

Natural and Semi Natural Open Space

Introduction and definition

- 5.1 This type of open space includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrubland, grasslands (eg downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, nature reserves and wastelands with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation and biodiversity within the settlement boundaries.
- 5.2 Natural and semi natural open space can frequently be found within other open space types, and in some instances there may be some sites classified as amenity green space or parks that play a similar role to natural and semi natural open space sites. This serves to highlight the overlap between typologies.
- 5.3 Larger sites that sit outside of settlement boundaries have been excluded from the audit and calculations. However it is important to consider the role that these sites play in alleviating deficiencies and providing resources for both residents and wildlife. This will be returned to later in this section.
- 5.4 Although natural and semi natural open space plays a key role in wildlife conservation and biodiversity, the recreational opportunities provided by these spaces are also important. It is essential that a balance between recreational use, biodiversity and conservation is achieved. There are 11 sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in Bromsgrove District.
- 5.5 This section outlines the strategic context and key consultation findings relating to natural and semi natural open space within Bromsgrove and the recommended local standards. These local standards are then applied in order to understand local issues and priorities.

Regional and local context

- 5.6 The key issues for natural and semi natural open spaces arising from a review of strategic documents are set out overleaf in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 – Strategic context – regional and local

Document Reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Links to open space, sport and recreation study
Bromsgrove Local Plan	<p>Policy DS2 states that area designated as Green Belt will be protected from development except in special circumstances for the development of essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation and cemeteries.</p> <p>Policy DS9 identifies that development proposals in Landscape Protection Areas (LPAs) will be evaluated against their potential impact on the landscape, ecology or individual site. Permission will only be given where the impact on the landscape or ecological site will be negligible</p> <p>Policy S35 identifies a number of conservation areas that will be considered for designation.</p> <p>Policies C9 and C10 protect SSSI's, NNR's, SWR's and LNR's from development. Any proposal which would destroy or adversely affect any of these sites will not be permitted.</p> <p>Policy C12 protects major wildlife corners from development.</p> <p>Policy C18 refers to woodland and states that the Council will seek to retain and enhance existing woodland.</p> <p>Policy S35A states that the Council will seek to preserve and enhance the appearance of conservation areas, further identifying that they will seek to retain and enhance open spaces, important views, trees and other features of importance.</p> <p>Policy S36 indicates that development proposals in or adjacent to areas of conservation will have to show they have</p>	<p>This study will provide evidence to guide decision making when applying policies from the local plan.</p>

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Document Reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Links to open space, sport and recreation study
	<p>taken into account and are compatible with the character of the area.</p> <p>Policy S45 states that the Council will seek to secure improvements to the environmental quality of conservation areas.</p> <p>Policy C10A further states that the Council will seek to minimise the affects of development proposals on features of nature conservation.</p>	
Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report	<p>Objectives of the strategy are to conserve and enhance the District’s biodiversity and protect the countryside and Green Belt.</p>	<p>This study will provide evidence for the protection of areas of conservation and biodiversity.</p>
Bromsgrove Community Plan 2003 – 2013	<p>A theme of the plan is consider your environment – increase the use of sustainable transport, improve access to open spaces and the countryside and protect the countryside and Green Belt.</p>	<p>The study considers the effective provision of open space and provides an understanding of the current spaces and the key issues. This will provide the baseline for improvement and help the Council in the achievement of the objectives of the community strategy.</p>
Worcestershire Countryside Access and Recreation Strategy	<p>The vision of the strategy is, “<i>to develop a countryside recreation culture in Worcestershire which residents and visitors alike benefit from the opportunity to access a range of high quality countryside recreation.</i>”</p> <p>The objectives of the strategy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring opportunity is available for all sections of the 	<p>This document considers the adequacy of current natural and semi natural open space and the countryside and identifies areas of deficiency. This evidence can then be used to prioritise actions which will contribute to the achievement of the Countryside Access and</p>

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Document Reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Links to open space, sport and recreation study
	<p>community to enjoy the countryside</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • securing and promoting opportunities for countryside access • encouraging and enabling local communities to become involved in and take action to share and increase the benefits of countryside recreation opportunities • promoting alternative forms of transport to access the countryside. <p>An objective of the strategy is to make use of recreational opportunities whilst protecting and enhancing the environmental qualities of the countryside.</p>	<p>Recreation Strategy.</p>

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- 5.7 These strategic documents reinforce the role of natural and semi natural open space in the local community and the importance of providing high quality, easily accessible natural and semi natural open space. Furthermore, the importance of the effective provision of links to the nearby countryside is also apparent.

Consultation – Assessing local needs

- 5.8 Consultation undertaken as part of the study highlighted the following key issues relating to natural and semi natural open space:
- 21% of residents indicate that they visit this typology more frequently than any other open space. Additionally, natural and semi natural open space is the most frequently visited open space in Bromsgrove, with 20% of respondents to the household survey stating they visit this type of open space daily
 - General comments from respondents to the household survey focused on the importance of the protection of natural and semi natural open space. This was further reinforced by attendees at drop in sessions
 - 11% of respondents to the children’s IT survey stated an area of woodland would be the new type of open space they would like most, highlighting the value of natural and semi natural open space to children.

Quantity of existing provision

- 5.9 The provision of natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove is summarised in Table 5.2 below. This table considers only spaces designated as natural and semi natural open spaces. In addition to these sites, there are two country parks in the district which offer many recreational opportunities for local residents. These sites will be considered during the application of standards.

Table 5.2 – Provision of natural and semi natural open space across Bromsgrove

Analysis areas	Current provision	Number of sites	Smallest site (hectares)	Largest site (Hectares)	LDF population (2026)	Provision per 1000 population (2026)
Bromsgrove North	4.91	1	-	4.91	12,575	0.390
Bromsgrove West	13.55	7	0.61	6.51	14,154	0.957
Bromsgrove East	0.00	0	-	-	10,429	0.000
Bromsgrove North East	2.88	3	0.51	1.43	12,706	0.227
Bromsgrove Central	16.42	8	0.35	4.91	48,192	0.341
Overall	37.76	19	0.51	6.51	98,056	0.385

- 5.10 The key issues emerging from Table 5.2 and consultations relating to the quantity of provision of natural and semi natural open space across the district include:
- overall, there is 37.76 hectares of natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove equating to 0.385 hectares per 1000 population
 - findings from the household survey reveal a split in opinion regarding the provision of natural and semi natural open space, with 45% of residents stating that provision is sufficient (more than enough/about right) and 52% insufficient
 - within the geographical areas similar results are portrayed. However, within Bromsgrove West, the majority of residents indicate provision is sufficient (62%). The greatest level of dissatisfaction is found within Bromsgrove North East, where 60% of residents feel provision is insufficient
 - the provision of natural and semi natural open space is unevenly distributed across the district with the majority of sites located in Bromsgrove Central (8) and Bromsgrove West (7)
 - the greatest provision per 1000 is located in Bromsgrove West (0.957 hectares). No natural or semi natural open space is located in Bromsgrove East. This is reflective of the findings of the consultation, where the highest levels of dissatisfaction were evident in Bromsgrove East.

Setting provision standards – quantity

- 5.11 The recommended local quantity standard for natural and semi natural open space has been derived from the local needs consultation and audit of provision and is summarised overleaf. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix F. The standard is set above the existing level of provision given that 52% of the population indicated that the overall quantity of natural and semi natural open space is insufficient. This represents an increase of just over 2% on current provision.

Quantity Standard (see Appendices E and F – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.43 ha per 1000 population	0.44 ha per 1000 population
Justification	
<p>A large proportion of respondents to the household survey were dissatisfied with the current provision of natural and semi natural open space (52%). Dissatisfaction with the current level of provision was further supported by drop in session attendees, who highlighted the need for the increased provision of this type of open space.</p> <p>In consideration of the high level of dissatisfaction with the current provision of natural and semi natural open space it is recommended that the local quantity standard is set slightly above the existing level of provision. This standard is reflective of the desire for increased provision with current provision and also considers the need to protect this type of open space.</p>	

Current provision - quality

- 5.12 The quality of existing natural and semi natural open space in the district was assessed through site visits undertaken by an independent consultant and PMP. Full details of all the scores achieved can be found in Appendix I.
- 5.13 It is important to note that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and are therefore reflective of the quality of the site on one specific day.
- 5.14 The quality scores achieved in PMP site assessments are weighted according to the findings of the local consultation. Those elements that were highlighted through consultation as being particularly important determinants of quality have been weighted to ensure that they have a greater influence on the overall quality score achieved. The full rationale behind this approach is set out in Appendix G.

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- 5.15 The key issues emerging from site assessments relating to the quality of natural and semi natural open space are:
- PMP site assessments reveal that the quality of natural and semi natural open space is average, with the average quality score of a site being 64%
 - a number of sites were identified as suffering from a lack of maintenance and have become overgrown. Those sites in need of particular improvement are Newton Road NSN (22%) and Falcony Centre NSN (46%)
 - site assessments indicate that the maintenance of natural and semi natural open space is poor. Specifically a number of sites are highlighted as being overgrown and neglected and this is considered to cause barriers to access.

- 5.16 The key issues emerging from consultation relating to the quality of natural and semi natural open space includes:
- 38% of respondents to the household survey state that the quality of natural and semi natural open space is good. However, 33% of residents indicate the quality of this type of open space is average
 - findings in four of the five analysis areas are consistent with the overall results, however the majority of residents in Bromsgrove North East, indicated the quality of natural and semi natural open space is average (49%). The greatest level of satisfaction was portrayed in Bromsgrove West, where 53% of residents suggested that the quality of natural and semi natural open space as good
 - the quality of natural and semi natural open space was perceived to be good by respondents to the Parish Council questionnaire. In particular the quality of this type of open space in the Parish of Alvechurch was regarded as excellent. However, the quality of natural and semi natural open space within the Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish was perceived to be very poor
 - 38% of children who identified natural and semi natural open space as their favourite open space stated that one of the reasons they do not like this type of open space is that they are untidy and contain litter.

Setting provision standards – quality

- 5.17 The recommended local quality standard for natural and semi natural open space is summarised below. This standard sets out the essential elements of a high quality natural open space. These findings are derived from the key themes of local consultations. Full justification and consultation relating to the quality of provision is provided within Appendix G.

Quality standard (see Appendix G)

Recommended standard – NATURAL AND SEMI NATURAL OPEN SPACE		
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:		
Essential	Desirable	
Nature features	Good access	
Clean and litter free	Flowers and trees	
Footpaths	Dog bins	
Detailed analysis of the local consultation suggests that with regards to natural and semi natural areas, the relative importance of the key components is as follows:		
Component of quality	Proportion of possible total responses received	Weighting
Security and Safety	20%	1
Cleanliness and maintenance	31%	2
Vegetation	48%	4
Ancillary accommodation	37%	3

Setting provision standards – accessibility

- 5.18 The local accessibility standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultations. It considers the distance that residents are willing to travel to access different types of facilities as well as the mode of transport that they would anticipate using.
- 5.19 Findings from the household survey reveal that 70% of current users walk to access this typology, indicating that natural and semi natural open space is expected to be in close proximity to the home.
- 5.20 Similar to the patterns exhibited by regular users, the majority of respondents to the household survey expect to walk to natural and semi natural open space (53%).
- 5.21 Site specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the programme of site visits where information and signage, transport and general accessibility issues were assessed. Where access to specific sites is limited, this will impact on usage of the site.
- 5.22 Site assessments reveal access to natural and semi natural open space is average. However, access to a number of Council owned sites was considered to be poor due to overgrown entrances and uneven footpaths.

- 5.23 The recommended local accessibility standard for natural and semi natural open space is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix H.

Accessibility standard (see Appendix H)

Recommended standard
15 MINUTE WALK TIME
Justification
<p>Local consultation highlights a clear preference for walking to natural and semi natural open space in the district. 70% of current users walk to this typology and 53% of respondents to the household survey stated they would prefer to walk to a natural or semi natural open space. Therefore it is recommended a walk time is set.</p> <p>The most common travel time experienced by current users of this type of open space was less than five minutes and drop in session attendees emphasised the good level of accessibility to natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove. This highlights that it is perceived that access to natural and semi natural open space is high. In some instances, it was clear that perceptions of natural and semi natural open space overlapped with usage of areas of nearby countryside.</p> <p>The standard of 15 minutes is reflective of the high levels of satisfaction with accessibility to existing natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove as well as the mean response rate. Combined with the application of the quantity standard, this standard will enable the identification of existing accessibility deficiencies and allow the Council to focus on increasing provision in these areas.</p>

Applying provision standards

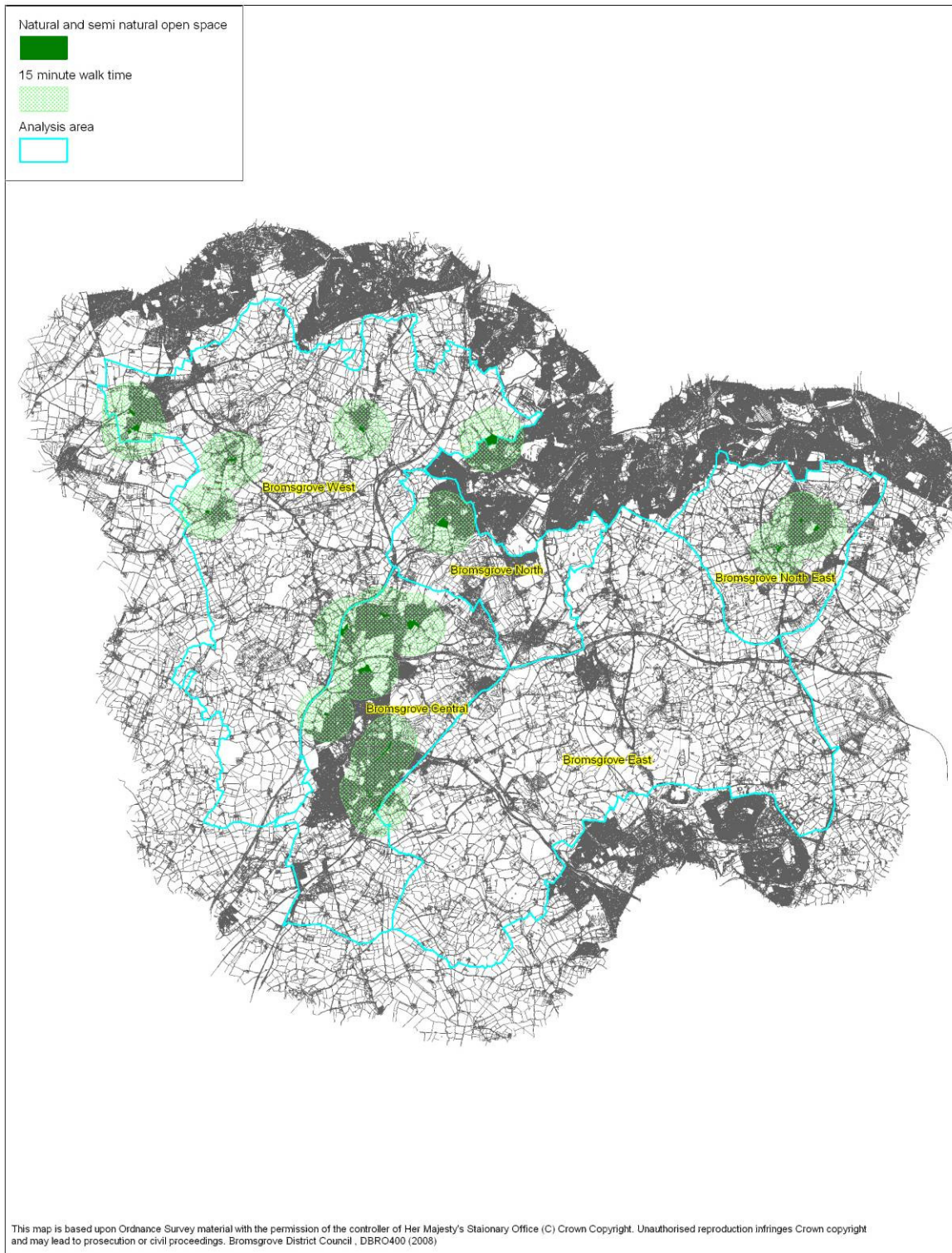
- 5.24 The application of the recommended quality, quantity and accessibility standards is essential to understand the existing distribution of open space, sport and recreation facilities and identify areas where provision is insufficient to meet local need.
- 5.25 The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately.
- 5.26 The application of the local standard for quantity is set out in Table 5.3 below.

Table 5.3 – Application of quantity standard

Analysis areas	Current balanced against local standard (0.44hectares per 1000 population)	Future balanced against local standard (0.44 hectares per 1000 population)
Bromsgrove North	-0.04	-0.62
Bromsgrove West	7.95	7.32
Bromsgrove East	-4.09	-4.59
Bromsgrove North East	-2.13	-2.71
Bromsgrove Central	-2.58	-4.78
Overall	-0.89	-5.38

- 5.27 The application of standards results in the following issues:
- the provision of natural and semi natural open space is insufficient to meet current demand. Based on future population projections this shortfall is set to increase to 5.38 hectares by 2026
 - across the analysis areas, only Bromsgrove West has sufficient provision to meet current and future demand
 - the greatest current and expected shortfall of natural and semi natural open space is found in Bromsgrove East.
- 5.28 The application of the local accessibility standards for natural and semi natural open space is set out in Map 5.1 overleaf.

Map 5.1 - Provision of natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove



Natural and semi natural open space - 15 minute walk time



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- 5.29 Map 5.1 illustrates that accessibility deficiencies are evident in all areas of the district, particularly in Bromsgrove East and Bromsgrove North East.
- 5.30 Due to the uneven distribution of sites it is essential to ensure adequate access to these sites in order to effectively meet local need. Site visits highlight that access to natural and semi natural open spaces is particularly with the average score achieved on the site assessments being only 57%. In particular, there was perceived to be a lack of signage. While some sites had dedicated entrances and were therefore easily accessible on foot, there were few sites considered to be accessible by public transport. The creation of green linkages between natural and semi natural open spaces and residential areas will be particularly important if the usage of natural open space is to be increased and the reliance on the car is to be reduced.

NSN1	Maximise access to natural and semi natural open space sites focusing particularly on improving signage to sites. Create a green network, facilitating access to natural open space and areas of accessible countryside on foot.
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- 5.31 The local quantity standard has been set slightly above the existing level of provision, indicating that there is insufficient natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove. Local consultation established a split in opinion regarding the provision of natural and semi natural open space. This suggests that there needs to be a balance between the quantity and quality. Although there may be a requirement for the development of natural open space, by its very nature, natural open space is difficult to create.
- 5.32 The quality of natural and semi natural open space in the district is average, with the mean quality score being 64%. The need for improved maintenance at this type of open space is highlighted through site assessments.
- 5.33 While it is not expected that these sites will be managed in the same way as parks / amenity green spaces, they should be inviting and controlled. The key aspirations for natural and semi natural open spaces identified by residents included a clean and litter free site, good footpaths and nature features. To improve the quality of existing sites in the district, these features should be enhanced. Several sites were identified as particular priorities for improvement earlier in this section.

NSN2	Identify opportunities for improving the quality of natural and semi natural open spaces. Enhancements should be informed by the quality vision and site assessment quality scores.
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- 5.34 While enhancement of sites for recreational purposes is important, consideration should also be given to the ecological and conservation opportunities provided and the habitats that these sites can create. As consultation highlights, natural and semi natural open spaces are one of the most popular types of open spaces in the district. It is therefore important to ensure that promotion of recreational opportunities on site is balanced with the wider functions of the site and that recreation and wildlife uses are in equilibrium. This will require sensitive management and maintenance. There are eleven sites of Special Scientific Interest in the district.
- 5.35 Parks and gardens are also particularly important in terms of natural and semi natural open spaces. Sanders Park for example has a brook running through it and is particularly important in terms of wildlife and conservation.

NSN3	Maximise biodiversity on natural and semi natural open spaces through the implementation of effective management and maintenance regimes. The impact of recreational use on sites should be monitored.
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5.36 Accessibility mapping highlights that there are a number of areas of deficiency. In light of the importance of natural open spaces to residents, the small number of sites, the wider habitat and biodiversity benefits and the deficiencies across the district, all sites should be protected through appropriate policies in the LDF.

NSN4	Include appropriate policies for the protection of natural open space within the LDF. Protection should extend to inaccessible sites of nature and habitat value (for example SSSI) as well as sites of recreational value.
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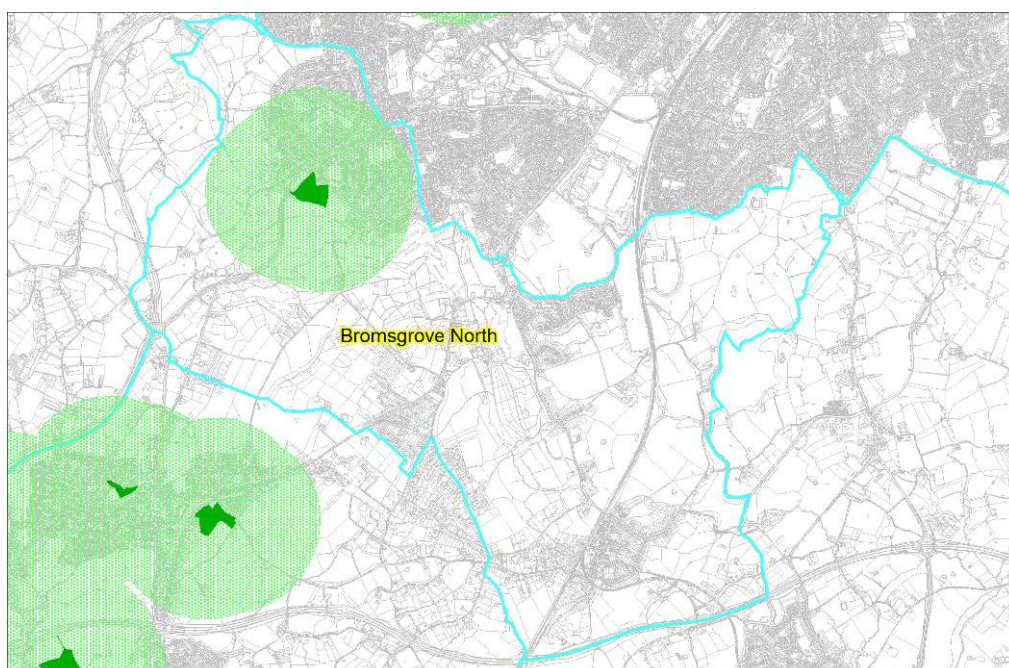
5.37 In addition, the small number of natural and semi natural open spaces reinforces the role of the countryside in providing recreational opportunities for residents in Bromsgrove.

5.38 While the previous issues relate to natural and semi natural open space in all areas of the district, the key issues relating to the provision of natural and semi natural open space in each area is outlined in the sections that follow.

Bromsgrove North

5.39 Application of the quantity standard indicates that there is insufficient provision of natural and semi natural open space to meet current and future demand, with a small expected shortfall of 0.62 ha by 2026. Accessibility mapping illustrates this shortfall with only residents located in Rubery able to access a natural or semi natural open space within the recommended 15 minute walk time (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 – Deficiencies of natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove North



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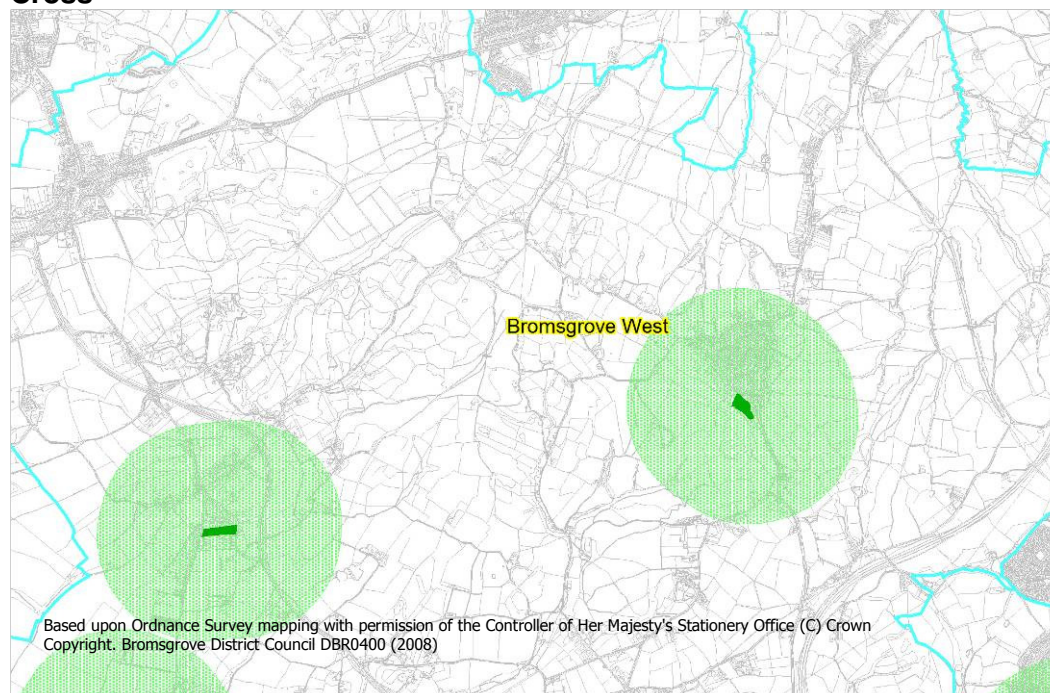
- 5.40 Although residents in Barnt Green and Cofton Hackett are outside the catchment of a designated natural and semi natural open space they do have access to the Lickey Hills Country Park. Lickey Hills Country Park is a large area of publicly accessible countryside and provides a number of recreational opportunities to residents in the district. The lack of local natural and semi natural open space means that this site is of particular importance to residents.
- 5.41 Within this area of the district residents indicated that the provision of natural and semi natural open space is sufficient. Furthermore, shortfalls in provision are lower than in other areas of the district and based on the application of the quantity standard, the number of residents in each of the villages outside of the catchment would be insufficient to warrant additional natural and semi natural provision. Therefore, in the first instance, improvements to the quality of natural and semi natural open space should be prioritised, alongside facilitating access to existing natural and semi natural open spaces and areas of nearby countryside.

NSN5	Seek to enhance the quality of natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove North, aiming to achieve the recommended quality vision at all sites.
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Bromsgrove West

- 5.42 Accessibility mapping indicates that the majority of residents in Bromsgrove West have access to a natural or semi natural open space within the recommended 15 minute walk time. Only residents located in the west of Hagley and Clent and Holy Cross are outside the catchment of a natural or semi natural open space (Figure 5.2). Quantitative analysis supports this good level of access, with there being sufficient provision of this type of open space to meet current and future demand.

Figure 5.2 – Deficiency of natural and semi natural open space in Hagley and Holy Cross



- 5.43 Although residents in Hagley and Clent and Holy Cross do not have access to a natural or semi natural open space they are in close proximity to Clent Hills Country Park. This site is a national park that provides access to the countryside for residents in areas of existing deficiency. This means that all residents in this area have access to either a country park or a site designated as natural and semi natural open space.
- 5.44 In consideration of the above, focus should be placed on enhancing the quality of existing natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove West. The quality of the natural open space at the Falcony Centre is poor.

NSN6	Seek to enhance the quality of natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove West, aiming to achieve the recommended quality vision at all sites.
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Bromsgrove East

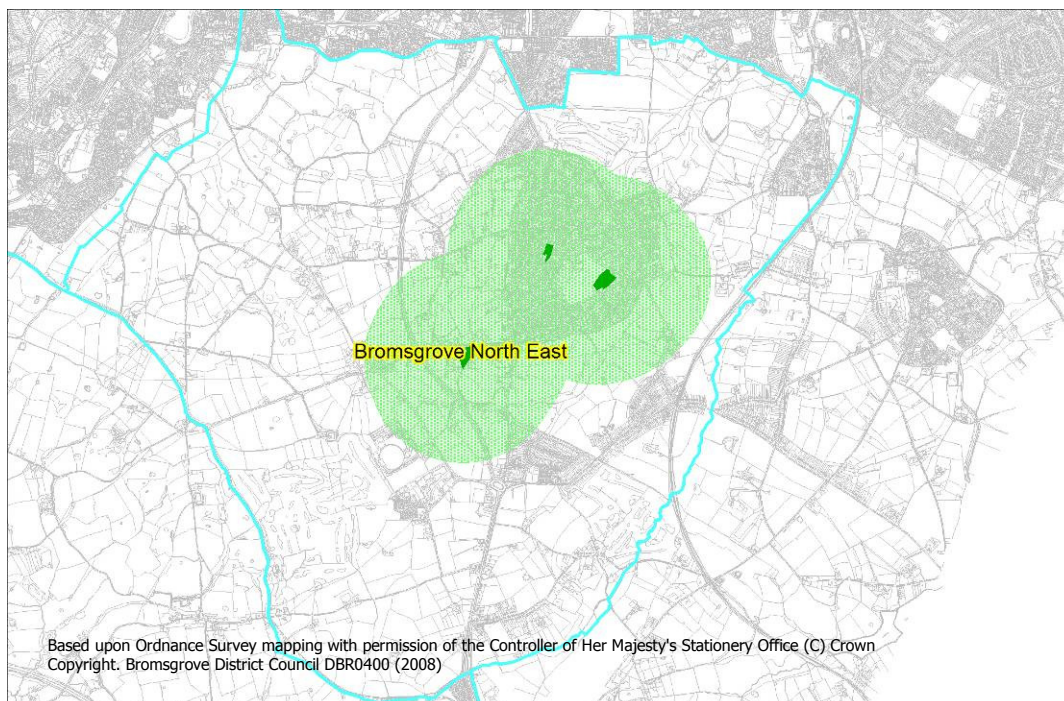
- 5.45 Application of the quantity standard indicates that there is insufficient natural and semi natural open space to meet current and future demand. Accessibility mapping highlights this shortfall with no residents able to access a natural and semi natural open space within the recommended 15 minute walk time.
- 5.46 The provision of parks and gardens in this area of the district is also insufficient to meet demand, exacerbating the overall shortfall. Application of the quantity standard for natural and semi natural open space indicates that shortfalls to the East of Bromsgrove are the highest in all areas of the district and will equate to over 4 ha by 2026. This is sufficient to require the creation of new space.
- 5.47 In light of shortfalls it is therefore recommended that new provision is required. Any new provision should be located in close proximity to larger settlements, such as Alvechurch.

NSN7	Seek to increase the provision of semi natural open space in Bromsgrove East.
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Bromsgrove North East

- 5.48 Accessibility mapping indicates that only residents in Wythall and Hollywood have access to a natural and semi natural open space. Residents in a number of smaller rural settlements do not have access to a natural or semi natural open space within the recommended 15 minute walk time (Figure 5.3). Application of the quantity standard supports this shortfall with there being insufficient provision to meet current and future demand.

Figure 5.3 – Deficiencies of natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove North East



- 5.49 Based on future population projections there will be a shortfall of 2.71 hectares by 2026. Although this deficiency is quite large, when measured against the quantity standard, due to the small populations of those villages outside the catchment of a natural or semi natural open space there is no specific requirement to provide a new site within any of these settlements. Despite this, in light of shortfalls, any opportunities to provide new semi natural sites should be seized.
- 5.50 In the absence of opportunities to provide new semi natural open space, a focus should be placed on improving the quality of existing sites as well as enhancing access through the provision of green linkages. The quality of Silvermead Crescent Natural and Semi Natural open space is particularly poor.

NSN8	Seek to increase enhance the quality of existing natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove North East. Improve linkages to these sites. Seek opportunities to provide new natural and semi natural open space in this area of the district.
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Bromsgrove Central

- 5.51 The shortfall of natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove Central is the second largest of all areas. Application of the quantity standard demonstrates that population growth up to 2026 will shortfalls rise to 4.78 hectares, the largest in the district. Accessibility mapping highlights this quantitative shortfall with residents in the south and north east of the analysis area outside the catchment of a natural or semi natural open space (Figures 5.4 – 5.5).

Figure 5.4 – Deficiencies of natural and semi natural open space in the south of Bromsgrove Central

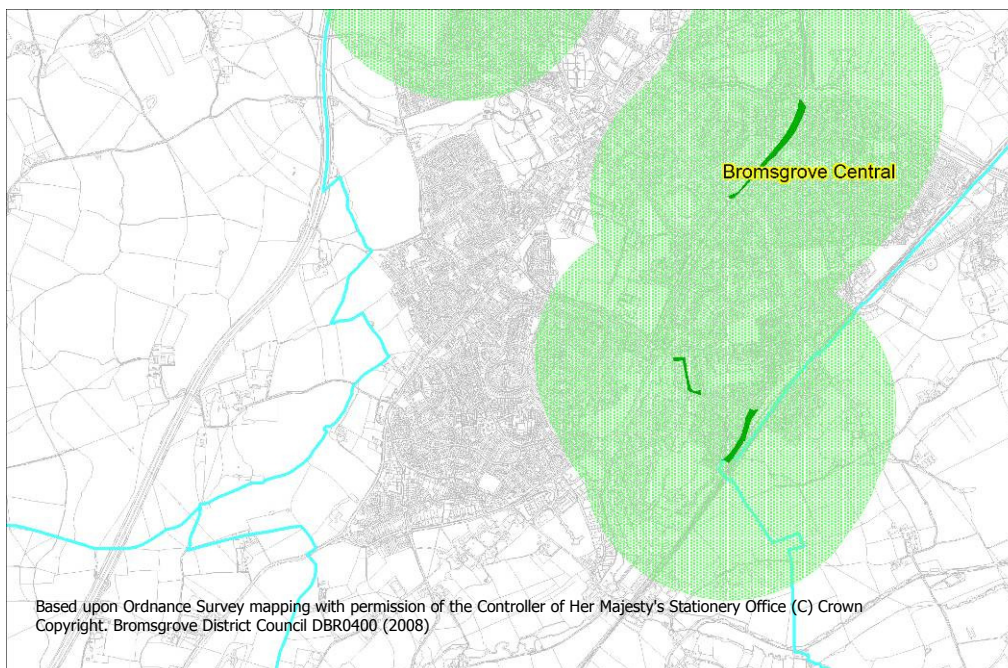
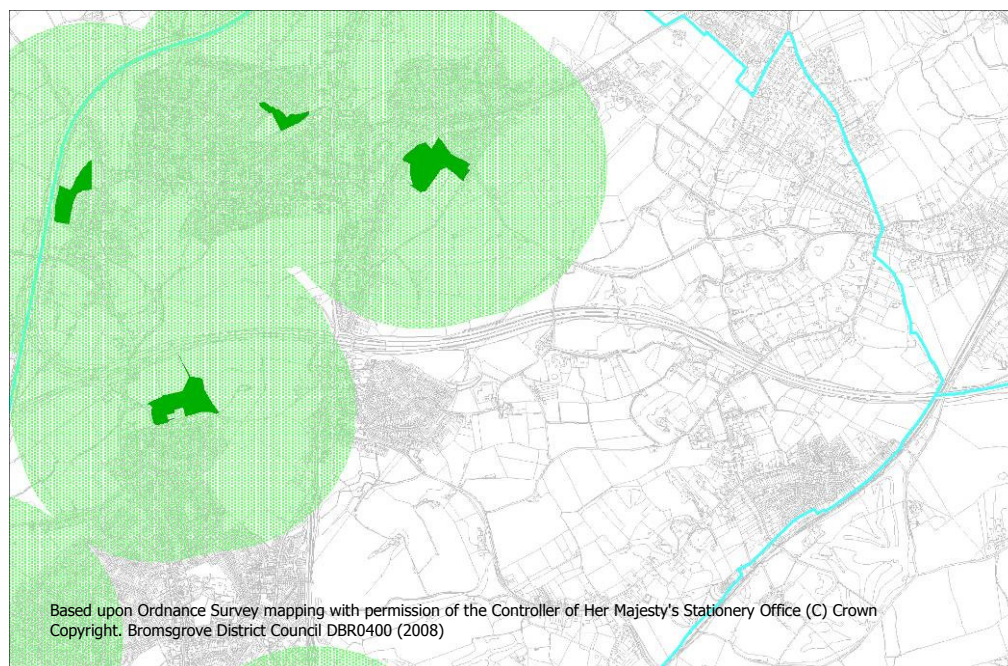


Figure 5.5 – Deficiencies of natural and semi natural open space in the north east of Bromsgrove Central



5.52 Although residents in the south and north east of Bromsgrove Central do not have access to a natural or semi natural open space, when considering the provision of parks and amenity green space, the majority of residents have access to at least one of these types of open space. Only residents in Stoke Prior, Burcot and Blackwell do not have access to any of these types of open space.

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- 5.53 Residents located in Burcot and Blackwell are in close proximity to Lickey Hills Country Park and therefore do have access to natural countryside although they do not have local natural and semi natural open space. In contrast, there is limited accessible countryside near to Stoke Prior, meaning that this deficiency takes on greater importance. The provision of a semi natural area in Stoke Prior will help to alleviate deficiencies in this area and also provide access for residents outside the catchment of a natural or semi natural open space in Stoke Heath and Charford.

NSN9	Consider the provision of a new semi natural open space in Stoke Prior.
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- 5.54 In light of shortfalls in natural and semi natural open space in the central area, the quality of existing sites and access to these sites is of particular importance. Newton Road Natural and Semi Natural open space was identified as being in particular need of improvement during site assessments.

NSN10	Increase access to existing natural and semi natural sites through the enhancement of linkages between open spaces. Improve the quality of natural and semi natural open spaces.
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Summary

- 5.55 Natural and semi natural open space is one of the most frequently visited type of open space in the district, indicated by 21% of respondents to the household survey. This emphasises the value of this type of open space to local residents.
- 5.56 In addition to the recreational value of natural resources, residents also frequently recognise the wider benefits of natural open spaces, particularly in terms of providing opportunities for biodiversity and habitat creation.
- 5.57 The need to protect natural and semi natural open space from development was a key theme throughout consultation and while recreational opportunities should be encouraged, this should be balanced with conserving and promoting biodiversity.
- 5.58 Application of the recommended quality, quantity and accessibility standards highlights that the improvements to the quality of sites is of particular importance. Natural and semi natural open spaces are unevenly distributed and new provision may also be required in some areas. Maximising access to natural and semi natural sites both within urban settlements and to those in the surrounding countryside should also be a key future priority. The creation of green linkages will be of particular importance in the achievement of this goal.
- 5.59 It is therefore recommended that the key priorities for the future delivery of provision of natural and semi natural open space in Bromsgrove that should be addressed through the Local Development Framework and/or other delivery mechanisms are:
- identify opportunities for improving the quality of natural and semi natural open spaces both in terms of the wildlife and habitat values of the site, but also for recreational purposes
 - maximise biodiversity on natural and semi natural open spaces through the implementation of effective management and maintenance regimes
 - monitor the impact of recreation of natural and semi natural open spaces

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- incorporate a policy protecting existing natural and semi natural open space within the Local Development Framework
- seek to enhance the quality of natural and semi natural open space in the district, aiming to achieve the recommended quality vision at all sites
- should the opportunity arise, consider the provision of a new semi natural open space in Bromsgrove North East and in Stoke Prior.