

Parks and Gardens

Introduction and definition

- 4.1 This type of open space (as defined by PPG17) includes urban parks and formal gardens that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events.
- 4.2 Parks often contain a variety of facilities and amenities, including some that fall within different classifications of open space, eg children's play facilities, sport pitches and wildlife areas. For classification purposes, the different open spaces within parks have been separated according to the PPG17 typology under which they most appropriately fall. Large green areas, footpaths, lakes and less dense woodland will provide the park area (total hectares) and the other facilities will be calculated separately under their own classification. This ensures that open space sites are not counted twice within the PPG17 assessment.
- 4.3 Within in the district there are a number of parks of which the majority of the site is dedicated to outdoor sports provision, such as football pitches. For the purposes of this study these sites have been classified as 'sports parks' and been excluded from the parks and gardens quantity calculation figures to avoid double counting. Those parks which are classified as sports parks are:
- Charford Recreation Ground
 - Braces Lane
 - Aston Fields Recreation Ground.
- 4.4 For accessibility mapping, sports parks have been plotted as point data and the same catchment for a park and garden (15 minute walk time) has been drawn around each site. This is reflective of the dual function of these sites as parks and sports facilities.
- 4.5 In addition to the large parks considered in this section, there are a variety of smaller spaces provided by Parish Councils in some of the rural settlements of the District. Many of these fulfil the role of parks and gardens within the village, and while they have been classified as amenity spaces they have also been considered within this section during the evaluation of standards.
- 4.6 Parks provide a sense of place for the local community and help to address social inclusion issues within wider society. According to the Park Life Report (published June 2007), 83% of those questioned feel that parks are a focal point of community life. The value of parks and gardens within Bromsgrove was highlighted by findings from the Sanders Park User Satisfaction Survey 2004. Over 61% of respondents to the survey stated they visit Sanders Park weekly or more than often.

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- 4.7 Parks also provide an important recreational resource, and many residents enjoy visiting parks to walk or to undertake more physical exercise. The Active People survey (Sport England 2007) reveals that walking is the most popular recreational activity for people in England. Over 8 million adults aged 16 and over completed a recreational walk for at least 30 minutes in the last four weeks. Provision of parks therefore represents a key opportunity to increase levels of physical activity across the local population.
- 4.8 In addition to the recreational opportunities provided by parks, these large green spaces provide structural and landscaping benefits to the surrounding local area. They also frequently offer ecological benefits, particularly in more urban areas. The provision of parks to break up urban landscapes is becoming increasingly important, particularly in light of growing fears regarding climate change. Appropriate provision of green space can contribute to a reduction of the impact of climate change.
- 4.9 Hagley Park and Hewell Park are listed as historic parks and gardens on the register maintained by English Heritage. This highlights the role that parks and open spaces can have in maintaining the history and character of an area. These sites offer no public amenity, although Hagley Park is visible from a public footpath.

Strategic context

- 4.10 A national survey commissioned by Sport England, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage was undertaken during 2003, studying the provision of parks within England. The aims of the survey were to establish:
- how many adults in England use parks?
 - what activities people take part in when visiting parks?
 - the reasons why people visit particular parks
 - the levels of satisfaction with the amenities on offer
 - why non-users do not use parks?
- 4.11 The definition of a park used in the survey was very broad and included both formal provision such as town parks, country parks, recreation grounds and also less formal provision such as village greens and common land.
- 4.12 The findings of the study were:
- just under two thirds of adults in England had visited a public park during the previous 12 months
 - there is a distinct bias in the use of parks by social groups, with almost three quarters of adults from the higher social group visiting a park compared with only half of those from the lower social group
 - people from black and ethnic minority communities also have relatively low participation as well as those adults with a disability
 - over 8 in 10 adults who had used a park in the previous 12 months did so at least once a month during the spring and summer with almost two thirds visiting a park at least once a week, and women tended to visit parks more often than men

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- it is estimated that the 24.3 million adults who use parks make approximately 1.2 billion visits during the spring and summer months and 600 million visits during the autumn and winter months – a total of 1.8 billion visits a year
- the most popular type of park visited was an urban or City Park.

4.13 It is clear that the benefits that parks can offer are now recognised on a national scale. There are also a number of regional and local documents that refer to the importance of parks and gardens. The key issues arising from these documents and the links with this study are set out in Table 4.1 overleaf.

Table 4.1 – Strategic context – regional and local

Document reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Links to open space, sport and recreation study
Bromsgrove Local Plan	Policy S48 protects historic parks and gardens from development, stating that any development that will have an adverse effect on the character of and setting of historic parks and gardens will not be permitted.	This study will provide evidence for the protection of these types of open space.
Sanders Park Management and Development Plan	<p>The vision of the strategy is, “<i>to provide a park of the highest quality for the enjoyment of the community of Bromsgrove town and District to visitors in the area.</i>”</p> <p>The aims of the strategy are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that Sanders Park is welcoming and accessible to all possible users • ensure the safety of all staff and users of the park • maintain the highest standards of maintenance • maintain the quality of management • provide a responsive, flexible and high quality management service. 	This study will consider the role of Sanders Park in the context of other parks and gardens and other open spaces. The key issues arising in the management and development plan are integrated within this study.
Sanders Park User Satisfaction Survey 2004	<p>Over 61% of respondents to the survey visit the park weekly or more than often.</p> <p>The majority of users travel for 20 minutes by either foot or by car to access Sanders Park.</p> <p>Sanders Park being too far away from a number of residents was a key barrier to access.</p>	The success factors and areas for improvement raised in this study have contributed directly to the standards set.

Consultation – Assessing Local Needs

4.14 Consultation undertaken as part of the study highlighted that

- parks are highly valued across the community. The wide range of facilities available at this type of open space was seen to provide many recreational opportunities for residents. Parks were perceived to provide important functions for children and often considered to be a focal point of the community, particularly in rural areas of the District
- 41% of respondents to the household survey identified parks and gardens as their favourite open space in Bromsgrove. 11% of residents visit parks daily and 37% weekly, highlighting the high level of use of this typology within the District.

Current Position – Quantity

4.15 The quantity of parks and gardens across Bromsgrove is summarised in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 – Provision of parks and gardens across Bromsgrove

Analysis areas	Current provision	Number of sites	Sports parks	Smallest site (hectares)	Largest site (Hectares)	LDF population (2026)	Provision per 1000 population (2026)
Bromsgrove North	6.22	2	0	3.02	3.20	12,575	0.49
Bromsgrove West	2.71	2	0	0.73	1.98	14,154	0.19
Bromsgrove East	0.88	1	0	-	0.88	10,429	0.08
Bromsgrove North East	0.00	0	0	-	-	12,706	0.00
Bromsgrove Central	12.82	3	3	0.56	11.16	48,192	0.27
Overall	22.63	8	3	0.56	11.16	98,056	0.23

4.16 The key issues emerging from Table 4.2 and consultations relating to the quantity of provision of formal parks across the District include:

- there is a total of 22.63 hectares of parks and gardens across Bromsgrove. This will equate to 0.23 hectares per 1000 based on the projected population for 2026
- respondents to the household survey expressed an overall satisfaction with the provision of parks and gardens, with 52% of residents stating that provision is sufficient

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- parks and gardens are unevenly distributed across the district with the majority of sites located in Bromsgrove Central (6)
- although the most parks and gardens are found in Bromsgrove Central the greatest provision per 1000 is located in Bromsgrove North (0.49 hectares)
- consultation findings within the individual analysis areas are consistent with the district wide results, with the majority of residents in four of the five analysis areas stating that provision is sufficient. The greatest level of dissatisfaction was portrayed in Bromsgrove North East, where the majority of residents indicate provision is insufficient (47%). Actual quantitative findings support this perception with no parks or gardens located in this area of the district
- 38% of respondent's to the IT young people's survey stated the provision of parks is sufficient
- drop in session attendees highlighted the value of parks and gardens in the district, identifying them as open spaces which are regularly used by residents. The provision of parks and gardens in Bromsgrove was perceived to be adequate by drop in session attendees
- the provision of parks and gardens was perceived to be adequate by respondents to the elected members questionnaire.

Setting provision standards – quantity

- 4.17 The recommended local quantity standards for parks and gardens has been derived from the local needs consultation and audit of provision and summarised below. Full justifications for the standards are provided within Appendix F.
- 4.18 Consultation from the household survey demonstrates that over 50% of residents are satisfied with the current quantity of provision. Furthermore, findings from the other consultations suggested that the majority of issues related to the quality of provision rather than the quantity of parks. In light of this, the standard has been set at the existing level of provision. When applied locally, deficiencies may still be identified in some areas.

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

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.26 hectares per 1000	0.26 hectares per 1000
Justification	
<p>Over half of the respondents to the household survey (52%) were satisfied with the current provision and parks and gardens. This highlights a high level of satisfaction with the current provision of this type of open space. Drop in session attendees and consultation with children and young people further reinforced this high level of satisfaction with the provision of parks and gardens.</p> <p>Local consultation focused on issues relating to quality rather than quantity of parks and gardens and therefore it is recommended that the local standard is set at the current level of provision. Setting the standard at the existing level of provision will allow the council to focus on enhancing the quality of existing parks and gardens in the district and combined with the application of the accessibility standard, will enable the identification of locational deficiencies.</p>	

Current provision - quality

- 4.19 The quality of existing parks and gardens in the district was assessed through site visits undertaken by an independent consultant with considerable experience of inspecting open space, sport and recreation facilities. 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.
- 4.20 The Green Flag Award is a national standard for parks and greenspace. Sanders Park is the only park in the district that has achieved this status.
- 4.21 Site assessments undertaken indicate the quality of parks and gardens in Bromsgrove is good. Maintenance was considered to be the main area for improvement. The site assessments and methodology can be found in Appendices I and J.
- 4.22 The quality of parks emerged as being particularly important to local residents. The Council are encouraging residents to become involved in the management and development of Sanders Park through the management and development plan and ‘Friends of Sanders Park’ group.
- 4.23 The key issues emerging from consultation relating to the quality of parks are:
- the majority of respondents to the household survey feel the quality of parks and gardens is good (38%) and 13% very good. 35% of residents feel the quality of parks and gardens is average. This indicates the quality of parks is generally regarded to be good

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- within the individual analysis areas differing results are portrayed, with residents in three of the five analysis areas indicating that the quality of parks and gardens is average. The lowest level of satisfaction with the current provision of parks and gardens is located in Bromsgrove West, where 57% of residents state the quality of parks and gardens is average
- general comments from respondents to the household survey highlighted the need for improved ancillary facilities and vegetation at parks and gardens. The need for more flowers and trees and seating was regularly emphasised by residents
- drop in session attendees indicated a requirement for improved maintenance at parks and gardens. Residents stated that parks are sometimes not well kept and could be improved. Sanders Park was identified as a well used high quality park in Bromsgrove that was of strategic importance to the District
- the quality of parks and gardens was generally perceived to be good by respondents to the Parish Council questionnaire. Specifically, Lickey Hills Country Park was highlighted as being excellent quality and Millenium Park in Barnt Green was identified as currently undergoing refurbishment, which will result in a high quality site
- 46% of respondents to the young people's IT survey stated that the quality of parks is average and could do with some improvements. 34% of young people indicated that parks are clean, tidy and well maintained
- 29% of children who identified parks and gardens as their favourite open space suggested that boring play facilities at parks are one of the reasons they did not like this type of open space
- 27% of respondents to the young people's IT survey who stated that parks and gardens are their favourite open space identified litter and untidiness and boring facilities as two things they did not like about parks and gardens.

Setting provision standards – quality

- 4.24 The recommended local quality standard for parks is summarised below. Full justifications and consultation relating to the quality of provision is provided within Appendix G.
- 4.25 The aspirations are derived directly from the findings of local consultations.

Quality standard (see Appendix G)

Recommended standard – PARKS AND GARDENS		
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:		
Essential	Desirable	
Well kept grass	Clean and litter free	
Flowers and trees	Good access	
Parking facilities	Litter bins	
Detailed analysis of the local consultation suggests that with regards to parks, the relative importance of the key components is shown below. These scores have been used to weight the site assessments.		
Component of quality	Proportion of possible total responses received	Weighting
Security and Safety	35%	1
Cleanliness and maintenance	58%	4
Vegetation	53%	2
Ancillary accommodation	54%	3

Setting provision standards – accessibility

- 4.26 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage as well as providing an opportunity for people to use the site. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultations.
- 4.27 Site specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the site visits, where information and signage, transport and general access issues were assessed.
- 4.28 Consultation and analysis has shown that the key issues with regards accessibility are:
- According to the household survey, 58% of those who use parks more frequently than any other type of open space walk, while 42% drive. Similar to the findings arising from consultation with current users, 63% of respondents to the household survey expect to walk and 30% prefer to drive
 - findings within the individual analysis areas are consistent with the overall results, with over 49% of residents in each area indicating they would expect to walk to this type of open space. The remainder of

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responses are split between the use of public transport, car and cycling

- residents are willing to travel to reach a park, with residents willing to travel between 1 and 45 minutes on foot or 3 and 45 minutes in the car
- other consultations demonstrate that residents are willing to travel to reach larger parks and gardens in the district, with Sanders Park being a particular draw for residents from all areas as well as for people outside of the district.

- 4.29 The recommended local accessibility standard for parks and gardens is summarised overleaf. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix H.
- 4.30 In light of the strategic nature of parks and gardens, two standards have been set. The walk time standard is reflective of the expectation for local provision, particularly within Bromsgrove Town. While residents in rural areas indicated that they would like local access to a park, there was a greater acceptance that a degree of travel may be required. In light of the strategic nature of parks, and the application of the quantity standard, which demonstrates that provision of parks in small settlements would be unfeasible, a drive time standard has also been set.

Accessibility Standard – Parks and gardens (see Appendix H)

Recommended standard
15 MINUTE WALK TIME (URBAN) 15 MINUTE DRIVE TIME (RURAL)
Justification
<p>Current and expected travel patterns highlight a preference for walking to parks and gardens in Bromsgrove, and this is evident particularly in the more urban area of the district. Findings from the children and young people’s survey further support walking as the preferred mode of travel and therefore based on local consultation, a walk time has been set.</p> <p>Although findings from the household indicate that a 5 – 10 minute walk time is the most common travel time experienced by current users and preferred by prospective users, due to the nature of this typology being a larger strategic facility offering a wide range of recreational opportunities, it is unrealistic to expect a park or garden to be located within 10 minutes of every household in the district.</p> <p>In light of the above, the local accessibility standard has been set at a 15 minutes walk time. While the first and second quartile figures indicate that a distance of 10 minutes would be expected, the third quartile in four of then five areas, as well as borough wide is 15 minutes. Additionally the mean response is 13 minutes.</p> <p>Setting a standard at this level with enable the council to achieve a balance between quantitative improvements in areas with accessibility deficiencies and improving the quality of existing sites.</p> <p>This standard is applicable to the urban areas of Bromsgrove. In light of the rural nature of the district, and the acceptance from residents in these areas that they may need to travel by car, a drive time standard has also been set. Evidence suggests that residents are willing to travel 15 minutes by car (mean) and the standard has therefore been set at this level.</p>

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Setting these two standards will enable the Council to achieve a balance between quantitative improvements in areas with accessibility deficiencies and improving the quality of existing sites. The application of this standard, in conjunction with the quantity standard, will help to determine where new provision is required.

Applying provision standards

- 4.31 The application of the recommended quantity, quality and accessibility standards is essential in understanding the existing distribution of parks and identifying areas where provision is insufficient to meet local need.
- 4.32 The application of the local quantity standard for each area is set out in Table 4.3. As highlighted earlier, these calculations do not include those sites termed 'sports parks'.
- 4.33 As well as determining areas of surplus and deficiency, the application of the quantity standard will also guide expectations as to the minimum size of settlement where parks should be provided.

Table 4.3 – Application of quantity standard – Parks and gardens

Analysis areas	Current balanced against local standard (0.26 hectares per 1000 population)	Future balanced against local standard (0.26 hectares per 1000 population)
Bromsgrove North	3.30	2.95
Bromsgrove West	-0.60	-0.97
Bromsgrove East	-1.54	-1.83
Bromsgrove North East	-2.96	-3.30
Bromsgrove Central	1.59	0.29
Overall	-0.21	-2.86

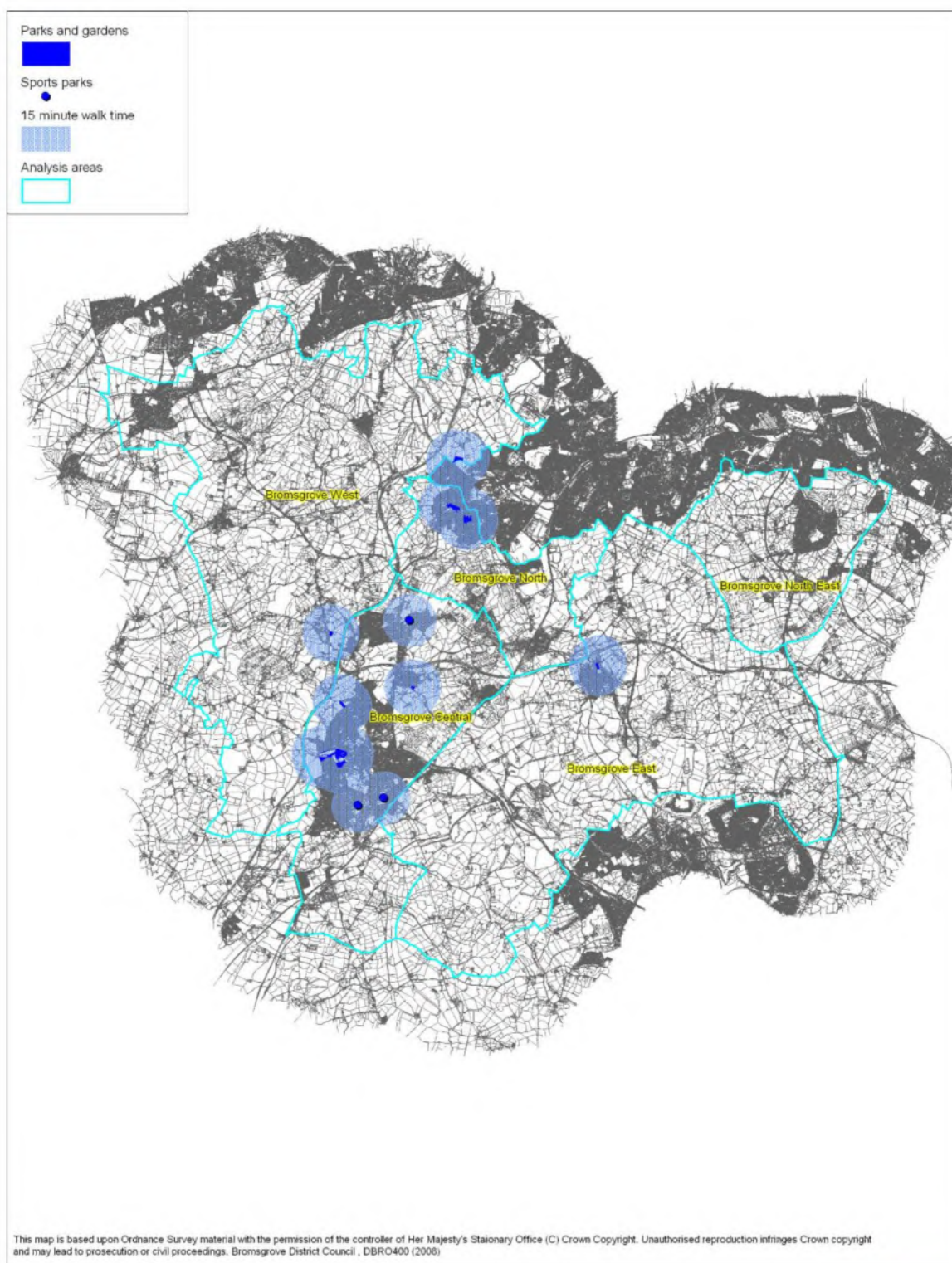
Green = above the standard, Red = below the standard.

- 4.34 As can be seen in Table 4.4 above:
 - the provision of parks and gardens is insufficient to meet current demand, with a shortfall of 0.21 hectares portrayed. Based on future population projections this shortfall is set to increase to 2.86 hectares

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- only two of the five analysis areas have sufficient provision of parks and gardens to meet current and future demand
 - the largest current and future shortfalls in the district are found in Bromsgrove North East, with a deficiency of 3.30 hectares of parks and gardens expected by 2026. Provision in Bromsgrove Central and the North is sufficient to meet demand.
- 4.35 In light of the wide catchment of parks and gardens, locational quantitative deficiencies should be treated as being of limited significance unless the deficiency is sufficiently large to justify the development of a new park. The overall shortfall of less than three hectares suggests that new provision is unlikely to be required.
- 4.36 The application of the local accessibility standards for parks and gardens is set out overleaf in Map 4.1. Consideration is given as to the interrelationship between parks and amenity green spaces in Map 4.2. This is particularly important in the rural settlements, where many of the amenity areas fulfil the role of a small park.

Map 4.1 - Provision of parks and gardens in Bromsgrove



Parks and gardens - 15 minute walk time



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- 4.37 Map 4.1 indicates that there are accessibility deficiencies in all areas of the district when considering the application of the local 15 minute walk time standard. The majority of residents in Bromsgrove East, North East, North and West are outside the accessibility catchment of a park or garden. A number of residents in Bromsgrove Central can also not access a park or garden within the recommended 15 minute walk time.
- 4.38 In contrast, all residents are able to reach a park within a 15 minute drive time from their house.

Applying the quantity, quality and accessibility standards

- 4.39 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas where there is potential unmet demand we apply both the quantity and accessibility standards together. The quantity standards identify whether areas are quantitatively above or below the recommended minimum standard; and the accessibility standards will help to determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Consideration should also be given to the quality of sites.
- 4.40 As highlighted, parks can play a key role in providing informal sport and recreation opportunities for local residents. Many residents who do not wish to participate in formal sports can participate in lighter physical activity in parks. There are many activities already underway across the parks including Royal Hunters Walks and the Walks for Health scheme. Events at parks can also be effective in promoting the usage of sites and many events regularly occur at Bromsgrove's main park, Sanders Park. The Sanders Park user survey suggested that residents would like to see more events at parks in the district.

PG1	Maximise the role that parks can play in striving to increase participation in health and physical activity across the district by effectively promoting these opportunities. Continue to promote activities and alternative means of exercise at parks to maximise usage and work in tandem with partners to provide a variety of opportunities.
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- 4.41 While the value of parks and the wider benefits that can stem from the provision of parks are clear, if the above targets are to be successful, it is essential that facilities are of appropriate quality and that the distribution of facilities is sufficient to provide all residents with opportunities.
- 4.42 Given that parks were one of the most frequently visited types of open space in the district and the wider benefits that these sites offer, both in terms of recreation but also nature and conservation benefits, all parks should be protected from development.

PG2	Include a policy within the LDF which protects parks in the district from development.
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- 4.43 The aim of the Sanders Park Management and Development Plan is to provide a high quality park and the plan identifies a number of areas for development. As highlighted, consultation highlighted as part of this study reinforced the importance of the quality of facilities and highlighted that improved maintenance was particularly important. The council should seek to adopt the principles of the Sanders Park Management and Development Plan at all parks in the district.

PG3	<p>Seek to develop and enhance existing parks to ensure that they meet both local and regional needs.</p> <p>Drive a structured programme of improvements with clear defined outputs.</p> <p>This may include the production of parks management plans and an updated strategy for all parks in the District based on the principles of the Sanders Park Management Plan.</p> <p>Strive to achieve the recommended quality vision at all sites across the district and use the findings of the site assessments to prioritise improvements.</p>
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- 4.44 In order to achieve parks of a high quality, it will be essential that partnership working continues. Bromsgrove District Council is seeking to set up a 'Friends of Sanders Park' group. Community involvement promotes a sense of pride and ownership in the local space and consideration should therefore also be given to setting up friends groups at other parks in the district.

PG4	<p>Promote community ownership and involvement in parks and open spaces.</p>
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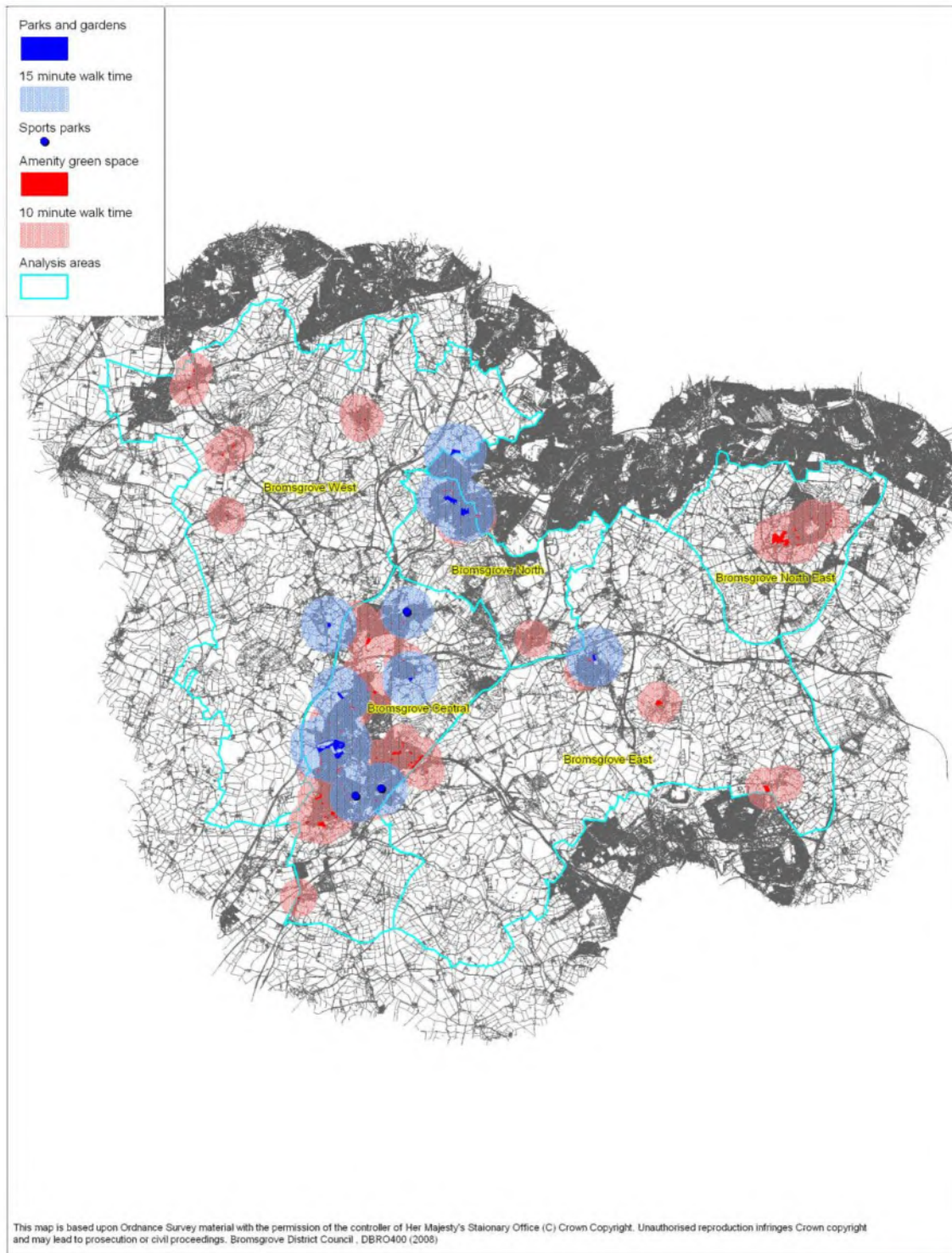
- 4.45 While there is a focus on the quality of parks and ensuring that the wider opportunities these sites offer are maximised, the application of the accessibility and quantity standards highlight some issues with the distribution of existing provision.
- 4.46 Map 4.2 overleaf illustrates the provision of parks and gardens in the context of amenity green space in the area. Amenity green space can play a key role in the delivery of local open space to residents; however the provision of local amenity green space does not negate the need for more formalised provision, such as a park.
- 4.47 The presence of amenity green space in areas deficient of parks provides an opportunity to upgrade these spaces to better meet the needs of local residents.
- 4.48 Where parks are provided within a 10 minute catchment (the recommended distance threshold for amenity green space as set in Section 6) they may negate the need for further provision of amenity green space (as a higher order facility they provide a greater range of facilities) as they fulfil similar roles. This is discussed in Section 6.

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- 4.49 The analysis that follows considers the provision of parks within each of the geographical areas of the district and highlights where future priorities should lie.
- 4.50 In order to maximise the benefit of new parks, any new facilities should be targeted in locations that are currently lacking in provision. Moreover, in order to ensure that the maximum number of residents are within the accessible catchment of parks and gardens, any new site should be located so that there is no overlap with the catchment of existing parks.
- 4.51 In light of the rural nature of the district, and the agreement of a 15 minute drive time (minimum standard for the rural settlements) as well as a 15 minute walktime in the urban areas, it will be important to facilitate access routes to maximise the use of parks. It will therefore be important to ensure that there are sustainable transport opportunities and green corridors linking parks with local neighbourhoods.

PG5	Seek to provide public transport links to all major parks in the district and facilitate the development of green corridors to link neighbourhoods with open spaces.
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Map 4.2 - Provision of parks and gardens and amenity green space in Bromsgrove



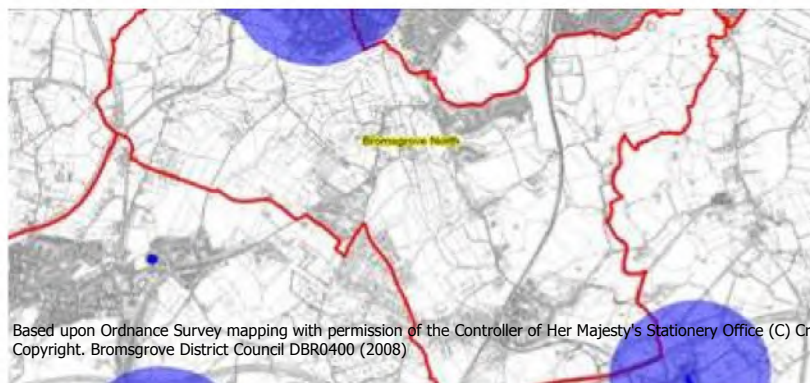
Provision of parks and gardens and amenity green space



Bromsgrove North

- 4.52 Application of the quantity standard indicates that there is sufficient provision of parks and gardens in the area to meet current and future demand.
- 4.53 When considering the application of the drivetime standard, it can be seen that all residents are within 15 minutes drivetime of a park either within Bromsgrove District or within neighbouring authorities.
- 4.54 Despite this, and despite the quantity of parks in the area, application of the local accessibility standard demonstrates that many residents are outside of the local catchment for parks and gardens.
- 4.55 There are two parks located in this area of Bromsgrove and these are situated in the north east of the analysis area in the Waseley and Beacon wards. Due to the location of these sites all residents in the Hillside ward are not within a 15 minute walk time of a park (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 - Deficiencies of parks and gardens in the Hillside ward



- 4.56 The provision of amenity green space in Bromsgrove North is below the recommended standard and when amalgamating the provision of parks and gardens and amenity green space the majority of residents in the Hillside ward do not have access to a park or amenity green space (Figure 4.2). This means that while residents do have access to larger parks within a drivetime distance, there is limited local open space to meet needs.

Figure 4.2 - Deficiencies of parks and gardens and amenity green space in the Hillside ward



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- 4.57 Although there is a lack of amenity green space and parks in the Hillside ward sporting and recreational opportunities are provided by the significant number of outdoor sports facilities in the ward, including Barnt Green Sports Ground. To an extent these sites therefore serve a dual function of sports facilities and informal recreation.
- 4.58 Barnt Green Parish Council Park (currently considered to be an amenity space) provides informal outdoor sports provision and a children’s play area. This site is situated in the centre of Barnt Green and essentially fulfils the role of a park in this area. In light of the lack of other open spaces, this site becomes a focal point of the community and provides access to a park for residents in Barnt Green and Cofton Hacket
- 4.59 Site assessments undertaken identified a number of issues with regards to maintenance at St Chad’s Recreation Ground and the risk assessment highlighted areas of the site as medium risk and in need of improvement. Similar issues were identified at Callowbrook Park, with litter being a particular issue at this site. Barnt Green Parish Council Park indicated that overall the quality of the site is high, although there is further potential to improve the site. At the time of the site visit, there were numerous benches and the site was clean and well maintained.
- 4.60 In light of the sufficient provision of parks and gardens in quantitative terms, and the good access to parks and open spaces within a 15 minute drivetime, in the short term, focus should be placed on maintaining and improving the quality of existing open spaces and ensuring that they are able to fulfil this dual role.
- 4.61 In addition to this, priority should be given to increasing access to existing sites in the area and to facilitating access to sites within a 15 minute drive time. This could be achieved through a network of other types of open spaces, such as green corridors. Enhancements to the quality of existing parks and gardens will also be important.

PG6	Seek to enhance the quality of sites in the area, striving to achieve the recommended quality vision. Improve the quality of existing sites considering the potential to upgrade one site to a park, particularly in the Barnt Green Area.
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Bromsgrove West

- 4.62 Accessibility mapping highlights a number of areas of deficiency in Bromsgrove West, with only residents in Catshill and Frankley able to access a park or garden within the recommended 15 minute walk time. Residents located in Hagley, Clent and Holy Cross, Romsley and Belbroughton are outside the local catchment of a park or garden (Figures 4.3 – 4.5). Quantitative analysis reinforces these deficiencies, with there being insufficient provision to meet current and future demand.
- 4.63 All residents in these areas are within the wider 15 minute catchment of a park.

Figure 4.3 – Deficiencies of parks and gardens in Hagley

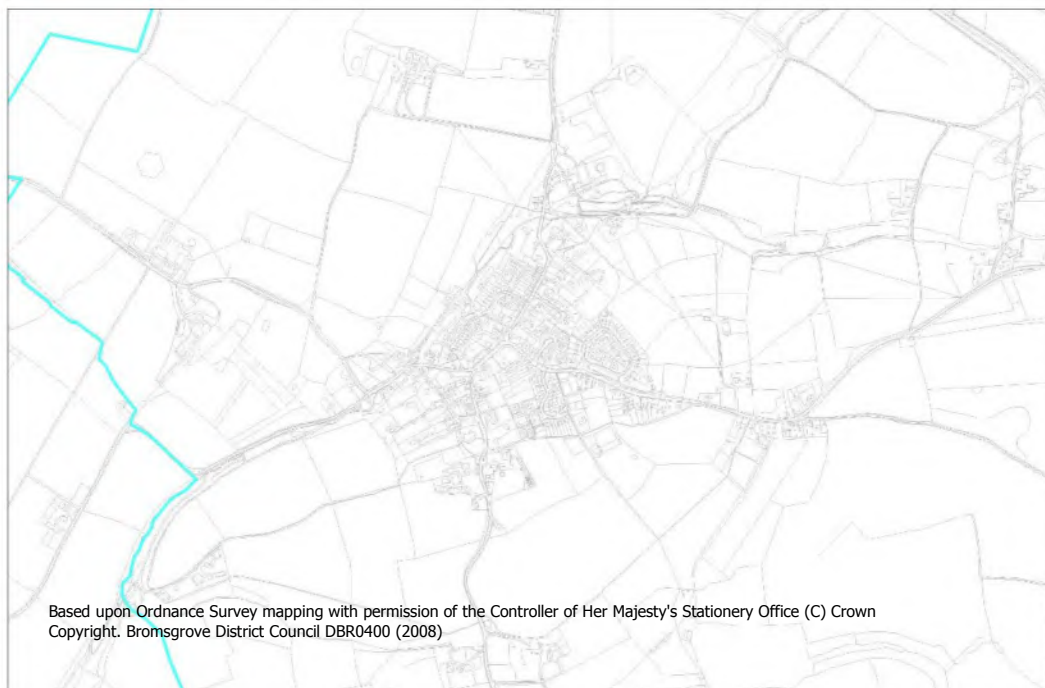


Figure 4.4 – Deficiencies of parks and gardens in Holy Cross and Romsley



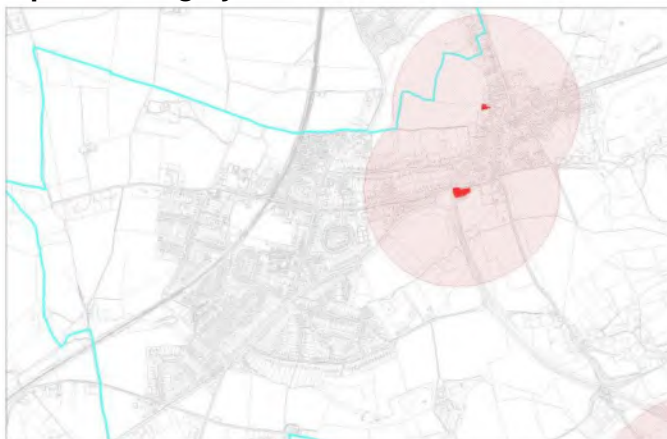
Figure 4.5 – Deficiencies of parks and gardens in Belbroughton



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- 4.64 Based on future population projections there will be a minor shortfall of 0.97 hectares by 2026. Analysis at a more local level indicates that while provision exceeds the standard in the majority of larger settlements in the area, provision in Hagley is insufficient to meet the minimum standard.
- 4.65 This is reinforced when combining the provision of parks and gardens and amenity green space. It can be seen that the majority of residents in Bromsgrove West have access to at least one of these types of open space within the local catchment area. Only residents in Hagley are outside the catchment of both amenity green space and parks (Figure 4.6). These residents are within the larger 15 minute drivetime catchment of a park.

Figure 4.6 – Deficiencies of parks and gardens and amenity green space in Hagley



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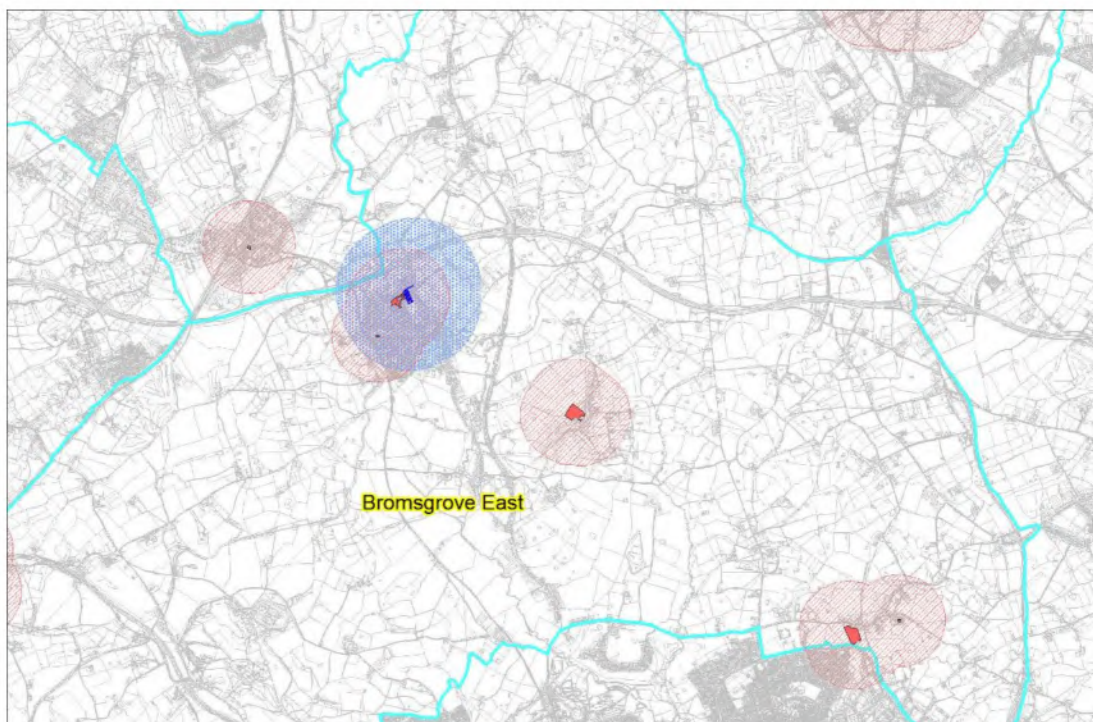
- 4.66 Although residents in Hagley do not have access to an amenity green space or park there is a good level of provision of other types of open space including natural open space, outdoor sports facilities and allotments. Although the provision of these types of open space does not negate the need for a park they do provide residents with a number of recreational and sporting opportunities.
- 4.67 Despite this, although the population of Hagley (approximately 5,600) is insufficient to generate the need for a large park, the application of the quantity standard would suggest that circa 1.5ha of parks would be appropriate in this town. This suggests that additional provision may be beneficial should the opportunity arise.
- 4.68 Outside of Hagley, the site assessment undertaken at Bournheath Recreation Ground indicates that the quality of this site is considered to be satisfactory. Improvements required focus on access issues, such as fences, gates and hedges. There are considered to be significant opportunities to improve this site.
- 4.69 Cleanliness and maintenance issues are identified as the main problems at Boleyn Road, with the qualitative assessment highlighting litter and overgrown vegetation as problems. Boleyn Road is acknowledged as site that experiences low usage.
- 4.70 Outside of Hagley the does not justify the provision of a new park. Therefore, the council should focus on enhancing the quality of existing parks and gardens in these areas. Should the opportunity arise, in order to provide residents of Hagley with access to informal open space, consideration should be given to the provision of a small pocket park in the area.

PG7	Seek to enhance the quality of parks and gardens in Bromsgrove West. Use the findings of the site assessments to identify priorities for improvement. Identify opportunities to provide a new small park within Hagley.
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Bromsgrove East

- 4.71 Application of the quantity standard indicates that there is insufficient provision of parks and gardens in Bromsgrove East to meet current and future demand. Only one park is located in this area of the district and accessibility mapping illustrates this shortfall with only residents in Alvechurch able to access a park or garden within the recommended 15 minute walk time (Figure 4.7 overleaf).
- 4.72 Despite this, all residents are within a 15 minute drivetime of a park.

Figure 4.7 – Deficiencies of parks and gardens in Bromsgrove East



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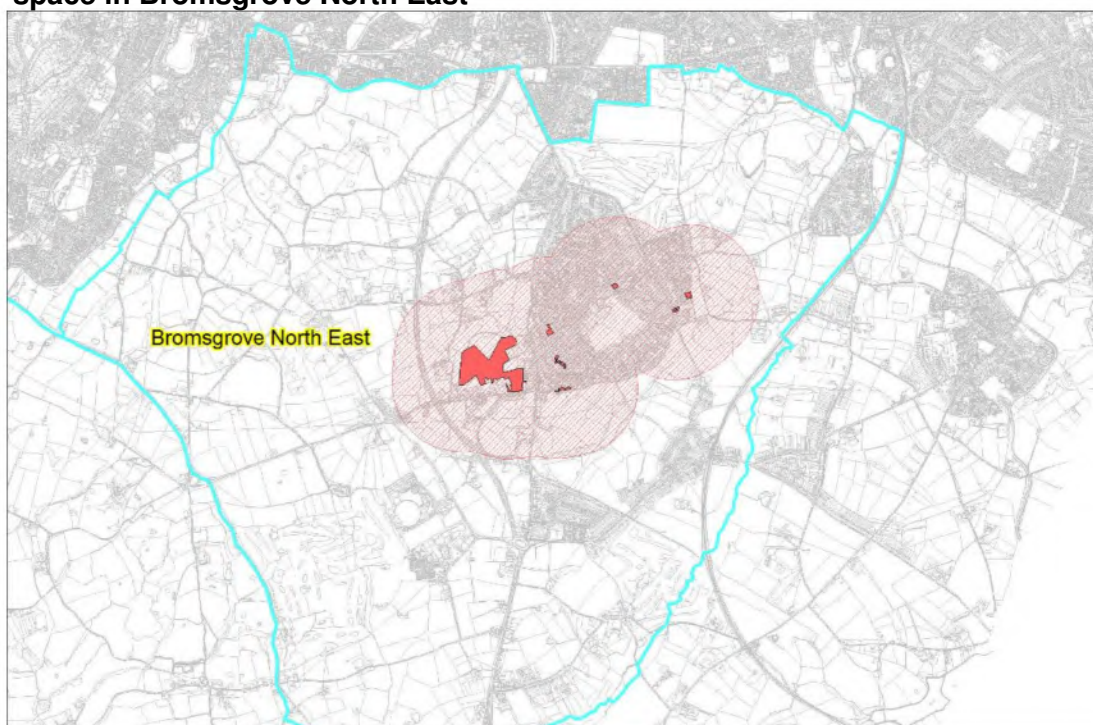
- 4.73 The provision of amenity green space in the area is sufficient to meet demand and accessibility mapping shows that the majority of residents have access to an amenity green space. While this does negate the need for parks, given that all residents are within the 15 minute drivetime catchment of facilities it means that new provision should not be prioritised.
- 4.74 Site assessments reveal that the quality of the only park in the area, Swans Length, is average. The requirement for improved maintenance at this site was identified. In light of this, the initial focus should be on improving the quality of this site.
- 4.75 Based on future population projections there will be a shortfall of 1.83 hectares of parks and gardens by 2026. Although this shortfall indicates there may be a requirement for a new park in Bromsgrove East the populations contained within those settlements outside the local catchment of a park do not warrant new provision. The existing amenity spaces therefore become of particular importance to the local communities and upgrades to these spaces should be considered. Additionally, residents will benefit from improvements to linkages and sustainable public transport links.

PG8	<p>Improve the quality of Swans Length in Alvechurch in line with the quality vision and findings of the site assessment.</p> <p>Consider upgrading amenity spaces in smaller settlements in Bromsgrove East, potentially to form a pocket park.</p>
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Bromsgrove North East

- 4.76 The largest quantitative shortfall of parks and gardens is found in this area. Application of the accessibility standard supports these shortfalls with no residents within a 15 minute walk of a park, although almost all are within the appropriate drivetime threshold.
- 4.77 Residents in Bromsgrove North East portrayed the greatest level of dissatisfaction with the provision of parks and gardens and based on 2026 population projections there will be a shortfall of 3.30 hectares of parks and gardens. This deficiency indicates that there may be a requirement for a new park and garden in the area.
- 4.78 Wythall Park is the largest site in the area (9.5ha) and contains a wide range of facilities including a children’s play area, multi use games area and outdoor sports facilities. This site is particularly important to the community and provides informal opportunities for recreation for residents of Wythall. The site is adjacent to the community hall and was perceived to be a high quality site.
- 4.79 The provision of amenity green space is sufficient to meet demand, however accessibility mapping indicates that sites are concentrated around Wythall and Hollywood limiting access for residents outside of these settlements (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8 – Deficiencies of parks and gardens and amenity green space in Bromsgrove North East



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SECTION 4 – PARKS AND GARDENS

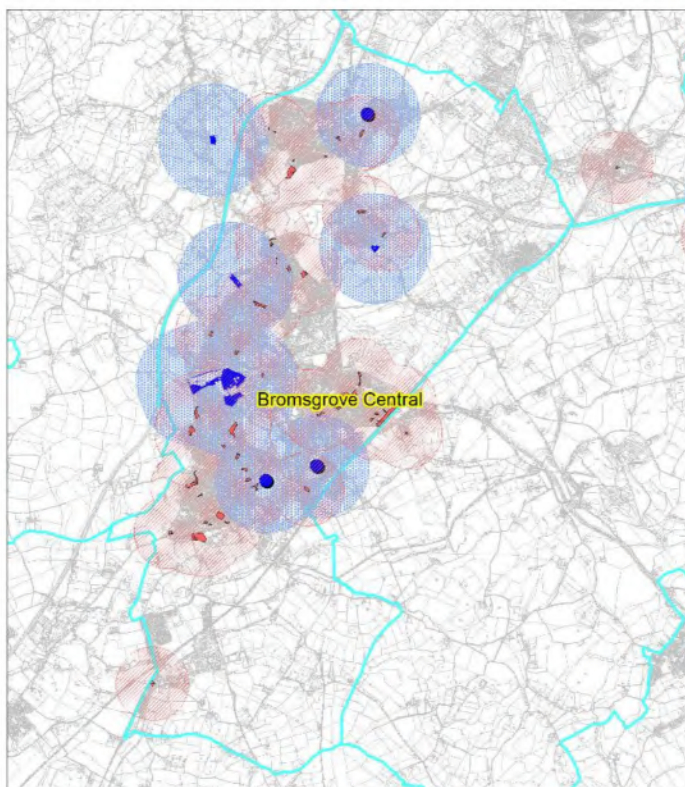
- 4.80 This suggests that while residents are within the recommended 15 minute drivetime of a park, there are shortfalls of local informal opportunities for recreation. While the population of any one settlement in this area is insufficient to warrant the provision of a park, consideration should be given to the provision of functional amenity areas in the larger settlements which can become the focal point of the community. This will be returned to in Section 6.

PG9	Maintain the quality of Wythall Park. Seek opportunities to provide small amenity spaces or pocket parks in areas outside of the local catchment for both parks and amenity spaces.
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Bromsgrove Central

- 4.81 The highest quantity of parks and gardens is located in Bromsgrove Central and application of the quantity standards indicates that there is sufficient provision to meet current and future demand. Despite there being adequate provision to meet demand, accessibility mapping indicates that a number of residents in the south and north of Bromsgrove Town are outside the recommended catchment of a park or garden (Figure 4.9).
- 4.82 There are higher expectations in the urban area and residents expect to have access to localised provision.

Figure 4.9 – Deficiencies of parks and gardens in Bromsgrove Central

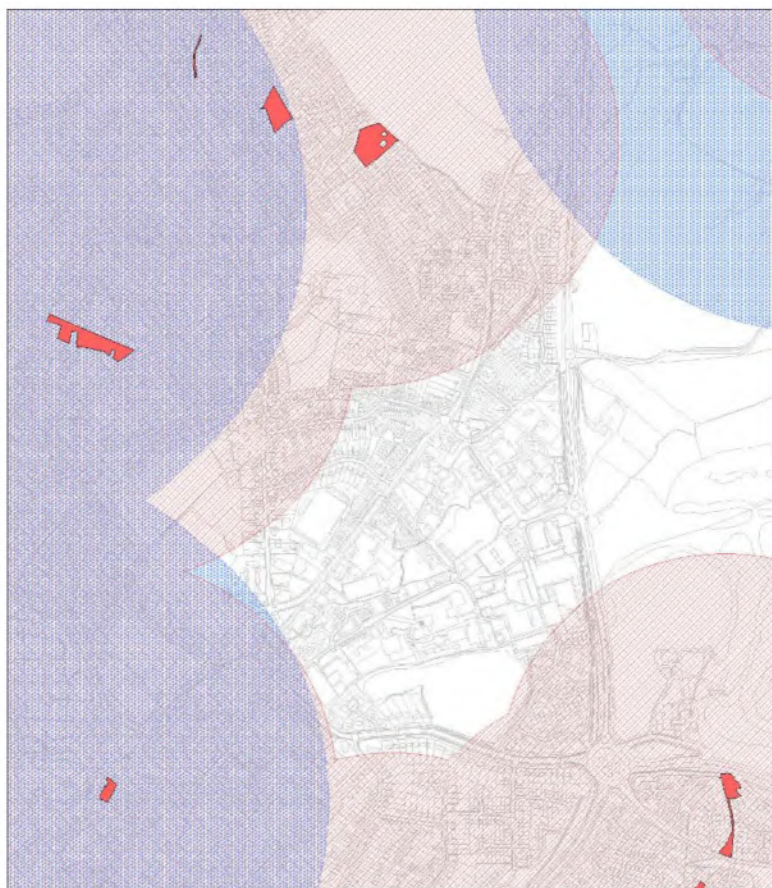


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- 4.83 When combining the provision of parks and gardens and amenity green space nearly all residents in Bromsgrove Central have access to at least one of these typologies within the recommended accessibility standards. Only residents in the south of Bromsgrove town centre, Burcot, Blackwell and Stoke Prior are unable to access a park or amenity green space (Figure 4.10– 4.12).

Figure 4.10 – Deficiencies of parks and gardens and amenity green space in the south of Bromsgrove town centre



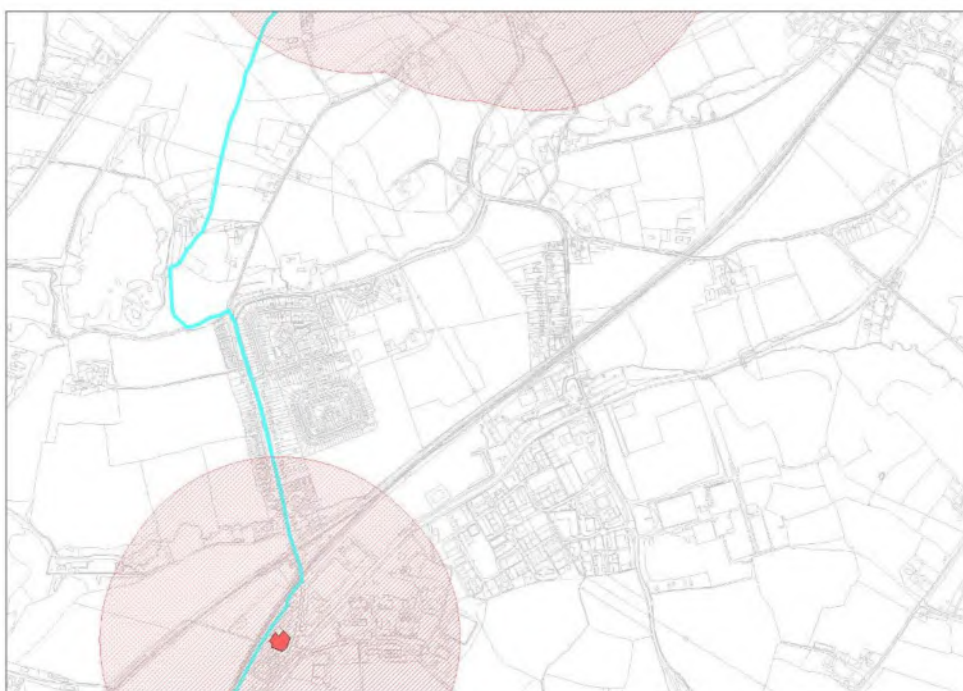
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Figure 4.11 – Deficiencies of parks and gardens and amenity greenspace in Burcot and Blackwell



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Figure 4.12 – Deficiencies of parks and gardens and amenity green space in Stoke Prior



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- 4.84 Sanders Park is located in this area of the district and is the largest park in Bromsgrove (11.15 hectares). This park was highlighted as a high quality site throughout consultation and identified as a site that attracts residents from across the district, including visitors. Contained within this park is a wide range of open spaces including provision for children and young people, allotments and outdoor sports facilities. The park holds a number of events throughout the year and is considered to be a strategic site in the district.
- 4.85 One of the objectives of the Sanders Park Management and Development Plan is to ensure that Sanders Park is welcoming and accessible to all possible users. In light of this objective and importance of Sanders Park, the council should improve access routes to this site, particularly focusing on providing green links for those residents who are currently outside of the appropriate catchment of a park.
- 4.86 Accessibility mapping illustrates that amenity green space sites and parks are located in close proximity to one another and provide the potential for a network of open spaces. To help alleviate existing accessibility deficiencies, the council should seek to develop a network of high quality open spaces to increase 'green linkages' between existing parks and gardens in the area.

PG10	Seek to develop a network of 'green linkages' between existing open spaces and parks and gardens.
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- 4.87 In areas where residents are outside of the local catchment area of both parks and amenity spaces, any opportunities to provide new spaces should be seized.
- 4.88 Excluding Sanders Park, site assessments undertaken highlight the need for improved maintenance at a number of sites in the Bromsgrove Central area. The findings of the site assessments should therefore be used to prioritise those sites in need of short term improvement.

PG11	Seek to enhance the quality of parks and gardens in Bromsgrove Central. Use the findings of the site assessments to prioritise those parks and gardens in need of short term qualitative enhancement. Longer term, identify opportunities to provide new parks in areas currently devoid of provision.
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Summary

- 4.89 Parks and gardens were highlighted as particularly valuable to local residents. The wide range of facilities available at this type of open space was seen to provide many recreational opportunities for residents. Parks were perceived to provide important functions for children and often considered to be a focal point of the community, particularly in rural areas of the district.
- 4.90 The role of parks and gardens in meeting targets to increase level of physical activity and improve health should also not be underestimated. The wider benefits of parks are wide reaching.

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- 4.91 The quality of parks and gardens is average. Site assessments identify a focus on the improvement of maintenance at parks and gardens.
- 4.92 Although increasing quality of existing parks and gardens in the district is highlighted as particularly important, application of the accessibility standards reveals that distribution of parks is uneven and there are some areas where residents are outside of the recommended distance thresholds.
- 4.93 It is therefore recommended that the key priorities for the future delivery of provision of parks in Bromsgrove, that should be addressed through the Local Development Framework (LDF) and/or other delivery mechanisms, are:
- maximise the role that parks can play in striving to increase participation in health and physical activity across the district
 - continue to promote activities and alternative means of exercise at parks to maximise usage
 - ensure that the LDF contains policies that protect parks from development
 - drive a strategic programme of qualitative improvements across the district to enhance the quality of parks
 - consider the designation of pocket parks within those settlements outside the catchment of a park
 - seek to develop a network of ‘green linkages’ between existing open spaces and parks and gardens to link neighbourhoods with green space
 - facilitate access to parks and gardens through the provision of sustainable public transport links.