 28% of these would travel up to 20 minutes and 16% more than 20 minutes.
- In the case of swimming pools 77% of users are prepared to travel up to 15 minutes to make use of such facilities. 24% of these would travel up to 20 minutes and 23% more than 20 minutes.
- In contrast, 59% of users of village halls and community centres.

For most indoor sports and recreation facilities respondents are more likely than not to drive rather than walk/cycle - most notably for gym/health and fitness centres (77%); swimming pools (61%); and sports/leisure centres (55%).

Walking is the preferred mode of travel for a clear majority of respondent households accessing village halls and community centres (77%) plus an additional 2% who cycle.

Importance of footpath/cycle access

- 83% of households confirmed that they would be prepared to walk/cycle further if the quality of the route was improved. 84% also said that if the quality of the route was improved they would make the journey more often.

2.3.4 Priorities

Open Space

- The category highlighted by the largest number of households as a high priority for potential improvement/new provision was better footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision; followed by woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves; and informal open space for ball games, picnics, dog walking etc.
- Other notable high priorities for improvement noted by significant numbers were water recreation facilities; facilities for teenagers; and allotments.
- Parks and recreation grounds and children's play areas also score quite highly as a priority need.

Indoor facilities

- For indoor sports and leisure facilities in general, fewer households highlighted high priority needs.
- Improvements to swimming pool provision gained the highest proportion of high priority ratings closely followed by improvements to sport and leisure centres.

2.3.5 Public Health and other issues

- Stroud District Council fully recognises the value and importance of access to open space, outdoor recreation facilities and indoor leisure facilities, in relation to improving health and wellbeing and in relation to residents' quality of life.
- Health and wellbeing is a key priority in the District Council's 4 Year Corporate Delivery Plan (2018 – 2022). The Plan aims to "promote the health and wellbeing of our communities and work with others to deliver the public health agenda".
- The District Council is currently updating its Health and Wellbeing Plan which contributes to the delivery of the Gloucestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. One of the elements of the plan is to implement schemes targeted at helping to reduce obesity/overweight levels.
- Examples of District Council health projects include: Active for Life; Healthy lifestyles scheme; Health Walks; and Cycling4Health.
- Gloucestershire County Council Public Health team produces a county-wide Health Inequalities Action Plan which the District Council's own plan supports. The importance of active lifestyles and open space, sport and recreation is noted.
- Some sectors of the community face particular barriers to access such as disabled people; children and young people; households in the more isolated rural areas and those in the more deprived wards of the study area

3.0 NEIGHBOURING LOCAL AUTHORITIES, PARISH COUNCILS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

3.1 Introduction

This section provides information and feedback from neighbouring local authorities and local parish and town councils. It is important to consult with neighbouring local authorities under the "duty to co-operate" requirement. This places a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils in England and public bodies to "engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters".

The need to consult and engage with local parish and town councils arises from the fact that many parish and town councils are responsible for the management of open spaces, play areas and recreation grounds; and the local parish councils also tend to have a good understanding of local needs and priorities in relation to local sport, play and recreation facilities. In addition to this Stroud District Council Ward members were provided with the opportunity to highlight and ward based or wider District issues relation to local provision.

Section three is comprised of two main sub-sections:

- Neighbouring Authorities - Cross-boundary and strategic issues
- Town/Parish Councils and District Council Members

There is a summary of key issues at the end of the section. The information and findings of this section will be taken forward in the main reports.

3.2 Neighbouring authorities - Cross boundary issues

Overview – Stroud District Council (Senior Planning Officer)

Stroud District Council shares borders with 6 local authority areas Cheltenham, Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Gloucester City, South Gloucestershire and Tewkesbury.

The following cross border issues and observations in relation to spatial planning were noted:

Local Authority	Cross border and strategic issues and observations
Forest of Dean	HRA links with Severn Estuary. FoD completing own visitor surveys to assess mitigation requirements and potential to coordinate future action. Potential for a future road/rail link with a bridge between Sharpness and Lydney (where once a rail bridge). Potential bat population linkages across the Severn in addition to known wildfowl on the Estuary. MOU to assess development sites around western edges of Gloucester City to assess which sites perform best in sustainability appraisal terms.
Gloucester	Signed Statement of Cooperation with JCS Authorities. County wide MOU to work together and on cross boundary matters. Working together to assess development sites around southern and eastern edges of Gloucester City to assess which sites perform best in sustainability appraisal terms. Will these meet our growth needs or those of the city? Transport links and SRN junction matters. Cotswold Beechwoods

	impact from visitor pressure arising from city growth and our growth. Regularly meet with Gloucester City officers.
Cheltenham	Signed Statement of Cooperation with JCS Authorities. County wide MOU to work together and on cross boundary matters.
Tewkesbury	Signed Statement of Cooperation with JCS Authorities. County wide MOU to work together and on cross boundary matters. Working together to assess development sites around northern edges of Gloucester City to assess which sites perform best in sustainability appraisal terms. Potential development sites around Brockworth. Previous former airfield allocation being completed in Tewkesbury and Stroud. Potential SALA sites at Hardwicke, Haresfield, Upton St Leonards (Brockworth) and Brookthorpe with Whaddon
Cotswold	County wide MOU to work together and on cross boundary matters. Previous discussions regarding potential of future development at Aston Down (housing, employment, mixed). This is not current issue. Aston Down historically regularly sought in Local Plan process as an allocation omission site. Is recognised still as operational airfield (former military airfield) and key employment site.
South Gloucestershire	Meetings with local planning policy officer at least every 6 months or sooner if specific planning issues arise. We have had discussions regarding M5 J14 motorway access, new settlement at Buckover and strategic development location at Charfield. Also future wish to coordinate mitigation under HRA along Severn Estuary. I believe there is a Duty to Cooperate and Statement of Common Ground with South Gloucestershire and wider West of England Plans.

A number of additional comments and observations were noted relating to cross border and strategic work:

- There is the County Planning Officers Group which meets regularly. On a County basis there is the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) which produced Strategic Economic Plan. and Local Nature Partnership (LNP) which meet at least quarterly. LNP produced the GI County Strategic Framework advice, SNAs and Nature Map (working with GWT).
- There is also the Health and Wellbeing Partnership in Gloucestershire and partnership work with Active Gloucestershire. The Council works with Gloucestershire County Council – links with the Healthy lifestyles team and public health
- The Council has active links with Forest of Dean District, Cotswold District and Cheltenham Borough Councils in relation to the Healthy Lifestyles Scheme. This scheme also involves the Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group and has links to GPs.
- The Council also works with Gloucestershire Care Services – with links to Physiotherapists, Occupational therapists, district nurses, cancer, cardiac, and respiratory rehabilitation teams.
- There is the Gloucestershire Local Authority Planning & Biodiversity Group which meets every couple of months. There is the Severn Estuary Partnership and Severn Estuary Stakeholders Group also.
- There is a SDC and County transport group to discuss strategic highway and transport matters.
- There is co-operation on County wide Gipsy and Traveller Matters including joint commissioned needs studies.
- Flood risk matters are discussed relating to the Severn Estuary catchment and on cross boundary development sites - involving Environment Agency and County as Lead Drainage Authority as well as IDB.

Neighbouring Local Authorities

Forward planning officers were also contacted from the 6 neighbouring authorities to check the status of similar studies and to check if they had identified any cross-border issues that they thought should be taken into account in the Stroud studies.

Comments and observations from officers of the neighbouring authorities are provided below¹².

Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC)

Type of study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border issues ¹³
Green Infrastructure	See notes from GCC below.	See notes from GCC below.
Open Space/PPG17 study	Open Space Study Standards Paper (KKP) – November 2016	Copy supplied. No specific issues highlighted by planning officer.
Playing Pitch Strategy	Cheltenham & Tewkesbury PPS (KKP) - September 2016	Copy supplied. No specific issues highlighted by planning officer.
Built Facilities Study	Cheltenham & Tewkesbury Built Leisure and Sports Assessment Report (KKP) - November 2016	Copy supplied. No specific issues highlighted by planning officer.
Other	Social, Sport and Open Spaces Study Developer Contributions toolkit (KKP) – August 2017	Copy supplied.

Cotswold District Council (CDC)

Type of study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border issues
Green Infrastructure	Green Infrastructure, Open Space and Play Space Strategy. Review of GI element of the document is in place - Sept 2017.	The Thames and Severn Canal is relevant. The CDC Local Plan 2011 – 2031 supports the restoration project. See Policy SP3 and SP4. Policy IN7 Green Infrastructure is also relevant as reference is made to Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC. The Local Plan has been examined and CDC has received the Inspector's letter.
Open Space/PPG 17 study	As above.	No specific issues identified by officers.
Play/Youth Facility Strategy	As above.	No specific issues identified by officers.
Playing Pitch Strategy	Cotswold PPS - April 2017	No specific issues identified by officers.
Built Facilities Study	Strategic Assessment of Need for Pools Provision in CDC - August 2016 Strategic Assessment of Need for Halls Provision in CDC - April 2016	No specific issues identified by officers.

¹² The officer responses were collected via an emailed proforma. Forest of Dean District Council did not respond to the invitation to comment.

¹³ These comments will be taken forward and considered in the main reports

Gloucester City Council (GCC)

Type of study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border issues
Green Infrastructure	GI Study (2014) Covers the JCS area ¹⁴ . Refers to the creation of a ‘regional park’, which is referred to in the JCS. Links to adopted JCS Policy INF3. https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BwV PoSbUL uXamdadDRHMIF0Z0k/view	Regional park – plan supplied. By its very nature Green Infrastructure has cross boundary implications. The aim is to create a GI network that linked the existing urban area of Gloucester with urban extensions in the JCS area but also those to the south of the city in Stroud District.
Open Space/PPG17 Study	The City Council is looking to update this shortly - http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/resident/Documents/Planning%20and%20Building%20Control/1.Open%20Space%20Strategy%20Approved%20Document.pdf	Given development has, or is, intended to happen on the boundary with Gloucester, there will be implications for the use of different forms of open spaces.
Playing Pitch Strategy	PPS (2016 – interim review 2017). See the evidence base page - http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/resident/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/Pages/Evidence-Base.aspx Please note also Gloucester City is one of the first authorities to have a Local Football Facilities Plan completed by KKP on behalf of the FA – this is scheduled for completion in the autumn.	The adopted PPS looks at sport on a city-wide basis and the wider ‘travel to play’ area. It includes for example the aim of delivering two multi-sports hubs, one to the north of the city at Oxstalls Sports Park (delivered) and one to the south at Blackbridge (emerging). The nature of these facilities, and in particular the fact that they include artificial surfaces means their catchment is significant.
Other	The City Council is working with Active Gloucestershire to bring forward the Blackbridge Sports and Community Hub.	I would advise speaking direct with Niall Judge at Active Gloucestershire who is leading on this matter.

GCC also included additional comments from Niall Judge at Active Gloucestershire:

1. Hunts Grove / Hardwicke

Pitches

- I know there are several sports pitches proposed, but could one of these be a 3G if there is anticipated demand?
- If the proposed developments off of Green Lane go ahead what would be the impact to Hardwicke Rangers?
- Likely that this development would cater for Gloucester’s playing need rather than Stroud so do we need to look at the capacity in the south of the city? (Quedgeley moving onto Fishers Meadow is an example of growing demand).

¹⁴ The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is a partnership between Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council, and Tewkesbury Borough Council. The JCS is co-ordinated strategic development plan that sets out how this area will develop during the period up to 2031

Green spaces

- There is a potential a lot of green space to be lost so taking an 'Active Design' approach would be very welcome whilst also considering the building with nature framework.
- Is there potential for a path on the other side of the Gloucester / Sharpness canal from Sellers Bridge that could connect to the new developments off of Green lane / church lane?

Sports facilities

- Protection for summerhouse equestrian centre as this a major equine facility for the area.
- There is next to no indoor facilities in the Quedgeley / Kingsway / Hardwicke area. As such there is no gym, swimming pools and limited sports halls (Severn Vale).
- There should be serious consideration about a small-scale leisure facility that could serve this area as nearest ones are GL1 or Stratford Park.
- Gloucester built facility may pick up the same need for this area
- S106 to support Severn Vale school facilities – Re surface their astroturf?

2. Coopers Edge / Brockworth / Bentham Domes

- I am sure there is something around pitch provision for this area but I do not know it well enough to know of issues.
- Brockworth – Impact of Perry Brook development on Millbrook school or improvement of sports pitches nearby?
- Bentham Domes are not closing at the moment and there is a desire to improve these facilities to become a football / netball facility.

3. Robinswood Hill (think it strays into Stroud?)

- Walking paths from the car park to service station
- Gloucestershire Wildlife are building a café at their HQ

4. County Council

- Ben Watts should be spoken to as he is leading the Local Cycling and Walking infrastructure plan – the main driver of this is to create a cycle way from Tewkesbury to Tetbury which would go through Gloucester and out near J12 of the M5.

South Gloucestershire District Council (SGDC)

Type of study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border issues
Green Infrastructure	Underway - West of England GI Plan under production. This will supersede the 2011 WoE GI Framework. Future consultation with Stroud DC to be undertaken regarding the GI Plan.	To be confirmed as the plan progresses, but important to ensure cross boundary linkages are considered.
Open Space/PPG 17 Study	Open Space study 2010: https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/gf2.ti/f/251202/6318821.1/PDF/-/EB36.pdf - site records currently being updated	Individual assessments are undertaken for planning applications using the open space data. Recent permissions in Charfield have demonstrated a need to provide off-site provision/enhancement in Stroud DC.

Playing Pitch Strategy	Underway - Draft consultation version available from: https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/sports_pitch/consultation/Home Consultation ended 24 April 2018 and responses are being considered.	Nothing specific but please note the comment above under PPG17 audit.
Built Facilities	Underway - South Gloucestershire Indoor & Built Sports Facilities Strategy Draft consultation version available from: https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/consult.ti/sports_pitch/consultation/Home Consultation ended 24 April 2018 and responses are being considered	The consultation references: Work with Stroud District Council to ensure facilities in the District will be able to cope with the potential increased demand [resulting from, in particular, strategic growth at Charfield]. Work with public transport operators to ensure access is effective between areas of population and leisure provision.
Play/Youth strategy	Play Strategy 2006 https://consultations.southglos.gov.uk/gf2.ti/f/251202/6319589.1/PDF/-/EB61.pdf	
Other	South Gloucestershire Physical Activity Strategy (2015) http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/South-Gloucestershire-Physical-Activity-Strategy-2015-20.pdf	

Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC)

Type of study	Notes/updates on relevant studies	Comments and observations – cross border issues
Green Infrastructure	JCS Green Infrastructure Strategy (2014)	No specific issues highlighted by officers.
Open Space/PPG17 Study	The Council (in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council) have recently had a Social, Sport and Open Space Study (2018) (KKP) which incorporates these elements. The report is still to be published but will be completed soon and will form part of the new Tewkesbury Borough Plan	SSSI on Gloucester border, shared interest between TBC, SDC and Gloucester City....issues with maintenance/grass cutting Footpath around eastern part of the Coopers Edge development had some issues in terms of access over farmers land. The aim was to have a walk around the development linking various POS's/Veteran Oaks etc. with interpretation boards at strategic points
Playing Pitch Strategy		Coopers Edge: new site planned to open in 2019. Includes x1 football and x1 rugby pitches plus 4 team changing facility. The x1 rugby helps reduce under supply in the borough. Site is

		<p>located close to SDC boundary in Hucclecote parish.</p> <p>Coopers Edge Cricket Club are currently nomadic while trying to secure a permanent home in the area.</p> <p>Coopers Edge Trust are the likely to take on the running of the sports facilities and will link its use to the Coopers Edge Community Centre (in SDC area). The new facilities will benefit the Coopers Edge Community across both boroughs.</p>
Built Facilities Study		
Play/Youth Strategy		No specific play/youth strategy, but issues around youth engagement/ASB across Coopers Edge.

Other Points: There is an ongoing issue around the impacts of growth on the Cotswolds Beechwoods SAC that has been raised by Natural England. This was brought up in Natural England's representations to the Joint Core Strategy and is around the potential recreational pressure from an increased population. This is likely to be an ongoing issue as we progress our respective local plan reviews.

3.3 Town/Parish Councils and District Council Members

3.3.1 General Overview

Within Stroud District there are 52 parishes of which 6 are Town Councils. Surveys were sent to all parish councils together with two reminders to chase responses as needed. In total 27 parish councils responded. The survey covered issues relating to the quantity, quality and accessibility of various types of open space, sport and recreation facilities. There was also an opportunity for the local councils to highlight any priorities they might have for new or improved provision.

Responses were received from the following town/parish councils:

- Alkington PC
- Berkeley Town Council
- Bisley-with-Lypiatt Parish Council
- Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon Parish Council
- Cainscross Parish Council
- Cam Parish Council
- Chalford Parish Council
- Dursley Town Council
- Eastington PC
- Frampton on Severn Parish Council
- Ham & Stone Parish Council
- Hardwicke Parish Council
- Hinton
- Horsley parish council
- King's Stanley PC
- Kingswood Parish Council
- Leonard Stanley Parish Council
- Minchinhampton Parish Council
- Moreton Valence Parish Council
- Nailsworth Town Council
- Randwick and Westrip Parish Council
- Rodborough Parish Council
- Stonehouse Town Council
- Stroud Town Council
- Whiteshill and Ruscombe Parish Council
- Woodchester Parish Council
- Wotton-under-Edge Town Council

Some broad findings from the survey were that:

- 22 of the 27 town/parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and outdoor facilities; and 9 managed some kind of indoor provision.
- 13 of the local councils noted that there was a need for additional or improved open space, sport, play and recreation facilities within their town or parish; 7 reported there to be no need for improvements; and the remaining 7 were not sure.
- 8 of the parishes did not think there was scope for greater community use of outdoor sport and recreation spaces at local schools; and six were not sure. However, 13 of the parishes highlighted potential for community use (see below) or noted a need for improvements.
- In relation to potential improvements to community use of indoor facilities - 8 of the parishes did not think there was scope for greater community use; 11 were not sure; and 9 of the parishes highlighted potential for community use (see below).

The suggested potential for improvements/greater community use of school facilities is noted below:

Outdoor Spaces Facilities

Town/Parish	Comments
Berkeley TC	Berkeley Primary School outdoor swimming pool
Nailsworth TC	NTC is currently working with Nailsworth Primary School to release S106 funding to build a MUGA for school and community use.
Cainscross PC	Closer communication between schools and local government departments

Chalford PC	Bussage School has a large play area that lays empty during school holidays. It could be used for community events during holidays.
Eastington PC	School playing field Cotswold Avenue
Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon	Wynstones School?
Randwick and Westrip PC	Possibly at Cashes Green Primary School although it is not large and you would have to discuss this with the Head Teacher
Dursley TC	These facilities are used by the community but there may be capacity to increase the usage. Further information is available from the individual facilities.
Frampton on Severn PC	There are no netball or hockey facilities in the village. Possibly the school playground and field could be used for these.
Hardwicke PC	Hardwicke School Currently provided use of football pitches to Hardwicke Rangers
Stonehouse TC	Outdoor space for hire at Maidenhill School.
Stroud TC	Marling School has a large amount of open space. The lower rugby pitch owned by the school has not been used by the school or let to any sports organisations. Stroud Rugby Club is currently looking for pitches to let.
Wotton-under-Edge TC	Katharine Lady Berkeley's School already provides community use of recreational facilities jointly with Wotton Community Sports Foundation and is building on this each year. Some usage could be made of the two primary school large grounds for summer sports or community facilities.

Indoor Provision

Town/Parish	Comments
Bisley-with-Lypiatt PC	Continue support for Thomas Keeble school to maintain facilities for public use.
Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon	Potential at Wynstones School?
Randwick and Westrip PC	Possibly at Cashes Green Primary School although it is not large and this would have to be discussed with the Head Teacher
Dursley Town Council	These facilities are used by the community but there may be capacity to increase the usage. Further information would be available from the individual facilities.
Frampton on Severn PC	Perhaps activity classes could go into the school or one of the other village halls as needed (eg pilates).
Hardwicke PC	Cubs/Scouts have used and in part still use Hardwicke School. Brownies use Village Hall.
Stonehouse TC	Stroud District Council need to support them.
Wotton-under-Edge TC	The schools' sports halls could be used for Easter and summer activities and some adult education classes could take place.

Quality factors - open space provision

We asked the parish councils to highlight what they thought, in general, were high priorities as regards qualitative factors of recreational open spaces. The quality factors most commonly deemed to be of a high priority as regards recreational public open spaces are that:

- They should be easy to get to (and get around) for all members of the community.
- They should be safe and secure for those using them.
- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained. They should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.

It is also thought important by many parish councils that recreational public open spaces should be multi-functional providing for all sectors of the community; and that there should be control of noise and unsocial behaviour.

Other aspects of quality specifically highlighted and related comments were:

- There should be attractive landscaping - hedging at the boundaries, trees including blossom trees.
- Protection of bio-diversity and natural surroundings as they promote well-being.
- Children should be able to play without the fear of being chased by a dog or stepping in muck.
- There should be a range of facilities offered in an area; not too many of one thing (eg play areas for all one age group and nothing for older people).
- There should be some open spaces where wildlife and biodiversity are prioritised over access by people.
- In some areas open space doesn't have to be organised/provided. The countryside has public footpaths all across it.

Green Infrastructure - Building with Nature

In partnership with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust specific questions were developed to secure the degree of parish council support for these three elements of Green Infrastructure quality. Responses are shown in the table below:

How important do you think it is that when planning for the future of public open spaces and sports facilities the District Council, local partners and developers should:

<i>Factor</i>	Very Important	Quite Important	Neutral	Not very Important	Not at all Important	No opinion
<i>Promote health and wellbeing:</i> by ensuring that public open and green spaces are accessible for all, and close to where people live and work - to optimise use and enjoyment.	22	3				
<i>Ensure effective water management:</i> by securing a commitment to improve water quality; reduce the risk of flooding; and manage water naturally for maximum benefit of people & wildlife.	16	7	1	1		
<i>Protect and enhance wildlife:</i> by ensuring green/open spaces provide areas where nature can flourish; and linking up spaces to the wider green network to promote better wildlife habitats and improve biodiversity.	21	4				

It is clear from the above that a clear majority of town and parish councils strongly support the elements of the Building with Nature quality standards for GI.

Summary of Issues Raised

The table below covers issues of quantity, quality and access for a range of facilities¹⁵

Town/Parish Councils	Indoor Facilities	Winter pitches	Artificial Turf Pitches	Cricket pitches	Tennis courts	MUGAs	Bowling greens	Play areas	Teenage facilities	Allotments	Parks, rec. grounds	Wildlife areas, etc.	Footpaths etc.
Alkington PC													
Berkeley TC						X		X	X				
Bisley-with-Lypiatt									X				
Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon PC								X					X
Cainscross PC													
Cam	X			X		X		X				X	X
Chalford PC													
Dursley TC			X			X		X	X	X	X		X
Eastington PC													
Frampton on Severn PC		X	X		X	X		X	X				
Ham & Stone PC													
Hardwicke PC	X		X		X					X			X
Hinton PC													
Horsley PC													
King's Stanley PC			X		X		X	X	X			X	
Kingswood PC	X												
Leonard Stanley PC	X	X			X			X			X		
Minchinhampton													
Moreton Valence								X					X
Nailsworth TC	X	X			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Randwick and Westrip PC													
Rodborough PC	X			X	X				X				X
Stonehouse TC	X		X		X			X		X	X	X	X
Stroud TC	X	X		X				X		X			
Whiteshill and Ruscombe PC													
Woodchester PC								X					
Wotton-under-Edge TC			X	X	X			X		X	X	X	X
Total	8	4	6	4	8	5	1	13	7	6	5	5	9

¹⁵ The figures in red shading highlight the most common issues raised.

For parish/town councils in Stroud District the aspects of most common concern are:

- The quality of existing play areas and insufficient areas for teenagers e.g. skateparks, shelters etc.
- Improvements to footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths.
- Improvements and new provision of village and community halls
- The need for additional tennis courts/MUGAs in some parishes

It was also notable that a significant number of parishes also highlighted a need for artificial turf pitches and allotments.

3.3.2 Parish specific issues

Unmet needs and aspirations for improvement

As part of the survey we also asked the open questions "are you aware of any particular groups within your community whose needs are not currently met" and "if you have, or are aware of, any specific projects, plans and aspirations for improving open space and outdoor recreation facilities in the Parish please tell us". Individual town/parish responses are shown in the table below.

Parish Council	Groups in parish whose needs not being met	Current plans and known aspirations
Berkeley TC	None specifically identified.	The town council aspires to improve facilities at Canon Park recreational facilities
Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon PC	In the Parish Plan 2013 a small number of people indicated that they would like to see local sporting facilities made available to the local community	
Cam	Open space is in short supply in east Cam. Many older people and dog walkers use Cam Sports field (not Parish managed) and children play on that field.	Buying land seems prohibitively expensive as developers are rampant. Even our precious Cam sports field was sold to developers sometime in the past without much awareness of the Council. This is the only large open green space in east Cam and we would fight to keep it should the club lease not be extended and applications were made to develop it. It is our aspiration to do all we can within our resources to improve open space and outdoor recreation facilities in our Parish.
Chalford PC	None specifically identified.	We are looking to improve the play equipment in our France Lynch Pleasure Ground to provide more challenging and innovative equipment. We are concerned that Thomas Keble Sports Centre is closing this year. We would not want to lose this facility as many residents use the gym.
Dursley TC	The Town Council has recently received a request for a Petanque (Boules) pitch to be provided in the War Memorial	<u>See The Town Council's Strategic Plan and Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan</u> <u>http://www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk/the-council.html</u>

	<p>Recreation Ground. (This would be used by all ages). The Town Council have been contacted in recent times by football clubs who currently play outside of Dursley, regarding the use of the War Memorial Recreation Ground.</p>	<p>Please also contact the individual sports clubs.</p>
<p>Frampton on Severn PC</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Girls/women wishing to play the sports traditionally played by girls in Secondary Schools are under-provided for compared to boys in Frampton. Girls do play football and cricket but there is no netball or hockey here. Older women have suggested they would like to participate in 'walking netball'. 2. There is no facility for rugby. 3. There is no facility for swimming in an area surrounded by water and where deaths by drowning regularly occur. 4. The equipped children's play area is less than that recommended (by 0.6ha) and the play area needs refurbishment 5. The village youth club closed down about 3 years ago and we have been unable to find leaders to revive it, although we do have space if we could. There is currently no transport facility for them to access youth clubs elsewhere. 6. The Youth Football Team has a scheme to raise money for a covered all-weather pitch and additional facilities but this will not cater for 1. above. Our local surveys (approx. 70% of parish households returned survey) contained requests that we did not further 'duplicate' facilities. (Probably a reference to having 2 cricket fields and 2 football fields + both Youth Football Club and the Community Association having stated aims of developing all 	<p>As a tier 2 settlement, we should be providing a good range of facilities for ourselves and the villages around. Most of the local sports clubs draw in members from adjacent areas and some (eg sailing, tennis, angling) from longer distances (Gloucester, Stroud, Dursley). The parish council priority is to refurbish the children's playground and to provide more non-sporting facilities for young people (youth club or access to youth club in an adjacent settlement). 'Sporty' young people are well catered for in the youth sections of the cricket, tennis, football and sailing clubs and riding club, especially if they are boys. We would like to see the development of a footpath/ cycle way across from the new Stroud Water towpath, when our end of the canal is restored, and linking to the west end of 'The Perryway' and into our village. This would improve the Sustrans 41 link through the village and to the canal towpath on the Gloucester to Sharpness Canal linking the south end of Frampton at Splatt Bridge to Slimbridge. It would provide a safer cycle way than that which exists at present, where cyclists negotiate the Perryway at their peril.</p>

	<p>weather pitches aimed primarily at football.)</p> <p>7. Walking/cycling will be enhanced by the development of the Stroud Water Canal to Saul and the associated towpath.</p>	
Ham & Stone PC	None specifically identified.	<p>It was identified by villages to improve recreational access within the village when a survey was completed for the Parish Plan in 2004. The Parish Council has provided equipment that is currently installed at the Court Mead Play area since 2004. Currently working on projects to install new equipment and fencing at Stone Playing Field</p>
Hardwicke PC	<p>Hardwicke Rangers run a number of football teams and use local facilities as listed. There is always a question over how long a lease can run. Increased demand for allotments. The football clubs are very well supported by young people. The demand is increasing all the time and when football is in progress more space is need for other leisure Pursuits</p>	<p>The recently adopted Hardwicke Neighbourhood Plan identifies the value of the public open spaces and the areas that require preservation and enhancement. Please refer to Hardwicke NDP.</p>
Horsley PC	<p>No – the facilities are already adequate. There are also lots of public footpaths for residents, of all ages, to use and appreciate the surroundings. There are also accessible wildlife areas which are greatly valued by residents.</p>	<p>Parish council is dedicated to maintaining all open spaces and facilities. No plans – residents (from previous surveys) are happy with existing spaces and keen to protect Horsley’s natural Spaces.</p>
King's Stanley PC	<p>Play equipment for teenagers – currently looking at this via S106. Walking football Girls football</p>	<p>S106 is to be spent on upgrading equipment for young people. A working group is about to be set up to look at options. The Parish Council hasn't received any requests for additional facilities.</p>
Kingswood PC	<p>There are no space or facility to provide a Youth Club or youth activities.</p>	<p>KPC are consulting on the village hall and the current facilities. The provision of outdoor toilets for the playing field.</p>
Leonard Stanley PC	<p>The youth football team has only been going for a few years but has become so popular that space is limited. I know that they would like to start a girl’s</p>	<p>A new Pavilion, to meet the future needs of the community. The Parish Council are currently undergoing a project to improve the open space in the Recreation Ground and create a picnic area. The tennis courts will be</p>

	<p>youth team. It would also be good to have a 'walking' football team for the older generation. The Pavilion will need a lot of modification to ensure that it is viable for the needs of the community.</p>	<p>completely overhauled. Several items of play equipment will be replaced. Also, would like to install cricket nets in the future. The VHMC will be replacing the windows and refurbishment of the toilets. Would also like new tables, chairs and improve the storage space and redecoration. Ideally would also benefit from a loop hearing system and wifi.</p>
Moreton Valence	<p>In the Parish Plan 2014 there was no indication that parishioners would like to see local sporting facilities made available to the local community</p>	
Nailsworth TC	<p>There is a shortage of sports pitches. NTC only have one pitch and this is at capacity. There is currently a lack of accessible open spaces for people with mobility problems which NTC is looking to address through investment in Miles Marling Field and KGV playing field. There is a shortage of open space provision for older people in Forest Green. Generally, facilities for children and young people are good.</p>	<p>NTC is currently drawing up a strategic plan to prioritise projects over the next year. Miles Marling Field and KGV Field (extension field) are the top priorities in NTC open space projects. There are many other pressures on NTC resources from non-open space projects. NTC is investigating moving the offices to a central 'civic centre', bringing the Town Council offices into the same building as the library, NTC managed TIC and the Mortimer Room. This will trigger the refurbishment of the Mortimer Room and some refurbishment of the Town Hall.</p>
Rodborough PC	<p>None specifically identified.</p>	<p>The pitch and site at the former Bownham Park School is our main focus this year (subject to it being transferred as expected). This will be used by the Rodborough Youth Football Club and it is expected that it won't be advertised as a public open space. We are considering installing Adult Gym equipment at Butterrow West.</p>
Stonehouse TC	<p>There is no public gym. The Stonehouse NDP shows the need for new community sports and social facilities and a swimming pool.</p>	<p>Stroud District Council have refused planning permission for new community facilities at Oldends Lane. It is the Town Council's wish to improve the safety of persons using Oldends Lane carpark and to remove run-down buildings which give the area an appearance of neglect. Stonehouse Football Club aspire to have good quality facilities.</p>
Stroud TC	<p>There is a lack of football/rugby pitches in Stroud Town. Historically teams in Stroud have had to look in other parishes for pitches. With young people particularly, this can often be difficult to access.</p>	

	<p>Stroud Rugby Club has long outgrown its facilities (which are just outside Stroud parish). A large majority of sports facilities are provided at Stratford Park. Again, this is not always accessible to some of the town residents, particularly bearing in mind the topography. Stroud is very hilly and there are no PROW leading to Stratford Park!</p>	
Whiteshill and Ruscombe PC	<p>Need for more disabled access around public footpaths to access the country.</p>	
Woodchester PC	<p>The village has very few recreational facilities. Despite the construction of Mountain Bike Trails there is still a strong desire for a play area in the village for younger children.</p>	<p>Residents and the Parish Council have worked hard to try to source a piece of land for a play area. Several local landowners, South Woodchester Amenity Land Trust and SDC have been contacted concerning possible purchase/leasing of land. There is strong support for a play area for younger children, but as yet the Parish Council have been unable to find a suitable piece of land. The Endowed School have made recent improvements to their outdoor space. However, these facilities are not available to the general public and are only available to school children within school hours.</p>
Wotton-under-Edge TC	<p>There is no cricket ground or tennis courts. More artificial turf pitches, e.g. 4G Astro turf for training. The Wotton Community Sports Foundation is setting a very high standard of outdoor/indoor sports activities for the whole community provided through volunteers and fundraising but still further work to be done. New facilities are also urgently needed for the very popular Scouts and Guides, as the old building is no longer fit for purpose.</p>	<p>Greenway Group has vision of linking up a cycling/ walking corridor between Wotton, Kingswood and Charfield and is currently doing feasibility studies. Provision of extra car parking is high on Town Council priorities for access to many leisure facilities, along with improvements at Old Town toilets which would assist walkers on the nearby Cotswold Way.</p> <p>Synwell Playing Field – new play/fitness equipment</p> <p>Wotton Community Sports Foundation – 4G Astro turf extra pitch , more youth shelters, BMX track, sensory garden, man shed, extra parking provision, play area long term vision, and a clubhouse</p> <p>Greenway Group – cycle way/footpath linking Charfield/Wotton</p> <p>Swimming Pool – refurbishment, new changing rooms and solar panels and tiling of pool being undertaken via grants</p>

Heritage Centre – improvement of indoor research facilities – very popular amongst elderly and visitors
Scout Hut – redevelopment of site at Conygres amongst woodland.

The detailed parish responses relating to aspects of quantity and quality of the various elements summarised in the table in 3.2.1 above are provided below:

Parish	Need for new/improved provision and typology specific comments
Berkeley TC	<p>MUGAS: do not have one need one at Canon Park recreational facility.</p> <p>Play Areas: need more contemporary equipment at canon park recreational facility</p> <p>Teen facilities: nothing at present, many requests over the years for a skatepark, unable to find a suitable location.</p>
Bisley-with-Lypiatt	<p>Teen Facilities: Need for BMX cycle track and skatepark</p>
Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon PC	<p>Play Areas: potential need for improvements.</p> <p>Footpaths etc: potential need for improvements.</p>
Cam	<p>Indoor Facilities: There are some parking problems at Jubilee fields when there are football tournaments.</p> <p>Cricket: there is a cricket club at Cam sports field. There could be one at Jubilee field.</p> <p>Tennis: Tennis courts at Cam sports field</p> <p>MUGAS: Jubilee fields could accommodate this</p> <p>Bowls: There is private bowling green at Cam Mill</p> <p>Play Areas: We are improving our play areas currently.</p> <p>Teen facilities: available at Jubilee Fields</p> <p>Allotments: At the moment these are plentiful and we are improving one site so there will be more available.</p> <p>Parks: We would like to protect many of our green spaces from development</p> <p>Wildlife areas etc: we have two small areas and would like to develop Cam-wide green infrastructure and corridors</p> <p>Footpaths etc: We wish to develop river Cam for riverwalks and preserve as green corridor and encourage cycling and walks. One aspiration is around walking, developing footpaths and green infrastructure - including tree planting"</p>
Dursley TC	<p>Indoor facilities: The recently opened Pulse Leisure Centre has increased capacity within the town. Other indoor sports facilities at the Primary and Secondary school in Dursley.</p> <p>Winter pitches: There are enough winter pitches for football. Additional football pitches are available at Cam. You would need to contact Dursley Rugby Club for information regarding whether more Rugby pitches are needed. (Tel: 07769 338134 Stuart Newman – Admin Manager)."</p> <p>Artificial turf pitches: Bookings for the All-Weather pitches in Dursley are managed by Rednock School. (Tel 01453 – 543618) These pitches are very well used by local football clubs during the winter months. The feedback we have from the local teams this facility is too expensive, during the 2017/18 season Dursley Town Ladies trained at Tetbury and for the 2018/19 season have purchased portable floodlights to allow training on the War Memorial Recreation Ground as an alternative to this local facility.</p> <p>Cricket: Cricket is played at Cam Cricket Club (in the neighboring parish at (Cam). Contact www.camcc.co.uk</p>

	<p>Tennis: There are two tennis courts at the War Memorial Recreation Ground. These are free to use and are not used to full capacity. There are also tennis courts at Rednock School (Tel: 01453 543618) There are further courts at Cam and Dursley Tennis Club which is based in Cam. Contact www.camanddursleytennisclub.co.uk"</p> <p>MUGAs: There are no multi-use games areas in Dursley. "There is a bowling green in Dursley. This is managed by Dursley Bowls Club (Tel: 01453 519017).</p> <p>Play areas: Analysis of green spaces undertaken as part of the Dursley Neighbourhood Development Plan found that there is a serious under-provision of Designated Outdoor Play Spaces totalling 19.81HA at the present which is likely to increase with new houses being built. See NDP Environment and Green Spaces Report 2014 http://www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html"</p> <p>Teen facilities: There are a range of opportunities for teenagers at the War Memorial Recreation Ground and Highfields Play Park and Field all including sports pitches, outdoor gym, tennis courts and BMX track. A welcome addition would be a skate park suitable for teenagers at the War Memorial Recreation Ground.</p> <p>Allotments: There are 36 allotments in Kingshill. Further allotments are available as part of the Prescription for health at Vale Hospital in Dursley Tel 01453 700011 or email valehospitalallotments@downtoearthstroud.co.uk The Town Council are actively looking for a new allotment site as the existing site will at some point become part of the cemetery."</p> <p>Parks: See entry under the Play Areas http://www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html</p> <p>Wildlife areas etc: Dursley is surrounded by ancient woodland which are also designated key wildlife sites.</p> <p>Footpaths etc: Work is underway to develop the Cam, Dursley and Uley Greenway which will be a cycle path linking these three settlements together. There is strong support in the Neighbourhood Development Plan for these.</p>
Frampton on Severn PC	<p>Winter pitches: No rugby or hockey</p> <p>ATPs: None at present but one is in planning stage at Youth Football field (primarily Football).</p> <p>Tennis: The club would like to gain a 4th court but there is insufficient room on the Recreation Field for this. A 4th court would allow them to double up on match Evenings.</p> <p>MUGAs: We do not currently have any and would find it beneficial. However, putting it on the Recreation Field (as proposed by some) would draw protests from local residents who are keen to retain some open grassland on the field. (40% of field space was taken by tennis club when this was developed in early 2000s).</p> <p>Play areas: one currently but it is less than the recommended size and needs refurbishment</p> <p>Teen facilities: None</p>
Hardwicke PC	<p>Indoor facilities: There is insufficient indoor space for sporting/leisure activities</p> <p>ATPs: a number of sports facilities are planned for Hunts Grove Development including artificial pitches.</p> <p>Tennis: There are no courts currently available in Hardwicke</p> <p>Allotments: there are regular calls for the provision of allotments</p> <p>Footpaths etc: The public rights of way in Hardwicke are much valued and there is a young walking group developing through the Youth Forum. There is a desire locally to enhance the public footpath from Green Lane through to Hardwicke Church. The highway footpath along Church Lane to the Church is used by walkers and horse riders. The road, however is at times dangerous for pedestrians and a</p>

	safe public footpath to the Church is needing to be maintained. During the development of Hardwicke Neighbourhood Plan there was an identification of providing a cycle way linking Hunts Grove to the older Part of Hardwicke.
King's Stanley PC	<p>Indoor facilities: Village Hall – short mat bowls and exercise classes. Selsley Scout HQ – hall.</p> <p>Winter Pitches: Football pitch at Marling's Close recreation area</p> <p>ATPs: None</p> <p>Cricket: Cricket pitch at Marling's Close recreation area Cricket Club in Selsley.</p> <p>Tennis Courts: None</p> <p>MUGAs: There is a MUGA owned by KSPC on Marling's Close recreation area.</p> <p>Bowls: None</p> <p>Play areas: The play area is to be upgraded over the next 2 years with S106 funding.</p> <p>Teen facilities: There is S106 funding available for additional equipment aimed at teenagers</p> <p>Allotments: There is one area of allotments in St George's Close/Ave. There are 10 allotments. No waiting list at present. We have looked for additional land but none available in the parish. We refer people to Leonard Stanley where there are dozens of allotments and currently some vacant plots.</p> <p>Parks and recs: Marling's Close recreation area, King's Stanley; Village Greens in King's Stanley. SDC owned Daffodils recreation area, Middleyard; SDC owned recreation area Selsley.</p> <p>Wildlife areas etc: We have been asked about looking at the stream and wooded area between the Marling Trust recreation land and the rear of the primary school as a potential woodland trail. Selsley Common is used by walkers and local residents. Encroachment of cotoneaster is an issue. Children digging up turf to make bike trails is an issue. Currently looking at getting signage for various areas of the Common to inform and advise on SSSI's. There have been some issues re access and landslips in Penn Wood.</p> <p>Footpaths etc. Many footpaths, including Cotswold Way run through the parish. Bridleways also in the parish.</p>
Leonard Stanley PC	<p>Indoor facilities: Village Hall Management Committee - have identified a raft of improvements needed; to ensure that it meets the needs of our current residents plus the growing population due to significant development in the village. The pavilion is old and again no longer fit to serve the growing population and increase of activities that the community would benefit from.</p> <p>Winter pitches: football pitch is in much demand and the drainage could be improved.</p> <p>Tennis courts: Complete overhaul of these tennis courts due this year.</p> <p>Play areas: some items require replacing, as they are old and need constant maintenance.</p> <p>Allotments: Well supported.</p> <p>Parks: verges are being destroyed by an increase in traffic due to an increase in development in the village</p> <p>Footpaths etc: work well with the Cotswold Wardens to ensure the footpaths are maintained.</p>
Moreton Valence	<p>Play areas: potential need for improvements.</p> <p>Footpaths etc: potential need for improvements.</p>
Nailsworth TC	<p>Indoor facilities: The Town Hall needs refurbishing throughout and facilities modernising. The Mortimer Room needs redecorating and facilities modernising.</p>

	<p>There are plans to modernise the Mortimer Room in the next year. Town Hall plans require significant investment and will take longer.</p> <p>Winter pitches: NTC's football pitch is small with no space to make it bigger. The pitch needs improvement for compaction and waterlogging problems. The changing room needs major investment or replacement. There is a long-term plan investigating a new pavillion/changing room building with shared use by Nailsworth Scouts. The aim would be to make this an accessible building to include 'changing place' toilet facilities.</p> <p>Tennis: Our KGV field tennis courts have recently been refurbished. They could do with a new small pavillion.</p> <p>MUGAs: A new MUGA is planned for Nailsworth Primary School</p> <p>Play areas: NTC has plans to add children's play facilities in Miles Marling Field as part of a whole refurbishment project in 2018/19</p> <p>Teen facilities: The skate ramps at KGV Field could do with some investment</p> <p>Allotments: NTC has no allotments but a long-term aspiration to provide some.</p> <p>Parks: Miles Marling Field will undergo major refurbishment as a community park for all ages in 2018/19. KGV Field (extension field) has a design for a community park with natural play facilities and accessible path. Consultation has been carried out and grant funding is being sought.</p> <p>Wildlife areas etc: Bunting Hill nature reserve needs a long-term management plan.</p> <p>Footpaths etc: These need constant attention and volunteer help is short.</p>
Rodborough PC	<p>Indoor facilities: A bigger Community Hall might be welcomed –there is a possibility of extending the Rodborough Community Hall in the next few years.</p> <p>Cricket: not received any requests but there isn't anywhere in the parish.</p> <p>Tennis: requests have been received in the past.</p> <p>Teen facilities: Requests for this have been received.</p> <p>Footpaths etc: The entrance to the cycleway from Dudbridge to Stroud at Wallbridge needs redesigning but there are long term problems with land ownership.</p> <p>Other: potential need for Adult/Outdoor Gym.</p>
Stonehouse TC	<p>Indoor facilities: New sports centre and changing room facilities required at Oldends Lane</p> <p>ATPs: Inadequate provision in all-weather surfaced pitches which are much needed by local football teams.</p> <p>Tennis: The public have expressed an interest in having these facilities. Yes</p> <p>Play areas: Oldends Lane facilities are in need of improvement</p> <p>Allotments: we have a waiting list and more provision is required</p> <p>Parks: we have a town green but would like parkland or a country park</p> <p>Wildlife areas etc: we have woodland but access needs vast improvement</p> <p>Footpaths etc: inadequate connection with West of Stonehouse</p>
Stroud TC	<p>Indoor facilities: Stroud is somewhat lacking village halls. There is no such facility in Uplands and the Top of Town.</p> <p>Winter pitches: the lack of football/rugby pitches has always been an issue in Stroud.</p> <p>ATPs: The only one to my knowledge is at Stratford Park.</p> <p>Cricket: In recent years Stroud Cricket Club moved out of Stroud to better facilities. There is no formal cricket provision in the parish.</p> <p>Tennis: Stratford Park.</p> <p>MUGAs: To my knowledge the only MUGA is at Uplands Playing Field.</p> <p>Bowls: Outdoor facilities are at Stratford Park.</p>

	<p>Play areas: Paganhill only has one small play area. Although residents are close to Stratford Park/Court, this will not be accessible to younger children. The area is also very Hilly.</p> <p>Teen facilities: There is a good skatepark at Stratford Park. Large indoor facility at RUSH skatepark (out of parish). They are currently looking to relocate to Stroud. Should this take place, there will be excellent facilities for this sport.</p> <p>Allotments: There are 5 allotments in Stroud, but all have long waiting lists. There is clearly a need for more sites.</p> <p>Parks: There are several parks, recreation grounds. Not all have adequate play facilities.</p> <p>Wildlife areas etc: Stroud Cemetery – Wildlife Conservation area; Stratford Park – Arboretum.</p>
Woodchester PC	<p>Indoor facilities: The Village Hall is very well used. The Endowed School also offers its hall for hire.</p> <p>Play Areas: need identified but unable to find a suitable location.</p>
Wotton-under-Edge TC	<p>ATPs: Wotton Community Sports Foundation needs funding for 4G Astro turf training pitch.</p> <p>Cricket: at KLB School but one is needed for community use – possible development of use outside school hours?</p> <p>Tennis: No tennis courts at all – nearest are in Kingswood</p> <p>MUGAs: Wotton Community Sports Foundation needs funding for a MUGA</p> <p>Play areas: Synwell Playing Fields needs investment into new play equipment as many items are nearing the end of their useful life. This is the only play area catering for older children in the whole town of almost 6000 population.</p> <p>Teen facilities: BMX track is now being developed at Community Sports Foundation site.</p> <p>Allotments: The Town Council has started embarking on improvements to its two sites – but improved access on sloping sites and parking provision nearby is needed.</p> <p>Parks: Need to improve sites at the Green Chipping and develop areas at Parklands and Synwell Green for more community use.</p> <p>Wildlife areas etc: Wotton Community Sports Foundation is developing a sensory garden. The Clump at Wotton Hill is managed by Wotton-under-Edge Town Council. Coppicing needs to resume at Conygre Woods and management of Brackenbury Ditches.</p> <p>Footpaths etc: The Cotswold Way Trail needs monitoring and improving in places. Cycle ways need to be developed, e.g. the Greenway Group’s proposal to develop a cycle way to link Wotton, Charfield and Kingswood.</p>

Parish Councils – other comments

Finally, the survey also provided the opportunity to raise any other issues or to make other points. The table below provides individual town/parish responses made:

Parish	Issues and other comments
Cam PC	Walking, green open spaces that are attractive and hedged footpaths that lead to them, are a priority for older people and those who want to take exercise in a stress-free manner - this probably being the largest percentage of the population. Play parks are very important for parents and children and facilities such as football and skate park are very important for young people. There should be a good balance of ‘hassle free’ facilities for all to encourage open air activities.

Dursley TC	Our Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group have undertaken a fair amount of work on auditing the green spaces, play areas and sports facilities within the Dursley parish. I have attached a link to one of the studies above. There is further research available but not all of it exists in a form which is suitable to upload to our website. Please contact me if you would like to discuss this further information. My contact details are at the top of this form.
Horsley PC	Natural surroundings are a key factor for residents as Horsley is fundamentally a rural village.
Kings Stanley PC	It would be worth contacting the Sports Club in King's Stanley as they will have some ideas on various activities.
Wotton-under-Edge TC	Much detail regarding items in Wotton and what is further needed is covered above. Wotton serves as a magnet/service centre for many local surrounding village and hamlets and thus it is vital that services are maintained and improved going forward – particularly considering the large amount of nearby housebuilding which will be occurring.

3.3 3 Stroud District Council Ward Members

District Council Ward members were invited to highlight any issues they were aware of relating to GI, open space, sport and recreation facilities. Responses are noted in the table below:

Ward	Issues, observations and comments
Berkeley	<p>Indoor facilities: We seem to be well provided but once car park charges are introduced no doubt usage will go down.</p> <p>Playing Pitches: Enough in my ward.</p> <p>Parks and recreation grounds: Think it would be a good idea to have adult fitness circuits as I have seen in Spain and Portugal. Brighton also have a trail that says in the paving stone 2 miles completed etc.</p> <p>Play areas: Could always be bigger and more imaginative. PC's don't get enough funding for them.</p> <p>Youth facilities: Skate parks near houses is a recipe for unhappy communities. But young people love them and it is an exciting exercise away from computers and screens.</p>
Stroud Uplands	<p>Indoor facilities: Stroud is well provided for with swimming pools and sports halls/leisure centres. The outdoor lido needs investment and improvement including being heated to extend the length of the season.</p> <p>Playing Pitches: There is a recognised shortage of sports pitches in Stroud, meanwhile there are also pitches that lack changing facilities and the policies should support their future enhancement.</p> <p>Parks and Recreation Grounds: Good range.</p> <p>Play Areas: Limited provision in older housing and also in new developments dating from the 1980's.</p> <p>Youth facilities: Need for retention of Rush skate park in the District.</p> <p>Footpaths etc: No bridleways in Stroud Town, large part of network is not recognised in the definitive map and this needs to be actioned by 2025.</p> <p>Water recreation: Well provided by the canal and access to some of the streams.</p> <p>Allotments: No known shortage but plan should allow for policy to provide where demand exists.</p> <p>Informal open spaces: We benefit from the commons – Selsley needs to be brought fully into District Council ownership. The Ebley Meadows commonland needs to be actively managed for recreation and could benefit from similar policies to the NT commons to fund this.</p> <p>Other: Need for new cemetery in Stroud – planning policies</p>

The Stanleys	<p>Indoor facilities: Leonard Stanley School has a small pool. King's Stanley Village Hall facilitates some indoor sports.</p> <p>Playing Pitches: Football, Cricket and Outdoor Gym at King's Stanley. Football at Leonard Stanley.</p> <p>Parks and recreation grounds: Outdoor playing areas at both Villages.</p> <p>Play areas: Available at both villages.</p> <p>MUGAs: MUGA at King's Stanley. Hard Tennis Court at Leonard Stanley.</p> <p>Footpaths etc: Footpaths in both Villages. Bridleway in Woods above both villages. Access to Woodland owned by Woodland Trust. Access to Common at Selsley.</p> <p>Natural green space: Woodlands above Villages.</p> <p>Allotments: Available in Leonard Stanley.</p>
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3.4 Neighbouring Local Authorities, Town/Parish Councils and Council Members - Observations and key issues

Neighbouring Local Authorities – Key Findings

Section 3.1 above briefly reviewed feedback from neighbouring Local Authorities in relation to the status of their open space strategies/associated studies and any cross-border issues of significance. The variety of documents and strategies in place (and their relevance to current planning policy) is considerable, embracing green infrastructure studies, open space strategies, and sport, recreation and play strategies.

The approach adopted by each authority is very much locally derived and individual cross border and wider strategic issues have been identified by the various local authority officers.

It is notable that some authorities are currently involved with commissioning new open space related studies or updating previous strategies that are out of date.

In relation to planning policy there is a strong degree of cooperation and joint working across authorities in Gloucestershire, particularly in relation to Green Infrastructure. There is also notably strong cross border and strategic communication in relation to biodiversity, natural green space, transport, drainage, economic and health and wellbeing issues.

Town/Parish Councils and Council members

General Overview

- 22 of the 27 town/parish councils who responded were directly responsible for the management of various local spaces and outdoor facilities; and 9 managed some kind of indoor provision.
- 13 of the local councils noted that there was a need for additional or improved open space, sport, play and recreation facilities within their town or parish; 7 reported there to be no need for improvements; and the remaining 7 were not sure.
- 8 of the parishes did not think there was scope for greater community use of outdoor sport and recreation spaces at local schools; and six were not sure. However, 13 of the parishes highlighted potential for community use or noted a need for improvements.
- In relation to potential improvements to community use of indoor facilities - 8 of the parishes did not think there was scope for greater community use; 11 were not sure; and 9 of the parishes highlighted potential for community use.

- The sectors most commonly highlighted as in need for improved provision were teenagers/young people and older residents.

Common areas of concern

For the town/ parish councils, the areas of most common concern are:

- The quality of existing play areas and insufficient areas for teenagers e.g. skateparks, shelters etc.
- Improvements to footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths.
- Improvements and new provision of village and community halls
- The need for additional tennis courts/MUGAs in some parishes

It was also notable that a significant number of parishes also highlighted a need for artificial turf pitches and allotments.

Quality considerations

The quality factors most commonly deemed to be of a high priority as regards recreational public open spaces are that:

- They should be easy to get to (and get around) for all members of the community.
- They should be safe and secure for those using them.
- Equipment and grounds should be of high quality and well maintained. They should be clean and free from litter and graffiti.

It is also thought important by many parish councils that recreational public open spaces should be multi-functional providing for all sectors of the community; and that there should be control of noise and unsocial behaviour.

Other aspects of quality specifically highlighted were:

- There should be attractive landscaping - hedging at the boundaries, trees including blossom trees.
- Protection of bio-diversity and natural surroundings as they promote well-being. There should be some open spaces where wildlife and biodiversity are prioritised over access by people.
- There should be a range of facilities offered in an area; not too many of one thing (eg play areas for all one age group and nothing for older people).

A clear majority of town and parish councils also strongly support the three elements of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's Building with Nature quality standards for GI That is, that that GI provision should promote health and wellbeing; ensure effective water management; and protect and enhance wildlife.

Detailed responses on open space typologies

Many of the parish councils provided detailed responses relating to aspects of quantity and quality of the various elements of open spaces surveyed. A number of District Council members also highlighted specific issues relating to their ward.

4.0 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPEN SPACE

4.1 Introduction

This section covers consultation responses and findings in relation to non-sporting recreational open spaces, including parks and recreation grounds, natural green spaces, water recreation, allotments and rights of way.

Consultation undertaken for this section included key stakeholder surveys, and a survey of relevant (non-sports) groups and organisations.

The information and findings from this section will be taken forward in the Green Infrastructure and Open Space Study main report.

This section is comprised of the following topic headings sections:

- Review of policy and strategy
- Key Stakeholders - strategic context and overview
- Local parks and recreation grounds and country parks
- Wildlife areas, nature reserves and woodlands
- Allotments
- Water- canals, rivers, lakes etc
- Rights of way, permissive routes, cycle paths etc
- Other informal and amenity space
- Outdoor recreation in areas of sensitivity (which might for example be ecological, landscape, visual, historical sensitivity)
- Bio-diversity and multi-functional open space
- Other observations

There is a summary of key points and issues at the end of the section.

4.2 Review of policy and strategy – Stroud District Council

This section provides a brief overview of relevant District Council policy and strategy documents, helping provide a well-established framework and context for future open space planning. Typology based policy is covered in the typology sections of the report.

4.2.1 Stroud District Council Corporate Objectives (Corporate Delivery Plan 2018-22)

The Council's Key Corporate Objectives are summarised in the four-year Corporate Delivery Plan, embracing the Vision of "Leading a community that is making Stroud district a better place to live, work and visit for everyone", specifically in order to:

1. Help create a sustainable and vibrant economy that works for all
2. Provide affordable, energy efficient homes for our diverse and changing population
3. Help the community minimise its carbon footprint, adapt to climate change and recycle more
4. Promote the health and well-being of our communities and work with others to deliver the public health agenda
5. Provide value for money to our taxpayers and high-quality services to our customers

While all of these are of relevance to this study, Objectives 3 and 4 are particularly important. For these two objectives the following are especially relevant in terms of identified Actions over 2018/22:

- Deliver new 'walking sports' and 'healthy lifestyle' programmes
- Introduce cost saving measures for grounds maintenance, building cleaning and waste collection
- Implement a cycling and walking plan focused on Saul – Stonehouse - Stroud - Brimscombe, Stroud - Nailsworth and Cam – Dursley – Uley
- Refurbish Stratford Park Lido and install solar panels to heat pool water
- Agree a long-term investment and management plan for Stratford Park with partners and contractors

4.2.2 Stroud District Local Plan 2015

The existing local plan has a timeframe up to 2031, and is currently under review. Until such time as the new local plan takes its place it contains the Council's adopted planning policy. It is based on six strategic objectives falling loosely under three separate topic headings: Home and Communities; Economy and Infrastructure; and, Our Environment and Surroundings. The strategic objectives contain themes that are relevant to this study:

Strategic Objective SO1: Accessible communities. Maintaining and improving accessibility to services and amenities for our communities, with:

- *Active social, leisure and recreation opportunities*

Strategic Objective SO3: Town centres and rural hinterlands. Improving the safety, vitality and viability of our town centres, which link to and support the needs of their rural hinterlands

Strategic Objective SO4: Transport and travel. Promoting healthier alternatives to the use of the private car and seeking to reduce CO2 emissions by using new technologies, active travel and/or smarter choices, working towards a more integrated transport system to improve access to local goods and services

Strategic Objective SO5: Climate Change and environmental limits. Promoting a development strategy that mitigates global warming, adapts to climate change and respects our environmental limits by:

- *Supporting a pattern of development that facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport*

Strategic Objective SO6: Our District's distinctive qualities. Conserving and enhancing Stroud District's distinctive qualities, based on landscape, townscape and biodiversity.

Key policies of the Local Plan

Many of the policies in the local plan are interrelated, consistent with the strategic objectives and themes. The section "Our Environment and Surroundings" contain several policies having an indirect, but important bearing on this study, including Delivery Policies:

- ES1 Sustainable Construction and Design;
- ES3 Maintaining Quality of Life within or Environmental Limits;
- ES4 Water Resources, Quality, and Flood Risk;
- ES6 Providing for Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- ES7 Landscape Character;
- ES8 Trees, Hedgerows Woodlands;
- ES9 Equestrian Development; and,
- ES11 Maintaining, Restoring and Regenerating the District's Canals.

However, the key policies are those dealing with the protection and provision of open space, and its various functions.

Delivery Policy ES12 Better design of places

“The District Council will require the layout and design of new development to create well designed, socially integrated, high quality successful places, where people enjoy living and working, with legible and well planned routes, blocks and spaces, integrated residential, commercial and community activity, safe attractive public spaces and pedestrian/cycle routes without traffic conflict, secure private areas, better designed buildings and landscaped spaces.

New development should be designed to offer flexibility for future needs and uses taking into account demographic and other changes. The Council will expect the improvement of existing buildings to meet changing needs and to sustain the District’s housing and commercial building stock.

All new development must be based on thorough site appraisal including reference to any Design Statements, Design Codes, Neighbourhood Plans, Secured by Design standards and be sensitive to its context as well as contributing to sustainable living.

‘Design Quality’, reflecting a thorough understanding of the site context, must be demonstrated as part of any proposal. The Council will require the submission of a Design and Access Statement which clearly demonstrates the design and suitability of the proposal in its local context where necessary.”

Delivery Policy ES13 Protection of existing open space

“Development proposals shall not involve the whole or partial loss of open space within settlements, or of outdoor recreation facilities, playing fields or allotments within or relating to settlements, unless:

1. a robust assessment of open space provision has identified a surplus in the catchment area to meet both current and future needs, and full consideration has been given to all functions that open space can perform
2. any replacement facility (or enhancement of the remainder of the existing site) provides a net benefit to the community in terms of the quality, availability and accessibility of open space or recreational opportunities. There should be no harm to spaces which:
 - a. contribute to the distinctive form, character and setting of a settlement
 - b. create focal points within the built up area
 - c. provide the setting for important buildings or scheduled ancient monuments
 - d. form part of an area of value for wildlife, sport or recreation, including areas forming part of a ‘green corridor’.

Local communities through Neighbourhood Plans shall designate Local Green Spaces which are of importance to them and are of particular local significance.”

Please note that Local Plan policies that are specific to particular typologies of open space can be found in the typology sections below.

4.2.3 Stroud District Local Plan Review Preferred Strategy

The District Council started the process of reviewing the current Local Plan last year. Following consultation, and committee resolution the Council’s preferred strategy for meeting development needs over the next 20 years includes the following:

Town Centres: Preferred Strategy will seek to deliver:

- Stroud town centre: walking and cycling links to and from the Stroudwater Canal and the wider Stroud valleys network
- Nailsworth town centre: improved walking and cycling links to the wider Stroud valleys network
- Dursley town centre: improved walking and cycling links connecting with Cam and Uley
- Wotton-under-Edge town centre: the Greenway cycle and walking route, subject to further feasibility work
- Stonehouse town centre: better cycling and walking links with and signage to/from the Stroudwater canal and to the wider Stroud valleys network.

Local Housing Need: The Preferred Strategy will seek to deliver: at least 638 new homes per year for a twenty-year period, on a mix of brownfield and greenfield allocated housing sites of varying sizes to ensure delivery is maintained throughout the plan period.

Local Green Spaces and Community Facilities: the Preferred Strategy will seek to deliver:

- A full audit of accessible open spaces across the District and their primary purpose
- A mapped GI network, linking urban areas to the wider countryside, identifying important habitats, landscape features, river and green corridors and ecological networks
- A set of standards for local open space, sport and recreation facility provision to assess the adequacy of provision
- A full assessment of existing local open space, sport and recreation facility provision and identification of surpluses and deficiencies based on quality, quantity and accessibility
- Site opportunities to address shortfalls in local open space, sport, recreation and community facility provision
- Opportunities to address gaps in the GI network and enhance the network function
- Restoration of the derelict canal between Stonehouse and Saul Junction, reconnecting Stroudwater Navigation to the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal, including creating 30 hectares of biodiverse habitat and canal towpath
- Improvements to the Stonehouse to Nailsworth cycleway, including biodiversity improvement and resurfacing work; creation of the Cam, Dursley and Uley Greenway and potential to deliver a Wotton under Edge, Kingswood and Charfield Greenway
- Support for the identification of local green spaces through Neighbourhood Development Plans and the protection of community facilities through existing Assets of Community Value legislation
- Opportunities to address identified community needs in association with new development through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and s106 agreements
- Support for the planned provision of community facilities alongside housing growth through master planning of strategic and other major developments
- Continued protection of identified areas of biodiversity, landscape, and heritage importance
- A mitigation strategy for the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC to assess and address recreational pressures including from growth within Gloucester.

Growth strategy: the preferred growth strategy will distribute at least 5,700 additional dwellings and sufficient new employment land to meet needs for the next twenty years.

The strategy will concentrate housing growth at the main towns of Cam and Dursley, Stonehouse and Stroud, where there is best access to services, facilities, jobs and infrastructure.

Housing and employment growth will also be centred at two new settlements at Sharpness and at Wisloe within the Severn Vale (A38/M5 corridor) where there is the potential to create new sustainable

communities along garden village principles. Further strategic employment growth will also be concentrated at accessible locations within the A38/M5 corridor.

In order to meet wider development needs and to support and improve existing services and facilities at smaller towns and larger villages, lesser levels of growth will be delivered at the local service centres of Berkeley, Minchinhampton, Nailsworth and Painswick.

Limited further growth will be delivered at the villages of Brimscombe, Chalford, Kings Stanley, Kingswood, Leonard Stanley, Manor Village and Thrupp which have a range of local facilities and which benefit from good transport links, or which have the potential to develop better transport links, to strategic facilities at the nearby towns of Stroud and at Wotton-under-Edge, where growth potential is limited by environmental constraints.

Further infill development to maximise the use of brownfield land will be supported at these and other settlements within settlement development limits. Some limited development (amount?) immediately adjoining settlement development limits (at tier 1-3A settlements only?) will be allowed to meet specific identified local development needs (i.e. exception sites for first time buyers, self-build and custom build housing, rural exception sites) subject to being able to overcome environmental constraints.

Comment

The above draft Preferred Strategy, is largely consistent with the existing local plan. However, there is refinement and further development of ideas and projects within the existing local plan, notably on the scale and distribution of proposed growth; the Green Infrastructure network; the role of the canal system; and sustainable transport links.

4.3 Key Stakeholders - strategic context and overview

This section summarises the role and function of key stakeholders that have responded to the consultation. Responses specific to individual typologies are addressed under each of the focused typology headings later in this section.

4.3.1 Stroud District Council

The following District Council officers provided comments either through face-to-face interview, or written response. Relevant responsibilities are summarised below, and their focussed comments on themes covered by the study are addressed later in this section.

Open Spaces Officer

Role: The Open Space function of the Council is essentially responsible for executing the grounds maintenance contract for the whole of the District, including for some parish councils, highways land, and in housing areas, and some cemeteries. It is also involved in negotiating S106 agreements.

The Council is responsible currently for 31 play areas (this is a reduction in numbers from previous years), as the District Council seeks to transfer management of open spaces to other local groups and organisations, where appropriate. The District Council also owns some woodlands, but management is sometimes undertaken through local committees.

The District Council does not own many open spaces, but ownership does include Stratford Park. The Council also manages some common land (but not Rodborough and Minchinhampton).

The District Council budget and staff resources available for open space management have been reduced, which means that the Council has to look to reducing its own operations and seek the involvement of other groups and organisations local, as appropriate.

Sport and Health Development Service Manager

Role: Overall responsibility for strategic and operational management of the Sport and Health Development Unit. The role has a very broad remit covering sport, physical activity, health, mental health, play and Safeguarding as both a lead and/or enabler. The role also inputs/advises on planning applications and capital/revenue funding bids. (n.b. many of this officer's comments are probably more relevant to the playing pitch and outdoor sports module of this overall study, and will therefore be addressed largely through that process).

Environment Strategy Manager

Role: Corporate consultation, and the preparation/review of the Council's environmental strategy.

Section 106 Monitoring Officer

Role: Main responsibility is administering the collection of Section 106 monies, and potentially their distribution. As part of this function there is liaison with both developers, and town and parish councils (who offer opinion and recommendations as to how such monies can be spent). The Officer will also be working closely with the CIL officer, as the two systems will be integrated.

CIL Senior Planning Officer

Role: Collecting and ultimately administering CIL contributions in accordance with Regulation 123 and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Biodiversity Officer

Role: Main responsibilities are to provide advice and recommendations to the Development Control Planning Team with regards to Ecology (Protected/notable species/ protected/notable habitats). Works closely with the Gloucester Environmental Records Centre.

Senior Arboriculture Officer

Role: Advises on arboriculture issues in respect of development schemes, planning applications and planning policy.

Canal Manager

Role: The role is focussed on bringing the Gloucester to Sharpness Canal back into use, and also to see the section between Stonehouse and Sharpness completed (and therefore into the wider canal network). There have been two (lottery funded) phases to the project: a 5-mile stretch centred on Stonehouse; and, a second stretch west of Stonehouse through to Sharpness.

The canal stretch is actually owned by the Stroud Valley Canals Company, which has charitable status.

Rural SuDS (Sustainable Drainage System) Project Office

Role: The role is to encourage the creation of sustainable rural drainage solutions, to offer an effective and environmentally-friendly approach to protecting development from flooding, through using natural material to slow down the transit of floodwater. The post was developed as a result of funding received in the aftermath of the Boscastle incident. (The Slad Valley was an area of identified risk).

Water Resources Engineer

Role: Consultation on the drainage implications from developments of less than 10 dwellings (others being dealt with by the County Council as the strategic authority). A particular remit to promote SUDSs in new developments.

4.3.2 Strategic Organisations

A semi-structured questionnaire was circulated to all relevant strategic organisations considered to have a bearing on the study (this is with the exception of neighbouring local authorities, which were considered through a separate part of the consultation). Strategic organisations were defined as those that cover a geography spanning at least a large part of the Stroud District, and usually also beyond the District. Their interests, decisions and actions relate to the District.

Comments were received back from the following organisations:

- Natural England
- The Woodland Trust
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- The Canal & River Trust;
- Cotswold Canals Trust;
- Gloucestershire Local Access Forum:
- Stroud Valleys Project:
- Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust; and,
- Gloucestershire Rural Community Council.

The questionnaire asked about each organisation's key interests and activities. It also asked for comments on aspects of local green Infrastructure, open space, recreation in relation to considerations of 'Quantity', 'Quality', and 'Accessibility'.

The following summarises the roles of each of these organisations. Detailed comments received are covered later in the report.

Natural England

Role: The government's adviser for the natural environment in England, helping to protect England's nature and landscapes for people to enjoy and for the services they provide. Its responsibilities are for:

- promoting nature conservation and protecting biodiversity
- conserving and enhancing the landscape
- securing the provision and improvement of facilities for the study, understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment
- promoting access to the countryside and open spaces and encouraging open-air recreation
- contributing in other ways to social and economic well-being through management of the natural environment

Within the District Natural England manages Cotswold Commons & Beechwoods National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - part forming Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation/SAC). These areas are located partially within the 'Cotswold Cluster' and 'Gloucestershire Rural Fringe' local clusters.

Spatial planning standards: Natural England has proposed standards for provision of natural green space, the Accessible Natural Green Space (ANGSt) standard. These standards recommend that everyone, wherever they live, should have accessible natural green space:

- Of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minute's walk) from home
- At least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home
- One accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- One accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- Statutory local Nature Reserves at a minimum level of one hectare per thousand population

Natural England suggest that these standards should be a target to achieve; and particularly that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural green spaces of at least two hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes from home).

The Woodland Trust – Regional External Affairs Officer (South West)

Role: The Woodland Trust is the country's largest woodland conservation charity with over 500,000 members and supporters and more than 1,000 sites, covering over 26,000 hectares, all over the UK.

The Trust protect and campaign, plant trees, and restore ancient woodland for the benefit of wildlife and people. It states that "Trees and woods filter our air, cool our cities, purify our water and enrich our soil. Yet the damage done to them has now reached catastrophic levels, and our plant and animal species are declining at an alarming rate."

Within Stroud District the Woodland Trust owns and manages: Coaley Wood; Langet Covert; Laycombe Wood; Nut Hill; Penn Wood; Stanley Wood; This England Wood.

Spatial Planning Standards: The Woodland Trust has researched and developed the Woodland Access Standard (WAS_t) for local authorities to aim for, encapsulated in their Space for People publication. They believe that the WAS_t can be an important policy tool complimenting other access standards used in delivering green infrastructure for health benefits.

The WAS_t is complimentary to Natural England's ANGST+ and is endorsed by Natural England. The Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard recommends:

- that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size
- that there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people's homes.

Environment Agency (EA) – Sustainable Places Planning Specialist

Role: The Environment Agency (EA) protects and improves the environment and promotes sustainable development. It plays a central role in implementing the government's environmental strategy in England. The Environment Agency plays a lead role in managing flood risk and works to minimise the impact of flooding.

EA is an executive non-departmental public body of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

The importance of biodiversity and multi-functional open space: Green Infrastructure (GI) is a term that describes a network of interconnected green and blue spaces such as: parks and gardens; playing fields and allotments; towpaths and wildlife corridors; beaches; watercourses, wetlands and flood storage areas; woodlands; trees; grasslands; green roofs and swales. GI lies within and between cities, towns and villages and can include both private and public spaces. The EA note that:

- A well planned and managed GI network can and should perform multiple functions and provide multiple benefits and services for communities such as:
 - managing surface water and flood risk
 - improving water quality
 - helping communities to address and adapt to climate change
 - providing opportunities for recreation and improved wellbeing
 - enhancing biodiversity
 - promoting community interaction

Guidance is available <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

The Forestry Commission (Local Partnership Advisor)

Role: The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible for protecting, expanding and promoting the sustainable management of woodlands and increasing their value to society and the environment.

The Forestry Commission and Natural England share Standing Advice in relation to Ancient Woodlands. The Local Partnership Advisor notes that:

- The NPPF amended in May contains stronger protections for ancient trees and ancient woodlands
- The Forestry Act regulates felling of woodland. UK Forest Standard provides guidance on acceptable management of woodland and on best practice.
- The government's 25 Year Environment Plan reiterates a commitment to planting 11 million trees.

- the government's Clean Growth Strategy includes a commitment to increasing woodland cover in England to 12% by 2060, which means 130,000ha of new woodland. It also sets out a target of a 26% drop in emissions from land use, which may require an even larger shift to woodland.
- Recent urban canopy cover research shows that Stroud has 28.5% tree canopy cover, which is not bad, with Farnham in Surrey top of the list at 45% and Fleetwood in Lancashire at 3%.

The Local Partnership Advisor also notes that “our comments need to come from a regional/national perspective, so I am not commenting in detail on the different aspects of green infrastructure provision in the town. My main comment is to encourage Stroud to set an ambitious goal to increase canopy cover and to ensure that new and existing woodland can be managed well, either by public or private hands, even in more urban areas. It would be great if you would calculate the benefits of woodland to carbon storage, water quality and flooding, health and wellbeing and biodiversity, as well as recreation and economic benefits too. And if you would consider future climate change and creation of woods that can be managed sustainably when you plan new GI improvements. Stroud has been an inspiration to many organisations nationally in the development of natural flood management techniques so far - long may this continue”.

Local Plans and ancient woodland – Forestry Commission approach: The information below is provided to assist you in assessing the appropriateness of sites for future development, and to highlight opportunities for achieving your renewable energy obligations.

A summary of Government policy on ancient woodland:

[Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#) (published October 2006). **Section 40** – “Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”.

[National Planning Policy Framework](#) (published March 2012).

Paragraph 118 – “planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss”.

[National Planning Practice Guidance](#) – Natural Environment Guidance. (Published March 2014)

This Guidance supports the implementation and interpretation of the National Planning Policy Framework. This section outlines the Forestry Commission’s role as a **non-statutory consultee** on “*development proposals that contain or are likely to affect Ancient Semi-Natural woodlands or Plantations on Ancient Woodlands Sites (PAWS) (as defined and recorded in [Natural England’s Ancient Woodland inventory](#)), including proposals where any part of the development site is within 500 metres of an ancient semi-natural woodland or ancient replanted woodland, and where the development would involve erecting new buildings, or extending the footprint of existing buildings*”

It notes that ancient woodland is an irreplaceable habitat, and that, in planning decisions, Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) should be treated equally in terms of the protection afforded to ancient woodland in the National Planning Policy Framework. It highlights the Ancient Woodland Inventory as a way to find out if a woodland is ancient.

[Standing Advice for Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees](#). (Published April 2014)

The Forestry Commission has prepared joint [standing advice](#) with Natural England on ancient woodland and veteran trees which we refer you to in the first instance. This advice is a material consideration for planning decisions across England. It explains the definition of ancient woodland, its importance, ways to identify it and the policies that relevant to it. It also provides advice on how to protect ancient woodland when dealing

with planning applications that may affect ancient woodland. It also considers ancient wood-pasture and veteran trees.

The Standing Advice website will provide you with links to [Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory, assessment guides](#) and other tools to assist you in assessing potential impacts. The assessment guides sets out a series of questions to help planners assess the impact of the proposed development on the ancient woodland. **Case Decisions** demonstrates how certain previous planning decisions have taken planning policy into account when considering the impact of proposed developments on ancient woodland. These documents can be found on our [website](#).

[The UK Forestry Standard](#) (3rd edition published November 2011).

Page 24 "Areas of woodland are material considerations in the planning process and may be protected in local authority Area Plans. These plans pay particular attention to woods listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory and areas identified as Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs).

[Keepers of Time](#) – A Statement of Policy for England's Ancient and Native Woodland (published June 2005).

Page 10 "The existing area of ancient woodland should be maintained and there should be a net increase in the area of native woodland".

[Natural Environment White Paper "The Natural Choice"](#) (published June 2011)

Paragraph 2.53 - This has a "renewed commitment to conserving and restoring ancient woodlands".

Paragraph 2.56 – "The Government is committed to providing appropriate protection to ancient woodlands and to more restoration of plantations on ancient woodland sites".

[Biodiversity 2020: a strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services](#) (published August 2011).

Paragraph 2.16 - Further commitments to protect ancient woodland and to continue restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS).

Renewable & low carbon energy: The resilience of existing and new woodland is a key theme of the Forestry Commission's work to Protect, Improve and Expand woodland in England we will continue to work with Forestry / Woodland owners, agents, contractors and other Stakeholders to highlight and identify, pests and diseases and to work in partnership to enable Woodlands and Forests are resilient to the impacts of Climate Change.

Woodfuel and timber supplies continues to be an opportunity for local market growth whilst also enabling woodlands to be brought back into active management.

Flood risk: The planting of new riparian and floodplain woodland, can help to reduce diffuse pollution, protect river morphology, moderate stream temperature and aid flood risk management, as well as meet Biodiversity Action Plan targets for the restoration and expansion of wet woodland.

The Forestry Commission is keen to work in partnership with Woodland / Forest Stakeholders to develop opportunities for woodland creation to deliver these objectives highlighted above.

In the wider planning context the Forestry Commission encourages local authorities to consider [the role of trees in delivering planning objectives as part](#) of a wider integrated landscape approach. For instance through:

- the inclusion of [green infrastructure](#) (including [trees and woodland](#)) in and around new development; and
- the use of locally sourced wood in construction and as a sustainable, [carbon lean fuel](#).

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust – Director of Conservation

Role: The Trust manages 17 nature reserves in the District: Box Wood; Coaley Peak; Daneway Banks; Elliotts Reserve (Swifts Hill); Frith Wood; Frome Banks; Laurie Lee Wood; Midger Wood; Neu Lindsey; Nind; Old London Road; Sapperton Valley; Siccaridge Wood; Snows Farm; Strawberry Banks; Stuart Fawkes; Three Gr

The Trust is also working (in association with the District Council) with developers and planners to create a common understanding of what constitutes high-quality green infrastructure (GI). The aim is to secure the benefits to people and wildlife, without provision for the natural environment being regarded as a hold-up to development.

Building with Nature provides a clear set of standards and a technical user guide to help applicants to the benchmark evidence how their development or policy meets the benchmark standard for high-quality green infrastructure.

The three elements on which the standards are based are: Promote health and wellbeing; Ensure effective water management; and, Protect and enhance wildlife.

The sections of this report covering the household and parish surveys report on questions that were asked by both these surveys specifically to gauge the level of support for the principles behind the above three elements.

The Canal & River Trust - Area Planner South and South Wales

Role: The Canal & River Trust (the Trust) is the charity that cares for 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England and Wales. “We are passionate believers in using the power of local waterways to transform places and enrich lives. The Trust is making life better by water. “

The Trust owns and maintain the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal as it runs through Stroud District as well as other land at Sharpness such as the former Victorian pleasure garden.

Cotswold Canals Trust – Chief Executive

Role: The Cotswold Canals Trust is responsible for the promotion of various lengths of and various activities/improvements along the length of the Stroudwater Navigation and Thames & Severn Canal (the Cotswold Canals). The canal passes through the Severn Vale, Stonehouse Cluster and Stroud Valleys.

Stroud Valleys Project – Chief Executive Officer

Role: The Stroud Valleys Project work in partnership with a wide range of landowners (especially councils) to manage their land by working to their management plans for wild life and people. The Project regularly work on the following sites:

- Stroud Valleys – Sensory Garden in Stratford Park, Capel’s Mill, Arundel Mill Pond, Frome Banks Nature Reserve (with GWT), Bisley Road Cemetery Nature Reserve, Queen Elizabeth Playing Fields, Hamwell Leaze, Bisley Road allotments, Rodborough Common, Minchinhampton Churchyard
- Cam and Dursley – Rackleaze, Holywell Orchard
- Berkeley – Sarah’s Field
- Wotton – Tyndale View and Charfield Drive green spaces and allotment

The Project also undertakes other one-off pieces for work on other sites throughout the District - funding dependent.

Gloucestershire Local Access Forum - Member with responsibility for consultations

Role: The Gloucestershire Local Access Forum has a role to advise decision making organisations (such as local authorities) on strategic access issues, and where appropriate, encourage greater access to all forms of recreation.

Gloucestershire Rural Community Council - Community Led Planning

Role: The Community Council do not manage spaces of facilities directly. It supports many community groups who do manage spaces and facilities. For example, community buildings. There are 42 information sheets on a variety of topics, consultation with communities, together with various legal model documents + governance and best practice templates and tool kits.

There is a Stroud District Village and Community Hall network which has a map of the community buildings that have been engaged with this network. The Trust works with this network.

The Community Council also supported parish and town councils and sports clubs regarding their governance and legal issues, raising funds, consultation on and maintenance on play areas and recreation grounds, sports pitches etc.

The Community Council also developed an Open Spaces methodology for communities to use to analyse their needs with another local planning authority.

The Community Council has developed a Parish Priority toolkit with DCLG and Cotswold District Council - its aim is to enable communities to assess their current asset needs and plan for the future, prioritising infrastructure needs at a local level.

British Horse Society (BHS) – Regional Manager

The BHS directly represents over 100,000 members who are horse owners, riders, carriage drivers and enthusiasts. The BHS is a Registered Charity and one of its charitable objectives is to promote and secure the provision, protection and preservation of rights of way and of access for ridden and driven horses over public roads, highways, footpaths, bridleways, carriageways, public paths and other land. Horse riders and carriage drivers in the Stroud District area will make use of and be using the current provision of rights of way open to them.

Key industry statistics (provided by BHS):

- Over two and a half million riders in the UK
- 74% of riders are female
- Nearly 40% of those taking part in equestrian activity do not participate in other forms of physical activity
- The equine industry in the UK contributes £8bn a year to the economy

4.4 Community Organisations Survey (non-sports): overview

A semi-structured questionnaire was circulated to all relevant community organisations considered to have a bearing on the study. Community organisations were defined as those that cover a geography spanning only a relatively small part of the Stroud District

The questionnaire asked about each organisation's key interests and activities. It also asked for comments on aspects of local green Infrastructure, open space, recreation in relation to considerations of 'Quantity', 'Quality', and 'Accessibility'.

Comments were received back from the following organisations¹⁶: Cotswold Boat Mobility; Friends of Stroud Museum; Stroud in Bloom; Eastington Community Orchard; and, Thrupp Community Orchard.

The following summarises the roles of each of these organisations, and their detailed comments received are covered later in this section.

Cotswold Boatmobility – Chairperson

Role: Boatmobility seeks to promote Accessible community boating group for all. Currently mainly weekday daytime, and using the Stroud Canal at least twice weekly.

Friends of Stroud Museum – Chairperson

Role: This local group campaigns and raises funds of the 'Museum in the Park' at Stratford Park. It makes use of local open space at Stratford Park for fundraising activities.

Stroud in Bloom – Chairperson

Role: This group has the aim to "make Stroud a better place to live, work and visit". The group's demographic tends to represent older age groups, and retired people. However, it works with schools, allotment holders, and other like-minded groups/organisations, those with disabilities, local parks and both town and district councils.

The group makes use of Stratford Park, for leisure purposes, at least twice a week.

Eastington Community Orchard (ECO) – Chairperson

Role: The aim of this group is the re-creation of the traditional orchards of Eastington Parish. All ages catered for - Junior Section of primary aged children, oldest member over 80 years. Membership 160. First Community Orchard 2010, now has 58 mature fruit trees and a nursery of saplings all grafted by members. Second Community Orchard 2016, has 12 saplings so far. Annual Apple day nearest Saturday to 19th October, open to all parishioners. Pasteurised apple and pear juice.

The group makes use of

- Coneygree Community Orchard, about an acre, open to the public. Popular green route to the school, church (for wedding groups) and ramblers en route to the Canal.
- Brownings Community Orchard, less than an acre. Still being developed with just 12 saplings planted winter 2017/18. Pond feature with reeds and bull rushes.

¹⁶ The survey was sent to groups identified by the District Council and via web searches. There may be additional organisations with an interest in open space that were not identified. The general findings may not therefore be entirely representative of all such groups across the District.

Thrupp Community Orchard - Leader

Role: The group provides access to fruit picking of a wide selection of varieties over a broad season. Offered to all the local community especially those within walking distance. “We have engaged with all age groups. We encourage engagement with the maintenance and celebration of the trees through the full annual cycle. We see the groups activity as adding to the community building for addition local benefits. The site offers a view of nature at its best with lots of biodiversity and encourage participants to learn more about the environment.”

Stroud Show – Chairperson

Organises an annual country show to celebrate the artistic and musical talents, horticulture and rural skills and activities. The Show uses Stratford Park once a year, and celebrates the park’s biodiversity.

4.5 Local Parks & Recreation Grounds and Country Parks¹⁷

4.5.1 District Council Officers

Open Spaces Officer: (Quality). Issues with the proposed skateboard facility being relocated into Stratford Park from Brimscombe Business Park (currently one of the biggest indoor skate parks). The concern relates to the integrity of the Park's landscape and the impact of the proposal on this integrity.

There is also concern that budget cuts are leading to reduced maintenance of District Council open spaces (generally), such as a reduction in numbers of grass cuts. The impression is that complaints received from the public are increasing as a result. So, existing resources are having to be spread further, whilst officers spend more time reacting to increased levels of complaint.

4.5.2 Strategic Organisations

Natural England: (Quality). Although not 'country parks' in the normal sense attention is drawn to the significant common land resource within the district, most of which is afforded 'open access' status. (Subsequent comments below under 'wildlife areas, nature reserves and woodlands' also apply here). Examples include Rodborough Common SAC, managed by the National Trust, and where active measures are under way through the planning system to manage the interrelationship between public access/recreation pressure and the conservation of the limestone grassland and its associated wildlife.

The Canal & Rivers Trust: (Quality). The Trust owns the former Victorian Pleasure Garden at Sharpness. It is hoped to improve this facility to provide public open space as part of the Sharpness housing allocation. However, the full potential for the site use is restricted by adjacent ecological and HSE designations.

Cotswold Canals Trust (Quantity): The canal could be regarded as a linear country park and it also forms the spine of the Stroud Industrial Heritage Conservation Area. **(Quality):** Where local parks etc. abut the canal, there are synergies of use. There is an initiative just west of Stonehouse Bridge where an existing playground area might be more integrated with the canal and towpath.

Stroud Valleys Project: (Quantity and Quality). The Project carried out a survey for Stroud Town Council of green spaces in the town in 2006/7 and it was concluded that the Town did not have enough green spaces (number of people, housing density and distance from green space). The Town Council developed a policy to purchase more green space as a result they purchased The Long Ground and Trinity Pocket Park. The Project work with the District Council Rodborough Common Conservation Programme to raise awareness of issues on Rodborough Common – cows getting killed, overuse for recreation, erosion of footpaths, wildflower trampling, dog mess etc.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust: (Quantity, Quality, Accessibility). The District has insufficient designated wildlife sites to stem declines in biodiversity. It is probably not feasible to add sufficient new reserves and designated sites with the land available, plus it is vital for wildlife conservation that people are able to access and engage with nature in local green spaces that are convenient for them. The Trust is working on a Nature Recovery Network map for the county to enable us to deliver the aspirations of the 25 Year Environment Plan. Local parks and recreation grounds should be important components of a Nature Recovery Network for the district and should be seen as multi-functional spaces, with some areas enhanced for biodiversity. Oakridge cricket ground is a Key Wildlife Site where some of the grass is allowed to grow long. This is an example that should be duplicated in other areas and new developments should have habitat creation as part of the design plans for new parks and recreation spaces.

¹⁷ Where comments can be classified as relating to such, they have been prefaced with the words 'Quantity', 'Quality', 'Accessibility'. This procedure is followed in all the typology sections in the report.

For many people the only opportunity they have to visit a natural green space is in local parks and the access to many is poor for people with limited mobility or other sensory disabilities.

The Trust is not aware that Stroud District has any Country Parks (based on the statutory definition). Coaley Peak is a Nature Reserve, whilst Stratford Park feels too small.

The Trust feels the 'country park' term is quite dated and would propose creating a new more ambitious vision. There should be greater ambition over the scale of new large parks so they can provide sufficient habitat for wildlife and provide recreational opportunities for the growing population. Country Parks should make a significant contribution to Stroud's nature Recovery Network, with large areas managed primarily as wildlife habitat.

Gloucestershire Rural Community Council: There is a certain amount of desire to create a national park within the Stroud District. This may be driven in part by a local MP. Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association - good resource for recreation ground. Gives lots of support to communities and will have a wealth of knowledge on location and current issues.

4.5.3 Community Organisations Survey

Comments from the Community Organisations Survey in relation to parks and recreation grounds are noted below:

Organisation	Comments (including specific comments on Quantity, Quality, Accessibility)
Friends of Stratford Park	<p>Quantity: This organisation believes there to be enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of its activities.</p> <p>Quality: The organisation rates the quality of all kinds of outdoor recreational provision in Stroud District as 'Very Good' with the exception of Allotments, on which it has 'No Opinion.'</p>
Stroud in Bloom	<p>Quality: Local parks and recreation grounds are very good in the Stroud Valleys area</p> <p>Quality: The group praises Stratford Park. "It is full of wildlife which has increased 10-fold over the past few years due to excellent management and provision of habitat.</p> <p>Quality: "At the moment the local council have agreed that a skate park can be relocated to the park which will cover 40.000 square feet of ground which is currently an amazing space full of wildlife and biodiversity. This concerns me greatly when there are other areas available for this skate park to be located without destroying natural habitat and areas of outstanding beauty. The 'new' proposed car park area will also destroy a further area of our parkland."</p>
Eastington Community Orchard	<p>Quality: Many small local parks have been enhanced in the last decade by playpark facilities, often courtesy of the Lottery funds. This should be captured by the survey being undertaken of parish councils.</p> <p>Quality: The quality of provision is very good.</p>
Thrupp Community Orchard	<p>Quality: The quality of provision is good.</p> <p>Accessibility: Very little availability of somewhere within walking distance, no busy road to cross, that is flat - for kicking a ball around informally, preferably with a hut for a base.</p>

Boatmobility	Quantity: The organisation believes there are there are enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of its activities.
Stroud Show	Quantity: The organisation believes there are there are enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of its activities. Quality: The organisation rates the quality of all kinds of outdoor recreational provision in Stroud District as 'Very Good' or 'Good' with the exception of Allotments, on which it has 'No Opinion.'

4.6 Natural Green Space - Wildlife areas, nature reserves and woodlands

4.6.1 District Council Policy and Officers Comments

Stroud District Local Plan

Delivery Policy ES14 Provision of semi-natural and natural green space with new residential development

“Strategic and major residential development shall be accompanied with additional accessible natural green space, proportionate to the scale of development. This will be provided to achieve the following target rates:

- Provision of at least 2ha of accessible natural green space per 1,000 population
- Provision of at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;
- Provision of one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- No person should live more than 300m (or 5 minutes walk) from their nearest area of natural green space of at least 2 hectares in size.

All strategic scale residential development will be expected to have a network of such spaces.”

Biodiversity Officer: (Quantity, Quality, Accessibility). This new post has resulted in more applications submitted with Ecological Surveys and recommended mitigation schemes showing a trend towards ecological net gains. There is however still a lack of joined-up thinking across the council. For example, no involvement in green space management, or the canal restoration. There is also considered to be limited mapped information for green assets in the district or on connecting features such as hedgerows and trees. At present it is difficult to understand what’s important. A comprehensive GI strategy would really help in achieving landscape scale biodiversity enhancements.

It would help to have a better mapped understanding of green space and connecting habitats within the district. It has been hard to save important hedgerows from development pressure.

An example of good practice in the District is considered to be the Kingswood development near Wotton-under-Edge, Great crested Newt mitigation and enhancement works were created throughout the development, not only have the enhancements resulted in a significant increase in the population site of GCN within the local area, the mitigation also offers a green lung through the development site that’s managed for wildlife allowing longer wildflower meadow planting to grow up providing cover GCN and other wildlife with mown paths for the enjoyment of the residents as Accessible Natural Green Space.

A priority should be a focus on connecting features and local green assets around sites that are likely to be promoted within the Local Plan review.

Senior Arboriculture Officer: (Quantity, Quality). Certain specialist officers are not involved sufficiently early in planning decisions (including both policy development, and input into development proposals). This has resulted in insufficient attention being given to Green Infrastructure within development proposals coming forward. However, the recent development at Littlecombe, Dursley is to an extent an exception to the norm.

The priority is felt to be to obtain better policy and supporting guidance for more effective consideration and sympathetic treatment of GI in planning proposals.

4.6.2 Strategic Organisations

Natural England: (Quality, Access). The district possesses a range of the highest quality designated nature conservation sites (European Sites including the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC, Rodborough Common SAC,

Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site) covering a substantial area and spanning a diverse range of habitat types. This diversity forms a key characteristic of the district's 'offer' to residents, visitors and also businesses choosing to locate here. In terms of *quality* the issue of recreation pressure represents a strategic and cross border issue of relevance both to Stroud DC and neighbouring Local Planning Authorities i.e. need to understand visitor activity trends and related data in order to ensure adequately evidenced and effective formulation of local plans.

Our IPENS¹⁸ theme plan on 'Public access & disturbance' provides context for consideration of the relationships between conservation of our European Sites and the demand for recreation opportunities.

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6621454219083776?category=5605910663659520>

Cotswold Canals Trust: (Quality). The canal supports a wide variety of wildlife and provides biodiversity connectivity between habitats. The towpath and canal both provide the means of observing wildlife and the canal passes by and through woodland areas. Unrestored sections of canal have tended to deteriorate through reeding-up and/or drying out.

The Heritage Lottery Fund funded Stroud Navigation Connected (Phase 1B) project should see the creation of large areas of biodiversity enhanced land adjacent to the canal.

It is important that the canal is not seen to be purely an environmental asset to the exclusion of its recreational and heritage value.

Cotswold Canals Trust (observation from volunteer): (Quality). The effect on the ecological and wildlife preservation along the canal system. Essential for coexistence of human and wildlife in harmony.

Stroud Valleys Projects: (Quantity, Quality). Not enough and they need improving e.g. Stonehouse Newt Ponds.

The Woodlands Trust: (Quantity, Quality, Accessibility). The Trust believes there is potential to promote access to several of our woodlands within Stroud District. However, with the scale of housing and infrastructure development which is proposed for the area it is essential to protect existing trees and woods, particularly ancient and veteran trees, and that adequate green infrastructure is delivered to help manage the increased pressure on the natural environment and to achieve net gain for biodiversity by extending, connecting and buffering existing sites.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust: (Quantity, Quality, Accessibility). In addition to The Trust's Nature Reserves, Stroud District contains 239 designated Key Wildlife Sites (KWS) and 37 candidate Key Wildlife Sites. It also contains 16 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including four GWT reserves) and 22 Conservation Road Verges. Although this sounds like a lot, many of these sites are very small and disconnected, meaning that they cannot provide viably ensure the future of the populations of rare and protected wildlife that they contain.

There is a need for bigger, better and more connected sites to form a Nature Recovery Network. Un-farmed green space is in short supply, particularly in urban areas. Opportunities should be explored for all public green space to contribute towards a Nature Recovery Network in some way. There is also a considerable concern over the future of Key Wildlife Sites (KWSs), which represent the vast majority of the land area with high wildlife value. The Wildlife Trust manages the database of KWS's but there is no real resource to support land owners to manage them in a way that maintains or enhances their wildlife value. Although KWS's are protected through the planning system, many are lost to actions that do not require planning permission

¹⁸ IPENS = Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000

and unless action is taken at a policy level there will continue to be a slow decline in the quantity and quality of KWS's

10% of the households in Stroud are members of the Trust and it receives a lot of comments that most of our sites are not accessible for people without their own car. Public transport to the smaller towns and villages is too sparse, too infrequent and too expensive to provide equality in access to high quality wild places. Rural transport must be improved alongside wildlife enhancements to urban sites, which tend to be more accessible for a larger proportion of the population.

British Horse Society: (Quality). BHS can only make generic comment as representative does not live or ride in the Stroud district area but would comment that wildlife areas, nature reserves and woodlands can and certain areas do offer safe off-road riding routes for horses, and very often wildlife is not necessarily disturbed by a person on horseback in the same way it would be by say, walkers or cyclists.

4.6.3 Community Organisation Survey

Respondents' views in relation to Wildlife Areas, Nature Reserves and Woodlands are noted below:

Organisation	Comments (including specific comments on Quantity, Quality, Accessibility)
Thrupp Community Orchard	<p>Quantity: The group believes there are enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet its needs.</p> <p>Quality: The quality of provision is good</p>
Boatmobility	<p>Quantity: The organisation believes there are there are enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of its activities.</p>
Friends of Stratford Park	<p>Quantity: Believes there to be enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of its activities.</p> <p>Quality: The organisation rates the quality of all kinds of outdoor recreational provision in Stroud District as 'Very Good' with the exception of Allotments, on which it has 'No Opinion'</p>
Stroud in Bloom	<p>Quality: in Stroud Valleys area quality of provision is Good</p>
Eastington Community Orchard	<p>Quantity: There are over 20 community orchard groups like ECO.</p> <p>Quantity: The group does not think that there are enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the its needs, with particular regard to the Stonehouse area.</p> <p>Quality: The quality of provision is very good</p>

4.7 Allotments

The majority of allotments in Stroud District are managed by town and parish councils and their views can be found in the appropriate section earlier in the report.

4.7.1 District Council Officers

No specific comments made of relevance

4.7.2 Strategic Organisations

Natural England: (Quality). No specific comments on provision within the district but attention was drawn to the publication 'Green infrastructure guidance' (NE 176) in terms of allotments' role as a valuable component in an areas wider GI resource:

Link -

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033?category=47004>

Stroud Valleys Project: (Quantity). The Project has an allotment site, which is well-managed. There used to be long waiting lists, but unclear on current situation.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust: (Quality). The Trust would like to see measures taken to reduce use or pesticides and planting of potentially invasive plant species, where sites are in proximity to designated wildlife sites.

4.7.3 Community Organisation Survey

Organisation	Comments (including specific comments on Quantity, Quality, Accessibility)
Friends of Stratford Park	<p>Quantity: Believes there to be enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of its activities.</p> <p>Quality: The organisation rates the quality of all kinds of outdoor recreational provision in Stroud District as 'Very Good' with the exception of Allotments, on which it has 'No Opinion'</p>
Eastington Community Orchard	Quality: The quality of provision is very good
Thrupp Community Orchard	Quality: The quality of provision is good
Stroud in Bloom	Quality: in Stroud Valleys area quality of provision is Good

4.8 Water - canals, rivers, lakes etc

4.8.1 District Council Officers

Canal Officer: (Quality). The Council's planning policies and practices are not as supportive of the canal as they could be. Other local authorities with canals seem to attract more planning gain- that was the impression.

The council could do more to help in assembling land packages. Perhaps there is an over-protective view towards the re-use of heritage industrial buildings. Potential development sites have not been 'linked' with the canal. Example is of a social housing scheme in Stonehouse that was designed to back onto the canal instead of face it.

Perhaps a need to consider better the strategic role and potential of the canal. (n.b. west of the 5-mile stretch canal restoration is not so advanced and is not considered to offer so much potential, given the lack of development opportunities.)

Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) Officer: (Quality). Belief that the existing local plan is good in terms of policies relating to promoting SuDS. Need to maintain level of intervention (e.g. ensure inclusion on the Reg 123 List for the CIL).

Water Resources Officer: (Quality). 'Roof to the balancing pond' should be promoted as part of the GI. Ideal is that SUDSs should be above ground and be part of green infrastructure, rather than be below ground. The latter may be more cost effective for developers. However, 'above ground' solutions contribute to green infrastructure. Local plan policy in respect of SUDS is adequate, but could be improved.

Good local examples include Gloucester Services, Rednock School, and Cashes Green Hospital.

Issues with the way that some SUDS greenery is maintained (mowed and it much of it shouldn't be); and, failure to be adopted as public open space (which it should be). Failure to get government to implement schedule 2 of the Water and Flood Management Act (therefore no enforcement).

4.8.2 Strategic Organisations

Natural England: (Quality, Access). At the time of writing Natural England were unable to offer updates on a project to deliver the England 'coastal path' but propose to send further information on this separately.

Canal & Rivers Trust: (Quality, Accessibility). The new environmental framework emerging from government through the UK National Ecosystem Assessment, Natural Environment White Paper and Biodiversity Strategy in England challenges both local authorities and the Trust itself to do more to protect and enhance the natural environment. The definition of open space in the National Planning Policy Framework includes areas of water such as rivers, canals and reservoirs.

The Trust welcomes Green infrastructure as "a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities".

The Trust believes its waterways are a valuable part of the strategic and local green infrastructure network. They also provide an important wildlife route and act as stepping stones for mitigation against habitat loss, dispersal and the genetic exchange of plants. They provide opportunities to enhance biodiversity and

ecological resilience. The Trust own and manage both the canal track and the adjacent towpath although it only owns 4% of all waterside land.

The Gloucester & Sharpness canal is already used for non-motorised water-based recreation such as rowing, canoeing and kayaking. As well as motorised cruising by canal boats and other craft.

The Trust believes there is huge scope to increase this usage, subject of course to the impact of such usage on navigational safety for all users and on ecology. Additional facilities, and the shared use of existing facilities will help increase usage but there is a need to provide additional support facilities such as cafes, hire depots and changing/toilet facilities to allow this type of use to flourish. Such facilities must be located on or adjacent to the waterway. This may require greater flexibility in the interpretation of development management policies as such uses cannot always be located within urban areas.

The Gloucester and Sharpness Canal is popular with boaters and this will only increase in the future as the Cotswold Canal offers new cruising opportunities. Additional serviced moorings may be required to meet this demand in the future. Car parking is always an issue, both for those using the canal for short term recreation such as jogging, fishing and dog walking as well as and for those who moor boats on the canal and need a parking space whilst on board.

The Trust wishes to work collaboratively to increase and improve facilities for the benefit of all users. It is currently supporting work by Slimbridge Parish Council to help ease congestion at the Patch.

The Trust believes that each waterside location needs to be considered individually, with no single approach being appropriate in all locations. New development alongside a canal should integrate the towing path and open-up access to the water, both visually and practically where possible, it should encourage use of the waterspace itself and engage with the qualities and benefits of being by water.

Cotswold Canals Trust: (Quality, Accessibility). The canal restoration project is of national importance and offer diverse water recreational activities including boating, canoeing, paddle boarding, disability boating, angling and waterside walking and cycling. The restored section sees a lot more use than those still to be restored but all sections are highly valued by the public.

The full restoration of the canal from Brimscombe to Daneway/Sapperton (Stroud Valleys area) requires land assembly and includes several significant challenges which will need to be overcome.

Stroud Valleys Project: (Quality). Should improve with £11m canal HLF bid over the next 4 years.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust: (Quality, Accessibility). More action is required to improve the condition of water courses in Stroud District. Environment Agency data indicates that nearly 50% of natural water courses are not in good ecological condition, although there are some good examples, particularly on the non-modified sections of the River Frome running from the source to Ebley Mill. Stroud District contains remnant populations of the highly endangered white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), which is at risk of extinction unless action can be taken to support these populations. Opportunities to re-naturalise watercourses would benefit flood management as well as wildlife.

The Thames and Severn Canal has several sections with high value, including designated sites and protected species and these need to be maintained or enhanced within any development plans.

The Stratford Park lake offers a real missed opportunity to have a high-quality wildlife haven and measures to re-naturalise the banks and reduce the eutrophication levels would be welcomed.

Access to the rivers is generally quite poor, but access to the canal is excellent. We are hoping to complete the accessible path through Frome Banks Nature Reserve when resources are available.

British Horse Society: (Accessibility). BHS can only make generic comment as this as representative does not live or ride in the Stroud district area but would comment that provision for horses should be considered along waterways wherever possible. In some areas horse riders are now precluded from riding canal tow paths which were designed initially to be travelled by a horse.

4.8.3 Community Organisations

Organisation	Comments (including specific comments on Quantity, Quality, Accessibility)
Boatmobility	<p>Quality: The organisation believes the quality of the District’s water recreation (on canals, rivers, lakes, etc) to be ‘Very Good’.</p> <p>Quality, Accessibility: In terms of immediate physical access. Not enough ramps for access to the wheelchair accessible boat. People from all over the county but some wheelchair users find public transport difficult, especially from FOD. Lack of toilets and car parking in current canal corridor. Buses can be difficult. Boatmobility thinks there is fantastic support from the District Council, and expects some of these issues to be addressed in time.</p> <p>Quality, Accessibility: There is a need to improve signage and access especially for disabled. Some access the Boatmobility venue by bus, when possible. There is a need for car parking and toilets, and wet weather cover. There is also a need to consider whole canal route to facilitate access (i.e. facilities needed at several points not just at Ebley.)</p>
Stroud in Bloom	Quality: in Stroud Valleys area the quality of provision is Good
Friends of Stratford Park	<p>Quantity: Believes there to be enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of its activities.</p> <p>Quality: The organisation rates the quality of all kinds of outdoor recreational provision in Stroud District as ‘Very Good’ with the exception of Allotments, on which it has ‘No Opinion’</p>
Eastington Community Orchard	Quality: The quality of provision is very good
Thrupp Community Orchard	Quality: The quality of provision is good

4.9 Rights of way, permissive routes, cycle paths etc

4.9.1 District Council Policy and Officer Comments

Stroud District Local Plan 2015

Delivery Policy EI13 Protecting and extending our cycle routes states:

“The Council will encourage proposals that develop and extend our cycle network. Major development should provide new cycle routes within the development and connect to nearby established cycle routes”.

Development will not be permitted where it significantly harms an existing cycle route or prejudices the future implementation of the following routes:

1. The Eastington to Chalford cycle route
2. The Eastington to Nailsworth cycle route
3. The Cam and Dursley cycle route (and any proposed future extension to Uley)
4. The National Cycle Network Route 41 (Bristol to Stratford) and Route 45 (Salisbury to Chester) which cross the District and connecting routes to and from the Stroud Valleys Pedestrian Cycle Trail and the Cam and Dursley cycle route
5. Any other part of the cycle network highlighted through the Local Transport Plan.

The LP also discusses the role of Sustrans in the district and highlights the focus of this plan in developing shared use paths. *Sustrans continues to implement the National Cycle Network, with Route 41 (Bristol to Stratford) crossing the Severn Vale through Berkeley and Frampton and Route 45 (Salisbury to Chester) linking Nailsworth and parts of the A419 with Stroud. Parts of these routes will be useful for local journeys as well as for recreation. The District Council, in conjunction with the County Council, will investigate connecting links with these routes (some are already part funded and partially in place) through the Stroud Valleys and from Cam and Dursley. The restoration of the Cotswold Canals provides an opportunity to enhance this network.*

Site Allocations Policy SA1 Stroud Valleys

“...Development briefs, to be approved by the District Council, will detail the way in which the land uses and infrastructure will be developed in an integrated and coordinated manner.”

This includes addressing Cycle and pedestrian routes along the canal and river corridors, linking up with the existing network. Similarly, development briefs, master plans or guidance for other strategic site allocations stipulate requirements to be addressed related to cycling and walking:

SA2 West of Stonehouse: Cycle and pedestrian routes through the development, connecting Nastend and Nupend with the town centre, Stroudwater Industrial Estate and Oldends Lane and footpath links from the development to the surrounding rural network, including improvements to the canal towpath.

SA3 North east of Cam: Extension to the Cam and Dursley cycle route along the line of the disused railway, through to the southern edge of the site and connecting Box Road with Courthouse Gardens. Improvements to Box Road, including the provision of a lit cycleway and footpath between the A4315 and Cam and Dursley railway station.

SA4 Hunts Grove Extension: Cycle and pedestrian routes through the development connecting with Haresfield Lane and the existing Hunts Grove development.

SA4a Quedgeley East: The development of the site will provide contributions to off-site highway works including public transport, pedestrian and cycle links to Gloucester city, Stonehouse and Stroud, in accordance with the recommendations of the evidence base transport assessments.

SA5 Sharpness Docks: Cycle and pedestrian routes through the development, connecting with Oldminster Road and the Severn Way, including the restoration of the former railway bridge link and improvements to the high level swing bridge.

SA5a South of Severn Distribution Park: The development of the site will provide contributions to off-site highway works including public transport, pedestrian and cycle links to Newtown, Berkeley and Dursley, and other infrastructure including flood defences and biodiversity.

The Local Plan also maps proposed cycle routes including those that are the focus of this plan. The background commitment and support through policy at national, county and district level is then in place and also supported at the neighbourhood level within respective Neighbourhood Plans in development for e.g. Dursley, Cam, and Stonehouse.

Draft Stroud District Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (CWIP)

This draft plan reflects the principles of the government's 'Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy' published in April, 2017. It is also consistent with the District Council's Local Plan, and the content of Gloucestershire's Local Transport Plan (2015-2031). All three documents promote the health, environmental and economic benefits of walking and cycling, both for utility and recreation purposes.

The focus of the CWIP is safe routes for cycling and walking from Saul to Stonehouse; Stonehouse to Stroud; Stroud to Brimscombe; Stroud to Nailsworth; and, between Cam & Dursley & Uley. Routes will be multi user/shared, off road, as much as practicable, with newly built paths or improved surfacing, sign posting and lighting where required. Improvements to cycle parking at Cam and Dursley, Stonehouse and Stroud railway stations will be included.

Whilst the above routes are afforded priority there are also more rudimentary cycle routes across the district which the plan could consider in the future. There are also nascent plans for routes in Standish, linking Little Haresfield and Stonehouse and a route linking Wotton under Edge, Kingswood and Charfield. Potential improvements to NCN 41/45 around Frampton have also been raised.

The Plan's projects will be undertaken with a variety of partners and funding is required from multiple sources.

4.9.2 Strategic Organisations

Gloucestershire County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) 2011-2036

Stroud District plays an important role within the Gloucestershire Rights of Way (RoW) network. RoW allow opportunities for public access in a large and mainly rural county. The path network allows people to enjoy the beautiful countryside in which many live and work, as well as to travel from place to place for work or school without having to use the car.

In addition, through tourism and local use, the recreational path network helps the local economy to generate income for rural businesses, while functional routes – to schools, workplaces and local facilities – form an essential part of the wider highway and amenity network.

Through the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), the County Council is required to develop and produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for adoption as part of the County's Local Transport Plan. A RoWIP must assess:

- The extent to which local public rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public;
- The opportunities provided by local public rights of way for exercise and other forms of outdoor recreation and enjoyment of the authority's area; and,
- The accessibility of local public rights of way to blind and partially sighted people and others with mobility problems.

The RoWIP is a strategic document, which identifies few location specific projects. It states that the County Council's Public Rights of Way Team will continue to develop the use of volunteers and parish and town councils in assisting with the maintenance of the path network.

Future work will entail managing the existing network within anticipated reduced budgets and resources which will inevitably manifest itself as a reduced level of maintenance and service than has previously been the case. However, it is hoped that close working with voluntary organisations, individuals and local councils will help mitigate the effects of likely funding reductions.

The priority guidelines utilised by the County Council to assess which cases to work on have been refined with Annexes to the RoWIP.

The ROWIP itself does not contain information on site-specific assessments, but draws broader, generic conclusions, which are then the focus of a 'statement of action' for the management of local public rights of way and for securing an improved network of paths.

Natural England: (Quality, Access). Initial evidence suggests that current proactive measures to establish 'permissive routes' for cycling in the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC by means of dialogue with local mountain bike clubs are proving partially successful. However, a proportion of mountain biking activity continues to take place elsewhere in the SAC. Further work is needed to understand the reasons for this type of visitor behaviour and options to manage or avoid adverse effects from such recreation pressure in the future. The following link was offered to the 'Site Improvement Plan' for the Cotswold Beechwoods SAC for reference. Please note that these plans are living documents and the version on line represents a 'snapshot' pending further work on the recreation theme as described above.

Link:

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6276086220455936?category=5755515191689216>

Canal & Rivers Trust: (Quality, Accessibility). Waterways are historically transport routes. Some sections are public footpaths whilst others are permissive paths only. Today the towpath is used for sustainable travel through walking and cycling. Increasing the use of our waterways by these means contributes towards reducing air pollution and carbon emissions. The Trust considers that waterways have an important role to play in delivering aspirations for sub-regional and local accessibility. They can provide safe and convenient cycle routes that connect people to jobs, key services and recreation opportunities. Enhancing the capacity, safety and attractiveness of towpaths and connecting pedestrian routes, particularly towards and within city and town centres, may support increases in walking for local trips. Towpaths also provide free access to open countryside, and the Trust is working to show that the use of our waterways and towpaths is important for the wellbeing of the nation.

The Trust has worked closely with the Gloucestershire Highways to ensure that the Local Transport Plan cycling guidance properly reflects its own design guidance.

Cotswold Canal Trust: (Quality, Accessibility). The canal towpath offers a relatively level route for pedestrians and cyclists (there can be conflict between the latter and other users if not undertaken responsibly). Much of the towpath is a PROW, cycling is permissive. Some lengths of towpath are permissive only or currently unavailable pending the canal's restoration (these are mainly to the west of Eastington).

The towpath in the Phase 1A length (The Ocean, Stonehouse to Thrupp has recently been upgraded. The worse sections are in Phase 1B west of the A38 where there is currently no surface and deep mud in winter; these should be upgraded as part of the HLF funded Stroud Navigation Connected project.

The line of the canal forms the Thames & Severn Way, a long-distance footpath which links the Severn Way to the Thames Path and intersected by a number of other generally north-south routes including the Cotswold Way.

The gap where a mile of canal was lost when the M5 was built and where there is no towpath, will be filled when the canal is restored through this section over the next few years.

Gloucestershire Local Access Forum: (Accessibility). The Gloucestershire Local Access Forum would support any action which would improve and extend access to the countryside for recreation.

Stroud Valleys Project: (Quality, Accessibility). The Project is currently carrying out a wildlife survey of the cycle path between Stroud and Nailsworth for County Council, as they are planning improvements later this year. Connectivity of routes for cycling could be improved.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust: (Quantity, Accessibility). With my Local Nature Partnership role there is also a remit on climate change and sustainable transport. There is insufficient quantity of safe cycling routes around Stroud District.

There are some good examples of cycling routes in good natural green spaces, such as the Stroud to Nailsworth route, but this is not the case with routes to rural villages and towns and around Stroud Town centre.

British Horse Society: BHS can only make generic comment as representative does not live or ride in the Stroud area but would comment that the BHS would like to see as much of the right of way network made available to horses/riders and carriage drivers. This is fast becoming a request of necessity rather than luxury due to the increasingly busy and dangerous roads that riders have to use to access the fragmented bridleway network.

British Horse Society: (Quantity). There are insufficient linked routes for horse riders. The legal network of routes for horses is fragmented and there needs to be consideration given to increasing the network whenever possible which includes creation of new routes to include horse riders and if possible carriage drivers. There are areas of the current network (footpaths) which may lend themselves to being ridden or would expand an existing riding route. Consideration could be given to upgrading these routes to a higher status to incorporate rights for riders.

A new circular bridleway or restricted byway route with suitable parking for horse trailers would enable safe enjoyment of a green space for adult and children riders and carriage drivers, cyclists and walkers and could be combined with nature watching and would add value in terms of health benefits and increased revenue to the local economy. An example of such a route is <http://www.bhs.org.uk/access-and-bridleways/carriage-driving/route-15-blakeney>. Forming a multi discipline group including equestrians from the BHS, the Mid Cotswold Tracks and Trails Group, Ramblers and Cycle Groups would help shape a great legacy for the future.

British Horse Society: (Quality). Existing routes should be kept clear and usable and where gates are in place these should allow for easy and safe navigation. Where riders are forced to dismount due to difficult

gates/gateways, mounting blocks could be provided. Horse riding is an exercise that can be and is enjoyed by those who are more senior in age but getting on after having to dismount can be difficult for some. Where bridleways meet and cross roads safe crossing points should be provided for the benefit of horse riders and road users alike.

The quality of existing routes in some areas is reducing significantly as the amount of development increases e.g. in the Eastington area building work is encroaching over bridleways such as Eastington bridleway 33 that in the past would have been a rural ride but will become a narrow corridor in an urban setting. The access to other bridleways to make a riding circuit was via quiet country lanes but these will become more dangerous as the volume of traffic increases due to the increase in dwellings and businesses.

The BHS has a number of leaflets and publications on Rights of Way on their website at <http://www.bhs.org.uk/access-and-bridleways/free-leaflets-and-advice> and would like to draw your attention to our study which is listed there on the Health Benefits of Riding.

4.9.3 Community Organisations Survey

Organisation	Comments (Including specific comments on Quantity, Quality, Accessibility)
Stroud in Bloom	Quality: in Stroud Valleys area the quality of provision is Good
Eastington Community Orchard	Quality: The quality of provision is very good
Thrupp Community Orchard	Quality: Quality of provision is good
Boatmobility	Quantity: The organisation believes there are there are enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of its activities.
Friends of Stratford Park	<p>Quantity: Believes there to be enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of its activities.</p> <p>Quality: The organisation rates the quality of all kinds of outdoor recreational provision in Stroud District as 'Very Good' with the exception of Allotments, on which it has 'No Opinion'</p>

4.10 Other Informal and Amenity Space

4.10.1 District Council Officers

Open Space Officer: (Quality). Budget cuts mean a loss of staff, and also a reduction in maintenance (such as numbers of grass cuts) although this might have counter-balancing environmental benefits. Volunteers are now used to manage some of the greenspaces. Public complaints are rising at a time when staffing and maintenance is falling.

The impression is that complaints received from the public are increasing as a result. So, existing resources are having to be spread further, whilst officers spend more time reacting to increased levels of complaint.

4.10.2 Strategic Organisations

Natural England: (Quality). See comments made and publications referred to under 'Allotments'.

Stroud Valleys Project: (Quality). Works with schools to help them improve their outdoor spaces and through our Wild Classrooms project support schools to get children outside learning.

Gloucestershire Trust for Nature Conservation: (Quality). The Trust would like to see the management of all green spaces consider opportunities for enhancements that help to deliver a Nature Recovery Network. Road side verges are a great opportunity to do this and there are some good examples in the District but too often verges with good botanical potential are mown too frequently.

4.10.3 Community Organisations

Organisation	Comments (including specific comments on Quantity, Quality, Accessibility)
Friends of Stratford Park	<p>Quantity: Believes there to be enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the needs of its activities.</p> <p>Quality: The organisation rates the quality of all kinds of outdoor recreational provision in Stroud District as 'Very Good' with the exception of Allotments, on which it has 'No Opinion'</p>
Stroud in Bloom	<p>Quality: in Stroud Valleys area the quality of provision is Good</p>
Eastington Community Orchard	<p>Quantity: The group does not think that there are enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet the its needs, with particular regard to the Stonehouse area.</p> <p>Quality: The quality of provision is very good</p>
Thrupp Community Orchard	<p>Quantity: The group believes there are enough open spaces and outdoor recreation facilities to meet its needs.</p> <p>Quality: The quality of provision is considered to be poor</p>

4.11 Outdoor Recreation in Areas of Sensitivity

4.11.1 Strategic Organisations

Natural England: (Quality). The agencies comments earlier in this report have primarily highlighted the interrelationship between and risks/benefits arising from open space resources, green infrastructure and designated sites and people. Given that resources such as the Cotswold Beechwoods form a key component of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty it will also be important to recognise the need to reconcile promotion/visitor enjoyment of the AONB with the conservation of its natural beauty as expressed through its 'special qualities'. In view of the AONB's large size and the number of planning authorities with territory within, overlapping and/or influencing it, a strategic and partnership-ased approach will be needed to achieve this objective.

Canal & Rivers Trust: (Quality). Whilst additional usage of the canal towpath is always welcomed and encouraged there are areas where adjacent areas of land have particular heritage or ecological value such as near the WWT, Purton Hulks and the Severn Estuary. Such areas may need additional protection, requiring a joined-up approach with other partners and stakeholders in order to manage and support any increase in usage effectively, safely and without detriment to surrounding assets.

Stroud Valleys Project: (Quality). Rodborough, Minchinhampton and Selsey Commons (see note in Country Parks above) all have issues of over use for recreation and this effects wildlife e.g. skylarks on Rodborough Common and disturbance by dogs.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust: (Quantity, Quality, Accessibility). There is a need for new high quality recreational green spaces on a large scale that can help relieve the pressure on sensitive sites, such as Rodborough Common.

The Trust does not want to see people prevented from accessing areas of ecological sensitivity as this will impact the population's connection to nature, however, there must be application of management and insights from research on Recreation Ecology to reduce the level of impact.

One of the key factors causing a detrimental impact at sensitive sites is the poor way marking, information and lack of formal footpaths.

British Horse Society: (Quantity, Quality). As horse riding and ownership increases in popularity then so does the need for the animals to be housed. This in turn can lead to request for development of stabling and other associated buildings and areas. The BHS has been instrumental in working with a number of AONB's on producing guidance on how equestrian development can fit with the landscape and other sensitivities in an area.

4.11.2 Community Organisations

Organisation	Comments (including specific comments on Quantity, Quality, Accessibility)
Stroud in Bloom	Quantity, Quality: There should be more areas for noisy, intrusive activities but NOT at the expense of wildlife, nature and habitats. There are plenty of brown sites available where these could be sited without intruding on green areas.
Eastington Community Orchard	Quality: "Noise is one of our greatest enemies in the countryside. When there are multiple sounds of birds in particular, it is offensive to have loud modern noises, like electronic music, blasting out the delicate rural sounds. Responsible walking and cycling do not harm the countryside, particularly, in the case of cycling, where upgraded footpaths like the canal towpaths, have been provided.

	The Local Plan should continue to support the re-generation of the canal corridor to achieve this.”
Stroud Show	Quantity, Quality: the Forest Green Rovers development , and Great Oldbury will destroy a lot of sensitive areas.

4.12 Bio-diversity and multi-functional open space

4.12.1 District Council Officers

Biodiversity Officer: (Quality). There is (still) a lack of joined up thinking across the Council. For example, no involvement in green space management, or the canal restoration. There is also considered to be limited mapped information for green assets in the district or on connecting features such as hedgerows and trees.

At present it is difficult to understand what’s important. A comprehensive GI strategy would really help in achieving landscape scale biodiversity enhancements.

It would help to have a better mapped understanding of green space and connecting habitats within the district. It has been hard to save important hedgerows from development pressure.

Water Resources Engineer: (Quality). Ideal is that SUDSs should be above ground and be part of green infrastructure, rather than be below ground. The latter may be more cost effective for developers. However, ‘above ground’ solutions contribute to green infrastructure.

Local plan policy in respect of SUDS is adequate, but could be improved.

4.12.2 Strategic Organisations

Natural England: (Quality). The agency’s earlier comments above and the references offered collectively seek to underline the importance of biodiversity and multi-functional open space for people living, working in and visiting Stroud and its neighbours.

Canal & Rivers Trust: (Quality, Accessibility). Waterways are multi-functional assets providing multiple economic, social and environmental benefits. In addition to being a form of green and blue infrastructure, important for leisure, recreation and tourism uses, they can provide local and strategic sustainable transport routes.

Waterways are increasingly being used in association with new technologies, contributing to the creation of ‘Information Superhighways’ and a potential source for thermal energy generation and cooling. They can act as catalysts for regeneration and a focus for development, are vital for many local small or medium sized enterprises (SMEs) while also supporting and adding value to larger companies. They form a valuable part of the nation’s visitor and green economies – engaging local communities and visitors alike and laying the foundations for future health, well-being and prosperity.

A supportive planning policy framework from national to neighbourhood level, can assist in unlocking the potential contribution and value of waterways to economic, social and environmental wellbeing of regions, districts, communities and individuals; along with protecting these valuable assets for the benefit of current and future generations.

The Trust is vitally important that planning policy recognises the multi-functional nature of waterways and the contribution they can make to wider economic, environmental and social objectives such as public

health, renewable energy and sustainable development, strengthening resilience and creating conditions suitable for growth.

Towpaths provide free access for leisure and recreation such as walking, cycling, angling. The canal, its banks and hedgerows provide habitat for birds and wildlife but also act as a linkage between other areas of greenspace such as the various areas of open space in the housing areas around Hardwicke and Quedgeley which are linked by the canal and towpath. Whilst a landscape buffer is usually seen as the best way to protect waterside habitat the trust prefers to ensure that good design achieves a balance and that views of and access to the waterside and still possible.

Stroud Valleys Project: (Quality). Balancing wildlife and people sharing the same space is really important. The Project raises awareness of the needs of wildlife in many of its activities and events, and through its website.

The Woodland Trust: (Quantity, Quality, Accessibility). The Trust believes that trees and woods can deliver a wide range of benefits for placemaking for local communities, in both a rural and urban settings, and this is strongly supported by current national planning policy. Woodland creation is especially important because of the unique ability of woodland to deliver across a wide range of benefits: - These include for both landscape and biodiversity, for enhancing wellbeing and quality of life, for the local economy (making areas more attractive and supporting sustainable development) as well as a range of environmental benefits such as improving air quality.

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust: (Quantity, Quality, Accessibility). This is absolutely vital. All spaces should be viewed as potential multi-functional green spaces and consider opportunities for enhancements that help to deliver a Nature Recovery Network. The Local Nature Partnership is planning to undertake Natural Capital Opportunity mapping which will help to indicate the best land-use across the county in terms of balancing ecological restoration with ecosystem service provision. The change in farm payment schemes from 2019 will create opportunities to transform how large areas of land in the District is managed, opening up more opportunities for multi-functional spaces in areas previously focused on food production.

British Horse Society: (Quantity). Equestrians are already operating on multi-functional areas in that bridleways are used by walkers and cyclists and the BHS welcome the opportunity of more of the same.

4.12.3 Community Organisations

No local community organisation made comments specifically related to bio-diversity and multi-functional open space.

4.13 Other Observations

Beyond comments made under the above specific headings, several organisations and groups made comments that could not really be classified neatly under the above headings but are nonetheless considered to have relevance.

4.13.1 District Council Officers

Sports and Health Unit Manager: (Accessibility). Many of this officer's comments are probably more relevant to the playing pitch and outdoor sports module of this overall study, and will therefore be addressed largely through that process. However, the officer made important points relating to the geography of the District and its impact on access by residents to recreation opportunities. The officer stressed the importance of examining access and provision in relation to discrete geographies within the District, and therefore locations which might as hub venues for certain types of recreation opportunities.

Section 106 Monitoring Officer: (Quality). It is felt that whilst some of the larger town and parish councils have a professional and informed approach in recommending how S106 might be used, the smaller councils do not always display such discipline and may perhaps wish to pursue projects that might not meet the needs of their communities in a balanced way.

There is also a concern that whilst CIL will meet the needs of major infrastructure projects; and, S106 some of the smaller projects, some 'middle-size' local projects might miss out- such as in respect of open space and play.

There is also considered to be a need to improve the consideration of green space, and GI issues in both planning and implementation.

CIL Senior Planning Officer: (Quality). No real guidance on the 'governance' side of the spending. Same view on 'middle-size' project funding gap as mentioned by S106 Officer.

Environment Strategy Manager: (Quality). There should be consideration, in maintenance contracts and planning policies, of the environment strategy.

4.13.2 Strategic Organisations

Natural England: (Quality). The various references offered above highlight the key role of education and awareness raising as part of ensuring that local residents, businesses and visitors can work together with the council and key stakeholders to benefit from the local green and open space resource within and near Stroud district while helping to ensure these resources are effectively conserved for future generations. In addition to the aspects mentioned above reference is made to Natural England publications on valuing the natural environment in order to support studies such as this one, and seek to demonstrate its importance:

Examples include: 'No charge? Valuing the natural environment' (NE220)

Link: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/36019>

'Green infrastructure - Valuation tools assessment' (NECR126)

Link: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6264318517575680?category=39013>

Canal & Rivers Trust: (Quality). The Trust would welcome the opportunity to work closely with the council on this matter, which aligns very well with our own charitable objects and the Trust’s recent rebranding as a waterways and well-being charity.

The Cotswold Canal Trust: (Quality). The canal project offers a wide variety of volunteering opportunities including opportunities to learn a wide range of new skills. The canal has a very strong sense of place which is highly valued.

The Stroud Valleys Project: (Quality). The role of volunteers in the management of green space, especially linked to reduced funding for councils looking after green spaces. Other community groups and the spaces they own and/or manage – there is lots of partnership working.

The Woodland Trust: (Quantity, Quality, Accessibility). The issue of street tree provision is not adequately addressed. Street trees provide the “green lungs” of built up areas. They provide cooling and shade, help improve air quality and manage flooding. They provide visual amenity, improve health and wellbeing and provide a home for nature.

4.13.3 Community Organisations

Organisation	Comment
Eastington Community Orchard	(Quality). It is clear that major developers, such as in Hunts Grove and West of Stonehouse, do not deliver the green space benefits which are promised at the outset. This seems short sighted, since better design would enhance the sale value of each house and more than justify the small cost of good quality green infrastructure design.
Stroud Show	Eastington has a wonderful community centre and childrens play area- but it was developed by Eastington not Stroud District Council

4.14 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND OPEN SPACE: Key Findings

Strategy and policy

The Council's Key Corporate Objectives are summarised in the four-year Corporate Delivery Plan, embracing the Vision of "Leading a community that is making Stroud district a better place to live, work and visit for everyone", in this regard relevant Actions over 2018/22 relevant to this study are:

- Deliver new 'walking sports' and 'healthy lifestyle' programmes
- Introduce cost saving measures for grounds maintenance, building cleaning and waste collection
- Implement a cycling and walking plan focused on Saul – Stonehouse - Stroud - Brimscombe, Stroud - Nailsworth and Cam – Dursley – Uley
- Refurbish Stratford Park Lido and install solar panels to heat pool water
- Agree a long-term investment and management plan for Stratford Park with partners and contractors

The existing Stroud District Local Plan (2015) reflects Council corporate objectives, through its own stated strategic objectives, and especially with regard to its policies relating to the conservation and promotion of open space of all kinds. The current policies reflect the importance of open space opportunities to people, communities, and the environment. Policies promoting the provision of new open space are therefore based on guidance provided by Fields in Trust and Natural England.

The proposals contained in the Local Plan and the draft Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan show the importance attached to these modes of transport for both utility and recreation, as well as their health, environmental and economic benefit.

Quantity

Household Survey:

59% of respondents suggested that there were not enough Footpaths, Bridleways, and Cycleways; 56% suggested likewise for 'natural' areas such as woodlands and wildlife areas; with householders saying likewise for Informal/amenity space (51%); and, Allotments (49%). A very small percentage of returns suggested there was too much of any type of open space.

Key stakeholder and community groups:

With just a few local exceptions, the overall consensus seems to be that there are enough open spaces of most kinds, but with the exception of natural areas (including woodland) and designated wildlife sites. Safe cycleways were also considered to be in short supply by some key strategic organisations. A desire to see improvements to off-road horse riding opportunities was expressed by equestrian interests.

Quality

Household survey:

For all kinds of outdoor facilities/open spaces the majority of households suggested that they were of average or better quality (though the most common rating tended to be "Average", or "Good"). Responses stating the quality of open space to be "Poor" or "Very Poor", were very much in the

minority. However, existing District Council resources are having to be spread further, whilst officers spend more time reacting to increased levels of complaint.

Key stakeholders and community groups:

In contrast to the results of the household survey, the key stakeholders and community groups tended to offer more nuanced views. This was especially in the case of opportunities to create better multi-functional and bio-diverse open spaces, so as to enhance overall bio-diversity.

The importance of considering open space as part of a wider green and blue infrastructure has also been emphasised.

Individual threats to and pressures upon existing open space have also been highlighted (such as to Stratford Park, and large areas of environmentally sensitive common land). Quality is also deemed to be an important factor in the way in which the restored canal network is integrated with both the surrounding built and natural environment.

Access

Household survey:

Given the nature of open spaces considered in this section, it is unsurprising that access by foot is very much the usual mode of transport to reach such destinations. Accordingly, acceptable travel time is very much time-sensitive with, for many types of open space, the majority of households not being prepared to travel more than 15 minutes, at best.

The above summarises considerations that will contribute to the development of standards of provision for an open space typology. However, other points have been raised in the consultation that do not fit neatly under any particular theme considered, such as:

- The need to consider individual open space (including water) as part of a green and blue infrastructure.
- The role of the canal system and its treatment in respect of its relationship with the surrounding built and natural environment.
- The use of open space as part of sustainable drainage solutions.
- The reduction in Council maintenance budgets in respect of open space, and its implications.

5.0 OUTDOOR PLAY AND YOUTH FACILITIES

This section provides feedback and information relating to outdoor play and youth facilities. It considers information and views provided by various stakeholders including the District Council, strategic organisations and local groups.

The section is structured into two main parts:

- Review of Policy and Strategy
- Youth and Play – stakeholder feedback

There is a summary of key points and issues at the end of the section.

5.1 Review of Policy and Strategy

5.1.1 Stroud District Local Plan 2015

Delivery Policy ES15 Provision of outdoor play space

“Proposals for new residential development shall provide appropriate public outdoor playing space, to achieve a standard of 2.4ha per 1000 population. The standard can be subdivided into the following categories:

- Youth and Adult Facilities including Multi Use Games Area at 1.6 ha per 1000 population
- Playing Pitches 1.2 ha per 1000 population (sitting within the Youth and Adult Facilities Standard)
- Equipped Play Space for Children and Young People at 0.2 – 0.3 ha per 1000 population
- Local Area of Play (LAP)/ Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)/ Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) at 0.4 – 0.5 ha per 1000 population.

Public Open Space should be usable and easily accessible to the dwellings it is intended to serve by a good quality pedestrian and cycle route.

Where achievement of this standard is unrealistic or inappropriate within the boundaries of the development site, a financial contribution will be sought in lieu of on-site provision. When new provision is provided, appropriate measures will be sought to ensure the future satisfactory maintenance and management of the open space. Site distance thresholds are set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance, ‘Residential Development Outdoor Play Space Provision’.”

These standards will be reviewed and revised standards proposed in the main report.

5.1.2 Stroud District Youth Work Strategy (2017-20)

The youth work strategy focuses on ensuring children and young people are provided with opportunities to participate in and influence “decision making which brings about change in them, others, their service and their communities”.

In line with this the Council supports local youth forums and a district-wide youth council which enable children and young people to have their say on decisions which affect them. This mechanism is referred to as the Youth Voice Vehicle.

Aims

The Council will:

- Demonstrate active leadership on the delivery of youth and community work in partnership with young people and their communities.
- Encourage communities to further develop quality educational and fun programmes for young people in their locality.
- Support and deliver professional youth and community work practice and interpret current and future national policies.
- Develop a framework for locally supported projects to grow, whilst encouraging young people to have a voice, volunteer and become active citizens in their community.

The strategy does not refer directly to the provision of outdoor play and youth facilities but recognises the importance of ensuring that local children and young people are consulted and engaged in decisions about any changes in play and outdoor youth facility provision in their local areas.

5.1.3 Fields in Trust (FiT)

In 2015 Fields in Trust produced the report: “Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play - Beyond the Six Acre Standard”. In relation to standards for children’s play space the following summary was produced as a guide for local authorities considering local standards:

Typology	Quantity guideline (hectares per 1,000 population)	Walking guideline (walking distance: metres from dwellings)
Equipped/designated play areas	0.25 See table below for recommended minimum sizes	LAPs – 100m LEAPs – 400m NEAPs – 1,000m
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	0.3	700m

FiT add that “quantity guidelines should not be interpreted as either a maximum or minimum level of provision; rather they are benchmark standards that can be adjusted to take account of local circumstances”.

The minimum sizes FiT recommend for play/youth spaces is noted below:

Play space typology	Minimum size	Minimum dimensions	Buffer zones
LAP	0.01ha	10x10 metres (minimum activity zone of 100sqm)	5m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings
LEAP	0.04ha	20x20 metres (minimum activity zone of 400sqm)	20m minimum separation between activity zone and the habitable room façade of dwellings
NEAP	0.1ha	31.6x31.6 metres (minimum activity zone of 1,000sqm comprising an area for play equipment and structures & a hard surfaced area of at least 465sqm (the minimum needed to play five-a-side football).	30m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings

MUGA & Skateboard Park	0.1ha	40x20 metres	30m minimum separation between activity zone and the boundary of dwellings
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Quality Guidance

FiT also provided general quality guidance for public open spaces.

- Quality appropriate to the intended level of performance, designed to appropriate technical standards.
- Located where they are of most value to the community to be served.
- Sufficiently diverse recreational use for the whole community.
- Appropriately landscaped.
- Maintained safely and to the highest possible condition with available finance.
- Positively managed taking account of the need for repair and replacement over time as necessary.
- Provision of appropriate ancillary facilities and equipment.
- Provision of footpaths.
- Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime.
- Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards for play areas using Play England's Quality Assessment Tool.

5.1.4 Play England

Play England have some broad observations about overall policy direction and advice on local standards as summarised below.

Quantity

Play England recommend provision of a range of play spaces in all urban environments:

- A Doorstep spaces close to home
- B Local play spaces – larger areas within easy walking distance
- C Neighbourhood spaces for play – larger spaces within walking distance
- D Destination/family sites; accessible by bicycle, public transport and with car parking

They emphasise that play spaces do not just mean formal play areas. While these are included play spaces cover all areas of public open spaces that are "playable" e.g. spaces that are accessible, safe, appropriate for play and where play use is welcomed and encouraged.

They also point out the need for standards for smaller settlements and rural areas where the doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination hierarchy is unlikely to be appropriate.

Quality

Play England would like the Play England Design Guide *Design for Play* to be referenced and added as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Play England have developed a *Quality Assessment Tool* that can be used to judge the quality of individual play spaces. They recommend that local authorities consider adopting this as a means of assessing the quality of play spaces in the local area.

Access

Access is the key element for Play England as referred to in the Quantity section – a range of doorstep, local, neighbourhood, and destination play spaces with appropriate catchments. Disability access is also an important issue for Play England and they would like local authorities to adopt the KIDS publication *Inclusion by Design* as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Priorities

Play England have a guidance document: *Better Places to Play through Planning*. The publication gives detailed guidance on setting local standards for access, quantity and quality of playable space. It also shows how provision for better play opportunities can be promoted in planning policies and processes; giving detail of how local development frameworks and planning control can be utilised in favour of child-friendly communities. They recommended that local authorities adopt this guidance generally in terms of play and spatial planning.

5.2 Youth and Play facilities – Stakeholders

5.2.1 Stroud District Council

Senior Youth Officer

The Senior Youth Officer is the District Council's lead officer for children and young people and responsible for the delivery of services and support to young people in relation to the Council's Youth Work Strategy. This includes management of youth participation through the local youth forums and the district-wide Youth Council. Some key points raised were that:

- The Youth Council had already been involved with discussions with Planning Policy officers relating to the Local Plan though not specifically on outdoor play and youth facilities.
- It is particularly important that young people are consulted and engaged at an early stage in relation to any play and youth facility developments or changes in their local area. The local youth forums could provide a mechanism for this. A specific process should be put in place through planning arrangements to ensure this happens.
- Access to outdoor facilities is very important in relation to the health and wellbeing of children and young people.
- There had been a reduction in access to indoor youth provision over recent years – some centres had closed and others had reduced opening times. In this respect the availability of appropriate outdoor spaces to meet was increasingly important.
- Parks and public open spaces also provided opportunities for the Council and Voluntary Youth services to undertake outreach and detached work with children and young people.
- There is a lack of appropriate outdoor space and facilities for teenagers/older youths to meet. They tend to get moved on from place to place. More tolerance is needed to recognise their equal right to meet with friends in public open spaces.
- Due to a lack of specific outdoor facilities and meeting places for young people in some areas they sometimes meet at play areas and areas designed for younger children which is not ideal.
- Regarding priorities for provision it appears that MUGAs are valued by many young people along with specific spaces for meeting that are recognised as their own. There seem to be a lack of such facilities across the district.
- Additional youth shelter/meeting space provision can help in this respect; but if shelters/meeting spaces are being considered it is vital to actively involve local young people, particularly in terms of

location and design. Not to do so will risk provision that is not fit for purpose and in the wrong place. Such provision is unlikely to be used.

Open Space Officer

- The District Council is currently responsible for 31 play areas including Stratford Park. The total number of plays areas has fallen over recent years.
- Budget reductions and fewer staff have impacted on levels of maintenance.
- There have been a number of objections to the proposed skateboard facility being relocated into Stratford Park from Brimscombe Business Park (currently one of the biggest indoor skate parks).

5.2.2 Play Gloucestershire (Director)

Play Gloucestershire is a county-wide play organisation that supports outdoor children's play. It has a team of Play Rangers who work at play area, youth facility and green spaces throughout Gloucestershire targeted at areas of identified need. The primary age range they work with is 7 to 14. In Stroud District work has included regular visits to sites within Stroud, Nailsworth, Dursley, Stonehouse, Cam and King Stanley.

Some key points highlighted were:

- Quantity – broadly speaking across the district there are not enough local/doorstep level spaces to play. In Stroud for example Stratford Park is excellent but neighbourhood/doorstep space for local play is insufficient. There are not enough MUGAs for older children/young people.
- Quality – the quality of play spaces and outdoor youth facilities is very variable across the district. The play space at Saul Playing Field is a good example of a simple well-designed play space set well within the wider open space to maximise play value. In contrast the play area at Mason Road Playing Field, Stroud only has a small fenced in play space with no integration with the wider green space and very little play value. In general, the design quality across the district is not good.
- Access – in many parts of the district children have to walk too far to access local play space. As regards disability access design should ensure inclusion for varied ability levels. Also, it is important that paths both to the play space and within it are well surfaced to enable access to play equipment. This is not the case with some sites.

A number of other points raised were:

- Encouraging and supporting outdoor play for children and young people is important for children's health and wellbeing both physical and mental.
- It is important to ensure play spaces and youth facilities include elements of risk and challenge to maintain interest. Also, that they well designed specifically for the individual site and integrated with the wider open space within which they sit.
- Local children and young people need to be consulted early on in the process regarding any proposals for new or improved play provision.
- MUGAs are very well used by many and should be considered a priority, particularly to meet the needs of older children.
- While there are some good examples of wheeled sports provision in the district e.g. at Old Ends Lane, Stonehouse, not all teenagers are interested in skate parks. In design terms they should aim to provide a variety of play uses rather than simply to focus on the dedicated skate enthusiasts.
- Play Gloucestershire's experience indicates that outdoor gyms seem to be of limited interest to children and young people

5.2.3 The Door Youth Project

The Door Youth Project is district-wide voluntary youth organisation working directly with young people at centres in Stroud, Stonehouse, Dursley, Cam and Wotton. It also provides outreach and detached youth work projects. The Director of Service Delivery and the Community Youth Work Co-ordinator provided their perspective on outdoor play and youth facility provision and key points included:

- The project makes use of various outdoor spaces and play/youth facilities for outreach and detached work sessions particularly in Stonehouse, Dursley and Cam. Outdoor spaces are also used for activity sessions by local centres.
- Broadly speaking, the Door's view is that overall there are not enough equipped play areas for younger children or facilities for teenagers such as skate parks, BMX facilities, MUGAs and youth shelters across the District.
- Regarding the overall quality of facilities, the view is that while in the main the quality of equipped play spaces for younger children tends to be fairly good, the quality of youth facilities is poor.
- As regards priorities for new/improved provision the main needs identified were for MUGAs, youth shelters/teen meeting places and outdoor gyms.

5.2.4 Stroud District Youth Council

The Senior Youth Officer noted that the timing of the consultation process (over exam time and the summer holidays) did not allow for a formal Youth Council meeting consultation. However, in liaison with the Senior Youth Officer Ethos developed an online system that enabled input from a small group of six youth council members so as to provide a young people's perspective on provision. Some key points are noted below:

- The young people all made use of local parks and recreation grounds. The other spaces most commonly visited were natural green space areas and local equipped play areas. None of the young people reported making use of outdoor gyms.
- Some young people highlighted meeting in the town/village centre and "on the street" indicating the importance of considering the role of planning more widely in relation to the design of public open space.
- A clear majority of the young people thought that overall there are enough outdoor play areas for younger children (under 13) in their local area; but opinion on whether there is enough outdoor provision for older children and young people was divided.
- As regards quality and maintenance, a clear majority of the young people thought that outdoor play areas for younger children were well maintained and of reasonable quality. Opinion on the quality and maintenance of youth facilities was again divided.
- A clear majority of the young people said that they would walk or cycle a bit further than normal to somewhere that had more to do and was more interesting.
- All of the young people said that they would like to have a say in how new outdoor areas for young people should be designed and how they can be improved.
- The Stroud Pump Track proposals were specifically highlighted as a project aimed at improving outdoor recreational provision for young people in Stroud¹⁹.

¹⁹ See also the comments from the Stroud Pump Track Group in the Community Organisations section below.

5.2.5 Town and Parish Councils

Town and Parish Councils are also key owners and managers of local play areas and youth facilities. Many of them highlight needs for improvements. Comments on play and youth facilities from individual parishes are provided in the table below:

Local Council	Comments – Play and Youth Facilities
Berkeley TC	MUGAs: do not have one need one at Canon Park recreational facility. Play Areas: need more contemporary equipment at canon park recreational facility Teen facilities: nothing at present, many requests over the years for a skatepark, unable to find a suitable location.
Bisley-with-Lypiatt	Teen Facilities: Need for BMX cycle track and skatepark
Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon PC	Play Areas: potential need for improvements.
Cam PC	MUGAs: Jubilee fields could accommodate this. Play Areas: We are improving our play areas currently. Teen facilities: available at Jubilee Fields.
Chalford PC	Play Areas: We are looking to improve the play equipment in our France Lynch Pleasure Ground to provide more challenging and innovative equipment.
Dursley TC	MUGAs: There are no multi-use games areas in Dursley. "There is a bowling green in Dursley. This is managed by Dursley Bowls Club (Tel: 01453 519017). Play areas: Analysis of green spaces undertaken as part of the Dursley Neighbourhood Development Plan found that there is a serious under-provision of Designated Outdoor Play Spaces totalling 19.81HA at the present which is likely to increase with new houses being built. See NDP Environment and Green Spaces Report 2014 http://www.dursleytowncouncil.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html " Teen facilities: There are a range of opportunities for teenagers at the War Memorial Recreation Ground and Highfields Play Park and Field all including sports pitches, outdoor gym, tennis courts and BMX track. A welcome addition would be a skate park suitable for teenagers at the War Memorial Recreation Ground.
Frampton on Severn PC	MUGAs: We do not currently have any and would find it beneficial. However, putting it on the Recreation Field (as proposed by some) would draw protests from local residents who are keen to retain some open grassland on the field. (40% of field space was taken by tennis club when this was developed in early 2000s). Play areas: The equipped children's play area is less than that recommended (by 0.6ha) and the play area needs refurbishment. Teen facilities: None
King's Stanley PC	MUGAs: There is a MUGA owned by KSPC on Marling's Close recreation area. Play areas: The play area is to be upgraded over the next 2 years with S106 funding. Teen facilities: There is S106 funding available for additional equipment aimed at teenagers
Leonard Stanley PC	Play areas: some items require replacing, as they are old and need constant maintenance
Moreton Valence	Play areas: potential need for improvements.
Nailsworth TC	MUGAs: A new MUGA is planned for Nailsworth Primary School Play areas: NTC has plans to add children's play facilities in Miles Marling Field as part of a whole refurbishment project in 2018/19 Teen facilities: The skate ramps at KGV Field could do with some investment.
Rodborough PC	Teen facilities: Requests for this have been received.
Stonehouse TC	Play areas: Oldends Lane facilities are in need of improvement
Stroud TC	MUGAs: To my knowledge the only MUGA is at Uplands Playing Field. Play areas: Paganhill only has one small play area. Although residents are close to Stratford Park/Court, this will not be accessible to younger children. The area is also very Hilly.

	Teen facilities: There is a good skatepark at Stratford Park. Large indoor facility at RUSH skatepark (out of parish). They are currently looking to relocate to Stroud. Should this take place, there will be excellent facilities for this sport.
Woodchester PC	Play Areas: need identified but unable to find a suitable location. Despite the construction of Mountain Bike Trails there is still a strong desire for a play area in the village for younger children.
Wotton-under-Edge TC	MUGAs: Wotton Community Sports Foundation needs funding for a MUGA Play areas: Synwell Playing Fields needs investment into new play equipment as many items are nearing the end of their useful life. This is the only play area catering for older children in the whole town of almost 6000 population. Teen facilities: BMX track is now being developed at Community Sports Foundation site.

5.2.6 Woodland Trust

The Woodland Trust highlight that woods are important spaces for informal play.

"As highlighted in the **Public Health White Paper** (Healthy Lives, Healthy People; Nov 2010) there are tremendous opportunities for native woodland to contribute positively towards delivering improved mental and physical health for children and young people. Research shows that woodland can provide benefits for air quality, urban heat island cooling, physical exercise provision and relief from mental illness".

5.2.7 Community Organisations

Local community organisations were surveyed for their views on the various typologies of open space and green infrastructure. Some of the groups provided points and observations on play and youth facilities as noted below:

Group	Comments on Play and Youth Facilities
Stroud Pump Track Group	<p>We are looking to fund and build a BMX pump track for the Stroud community. Our project team are all avid cyclists and we feel Stroud is lacking in such a facility, which we know would be popular with local youths and cyclists.</p> <p>We will be applying for funding from various sources, including; grants, national schemes, public and private funding. We are aiming for the track to be of the highest quality available, to be built with an asphalt surface for longevity and all-weather usability.</p> <p>As part of the research for a potential site for the BMX track in the area, we have looked at the Council's Local Plan, to establish the recreation areas and green spaces and to ascertain if any may be suitable. We have written to the Council regarding a potential site at Stratford Park and we have also asked about a playing field in Dudbridge that is adjacent to the canal path opposite the Marling School playing field (we believe that this playing field is owned by SDC).</p>
Cotswold Canals Trust	There is an initiative just west of Stonehouse Bridge where an existing playground area might be more integrated with the canal and towpath.
Stroud Valleys Project	There are never enough facilities for all the ages and genders.
Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust	Natural green spaces should have sufficient opportunities for all ages to encourage young people to connect with nature and receive the health and wellbeing benefits of regular activity in nature. At present most site feel like they have provision for very young children or much older adults. There is little provision for older children.
Gloucestershire Rural Community Council	Problems of grant funding make the creation and maintenance of specific facilities for younger people in the current funding climate very hard to achieve (if reliant on grant aid). Sole use spaces are very unpopular with grant bodies as they are generally unsustainable.
Stroud in Bloom	Generally speaking the quality of play areas and youth facilities is poor.

	Youngsters need room to pursue hobbies in a safe, structured environment. The group has no objection to this at all but feels that the site approved by the local District Council is not the right place for a skate park. This could be relocated to a brown site area where its industrial nature would fit in well and be easily accessible to all.
Eastington Community Orchard	In general, the quality of play areas and youth facilities is good.
Thrupp Community Orchard	In general, the quality of play areas and youth facilities is poor (specifically in relation to the Stroud Valley). There is very little availability of somewhere within walking distance, with no busy road to cross, that is flat e.g. suitable for kicking a ball around informally. Preferably such a space should also have a hut for a base.

5.3 Play Areas and Youth Facilities - Key Findings

The town and parish councils are the primary play space and youth facility providers in Stroud District. The District Council manage 31 play areas including Stratford Park.

5.2.1 Quantity

Stakeholder views

- A small number of town and parish councils report that there is not enough play provision in their parish but a higher proportion highlight a lack of youth facilities.
- The District Council Senior Youth Officer noted that there is a lack of appropriate outdoor space and facilities for teenagers/older youths to meet.
- Play Gloucestershire suggested that across the district there are not enough local/doorstep level spaces to play; and that there are not enough MUGAs for older children/young people. They added that “in Stroud, for example, Stratford Park is excellent but neighbourhood/doorstep space for local play is insufficient”.
- The Door Youth Project thought that overall across the District there are not enough equipped play areas for younger children or facilities for teenagers such as skate parks, BMX facilities, MUGAs and youth shelters.
- The Youth Council respondents thought that overall there are enough outdoor play areas for younger children (under 13) in their local area; but opinion on whether there is enough outdoor provision for older children and young people was divided.

Residents survey

- A clear majority of respondents (63%) to the resident’s survey believe that overall across Stroud District there is insufficient provision of youth facilities.
- The view on the quantity of play spaces is divided with around 50% suggesting a need for more across the District but a similar proportion believing that overall there are enough.

5.2.2 Quality

Stakeholder views

- A significant number of town/parish councils highlighted a need to improve the quality of local play space and youth facility provision.

- Play Gloucestershire noted that the quality of play spaces and outdoor youth facilities is very variable across the district; though overall the design quality across the district is not good. They added that “the play space at Saul Playing Field is a good example of a simple well-designed play space set well within the wider open space to maximise play value”. In contrast “the play area at Mason Road Playing Field, Stroud only has a small fenced in play space with no integration with the wider green space and very little play value”.
- Play Gloucestershire also noted the importance of ensuring play spaces and youth facilities include elements of risk and challenge to maintain interest. Also, that they need to be well designed specifically for the individual site and integrated with the wider open space within which they sit.
- The Door Youth Project thought that while in the main the quality of equipped play spaces for younger children tends to be fairly good, the quality of youth facilities is poor.
- The Youth Council respondents thought that in general outdoor play areas for younger children were well maintained and of reasonable quality. Opinion on the quality and maintenance of youth facilities was divided.

Residents survey

- The quality of youth facilities is not rated highly - 78% of respondent households say that they are at best adequate with 31% of those rating them as poor or very poor).
- In general resident have less concern with the quality of equipped play areas across the District (42% rated them as being good or very good in contrast to 9% rating them as poor or very poor).

5.2.3 Access

Stakeholder views

- Play Gloucestershire noted that in many parts of the district children have to walk too far to access local play space. As regards disability access design should ensure inclusion for varied ability levels. Also, it is important that paths both to the play space and within it are well surfaced to enable access to play equipment.
- Youth Council respondents indicated that they would walk or cycle a bit further than normal to somewhere that had more to do and was more interesting.

Residents survey

- 62% of users would expect play areas to be within a 10 minute travel time, of which 30% would not wish to travel more than 5 minutes.
- 88% of users would expect play areas to be within a 15 minute travel time. 33% of these would not wish to travel more than 10 minutes and 12% no more than 5 minutes.

5.2.4 Priorities for improvement

- The Senior Youth Officer, Play Gloucestershire and the Door Youth Project all suggested that the provision of additional MUGAs was a high priority along with more youth shelters/outdoor meeting places.
- Youth Council respondents noted Local Parks and recreation grounds as a high priority for improvement along with MUGAs, wheeled sports facilities and accessible wild natural green space areas.

5.2.5 Other Issues / General Observations

- The District Council Open Space officer noted that as budgets have reduced over recent years, maintenance of existing provision has been and continues to be a major challenge.
- A proposal for a new Pump Track in Stroud town was highlighted via the Youth Council respondents and also by the Pump Track group itself.
- The Open Space Officer also noted that there have been a number of objections to a proposed skateboard facility being relocated into Stratford Park from Brimscombe Business Park.
- The value of play in relation to improvements to children and young people's health and wellbeing was highlighted by a number of stakeholders.
- Stakeholders noted the need for well-designed play and youth facilities, the value of consultation with young people and the wider community in that process.
- The Senior Youth Officer noted that It is particularly important that young people are consulted and engaged at an early stage in relation to any play and youth facility developments or changes in their local area. The local youth forums could provide a mechanism for this. A specific process should be put in place through planning arrangements to ensure this happens.
- Some of the Youth Council respondents highlighted that they met in the town/village centre and "on the street" indicating the importance of considering the role of planning more widely in relation to the design of public open space.
- Play England provide useful guidance on play and spatial planning; play space design; and managing risk in play. Some of these could be adopted as guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents.

6.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

6.1 General

The survey work, stakeholder consultation, and desk-based research have highlighted a wide range of issues of value to the Green Infrastructure, Sport and Recreation Study.

Response levels to the residents' survey, town/parish councils survey, and community organisation survey have been high. This has ensured that a wide and diverse range of views from local residents and groups with an interest in open space, recreation and sport have influenced the findings of the study. The key strategic stakeholders have responded and issues have been identified to be further considered in the three main reports.

There is a strong degree of consistency across the various sources on key areas of local and strategic need/aspirations, from which we can be confident that the findings are robust and reliable. This provides a strong evidence base to be combined with the detailed facilities audit and analysis.

The information and findings from the *Community and Stakeholder Consultation* report will be taken forward primarily in the *GI and Open Space* report. Relevant findings will also feed into the *Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy* and the *Indoor Sports Facilities Assessment*.

6.2 Key themes for the local plan review

The following themes and issues have been highlighted as being especially relevant and important. They have been categorised, wherever possible under the existing relevant local plan strategic objectives (see section 4.2.2).

The table below summarises:

- The relevant Local Plan Strategic Objectives;
- Key consultation themes- wherever appropriate these are summarised under the relevant Strategic Objective, or else, under 'Other'; and,
- Suggested 'Action and other comments'.

This consultation report is designed to inform other components of the overall study relating to Green Infrastructure and Open Space; Outdoor Sports; and Built Community and Sports facilities. Accordingly, most 'Actions' simply identify in which of the three other component reports, the relevant Actions should be considered further. Alternatively, some of the Actions may be better addressed directly through revised Local Plan policy and proposals.

It must be stressed that the following *are key findings from the consultation*. The findings of the three (above) technical assessments will also highlight additional relevant and important matters.

Local Plan Strategic Objective	What the consultation has highlighted	Suggested Action and other comments
<i>Strategic Objective SO1: Accessible communities. Maintaining and improving</i>	The importance of providing for additional teenage and youth provision.	Initially, specific recommendations for new and improved provision to be made in the GI/Open Space report.

Local Plan Strategic Objective	What the consultation has highlighted	Suggested Action and other comments
<p><i>accessibility to services and amenities for our communities, with:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Active social, leisure and recreation opportunities</i> 		The report should also recommend any appropriate modifications to existing Local Plan policy.
	This importance of informal recreation provision. For example, the importance attached by the community to new and improved footpaths, bridleway and cyclepath provision; as well as woodlands, wildlife areas and nature reserves; and informal open space for ball games, picnics, dog walking etc	Initially, specific recommendations for new and improved provision to be made in the GI/Open Space report. The report should also recommend any appropriate modifications to existing Local Plan policy.
	In respect of built/indoor sports and recreation, the type of provision for which there appears to be most desire to see improvement is swimming.	Initially, specific recommendations for new and improved provision to be made in the Built/Indoor Facilities report.
	General support for viewing 'open space' as multifunctional.	Initially, specific recommendations for new and improved provision to be made in the GI/Open Space report. The report should also recommend any appropriate modifications to existing Local Plan policy.
<p><i>Strategic Objective SO3: Town centres and rural hinterlands. Improving the safety, vitality and viability of our town centres, which link to and support the needs of their rural hinterlands</i></p>	The importance of recognising travel times as a factor influencing willingness to access and use facilities of many kinds. This is especially relevant given the geography of the District.	<p>In all three reports dealing with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GI/Open Space; Outdoor Sport; and, Built/indoor facilities, <p>Recommendations should be made in respect of local clusters (as defined in the local plan), as appropriate.</p> <p>The potential for identifying 'hub venues' for providing certain key opportunities should also be considered.</p> <p>The Built/Indoor facilities study should consider the role of village halls and community buildings in providing local</p>

Local Plan Strategic Objective	What the consultation has highlighted	Suggested Action and other comments
		opportunities in villages that cannot easily access core facilities in the key settlements.
Strategic Objective SO4: <i>Transport and travel. Promoting healthier alternatives to the use of the private car and seeking to reduce CO2 emissions by using new technologies, active travel and/or smarter choices, working towards a more integrated transport system to improve access to local goods and services</i>	Strong support across the community and with stakeholders for new and improved walking and cycling opportunities.	It is considered that the Local Plan is already especially strong in this respect, but the review should embrace the emerging Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
	The importance of recognising travel times as a factor influencing willingness to access and use facilities of many kinds. This is especially relevant given the geography of the District.	See points covered under Strategic Objective 3 In all three reports dealing with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GI/Open Space; • Outdoor Sport; and, • Built/indoor facilities, Recommendations for local standards of provision should include guidance on appropriate travel time/distances, as well as transport mode.
Strategic Objective SO6: <i>Our District's distinctive qualities. Conserving and enhancing Stroud District's distinctive qualities, based on landscape, townscape and biodiversity.</i>	Support across the general community and stakeholders in respect of the need to create, sustain, and improve Green Infrastructure across the District.	GI/Open Space Study should consider existing treatment of GI in Local Plan and recommend fine-tuning of policy statements, if appropriate.
	A concern to protect the character of existing important open space. Important open space of all kinds needs to be protected from inappropriate (over) use and development. This principle applies to valued common land such as Minchinhampton and Rodborough Commons; and formal parks, such as Stratford Park. It could also be applied to the canal and waterways network, and especially in relation to the design of adjacent development.	GI/Open Space Study should consider existing treatment of Open Space in Local Plan and recommend fine-tuning of policy statements, if appropriate.

Local Plan Strategic Objective	What the consultation has highlighted	Suggested Action and other comments
Other	The value of recognising and providing open space as part of a sustainable drainage solution, both within developments and in vulnerable valley areas.	GI/Open Space Study should consider existing treatment of Open Space in Local Plan and recommend fine-tuning of policy statements, if appropriate.
	Issues with respect to reduced Council maintenance budgets versus the need to maintain existing and improved open space.	<p>GI/Open Space Study should consider existing treatment of Open Space in Local Plan and recommend fine-tuning of policy statements, if appropriate.</p> <p>This might include consideration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms for on-going management and maintenance; • Cost-effective design and management principles. <p>All technical studies will need to reflect on the role of CIL/Section 106 and how these methods of capturing developer contributions can best be used for the benefit of GI/OS/Recreation.</p>