

# **LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW**

## **OPEN SPACE PPG17 STUDY**

### **Final Report**



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## Executive Summary

1. This study examines Harrow's open spaces and indoor sports facilities from two points of view: an expert audit against established criteria, and a comprehensive appraisal, through consultation, of public expectation of different types of open space. The study has been designed to be compliant with Government requirements, as set out in PPG17 and associated guidance. It has been guided by the [Best Practice Guidance](#) and [Supplementary Planning Guidance](#) which supplement the London Plan, the Mayor of London's strategic planning document which provides the policy framework within which individual Boroughs must set their local planning policies.
2. The study provides the Council with an understanding of the quantity, quality and accessibility of local open spaces available for public use, and recommends standards of provision. It applies these standards to indicate how well current provision meets current demand, and also compares results across different areas of the Borough and thus looks at how even the provision of each type of open space is.
3. The sites examined in this study include, but are not limited to, those in the ownership or care of the local authority. The criterion for inclusion is that the site must be generally accessible to the public, regardless of ownership.
4. Open space is widely recognised as offering significant benefits to local people; it may be regarded as a universal service, that can offer something for everyone, regardless of age, disability, or other factors. Good quality open spaces provide opportunities for formal and informal recreation, including both physical activity and quiet reflection. They also offer opportunities for social interaction, the development of healthier lifestyles, and the development of social and community cohesion. But in addition to their functional roles, open spaces also provide significant amenity benefits, enhancing the appearance and liveability of an area, improving property values, attracting visitors into the local economy, providing havens for wildlife and species, and reducing environmental damage and pollution. Studies have shown that even those who do not use open spaces themselves, nevertheless value them and want to see them protected and enhanced.

5. This is the case in Harrow as well. People in this Borough, whether or not they are active or regular users of open space, believe strongly that it contributes to the quality of the local environment. They are less certain, though, that local open spaces offer something for everyone, and are clearly looking for improvements in some key areas of provision, in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. The main problems local people encounter in using open spaces in Harrow focus on cleanliness (especially dog control), maintenance and behaviour; these are often problems that compound one another.

### **Parks and gardens**

6. Parks and gardens are largely designed spaces that aim to provide a range of opportunities; they are used for exercise, but also for quiet reflection, and for play and recreation as well as for social interaction, community events, and enjoyment of nature. Parks in Harrow are often multifunctional spaces that offer a variety of experiences to a range of possible participants. There are 28 parks in the Borough (excluding Stanmore Country Park, which is counted as natural green space), and a majority of people are satisfied with current provision; nevertheless a substantial minority would like to see more space of this type, particularly in the central sub-area.
7. Park quality varies, but Canons Park, which has Green Flag status, achieves high scores on the audit. Residents' perceptions give above average scores generally, but indicate room for improvement in areas like cleanliness, planting and amenities; toilets, seating, and safety after dark attract negative perceptions.
8. The distribution of parks across the Borough is reasonably even, but some attract more visitors than others; popular sites include Canons Park and Pinner Memorial. Most people walk to their local park, and make a journey of no more than 10-15 minutes to do so.
9. Our recommended **quantity** standard highlights a deficiency of provision in the south and central parts of the Borough, and is set at a level that tends to address the disparities in provision between different parts of the Borough, rather than to achieve an overall increase in quantity. Our **quality** standard sets a benchmark which would require parks to attain a level of quality similar to that of Chandos



Recreation Ground. Our **accessibility** standard aims to ensure that everyone has access to a park within reasonable reach, and indicates deficiencies in this respect in the southeastern and southwestern sub-areas in particular.

## Play

10. Children choose a wide variety of spaces to play in, but for this study's purposes the analysis is limited to those settings provided specifically for children's play, which means primarily equipped play spaces where children can come and go as they please. This covers play spaces designed for specific age ranges, including space provided for young people as well as those aimed at children.
11. Harrow has 42 equipped play areas, and a further four open access multi-use games areas suitable for informal games. These focus primarily on the needs of younger children; just six play spaces are provided specifically for teenage users. Just over half of residents want to see more children's play space, while almost everyone agrees on the need for more teenage play space.
12. Quality scores are mixed, with some excellent sites counterbalanced by some that are poor. Resident perceptions are that spaces are well located and accessible, safe and well used; but there are doubts about seating, the age range supported at different sites, and cleanliness. Teenage spaces get very low ratings and are criticised heavily for lighting, attractiveness and maintenance, and safety.
13. Although half of residents never visit a play space, those who do visit tend to visit quite often; over a quarter visit at least every two weeks. Most visits are made on foot, and involve a journey of less than 10-15 minutes. Pinner Memorial Park, Canons and Centenary are the sites most frequently mentioned.
14. Our recommended **quantity** standard calls for an increase in provision that we believe is realistic, although challenging. Application of this standard highlights a significant deficiency in all five sub-areas. On **quality**, our benchmark site is Stanmore Recreation Ground, and other sites should be brought up to this standard as a minimum. Our **accessibility** standard sets different catchments according to the age-group of the child the site is aimed at. Many areas of the

Borough are deficient at all levels of play provision, but the position on teenage provision is acute.

### **Amenity Green Space**

15. These spaces, characteristically found in housing areas and other developments, have several functional uses, including space for dog walking, informal play, and planting, as well as providing visual relief from development. In Harrow, there is a total of over 38 hectares of space of this type, three quarters of which is in the north of the Borough. Residents say this space is mostly used for dog walking and for informal play, two activities which are not necessarily compatible. Half of all residents think there is too little space of this type, a view which is more prominent in the south of the Borough.
16. Residents tend to agree that the quality of these spaces is reasonable; the audit also found little evidence of litter or dog mess, two common problems on spaces of this type, but some spaces are being damaged by unauthorised parking. The area most commonly identified for improvement is maintenance.
17. Our recommended standard for **quantity** calls for a substantial increase in the quantity of this space. On **quality**, our benchmark site is Berridge Green, and bringing other spaces up to this level should address the issues raised in consultation. To ensure **accessibility** to spaces capable of supporting typical activity, our accessibility standard calls for a space of at least 0.1 Ha within 400m of every resident. Application of these standards highlights deficiencies in both quantity and accessibility in the south of the Borough, and some accessibility issues in the north as well.

### **Natural and Semi-natural Green Space**

18. These are spaces which have been naturally colonised by plants and wildlife, and can take the form of land, water and other natural features; their primary purpose is to provide biodiversity and nature conservation, but they have secondary roles in promoting health, environmental education, and recreational

enjoyment of nature. For this study, our analysis is limited to those spaces which are accessible to the public.

19. There are 28 sites of this nature in Harrow, including some designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and three Local Nature Reserves, including Stanmore Country Park. Around 85% of the space, and two thirds of the sites, are in the northeast of the Borough. There is a significant level of demand for more space of this type, with a majority of residents in all areas of the Borough calling for more provision, a demand which is most marked in the south-west of the Borough.
20. The audit results show quality to be good for most sites, in particular the SSSIs such as Bentley Priory; some smaller sites are of moderate quality. Residents' perceptions are that quality is reasonable, with above average scores for safety, biodiversity and path quality; accessibility for wheelchairs and buggies is scored more circumspectly, though.
21. Two thirds of residents use this type of space, and half of these do so at least once a fortnight. The most commonly visited sites include Bentley Priory and Stanmore Country Park, but also Ruislip Lido and Rickmansworth Aquadrome. Residents believe sites cater well for dog walkers, walkers and joggers but less well for equestrians, mountain bikers and cyclists. Access is primarily dependent on the use of a car.
22. Our proposed standard for **quantity** recognises the geographical unevenness of current provision, and calls for an increased level of provision outside the north-east of the Borough. This standard highlights significant deficiencies in the south but is already met across the north of the Borough. Our benchmark site for **quality** is Stanmore Country Park, and other sites should be brought up to at least this level of quality. For **accessibility**, we recommend that everyone should have an accessible natural green space within 1km of home. There are large areas of the Borough that are deficient against this standard.

### **Green corridors**

23. Access corridors such as footpaths and railway lines provide linear landscapes that also offer opportunities for natural colonisation, and provide linkages for

wildlife as well as people. They provide functional spaces for travelling without encountering road traffic, but also environments suited for exercise such as walking, jogging and equestrianism.

24. There are 18 green corridors in Harrow, mainly in the north of the Borough; three of these are part of the old Belmont railway. A significant majority of residents would like to see an increase in provision of this type of space, especially in the west and central areas of the Borough.
25. Quality scores are low, and many corridors are in poor condition with low standards of cleanliness and maintenance and poor quality path surfaces. Consequently these spaces get little use at present.
26. PPG17 indicates that there is no sensible way of setting a standard for green corridors. We nevertheless recommend that the Council's policy should promote the use of green corridors to link existing green spaces, and should exploit more fully the opportunities provided by existing linear features.

### **Indoor sport**

27. Indoor sport includes purpose-built multi-functional facilities such as leisure centres and swimming pools, but also encompasses fitness centres and the like, as well as those community centres and similar buildings used for sports purposes. They also include schools whose facilities are available for community use.
28. Harrow has nine swimming pools, twenty-eight indoor sports halls, and nineteen health and fitness suites; the Borough also has a tennis centre, an indoor bowls club and a gymnastic centre, and several school-based facilities for dance and other activities. There are, in addition, several community centres used to a varying degree for sports. A majority of people want more space, but a significant minority are content with current quantities of indoor sports space.
29. Quality scores vary but Harrow Leisure Centre, the principal local site, gets generally good scores. Improvements in cleaning, and in the condition of showers and changing facilities, are the main areas where attention is needed.
30. Those who use indoor sports facilities tend to do so fairly regularly, with weekly visiting not unusual, though there is also a high level of casual visiting. Harrow

Leisure Centre is by far the most visited facility locally. Cars are normally used for this type of recreation.

31. Our recommended standards for **quantity** call for no change in levels of swimming provision, or in health and fitness provision, but a substantial increase in the amount of sports hall space. Applying this standard would mean no surplus or deficiency in swimming pool or health/fitness provision, but a significant shortfall in sports halls will continue to arise through to 2026. Minimum **quality** standards have been set based on the Quest ratings, and these would require modest improvement at Harrow Leisure Centre and more significant improvement at Hatch End. Our **accessibility** standard is based on a 20 minute drive time, which means the whole Borough is covered under normal driving circumstances.

## Outdoor sport

32. For the purposes of this study, outdoor sport encompasses playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities such as bowling greens and tennis courts, together with ancillary facilities such as changing rooms and showers. Participation in outdoor sports in Harrow is on a par with the national picture, but low in the context of London.
33. A total of nearly 160 Ha of space in Harrow is given over to sports pitches, which are distributed across the Borough, but with a greater level of provision in the northwest sub-area. . In addition there are 14 Multi-use Games Areas (MUGAs), five synthetic turf pitches (STPs), 11 bowling greens and 114 tennis courts on 24 sites. Residents are broadly happy with levels of provision, with a substantial minority wanting more, especially in the south of the Borough.
34. Only 15% of Harrow's football pitches rate as good or excellent, but cricket pitches score very well, and rugby also has good quality pitches. Tennis and bowls also generally have good quality facilities, and the MUGAs and STPs offer good quality as well. Changing accommodation scores vary widely, with local authority facilities scoring poorly; facilities for women are generally very poor, or limited, and would deter participation. Half of those using sports pitches travel by car; most of the rest walk.

35. Our recommended **quantity** standard calls for a modest increase in provision of pitches. Applying this standard highlights deficiencies in the central and southwestern subareas. Our **quality** standards would require a significant improvement in football pitch quality, and a slight improvement in rugby; the benchmark sites are Zoom Leisure (football), and Grove Field (rugby), Harrow Recreation Ground (cricket), North Harrow Tennis club, and Stanmore Recreation Ground (bowls). Our benchmark for changing accommodation is the site at Saddlers Mead. Our accessibility standard is a 15 minute actual walking distance, and most of the area is adequately covered for pitches; there are deficiencies in the north for bowls, and across the borough for MUGAs and STPs.

## Allotments

36. Allotments are areas of land set aside for the cultivation of produce, and they are valuable because in addition to this functional role they support social interaction, health, and sustainability. They are particularly important in denser-populated areas where garden space is limited or absent. There are 37 allotment sites in Harrow, and over 1,350 plots; the waiting list for plots (not usually a precise indicator of demand) suggests a substantial latent demand for more provision. There are no allotment sites at all in the northeastern sub-area. A majority of people think the quantity of provision is about right, but a substantial minority want more; demand is highest in the southeast.
37. Quality scores are mixed, and poorer quality sites are more commonly found in the south of the Borough.
38. Our recommended **quantity** standard would provide a modest increase in provision. We suggest that this, together with a review of the waiting list and the potential of two currently unused sites, would meet much of the existing demand. This standard does at present generate a deficiency especially in the central and northeastern sub-areas. Our benchmark site for **quality** is Headstone and improvement to this level would address many concerns raised in consultation. An analysis of existing patterns of use leads us to an accessibility standard

based on the number of plots on each site, and applying this standard means that most of the Borough outside the northeast sub-area is adequately covered.

## **Cemeteries and churchyards**

39. Cemeteries and churchyards are primarily functional spaces in which the dead are buried, but they can have significant secondary roles as places of quiet reflection, and as environmental and wildlife havens, especially in the urban context. There are 14 burial grounds in Harrow, and these are mostly full other than for specific religious requirements; burials now are directed to the cemetery at Carpenders Park, in the care of Brent Council. Cremations are normally undertaken at Ruislip, but Harrow cemeteries do offer facilities for interment of cremated remains.
40. Residents are broadly happy with the level of provision of burial space and there is little pressure for increased provision. Options exist for possible re-use of old grave sites but are not currently being explored and have yet to win widespread public support.
41. Cemetery sites vary in quality; residents comment favourably on cleanliness, and on daytime safety, but are less positive about the care of plots and headstones, and are critical of a lack of seating.
42. The proximity of cemetery space to residents' homes is not normally a factor in visiting; people tend to go to those places that have personal meaning for them, not necessarily the nearest one. In Harrow, relatively few people ever visit a cemetery, and those who do, do so infrequently. Clamp Hill and Pinner are the sites most visited by local people.
43. Our recommended standard for **quantity** is based on a projected need for 180-195 new grave spaces per annum, a demand which can be met for the time being at Carpenders Park. On **quality**, our benchmark site is Pinner New cemetery and other sites should be brought up to that level; we also suggest adoption of the Charter for the Bereaved as a quality tool. There is no **accessibility** standard for cemeteries.

## **Civic Space**

44. Civic spaces are typically hard-surfaced pedestrian areas such as market squares and piazzas, providing a setting for civic buildings and public events. There are fifteen of these spaces in Harrow. A slight majority of people think that this provision is adequate, but a substantial minority want to see more.
45. Most sites score reasonably well for quality, but residents are more cautious in their opinions. They give reasonable scores for important attributes such as access, safety during the day, and lighting, but are less positive about seating, and safety after dark.
46. Civic space is by definition normally accessible space. It is not normally a destination in itself but rather plays a supporting role in providing a venue for activities of different types. Most people visit civic space from time to time, and many are regular visitors (for instance, as commuters or shoppers).
47. Our recommended standard for civic space is essentially focussed on quality and inclusion, rather than on quantity or accessibility. We recommend an approach that ensures clean and safe places that enhance a sense of place and promote cohesion.



**Table of proposed standards**

Typology	Quantity standard	Quality standard	Accessibility standard
Parks and gardens	0.66 Hectares per 1000 population Emphasis to be given to increasing provision in the southeast, southwest and central sub-areas	A quality score of 81.5% A value score of 80% Higher scoring parks should aspire to the Green Flag standard	Accessibility Standard District Park 1200 kilometres Local Park 800 metres Small Open Space 400 metres Pocket Park 400 metres Linear Park wherever achievable
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	Provision should be made of at least 0.4 hectares of accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace per 1000 population in the South East, Central, South West and North West sub-areas. In the North East sub-area existing provision should be retained.  A minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population (which can be included in the quantity standard set above).  The benchmark site for quality and value is Chandos Recreation Ground	The quality standard is 72.5 %. The value standard is 80%. The benchmark site for quality and value is Stanmore Country Park.	The recommended Accessibility Standard is that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace within one kilometre actual walking distance of home.
Amenity Greenspace	0.31 hectares per 1000 people	Quality score of 83.8% Value Score of 80%	Residents should have at least one amenity greenspace of at least 0.1 Ha in size within 400m of where they live.

Typology	Quantity standard	Quality standard	Accessibility standard
Play	4 square metres of dedicated playable space per child At least three youth spaces specifically designed to accommodate the needs of teenagers, within in each sub-area	Location 89% Play Value 85% Care and Maintenance 73% Overall 79% The benchmark site is Stanmore Recreation Ground.	A Doorstep Playable Space within 100m walking distance A Local Playable Space facility within 400m walking distance A Neighbourhood Playable Space facility within 400m walking distance A Youth Space within 800 metres walking distance
Churchyards and Cemeteries		The quality standard for cemeteries is 87% for quality and 90% for value. We also recommend adoption of the Charter for the Bereaved as a means of raising quality standards.	
Civic Space		A civic space that is attractive to all sections of the community and which functions as a setting where people meet, and where cultures mix.	
Allotments	0.18 hectares per 1000 people	The quality standard for allotments is 77.1%. The benchmark site for quality and value is Headstone Allotments.	50 or more plots: 1200m 21 to 50 plots: 900m 20 or fewer plots: 600m

Typology	Quantity standard	Quality standard	Accessibility standard
Outdoor sports facilities	0.78 Hectares per 1000 population.	<p>The recommended quality standards for sports pitches are:-</p> <p>Football 71%</p> <p>Cricket 84%</p> <p>Rugby 71%</p> <p>Minimum quality standard for bowling greens is 81.5%.</p> <p>Minimum quality standard for tennis courts is 87.5%.</p> <p>Minimum standard for changing facilities is 63% .Changing facilities for women should be brought up to this minimum standard as a priority.</p> <p>All new natural grass pitches and bowling greens should meet the Performance Quality Standard (PQS).</p>	<p>Catchment area of 1,200 metres actual walking distance is applied for all outdoor sports. This is based on an approximate 15 minute walking time.</p> <p>Synthetic Turf Pitches – 20 minute drive time</p>
Indoor sport	<p>Swimming Pools 7.17m<sup>2</sup> per 1000 population</p> <p>Sports Halls 102 m<sup>2</sup> per 1000 population</p> <p>Health and fitness 4.5 stations per 1000 population</p>	<p>The recommended quality standard is a score of 78% on the Indoor Sports Facilities Quality Assessment.</p> <p>Quest scores as follows:</p> <p>Harrow LC 70%</p> <p>Hatch End Pool 70%</p> <p>Aspire NTC 75%</p> <p>Centres to meet the requirements of the DDA.</p>	<p>Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools – 20 minute drive time</p>

## **Introduction**

### **Background**

- 1.1 Open space offers significant benefits to the resident population. It is also a visitor attraction, sustaining and improving the local environment and thus making an important contribution to quality of life. Open space can also attract people to live and work in an area; green space and recreational opportunity contribute significantly to perceptions of the attractiveness of a locality. Harrow is just one Borough forming part of the North-West segment of the London conurbation and, inevitably, Harrow's open spaces are also used by residents from neighbouring Boroughs. Equally, Harrow's residents also make use of space in adjoining Boroughs.
- 1.2 Ashley Godfrey Associates was appointed in June 2009 to carry out a peer review of the Council's existing PPG17 study, undertaken in 2005, and to make recommendations as to its robustness and fitness for purpose.
- 1.3 The commission for this study followed that review, which examined the previous study and found that it would be unlikely to be a robust, up-to-date basis on which to develop standards and future policy for open space in the Borough. It had also been adversely affected by the passage of time and the changes that had taken place in Harrow over the intervening period, and we therefore agreed with the Council that a new study should be commissioned. We have nevertheless drawn on this earlier study in some limited ways, such as in referencing their consultation work where this is sufficiently reliable and where it continues to be pertinent.
- 1.4 This report is a technical study, informed by Government and Mayor of London guidance, that has been formulated from community consultation and an audit of selected types of open space. Standards for open space provision have been formulated to enable an assessment of current and future provision. The report will also support further work on the standards for different types of open space, the Council's Open Spaces Strategy, and future development planning.

- 1.5 The results of this study will contribute to the Council's approach to green space by identifying unmet and under-met need, providing information about usage, attitudes and values in relation to sport, recreation and open space, and allowing the development of a vision and strategic objectives that reflect these across the whole of the diverse community that makes up the Borough's population. The study will inform the Local Development Framework (LDF) and will be an important contributor to the Council's wider development plans including the provision of open space within future housing development, and any areas scheduled for regeneration.

### **The study**

- 1.6 The objectives of the study are as follows:
- To undertake an audit of open space, sport and recreation provision in Harrow
  - To provide information about existing community needs and aspirations in relation to sport, recreation and open space, covering both qualitative and quantitative aspects, and exploring the views of users and non-users of the existing provision;
  - To analyse how these results vary according to the different demographic characteristics of different groups and communities within the Borough;
  - To develop a set of appropriate standards for Harrow, giving a hierarchy of provision that would meet the need of the local community as determined in the community needs analysis.
- 1.7 The purpose of the audit is to:
- identify what provision exists, where it is located and to attribute a specific typology to each greenspace relative to the way it is used for sport or recreation
  - evaluate the quality and value of different types of greenspaces or sport and recreation provision

- identify the features or characteristics of spaces that need to be improved
- identify the current quantity of each form of provision as an essential step in identifying quantitative provision standards
- map the audit findings using the Geographical Information System (GIS)

The community needs assessment aimed to determine a number of issues:

- The extent to which local residents use different types of open space within the Borough
- Which ones they use, and why they choose to use those spaces and not others
- Which people do not use open space, and why that is
- The distances they travel, or are prepared to travel, to use different types of open space
- The modes of transport they use when accessing different types of local open space
- Their views, both positive and negative, about the open spaces they currently use
- Their expectations about levels of provision of different types of facilities in those open spaces
- Their expectations and aspirations in relation to improving open space provision, in terms of the types of space available and accessible to them, and the quality of those spaces
- The barriers which prevent people making more (or indeed any) use of existing local space provision
- The ways in which the results of these questions vary according to the demographic and geographic characteristics of the respondent

1.8 The study also required the research to be set in the context of a review of existing policy and guidance such as Natural England's Accessible Natural

Green Space Standard, Fields in Trust's *Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play*, Mayor of London guidance and planning guidance such as PPG17, the Consultation paper on a new Planning Policy Statement: Planning for a Natural and Healthy Environment and the Draft Replacement London Plan.

1.9 The study has therefore

- Reviewed relevant national and regional strategies, to ensure that the report includes and recognises the major changes that influence parks, play and open spaces provision.
- Reviewed existing policies and standards in relevant local strategies including the Council's Corporate Plan and the local Community Strategy, identifying any tensions between guidance, strategic direction, and the results of the community needs assessment.
- Identified those areas that are served by existing provision by mapping the catchment areas for each type of provision, taking into account barriers and severance factors.
- Identified those areas lying outside the average distance that people are willing to travel to open spaces.
- Identified deficiencies in the quantity of provision.

1.10 From this, the study has established:

- areas where there is a deficiency in terms of accessibility.
- areas where there is a quantitative deficiency.
- sites where quality fails to meet the established standard.

1.11 We have undertaken a comprehensive analysis of the current provision and the views and aspirations of local people, to develop an appropriate **set of local standards** for Harrow's sport, recreation and open space provision.

1.12 Specifically, we have

- Developed standards for the quantity of provision of appropriate elements within each typology of open space, taking into account the location of existing provision, community views and levels of use.
- Determined quality standards for provision based on community expectations as expressed in the research. We have established appropriate quality benchmarks for different forms of provision, where appropriate reflecting quality standards set nationally or by comparable authorities.
- Established a hierarchy of open space accessibility based on size, purpose and function, and distance thresholds based on current patterns and the evidence of maps, and recognising the barriers to movement that exist within the district.

**Population and local context**

1.13 The London Borough of Harrow is located in Outer London, to the northwest of the City, and covers a total of 5,044 hectares. It is bordered by four other Outer London Boroughs, namely Brent, Ealing, Hillingdon and Barnet, and by the two Hertfordshire districts of Hertsmere and Three Rivers to the north. The area includes some historic towns such as Harrow-on-the-Hill, Stanmore and Wealdstone, but also a good deal of what has become known as “metro-land”, areas of low-density housing developed by, or as a result of, railway development in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. There are also some areas of higher housing density in the southeast and southwest of the Borough, while the northern fringe of the Borough includes a substantial area of Green Belt, which represents around a fifth of the total land area of the Borough.

1.14 The most up-to-date population projections for Harrow are those contained in the GLA’s 2008 RND Ward Population Projections Low. These take account of the current London Plan housing targets and completions up to 2008 as well as the Boroughs’ housing trajectory. The table below sets out the population projections for Harrow for the years 2010, 2016, 2021 and 2026.



The 2008 Ward Population Projections have been aggregated into the areas described in **Table 1.1**.

**Table 1.1: Population Projections (GLA Low Projections)**

Year	Total Population
2001	210,717
2010	220,688
2016	229,937
2021	229,373
2026	229,018
2010 as a % of 2026	3.77% (8,330)

1.15 The 2008 Ward Population Projections show that in 2010 there are 220,688 residents in Harrow. This represents an increase of 6.7% since the 2001 census. The proportion of males to females is 48.6% to 51.4%. The population is projected to increase to 229,018 by the end of the Plan period in 2026. This represents an increase of 3.77% overall in the period 2010 to 2026.

1.16 The age profile of Harrow's residents in 2010 shows that 19.2% of the population is composed of young people aged 0 to 15, similar to London overall at 19.3% and higher than England at 18.8%. This is projected to increase to 20.1% by 2021 but will fall back to 19.6% in 2026. 65% of Harrow's population is of working age<sup>1</sup>, compared with 66.9% for London and 62.1% for England. Those over state retirement age comprise 15.7% of Harrow's population, higher than London's rate of 13.8% but below that of England as a whole at 19.1%. The proportion of Harrow's population aged over 65 is projected to increase to 17.2% by 2026. The average age of the population is 35.5, compared to an average for England and Wales of 39<sup>2</sup>. The age breakdowns are shown in **Table 1.2** and the age profiles for the individual years are shown in **Chart 1.2**.

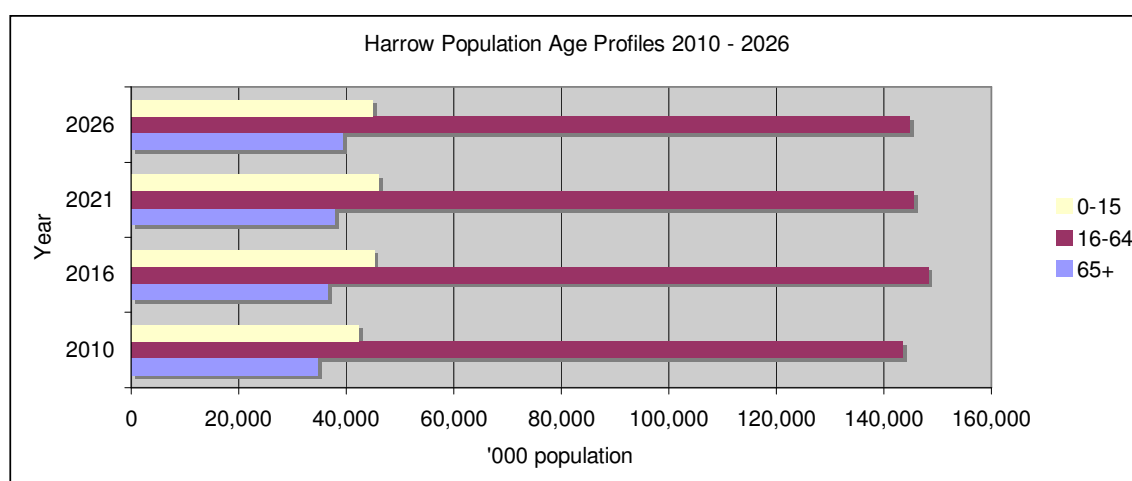
<sup>1</sup> Working age is defined as 16-64 for men and 16-59 for women.

<sup>2</sup> The 'median' average has been used here which means half the population are older and half the population are younger.

**Table 1.2: Age profiles in population projections**

Year	Age 0-15	Age 16-64	Age 65+
2010	42,432 (19.2%)	143,538 (65.0%)	34,718 (15.7%)
2016	45,155 (19.6%)	148,246 (64.5%)	36,537 (15.9%)
2021	46,022 (20.1%)	145,498 (63.4%)	37,854 (16.5%)
2026	44,933 (19.6%)	144,725 (63.2%)	39,360 (17.2%)

**Chart 1.2: Age Profiles**



1.17 Population density for Harrow is 44 people per hectare (pph) compared to London as a whole which is 48 pph. Density varies from 18 pph in Canons to over 100 pph in areas of West Harrow and Rayners Lane<sup>3</sup>.

### ***Ethnic origin***

1.18 Demographically the most striking feature of the local population is its ethnic diversity, with almost half the population drawn from non-White ethnic minority communities, of which the largest single group are of Indian ethnicity. There are smaller populations of Afro-Caribbean, Chinese and other ethnic groups in the Borough, and a corresponding diversity of religious conviction with significant numbers of Hindu adherents, as well as a substantial Jewish population. Figures for Harrow show the ethnic minority population<sup>4</sup> growing

<sup>3</sup> About Harrow

<sup>4</sup> This definition of 'ethnic minority' includes all people in the Borough who are not White

from 41.8% in mid-2001 to 45.1% in 2007<sup>5</sup>. The Census showed a figure of 41.2% for the ethnic minority population of Harrow in 2001<sup>6</sup>, making the Borough one of nine local authorities in England with an ethnic 'minority' majority. According to the GLA projections the structure of the population is also expected to change, with increases in all non-White ethnic population groups, and a corresponding decrease in the White population.

- 1.19 In general the White British group has an older age profile with 59% of residents of working age and 23% of retirement age. In contrast over 68% of Harrow's minority ethnic group population (non White British) are of working age and only 11% are of retirement age. The non-White ethnic populations are also unevenly distributed within the Borough, with wards such as Kenton East, Queensbury, Edgware and Kenton West having over 60% of their residents from an ethnic minority, whilst in Pinner and Pinner South the figure was nearer 30%.

## **Health**

- 1.20 The overall proportion of the adult population in Harrow who are obese has been estimated to be 19.6%, although there is some variation by ward. The Schools Measurement Programme, which measures the weight of children in the reception year and Year 6 in Harrow schools, shows that 9.4% of children were obese in the reception year, a proportion that had increased to 17.9% by Year six.
- 1.21 The Active People Survey 3 (April 08/09) shows Harrow to be one of the least active areas in the UK. The National Indicator 8 result - Adult participation in 30 minutes, moderate intensity sport - for Harrow is 14.84%, a decrease of 4.07% since Active People Survey 1 (October 05/06). This is significantly lower than the adjoining authorities of Brent 18.30%, Ealing 18.75% and Hillingdon 21.47%.

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<sup>5</sup> 2007 ONS Population Estimates by Ethnic Group for Harrow

<sup>6</sup> The Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) population is defined in the 2001 Census as the population from all ethnic groups with the exception of White British.

- 1.22 The Harrow Children's Plan 2009 - 2011 contains a statement from the Youth Parliament, that the most important issues affecting young people in Harrow is a lack of leisure and social activities.
- 1.23 Harrow has an overall life expectancy at birth of 79.2 years for men and 83.2 years for women.<sup>7</sup> This is 1 year and 2 years respectively above the average for London. Although premature mortality due to coronary heart disease (CHD) is reducing, the prevalence rate of CHD is increasing. The Association of Public Health Observatories (APHO) prevalence model estimates that there are currently 7,800 people living in Harrow who will develop CHD.

### ***Deprivation***

- 1.24 Harrow as a Borough is not deprived. It is one of the top eight most affluent Boroughs in London. However, it also ranks among the top eight Boroughs with high rates of low income linked to employment and is also ranked in the worst 16 Boroughs for 'pay inequalities'<sup>8</sup> and 'low pay by residency'<sup>9</sup>.
- 1.25 The Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for 2004 and 2007 show that multiple deprivation in Harrow deteriorated in that interval. For income alone, the IMD measure (2007) showed that 20 Super Output Areas (SOA)<sup>10</sup> in Harrow fell within the top 20% of England's most deprived areas. IMD 2007 shows that the most deprived electoral wards in Harrow are Roxbourne with a deprivation score of 22.2, Greenhill (20.69), Wealdstone (20.37) and Marlborough (18.52). Moreover, Roxbourne and Stanmore Park has two of England's most deprived super output areas (SOA).
- 1.26 Child poverty is defined as children living in a household that receives a means-tested benefit. Between 2007 and 2008 child poverty affected 24% of the children in Harrow, a rate of child poverty that is higher than the average

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<sup>7</sup> Health Profile 2009, Association of Public Health Observatories

<sup>8</sup> The distribution of hourly pay shows inequalities within and between boroughs. London's Poverty Profile, May 2009

<sup>9</sup> The proportion of employees paid less than £7.50 per hour by borough. London's Poverty Profile, May 2009

<sup>10</sup> Super Output Areas (SOAs) are used for the collection and publication of small area statistics. SOAs are more similar in size of population than, for example, electoral wards. They are also intended to be stable, enabling the improved comparison and monitoring of policy over time.

for England. There are two high SOA areas for income affecting children in Roxbourne (including Rayners Lane Estate), and a third in Wealdstone.

## Methodology

### A Typology of Open Space

- 1.27 Open space is defined in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground.
- 1.28 Government Guidance indicates that open space should be taken to mean all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can also act as a visual amenity.
- 1.29 The typology for Harrow largely follows that set out in PPG17, the Companion Guide to PPG17 and the Mayor's Best Practice Guidance<sup>11</sup>, but covers all those types of open space which the Council wished us to examine. This is shown in **Table 1.3**. There are some types of open space which have been deliberately excluded including:
- 1.30 'SLOAP' (space left over after planning) – this term describes spaces that are incidental to development, too small or irregular in shape to be usable, but which may nevertheless create maintenance and other obligations.
- 1.31 Other incidental areas of land that do not have a specific use, such as farmland, post-industrial wasteland, and areas of natural and semi-natural greenspace for which there is no public access.

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<sup>11</sup> Open space strategies: Best practice guidance. Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and the Greater London Authority.2009.

**Table 1.3: Typology of Sport, Recreation and Open Space sites**

Type of Open Space	Description	Purpose
<b>Urban Parks and Gardens</b>	Areas of land normally enclosed, designed, constructed, managed and maintained as a public park or garden.	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
<b>Amenity Greenspace</b>	Landscaped areas providing visual amenity or separating different buildings or land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons i.e. road verges, large roundabouts or greenspace in business parks. Areas of grass within housing areas that are used for a variety of informal or social activities such as informal play.	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
<b>Playspace for children and teenagers</b>	Areas providing safe and accessible opportunities for children's play, usually linked to housing areas.	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
<b>Outdoor Sports Facilities</b>	Large and generally flat areas of grassland or specially designed surfaces, used primarily for designated sports i.e. playing fields, golf courses, tennis courts, bowling greens; areas which are generally bookable.	Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports.
<b>Green Corridors</b>	Routes including canals, river corridors and old railway lines, linking different areas within a town or city as part of a designated and managed network and used for walking, cycling or horse riding, or linking towns and cities to their surrounding countryside or country parks. These may link green spaces together.	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.

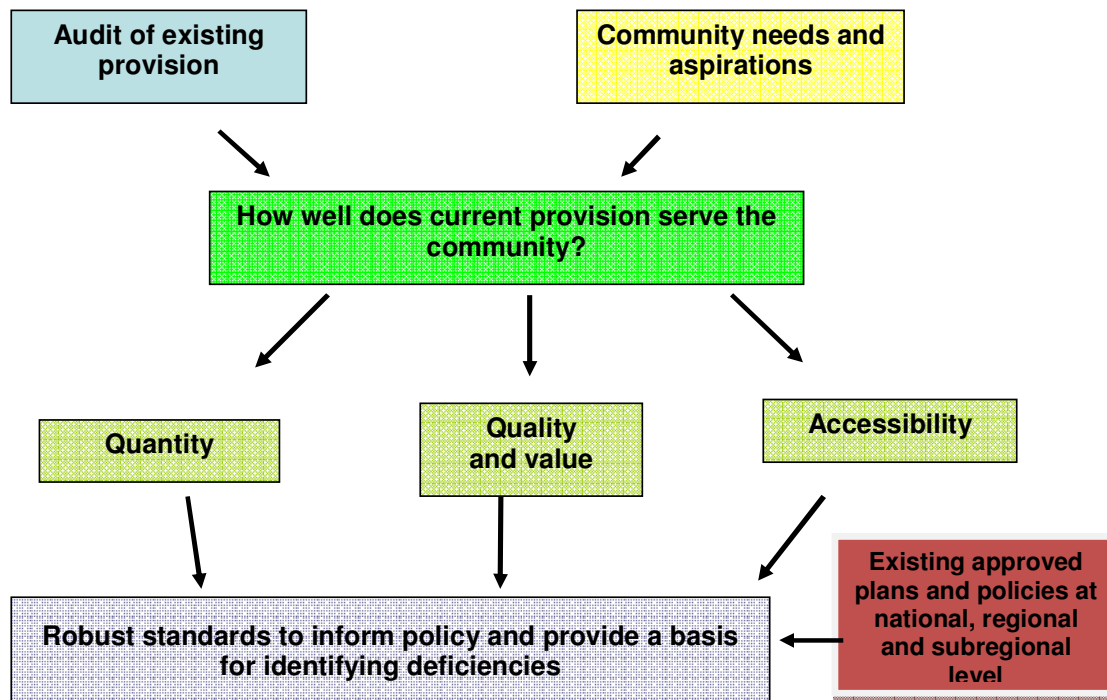
<b>Natural/semi-natural Greenspaces</b>	Areas of undeveloped or previously developed land with residual natural habitats or which have been planted or colonised by vegetation and wildlife, including woodland and wetland areas.	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.
<b>Allotments</b>	Areas of land in or just outside a town that a person rents for growing vegetables, fruits or flowers. Allotments can be temporary or statutory.	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.
<b>Churchyards and Cemeteries</b>	Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds.	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
<b>Civic space</b>	Squares, streets and waterfront promenades, predominantly of hard landscaping that provide a focus for pedestrian activity and make connections for people and for wildlife, where trees and planting are included.	Providing a setting for civic buildings, demonstrations and community events.
<b>Indoor sports facilities</b>	Purpose-built facilities such as leisure centres, swimming pools and other indoor facilities, and also other indoor space such as village halls and community centres.	Indoor sports such as swimming, aerobics, racket sports, indoor football and bowling, fitness centres etc.

## The PPG 17 process

1.32 Guidance on undertaking a PPG17 study indicates the importance of bringing together two separate streams of data. On the one hand, an audit of existing open spaces within the authority area should be carried out, for each type of space in the typology and covering quantity, quality and value, and accessibility. On the other hand, consultation with local people is required in

order to determine how well existing provision meets community needs and expectations. The outcome of these two pieces of work is then to bring them together, alongside statutory and other guidance material, to develop a locally determined standard for each type of open space, in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. The process is illustrated in this diagram:

**Figure 1.1: The PPG17 process**



## Geography of the study

1.33 Both the audit and the consultation use a specific geography of the Borough to allow for analysis and comparison of results between different, coherent geographical sub-areas. The structure of these was agreed with the Borough at the outset of the project and is fundamental to the analysis which follows. It



involves grouping different electoral wards of the Borough together, as shown in this map and table:

**Map 1.1: Sub-areas of the Borough used for audit and consultation data aggregation**



**Table 1.4: Areas and sub-areas used in the study**

Sub-area	Wards included
Southwest	Harrow on the Hill
	West Harrow
	Rayners Lane
	Roxbourne
	Roxeth
Central	Greenhill
	Headstone S
	Kenton W
	Marlborough
	Wealdstone
Southeast	Belmont
	Edgware
	Kenton E
	Queensbury
Northeast	Canons
	Harrow Weald
	Stanmore Park
Northwest	Hatch End
	Headstone N
	Pinner
	Pinner S

1.34 The populations of the five sub-areas are shown in **Table 1.5** below.

**Table 1.5: Current and Future Population of Harrow and the Sub-areas**

Sub-area	2010	2016	2021	2026
North East	32,732	34,879	34,676	32,325
South East	40,065	40,523	40,381	43,121
Central	52,615	57,215	57,116	52,315
North West	40,178	40,793	40,597	41,612
South West	55,098	56,527	56,603	59,644
<b>Harrow</b>	<b>220,688</b>	<b>229,937</b>	<b>229,373</b>	<b>229,018</b>

Source: GLA 2008 Round Ward Population Projections

1.35 The population figure for each sub-area is used to determine the level of existing and future open space provision, by head of population. It also allows for variances between sub-areas to be identified, which will be helpful in informing LDF policy.

1.36 The sub-area with the largest population is the South West with 25% of the total population. The lowest population is the North East with 14.8% of the total population.

1.37 Overall the population will increase up to 2016 and will then remain relatively stable with a small decline in total population up to 2026. The populations of the North East and Central Sub-areas are projected to increase up to 2016 and then decline to below their 2010 total by 2026.

## **Audit methodology**

1.38 The audit methodology used in this study has been developed to be fully compliant with the requirements of PPG17 and the Companion Guide.

- 1.39 The audit of open spaces was undertaken by the consultancy team; data and maps were provided by the authority for analysis and site identification. We identified all open spaces within the local authority area regardless of ownership and the extent of public access. However, only those sites accessible to the public at large are included in the assessment of supply, so privately owned sites accessed on payment of a fee<sup>12</sup>, or as an occasional concession, and sites closed to public open access (such as some wildlife sites) have been excluded. Where spaces are currently not accessible but have the potential to become accessible at some point in the future, they have been recorded as 'Candidate Sites' and are listed in Appendix 16. Similarly, school sites have only been included where they were known to be in community use, normally through formal agreement.
- 1.40 The definitive list of sites, which formed the basis of the audit was taken from the records held by the authority, primarily within its Geographic Information System (GIS). This covers sites of a wide range of sizes, down to 0.1 Ha and lower in some instances. However, this was augmented by examination of other sources, including on the ground fieldwork, which generated additional sites, and occasional changes of boundary and typological definition, and which were mapped on the GIS database.
- 1.41 Each site was visited in person, examined at length, photographed, and scored against a predetermined set of criteria relevant to that type of space, for quality and value assessments. A set of audit forms showing the criteria used for each different type of space is included as an appendix to this report (**Appendix 1**). A small audit team was deployed for this work, so as to minimize subjectivity in these assessments, and the results were also moderated to ensure consistency across the range of scores. However, it should be borne in mind that the scores for each individual site represent the opinion of the surveyor at the time of the audit and are necessarily subjective. They provide a broad guide of the quality of the space or facility, and complement residents' views on quality derived from the residents' survey.

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<sup>12</sup> Privately owned sports facilities which are open to the community either as 'pay and play' or which require payment of an annual membership fee are included in the audit.

- 1.42 Quantity data were produced by calculation using the GIS shape file for each space; multi-functional spaces were subdivided between their respective functions so as to fit within the PPG17 classification system. The audit data were then processed for each type of space to determine a range of quality and value scores from which a median could be calculated; this was then used as an initial benchmark site for the typology in question, as required by PPG17, to begin the process of setting quality and value standards. Accessibility data was produced using the GIS layers for each type of space, with appropriate catchment areas drawn round each space, and due allowance made for major barriers to movement, such as motorways, railways and watercourses which people would not normally cross to reach an open space.
- 1.43 The audit of provision also seeks to evaluate the quality and value of each individual space or facility in order to determine the most appropriate policy approach to existing provision.
- 1.44 Quality relates to the range of features or facilities on the site (e.g. trees, shrubs or seats), their basic characteristics (e.g. appropriate to the site or not), and their condition (e.g. on a spectrum from very good to very poor)
- 1.45 Value refers to the value of a site to people and bio-diversity; to its cultural and heritage value; and to its strategic value - for example, by providing a sense of openness in a densely developed area.
- 1.46 Quality and value are entirely independent of each other. For example, if a particular greenspace is the only one in an area where children and young people can play or 'hang out,' it is of high value, even if it is of poor quality. Conversely, a space or facility of excellent quality may be of little value if it is inaccessible or no-one knows it is there.
- 1.47 Assessing the quality and value of open spaces and sport and recreation facilities is fundamental to effective planning. It is the best approach to identifying those spaces or facilities which should be protected by the planning system, those which require enhancement, and those whose purpose may be altered to meet changing patterns of use and need. The simple high/low

classification shown in **Table 1.6** gives possible combinations of quality and value for open spaces and sport and recreation facilities.

**Table 1.6: Quality/Value Matrix**

<b>High Quality/High Value</b>	<b>High Quality/Low Value</b>
These spaces or facilities should be protected through the planning system as they are both high value and high quality.	<p>These spaces are of high quality but not particularly valuable in terms of meeting people's needs or bio-diversity and have little cultural or heritage value.</p> <p>Ways should be sought to improve their value, while retaining their high quality.</p>
<b>Low Value/Low Quality</b>	<b>Low Quality/High Value</b>
<p>These spaces are currently not valuable in terms of meeting community needs but they may be the only spaces in an area,</p> <p>It may be better to address a local deficiency in some other form of greenspace</p>	These spaces are valuable and should be protected. Their quality should be improved to move them into the high value/high quality category

### **Household survey research methodology**

1.48 The primary consultation vehicle for this study is a comprehensive household survey. A questionnaire was drawn up in consultation with the Council, and intended to cover all the different open space and recreational typologies to an appropriate level of detail. It is important in designing a questionnaire to ensure that most people can answer a majority of the questions (otherwise they are unlikely to reply at all) and for this reason the emphasis on the early part of the questionnaire is on those types of green space with which most people are familiar, even if they do not use them personally. A copy of the questionnaire used is provided at **Appendix 2**.

- 1.49 The Council provided us with a copy of its local Land and Property Gazetteer, edited to remove all non-residential addresses, and a licence to use this for the purpose of the survey. We also asked the Council to identify the sub-areas of the Borough that would be used for analysis purposes and to compare the results geographically, and to identify the Council wards in each sub-area. The allocation of wards to sub-areas is shown in **Map 1.1**.
- 1.50 An initial sample of 4000 addresses was drawn from the Gazetteer list; this was structured according to the local population, so that the number of addresses sampled for each sub-area was in proportion to the sub-area's population, and each sub-area's sample was structured so as to represent each ward in proportion to its population. Within this structure, each address was selected at random using a random number generator. This table shows the sample calculation:

**Table 1.7: Sample structure**

Sub-area	ward	population	area subtotals	proportion of Borough population	area subtotals	probability sample reqd	area subtotals	structured sample reqd	area subtotals
Southwest	Harrow on the Hill	10632	51844	5.14%	25%	206	1,003	164	800
	West Harrow	9689		4.68%		187		150	
	Rayners Lane	10038		4.85%		194		155	
	Roxbourne	10947		5.29%		212		169	
	Roxeth	10538		5.10%		204		163	
Central	Greenhill	9324	47137	4.51%	23%	180	912	158	800
	Headstone S	9366		4.53%		181		159	
	Kenton W	10277		4.97%		199		174	
	Marlborough	9207		4.45%		178		156	
	Wealdstone	8963		4.33%		173		152	
Southeast	Belmont	9506	39281	4.60%	19%	184	760	194	800
	Edgware	9832		4.75%		190		200	
	Kenton E	9888		4.78%		191		201	
	Queensbury	10055		4.86%		194		205	
Northeast	Canons	10091	29775	4.88%	14%	195	576	271	800
	Harrow Weald	10345		5.00%		200		278	
	Stanmore Park	9339		4.52%		181		251	
Northwest	Hatch End	10098	38774	4.88%	19%	195	750	208	800
	Headstone N	9522		4.60%		184		196	
	Pinner	9599		4.64%		186		198	
	Pinner S	9555		4.62%		185		197	
	Totals	206811	206811	1	100%	4000	4,000	4000	4,000



- 1.51 Each address in the sample was sent a pack in November 2009, including an explanatory covering letter, a pre-numbered questionnaire, and a reply paid envelope with a freepost address.
- 1.52 Undeliverable packs that were returned were assigned a new address and sent out again, taking care to ensure that the new addresses were located in the same ward. If the initial address suggested it was a house in multiple occupancy, or a flat, we chose a similar address for the substitute.
- 1.53 After a suitable interval, where no response had been received, a second pack containing a follow-up letter, and a further copy of the questionnaire and freepost envelope, were sent out.
- 1.54 At the end of this process, early in January 2010, we closed the survey and completed the work of entering and logging the forms received. This table summarises the mailing and the response we received.

**Table 1.8: Household survey response rate**

Initial sample	4000
Rejected by householder/ post office	310
Substitutions made	300
Total valid sample	3990
Responses received (after removing duplicates)	1079
Response rate	27.0%

- 1.55 A response rate of 27% is respectable for a survey of this type. The response volume of 1,079 replies means that the results are accurate to within +/- 3% of a survey of the entire population, at the 95% confidence interval. This is the normal industry and government standard for quantitative studies of this scale and means that the survey meets this standard.
- 1.56 As is normally the case in postal surveys, however, response is not evenly spread across all geographic or demographic groups. Response from some areas of the Borough is stronger than in others, whilst some groups of people

have been more likely to respond than others. This would create bias in the data if we did not act to adjust for it. Weightings have therefore been applied to correct the results and compensate for this imbalance in response; weightings have been applied to adjust for age, gender, ethnic origin, and area of residence, to restore the original population structure of the Borough and the distribution of results across the five different sub-areas. The actual weightings used are shown in this table:

**Table 1.9: Data weightings applied to household survey**

Attribute	Original sample/ population proportion	Achieved response proportion	Weighting applied
<b>Geography</b>			
Southwest	25%	18%	1.37
Central	23%	18%	1.28
Southeast	19%	19%	0.98
Northeast	15%	20%	0.74
Northwest	19%	25%	0.76
<b>Age</b>			
16-35	36%	11%	3.33
36-50	27%	29%	0.92
51-65	20%	28%	0.74
66 and over	17%	32%	0.53
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	48%	47%	1.02
Female	52%	53%	0.98
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White	59%	66%	0.89
Mixed race	3%	2%	1.50
Asian	30%	26%	1.15
Black	6%	2%	3.00
Other	2%	4%	0.5

- 1.57 Data have been analysed using a statistics application called SPSS<sup>13</sup>. The raw data set is retained by the council for use in any future analysis it may wish to do, but in accordance with the MRS<sup>14</sup> guidance on personal data, the address file has been destroyed.

## **Report structure**

- 1.58 The report that follows sets out our findings for each typology. After a short section setting out some general observations from the survey, to provide a resident perspective on the importance of open space, we look at each type of sport, recreation and open space in turn.
- 1.59 For each type of space, we examine
- The definition of that type of space;
  - The strategic context in which that type of open space sits, considering national and local policy frameworks, and also any existing research that aids understanding of this type of space;
  - The audit of open space and its conclusions, looking at quantity, quality, usage and accessibility;
  - The consultation findings for that type of space, looking at quantity, quality, usage and accessibility;
  - Our recommended standards for that type of space;
  - Present and future deficiencies in that type of space, based on application of the standards.
- 1.60 Appendices to the report provide lists and details for each open space examined in the audit, together with other background information including audit criteria and the survey questionnaire.

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<sup>13</sup> SPSS stands for Statistical Package for Social Sciences, and is a commonly-used statistical analysis tool of considerable pedigree and reputation.

<sup>14</sup> Market Research Society, the professional governing body for research work.

## **Strategic Context**

- 1.61 Key national, regional and local policies and strategies have informed this open spaces, sport and recreation assessment.

### ***National Policy Background***

- 1.62 Government policy towards parks and open spaces has evolved significantly in recent years. The Urban Green Spaces Task Force<sup>15</sup> and the publication of PPG 17<sup>16</sup> in 2002 established the requirement to assess parks and open spaces against criteria of quality, quantity and accessibility, and the obligation to develop locally-based and evidenced standards of provision.
- 1.63 Parks, play areas and open spaces will contribute to the ‘cross cutting’ issues of health, social inclusion, regeneration, community safety and urban regeneration and they also have a part to play in lifelong learning, liveability of built up areas and environmental sustainability.
- 1.64 The urban white paper ‘Our Towns and Cities: The Future’<sup>17</sup> sets out visions and measures for design and development which encourage well laid out urban areas with good quality buildings, well designed streets and good quality public open spaces. Well-managed public open spaces such as greens, squares, parks and children’s play areas are considered vital to enhancing the quality of urban environments.
- 1.65 Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17)<sup>18</sup> sets out the ways in which open spaces, sport and recreation contribute to broader Government objectives and emphasises the requirement for assessments of need that encompass the differing and distinctive needs of the population for open space, sport and recreation.
- 1.66 The Sustainable Communities Plan<sup>19</sup> sets out a long-term programme of action for delivering sustainable communities. The aim is to deliver growth where it is

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Green Spaces, Better Places: Final report of the Urban Green Spaces Task Force (2006)

<sup>16</sup> Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation ODPM (2002)

<sup>17</sup> Our Towns and Cities: The Future - Delivering an Urban Renaissance, DCLG 2002.

<sup>18</sup> Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 – Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, 2002.

<sup>19</sup> Sustainable Communities Plan - Building for the Future , DCLG 2003.

most sustainable and improving the quality of life for local communities. In London<sup>20</sup> the regional context for the Sustainable Communities Plan also seeks to deliver well-designed, sustainable developments that achieve greater housing density while protecting the Green Belt and open space.

- 1.67 The Housing Green Paper<sup>21</sup> sets out the need for good quality neighbourhoods and green public space that help create healthy communities. Local authorities are exhorted to provide more and better open spaces for people to use, including play areas for children.
- 1.68 The Government's play strategy<sup>22</sup> sets out new policies for play provision. Free play, particularly outdoors, is fundamental to children's learning, healthy growth and development. The strategy calls for a much more imaginative and flexible approach to the creation of play spaces.
- 1.69 Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace standard (ANGSt)<sup>23</sup> provides a set of benchmarks for ensuring access to places of wildlife interest.
- 1.70 The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) established CABE Space to promote the role of parks and open spaces in the UK and provide advice on strategic issues in relation to parks and open spaces. CABE Space has produced a significant body of guidance ranging from best practice guidance on the development of an open space strategy<sup>24</sup> to the 'manifesto for better public spaces' which explains what should be done to achieve improved quality.<sup>25</sup>
- 1.71 Open spaces have the potential to contribute to the health agenda particularly the issue of obesity.<sup>26</sup>
- 1.72 The significance of cemeteries as landscapes of historic interest or wildlife value and the importance of conserving both designed and natural features of cemeteries are promoted by Natural England.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Sustainable communities in London, DCLG 2003.

<sup>21</sup> Homes for the future, more affordable, more sustainable DCLG (2007)

<sup>22</sup> The Play Strategy. DCFS and DCMS 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities Natural England 1995

<sup>24</sup> Open space strategies: best practice guidance CABE Space (2009)

<sup>25</sup> Manifesto for Better Public Spaces, CABE Space (2003)

<sup>26</sup> Healthy weight, healthy lives – a cross-government strategy for England, Department of Health (2008)

- 1.73 Trees are seen to be an important single element of green infrastructure and help to promote the Government's agenda for cleaner, greener, safer cities and the development of sustainable communities.<sup>28</sup>
- 1.74 The need to protect allotments as an important element of leisure provision was recognised by the Select Committee<sup>29</sup>.
- 1.75 Sport England is aiming for two million more people to be active by 2012 and to provide more places to play sport.<sup>30</sup> A key element of Sport England's work encompasses planning the provision of facilities and helping to ensure that they are fit for purpose and attractive to users.
- 1.76 Sport England promotes a planned approach towards the provision of facilities, and seeks to ensure that those involved in provision of sport and recreation through the planning process take a broader view of the role of spatial planning as an enabling function which goes beyond the setting and delivery of land-use policy.

### ***Regional Policy Background***

- 1.77 The Mayor has produced a Spatial Development Strategy for London, called the London Plan<sup>31</sup>. London Boroughs' development plan documents must be in 'general conformity' with it. The London Plan deals only with matters that are of strategic importance to Greater London. The Plan provides the London-wide context within which individual Boroughs must set their local planning policies
- 1.78 Subsection 4 is entitled 'Improving London's open environment' and this sets out the policy:

#### ***Policy 3D.8 Realising the value of open space and green infrastructure***

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<sup>27</sup> Paradise Preserved: An introduction to the assessment, evaluation, conservation and management of historic cemeteries. English Heritage and Natural England (2007)

<sup>28</sup> Trees in Towns II. Communities and Local Government (2008)

<sup>29</sup> Future for Allotments. Report of the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Select Committee (1998)

<sup>30</sup> Spatial Planning for Sport and Active Recreation (2005)

<sup>31</sup> Consultation draft replacement London Plan, Mayor of London, 2009.

- 1.79 This policy is concerned with the protection, promotion and improvement of access to London's network of open spaces, to realise the current and potential value of open space to communities, and to protect the many benefits of open space, including those associated with health, sport and recreation, children's play, regeneration, the economy, culture, biodiversity and the environment.
- 1.80 The advice to Boroughs is that policies in Development Planning Documents (DPDs) should reflect the need for all developments to incorporate appropriate elements of open space that make a positive contribution to and are integrated with the wider network of open spaces.
- 1.81 Para 3.297 signals that open space is an integral part of the spatial character of the city with London's Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land forming the basic structure of London's strategic network of open spaces. Local open spaces form part of the wider network of open spaces, which in turn is part of the vital and distinctive attraction of London. They play a crucial role in adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.
- 1.82 Green Chains are also seen as being important to London's open space network, recreation and biodiversity (Para 3.304). They consist of footpaths and the open spaces that they link, which are accessible to the public. Because of their London-wide significance, the open spaces and the links within a Green Chain should be designated as MOL.

*Policy 3D.11 Open space provision in DPDs*

- 1.83 In addition to the policy in 3D.8, DPD policies should:
- identify and support Regional and Metropolitan Park opportunities;
  - identify broad areas of public open space deficiency and priorities for addressing them on the basis of audits carried out as part of an open space strategy, and using the open space hierarchy (see **Appendix X**) as a starting point;
  - ensure that future open space needs are considered in planning policies for Opportunity Areas and other areas of growth and change in their area;

- encourage functional and physical linkages within the network of open spaces and to the wider public realm, improve accessibility for all throughout the network and create new links based on local and strategic need;
- identify, promote and protect Green Corridors and Green Chains and include appropriate designations and policies for the protection of local open spaces that are of value, or have the potential to be of value, to local communities.

1.84 The Plan advises that London's public open space hierarchy provides a benchmark for the provision of public open space across London (Para 3.305). It categorises spaces according to their size and sets out a desirable maximum distance which Londoners should travel in order to access each size of open space. Using these standards to map open space provision, the hierarchy provides an overview of the broad distribution of open space provision across London, highlights areas where there is a shortfall and facilitates cross-borough planning and management of open space.

1.85 A proactive approach to the protection, promotion and management of biodiversity in support of the Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy is promoted. This means planning for nature from the beginning of the development process and taking opportunities for positive gains for nature through the layout, design and materials of development proposals.

1.86 The Mayor has also sought to deliver a grass-roots sporting legacy for Londoners from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games by securing a sustained increase in participation in sport and physical activity amongst Londoners<sup>32</sup>; The goal is to 'Transform the sporting infrastructure' by initiating a London-wide facilities strategy and investing in community sports facilities.

1.87 The Mayor will work with local authorities, national governing bodies, the Football Foundation, the London Marathon Trust, the private sector and others to provide new facilities or refurbish existing facilities. The focus will mainly be on small, community, park or estate-based projects. The Mayor will also explore ways to

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<sup>32</sup> A Sporting Future for London, Greater London Authority 2009



maximise community usage of sports facilities in schools (state and independent) and in the further and higher education sectors.

- 1.88 The Mayor has produced supplementary planning guidance (SPG) providing guidance to London Boroughs on providing for the play and recreation needs of children and young people<sup>33</sup>.
- 1.89 The London Plan seeks to improve people's access to nature<sup>34</sup>. The Mayor has identified areas of deficiency in access to nature to highlight the parts of London that are in greatest need for improvements in biodiversity.
- 1.90 The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy<sup>35</sup> aims to protect and enhance the natural habitats of London together with their variety of species. The Strategy aims to ensure that there is no net loss of important wildlife habitat, and the Mayor wants to see a net increase in habitat through enhancement and habitat creation.
- 1.91 Guidance provided by the Mayor<sup>36</sup> emphasises that audits of parks and open spaces should identify improvements needed to make them accessible and inclusive to all potential users, regardless of disability, age and gender.
- 1.92 The London Plan recognises the valuable contribution that access to a good quality network of open space makes to the quality of life for those who live, work and visit the capital. The Strategic Parks Project seeks to develop opportunities to provide regional and metropolitan parks in London<sup>37</sup>.
- 1.93 The 'Green Arc' is a strategic initiative aimed at significantly improving the environment and accessibility of the Green Belt open space and countryside around London and in the southern parts of Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The aim is to create and protect an extensive and valued recreational landscape of well connected and accessible countryside around London,<sup>38</sup> for people and wildlife.

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<sup>33</sup> Supplementary Planning Guidance: Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation 2008

<sup>34</sup> Improving Londoners' Access to Nature: London Plan Implementation Report 2008

<sup>35</sup> The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy 2002

<sup>36</sup> The Mayor's Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment SPG, 2004.

<sup>37</sup> London Strategic Parks Project Report, 2006.

<sup>38</sup> North West Green Arc 2006

### **Local Policy Background**

- 1.94 Harrow's Sustainable Community Strategy recognises that there is a need to safeguard and enhance the quality of the wider environment. Access to open space is considered to be important and the potential to increase the opportunities available to the local community is recognised<sup>39</sup>.
- 1.95 The vision is for Harrow to become more sustainable and for residents and visitors to benefit from an improved quality of life. Open spaces will offer a range of uses, balancing the protection of wildlife with recreational use.
- 1.96 This Corporate Plan<sup>40</sup> sets out the Council's high level priorities and targets for the period 2010 to 2013. Priorities include obtaining Green Flag Status for an additional three parks and developing a green infrastructure grid for the Borough to support future investment in public realm, spaces and parks.
- 1.97 The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is the statutory development plan for the borough<sup>41</sup>. It set out the planning framework for determining planning applications.
- 1.98 The Local Development Framework will replace the UDP. Saved policies relating to open space, sport and recreation provision seek to protect and where appropriate enhance the borough's open spaces, parks, playing fields and recreation grounds, regardless of ownership<sup>42</sup> and improve the amount and distribution of public open space within the Borough to reduce local park deficiency<sup>43</sup>. Other policies seek to retain allotment sites in their current use and safeguard green chains.
- 1.99 The Core Strategy sets out the Council's approach to protecting and enhancing the environmental quality of Harrow. Whilst there are many pressures and demands on existing open spaces, leisure and recreational facilities, maintaining a network of high quality open spaces is considered to be essential to the creation of sustainable communities in Harrow.

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<sup>39</sup> Harrow's Sustainable Community Strategy: *Working together and working with you*. March 2009 Page 9.

<sup>40</sup> Harrow's Getting Better Harrow Council Corporate Plan 2010/11 – 2012/13

<sup>41</sup> Harrow Unitary Development Plan (UDP) 2004

<sup>42</sup> Policy EP47 - Open Space

<sup>43</sup> Policy EP48 - Public Open Space

- 1.100 Harrow's Local Area Agreement<sup>44</sup> identifies priority areas and outcomes including the promotion of cultural services and the provision of public spaces.
- 1.101 The main aim of the Harrow Biodiversity Action Plan (HBAP)<sup>45</sup> is to conserve, protect and enhance the biodiversity of the London Borough of Harrow. The objective of the BAP is to raise awareness of biodiversity issues and encourage local people to be involved in biodiversity issues.
- 1.102 Harrow's Green Belt Management Strategy aims to provide a framework to guide Harrow's future decisions on the protection and management of the Green Belt<sup>46</sup>.area and to make Harrow's Green Belt more attractive and accessible for people and wildlife and maximise biodiversity.
- 1.103 Harrow's vision for play<sup>47</sup> promotes good quality play provision that offers children opportunities for growth, development, confidence, self-esteem, exploration and challenge. The play strategy action plan will aim to increase the amount, range and accessibility of local supervised and unsupervised play provision.
- 1.104 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)<sup>48</sup> recognises the contribution of the rights of way network to the accessibility of the Borough's Green Belt, open spaces and parks. It seeks to ensure that the public rights of way network is safely managed to a high standard and that opportunities for sustainable travel for leisure and access to work, school and local services are increased through a programme of improvements.

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<sup>44</sup> Harrow's Local Area Agreement 2008-2011

<sup>45</sup> Harrow Biodiversity Action Plan 2008

<sup>46</sup> Harrow's Green Belt Management Strategy 2006-2011

<sup>47</sup> Harrow's Play Strategy 2007-2012

<sup>48</sup> Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2007

## General observations on Open Space

- 2.1 There are some questions in the survey that relate to green spaces generally, rather than to any one typology of space; these responses, which set out public attitudes and perceptions, are presented here to provide a context for much of what follows in this report.
- 2.2 This table shows how people respond to some statements about open space; the answers they gave have been converted into mean scores<sup>49</sup> to enable a comparison of the results:

**Table 2.1: Agreement with statements about open space**

Statement	Mean score
Open space in my local area contributes to the quality of the local environment	1.12
Local open spaces provide something for everyone in the community	0.73
Open space in my area is easy to get to	0.61
Local open spaces are adequate for my needs	0.40
There is a good balance of smaller and larger open spaces in my area	0.08
There is plenty of room locally to enjoy a wide range of outdoor activities	-0.08
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>185</i>

- 2.3 Overall, people tend to agree with the contribution open space makes to the environment. It is usually the case that even those who never use open space themselves still have a positive view on this issue, recognising that open space

<sup>49</sup> A mean score is calculated by applying a score to each response for each criterion. A rating of “agree strongly” attracts a score of 2, a rating of “tend to agree” is scored at 1, and ratings of “tend to disagree” or “disagree strongly” are scored at -1 or -2 respectively. “Average” and “don’t know” are scored as zero and do not affect the result. The resulting score is then averaged across all respondents, giving an overall score somewhere between +2 and -2. A negative score indicates a balance of negative opinion, whilst a positive score indicates a positive opinion overall; the higher the score in either direction, the stronger that opinion is.

is healthy and pleasant to look at, and provides relief from intense development, even if the individual does not take practical advantage of it.

- 2.4 There is little difference in this opinion according to where people live, nor by most other personal characteristics, although we note that Asian people generally agree a little less with this statement.
- 2.5 Views are a little more guarded on the idea that open spaces cater for all needs, and although people still tend to agree with the statement they are less certain about this. Residents of the Northwest sub-area are rather less likely to agree with this, suggesting that this area's open spaces cater less well for a diverse range of needs than those in other sub-areas.
- 2.6 Those aged 35-50 are a little less likely to agree with this statement; Black people are much more likely to agree than those from other ethnic groups.
- 2.7 There is a similarly cautious overall response on accessibility, with people's overall view lying about halfway between tending to agree and overall neutrality. Here there are substantial differences according to where people live, and those in the Northeast sub-area (an area with an abundance of natural space in particular) are much more likely to agree, whilst their counterparts in the Southwest sub-area are more likely to dispute the statement.
- 2.8 Under 35s are much less likely to agree with this statement than older residents, and Black people much less likely to agree than other ethnic groups.
- 2.9 The adequacy of local open spaces is also an issue on which people only agree cautiously. Needs are best met in the Central and Northwest sub-areas, but the scores here are still quite modest; the areas where people feel their needs are least well met are the Southwest and Southeast sub-areas. Older people are more likely to agree with this statement than younger people, and men's needs are better met than those of women. White people are more likely than Asian and Black people to feel their needs are being met. Interestingly, people with disabilities are more positive about this statement than those with no disability.
- 2.10 Opinions on the balance of larger and smaller spaces are more neutral in tone. Northeast sub-area residents are the most likely to agree with this statement, but do so only tentatively, while residents of the Southwest sub-area are overall

negative (though only just) on this issue. Younger people and women are also much less positive about the balance of spaces.

- 2.11 As to the space available for a wide range of activities, people are overall in slight disagreement with this statement. In the Northeast, people are more likely to respond positively, but the negative view is predominant elsewhere and especially so in the Southwest sub-area.
- 2.12 People aged 35-50 are the most likely to disagree with this, as are women. Men, and Black people, actually respond positively to this statement, and perhaps have lower expectations of open space availability than their counterparts.
- 2.13 We also asked about problems in open spaces, and the answers to this question are shown here, where again we have used mean scores<sup>50</sup> to enable a comparison of the results:

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<sup>50</sup> A mean score is calculated by applying a score to each response for each criterion. A rating of a very serious problem" attracts a score of 2, a rating of "a problem at times" is scored at 1, and a rating of "not a problem at all" scores zero. "Don't knows" are eliminated for the calculation. The higher the score, the more serious the problem is perceived to be.

**Table 2.2: Significance of problems in open space**

Problem area	Mean score
People not cleaning up after their dogs	1.14
Anti-social or inappropriate behaviour	1.01
Dangerous litter	0.89
Dogs running free or uncontrolled	0.88
Spaces are poorly maintained	0.74
Broken or damaged equipment	0.67
Slippery or unsafe surfaces	0.59
Inappropriate activities in the space	0.56
Conflicts between the needs of different users	0.49
Too many people trying to use the space	0.39
Not enough places to exercise dogs	0.39
Noise	0.37
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 500 to 904</i>

2.14 Two problems emerge with particular prominence here, though both are more of “a problem at times” rather than anything more serious; having said that, they are a serious problem in some open spaces in the Borough nonetheless. These relate to people’s inability to clean up after their dogs, and to anti-social behaviour or other inappropriate behaviour taking place in spaces. Failure to clean up after a dog is a form of anti-social activity in that it tends to reduce the usability of the open space for other people, whilst the relative seriousness of anti-social behaviour echoes people’s safety concerns expressed elsewhere in the survey.

- 2.15 Dog mess is a problem in all sub-areas, but especially in the Central sub-area (score of 1.26), and slightly less so in the Northwest sub-area (0.98). Anti-social behaviour is much more of a problem in the Southwest and Northwest sub-areas than in the other three localities.
- 2.16 Dogs create other problems too, or at least their owners do by allowing them to run free, which can create problems for other open space users who may dislike dogs, particularly those with young children. Overall, dogs running uncontrolled are a problem at times, rather than a universally serious issue, but are a little less common in the Northwest than elsewhere.
- 2.17 Poor maintenance is also identified as a problem at times, suggesting that some spaces are quite poorly looked after, which can reinforce perceptions of antisocial behaviour and usage; this seems to be a more serious problem in the Central sub-area than anywhere else. Broken or damaged equipment, one dimension of poor maintenance, is also more of an issue in the Central sub-area than elsewhere.
- 2.18 The other issues are less likely to be identified as problems, but it is noticeable that overcrowding is a problem at times in the Central sub-area, and less of an issue in the Southwest and Northwest sub-areas. Dangerous litter is more likely to occur in the Southwest, Central and Northeast sub-areas than in the other two localities, and slippery surfaces are more of an issue in the Central sub-area than elsewhere. Noise, on the other hand, troubles Northeast sub-area residents more than anyone else.



## Parks and Gardens

### Background

- 3.1 Parks and gardens are areas of land normally enclosed, designed, constructed, managed and maintained as public parks or gardens, and do not therefore include informal open space, sites of nature conservation, or parkland not normally accessible for public enjoyment. They are intended to provide accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.

### Strategic Context

- 3.2 Good quality open space is a key factor in making our urban areas attractive and viable places in which to live, work and play.
- 3.3 The 2009 Place Survey<sup>51</sup> found that in urban areas, 87 per cent of the population had used their local park or open space in the previous year, and 79 per cent had used it in the previous six months. The Place survey showed that parks and open spaces are the most frequently used service of all the public services tracked. Heritage Lottery Fund research reports 1.8 billion visits to parks in England every year.<sup>52</sup>
- 3.4 People's appreciation of parks and open spaces is increasing: in 2007, 91 per cent of people thought it was very or fairly important to have green spaces near to where they live, and by 2009 this had risen to 95 per cent.<sup>53</sup>
- 3.5 There is a strong link between people's satisfaction with their local parks and open spaces, and their satisfaction with their neighbourhood. Satisfaction with neighbourhood is one of the key things that affects perceptions of council

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<sup>51</sup> The Place Survey provides information on people's perceptions of their local area and the local services they receive. The survey collects information on 18 national indicators for local government, used to measure local government performance.

<sup>52</sup> *HLF funding for public parks 1 April 1994 – 31 March 2009* Heritage Lottery Fund Policy and strategic development department data briefing, October 2009.

<sup>53</sup> Public attitudes and behaviours towards the environment - tracker survey. A research report completed for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs by TNS. September 2009

performance. This is particularly acute in the most deprived areas, where neighbourhood satisfaction is at its lowest<sup>54</sup>.

- 3.6 CABI Space research<sup>55</sup> has found that people in deprived areas, wherever they live, receive a far worse provision of parks than their affluent neighbours. The most affluent 20% of wards have five times the amount of parks per person than the most deprived 10% of wards. Residents in affluent suburbs are therefore likely to have an above-average quantity of good parks nearby. On the other hand, residents of a deprived inner-city ward, with high-density housing, are more likely to have access to small, poor-quality green spaces and are unlikely to have access to large green spaces, or good quality green space. Comparing deprived and affluent areas, residents' general satisfaction with their neighbourhood falls from around 80% in affluent places to around 50% in the most deprived places.
- 3.7 Wards that have almost no Black and minority ethnic residents<sup>56</sup> have six times as many parks as wards where more than 40% of the population are people from Black and minority ethnic groups. This is reflected in the indicator of general satisfaction with neighbourhood, when analysed by ethnicity (rather than affluence). In those wards with more than 40% of their populations from Black or minority ethnic groups, only half of residents are satisfied with their neighbourhood, compared with 70% in wards with fewer than 2% ethnic minority populations.
- 3.8 CABI Space research<sup>57</sup> has found that if an area has high quality parks, it is likely that more residents will use them more often. Parks in the most deprived 10% of wards have a significantly lower frequency of visits, compared with the most affluent wards. Similarly, average visitor numbers to parks restored with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund have risen by 68%.

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<sup>54</sup> Source: BVPI 2006 survey.

<sup>55</sup> Urban green nation: Building the evidence base. Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment 2010.

<sup>56</sup> Fewer than 2 per cent of ward population

<sup>57</sup> Ibid

- 3.9 Young people are less satisfied with their parks; 15% of 16 to 24 year olds think their local parks are the aspect of their area that need most improvement, compared with 8% of 55-74 year olds.<sup>58</sup>
- 3.10 It has been claimed that parks attract a broader spectrum of the population than other services (e.g. art galleries, museums and libraries)<sup>59</sup>. Further, their local and accessible nature permits them to function as important social venues for individuals and small groups, including families. The flexibility of parks enables a wide variety of uses, providing suitable venues for medium and large-scale events which can help to provide a focus for wider community groups. They are among very few public facilities that have a genuine all-age potential.
- 3.11 Parks contribute to a sense of place and help define local communities, which can help to reduce social isolation and increase social cohesion. For many people, parks provide continuity because in times of rapid change they stay the same and provide a “key symbolic feature in the local sense of place”<sup>60</sup> It has been suggested that benefits are maximised where parks provide for a range of needs and where wide open, featureless spaces are avoided.<sup>61</sup>
- 3.12 Parks and open spaces have an important amenity value, by providing a contrast to the built environment and adding to the quality of life. They have the potential to provide attractive environments, which, by providing a sanctuary from the stresses of modern living, can contribute to a sense of well-being and improved mental health.
- 3.13 Parks and trees have proven ecological value in urban areas by mitigating air pollution. They are used for a wide range of sports and physical activities and these in turn have positive fitness and physical health benefits. However, fears have been expressed about public safety, particularly after dark, and these are a threat to the broader social role of parks and may have contributed to the decline of the public park as a central feature of community life.

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<sup>58</sup> Active People Survey 1, Sport England. 2006.

<sup>59</sup> Park Life: Urban Parks and Urban Renewal, a study of 1,211 users of urban parks and 295 local residents, Greenhalgh and Worpole (1995)

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

<sup>61</sup> People Parks and the Urban Green, Burgess et al (1988) and Greenhalgh and Worpole (1995)

- 3.14 There are a number of potential economic benefits that are derived from high quality parks. These include an enhanced local image, helping to attract visitors and inward investment, and to retain existing businesses; facilities for employees and opportunities to train young people and the long-term unemployed. In Outer London, they also play an important role in helping to retain high-earning residents, stemming the flow of families to other locations outside Greater London.<sup>62</sup>
- 3.15 Recent figures released by Savills Residential Research reveal that homes next to an open space can expect an uplift in value of 12% over properties in the same location with no park views. According to Savills, even the presence of a park up to two streets away will result in an average 7% uplift compared to streets with the same type of property away from open space.<sup>63</sup>
- 3.16 In the USA, the Millennium Park in Chicago, a 24.6 acre park opened on the banks of Lake Michigan in 2004. An Economic Impact Study commissioned by the City of Chicago in 2005, showed that it had boosted residential development by about \$1.4 billion, and increased real estate values in the area by \$100 a square foot. Hotels and restaurants have reported an increase in customer volumes since the park was established, and many use the park as an attraction on their websites and in their sales brochures. The Economic Impact Study estimated that 70% of the spending of day-trip visitors to the area is directly attributable to Millennium Park, 25% of the spending of domestic travellers who spend an average of two days in the area is attributable, and for international travellers in the area for an average of six days, 10% is attributable.<sup>64</sup>

### **The Need for Parks and Gardens**

- 3.17 The size, distribution and nature of parks and gardens in Harrow were largely determined as the Borough developed in the early to mid-twentieth century. At the same time, it is very unlikely that there will be significant growth in either the

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<sup>62</sup> Mayor's Outer London Commission report, 2010

<sup>63</sup> Savills Residential Research, 2006, 'The impact of nearby open space on property prices', Savills Residential Research, London

<sup>64</sup> The Millennium Park Effect: Edward K. Uhler 2006

number or area of urban parks in Harrow in the future. In these circumstances the required level of current provision of parks is largely pre-determined and supply-led. A supply-led methodology uses the location and scale of existing provision as its starting point and seeks to make optimal use of it, for example by management initiatives designed to enhance existing provision.

- 3.18 In the period since the establishment of Harrow's parks, there have been many changes to where and how people live, how they move around, the expectations of access for people with disabilities or pushchairs, the access for dog owners, and the population, size and density of localities within the area. Some parks may no longer be in the most appropriate locations in relation to where people actually live, and the facilities within them may be less relevant to people's needs and expectations than when they were first established.
- 3.19 Given the likely public and political opposition to the loss of urban parks, and a general policy presumption against their development this effectively means that the consideration of a quantity standard of provision is a process of post-rationalisation. It is therefore appropriate to consider the extent to which parks are relevant to current needs. The attractiveness and safety of access routes to them from nearby housing areas is also an important issue. Where existing parks are well located in relation to where people live, and clearly meet, or have the potential to meet, local needs, it will be desirable to enhance their attractiveness by improving their quality and accessibility.

## **Audit**

### ***Quantity***

- 3.20 Parks and gardens in Harrow are multi-functional spaces, which accommodate a range of activities including outdoor sport and provision for children and young people. To take account of this significant multi-functionality, and to avoid double counting for the purposes of this quantitative audit, the parts of parks laid out for other uses have been deducted from the overall (gross) area of each park to leave a remaining (net) area that functions primarily as a park or garden. For

example, **Table 3.1** shows the breakdown of the types of space at Harrow Recreation Ground (PK029).

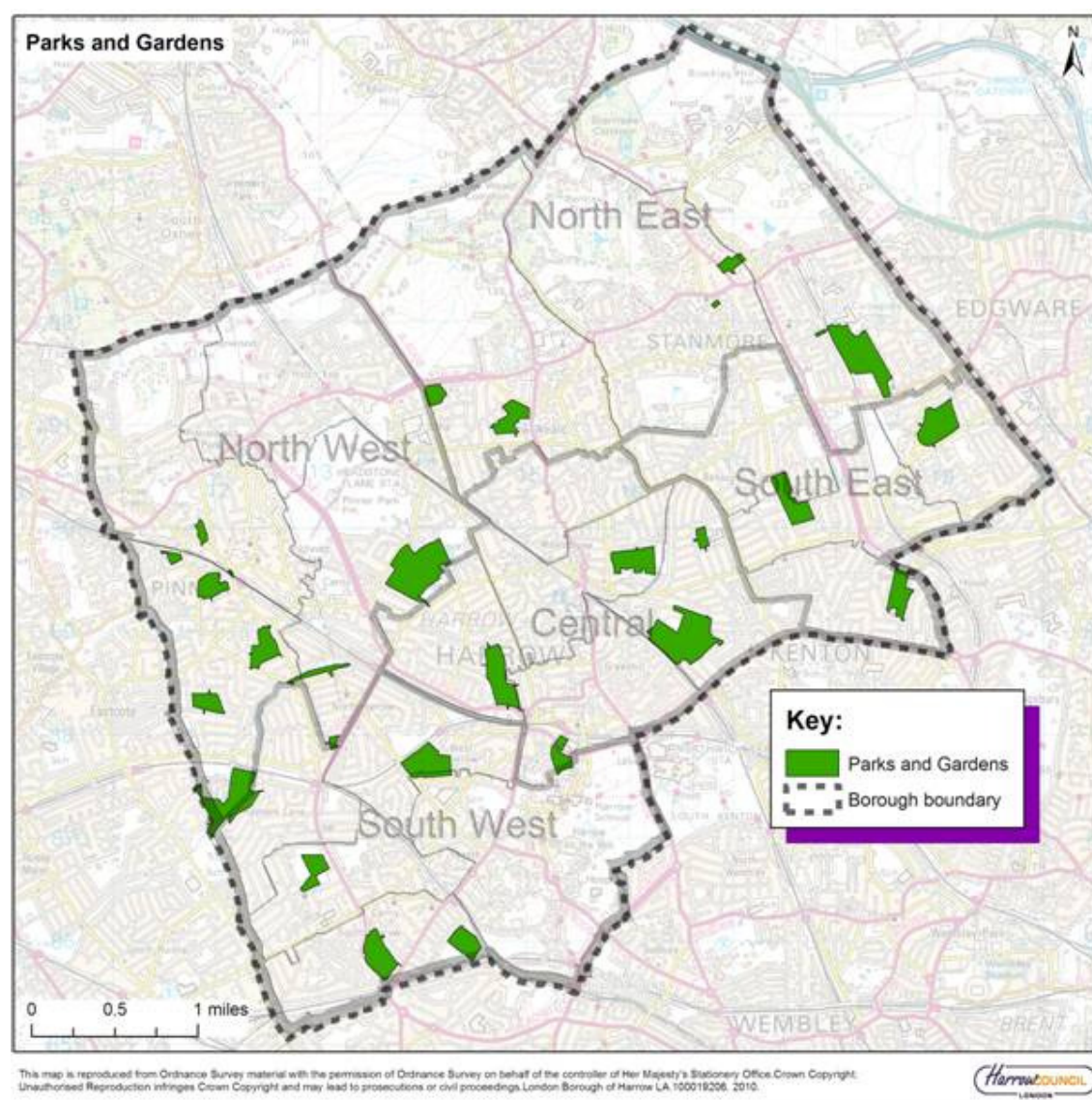
**Table 3.1: Types of space at Harrow Recreation Ground**

	Parks (Hectares)	Outdoor Sport Pitches (Hectares)	Play (Hectares)	MUGA (Hectares)	Tennis (Hectares)	Bowls (Hectares)	Total (Hectares)
Harrow Recreation Ground	4.95	5.16	0.31	0.18	0.37	0.21	<b>11.18</b>

3.21 The gross area of Harrow Recreation Ground is 11.18 hectares, of which 4.95 hectares are considered to be park and the remaining areas are made up of different types of outdoor sports and children's play. For the purposes of PPG17, the net area of park has been used to establish the current levels of provision, which are used to establish the locally determined standard. However, details of gross areas are also provided to give an indication of the total space that might be identified as a park in each sub-area.

3.22 There are 28 parks in Harrow, and **these are shown in Map 3.1.**

**Map 3.1: Parks in Harrow Borough**



3.23 **Table 3.2** provides an analysis of the gross areas of parks, and shows that overall gross provision is 192.9 hectares. The Northwest and Central sub-areas still have a higher proportion of parks provision (55%), and benefit from the inclusion in these figures of outdoor sports space at sites such as Kenton Recreation Ground (PK014), Headstone Manor Recreation Ground (PK012) and Roxbourne Park (PK016).

**Table 3.2: Parks and Gardens Gross Provision by Sub-area**

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Parks (Gross Hectares)	Gross Hectares per 1000 Population	Persons per Hectare (Gross)
Central	52615	47.33	0.90	1112
Northeast	32732	31.27	0.96	1047
Northwest	40178	59.41	1.48	676
Southeast	40065	26.52	0.66	1511
Southwest	55098	30.70	0.56	1795
<b>Total</b>	<b>220688</b>	<b>195.22</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>1130</b>

3.24 The net area of Harrow parks is 138.73 hectares; however, there are differences in provision by sub-area as can be seen in **Table 3.3**, which shows that the distribution of park provision is relatively even. The Northwest sub-area has the most space, with 28% of the total area in ten parks. The Central sub-area has 6 parks and 20% of provision. The remaining three sub-areas account for 52% of total provision in twelve parks.

**Table 3.3: Parks and Gardens Net Provision by Sub-area**

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Parks (Net Hectares)	Net Hectares per 1000 Population	Persons per Hectare (Net)
Central	52615	27.05	0.51	1945
Northeast	32732	26.26	0.80	1246
Northwest	40178	38.48	0.96	1044
Southeast	40065	22.27	0.56	1799
Southwest	55098	24.67	0.45	2234
<b>Total</b>	<b>220688</b>	<b>138.73</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>1591</b>



3.25 A comparison<sup>65</sup> of provision with other local authorities is shown in **Table 3.4** below.

**Table 3.4: Comparison of Parks and Gardens Provision<sup>66</sup>**

Location	Parks and Gardens per 1000 population (Ha)
Chelmsford	3.12
Enfield	2.49
Bexley	2.08
Sevenoaks	0.95
Hammersmith & Fulham	0.94
<b>Harrow</b>	<b>0.88</b>
Vale Royal	0.88
Hartlepool	0.73
Purbeck	0.66
Knowsley	0.59
East Hertfordshire	0.53
Reigate & Banstead	0.47
Thurrock	0.43
Three Rivers	0.31
Erewash	0.31
Islington	0.28
Windsor and Maidenhead	0.27
West Wiltshire	0.25
Waveney	0.25

3.26 Parks and gardens provision is normally expressed in terms of the area of parks and gardens per 1000 population; for Harrow as a whole this figure is 0.88 hectares (gross), which equates to 0.63 hectares (net) per 1000 population. This is a substantially lower level of provision than Enfield (2.49 ha per 1000) but twice the level of provision in Three Rivers (0.31 ha per 1000).

<sup>65</sup> It is not always clear whether figures quoted by other authorities are gross or net, but it is reasonable to assume they are gross, and we therefore compare them with Harrow's gross figure.

<sup>66</sup> The list of comparators used here has necessarily been limited to those authorities which have completed their Open Space, Sport and Recreation assessments. Where possible, data from adjoining and similar local authorities have been included.

3.27 In total, 28 spaces have been defined as being parks and gardens. These range in size from 0.18 hectares to 21.43 hectares. Harrow also has one Country Park, Stanmore Country Park which is not included in the parks provision on the grounds that its primary purpose is natural and semi natural greenspace.

### ***Quality and Value***

3.28 Parks and gardens were assessed against a range of attributes that reflect both the quality and the value of the park, so as to identify those spaces of good quality and those that need enhancement. The assessment sheet used can be found in **Appendix 1**. Quality scores include attributes such as the character and layout of the park, and features such as the planting, entrance, pathways, and seating. Value scores relate to

- context – a space which is relatively inaccessible will be of little value, regardless of quality
- level and type of use – a space which attracts little use will always be of low value, whilst even a low quality space that is well used will be of high value
- Wider benefits – structure and landscape will help to define the identity and character of the park, and there are also ecological, biodiversity, social inclusion and health benefits, and the creation of a sense of place

3.29 The statistical median<sup>67</sup> quality score for parks is 72.7%, and 14 parks achieve a score equal to or higher than the median with West Harrow Recreation Ground (PK020) being the site that scored closest to this figure (72.8%); 14 parks score below this figure. The statistical median value score is 81.7% which is close to the score achieved by West Harrow Recreation Ground (80%).

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<sup>67</sup> The median of a population is the point that divides the distribution of scores in half. Numerically, half of the scores in a population will have values that are equal to or larger than the median and half will have values that are equal to or smaller than the median.

To work out the median:

a) Put the numbers in order. **3 6 6 6 7 9 11 11 13**

b) The number in the middle of the list is the median 7 is in the middle. So the median value is 7.

If there are two middle values, the median is halfway between them. For example, if the set of numbers were **3 6 6 6 7 8 9 11 11 13** There are two middle values, 7 and 8. The median is halfway between 7 and 8. The median is 7.5.

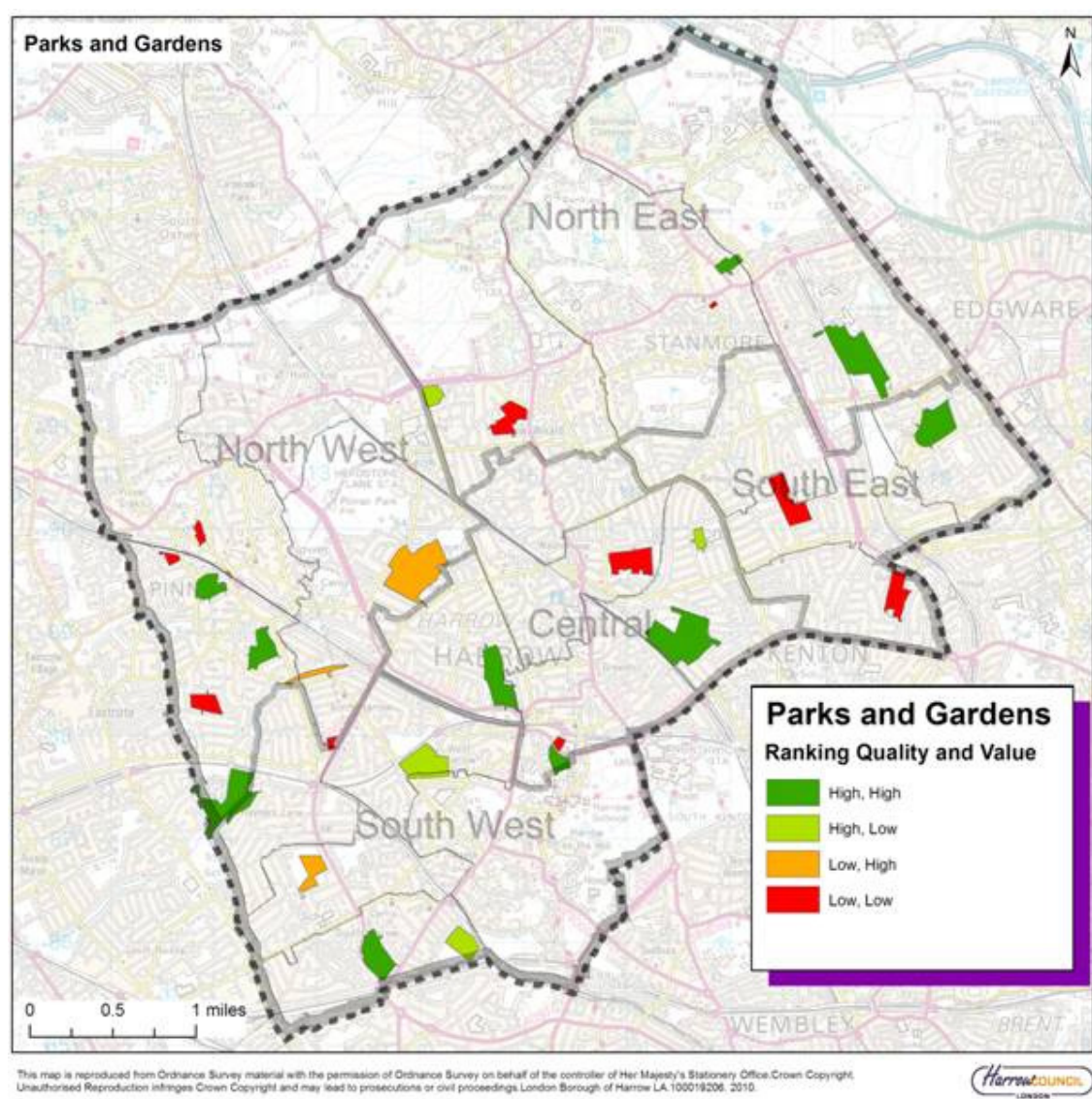
- 3.30 The highest scoring park for quality is Canons Park (PK006), with 96.3%; this site also achieves the highest value score (100%). This park received Green Flag status in summer 2008. The lowest scoring park for value is Pinner Recreation Ground (PK008) with 72.7%.
- 3.31 Ten parks achieve an assessment of high quality and high value. They are reasonably evenly distributed across the sub-areas with three in the Northwest sub-area, three in the Central sub-area, two in the Northeast sub-area and one in each of the Southwest and Southeast sub-areas. Ten parks have been assessed as being low both in terms of quality and value and again these show a similar distribution across the sub-areas.

***Table 3.5: Summary of Quality and Value Rankings***

Quality Ranking	Value Ranking	Proportion of Sites
High	High	35.7%
High	Low	14.3%
Low	High	14.3%
Low	Low	35.7%

- 3.32 Map 3.2 shows the distribution of sites according to quality and value. The results of the audit can be found in **Appendix 3**.

### Map 3.2 Quality and value of parks



### Accessibility

- 3.33 Accessibility of parks is a key attribute because if a particular park is inaccessible it will be irrelevant to those who want to use it.
- 3.34 The London Plan sets out a hierarchy of public open spaces for application across London, and which uses distance criteria to attempt a consistent approach for identifying broad areas of deficiency in provision. The hierarchy for Harrow parks shown in **Table 3.6** is based on this. This defines the role and

significance of parks in Harrow, based on the function and key characteristics of each individual park. Of course, a park that functions at the higher level will also function as a park at lower levels of the hierarchy, so that, for instance, a District Park will also function as a Local Park. Details of individual parks and their position in the hierarchy are in **Appendix 3**.

**Table 3.6: Harrow Parks Hierarchy**

Category	Size Criteria	Distances from homes (Walking Distance)
<p><b>District Park</b> (e.g. Canons Park)</p> <p>May attract visitors from a wider area than the local neighbourhood.</p> <p>Large areas of open space that provide for active and passive recreation – contain a good range of play equipment and provision for young people, together with sporting provision. Normally feature areas of short grass, shrubs and trees. Many also feature formal planting in the form of rose beds and perennial and/or annual bedding displays. May feature a range of habitats which contribute to the local biodiversity.</p> <p>Good provision of basic amenities including seating, litter bins, dog bins, recycling facilities and entrance signs, public notice boards, possibly with toilets, a café and onsite base for staff.</p>	8 - 20 Hectares	1200 metres
<p><b>Local Park</b> (e.g. Pinner Memorial Park)</p> <p>Likely to attract residents living in the local neighbourhood. Provide an opportunity for both passive recreation as well as active recreation. Provision for court games, children's play, sitting-out areas and natural areas and some formal sporting provision.</p> <p>Some areas of short grass, shrubs and trees and gardens. Many also feature formal planting in the form of rose beds and perennial and/or annual bedding displays. Good provision of basic amenities, including entrance signs, seating, litter bins, dog bins.</p>	2 - 8 Hectares	800 metres
<p><b>Small Open Space</b> (e.g. Park Drive Recreation Ground)</p> <p>Serve a more local need for people living in the immediate area. Provide opportunities for both passive recreation and active recreation but on a smaller scale to that found within the local parks and gardens. May contain play equipment and/or a Multi Use Games Area, and possibly some other formal sporting provision. Also have good provision of basic amenities including entrance signs, seating and litter bins.</p> <p>The majority of small open spaces feature some areas of short grass, shrubs and trees.</p>	0.4 - 2 Hectares	400 metres
<p><b>Pocket Park</b> (e.g. Bernays Gardens)</p> <p>Predominantly used by residents in the immediate neighbourhood. However, where they are located in a town centre they will also provide a respite for shoppers and local employees.</p> <p>May have a small play area for younger children. Smaller areas of short grass, some shrubs and possibly trees. In general, they have a more limited provision of basic amenities, although seating and litter bins are normally present.</p>	Under 0.4 Hectares	400 metres
<p><b>Linear Park</b> (e.g. Yeading Walk)</p> <p>Open spaces adjacent to rivers, canals and other waterways; paths; nature conservation areas; and other routes that provide opportunities for informal recreation. There may be adjoining attractive areas which are not fully accessible to the public but contribute to the enjoyment of the space.</p>	Variable	Wherever achievable

## Key Consultation Findings – Parks and gardens

### Quantity

3.35 Residents were asked for their views on the current levels of provision of parks in Harrow Borough, and divide into two principal camps: two thirds of residents expressing an opinion (67%) say the quantity of parks is about right, whilst a third (31%) say there are too few spaces of this type. Only eight of the people we surveyed said they thought there were too many parks in this Borough. The perception of deficiency in park provision is lower than for most other types of open space.

**Table 3.7: Residents' views on the current levels of provision of parks**

Sub-area	Proportion of residents wanting more parks provision
Central	37%
Northeast	28%
Northwest	32%
Southeast	26%
Southwest	33%
Overall	32%
N(=100%)	936

3.36 Levels of contentment with provision are highest in the Southeast sub-area, where three quarters of residents expressing an opinion say the quantity of parks is about right, and the Northwest where two thirds of residents (67%) express satisfaction with the level of provision. Demand for more provision is highest in the Central sub-area, but even here the proportion who want more park space (37%) is considerably lower than the proportion who think existing provision is adequate in terms of quantity (63%).

- 3.37 The desire for increased provision is much higher among younger residents, with two in five people aged 35 or under (39%) suggesting there are too few parks locally; satisfaction with existing provision is strongest among the oldest people and just one in five (19%) people aged 66 or over say they think there should be an increase in provision. Consistent with this, people with children living at home are also more likely to think there should be more parks, but even here they are in a substantial minority, with two thirds (63%) of people with children thinking provision is about right.
- 3.38 Although there are significant minorities in the population who would like to see increased provision, they remain minorities throughout the analysis and would not therefore justify a significant increase in provision on quantity alone. It is also noticeable that there is a statistically significant inverse correlation between the frequency of park visiting and demand for more park space; those who visit more often are, generally speaking, also more content with what they have.

### ***Usage***

- 3.39 Overall, 87% of local residents make some use of parks, with just one in eight people (13%) saying they never visit a Borough park. Levels of use vary, however, as this table illustrates:



**Table 3.8: Frequency of visits to parks**

Frequency of visit	Proportion of people (%)
Every day	9%
Once or twice a week	25%
Two or three times a month	20%
Once a month	9%
Once every two or three months	12%
Less often	12%
Never	13%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1098</i>

3.40 Whilst there are some people for whom a park visit is an everyday occurrence (these will include dog walkers, and commuters using park routes), the general pattern is a less intense, but nonetheless significant, level of use. Over half of all local residents (54%) say they use parks at least once a fortnight, and two thirds (63%) say they visit at least once a month, suggesting that Borough parks are a very important facility to local people and one they use regularly. A small proportion of respondents indicate that their usage varies seasonally, but this cannot be measured accurately.

3.41 Levels of use are high in all sub-areas, but especially so in the Northwest and the Southwest, where over two thirds of residents (69% and 68% respectively) are using parks at least once a month. The lowest take up is in the Southeast, but even here well over half (59%) of residents visit a park at least once a month.

3.42 Younger people make more use of parks than older people, but levels of use are high in all age-groups and even in the over 65s, where levels of use are lowest, well over half (55%) of residents are using parks at least monthly, and the proportion who never use is just one in five (20%). Men are a little more likely to

visit a park at all, but those women who visit tend to visit a little more often, though the differences are not marked.

- 3.43 Park visiting is high in all ethnic groups, but parks are more popular with Black residents (76% visit at least monthly) and are visited less by Asian residents (59% visit at least monthly). Unsurprisingly, people with disabilities are much less frequent visitors than their counterparts with no disability, and just over a third of people with disabilities (37%) visit at least monthly, whilst a similar proportion (35%) never visit a park.
- 3.44 Parks are by no means exclusively the preserve of families, but it is noticeable that adults with children at home visit more often than those with no children. Over half of adults with no children (52%) visit at least monthly, but well over three quarters (78%) of people with children do so; in contrast, only 3% of families with children at home never visit a park.
- 3.45 The parks most often visited are listed here (people use different names for the same place, and occasionally the same name for different places, but this table gives a reasonable picture of the distribution of visits). It should also be noted that not everyone who says they visit a park indicates which one they visit most.

**Table 3.9: Parks most visited**

Park most visited	Number of times mentioned
Pinner Memorial	88
Canons	80
Centenary	50
Headstone Manor	44
West Harrow Rec	42
Harrow Rec	40
Harrow Weald Rec	28
Alexandra	27
Kenton	27
Roxbourne	26
Pinner Village Gardens	24
Pinner (unspecified) <sup>68</sup>	20
Boxtree	22
Stanmore	21
<i>N</i>	<i>824</i>

3.46 All the Borough's parks are mentioned, but it is clear from this table that some are more popular than others, and that two are much more popular than their counterparts. Pinner Memorial Park is the park most visited by residents of this Borough, with Canons close behind; no other site compares with these in popularity. Centenary, Headstone Manor, Harrow Recreation Ground and West Harrow Recreation Ground are also mentioned by substantial numbers of people, but are not in the league of Canons or Pinner Memorial. It is also possible that several of those who simply answered "Pinner" mean the Memorial Park, placing Pinner well ahead of its counterparts.

3.47 What is also noted is that 94% of those residents who are visiting parks make use of a local, Borough facility. Although there are a small minority (6%) who travel further afield, this is relatively uncommon – and even then, the parks being visited include some that lie just outside the Borough boundary, and may well be "local" to the people using them. Sites that lie further afield which attract

<sup>68</sup> For these responses, we do not know specifically which space in Pinner is being referred to.

residents include the country park at Aldenham, and central London locations such as Regents Park and Hyde Park, which may be being used at lunchtimes by commuters or shoppers. We also note that those using Borough parks visit much more frequently than those using sites further afield; 71% of those using a Borough park visit at least monthly, against just 45% of those using non-local facilities.

### ***Non-use of parks***

3.48 Thirteen per cent of local people never visit a park, and the reasons for this are shown here:

***Table 3.10: Reasons for not visiting parks***

<b>Reason for not visiting</b>	<b>Proportion of non-users (%)</b>
Concerned for safety in the park	75%
Don't have enough time	62%
More interesting things to do	36%
Concerned about safety travelling	33%
Park in poor condition	18%
Park is too far away	17%
Park is too difficult to get to	14%
Park is too difficult to move around in	5%
Park is too expensive to get to	0%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>146</i>

3.49 Although people with disabilities are the group least likely to be using parks, mobility-related issues are not prominent among the reasons given for non-use. By far the most important factor is a fear for the individual's safety while in the park, and three quarters of non-users cite this as a factor in their decision not to use, suggesting that there is a degree of fear associated with parks which evidently does not apply nearly as strongly to the streets that would be used to get there. This is not confined to any one age group, but is a much greater influence on female behaviour among non-users.

3.50 Otherwise, the main reasons for not using parks are essentially that the individual's interests lie elsewhere; two thirds of non-users say they don't have enough time (indicating priorities that lie in other areas of interest) and a third state that they have other interests. Park condition or accessibility are not significant deterrents from usage, and cost is not a factor at all.

### Quality

3.51 Those who do visit parks were asked to rate their usual park against a range of criteria. The criteria concerned, and the mean score<sup>69</sup> each achieved, are listed below, and the views that pertain to Borough parks are separated from those for parks outside the Borough, for clarity.

**Table 3.11: Residents' views of park quality**

Attribute	Mean score for Harrow Borough parks	Mean score for parks outside the Borough
Accessibility for wheelchairs and prams	0.74	0.57
Cleanliness and litter	0.69	0.84
Opportunities for children to play	0.68	1.19
Planting and grassed areas	0.58	1.25
Safety during the day	0.58	1.04
Friendliness of park staff	0.39	0.56
Quality of fencing	0.34	0.56
Well laid out with variety of landscapes	0.28	1.00
Litter bins	0.24	0.41
Information and signage	0.18	0.55
Vandalism and graffiti	0.12	0.65
Dog mess	-0.09	0.30
Seating facilities	-0.07	-0.06
Lighting	-0.42	0.07
Safety after dark	-0.58	-0.59
Toilet facilities	-1.31	-0.70
N(=100%)	<i>Varies from 299 to 819</i>	<i>Varies from 35 to 57</i>

<sup>69</sup> A mean score is calculated by applying a score to each response for each criterion. A rating of excellent attracts a score of 2, a rating of good is scored at 1, and ratings of below average or poor are scored at -1 or -2 respectively. "Average" and "don't know" are scored as zero and do not affect the result. The resulting score is then averaged across all respondents, giving an overall score somewhere between +2 and -2. A negative score indicates a balance of negative opinion, whilst a positive score indicates a positive opinion overall; the higher the score in either direction, the stronger that opinion is.

- 3.52 Most attributes attract positive scores, though none of these is strongly positive. The highest mean score, equating to an answer somewhere between “good” and “average”, is for accessibility. A similar score is assigned to play opportunities, and to cleanliness, an interesting finding given that this is often perceived as a problem in parks. Planting also attracts a moderate positive score, so that maintenance scores perform relatively well in this table, but it should be noted that the scores are by no means strong.
- 3.53 On safety, daytime safety scores reasonably, with a score above average, but safety after dark attracts a negative score of similar strength indicating a significant perception problem of parks after dark (a perception which may be more imagined than real, since many parks are locked at dusk). This may be influenced by, or be influencing, the score for lighting, which is also negative.
- 3.54 The score for friendliness of park staff is based on a fairly low response, as many people have no contact with staff.
- 3.55 Looking at the negative scores, most are modest, and although dog mess and seating both attract negative scores neither is especially strong. This cannot be said of the score for toilets, however, which is tending towards an overall “poor” result and indicates a significant issue with quality. Toilet facilities (or their absence) are known from other work<sup>70</sup> to be a major influence on park visiting the length of the visit, and are especially important for people accompanying children and for older people, especially women.
- 3.56 Whilst the quality scores are positive, they indicate significant possibilities for improvement, with seating and dog mess two attributes where higher scores could be achieved with modest levels of investment.
- 3.57 It is also interesting to compare the scores achieved by Harrow Borough sites with those given to parks further afield. The scores for parks outside the Borough are generally (though not always) higher, as might be expected – at least in part, this is because those who choose to travel further to parks are more likely to choose those of high quality, whereas in Borough parks convenience may override considerations of quality.

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<sup>70</sup> A number of private studies of individual parks carried out by Phil Back illustrate this point.

- 3.58 Non-Borough parks score much more highly on play opportunities, daytime safety, planting, layout, and vandalism. They also score significantly better on dog mess and lighting, where local parks are negative, and on toilets where a much better, though still negative, score is achieved. Overall, non-Borough parks are perceived as distinctly higher in quality than those within the Borough, and these factors may be influencing people's choice to go further afield; although it must be noted that central London parks also have other strong attractions, including events. They also have a visitor base that promotes increased levels of facility, and transport links that make them attractive as meeting places.
- 3.59 On the other hand, non-Borough parks are actually less easily accessed by wheelchairs and buggies, are just as problematic as Borough parks in the area of seating, and are no safer after dark than those in the Borough.
- 3.60 The scores for maintenance attributes are lower in the Central sub-area. Here the mean score for cleanliness is just 0.47, in contrast to a score of 0.81 in the Southwest. On dog mess, the contrast is even more evident, with a Central score of -0.37 comparing with a score of +0.12 in the Northwest – by no means an outstanding score, but a much better one than that achieved in the Central sub-area. Planting and grassed areas are best rated in the Northeast, and again Central is the lowest scoring sub-area.
- 3.61 As to seating, scores are weak in all areas but are worst in the Northwest, where a score of -0.36 compares poorly with the score of +0.20 in the Northeast – again, not an outstanding score, but a significantly better one. Toilet scores are low everywhere but are worst in the Southwest (-1.56) and the Northwest (-1.55); the best of a poor bunch of scores is in the Northeast (-0.82).
- 3.62 Interestingly, younger residents tend to give higher scores on this range of attributes, though the differences are not especially marked. Safety issues after dark are very much more prominent for Asian residents (-0.79) than White residents (-0.53), but there are no significant differences by age or gender.

## **Accessibility**

3.63 People were asked how they travel to the park, with these results:

**Table 3.12: How people travel to parks**

Means of transport	Proportion of park users (%)
Walk or jog	79%
Car	16%
Bus/tube/rail	2%
Cycle	2%
Other	1%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>946</i>

3.64 Walking is by far the most common way of reaching a park, and four out of five park users travel on foot to their preferred park. Almost all of the rest travel by car, and there are very few residents using public transport, or using a cycle, to get to this type of facility. The small proportion using other types of transport include mobility scooter users as well as motorcyclists. Even among those households who have cars, using the car to get to the park is rare and just one in six car owners (17%) use the car for a journey of this type.

3.65 Car use is much more prominent among those using non-local parks, and so is public transport, indicating that these are not always conveniently located for people. Car use is also a little more common where children are involved, although there is little difference in overall journey time.

3.66 Unsurprisingly, walking is the most common means of transport in all sub-areas, but is particularly prominent in the Southwest and the Northwest, where over 80% of park visitors walk. Car use is more prominent in the other three sub-areas but in no instance does the proportion using a car exceed 20%. Walking tends to reduce with advancing age but even so over three quarters of over 65s who visit parks travel on foot to do so. Car use is higher among the older age-groups and also with those aged 36-50; under 35s are comparatively unlikely to use a car and just 12% do so.



- 3.67 Men walk a little more than women; women are almost exclusively the users of public transport and very few men travel to a park on a bus. People with disabilities are also a little more dependent on cars, and much more likely to use public transport, when making a park visit.
- 3.68 Black people are most likely to walk, and Asian people less likely to walk, but even so three quarters (75%) of Asian people walk to their preferred park.
- 3.69 Linked to the means of transport is the time taken to reach the park, which is shown in this table:

**Table 3.13: Time taken to reach the park**

Length of time taken	Proportion of park users (%)
0-5 minutes	38%
6-10 minutes	37%
11-15 minutes	16%
16-20 minutes	5%
Over 20 minutes	4%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>947</i>

- 3.70 In all, three quarters of park visitors take a journey of no more than 10 minutes to get to the park they visit most often, and virtually no-one travels for more than 15 minutes. Parks in this Borough are thus very much a local amenity which people expect to reach easily within a short travelling time.
- 3.71 Looking at how people travel to the park, it is noticeable that there are few differences in the amount of time taken according to the transport used; 75% of walkers, and 70% of car users, take 10 minutes or less. Clearly the distance that can be covered by a car in 10 minutes is likely to be further, and it may be that a walk of over 15 minutes encourages the use of the car for a minority of families, who would prefer to travel further and access a park further away than walk to a local park. Cycle use is confined largely to parks within a 5 minute cycle ride.
- 3.72 On average, a journey to a local park takes around 8 minutes; this figure varies between sub-areas, but not to any significant extent. The shortest journey times

are those by the Northwest sub-area residents, at 6.9 minutes, in contrast to the 8.25 minutes journey required in the Northeast. Car use is also higher in the Northeast and this suggests that residents in this sub-area may be travelling a little further afield than their counterparts.

## **Standards**

### ***Quantity***

- 3.73 The results of consultation indicate that there is a minority, but a substantial one, which would wish to see a higher level of park provision than is available at present. Moreover, the consultation also demonstrates that parks are essentially a local service accessed largely on foot, so provision at a more localised level would also benefit local people and would be likely to increase the frequency of visiting. The present net quantity of 0.62 Hectares per 1000 is therefore considered insufficient and the standard needs to be set at a higher level, but the increase does not need to be particularly dramatic in nature; rather it should tend to address current disparities in provision across the sub-areas.
- 3.74 We conclude therefore that the quantity standard for parks should be 0.66 ha per 1,000, with emphasis on increasing provision in the Southeast, Southwest and Central sub-areas. This standard would not however suggest that there is a surplus in the Northeast or Northwest sub-areas.

#### **Quantity Standard**

***0.66 hectares per 1000 people***

***Emphasis to be given to increasing provision in the southeast, southwest and central sub-areas***

### ***Quality***

- 3.75 The main emphasis in terms of standards relating to parks and gardens should generally be on their protection and enhancement. The consultation indicates that there is considerable room for improvement in the standards of quality in Harrow's parks, and looks for across the board increases in quality scores with particular attention given to areas such as perceptions of safety after dark, seating, dog mess, vandalism and bins. More imaginative landscaping would also be welcomed, based on the comparative scores between the Borough and non-Borough parks.
- 3.76 Whilst the statistical median quality score for parks is 72.7%, we feel that this is not sufficiently challenging to respond to concerns over quality. We therefore suggest that the quality score of 81.5% and value score of 80% achieved by Chandos Recreation Ground (PK007) should serve as a more aspirational benchmark for other parks.

#### **Quality Standard**

***A quality score of 81.5%***

***A value score of 80%***

- 3.77 A quality standard that has been achieved by three parks in Harrow<sup>71</sup> is the Green Flag Award. This scheme aims to raise standards in public parks by providing a benchmark by which the quality of parks and open spaces can be measured.

### ***Quality Criteria***

- 3.78 Good quality parks can be achieved if the following criteria<sup>72</sup> are satisfied:

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<sup>71</sup> Canons Park, Harrow Recreation Ground and Roxeth Park.

<sup>72</sup> These criteria have been developed by Ashley Godfrey Associates.

*Overall impression*

a welcoming appearance at the entrance to the park

an appropriate layout of woody and non-woody elements giving good spatial quality

good balance between natural, amenity and recreational elements

good relationship between landscape elements, infrastructure, buildings and structures relative to the site and relating well in visual terms

a varied topography and attractive views

elements of formal and informal supervision provide a feeling of personal safety and encourage people to use the park.

*Entrances*

the entrances to sites should be well placed, in good condition and well maintained.

*Parking*

adequate parking adjacent to main entrances to the park.

*Information and interpretation*

site is well signposted

informative interpretation boards that provide good educational material

*Water*

well maintained water areas.

*Boundaries and paths*

fencing maintained in a good state of repair

gates in good working order

paths are generally well placed and in good condition

gravel or grass paths not overgrown

tarmac paths kept in good state of repair and potholes filled in.

*Access*

site is accessible to people with disabilities

measures to facilitate access and overcome obstacles such as steep hills or rough terrain

*Safety, vandalism and graffiti*

little evidence of graffiti and vandalism

*Cleanliness, dog fouling, litter and fly tipping*

little evidence of litter, dog mess and fly tipping.

*Facilities*

a sufficient number of seats maintained in good condition

play areas/ buildings/toilets well maintained and functioning

refreshment/café providing good quality food and drinks at a reasonable cost

toilets should be clean and well maintained

good range of sports provision in good condition.

*Buildings*

maintained in above average condition

absence of graffiti on the walls.

*Nature conservation*

Evidence of encouragement of nature conservation e.g. margin of grass areas allowed to grow.

*Trees*

absence of dead trees

diversity of species and age of specimens.

### **Accessibility**

3.79 London's public open space hierarchy establishes the accessibility standards for parks and gardens in London. This has been adapted to reflect the local situation in Harrow. District Parks are at the highest level of the hierarchy and have a catchment of 1200 metres. Local Parks are one tier below the District Park and have a catchment of 800 metres. For people living within 800 metres of a District Park, the park will also function as their Local Park. Similarly, a Local Park will function as a Small Open Space or Pocket Park for those who live within 400 metres of a Local Park. **Maps 3.3 – 3.5** therefore show these sites at each tier of the hierarchy.

<b>Accessibility Standard</b>	
<b>District Park</b>	<b>1200 metres</b>
<b>Local Park</b>	<b>800 metres</b>
<b>Small Open Space</b>	<b>400 metres</b>
<b>Pocket Park</b>	<b>400 metres</b>
<b>Linear Park</b>	<b>Wherever achievable</b>

3.80 The aim of these standards is to ensure that local people have access to good quality parks and gardens. Ideally, everyone should be within the catchment for each level of the hierarchy. A key element of the strategy will be the consideration of how the deficiencies revealed by the mapping of catchment areas can be alleviated or reduced.

## Deficiencies

### Quantity

3.81 **Table 3.14** shows the level of deficiency for each of the five sub-areas, when the recommended standards are applied.

**Table 3.14 Current Deficiencies in Parks and Gardens**

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Current level of provision (Hectares)	Current level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population	Amount of Parks and Gardens (Ha) required to meet standard	Deficiency (hectares)
Central	52,615	27.05	0.51	0.66	34.73	7.68
Northeast	32,732	26.26	0.80	0.66	21.60	+4.66
Northwest	40,178	38.48	0.96	0.66	26.52	+11.97
Southeast	40,065	22.27	0.56	0.66	26.44	4.18
Southwest	55,098	24.67	0.45	0.66	36.36	11.70
Total	220,688	138.73	0.63	0.66	145.65	6.92

3.82 The proposed standard is already met and surpassed in the Northeast and Northwest sub-areas (although even there public consultation suggests that supply is by no means excessive). We would not consider these sub-areas to be in actual surplus and recommend retention and protection of existing space in these sub-areas. There is a deficit in the three remaining sub-areas, which is most marked in the Southwest, where 11.70 hectares of additional space are needed, but is also prominent in the Central sub-area where a deficit of 7.68 hectares is indicated.

**Table 3.15: Future Deficiencies in Parks and Gardens**

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Current level of provision (Hectares)	Future level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population	Amount of Parks and Gardens (Ha) required to meet standard	Deficiency (hectares)
Central	52,315	27.05	0.52	0.66	34.53	7.48
Northeast	32,325	26.26	0.81	0.66	21.33	+4.93
Northwest	41,612	38.48	0.92	0.66	27.46	+11.02
Southeast	43,121	22.27	0.52	0.66	28.46	6.19
Southwest	59,644	24.67	0.41	0.66	39.37	14.70
Total	229,018	138.73	0.61	0.66	151.15	12.42

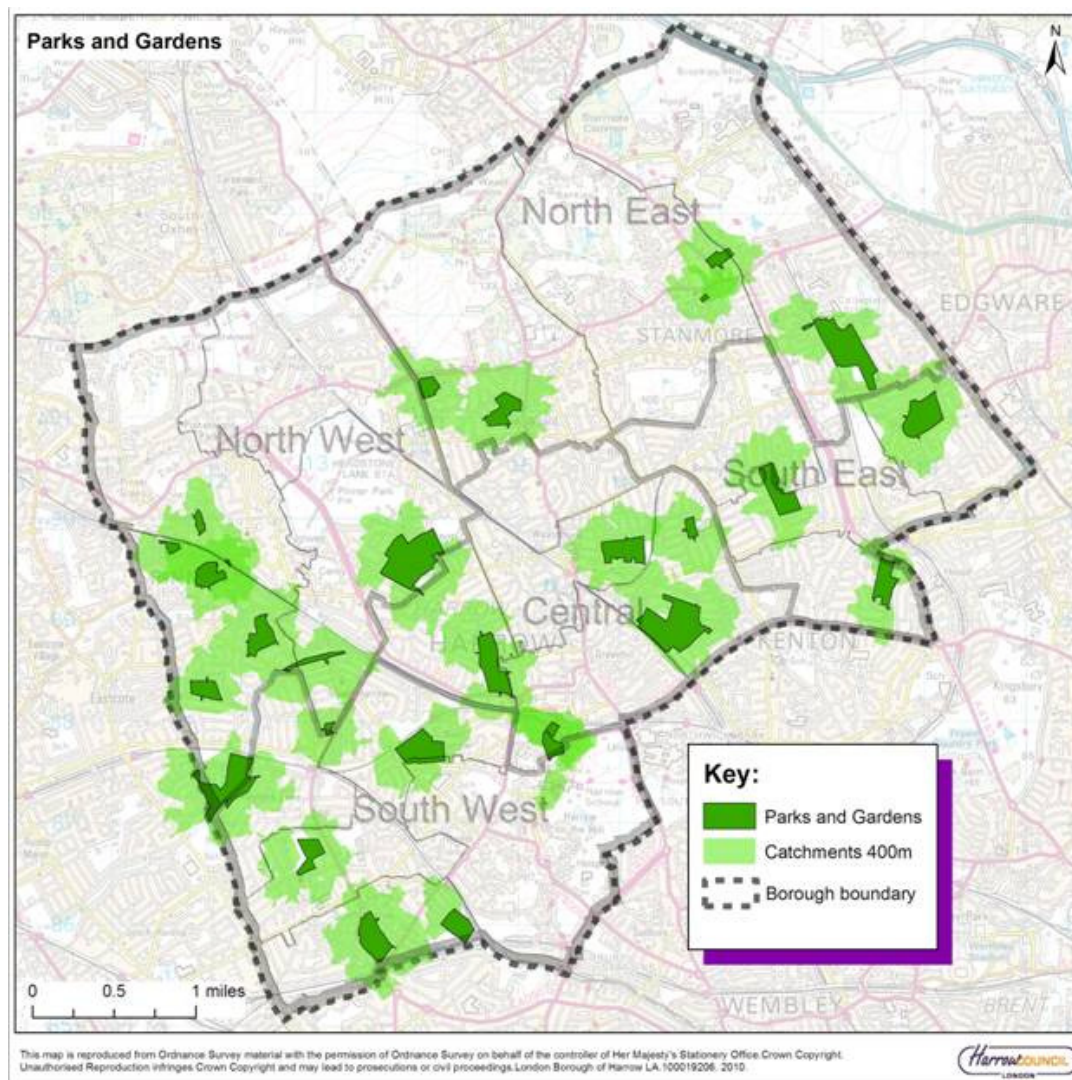
3.83 By 2026, total population will have increased by approximately 8,500 with most of the increase being concentrated in the Southeast and Southwest sub areas. As a consequence the existing deficiencies in provision in these sub areas are exacerbated with the requirement in the Southwest increasing to 14.70 hectares.

### **Accessibility**

3.84 The maps that follow show the application of the accessibility standard to parks at different levels in the hierarchy, noting that parks at one level can also have a role as parks at a lower level in the hierarchy.

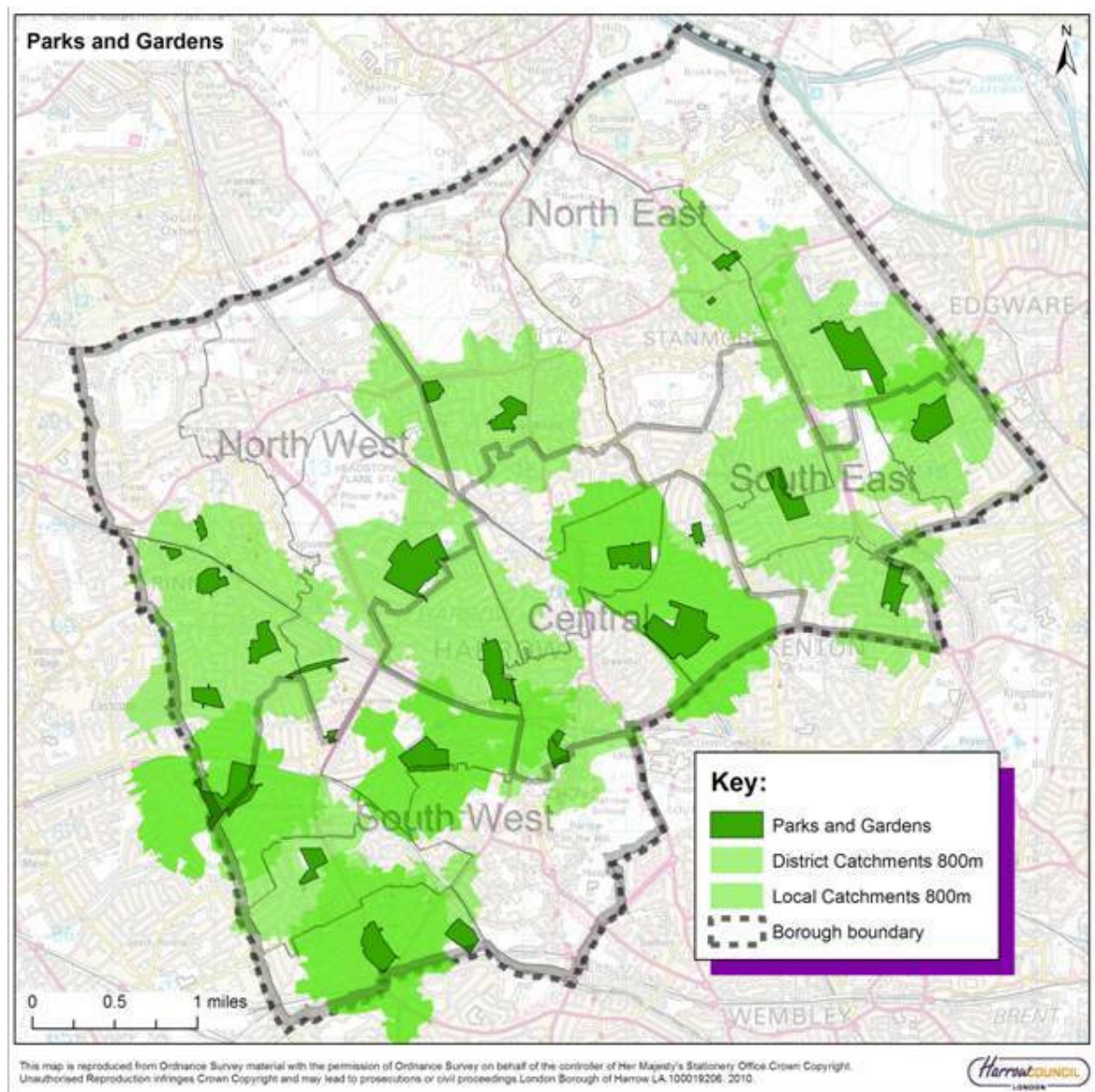


**Map 3.3: Parks at 40m catchments**



3.85 Although much of the borough has access to a pocket park or small open space, there are significant accessibility deficiencies in the northeast and northwest sub-areas. There are also some significant areas of the southwestern, central and southeastern sub-areas that lie outside these catchments.

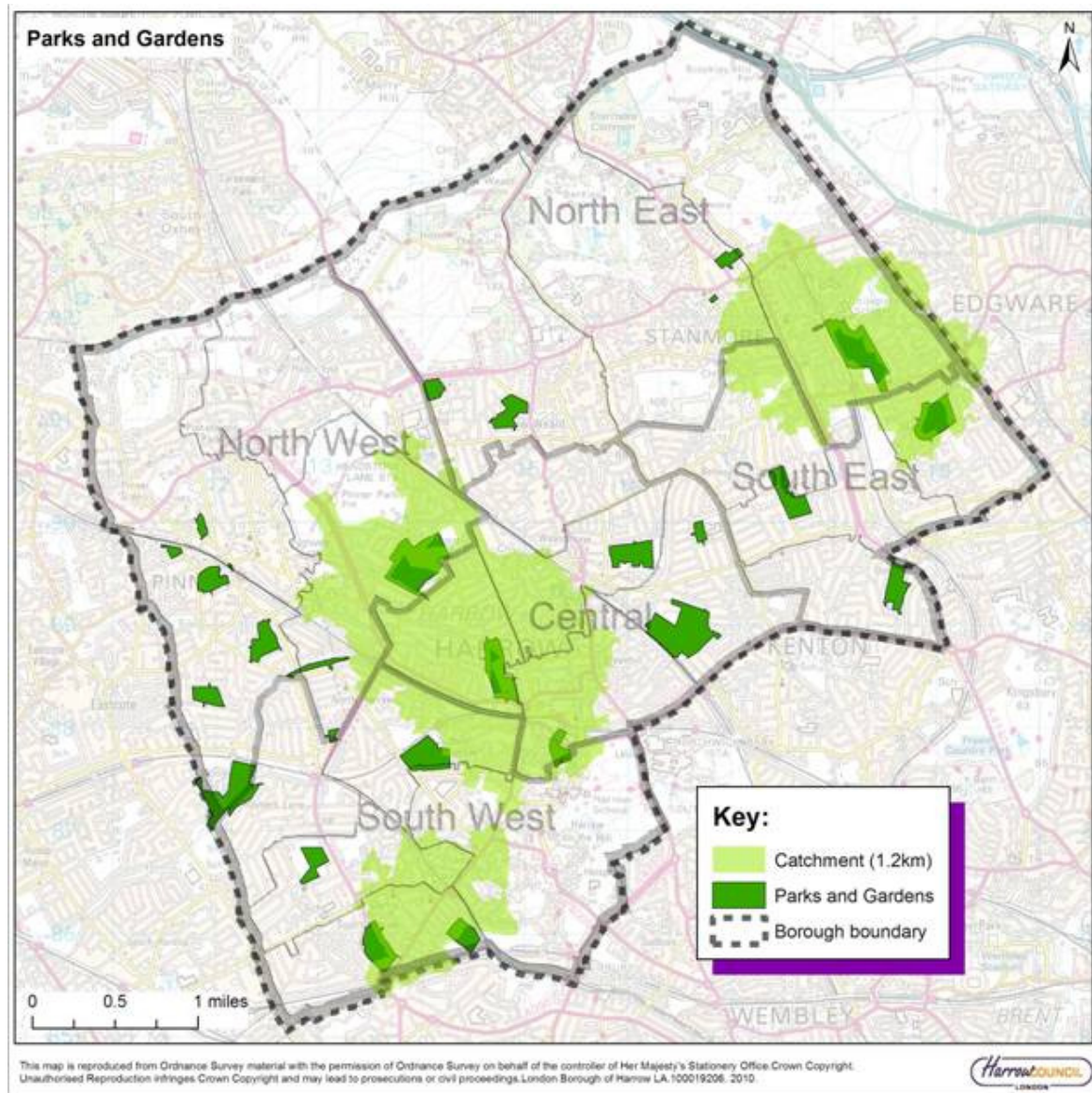
**Map 3.4 Park catchments at 800m**



3.86 Looking at the 800m catchment, most of the southern half of the Borough is covered by these catchment areas and thus has access to the local park dimension of the hierarchy; even so, a substantial area of the southwestern sub-area lies outside the catchment, as do much of the northeastern and northwestern sub-areas.



**Map 3.5: Park catchments at 1200m**



3.87 At the district park level, only a small portion of the Borough lies within a park's catchment area, and much of the Borough population is thus deficient in accessibility terms according to this standard. The main shortfalls are thus in parks at the extremes of the hierarchy.

## Play

### Definition

- 4.1 'Play' has been defined<sup>73</sup> as freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated behaviour that actively engages the child. This definition is widely recognised and understood in the play sector. In lay terms it says that children are playing when they are doing what they want to do, in the way they want to and for their own reasons.
- 4.2 The term 'play provision' is used to describe settings where the primary aim is for children to play. Play England's objective for good play provision has been summarised as the delivery of play provision that is accessible, welcoming and engaging for all children and young people including those who are disabled or have specific needs and wishes; it is acknowledged that children and young people of different ages have different play interests and needs.
- 4.3 This report is concerned principally with dedicated playable spaces which are mostly equipped, although children often play in spaces with no specific play equipment. In general, play provision is considered to be open access where children can come and go as they please. A study carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in 1996<sup>74</sup> found that just 12% of outdoor play by children occurs in equipped play areas; in contrast, nearly half of all play was at that time in the street or on the pavement and 18% in public open space including amenity space, showing that this type of provision offers significant potential for children's play.
- 4.4 Playgrounds and play areas are located in parks, recreation grounds, playing fields and other public open spaces or in housing estates, where they have been designed as part of the development plan, or included when the area has been re-developed or renovated.

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<sup>73</sup> Children's Play Council (2002) Making the Case for Play

<sup>74</sup> Child's Play: facilitating play on housing estates; Rob Whewey and Alison Millward, JRF 1997

## Strategic Context

- 4.5 In response to the growing demand for better play opportunities the government recognised the importance of play in a child's development and produced a national play strategy, "The Play Strategy"<sup>75</sup> which set out plans to improve and develop play facilities for children throughout the country. The strategy identifies the importance of free play, particularly outdoors, as being fundamental to children's learning, healthy growth and development. It is emphasised that children must have access to opportunities for risk taking and it is the responsibility of those planning for play provision to strike the balance between risk and benefit. Children have a legitimate claim to play both in places designed specifically for play and to share in the use of general public space for their own enjoyment.
- 4.6 The strategy seeks to support and develop opportunities for play but also calls for a much more imaginative and flexible approach to the creation of new play spaces.
- 4.7 The strategy aims that:
- In every residential area there are a variety of supervised and unsupervised places for play, free of charge;
  - Local neighbourhoods are, and feel like, safe, interesting places to play;
  - Routes to children's play space are safe and accessible for all children and young people;
  - Parks and open spaces are attractive and welcoming to children and young people, and are well maintained and well used;
  - Children and young people have a clear stake in public space and their play is accepted by their neighbours;
  - Children and young people play in a way that respects other people and property;

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<sup>75</sup> The Play Strategy. DCFS and DCMS 2008.

- Children and young people and their families take an active role in the development of local play spaces; and
- Play spaces are attractive, welcoming, engaging and accessible for all local children and young people, including disabled children, and children from minority groups in the community.

4.8 In a letter to Chief Planning Officers, the government advised that the Play Strategy:

*‘recognises that planning and wider local place shaping is of fundamental importance to the quality of space available for children to play, and to the ability of children to access that space safely by foot and bike.’*

4.9 The Children’s Plan, “Building brighter futures”<sup>76</sup>, set out the Government’s strategy for children, young people and their families. This included £225 million of new government funding to create more and safer places to play with 3,500 playgrounds to be rebuilt or renewed, and made more accessible to disabled children. The plan also encouraged the development of more Home Zones, greater use of 20mph speed limits and the promotion of outdoor play where children can learn how to manage risks.

4.10 Playbuilder is a national 3-year programme of capital grants (2008-2011) from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)<sup>77</sup>. Harrow Council was awarded a grant of £1.1 million under the Playbuilder programme to improve 22 play areas before March 2011, primarily for the 8-13 age group. In addition, the Big Lottery Fund’s Children’s Play programme provided an award of £456,075 to finance six projects in Harrow including play areas in Canons Park, Headstone Manor Recreation Ground, Roxeth Recreation Ground and Grange Farm Close.

4.11 The guidance ‘Better Places to Play Through Planning’<sup>78</sup> aims to support local planning and transport authorities to develop and implement planning policy that ensures children and young people have access to high quality playable spaces

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<sup>76</sup> The Children’s Plan: Building brighter futures. The Department for Children Schools and Families. 2007.

<sup>77</sup> Now (2010) the Department for Education

<sup>78</sup> Better Places to Play Through Planning. Play England 2008.

close to where they live and spend their time. As the agency responsible for spatial planning, the creation of suitable spaces for play is a key responsibility of the local planning authority. Local planning policies and practice are considered to have a major impact on the provision of accessible spaces where children and young people can play in safety in their neighbourhoods.

- 4.12 The guide builds on the policies covered in current government guidance.<sup>79</sup> It offers recommendations for improving the quality, quantity and access to local playable spaces through planning policy and development control. The Local Development Framework (LDF) and development control are mechanisms to improve the experience and enjoyment of children and young people and involve them in shaping their own neighbourhoods. Advice is also provided on following the statutory guidance to work more closely with the local Children's Trust.
- 4.13 The Mayor of London has produced Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for the delivery of good quality and accessible play facilities together with places to go and things to do for older children and teenagers.<sup>80</sup> It offers guidance to London boroughs on providing for the play and recreation needs of children and young people under the age of 18, and advocates the use of benchmark standards in the preparation of play strategies and in the implementation of Policy 3.6 of the draft replacement London Plan.<sup>81</sup> This states that:

*'the Mayor and appropriate organisations should ensure that all children and young people have safe access to good quality, well-designed, secure and stimulating play and informal recreation provision, incorporating trees and greenery wherever possible.'*

- 4.14 Policy 3.6 makes it clear that development proposals that include housing should make provision for play and informal recreation in accordance with the Mayor's Supplementary Planning Guidance. LDF policies should seek to improve access and opportunity for all children and young people in their area because

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<sup>79</sup> Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3)(CLG 2006c); Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation (PPG17) (ODPM 2002); and the Manual for Streets (DfT and CLG 2007)

<sup>80</sup> Supplementary Planning Guidance - Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation. Mayor of London 2008.

<sup>81</sup> The London Plan - Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London, Consultation draft replacement plan. Mayor of London 2009. Page 71.

stimulating play facilities are essential for a child's welfare and future development. LDFs should address the lack of adequate access to play facilities by providing policies on play provision, including the need for high quality design.

- 4.15 Policy 36 also indicates that play space should be provided on new housing development and that this should normally be made on-site and in accordance with LDF play policies for the area. Off-site provision may be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that it fully satisfies the needs of the development whilst continuing to meet the needs of existing residents.<sup>82</sup>

### ***Playing close to home***

- 4.16 How far from home a child will go to play is directly related to the child's age. Younger children tend to play close to home where they feel secure and comfortable, but as they grow older they are more likely to venture further from home to explore their surroundings and seek out friends. This freedom to extend the boundaries of their world and explore further from home plays an important role in the development of a child's independence and self-confidence.
- 4.17 The Policy Institute Report, 'One False Move: A Study of Children's Independent Mobility'<sup>83</sup> showed that surveys of English primary school children in 1971 and 1990 revealed large decreases in their freedom to travel independently. In 1971, 80% of 7 and 8 year old children travelled to school on their own unaccompanied by an adult. By 1990 this figure had dropped to 9%, primarily because of their parents' fear of traffic.
- 4.18 Research for a variety of organisations by Rob Wheway has confirmed that changing patterns in children's playing out over time have been due to dangers posed by traffic.<sup>84</sup> The reduction in the distances that children are allowed to travel unaccompanied and the reduced freedom of children to move about within

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<sup>82</sup> The London Plan: Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. Consultation draft replacement plan. Mayor of London 2009.

<sup>83</sup> One False Move: A study of children's independent mobility. Hillman, Adams, and Whitelegg; Policy Institute, London, 1990

<sup>84</sup> Child's Play: Facilitating play in housing estates (1997) Wheway R, Millward A. published by Chartered Institute of Housing and Joseph Rowntree Foundation



their local neighbourhood is a key reason why many playgrounds are less well used than previously.

### ***Parents' and Children's Fears***

- 4.19 The independent think tank and research institute, Demos, has demonstrated that in this country we increasingly exclude and marginalise the young.<sup>85</sup> Trends in Britain are pointing towards less outdoor play, increased parental anxiety and less tolerance of children and young people. The impact of an unwelcoming public realm on their health and well-being is becoming increasingly clear.
- 4.20 The report draws on six case studies to argue that we need a paradigm shift in the way we think about the built environment - one which addresses the deepening segregation between generations.
- 4.21 Although many children enjoy playing outside, one of their biggest concerns is a fear of being bullied by older children. Children are also increasingly constrained by their parents' fears for their safety<sup>86</sup> whether this be concerns about 'stranger-danger' or traffic. The result is to shrink the world children can discover on their own.
- 4.22 The rates of childhood deaths from pedestrian accidents in this country are amongst the highest in Europe.<sup>87</sup> As a result, parents restrict their children if they need to cross roads with fast-moving traffic, or even residential roads where motor vehicles are given priority over pedestrians. Indeed evidence shows that the majority of these accidents happen where children spend most time - close to home in residential streets.<sup>88</sup> Consequently, roads are a much greater barrier to children's movement than they were in the past.

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<sup>85</sup> Seen and Heard: Reclaiming the public realm with children and young people. Demos 2007.

<sup>86</sup> Greenhalgh, L and Worpole, K (1995) Park Life: Urban parks and social renewal – a report by Comedia in association with Demos. Comedia. Children's Play Council and The Children's Society (2001) Press Release for Play Day. The Society.

<sup>87</sup> Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation. Department of Health 1999.

<sup>88</sup> Liabo, K, Curtis, K (2003) Traffic calming schemes to reduce childhood injuries from road accidents and respond to children's in What Works for Children Group Evidence Nugget April 2003. [http://www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk/nugget\\_summaries.htm](http://www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk/nugget_summaries.htm)

- 4.23 Consultation by Barnardos and Transport 2000<sup>89</sup> concluded that if we want children to be able to use our streets to walk to school, to play and to exercise we need to make sure they feel safe enough to cross the road.

### ***Area Location***

- 4.24 Where a playground is in the right location it will be highly used. A good location is where children at play can "see and be seen" and where there is a high probability that other people will pass by or through.
- 4.25 Children tend to stay in any one place for a relatively short period of time but will keep returning to a popular place. A playground in a poor location, even with good equipment, is likely to have low usage and be vulnerable.<sup>90</sup> A playground which is well located, when imaginatively equipped and well maintained, will be popular with both children and their parents.

### ***Existing Standards***

- 4.26 'Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play' (PAD) formally known as 'The Six Acre Standard', published by Fields in Trust, recommends the benchmark standards set out in **Table 4.1** below.

***Table 4.1: PAD benchmark standards for play space***

<b>Children's Playing Space</b>	<b>Benchmark Standard (hectares per 1000 population)</b>
Designated Equipped Playing Space	0.25
Informal Playing Space	0.55
Total - Children's Playing Space	0.80

<sup>89</sup> Reduce Speed Now: Stop, look and listen (Report of unclear date, prepared by Barnardos/ALG/Transport 2000, Ilford)

<sup>90</sup> Ibid

4.27 Fields in Trust has developed a quantity Benchmark Standard derived from a national survey of locally developed standards of provision in local authorities across the country. The standard provides a basis for assessing the adequacy of existing provision compared to the median score achieved in other local authority areas, and can be used to assess the adequacy of each category of equipped play space as well as the adequacy of provision for casual and informal play. The overall children's playing space Benchmark Standard can then be applied to obtain an overview of the current level of provision.

4.28 Similarly, Fields in Trust has also developed an accessibility standard which is shown in **Table 4.2**.

**Table 4.2: FIT Children's Playing Space Accessibility Benchmark Standard**

Type of Space	Distance Criteria (metres)	
	Walking Distance	Straight Line Distance
Local areas for play or 'door-step' spaces –for play and informal recreation (LAPs)	100	60
Local equipped, or local landscaped, areas for play – for play and informal recreation (LEAPs)	400	240
Neighbourhood equipped areas for play –for play and informal recreation, and provision for young people (NEAPs); this also covers what is referred to in the London supplementary Planning Guidance as youth space	1,000	600

4.29 Fields in Trust suggests that the Play England Quality Assessment Tool, or equivalent, can be used to assess the quality of both designated play spaces, whether equipped or not, and casual and informal spaces for play.

### ***Play England typology***

4.30 More recently, Play England has developed a new typology of play spaces.<sup>91</sup>

This defines play provision as spaces and facilities that are free of charge, where children are free to come and go (other than where safety is an issue for children with particular needs), and where they are free to choose what they do – the so-called “three frees”. The typology of play spaces is shown in **Table 4.3**.

**Table 4.3: Play England Typology of Play Spaces**

<b>Type of Play Space</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Walking Distance (metres)</b>
Type A: ‘Door-step’ spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation	<i>A small space, within sight of home, where children, especially young children can play within view of known adults.</i>	100
Type B: ‘Local’ spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation	<i>A larger space which can be reached safely by children beginning to travel independently and with friends, without accompanying adults and for adults with young children to walk to with ease.</i>	400
Type C: ‘Neighbourhood’ spaces and facilities for play and informal recreation.	<i>A larger space or facility for informal recreation which children and young people, used to travelling longer distances independently, can get to safely and spend time in play and informal recreation with their peers and have a wider range of play experiences.</i>	1,000

### **Providing for Children and Young People’s Play and Informal Recreation Mayor of London)**

4.31 The Mayor’s Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) proposes a new typology of play spaces based on the advice provided for play strategies.<sup>92</sup> This typology is shown in **Table 4.4**.

<sup>91</sup> Tools for evaluating local play provision: A technical guide to Play England local play indicators. Ashley Godfrey Associates 2009

<sup>92</sup> Mayor’s Guide to Preparing Play Strategies, 2005.

**Table 4.4: Mayor of London's Typology of Play Space**

Type of Space	Description	Actual Walking Distance from residential unit (metres)
Doorstep Playable Space	A place where young children under the age of five can play.	100
Local Playable Space	A place where children aged up to 11 can play,	400
Neighbourhood Playable Space	A more extensive place where children up to the age of 11 can play , and where there are some facilities for young people over 11.	400
Youth Space	A place where young people aged 12 and above can meet and take part in informal sport based activities (including 'extreme sports' such as skateboarding or skating) and other informal recreation.	800

4.32 The Mayor's typology of play spaces is based on the concept of the 'playable space'. The SPG sets out the need to recognize the ways that children and young people use different types of public space. The typology builds on the multifunctional nature of the 'playable space' rather than play spaces per se.

4.33 A **Doorstep Playable Space** is described as a landscaped space of at least 100 square metres, including play features such as sand and water (if possible), climbable objects and fixed equipment for young children and places for carers to sit and talk. This type of space caters for children aged birth to 5 years.

4.34 A **Local Playable Space** should be at least 300 square metres which has landscaping and equipment for children aged from birth to 11 years to enable them to play and be physically active. Features could include landscaping to create natural feel, with some changes of level, equipment integrated into the landscaping, that allows children to swing, slide and climb, multigames/ball walls, kick about area, basketball nets and sand (if possible). It should also have provision for children and their carers to be able to sit and talk.

- 4.35 A **Neighbourhood Playable Space** is a larger space of at least 500 square metres which is a more natural area with landscaping and equipment catering for children aged from birth to 11 and providing opportunities for play and physical activity and with some youth facilities. It should also have provision for children and their carers to be able to sit and talk. This type of space might have bike, skate and skateboard facilities, kick about area, basketball nets and possibly a water feature if possible. For young people a shelter plus basketball net, small wheeled facility or climbing wall/boulder could be provided.
- 4.36 For older children the **Youth Space** aims to provide a social space for young people aged 12 and over to meet, hang out and take part in informal sport or physical recreational activities. Facilities could include a multi ball court, basketball court, climbing walls or boulders, multi-use games area (MUGA), wheeled sports area, skatepark or BMX track, traversing wall, climbing boulders, exercise trails, (outdoor exercise equipment ). A Youth Shelter would provide a place to meet and sit down.
- 4.37 The SPG provides guidance on assessing areas of deficiency. This adequacy of existing provision needs to be assessed in relation to the provision per child population.

## Local Context

### ***Harrow Play Strategy Action Plan 2007 - 2012***

The play strategy action plan aims to address these priorities in the short to medium term:

- 4.38 **Priority 1. Make use of a multi-agency approach to increase the amount, range and accessibility of local supervised and unsupervised play provision.**

#### **Action**

- Maintain and increase the amount of supervised play provision available in the Borough.

- Increase use of school playgrounds for out-of-school hours, open access play.
- Increase play opportunities for disabled children during term-time and holiday periods.
- Maintain and increase the amount of unsupervised play opportunities available across the Borough.

**4.39 Priority 2. Develop play provision with the active engagement of children and young people and ensure that play opportunities address the needs of children of all ages.**

**Action**

- Develop adventurous and challenging activities for older children.
- Increase the availability of supervised play opportunities for children aged 12+
- Involve children and young people in the design and planning of play spaces and play opportunities.
- Raise awareness of existing and proposed play opportunities amongst children and young people as part of encouraging physical activity.

**4.40 Priority 3. Monitor access to play provision for all children and improve access where deficiencies are identified.**

**Action**

- Create additional play opportunities in areas of greatest need.
- Make use of demographic and GIS mapping to monitor the demand for play spaces.
- Monitor and evaluate Big Lottery Fund play projects to ensure they are meeting targets and inform future planning.

## The need for provision for Children and Young People

4.41 There are currently 43,948 children and young people under the age of 16 in Harrow or 19.9% of the total population. **Table 4.5** shows how this group is projected to change over the next sixteen years. A growth in play and informal recreation provision will be required to meet the needs of the existing and future child population. In the period 2010 to 2016, the child population is estimated to increase by 3,725 (8.5%) and the decline by 929 to 46,745 by 2021. The child population is then estimated to increase by 1,072 to reach 47,817 by 2026.

**Table 4.5: Changes in Child Population in Harrow 2010-2026**

Age Group	2010	2016	2021	2026
Children under 5	13,657	15,538	14,610	14,058
5-11 year olds	17,657	19,794	19,794	19,505
Young People 12-16	12,634	12,341	12,341	14,254
Total	43,948	47,673	46,745	47,817

Source: 2008 Ward Population Projections Low, GLA.

4.42 The projected number of young people aged 16/17 years in Harrow (**Table 4.6**) shows a decline of 2,723 in the period 2010 to 2016 and then a steady increase up to 2026. This represents an 11.1% increase overall of the 16 to 17 years old age group over the period 2010 to 2026.

## Audit

4.43 The audit focused on dedicated playable spaces. Each playable space was initially identified as being either Doorstep Playable Space, Local Playable Space, Neighbourhood Playable Space or Youth Space and assessed against the relevant criteria for that type of space. Adopting this approach does not mean that play is restricted to dedicated ‘reservations’; children and young people do not limit where they play or hang out to dedicated equipped spaces, and will use a wide range of spaces including the street, civic spaces, parks,

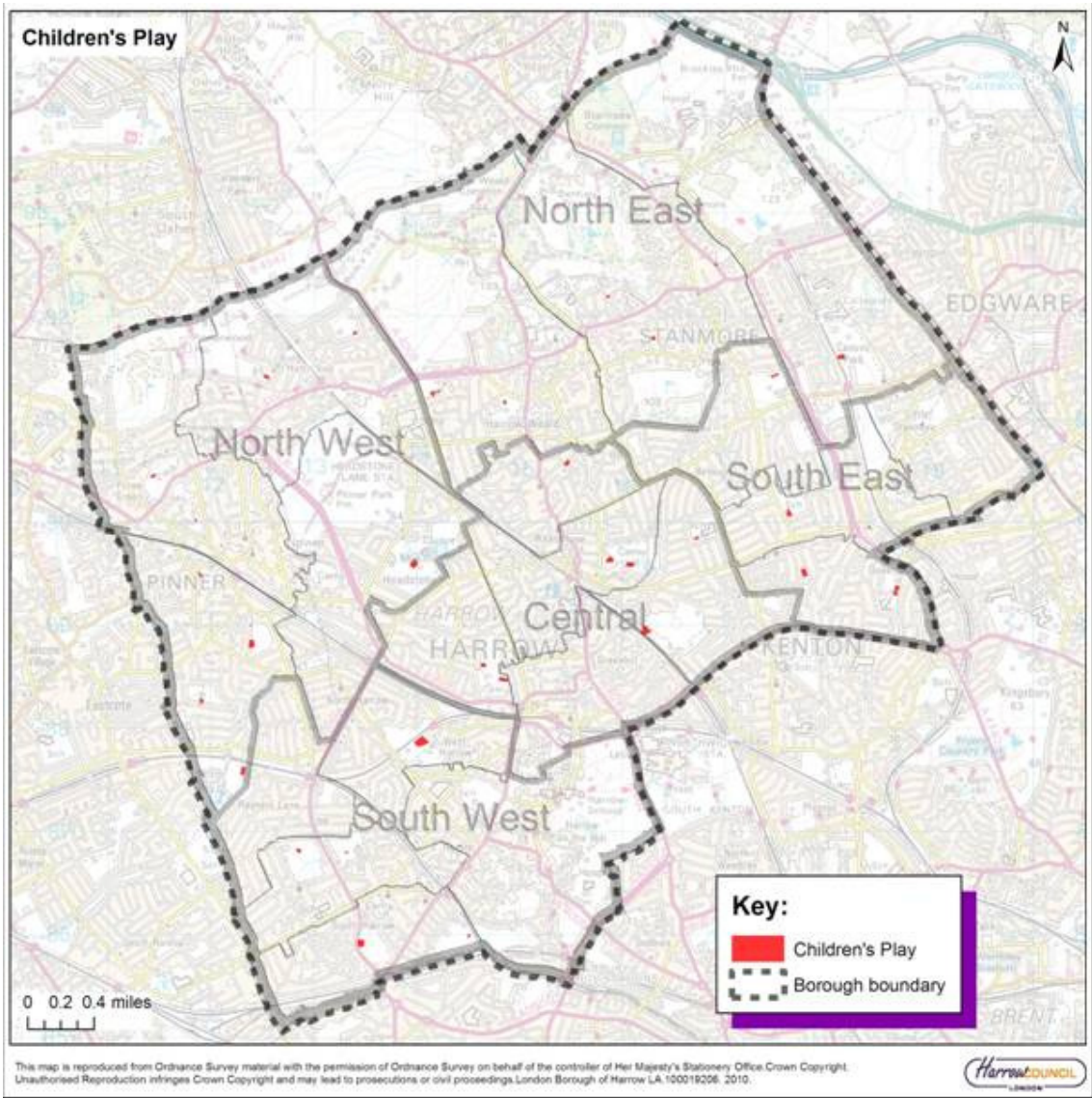


playing fields and amenity greenspace. There are therefore many other types of open space covered by this study that will provide informal play opportunities.

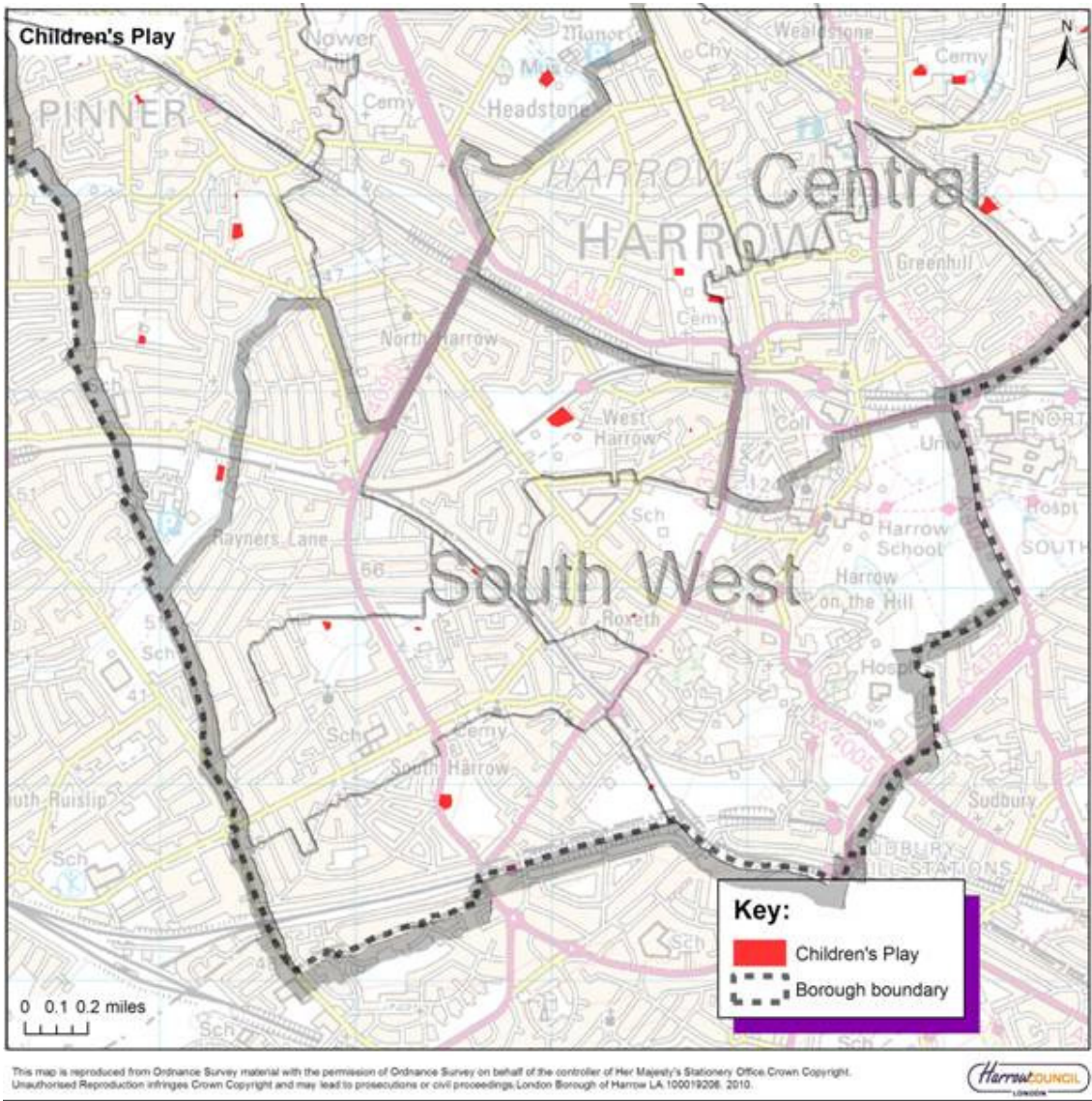
### ***Quantity***

- 4.44 The scope of the audit was confined to playable spaces catering for the needs of children up to approximately 12 years of age, and youth provision for teenagers including facilities such as skateboard parks, basketball courts and ‘open access’ Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs).
- 4.45 There are currently 42 play areas and 4 open access multi use games areas (MUGAs) in Harrow. Some sites comprise an equipped playable space and youth provision; others contain either an equipped playable space or youth provision only. These sites are identified on **Maps 4.1 to 4.5**. The number of sites located in each sub-area is shown in **Table 4.7** below. Playable spaces were found in parks, recreation grounds, informal open spaces and smaller areas of open space or within residential areas.
- 4.46 Two sites, one in Kenmore Avenue and one of the two sites in Montesoles Recreation Ground, were under construction at the time of the survey and these have therefore not been assessed.

**Map 4.1      Playable spaces**

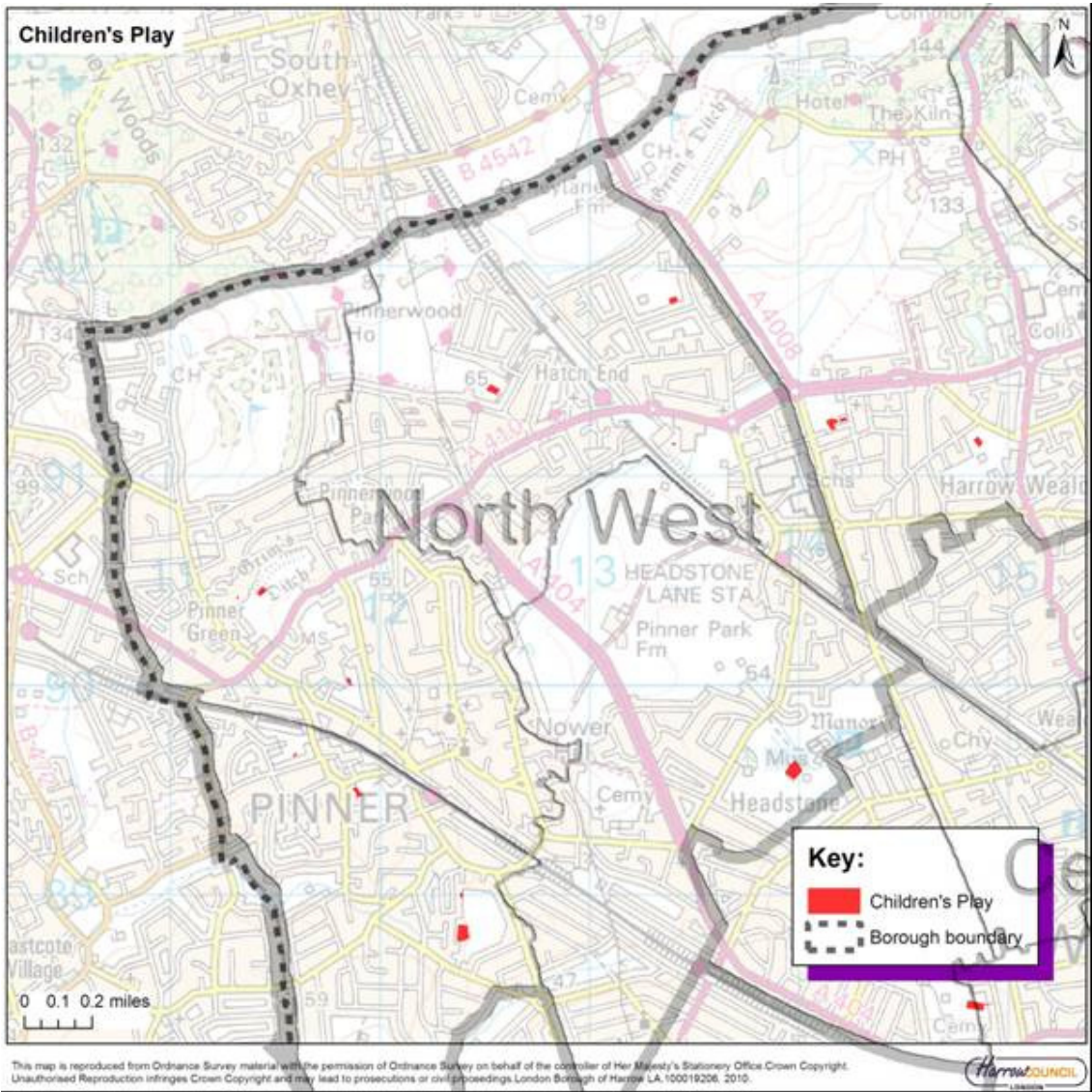


**Map 4.2      Playable spaces in sub-areas**

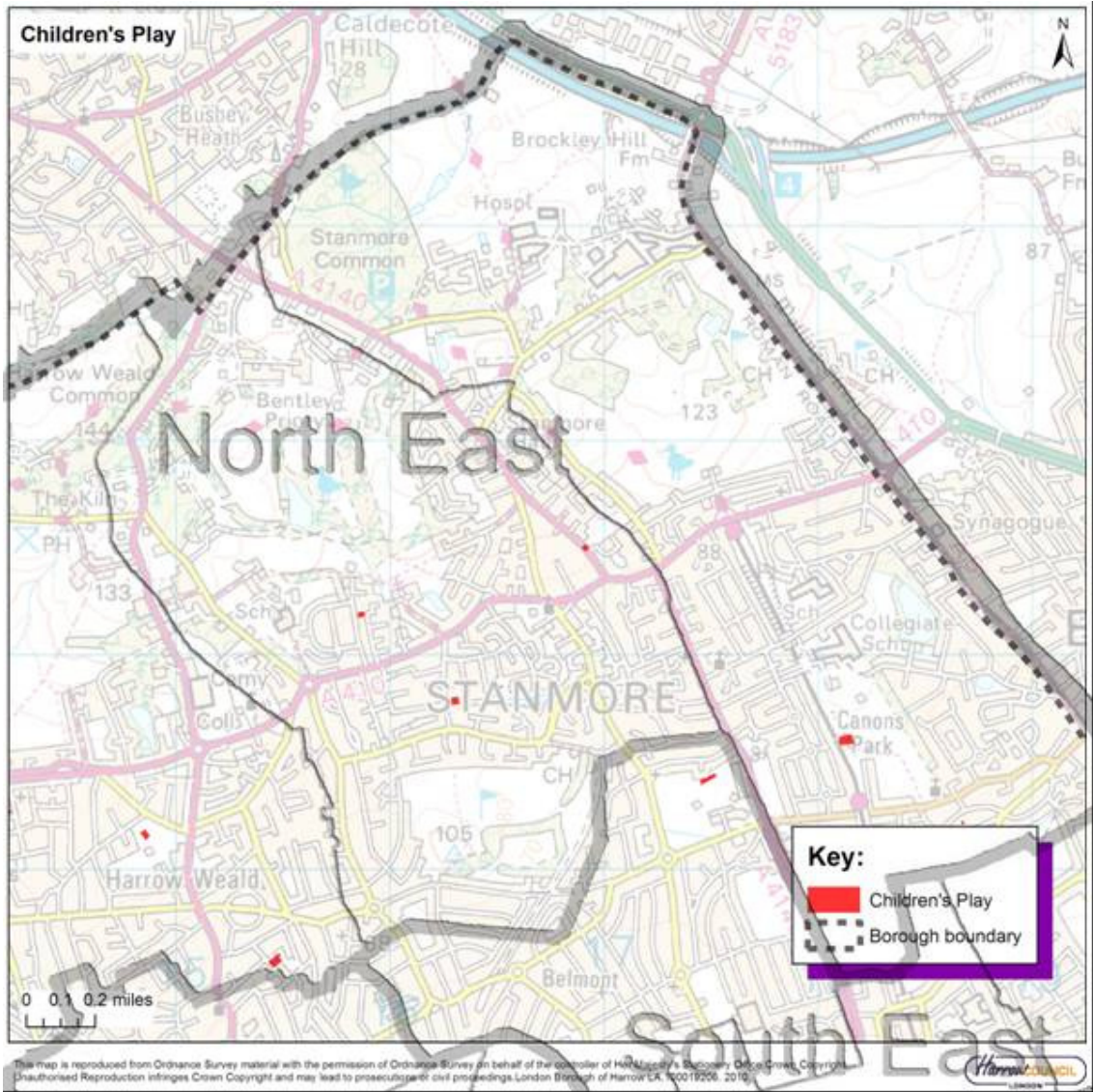




**Map 4.3      Playable spaces in sub-areas**

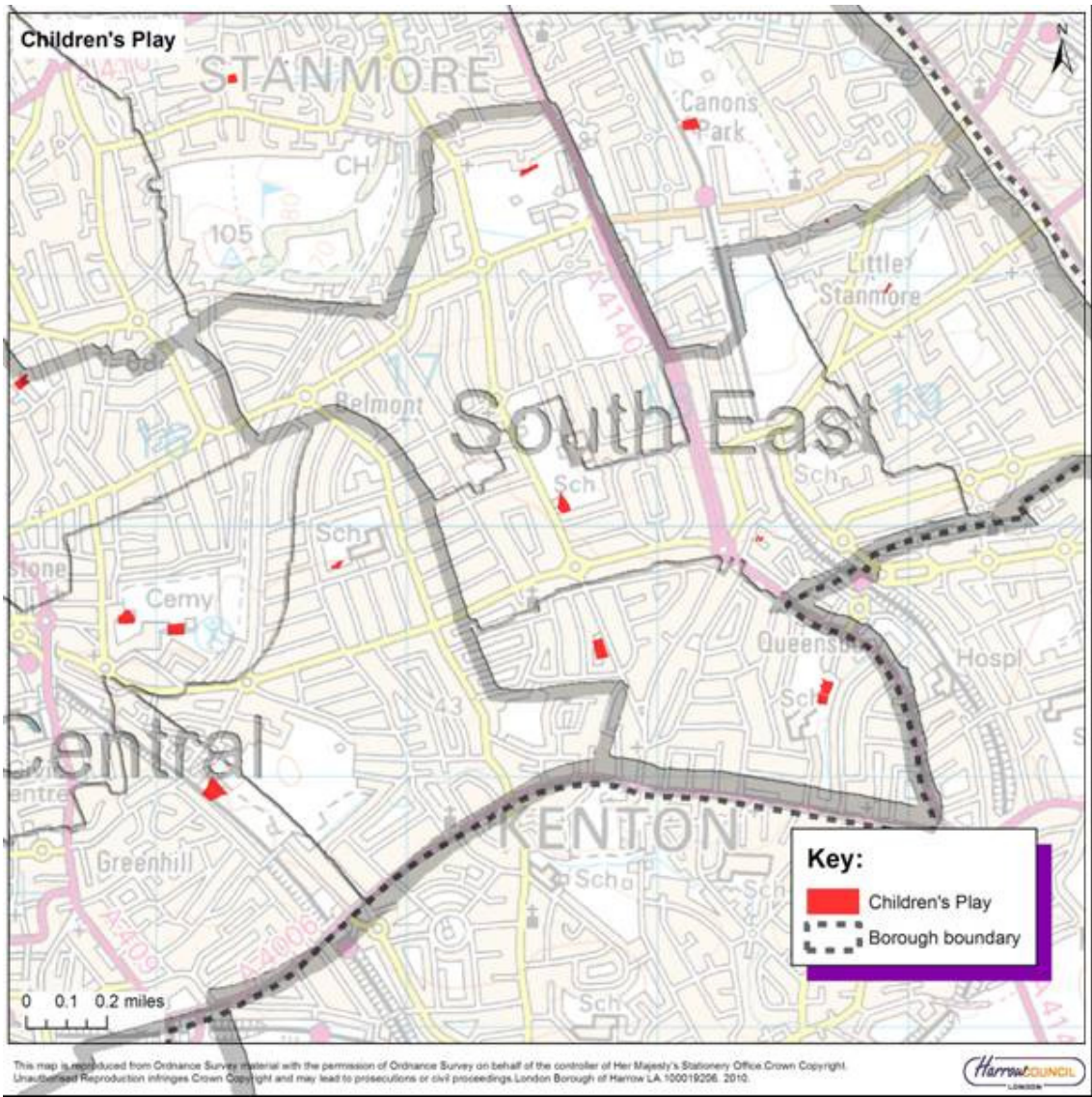


Map 4.4 Playable spaces in sub-areas





**Map 4.5 Playable spaces in sub-areas**



**Table 4.6a: Playable space provision for children under 5 years by sub-area**

Sub-area	No. of playable spaces per sub-area	No of children under 5 (2010 Estimates)	Children under 5 per Play Area	Proportion of total children under 5 in population	Proportion of all playable spaces for children under 5
Central	0	3,753	0	1.7%	0.0%
Northeast	2	1,874	937	0.8%	18.2%
Northwest	3	2,500	833	1.1%	27.3%
Southeast	2	1,687	843	0.8%	18.2%
Southwest	4	3,843	961	1.7%	36.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13,657</b>	1242	6.2%	

4.47 There are just 11 playable spaces for children under 5 years. There is no provision in the Central Area. Overall there are 1242 children under 5 per play space. The sub-area with the best provision in terms of children per play space is the northwest sub-area with 833 children under 5 per play space.

**Table 4.6b: Playable space provision for children 5-11 years by sub-area**

Sub-area	No. of playable spaces per sub-area	No of children 5-11 (2010 Estimates)	Children 5-11 per Play Area	Proportion of total children 5-11 in population	Proportion of all playable spaces for children 5-11
Central	5	3,810	762	1.7%	45.5%
Northeast	5	2,514	503	1.1%	45.5%
Northwest	10	3,250	325	1.5%	90.9%
Southeast	5	3,451	690	1.6%	45.5%
Southwest	5	4,632	926	2.1%	45.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>17,657</b>	<b>589</b>	<b>8.0%</b>	

4.48 There are 30 play spaces for children aged 5 to 11 years. There is an even distribution across four sub-areas with 5 spaces in each sub-area. The exception is the northwest sub-area with 10 spaces. Overall there are 589 children aged 5 to 11 per play space. The subarea with the best provision in terms of children per play space is the northwest sub-area with 325 children aged 5 to 11 per play space. In contrast, the southwest sub-area which has a higher proportion of

children aged 5 to 11 than the other sub-areas, has 926 children aged 5 to 11 per play space.

**Table 4.6c: Playable space provision for children 12-16 years by sub-area**

Sub-area	No. of playable spaces per sub-area	Young People 12-16 (2010 Estimates)	Young People 12-16 per Play Area	Proportion of total Young People 12-16 in population	Proportion of all playable spaces for Young People 12-16
Central	2	2,716	1358	1.2%	18.2%
Northeast	1	1,883	1883	0.9%	9.1%
Northwest	1	2,251	2251	1.0%	9.1%
Southeast	1	2,571	2571	1.2%	9.1%
Southwest	1	3,213	3213	1.5%	9.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12,634</b>	<b>2106</b>	<b>5.7%</b>	

4.49 There are just 6 play spaces for children aged 12 to 16 years. These are relatively evenly spread across the sub-areas. Overall there are 2,106 children aged 12 to 16 years per play space. The sub-area with the best provision is the central sub-area with 1,358 children aged 12 to 16 years per play space.

**Table 4.7: Overall playable space provision within each sub-area<sup>93</sup>**

Sub-area	No. of playable spaces per sub-area	No of children aged birth to 15 (2010 Estimates)	Children 15 or under per Play Area	Proportion of total children aged birth to 15 in population	Proportion of all playable spaces
Central	7	9740	1391	23.0%	15.2%
Northeast	8	5880	735	13.9%	17.4%
Northwest	13	7541	580	17.8%	28.3%
Southeast	8	8075	1009	19.1%	17.4%
Southwest	10	11037	1104	26.1%	21.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>42274</b>	<b>919</b>		

<sup>93</sup> To avoid double counting, a site with two different types of provision on the same space has been counted only once in this table.



- 4.50 Overall, the Northwest and Southwest sub-areas have the largest number of playable spaces, accounting for exactly half of the total provision, with the other half spread across the eastern and central areas of the Borough. **Table 4.5** also shows the relative distribution of these spaces in relation to the distribution of children in each area. The Northwest sub-area has 17.8% of all children and contains 28.3% of the playable spaces in Harrow so has relatively better provision than the other sub-areas. Children in the Central sub-area are the least well provided for with 15.2% of the play areas but 23.0% of all children. The Southwest sub-area has the highest proportion of children (26.1%) and has 21.7% of the playable spaces. The sub-area with the lowest proportion of children under 16 is the Northeast sub-area (13.9%), which has 17.4% of all playable spaces.
- 4.51 **Table 4.8** compares provision in Harrow with other local authorities. The overall number of children per play area in Harrow is 908<sup>94</sup> which is a better level of provision than Ealing (1069) and Enfield (1287) but is lower than the other London boroughs in the table.

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<sup>94</sup> Calculated using 2001 Census data to enable comparisons with other local authorities, so the result is a little different from the calculation in Table xx, which uses 2010 estimates.

**Table 4.8: Children aged 15 or under per play area**

Local Authority	No. of Play Areas	Population (2001 Census)	% aged 15 or under	Number of Under 16s	Children per play area
Hammersmith & Fulham	114	165,242	16.50%	27265	239
Camden	130	198,020	16.60%	32871	253
Three Rivers	43	82848	20.49%	16978	395
Windsor and Maidenhead	60	133,626	19.67%	26289	438
Wandsworth	80	260380	16.31%	42474	531
Kensington & Chelsea	42	158,919	15.60%	24791	590
Sutton	42	179,768	20.90%	37572	895
<b>Harrow</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>206,814</b>	<b>20.20%</b>	<b>41776</b>	<b>908</b>
Bexley	49	218307	20.91%	45648	932
Ealing	56	300,948	19.90%	59889	1069
Enfield	45	273559	21.18%	57933	1287

4.52 **Table 4.9** shows that provision per child in terms of space provided is highest in the Northwest sub-area (0.25 hectares of playable space per 1000 children). Provision in the three sub-areas of the Northeast, Southeast and Southwest is the same at 0.15 hectares of playable space per 1000 children. The Central sub-area has a slightly higher level (0.19 hectares of playable space per 1000 children). The overall provision is 0.18 hectares of playable space per 1000 children.

4.53 The quantity of provision is often expressed in terms of provision per 1000 population and on this basis overall provision is 0.03 hectares of playable space per 1000, with the Northwest sub-area having the highest level of provision (0.05

hectares). The Fields in Trust benchmark at 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population is therefore significantly higher than overall provision in Harrow.

**Table 4.9: Current levels of provision**

Sub-area	Population	Number of Children aged 15 or under	Area of Playable Space (Hectares)	Area of Playable Space Per 1000 Population (Hectares)	Area of Playable Space per 1000 Children Under 16 years (Hectares)
Central	52615	9,740	1.90	0.04	0.19
Northeast	32732	5,880	0.90	0.03	0.15
Northwest	40178	7,541	1.90	0.05	0.25
Southeast	40065	8,233	1.24	0.03	0.15
Southwest	55098	11,037	1.70	0.03	0.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>220688</b>	<b>42,432</b>	<b>7.64</b>	<b>0.03</b>	<b>0.18</b>

4.54 The Mayor of London uses a measure of square metres per child under 16 years. The analysis of provision in the sub-areas is shown in **Table 4.10** below.

**Table 4.10: Provision of playable space per child**

Sub-area	Number of Children Under 16 Years	Area of Playable Space (m <sup>2</sup> )	Area (m <sup>2</sup> ) dedicated Playable Space per child
Central	9,740	18951	1.95
Northeast	5,880	8978	1.53
Northwest	7,541	18999	2.52
Southeast	8,233	12422	1.51
Southwest	11,037	17032	1.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,432</b>	<b>76383</b>	<b>1.80</b>

4.55 The overall provision of 1.80m<sup>2</sup> is low when compared with the Mayor of London's recommended benchmark of 10 m<sup>2</sup> of dedicated playspace per child .

4.56 In terms of the different types of playable spaces **Table 4.11** below provides details of the distribution across the sub-areas.

**Table 4.11: Types of Playable space in the sub-areas**

Sub-area	Doorstep Playable Space	Local Playable Space	Neighbourhood Playable Space	Youth Space
Central	0	5	1	1
Northeast	2	4	1	1
Northwest	3	9	1	0
Southeast	2	5	0	1
Southwest	4	5	0	1
<b>Total</b>	11	28	3	4

4.57 There is a predominance of local playable spaces in Harrow with 28 of all playable spaces falling into this category. In Harrow, virtually all these spaces are located within parks or recreation grounds. This type of space is spread relatively evenly across the sub-areas although the Northwest Sub-area has nine compared with five in each of the Southeast, Southwest and Central sub-areas and four in the Northeast sub-area.

4.58 There are 11 Doorstep Playable Spaces, which are also relatively evenly distributed apart from the Central sub-area, which has no space of this type. These spaces are mainly situated within housing areas.

4.59 There are only 3 of the larger Neighbourhood Playable Spaces, in addition to which each sub-area has a play MUGA apart from the Northwest sub-area. One new MUGA is being constructed in the Southeast sub-area, and there is a small MUGA included in the Chichester Court Play Area (PL029), also in the Southeast sub-area.

### ***Provision for Teenagers***

- 4.60 Specific provision for teenagers is limited to the Skateboard Park at Byron Recreation Ground (PL023).
- 4.61 Multi-use games areas (MUGAs) are intended primarily for ball games. The most common dimension for a 'one court' facility for 5-a-side football, tennis, netball and outdoor basketball is 37 metres by 17.5 metres.
- 4.62 Most MUGAs in Harrow are generally kept locked and only available through a formal booking system. These have therefore been assessed as sports facilities rather than open access play.<sup>95</sup> Currently there are four MUGAs that are open access and available for play, with the additional MUGA currently being constructed at Kenmore Road Play Area (PL027). These have all been classified as Youth Spaces. Details of these play MUGAs can be found in **Appendix 4**.

### ***Youth Shelters***

- 4.63 Youth Shelters are metal structures with seats and a roof where young people can meet and socialise. There is one youth shelter in Pinner Memorial Park (PL018) adjacent to a Climbing Wall.

### ***Provision for Children with Disabilities***

- 4.64 Play equipment specifically designed to cater for the needs of children with disabilities has been provided at Headstone Manor Recreation Ground (PL022), Stanmore Recreation Ground (PL005) and Roxeth Recreation Ground (PL039).

### ***Quality of Children's Play Areas***

- 4.65 Quality and value were assessed using the Quality Assessment Tool advocated by Play England. The assessment focuses on three major aspects of children's outdoor play: the location of play areas, their play value, and the level of care and maintenance. Scores are obtained for the three aspects individually. In addition an overall score is calculated but this has limited value in that it masks any significant difference in one of the three key aspects.

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<sup>95</sup> Because they are not freely available for turn up and play, and because they are largely used for sport on a bookable basis.

- 4.66 The majority of assessments were undertaken before improvements to playgrounds under the Playbuilder and Big Lottery programmes had been implemented; the exceptions are Headstone Manor (PL022) and Canons Park (PL014). Improvements to some play areas are programmed for implementation in the period up to March 2011.

#### *Location*

- 4.67 Research<sup>96</sup> shows that location is the single most important factor in how well children use open spaces. In general, children like to play locally where they can be seen, see others and meet others. Young people are able to roam further and can therefore use neighbourhood play areas, although they too like to feel safe wherever they are “hanging out”.
- 4.68 Disabled children and parents/carers with buggies should be able to access play areas as much as non-disabled children. Often children will play with younger siblings who may need to be taken to the area in a buggy or push chair.
- 4.69 The scoring is designed to identify the suitability of the location of play areas and spaces where children may play.

#### *Play value*

- 4.70 The assessment deliberately does not focus exclusively on the fixed equipment in playgrounds but considers the different ways in which children can experience sensations such as rocking, swinging and sliding – this is particularly true for some disabled children whose impairments mean they cannot, for example, sit on traditional swings. It seeks to capture the variety of different opportunities available to a child and the ways in which he or she can access different types of play. Quiet, contemplative play is as important as boisterous, physical play and although children will play in their own way in any given area, their play can be enriched through creating appropriate and stimulating play environments.

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<sup>96</sup> Playable Space Quality Assessment Tool, Inspire for Play England, 2009; Child’s Play: facilitating play on housing estates; Rob Wheway and Alison Millward, JRF 1997; Can Play Will Play, John A and Wheway R, Fields in Trust, 2004.

- 4.71 Children need to take risks to learn about and understand their own capabilities. Risk does not mean creating hazardous environments, but it does mean ensuring opportunities for challenge are available through design.

#### *Care and maintenance*

- 4.72 All play areas should enable children to play free from hazards. This section aims to assess the quality of care and maintenance.
- 4.73 The ranking of each dedicated children's play area is determined by whether the score achieved is above or below the median<sup>97</sup>.
- 4.74 **Table 4.12** below shows the rankings in terms of location, play value, care and maintenance and overall for each sub-area. Those spaces that scored above the median are ranked as high and those below are ranked as low.
- 4.75 Most of the play areas in Harrow are well located; the median score for location was 74.3%. An example of a site scoring at the median level is the play area in Chandos Recreation Ground (PL015). Sites which were located centrally within housing estates scored well, for example the play areas at Grange Farm Estate and Ford Close (PL035 and PL037) both scoring 97.1%. Larger Local Playable Spaces in parks which scored well include those at Stanmore Recreation Ground (PL005), Alexandra Park (PL038) and Harrow Recreation Ground (PL042). The play area which has the lowest score for location was at Whitchurch Recreation Ground (PL012).

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<sup>97</sup> The median of a population is the point that divides the distribution of scores in half. Numerically, half of the scores in a population will have values that are equal to or larger than the median and half will have values that are equal to or smaller than the median.

To work out the median:

a) Put the numbers in order. 3 6 6 6 7 9 11 11 13

b) The number in the middle of the list is the median 7 is in the middle. So the median value is 7.

If there are two middle values, the median is halfway between them. For example, if the set of numbers were 3 6 6 6 7 8 9 11 11 13 There are two middle values, 7 and 8. The median is halfway between 7 and 8. The median is 7.5.

**Table 4.12: Ranking of quality scores in each sub-area**

Sub-area	Ranking	Location	Play Value	Care & Maintenance	Overall
Central	High	4	2	2	2
	Low	2	4	4	4
Northeast	High	4	4	3	4
	Low	3	3	4	3
Northwest	High	6	8	8	8
	Low	7	5	5	5
Southeast	High	3	1	2	1
	Low	2	4	3	4
Southwest	High	5	6	5	5
	Low	4	3	4	4

4.76 There is a relative balance between sites achieving high and low scores for location across all the sub-areas. The Northwest sub-area has the greatest number of sites in total and the highest number that score both low and high. Overall, more spaces scored at the level of the median or above (22) than below (18).

4.77 The median score for play value was 62.5%. An example of a site with this score is the play area in Centenary Park. The new play area at Canons Park scored highly for play value at 90% as did that at Headstone Manor. Play areas with low scores included those at Chenduit Way and Jubilee Close, both with less than 25%.

4.78 The Southwest sub-area has a higher proportion of spaces which scored on or above the median for play value. Conversely, the Southeast sub-area has a higher proportion of spaces with low play value, as does the Northwest sub-area.

4.79 The median score for care and maintenance was 67.3%, represented by the play area at Sadlers Mead. The site with the highest score was Headstone Manor, closely followed by Canons Park, both over 85%. Sites with low scores included those at Jubilee Close and Chenduit Way, both with 32%.



- 4.80 More spaces (8) in the Northwest sub-area scored above the median for care and maintenance than below (5). Elsewhere there is a balance between scores.
- 4.81 In terms of the overall scores, the Northwest sub-area has a higher proportion of sites with a high score (8) compared to low (5) and the Southeast sub-area has a higher proportion of low scores (4) to high (1). The full results of the audit and quality assessments can be found at **Appendix 4**.
- 4.82 Four play MUGAs were scored separately using the bespoke quality assessment for MUGAs. The lowest score (32.4%) was for Queensbury Recreation Ground MUGA (in the Southeast sub-area). The highest score (83.8%) was achieved by the new MUGA adjacent to the Beacon Centre (PL045) in the Southwest sub-area. The skatepark at Byron Road achieved a high score for location, but its scores for both play value and care and maintenance were below the median. Details for play MUGAs can be found in **Appendix 4**.

### ***Accessibility***

- 4.83 The distances and classifications of playable spaces are indicated in **Table 4.13**. This follows the Mayor's Guidance.<sup>98</sup> This follows the Mayor's guidance,<sup>99</sup> which sets out the maximum actual walking distance from a residential unit (taking into account barriers to movement) for different age groups. These are:

Under 5 years old	100 metres
5-11 year olds	400 metres
12+ years old	800 metres

- 4.84 The Mayor's Guidance explains that age ranges stated in the hierarchy are indicative. They are inclusive and set out the broad age range of the main intended user group(s). It should not be interpreted that users of other ages should be excluded. On this basis, the catchment areas for Local and Neighbourhood play spaces has been set at 400 metres and Youth Spaces have

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<sup>98</sup> Tools for evaluating local play provision: A technical guide to Play England local play indicators. Play England 2009.

<sup>99</sup> Supplementary Planning Guidance, Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation, Mayor of London, 2008.

a catchment of 800m. **Appendix 4** provides details of the catchment areas for individual play spaces.

4.85 Accessibility to children's play areas is shown on **Map 4.6**, which indicates the catchment areas for each site.

**Table 4.13: Accessibility and classification of playable spaces**

Type	Walking Distance from Residential Unit (metres)
Doorstep	100
Local	400
Neighbourhood	400
Youth	800

4.86 The two Neighbourhood play spaces (PL014 Canons Park Play Area and PL022 Headstone Manor Play Area) are shown with 400 metre catchments together with a 'shadow' 800 metre catchment to indicate that they could potentially provide the type of facilities normally associated with a 'Youth Space'.

## **Key consultation findings – play**

### ***Quantity – children's play space***

4.87 As with parks generally, opinions on the amount of playable space are divided into two camps. The larger group, just over half of all residents (51%), think there is a need for more playable space in the Borough, whilst almost everyone

else (47%) thinks provision is about right as things are. Very few residents (2%) think there is too much space of this type.

**Table 4.14: Residents' views on the amount of provision for children and young people**

Sub-area	Proportion of residents wanting more play provision
Central	60%
Northeast	50%
Northwest	49%
Southeast	46%
Southwest	50%
Overall	51%
N(=100%)	812

4.88 Geographically, Central is the sub-area perceived as least well served by existing provision; only two in five (39%) local residents thinks provision in this sub-area is adequate, whilst three in five (59%) want to see more playable space. Opinions in the other sub-areas generally follow the overall pattern with views equally divided between those who think there is enough space and those who want more.

4.89 The desire for more playable space is, unsurprisingly, higher among younger age-groups, and reduces as the age of the resident increases; those who want more outnumber the others by three to two in the under 35s, but this reverses among the over 65s. It is those with children at home who are keenest on more playable space, but even among childless families nearly half (46%) of residents want more playable space. Black and Asian people are especially keen on more provision, and in these groups there are three people wanting more (59%) for every two people who are happy with existing provision (41%).

## Usage

4.90 Levels of use of playable space vary, as this table illustrates:

**Table 4.15: Frequency of visits to playable spaces**

Frequency of visit	Proportion of people (%)
Every day	1%
Once or twice a week	13%
Two or three times a month	12%
Once a month	6%
Once every two or three months	6%
Less often	14%
Never	48%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1080</i>

4.91 Although nearly half of all local people (48%) never visit a local play area, just over half (52%) do visit at least occasionally. Half of these visit at least every couple of weeks (26% of all residents), but half are more occasional visitors. Very few residents say they visit every day, but overall one in three residents visits at least once a month so although play is not as popular as the parks generally, it is nevertheless an important dimension of open space in the Borough.

4.92 Visiting play areas is most likely to happen in the Southwest sub-area, where well over a third (37%) of residents visit at least once a month, well ahead of take up in the Northeast where less than a quarter of residents (24%) visit this often. Take up of playable space is also lower in the Central sub-area, where 27% of residents visit at least monthly.

4.93 Playable space visits occur for people in all age-groups, but the level of take up is much higher in the younger age-groups, and typically three in five (62%) of

over 50s never visit this kind of space – though this still leaves plenty of people who do visit, perhaps as part of entertaining grandchildren. What is also noticeable, though, is that younger people are much more frequent visitors; over two fifths (44%) of under 35s visit at least monthly, but less than one in seven (14%) of over 65s visit this often.

- 4.94 These spaces are also much more popular with women than with men; although men do visit, they are less likely to do so overall, and also visit less often than women. Black and Asian residents also visit more, and more frequently, than their White counterparts; 42% of Asian residents visit at least monthly (and half of these visit at least once a week) while just 22% of White residents visit monthly, and only 7% of White residents visit at least once a week. People with disabilities are less likely to visit, and do not visit as often, but this may well be age-related rather than linked to mobility *per se*.
- 4.95 The play areas most often visited are listed here (people use different names for the same place, and occasionally the same name for different places, but this table gives a reasonable picture of the distribution of visits). It should also be noted that not everyone who says they visit a playable space indicates which one they visit most.

**Table 4.16: Playable spaces most visited**

Playable space most visited	Number of times mentioned
Pinner Memorial	37
Pinner (other and unspecified)	20
Canons	34
Centenary	25
Headstone Manor	18
Harrow Rec	18
West Harrow Rec	14
Pinner Village	10
Harrow Weald Rec	10
Alexandra	10
<i>N</i>	<i>368</i>

- 4.96 This table has smaller numbers, but is otherwise identical in both content and order of popularity to the comparable table in the parks section; people visit the same places for play as they do for other park activity, and although there are other places where play can take place, they are not as popular as the park-based play areas. Pinner Memorial and Canons are by far the most popular destinations, even though the Southwest is the sub-area with the highest take up; but all the main park playable spaces are identified here.
- 4.97 There is a small proportion of residents who use non-local playable spaces, about one in ten of all those who use playable space at all. Interestingly, though, their use of these spaces is no more or less frequent than those using local spaces, and although a handful of spaces named are some distance away (Woburn Safari Park is mentioned here), many of those named appear to be local spaces across the Borough's immediate boundaries.

#### ***Quantity – Teenage playable space***

- 4.98 A separate question in the survey asks for opinions on playable space for teenagers. Although all respondents were invited to comment on this, a large proportion felt unable to do so and there is a high “don't know” group on these quality questions.<sup>100</sup> Among those expressing a view, the overwhelming opinion is that the Borough needs more of this type of space, with four out of five residents (80%) saying the Borough has too few teenage playable spaces. The remaining 20% feel there is enough provision already, and almost nobody wants to see teenage space removed.

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<sup>100</sup> There are 619 residents expressing an opinion, making the result of this question accurate to within +/- 4% at the 95% confidence interval.

**Table 4.17: Residents' views on facilities for teenagers**

Sub-area	Proportion of residents wanting more teenage provision
Central	76%
Northeast	85%
Northwest	89%
Southeast	79%
Southwest	78%
Overall	80%
N(=100%)	619

4.99 The vast majority in favour of more provision is seen across all five sub-areas, but is highest in the Northwest (an astonishing 89% want more space) and the Northeast (85% want more). Even in the sub-area with least support, though – the Southwest – over three quarters (78%) want more provision for teens.

4.100 These opinions are broadly shared across all age-groups, but are particularly strong in the 35-50 age-group (83% want more space), who tend to have teenage children, and the over 65s (82% want more) who perhaps feel more vulnerable to teenagers with little to do. Opinion is also strongly in favour of more space in households with teenagers living in them (83% want more).

4.101 Among the different ethnic groups, Asians are less keen than others on having more provision, but even so almost three-quarters (71%) call for more space. This figure rises to 88% of White residents.

### **Quality – children's playable space**

4.102 Those who do visit playable spaces were asked to rate their preferred site against a range of criteria. The criteria concerned, and the mean score<sup>101</sup> each

<sup>101</sup> A mean score is calculated by applying a score to each response for each criterion. A rating of excellent attracts a score of 2, a rating of good is scored at 1, and ratings of below average or poor are scored at -1 or -2 respectively. "Average" and "don't know" are scored as zero and do not affect the result. The resulting score is then averaged across all respondents, giving an overall score somewhere

achieved, are listed below, and the views that pertain to local play areas are separated from those for non-local spaces, for clarity.

**Table 4.18: Residents’ view of quality of playable spaces**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Mean score for local playable spaces</b>	<b>Mean score for non-local spaces</b>
Located in a good place	0.97	1.01
Accessibility for wheelchairs and buggies	0.73	0.48
Well used by children	0.68	1.11
Feels safe to allow children to play there	0.65	1.06
Children can meet and make friends there	0.57	0.92
Attractive, welcoming, well laid out	0.40	0.76
Litter bins	0.38	0.72
Offers a range of different types of play	0.33	0.86
Information and signage	0.31	0.29
Clean and litter free	0.24	0.90
Range of different ages	0.23	0.67
Seating for adults and children	0.12	0.47
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Varies from 392 to 451</i>	<i>Varies from 34 to 40</i>

4.103 The attributes listed here are taken from an assessment framework developed with Play England as a basis for quality assessment of children’s playable space. All the scores are positive, although they are not especially strong, indicating several areas with room for improvement; it is also arguable that improving some attributes would also improve perceptions in other attribute scores. The strongest score, though, achieving an overall “good” rating, is that for location, which is also, according to Play England, the key factor in play area quality, so it is encouraging to see that Harrow is performing best on an attribute which is both important and very difficult to change in the short term.

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between +2 and -2. A negative score indicates a balance of negative opinion, whilst a positive score indicates a positive opinion overall; the higher the score in either direction, the stronger that opinion is.



- 4.104 Harrow's playable space also scores comparatively well on accessibility for wheelchairs and buggies, another important dimension for parents with younger and less mobile children, and fairly well on the level of use of playable spaces by their target market; the capacity of play to develop children socially also gets a reasonably positive score here.
- 4.105 Physical attributes of the playable spaces get a lower, but still positive, score. The attractiveness and welcome of these spaces is viewed positively, but nevertheless with reservations, and there are similar hesitations about the scores on range and age-range, indicating a view that these aspects of play can be enhanced further.
- 4.106 There are also reservations about cleanliness, although the spaces do nevertheless feel safe for children to play, suggesting that litter is not necessarily dangerous in nature; nonetheless bin provision, whilst positive, is another area where the scores are too modest to allow comfort. The lowest overall score is for seating, which is only a little better than average.
- 4.107 Comparison with the scores for non-local spaces suggests that quality issues may be a part of the reason for choosing a neighbouring Borough's space. Most (though not all) of the non-local space ratings are higher, and in some cases the difference is substantial. Non local spaces are much more highly rated for child safety, sociability, attractiveness, range of play available, cleanliness, age range and provision of litter bins. Nonetheless, Harrow's spaces compare fairly well with their neighbours on some attributes; the scores on location and information are comparable, while the accessibility of Harrow play areas for wheelchairs, prams and buggies outperforms the Borough's neighbours by some distance.
- 4.108 Looking at the different sub-areas, location gets a much higher rating in the Southwest and the Northeast than in the other sub-areas, well above a mean score of 1 in both cases (1.18 and 1.11 in the Southwest and the Northeast respectively), though the scores in other areas are by no means poor. Spaces in these two sub-areas also score higher generally, albeit with exceptions. Given the popularity of Pinner as a destination, it is noteworthy that the Northwest sub-area scores quite poorly on some attributes, with negative scores for range of

play (-0.01), attractiveness (-0.01), and signage (-0.08), a modest negative score for age range (-0.30), and an especially poor score for seating (-0.45). There is quite a wide variation on attribute scores between sub-areas, but the Northwest attracts the lowest scores for every attribute mentioned here in spite of having the site that is most commonly visited.

- 4.109 Younger people – those who use these spaces the most – tend on the whole to give higher scores than their older counterparts, suggesting that those who know the sites best are able to rate them more highly. Older visitors are especially critical of the lack of seating, and also give appreciably lower scores to attractiveness and play range. Asian people, however, tend to give slightly lower scores across the board than White people, in spite of their more frequent usage of the spaces. People with disabilities give higher scores for accessibility, so an attribute that is especially important to this group gets a good rating.

#### ***Quality – playable space for teenagers***

- 4.110 As noted above, there are a large proportion of “don’t knows” as regards teenage space. The results for those who do respond in a more informed way are shown in this table, which contains the criteria concerned, and the mean score<sup>102</sup> each achieved:

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<sup>102</sup> A mean score is calculated by applying a score to each response for each criterion. A rating of excellent attracts a score of 2, a rating of good is scored at 1, and ratings of below average or poor are scored at -1 or -2 respectively. “Average” and “don’t know” are scored as zero and do not affect the result. The resulting score is then averaged across all respondents, giving an overall score somewhere between +2 and -2. A negative score indicates a balance of negative opinion, whilst a positive score indicates a positive opinion overall; the higher the score in either direction, the stronger that opinion is.

**Table 4.19: Residents' views of quality of teenage provision**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Mean score for local teenage spaces</b>
Located in a good place	0.40
Well used	0.10
Suitable for a range of ages	0.00
Young people can meet and make friends	-0.02
Clean and litter free	-0.13
Feels safe for young people to go there	-0.15
Well maintained and looked after	-0.17
Range of different activities	-0.19
Attractive, welcoming, well laid out	-0.26
Lighting	-0.41
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Varies from 354 to 388</i>

4.111 It should be noted that very few responses in the survey were received from teenagers, so what we have here is an adult perspective on teenage play provision, which typically would include facilities such as youth shelters, MUGAs and ball courts.

4.112 The scores are generally low and centred around the “average” mark. There are positive scores for location, which is always a key quality criterion for playable space, but the score is modest suggesting that people have reservations on this issue. The level of use also attracts a modest positive score indicating that people believe these spaces to be reasonably popular with their target audience. Views are completely non-committal on the suitability of these sites for different ages, perhaps reflecting the competence of this group of respondents to take a view on a fairly specialised form of provision.

4.113 All the remaining scores are negative, though attributes like cleanliness, safety and maintenance are not dramatically below the middle of the quality range.

People tend to view these sites as largely unattractive, though, and there are also criticisms of lighting, which is often a significant contributor to levels of use, especially when daylight hours are shorter.

- 4.114 There is a wide variation in perceptions of these sites according to their location in the Borough. Scores are consistently lower in the Northeast, and much lower in the Northwest, than they are in the Southwest; in these two sub-areas, all attribute scores for this type of facility are negative. Northwest sub-area residents give especially poor scores for lighting (-0.93) and range of activities (-0.91), both scores that are substantial negatives and which suggest that these are real problems in local provision. Northwest sub-area residents also score use by teenagers much lower (-0.79), again a strong negative score which contrasts sharply with modest positive scores in both the Southwest (0.27) and Central (0.28) sub-areas.
- 4.115 Younger residents also tend to give scores that are a little higher than those given by older residents, but the differences in age perception are not as strong as those seen geographically. Interestingly, the lowest scores are from middle age-groups, not from the very oldest residents. People with children at home give higher scores than those without, but the differences are not especially marked.
- 4.116 There are significant differences in the views of different ethnic groups, however. White people give the lowest overall scores, and although Asian people give better scores across the board they also give low scores, almost all negative with a few borderline positives. In contrast, Black residents give these facilities much higher scores, and in some cases rate them quite highly; Black residents give a score of 1.54 for usage, a score approaching excellent, and 1.33 for meeting friends, another very strong positive score.

### ***Accessibility – children’s play***

4.117 People were asked how they travel to their preferred children’s playable space, with these results:

***Table 4.20: How people travel to playable spaces***

<b>Means of transport</b>	<b>Proportion of playable space users (%)</b>
Walk or jog	78%
Car	17%
Bus/tube/rail	2%
Cycle	2%
Other	1%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>546</i>

4.118 The results here are almost identical to those for parks, and reflect the locations of the most popular playable spaces within multi-functional park spaces.

4.119 Walking is by far the most common way of reaching a park, and four out of five park users travel on foot to their preferred playable space. Almost all of the rest travel by car, and there are very few residents using public transport, or using a cycle, to get to this type of facility. The small proportion using other types of transport includes mobility scooter users as well as motorcyclists.

4.120 Car use is much more prominent among those using non-local playable space, and so is public transport, indicating that these spaces are not always conveniently located for people. In fact nearly two thirds (62%) of visits to a non-local space are by car.

4.121 As with park visits, walking is the most common means of transport in all sub-areas, but is particularly prominent in the Southwest and Northwest, where over 80% of play visitors walk. Car use is more prominent in the other three sub-areas and this is especially the case in the Southeast, where car use accounts for well over a quarter (29%) of all play visits. Walking tends to reduce with

advancing age but even so over three quarters of over 65s who visit parks travel on foot to do so. Car use is higher among the middle aged groups; under 35s are comparatively unlikely to use a car and just 14% do so. Car use for play is also less likely among over 65s, where one in six (17%) of residents use a car to go to their preferred playable space.

4.122 Men walk a little more than women; women are almost exclusively the users of public transport and very few men travel to a park on a bus. People with disabilities are also a little more dependent on cars, and much more likely to use public transport, when making a park visit.

4.123 Black people are most likely to walk, and Asian people less likely to walk, but even so three quarters (72%) of Asian people walk to their preferred park. One in five Asian residents (22%) uses a car for this type of visit.

4.124 Linked to the means of transport is the time taken to reach the park, which is shown in this table:

**Table 4.21: Length of time to travel to playable space**

Length of time taken	Proportion of play users (%)
0-5 minutes	33%
6-10 minutes	39%
11-15 minutes	20%
16-20 minutes	4%
Over 20 minutes	4%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>532</i>

4.125 The results are very similar to those for parks, as would be expected from the patterns already observed, but the journey times are slightly lower overall, reflecting the more local nature of some types of play provision. Three quarters

of playable space visitors make a journey of 10 minutes or less, and hardly anyone travels for more than 15 minutes to get to this kind of space – though clearly the mode of transport used affects this, with a car being capable of a much greater distance than a pedestrian at most times of day.

- 4.126 Journey times to playable space are lowest in the Central and Northeast sub-areas; in the Northeast, nearly half of all play visits (47%) take less than five minutes, and in Central the figures are similar (42% take less than five minutes). The Northeast is also the sub-area with the furthest distances travelled, though, and over a third (36%) of visits from this sub-area takes more than 10 minutes.
- 4.127 Younger people are a little more likely to travel for longer; a third (32%) of under 35s take more than 10 minutes to travel to a playable space, while just 9% of over 65s travel this far. A quarter of those visiting non-local playable spaces (26%) face a journey of over 20 minutes, so the commitment from those going further afield is often a considerable one.

## **Standards**

### ***Quantity***

- 4.128 The results of the consultation process revealed that there is a balance between those that consider that there is adequate provision for children's play (47%) and those that would like to see more provision (51%). However, the views expressed about provision for older children and young people are more definite. Four out of five (80%) of those expressing an opinion want to see more facilities for teenagers.
- 4.129 Geographically, Central is the sub-area least well served by existing provision; only two in five (39%) local residents think provision in this sub-area is adequate, whilst three in five (59%) want to see more playable space. Otherwise, opinions in the other sub-areas generally follow the overall pattern with views equally divided between those who think there is enough space and those who want more.

4.130 We have proposed a standard that seeks to address the shortfall in both dedicated children's play areas and provision for teenagers. The Mayor's Guidance sets the benchmark standard of 10 m<sup>2</sup> which is a significantly higher figure than the current level of provision. However, a standard needs to be set that is both aspirational and also achievable. For this reason the quantity standard for children's playable space has been set at 4 square metres of dedicated playable space per child.<sup>103</sup>

4.131 The quantity standard for youth provision is that there should be at least three youth spaces specifically designed to accommodate the needs of teenagers in each sub-area, linked clearly to consultation with local young people about their specific needs and the best way of meeting these.

**Quantity Standard**

**4 square metres of dedicated playable space per child**

**At least three youth spaces specifically designed to accommodate the needs of teenagers, in each sub-area**

***Quality***

4.132 The quality standard has been set at a level which is higher than the median scores for each attribute, thus reflecting the quality aspirations identified in the consultation. The site which represents the quality standard for all criteria is Stanmore Recreation Ground which has the following scores:-

- Location 89%
- Play Value 85%
- Care and Maintenance 73%
- Overall 79%

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<sup>103</sup> Child is defined as aged under 16 years



### *Location*

4.133 The benchmark standard score for location is 89%

4.134 It is further recommended that the location of children's playing spaces in future should be assessed against the guideline criteria set out in **Appendix 5**. This is to ensure that in future children's playing spaces are:

- reasonably close to home;
- within sight of walking or cycling 'desire lines' or main travel routes;
- in spaces where there is 'informal oversight' from nearby houses or other well-used public spaces;
- in locations identified by children and young people as appropriate;
- capable of being used for a variety of play activity, including sports;
- embedded in the community;
- providing encounters with the natural environment.

### *Play Value*

4.135 The benchmark standard score for Play Value is 85%.

4.136 Provision for teenagers should meet expectations in terms of variety of opportunity to sit or exercise, and perceptions of safety, and it is recommended that prior consultation with young people be a requirement of new provision where this is possible.

### *Care and Maintenance*

4.137 The benchmark standard score for care and maintenance is 73%.

4.138 We also recommend that all play equipment should comply with European Standards BS EN1176, Playground equipment, and BS EN1177 and BS 7188, Impact absorbing playground surfacing.

### *Overall Quality*

4.139 The overall benchmark standard score is 79%.

4.140 This can be applied to both existing and proposed playable spaces. Any proposed playable space that fails to meet this minimum standard should be redesigned.

**The Quality Benchmark Standards are:**

<b><i>Location</i></b>	<b><i>89%</i></b>
<b><i>Play Value</i></b>	<b><i>85%</i></b>
<b><i>Care and Maintenance</i></b>	<b><i>73%</i></b>
<b><i>Overall</i></b>	<b><i>79%</i></b>

***Quality Criteria***

4.141 The quality criteria are those established by the Play England guidance.<sup>104</sup>

- are 'bespoke'
- are well located
- make use of natural elements
- provide a wide range of play experiences
- are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children
- meet community needs
- allow children of different ages to play together
- build in opportunities to experience risk and challenge
- are sustainable and appropriately maintained
- allow for change and evolution

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<sup>104</sup> Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces. Play England 2009

### ***Accessibility***

4.142 **Table 4.13** above shows the accessibility standards for children's playing spaces. The aim should be for children within each age band to have easy, safe access to the appropriate playing space within the distances specified. These should be located so as to ensure children do not have to cross a busy or dangerous road to gain access to the space.

4.143 We draw attention, though, to the need to augment playable space with local informal space.

***We recommend an accessibility standard that provides for***

- ***A Doorstep Playable Space within 100m walking distance***
- ***A Local Playable Space facility within 400m walking distance***
- ***A Neighbourhood Playable Space facility within 400m walking distance***
- ***A Youth Space within 800 metres walking distance***

## Deficiencies

### Quantity

4.144 **Table 4.22** shows the level of deficiency for each of the five sub-areas, when the recommended standards are applied.

**Table 4.22: Deficiencies in Provision for Children and Young People in 2010**

Sub-area	Child Population 0-15 years 2010	Sq m	Sq metres per child	Standard (m <sup>2</sup> per child)	Deficiency Square metres per child	Deficiency Hectares
Central	9,740	18,951	1.95	4	2.05	2.00
Northeast	5,880	8,978	1.53	4	2.47	1.45
Northwest	7,541	18,999	2.52	4	1.48	1.12
Southeast	8,233	12,422	1.51	4	2.49	2.05
Southwest	11,037	17,032	1.54	4	2.46	2.71
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,432</b>	<b>76,383</b>	<b>1.80</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.20</b>	<b>9.33</b>

4.145 Applying the standard generates a deficiency of 9.33 hectares of provision for children and young people across Harrow. There is a deficit in all the sub-areas. However, some of this shortfall will be met by amenity greenspace which provides opportunities for informal play in residential areas, although this will clearly not be the case where residents use this type of space for car parking.

4.146 If the level of provision remains the same, the increase in the child population up to 2026 will result in an increased deficiency as shown in **Table 4.23** below. The overall deficiency increases by 3.31 hectares and the level of deficiency increases across all the sub-areas.

**Table 4.23: Deficiencies in Provision for Children and Young People in 2026**

Sub-area	Child Population 0-15 years 2026	Sq m	Sq metres per child	Standard (m <sup>2</sup> per child)	Deficiency Square metres per child	Deficiency Hectares
Central	11,565	18951	1.64	4	2.36	2.73
Northeast	6,756	8978	1.33	4	2.67	1.80
Northwest	9,150	18999	2.08	4	1.92	1.76
Southeast	9,727	12422	1.28	4	2.72	2.65
Southwest	13,503	17032	1.26	4	2.74	3.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>50,701</b>	<b>76383</b>	<b>1.51</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2.49</b>	<b>12.64</b>

### **Accessibility**<sup>105</sup>

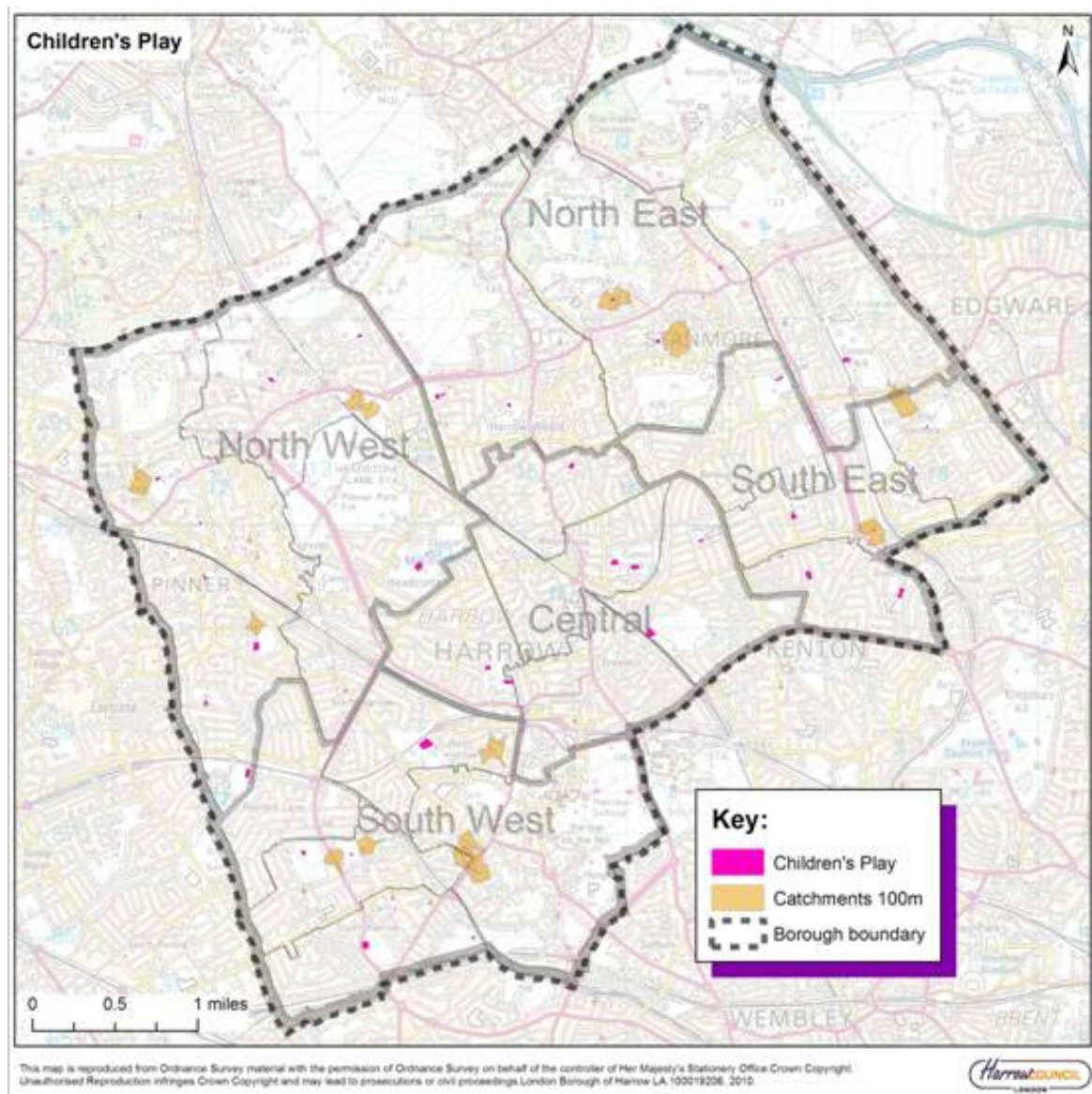
4.147 The Mayor's Guidance sets out the method for identifying areas of deficiency for play.<sup>106</sup> Having identified the existing play spaces for the three age bands and their catchment areas it is possible to identify areas of deficiency where children and young people do not have access to existing facilities within a reasonable distance from their homes.

4.148 **Maps 4.6 to 4.8** identify the existing places for play and the areas of deficiency for the three age bands.

<sup>105</sup> Accessibility here refers to the number of children living within a reasonable distance for each type of play space. Accessibility for children with disabilities or impairments is one of the criteria assessed under *Location* as part of the quality assessment.

<sup>106</sup> Supplementary Planning Guidance Providing for children and young people's play and informal recreation Step A5: Are there existing areas of deficiency? Mayor of London, 2008

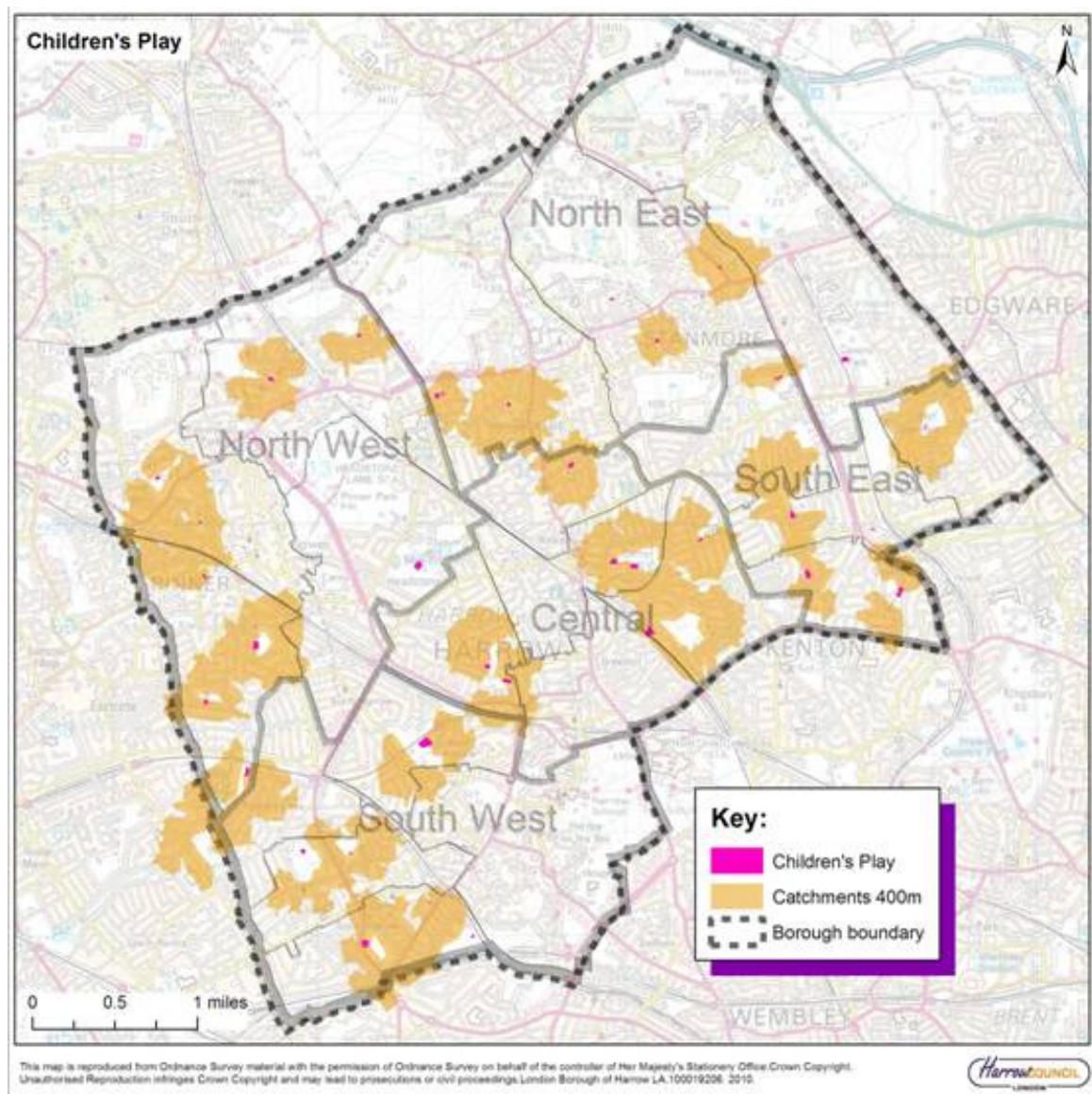
**Map 4.6: Play provision for Children under 5**



4.149 **Map 4.6** shows the existing provision for children under 5 and the catchment areas. There are 11 play spaces specifically designed for children under 5 years old. There are two in both the northeast and southeast sub areas, three in the northwest sub area and four in the southwest sub area. There is no provision for this age group in the central sub area and this is therefore the area of greatest deficiency. There are significant areas of deficiency in the four remaining sub areas with the southwest sub area having a relatively lower proportion of its area in deficiency.



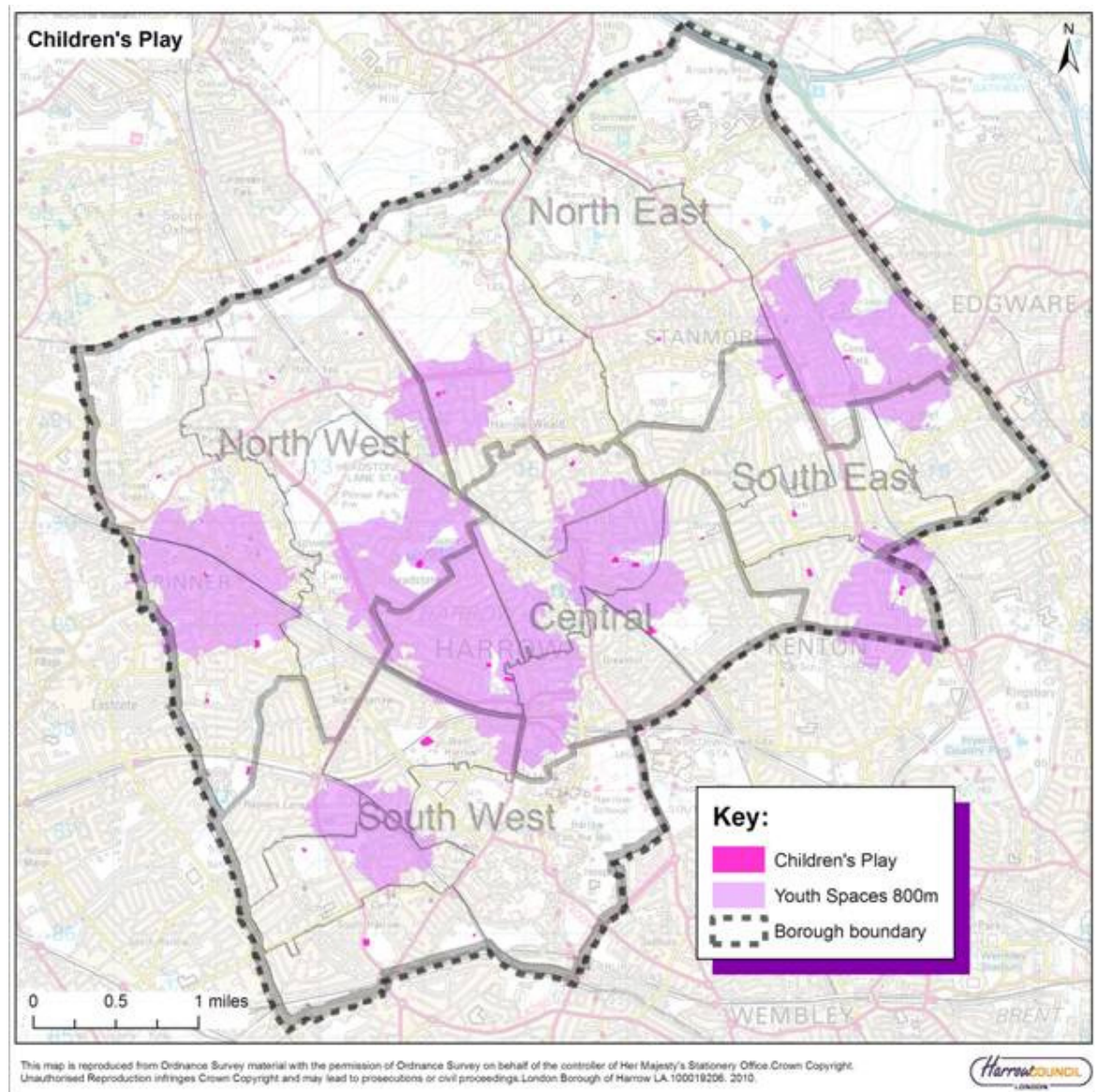
**Map 4.7: Play provision for Children 5-11 years**



4.150 **Map 4.7** shows the existing provision for children aged 5 to 11 years with catchment areas. There are 30 play spaces specifically designed for children aged 5 to 11 years. There are five in each of the central, northeast, southeast and southwest sub areas. There are 10 play spaces in the northwest sub area for this age group and this is the subarea with the least deficiency. Nevertheless there is a deficiency in the areas around Hatch End, Pinnerwood Park, Headstone North and Nower Hall. There are significant areas of deficiency in the

four remaining sub areas with parts of Stanmore, Wealdstone, Greenhill and Harrow on the Hill lacking access to this type of play space.

**Map 4.8: Play provision for Children 12+ years**

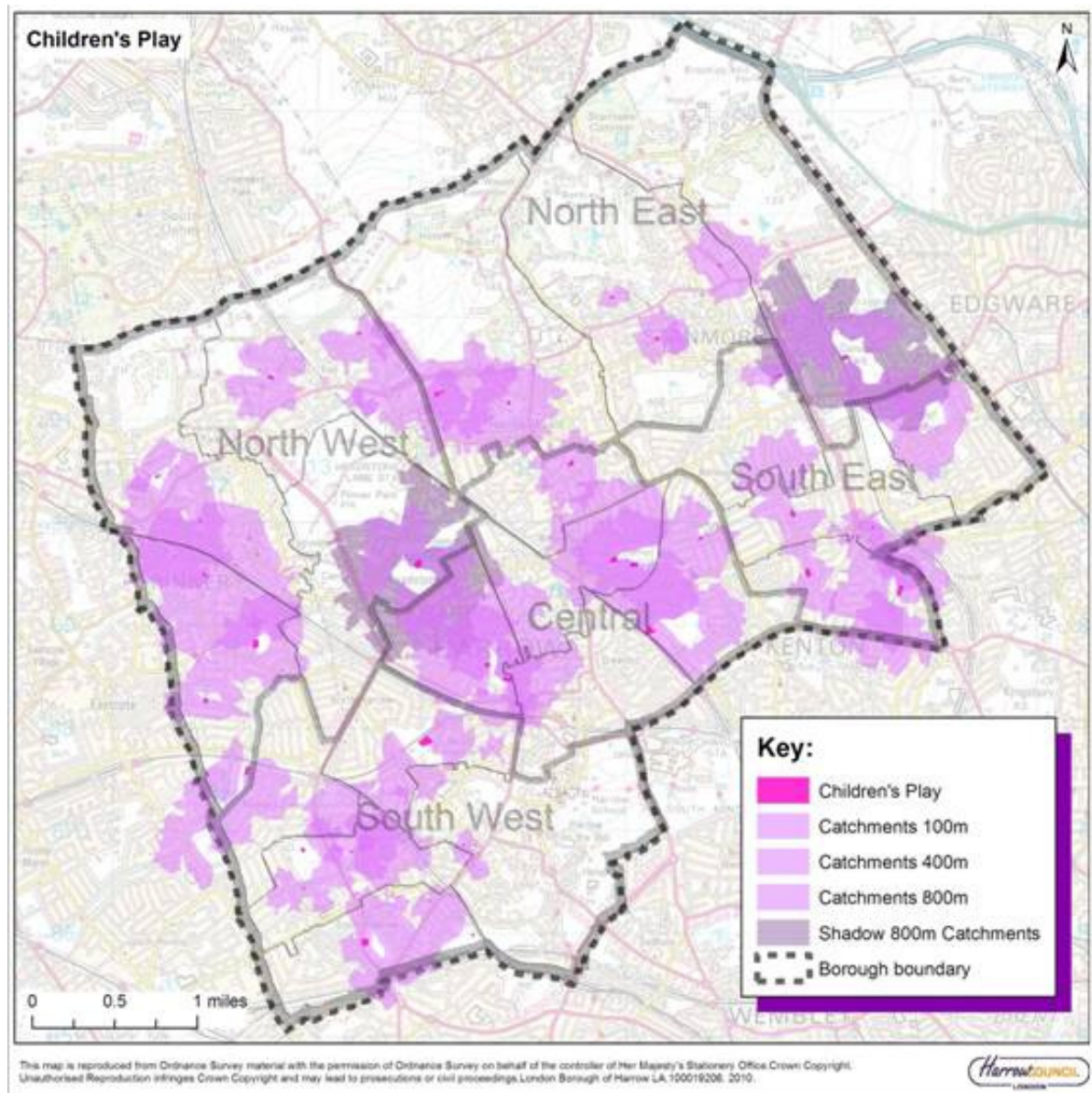


4.151 There are just six spaces for children 12-16 years old. There are four MUGAs with one located in each sub area with the exception of the northwest sub area. However this sub area does have a Climbing Wall and Youth Shelter located in Pinner Memorial Park. In addition there is a skate park in the central sub area.



Areas of deficiency include most of Stanmore, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Pinnerwood Park, Belmont, Pinner South and North Harrow.

**Map 4.9: Catchment Areas for All Types of Play Space**



4.152 **Map 4.9** shows the catchment areas for all types of playspace. The main areas which lie outside any catchment area are a large part of the northeast sub area and part of the southwest subarea around Harrow-on-the-Hill. A 'shadow' catchment area of 800 metres is shown for Canons Park and Headstone Manor

play areas. This indicates that whilst these two sites are designated as 'Neighbourhood' spaces and do not have the type of provision which fits with the requirements for a Youth space, they have the potential to provide for this age group in the future.

## **Amenity Greenspace**

### **Definition**

- 5.1 Landscaped areas with no designated specific use, but which provide visual amenity or separate different buildings or land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons particularly in and around housing areas are generically described as amenity greenspace. Amenity greenspaces offer opportunities for informal activities such as play and dog walking and they may also function, incidentally, as wildlife habitats. Amenity greenspaces should be highly accessible and therefore located in close proximity to people's homes or places of work.

### **Strategic context**

- 5.2 The provision of amenity space to meet the needs of new development is important in promoting the well being of residents and enhancing the quality of the urban environment. Amenity greenspace provides opportunities for recreation and leisure and contributes to the quality of the townscape. The measurable benefits include improved public health, reduced stress levels, child development through creative play, interaction with nature and economic prosperity.
- 5.3 The Government attaches particular importance to the 'greening' of residential environments. This policy is outlined in Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (2006)<sup>107</sup> which sets out the benefits of greenspace in enhancing quality and biodiversity. In order to promote more sustainable residential environments, both within and outside existing urban areas, local planning authorities are encouraged to promote a greener residential environment. Landscaping should therefore be an integral part of new housing developments, which should incorporate sufficient provision where adequate spaces are not already provided within easy access of the new housing.

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<sup>107</sup> Amended 2010

- 5.4 One factor in considering the amount of amenity space provided in residential development is that there is often overlap in the character and location of communal amenity space and casual play areas for children. Both are often relatively small parcels of greenspace which are closely related to homes, and the same space can benefit local residents, both for play and for amenity.
- 5.5 The need for amenity greenspace therefore relates to the nature of a development. A development where houses have large gardens will have less need than flatted developments or areas of sheltered housing with little or no garden space. However, where a housing area is likely to contain a significant number of children, amenity greenspace also functions much of the time as space for children's play.
- 5.6 In 'Rethinking Open Space'<sup>108</sup>, Kit Campbell suggests that the need for amenity greenspace will vary according to:
- the proportion of children in the development and the need for play space;
  - proximity to existing parks;
  - the average size of gardens linked to houses or flats;
  - the safety of roads;
  - the availability of substitutes such as ready access to countryside.
- 5.7 The need for amenity greenspace is not limited to housing areas. The landscaping associated with many non-housing developments, such as business parks and even some industrial estates where it provides visual amenity or separates different buildings or land uses for environmental, visual or safety reasons, should be included in the consideration of need, but with due recognition of the need for quality as well as quantity.

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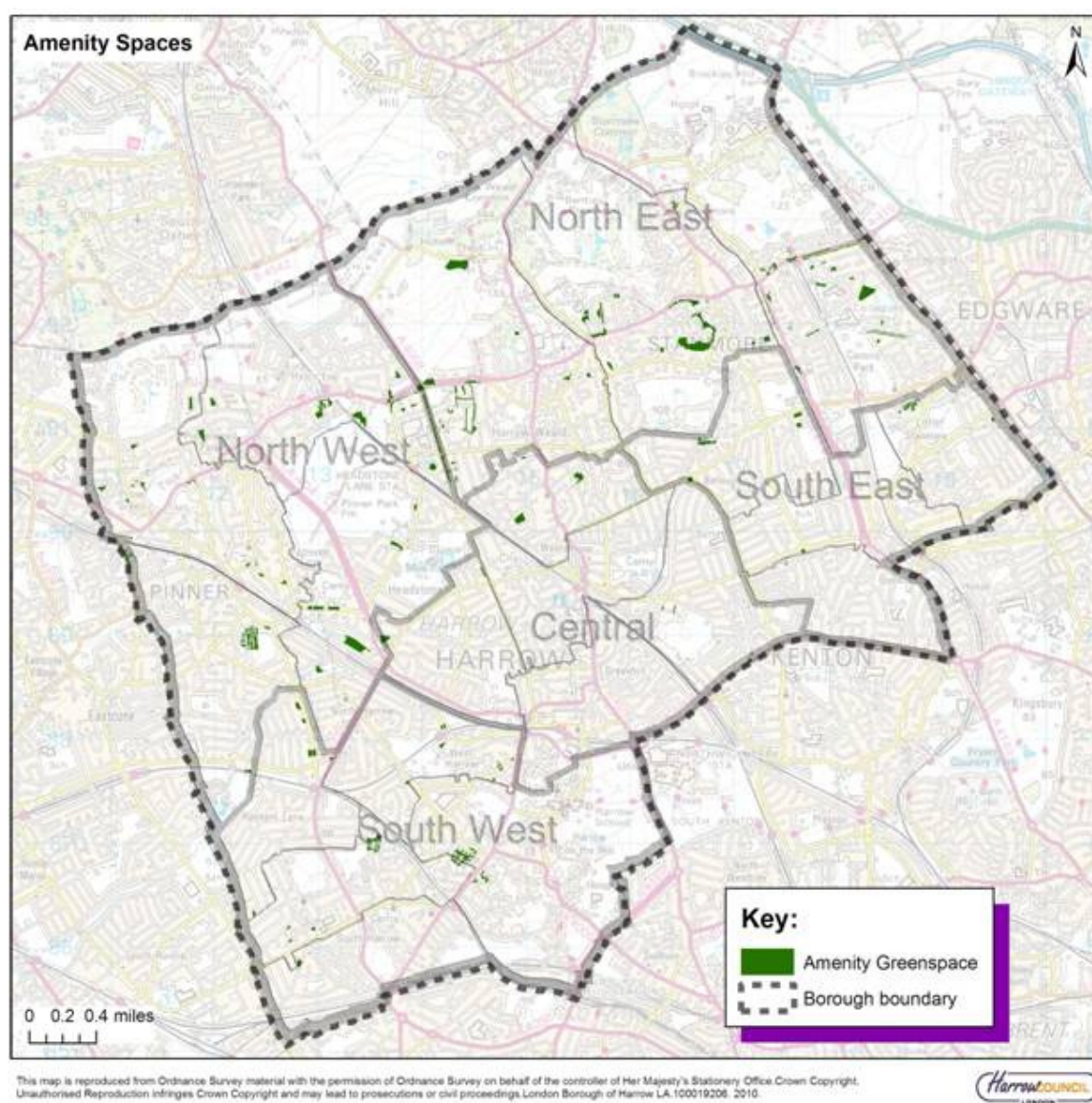
<sup>108</sup> Rethinking Open Space - Open Space Provision and Management: A Way Forward, Report for Scottish Executive, Kit Campbell (Edinburgh, 2001)

## Audit

### Quantity

5.8 The total area of amenity greenspace has been calculated from the mapping exercise undertaken as part of the audit. The locations of these spaces are shown in **Map 5.1**.

**Map 5.1: Location of amenity greenspace**



5.9 **Table 5.1** shows that the total amount of amenity greenspace is 38.33 hectares, representing 0.76% of the total area of the borough. The table breaks down the

amount of greenspace by sub-area and demonstrates considerable variation between the sub-areas in the north and those in the centre and south. The two sub-areas in the north account for 77% of the total area of amenity greenspace in Harrow compared with 23% in the central and southern sub-areas. The Northeast has the highest level of provision with 17.10 hectares followed by the Northwest with 12.42 hectares. The Southeast has just 1.98 hectares.

**Table 5.1: Amenity Greenspace provision by Sub-area**

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Amenity Greenspace (Hectares)	Hectares per 1000	Persons per Hectare
Central	52615	2.14	0.04	24595
Northeast	32732	17.10	0.52	1914
Northwest	40178	12.42	0.31	3236
Southeast	40065	1.98	0.05	20206
Southwest	55098	4.69	0.09	11743
<b>Total</b>	<b>220688</b>	<b>38.3</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>5757</b>

5.10 109 sites of amenity greenspace were surveyed, of which 46 were in the Northeast sub-area. The sites range in size from 0.04 hectares (AGS094 Lascelles Avenue North) to 3.41 hectares (AGS009 Lady Aylesford Avenue). Although there are smaller amenity greenspaces, these are incidental in nature and do not make a significant contribution in terms of usage; the audit deliberately excludes these. The spaces mainly comprise green spaces in housing areas or large grass verges in residential areas. Just over half of the sites surveyed (52.3%) were relatively small - 57 sites were less than 0.2 hectares - while 27 sites (14%) were larger than 0.2 hectares and seven (6.4%) of these were larger than 1 hectare.

5.11 For Harrow as a whole the average quantity of amenity greenspace per 1000 population is 0.17 hectares. This is shown in **Table 5.1**.

5.12 Looking at variations across the borough, the area with the highest provision in terms of hectares per 1000 population is the Northeast sub-area with 0.52



hectares. The Northwest sub-area has 0.31 hectares per 1000 and the Central sub-area has the lowest provision at 0.04 hectares per 1000.

- 5.13 The level of provision of amenity greenspace is relatively low in comparison with some other local authorities as this table shows:

**Table 5.2: Comparison of quantity of amenity greenspace provision with other authorities<sup>109</sup>**

Local Authority	Hectares per 1000 population
Three Rivers	0.79
Sevenoaks	0.74
Thurrock	0.73
Windsor and Maidenhead	0.54
Hammersmith & Fulham	0.36
Reigate & Banstead	0.35
Bexley	0.33
<b>Harrow</b>	<b>0.17</b>
Enfield	0.13
Islington	0.011

### **Quality**

- 5.14 The amenity greenspace sites were assessed against a range of attributes that are considered fundamental to the quality of the site. The median quality score for amenity greenspace was 77.8% and 55 sites achieved a score equal to or higher than the median; 54 sites scored below this figure. The majority of sites have been maintained in a good condition and there was little evidence of litter or dog mess. This is broadly consistent with the views of respondents to the consultation where four in five residents considered the quality of this type of space to be above “average”. However, some spaces scored poorly because

<sup>109</sup> The choice of comparators is limited by the availability of data. The local authorities listed were chosen on the basis that they were either in adjoining local authority areas or were located similar outer London locations. Islington provides a comparison with an inner London borough.

cars had driven across them and had been parked. As a consequence the grass areas had been damaged and left deeply rutted. In other spaces, the grass was in a poor condition and there was evidence of litter.

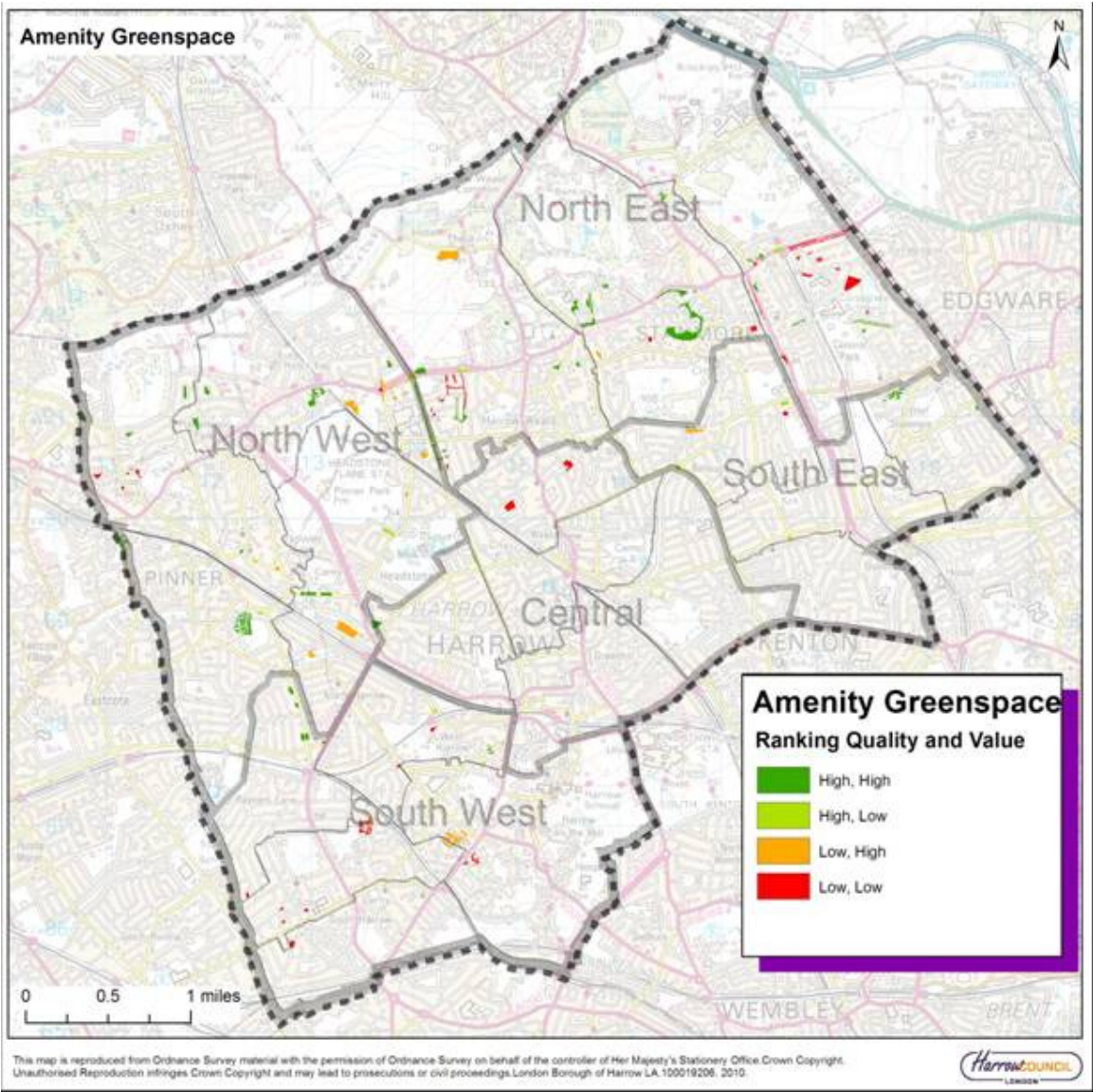
- 5.15 One of the sites which achieved the median quality score was the site at The Gardens, West Harrow (AGS 056). The highest scoring site with 100% was Berridge Green (AGS065) in the Southeast sub-area. This is an exemplar site where the edges of the green have been designed to resist damage from cars and where the quality of the grass areas is good. The lowest scoring site was Beatty Road (AGS012) in the Northeast sub-area which scored 42.9%.
- 5.16 The median value score for amenity greenspace was 70% . Sites that scored poorly were those that showed little evidence of regular use, failed to contribute to the amenity and sense of place of the neighbourhood, or were poorly located.
- 5.17 Several sites scored 70%, the median score for value. One of these was the amenity greenspace adjacent to Hatch End Swimming Pool (AGS078) in the Northwest sub-area.
- 5.18 Quality and value assessments overall are summarised below, and shown in **Maps 5.2 – 5.5:**

***Table 5.3: Summary of Quality and Value Rankings***

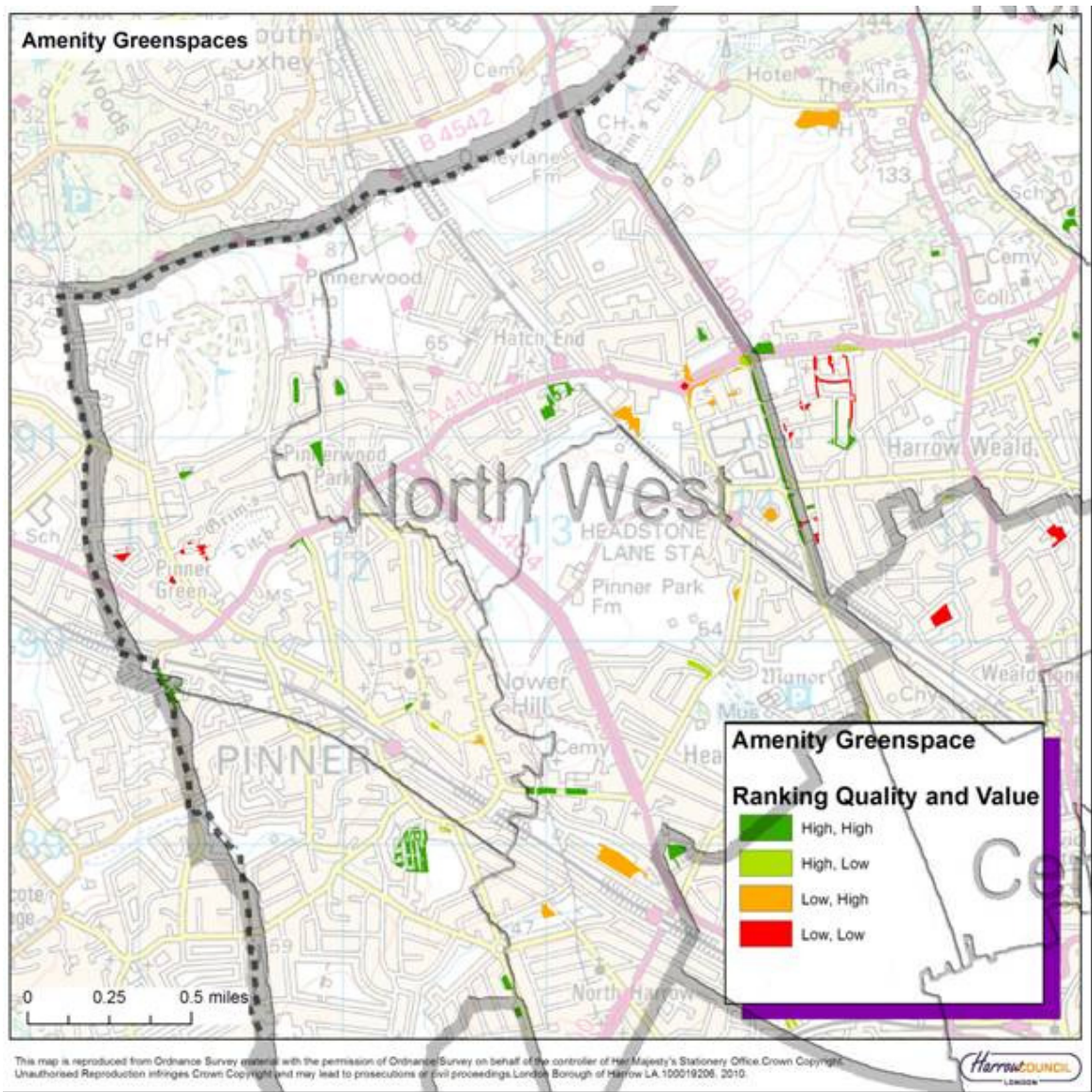
Quality Ranking	Value Ranking	Proportion of Sites
High	High	35.8%
High	Low	14.7%
Low	High	14.7%
Low	Low	34.9%



**Map 5.2: Quality and value of amenity greenspace in Harrow**

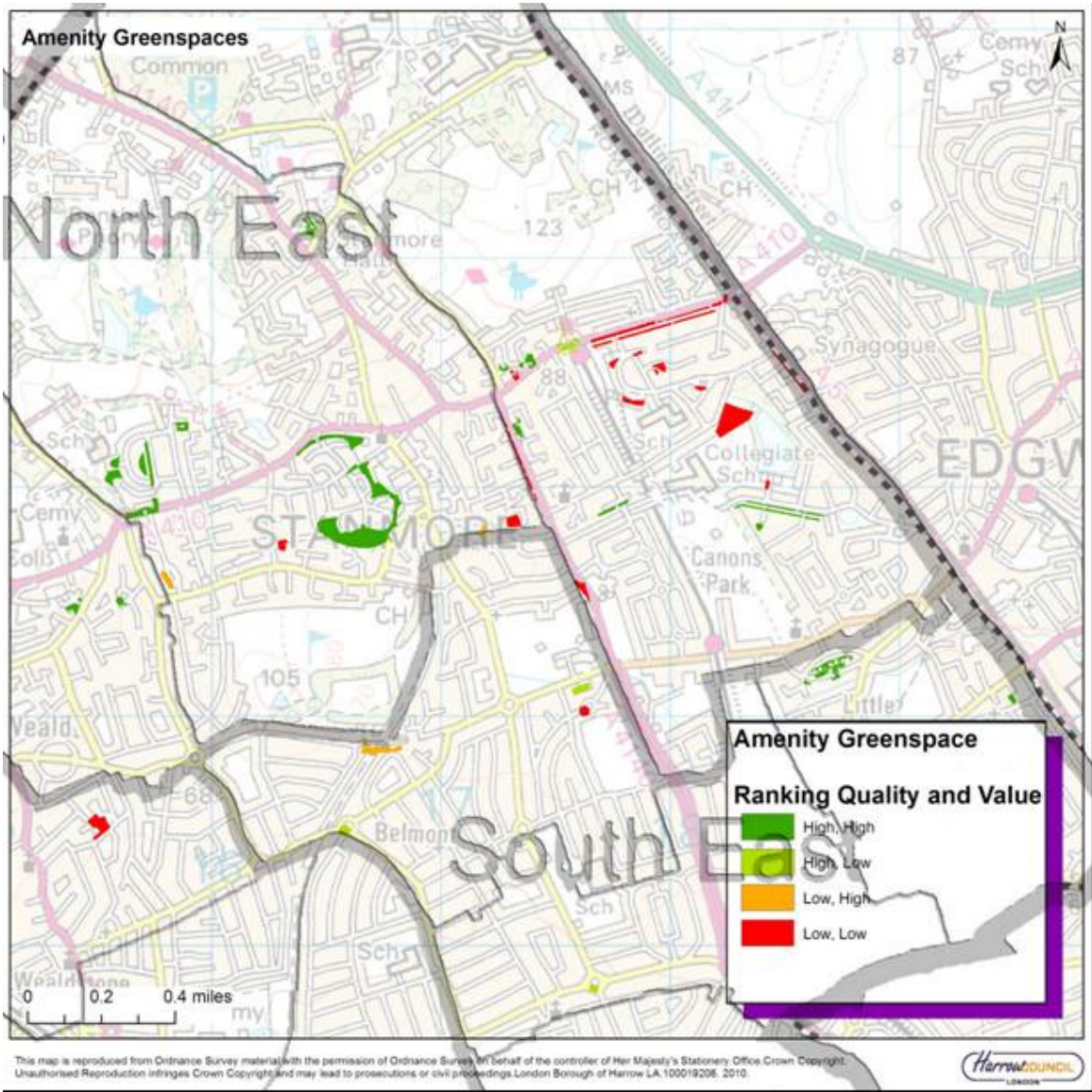


**Map 5.3: Quality and value of amenity greenspace in Harrow (northwest)**

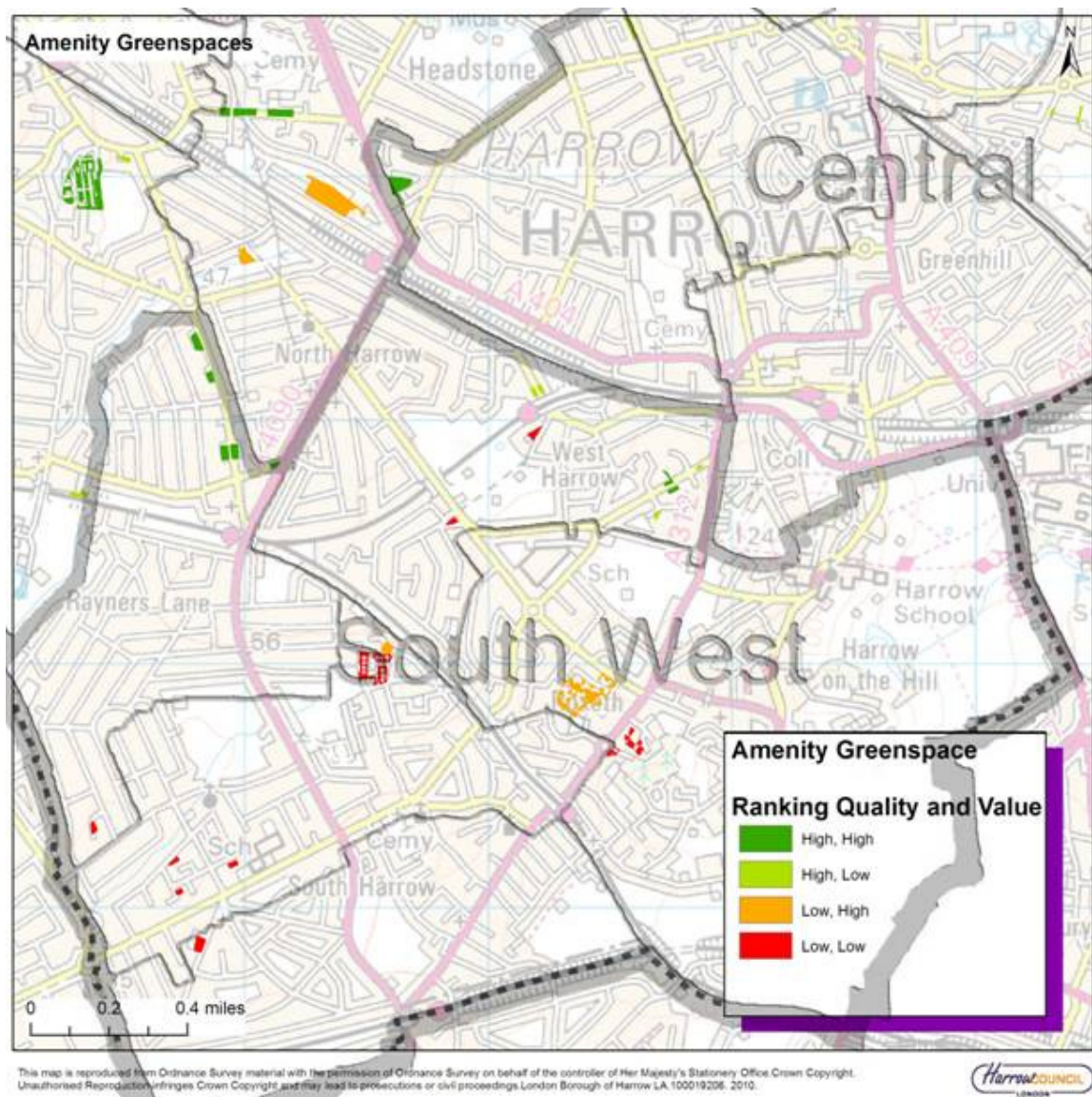




**Map 5.4: Quality and value of amenity greenspace in Harrow (east)**



**Map 5.5: Quality and value of amenity greenspace in Harrow (southwest)**



5.19 The maps shows a mix of sites, with a substantial proportion of high quality, high value sites but a significant proportion of sites that scored low on both quality and value. The results of the audit can be found in **Appendix 6**.

## ***Accessibility***

5.20 **Map 5.1** shows that the distribution of amenity greenspaces across the borough is uneven with the best supply in those sub-areas in the northern half of the borough.

5.21 Many of these sites are located in housing areas and are therefore easily accessible on foot by local residents and children in particular. Larger areas of amenity greenspace are likely to be used by people living within a relatively restricted catchment area of up to 400 metres.

## **Key consultation findings – amenity greenspace**

### ***Quantity***

5.22 Residents divide into two groups on amenity greenspace. Half (51%) think there is too little space of this type, and almost everyone else (49%) thinks the quantity is about right. Virtually no-one thinks there is too much of this type of space.

***Table 5.4: Residents' views on quantity of amenity greenspace***

<b>Sub-area</b>	<b>Proportion of residents wanting more amenity greenspace provision</b>
Central	60%
Northeast	39%
Northwest	47%
Southeast	45%
Southwest	54%
Overall	50%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>778</i>

5.23 Demand for additional amenity space is highest in the Central area, where three in five residents (60%) say there is too little of this type of space, and is lowest in

the Northeast, where a similar proportion (57%) say the amount of this type of space is about right.

- 5.24 Younger residents are more likely to want more of this type of space, and 54% of those aged 35-50 want an increase, perhaps because they seek an increase in local informal play space for children. This is borne out by the fact that 55% of people with children want to see more amenity greenspace, in contrast to 48% of those without children.

### **Usage**

- 5.25 These areas are used for a variety of different purposes that reflect their context. In Harrow, these spaces are used as follows:

**Table 5.5: Uses of amenity greenspace in Harrow**

Use	Proportion of residents who answer “regularly”	Proportion of residents who answer “occasionally”	Proportion of residents who answer “never”
Dog walking	61%	18%	21%
Kickabout games	44%	32%	24%
Children’s play	41%	37%	22%
Organised sport	28%	27%	45%
Community events	9%	36%	55%
Car parking	9%	18%	73%
N(=100%)	Varies between 887 and 811		

- 5.26 As is often the case, these spaces are most frequently used for walking dogs, and for three in five residents their local green space is being used for this purpose among others. Only one in five residents have dog-free amenity greenspace. Whilst dog-walking space is an important element of open space, the presence of dogs often militates against other uses, both because of dog

mess contaminating the space and because dogs can be alienating to small children playing.

- 5.27 **Dog walking** is common in all sub-areas, but this is especially the case in the Northeast where over two thirds of residents (69%) say their space is used for this purpose regularly, and in the Northwest where just one in seven residents (14%) have dog free amenity space.
- 5.28 **Kickabout games** are less common, but two in five residents (44%) say their local amenity space is used for this purpose regularly, and three quarters (76%) say this is at least an occasional use. This type of use is commonest in the Central sub-area, where over half of all residents (52%) report regular use of this type. In the Northeast, just 37% of residents say their local space is used for kickabout.
- 5.29 Amenity greenspace often fills a gap in **children's play**, especially when it is close to home. Two in five residents (41%) say their local space is regularly used for play, and three quarters (78%) identify this type of use at least occasionally.
- 5.30 Again the Central sub-area is where this happens most, but it is less common than kickabout games (45% report regular use). Spaces in the Northeast are again the least likely to be used for play (27% of residents here say their space is never used for play).
- 5.31 Informal sport and play may be fairly commonplace but **organised sport** is much less likely on amenity greenspace land. Nevertheless, over a quarter of residents (28%) say that some form of organised sport is taking place near them on a regular basis, and over half (55%) say this happens at least from time to time. This is most likely to be happening in the Central sub-area, where a third of residents (33%) report regular organised sport on their local space, in contrast to just 20% of residents in the Northeast.
- 5.32 Use of this type of space for **community events** is limited. Just 9% of residents say this happens regularly, although 45% say it is at least an occasional occurrence. This kind of use is uncommon everywhere, but is very much less



likely in the Central sub-area (61% of residents say never) and the Northeast (59% of residents say never).

- 5.33 There are some parts of the country where pressure on **parking** space means that amenity greenspace is attractive as unauthorised parking space, to the detriment of the surface and of other potential uses. This does not seem to be happening to any significant extent in Harrow, where just 9% of residents report regular car parking on green space, and only a quarter (27%) can say that this happens even occasionally. Three quarters of residents (73%) say their space is never used for this purpose.
- 5.34 The Central sub-area is where car parking seems to occur most often, but even here just 12% of residents report regular use, and just a quarter (27%) say it happens at all. Car parking on amenity grass is least likely in the Southeast and the Northwest.

### ***Quality***

- 5.35 Asked to rate the quality of local grassed areas, opinions vary, as no doubt do the spaces people are thinking of as they answer. There is a broad consensus, though that this type of space is generally in a reasonable condition, with two in five residents (41%) rating it as “good”, and a slightly smaller proportion (38%) rating it as “average”. One in eight residents (13%) rate their amenity space as below average or poor, and just one in twelve (8%) rate it as excellent, so for most people the space is adequate or better.
- 5.36 In spite of this overall consensus though, ratings for this type of space vary around the borough, as this table illustrates:



5.37 Mean scores<sup>110</sup> for sub-areas of the borough are as follows:

**Table 5.6: Mean Quality Scores for amenity greenspace**

Sub-area	Mean score
Northeast	0.48
Southwest	0.47
Southeast	0.34
Northwest	0.32
Central	0.29
Overall	0.38
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>varies from 128 to 264</i>

5.38 Although the overall score for the borough is a modest positive of 0.38, this varies widely across the five sub-areas. In the Northeast and the Southwest, the mean score is markedly higher than this, in contrast to the much lower scores in the Northwest, and especially in the Central sub-area.

5.39 Quality ratings are higher from the youngest and oldest residents; they are much lower among residents aged 36-65.

5.40 Asked what would most improve local grassed areas, over 700 suggestions were made, which have been grouped by theme. The most prevalent themes are these:

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<sup>110</sup> A mean score is calculated by applying a score to each response for each criterion. A rating of excellent attracts a score of 2, a rating of good is scored at 1, and ratings of below average or poor are scored at -1 or -2 respectively. "Average" and "don't know" are scored as zero and do not affect the result. The resulting score is then averaged across all respondents, giving an overall score somewhere between +2 and -2. A negative score indicates a balance of negative opinion, whilst a positive score indicates a positive opinion overall; the higher the score in either direction, the stronger that opinion is.

**Table 5.7: Frequency of comments**

Theme	Frequency (% of all comments)
Maintenance	35%
Litter and cleanliness	11%
Better planting	10%
Install more bins/dog bins	8%
Ban dogs	5%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>657</i>

5.41 By far the biggest area people perceive for improvement is in maintenance, which is the focus of over a third of all comments. Alongside this is a demand for improvement in the sites in the form of better planting of shrubs, flowers and trees, and also for a stronger cleanliness regime backed up by the installation of more bins, including dog bins. However there is also a small group who would support a dog ban on at least some sites, challenging one of the major uses of these spaces but at the same time highlighting a significant constraint on use by others.

## Standards

5.42 These standards are the locally determined standards for Harrow that have emerged from the consultation and audit.

## Quantity

5.43 The consultation revealed that 49% of residents think there is enough amenity greenspace in their locality, but 51% say there is not enough of this type of space. Demand for additional amenity greenspace is highest in the Central area, where three in five residents (60%) say there is too little of this type of space, and is lowest in the Northeast, where a similar proportion (57%) say the amount of this type of space is about right.

- 5.44 Current provision across the Borough is 0.17ha per 1000. Provision needs to be above the current Central, Southeast and Southwest sub-area levels, and above the current overall level, but can be below the Northeast sub-area level; the Northwest sub-area has provision close to the overall desired level. It is therefore proposed that a standard of 0.31 hectares per 1000 population be adopted. This is higher than the current level of provision and reflects a level which is appropriate to people's expectations.

**Quantity Standard**

***0.31 hectares per 1000 people***

***Quality and Value***

- 5.45 The benchmark site is Berridge Estate (Quality 83.8%; Value 80%). Bringing sites up to this level of quality and value should address many of the criticisms raised in consultation, regarding maintenance standards, litter clearance, dog control and car parking.

**Quality Standard**

***Quality score of 83.8%***

***Value Score of 80%***

- 5.46 This represents an uplift on the median scores of 77.8 % for Quality and 70% for Value.

***Quality Criteria***

***5.47 General***

- Consideration should be given to the potential to link with other open spaces as part of a network of greenspaces that can contribute to the

delivery of green infrastructure and the development of the Mayor's vision for a 'green grid'.

- Opportunities to provide safe routes away from traffic linking with walking and cycling routes should be considered.
- Amenity greenspace should create a sense of place and provide a setting for adjoining buildings.

#### *5.48 Seats*

- In sites with a clear lack of seating, seats should be provided. Existing seats should be maintained and repaired where there is evidence of graffiti and vandalism.

#### *5.49 Play areas*

- The potential to provide informal recreational opportunities in residential neighbourhoods should be considered in consultation with children and local residents. This may mean installation of equipment, but could equally mean exclusion of dogs from some areas and signage indicating designation for play purposes.

#### *5.50 Nature conservation/vegetation/trees*

- Some sites have good natural diversity and should continue to be managed in a way that encourages wildlife. Opportunities to improve nature conservation with planting of diverse species should be pursued, and existing planting maintained and managed.

### ***Accessibility***

5.51 The majority of these sites are located in housing areas and are therefore easily accessible on foot. However, the size of the space is a major factor in its usability. The prime consideration in determining minimum acceptable size standards should be the needs of the local community. On this basis, it is

proposed that the minimum size of amenity greenspaces should be at least 0.1 hectares with no dimension smaller than 15 metres.

- 5.52 This equates to the area of about two tennis courts and is considered to be the smallest space capable of accommodating children's play. This 'door step' space should be within approximately 1 minute walk from the home (100 metres pedestrian route or 60 metres straight line distance) without having to cross a classified road.

**Accessibility standard**

*Residents should have at least one amenity greenspace of at least 0.1 Ha in size within 400m of where they live.*

**Deficiencies**

**Quantity**

- 5.53 **Table 5.8** shows the current provision of amenity greenspace against the recommended standard.

**Table 5.8: Deficiencies in Current Provision of Amenity Greenspace**

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Current level of provision (Hectares)	Current level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population	Amount of Amenity Greenspace required to meet standard	Deficiency (hectares)
Central	52615	2.14	0.04	0.31	16.31	14.17
Northeast	32732	17.10	0.52	0.31	10.15	+6.96
Northwest	40178	12.42	0.31	0.31	12.46	0.04
Southeast	40065	1.98	0.05	0.31	12.42	10.44
Southwest	55098	4.69	0.09	0.31	17.08	12.39
<b>Total</b>	<b>220688</b>	<b>38.33</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.31</b>	<b>68.41</b>	<b>30.08</b>

5.54 There is an overall deficiency in Harrow of 30.08 hectares. This deficiency is most pronounced in the Central sub-area where there is a deficit of 14.17 hectares, although the deficiency in both the Southwest and Southeast sub-areas is in excess of 10 hectares.

**Table 5.9: Deficiencies in Future Provision of Amenity Greenspace**

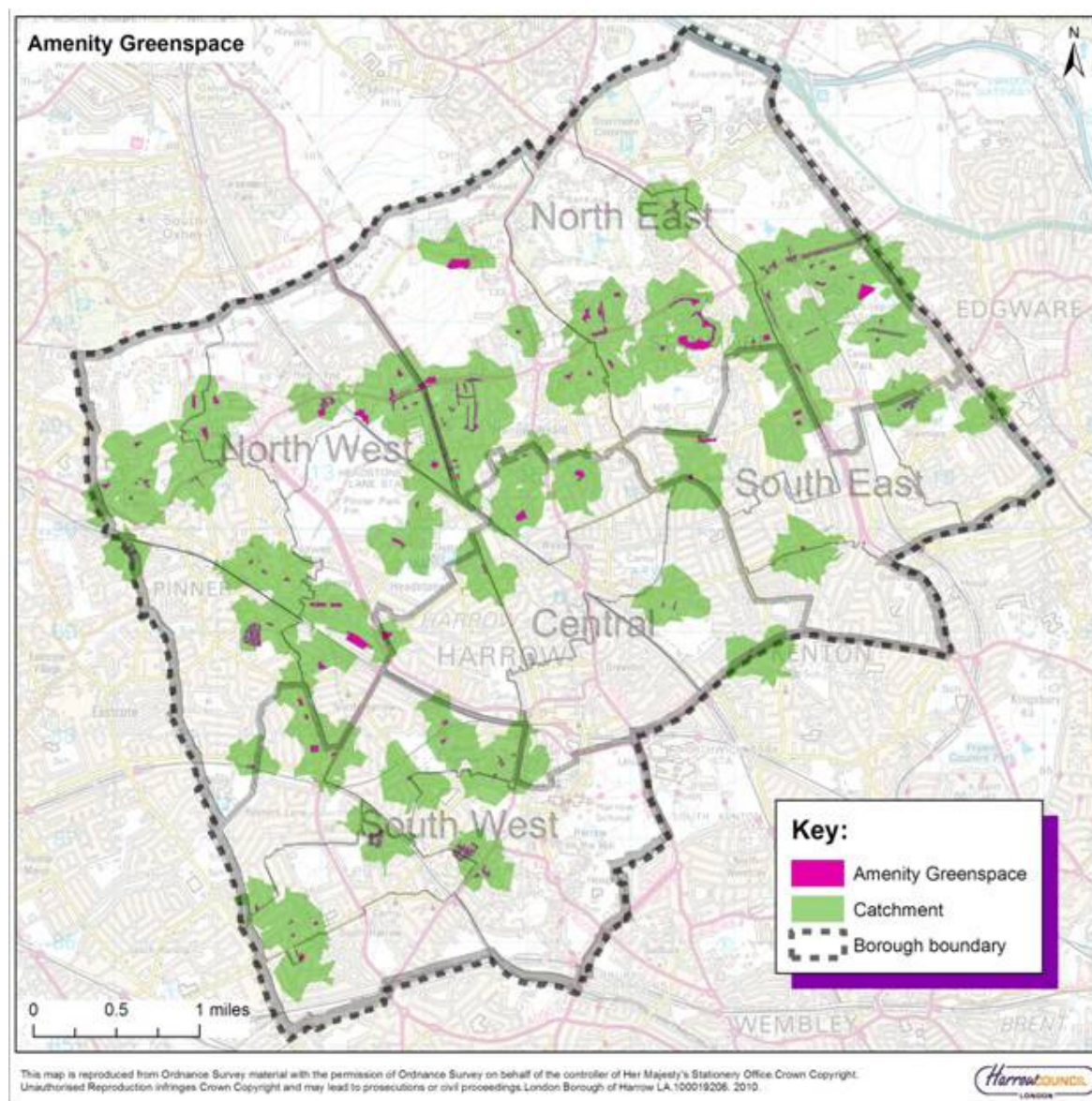
Sub-area	Population (2026 Estimates)	Current level of provision (Hectares)	Future level of provision (Hectares per 1000	Standard per 1000 population	Amount of Amenity Greenspace required to meet standard	Deficiency (hectares)
Central	52315	2.14	0.04	0.31	16.22	14.08
Northeast	32325	17.10	0.53	0.31	10.02	+7.08
Northwest	41612	12.42	0.30	0.31	12.90	0.48
Southeast	43121	1.98	0.05	0.31	13.37	11.38
Southwest	59644	4.69	0.08	0.31	18.49	13.80
<b>Total</b>	229018	38.33	0.17	0.31	71.00	32.66

5.55 The overall deficiency increases to 32.66 hectares by 2026. The only sub-area with provision that exceeds the standard is the North East sub-area where the level of provision should be sustained. The deficiencies in the Central, South West and South East sub-areas are all in excess of 10 hectares.

### **Accessibility**

5.56 Map 5.6 shows the application of the recommended accessibility standard to amenity green space sites. The catchment is a 400m walking distance measured from the nearest point on the road network.

**Map 5.6: Catchment areas of Amenity Greenspace sites**



5.57 Many areas of the Borough are deficient in accessibility of amenity green space. The Central sub-area, as would be expected, shows the greatest access deficiency, with large areas having no access against this standard; but even in the north-east, with its comparatively good provision, there are residential areas with little or no accessible amenity space (though this is compensated for by extensive provision of other typologies). There are large parts of all the other sub-areas that are deficient in access to amenity green space, particularly in the southeast and southwest sub-areas and to the north of Rayners Lane.

## Natural and Semi-natural greenspace

### Definition

6.1 Natural and semi-natural greenspaces have been defined as “land, water and geological features which have been naturally colonised by plants and animals and which are accessible on foot to large numbers of residents.”<sup>111</sup> Natural greenspaces are mostly areas of undeveloped land with limited or no maintenance, which have been colonised by vegetation and wildlife, and can therefore include woodland, heathland, meadows, marsh, ponds and lakes, chalk grassland or derelict land, although linear spaces are treated separately as green corridors. The primary function of natural greenspaces is to promote biodiversity and nature conservation, but they are also important for environmental education and awareness, and for recreational enjoyment of nature.

6.2 The definition of natural space within ANGSt<sup>112</sup> is:

*“places where human control and activities are not intensive so that a feeling of naturalness is allowed to predominate”.*

6.3 Natural England acknowledges that deciding at which point a feeling of naturalness predominates may be difficult to determine, and that there is considerable room for interpretation. For this Natural England uses a proxy measure for naturalness based on two ‘levels’. Level 1 includes Nature conservation areas, including SSSIs, Local sites (including local wildlife sites, RIGs) Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Woodland and remnant countryside (within urban and urban fringe areas). Level 2 includes formal and informal open space, rivers and canals, unimproved grassland, disused/derelict land, formal and informal areas scrub, Country Parks and open access land.

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<sup>111</sup> Harrison, C, Burgess, J, Millward, A and Dawe, G (1995) *Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities* (English Nature Research Report 153), English Nature

<sup>112</sup> Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (Natural England)



6.4 Accessible greenspace are defined by Natural England as:

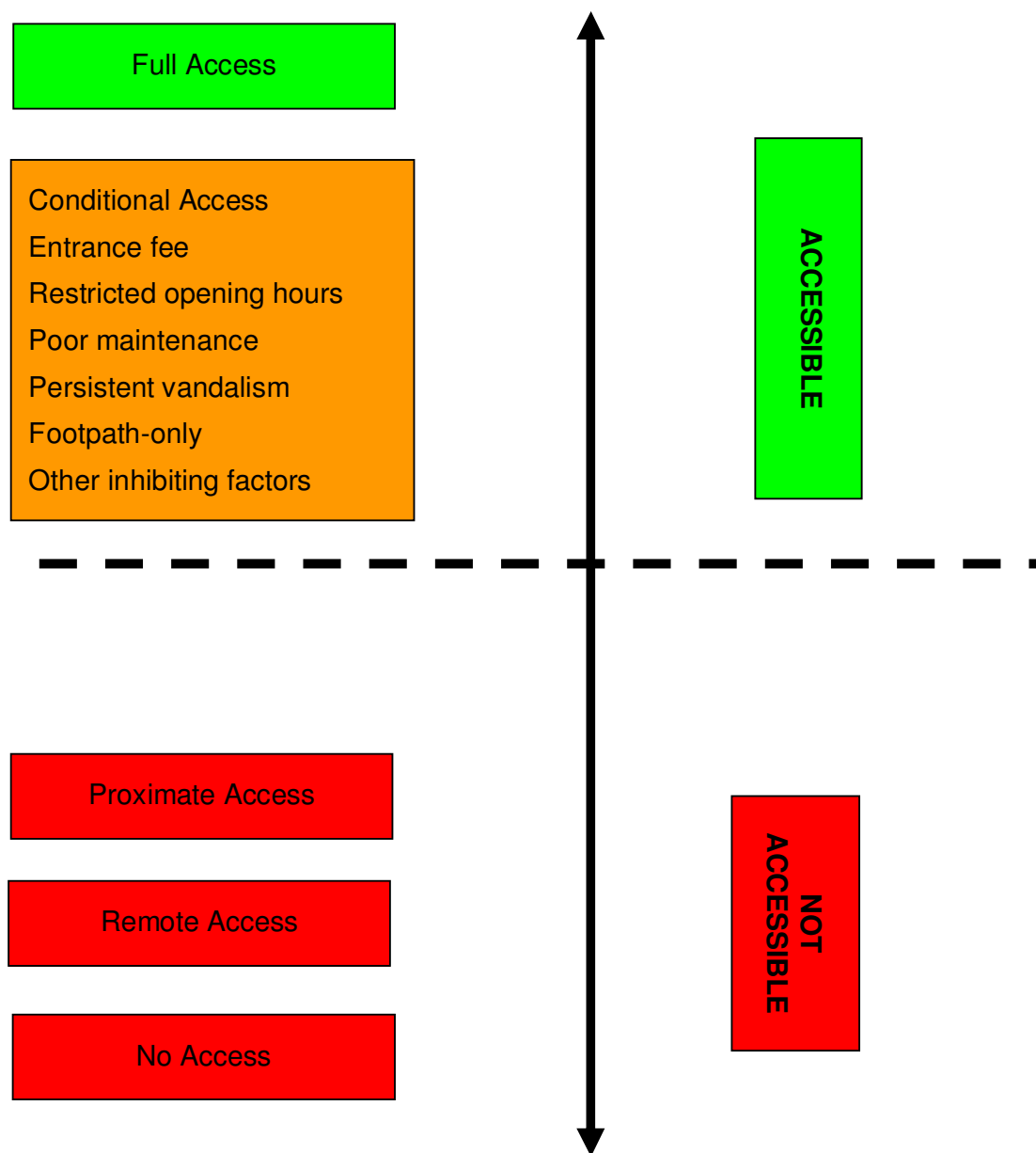
*'places that are available for the general public to use free of charge and without time restrictions (although some sites may be closed to the public overnight and there may be fees for parking a vehicle). The places are available to all, meaning that every reasonable effort is made to comply with the requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA 1995). An accessible place will also be known to the target users, including potential users who live within the site catchment area.'*

6.5 Natural England has divided access into five categories to determine whether a natural area is accessible:

- *Full Access:* Entry to the site is possible without restriction.
- *Conditional Access:* A right of entry exists which is subject to or affected by one or more restrictions or conditions that may affect the quality of the natural experience enjoyed by the visitor.
- *Proximate Access:* There is no physical right of access but the site can be experienced from its boundary, where a close-up visual and aural experience of nature may be available.
- *Remote Access:* No physical right of access exists and the proximate experience is limited, but the site provides a valuable visual green resource to the community along a number of distinct sightlines and at distance.
- *No Access:* No physical right of access exists and views of the site are largely obstructed.

6.6 In order to be considered sufficiently accessible to satisfy the needs of the model, sites must be either fully or conditionally accessible as shown in **Figure 6.1** below. Accessibility is taken to mean the ability of visitors to physically gain access to a site (sites which satisfy this criterion are then considered to exert a catchment zone upon the surrounding area).

**Figure 6.1: Models of access to Natural Greenspace**



*Source: Providing Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities, Natural England*

6.7 Accessibility encompasses a spectrum from the purely visual to the right to enter a greenspace, move about freely and experience it without disturbance. The threshold for a site to be considered to provide sufficient experience of nature for

the purposes of the model is considered to occur at the point at which physical entry to a site is possible.

### **Strategic context**

- 6.8 The England Biodiversity Group has published a new framework, 'Conserving Biodiversity - The UK Approach', which aims to build on the strengths of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). The importance of natural and semi natural greenspaces is succinctly summarised in the vision for the framework which is:

*"....that in our countryside, towns and seas, living things and their habitats are part of healthy, functioning ecosystems; we value our natural environment, a concern for biodiversity is embedded in policies and decisions, and more people enjoy, understand and act to improve the natural world about them."*<sup>113</sup>

- 6.9 The UK Government and the devolved administrations have adopted this to express a shared vision for biodiversity conservation. Central to this vision is recognition of the interconnections between living species (including people), their particular habitats, the services that they provide for us and their dependence on protected status. The framework makes it clear that:

*'Achievement of this vision will require a more holistic approach which recognises these interdependencies and uses a variety of current and emerging schemes and policy instruments.'*

- 6.10 Natural England is one of the agencies seeking to deliver the vision. The role of natural and semi natural greenspace is considered to play a key role in delivering biodiversity and contributing to climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as providing opportunities for recreation. Natural England believes that everyone should have access to good quality natural greenspace near to where they live, i.e. 'Nature Nearby'<sup>114</sup>.

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<sup>113</sup> Conserving Biodiversity – The UK Approach, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on behalf of the England Biodiversity Group 2007.

<sup>114</sup> Nature Nearby - Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance (March 2010)

- 6.11 Three key standards have been proposed by Natural England which aim to deliver high quality natural green spaces close to where people live, and connect people with the natural environment.

***Access to Natural Greenspace Standard – ANGSt***

- 6.12 Natural England has revised its approach to implementing ANGSt<sup>115</sup>, with the aim of gaining better acceptance of the Standard. Sometimes called ANGSt Plus, this new framework for applying ANGSt is appropriate for assessing current levels of accessible natural greenspace, and planning for better provision. It identifies those sites that might be considered natural sites, and areas within other green spaces that have a value for nature. It also facilitates the identification of areas of deficiency where the standard is not met.
- 6.13 The three underlying principles of ANGSt are:
- Improving access to green spaces.
  - Improving naturalness of green spaces.
  - Improving connectivity with green spaces.
- 6.14 Natural England is encouraging all local authorities to adopt ANGSt as their local standard because of the range of benefits that it can deliver. Conformity to ANGSt will benefit biodiversity and contribute to the mitigation of adverse climate change effects.
- 6.15 ANGSt's standards require that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible natural greenspace:
- of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes walk) from home;
  - at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;

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<sup>115</sup> In the earlier version of ANGSt, English Nature recommended that provision should be made of at least 2ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1000 population according to a system of tiers into which sites of different sizes fit. Handley, J. et al 'Providing Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities: A Practical Guide to Assessing the Resource and Implementing Local Standards for Provision'. English Nature. 2003.

- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.

6.16 However, at the local level the Standard only deals with the requirement to have a 2ha site within 300m of people's homes. 'It does not address the need to express quantities of different types of space in terms of population sizes.'<sup>116</sup> Natural England acknowledges that ANGSt cannot therefore provide for the full range of a local planning authority's needs.

### ***Visitor Service Standards***

6.17 Visitor Service Standards are outlined for three types of natural greenspace:

- National Nature Reserves
- Country Parks
- Local Nature Reserves.

### ***Greenspace Quality Standards***

6.18 Natural England promotes the Green Flag Award as the national quality standard for all green spaces.

### ***London Plan***

6.19 The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy<sup>117</sup> has two main themes, protecting important wildlife habitat and priority species and improving access to nature. These two themes are reflected in the strategy's two main targets, no net loss of important wildlife habitat and reducing areas of deficiency in access to nature.

6.20 The themes of the Biodiversity Strategy are supported in the Draft Replacement London Plan. With regard to improving access to nature, areas of deficiency,

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<sup>116</sup> **'Nature Nearby'**: Accessible Natural Greenspace Guidance. Natural England 2010

<sup>117</sup> Connecting with London's Nature - The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy, GLA, 2002.

defined as being more than one kilometre actual walking distance from an accessible site of metropolitan or borough importance for nature conservation have been mapped. The Strategy also indicates that some of this deficiency can be met with accessible natural greenspace in places that do not meet the criteria for selection as a Site of Local Importance. A distance of 500 metres actual walking distance is recommended for this more detailed consideration of local access.

- 6.21 A London Plan implementation report on tackling the deficiencies provides guidance on ways to improve access to nature and lists priority opportunities to address areas of deficiency.<sup>118</sup> The Mayor's Guidance<sup>119</sup> indicates that boroughs should incorporate the findings of the London Plan Implementation Report into their open space strategies.
- 6.22 The consultation draft replacement plan for London<sup>120</sup> confirms that in their LDF preparation Boroughs should:
- use the procedures in the Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy to identify Sites of Borough and Local Importance for Nature Conservation;
  - identify areas deficient in accessible wildlife sites and seek opportunities to address them; and
  - include policies for the protection of protected/priority species and the enhancement of their populations via BAP targets.<sup>121</sup>

### ***Harrow Biodiversity Action Plan***

- 6.23 The main aim of the Harrow BAP is to conserve, protect and enhance the biodiversity of the London Borough of Harrow.
- 6.24 The objectives of the Harrow BAP include the need to regularly audit biodiversity; to implement the National and London targets for habitats and species; to raise

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<sup>118</sup> Mayor of London, 2008. Improving Londoners' access to nature, The London Plan Implementation Report

<sup>119</sup> Open space strategies: Best practice guidance, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and the Greater London Authority, 2009.

<sup>120</sup> The London Plan - Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London, GLA, 2009.

<sup>121</sup> Policy 7.19 Biodiversity and access to nature

awareness of biodiversity issues, and to encourage local people to be involved in biodiversity issues. The Harrow BAP provides a long-term strategy for biodiversity which is intended to inform other relevant strategies and actions.

### ***The Benefits of Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace***

- 6.25 Research undertaken for Natural England<sup>122</sup> revealed that the main reasons for people visiting natural greenspaces are to walk the dog, for exercise and for the pleasure of being in a green space or close to nature. Dog walking is popular at local sites, woodlands and country parks but less frequent at nature reserves. Reducing stress and relaxing constitute some of the main social values.
- 6.26 Maintaining and increasing access to natural greenspace has a number of well documented benefits.<sup>123</sup>
- 6.27 *Health benefits:* access to nature provides psychological and health benefits. Studies have shown that people living in a greener environment report fewer health complaints, have better perceived general health and better mental health. The British Heart Foundation and the Countryside Agency have promoted access to the countryside and natural greenspaces as part of the 'Walking the Way to Health' initiative.
- 6.28 *Economic benefits:* natural open space acts as a green magnet, attracting people to live and work in the area. Greening also plays an integral role in regeneration initiatives and new and existing infrastructure, the public realm, and other developments. Biodiversity adds value to a site, and ecological management practices can save money. However, there are potential conflicts with economic development, which have to be addressed if biodiversity is to be successfully integrated.
- 6.29 *Educational benefits:* the use by local schools of natural green spaces for nature study. Visiting such sites provides hands-on experience of plants and animals. They provide children and adults with opportunities to learn about and

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<sup>122</sup> Nature for people: the importance of green spaces to East Midlands communities. English Nature Research Report No. 567.

<sup>123</sup> Connecting with London's Nature: The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy, Greater London Authority, July 2002

understand nature, potentially leading to a respect for living things and a desire to conserve them.

- 6.30 *Functional benefits:* vegetated surfaces help to slow water runoff and so reduce the risk of flooding. Vegetation provides local climatic benefits and helps to prevent erosion, ameliorate ambient noise and absorb some pollutants.
- 6.31 *Sustainable development:* the natural world provides a range of sustainability benefits. Natural greenspaces provide valuable wildlife habitats and contribute to the conservation of threatened species.

### ***Children's Play***

**6.32** Natural England is seeking to promote the need to make natural spaces more available for children today. The Natural England's National Childhood and Nature survey<sup>124</sup> found that:

- Children spend less time playing in natural places, such as woodlands, countryside and heaths than they did in previous generations. Less than 10% play in such places compared to 40% of adults when they were young.
- Three quarters of adults claimed to have had a patch of nature near their homes and over half went there at least once or twice a week. 64% of children reckon they have a patch of nature near their homes but less than a quarter go there once or twice a week.
- Parents would like their children to be able to play in natural spaces unsupervised (85%) but fears of strangers and road safety prevent them from giving much freedom to their children.

6.33 The Natural England publication 'Accessible Natural Green Space in Towns and Cities'<sup>125</sup> research report found that, if the nearest area of green space is more than 280 metres from home (or involves crossing a significantly-trafficked road), then parents feel it is not safe to allow their 7-8 year olds out to play on their own.

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<sup>124</sup> Report to Natural England on Childhood and Nature: A Survey on Changing Relationships With Nature Across Generations England Marketing, 2009

<sup>125</sup> Harrison et al, Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities, English Nature 1995



### ***Recreational Capacity***

- 6.34 The recreational activities of residents, particularly dog walking, inevitably put pressure on natural and semi-natural greenspaces. There is a need to ensure that sites of high biodiversity value are protected from the increasing recreational pressure they will experience in the coming years.
- 6.35 One approach to quantifying the vulnerability of sites<sup>126</sup> is the "Jackson Vulnerability Index"<sup>127</sup> which has been developed by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough.
- 6.36 The Vulnerability Scoring System classifies sites on the following basis:
- 1-7 This site is suitable as a recreation asset
  - 8-14 This site is suitable as a recreation asset with visitor management
  - 15-21 This site is moderately vulnerable to recreation and requires visitor management
  - 22-27 This site is very vulnerable to recreation
- 6.37 A range of attributes that seek to measure the sensitivity of a site are assessed and scored. These attributes include the size of the site and its accessibility, connectivity with other sites, the type and status of the habitats and whether there are any protected species. The aim is to be able to identify vulnerable sites and facilitate the management of recreational activities to protect sensitive sites.
- 6.38 There are a number of sites of high ecological value in Harrow that are heavily used for recreation, particularly dog walking. Measures may be necessary to manage the recreational capacity of these sites.

### ***Woodlands***

- 6.39 The Woodland Trust argues that it is important that there are sufficient woods close to where people live. In a survey undertaken as part of the 'Space for

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<sup>126</sup> Sensitivity of Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation in Bedfordshire, L. Jackson. The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough 2008.

<sup>127</sup> © The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough

People’ project, 85 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement that ‘more woods in urban areas would help them to stay in touch with nature’.

6.40 To this end the Trust has developed the ‘Woodland Access Standard’, which recommends:

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

## **Designated Sites in Harrow**

### ***Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)***

6.41 SSSIs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act and are designated for their interest in terms of their flora, fauna, geological or physiographic features

6.42 There are 2 sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in Harrow – Bentley Priory and Harrow Weald Common. Bentley Priory is made up of 4 units, and covers 57 hectares of unimproved neutral grassland, ancient and long-established woodland, scrub, wetland and open water. In the latest assessments, carried out by Natural England, 1 unit is in favourable condition (assessed in 2009), and 3 are classed as unfavourable recovering (assessed in 2006). The latter have all improved from the previous assessment carried out in 2003, when they were classed as unfavourable declining. This improvement is due to extensive scrub clearance.

6.43 Harrow Weald Common is a former gravel pit designated for its geological value. It is one unit, covering 3.5 hectares. It was classified as favourable condition in its latest assessment in 2009. The previous assessment in 2002 also gave the same classification.

6.44 Bentley Priory and most of Harrow Weald Common are accessible to the local community.

### ***Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)***

- 6.45 There are 3 types of SINC: Sites of Metropolitan Importance, Sites of Borough Importance and Sites of Local Importance.
- 6.46 The Sites of Metropolitan Importance are designated by the Mayor of London, and the GLA - they are the most important wildlife sites in London. There are 5 of these sites in Harrow, namely Stanmore Golf Course and Montrose Walk, Stanmore & Little Commons, Pear Wood and Stanmore Country Park, Harrow Weald Common and Bentley Priory. All these sites, with exception of Stanmore Golf Course, are accessible<sup>128</sup>.
- 6.47 The sites of Borough Importance are habitats designated as important wildlife sites by Harrow Council. The lowest grading wildlife sites are the Sites of Local Importance - these are smaller sites such as areas in parks that provide the community with access to wildlife near their homes. In Harrow, there are 17 Sites of Borough Importance of which only 7 are accessible, and 18 Sites of Local Importance, 15 of which are accessible. All these sites are listed in **Table 6.1** below.

***Table 6.1: Designated Sites in Harrow***

<b>Site name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
Bentley Priory Open Space	Metropolitan
Harrow Weald Common	Metropolitan
Pear Wood and Stanmore Country Park	Metropolitan
Stanmore and Little Commons	Metropolitan
Stanmore Golf Course and Montrose Walk	Metropolitan
Harrow-on-the-Hill	Borough Grade I
Pinner Park Farm	Borough Grade I
Pinnerwood Park and Ponds	Borough Grade I
Roxbourne Rough Nature Reserve	Borough Grade I
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital Grounds	Borough Grade I
Wood End Railway Crossing	Borough Grade I

<sup>128</sup> 'the path across Stanmore Golf Course in Harrow is enclosed for its entire distance by high wire fencing and in this case could not be regarded as giving real access to nature.' Cited in 'Improving Londoners' access to nature, The London Plan Implementation Report. Mayor of London, 2008.

Canons Lake and The Basin	Borough Grade II
Canons Park and Stanmore Railway Embankments	Borough Grade II
Clamp Hill Brickfields	Borough Grade II
Grim's Dyke and Pinner Green	Borough Grade II
Harrow Weald Park and the Hermitage	Borough Grade II
Headstone Manor Copse	Borough Grade II
Oxhey Lane Fields and Railway Cuttings	Borough Grade II
Rayners Lane Railsides	Borough Grade II
St Dominic's Sixth Form College	Borough Grade II
Stanmore Marsh	Borough Grade II
Wood Farm	Borough Grade II
The Grail Centre	Borough Grade II
Yeading Brook in Harrow	Borough Grade II
Belmont Nature Walk, including The Rattler	Local
Bonnorsfield Lane	Local
Edgewarebury Brook at Whitchurch School	Local
Grim's Dyke at Sadlers Mead	Local
Harrow Arts Centre	Local
Harrow Cemetery	Local
Newton Park and Newton Park Ecology Centre	Local
Old Tennis Court in West Harrow Recreation Ground	Local
Orley Farm School Nature Conservation Area	Local
Paines Lane Cemetery	Local
Pinner Memorial Park	Local
River Pinn at West Harrow (Cuckoo Hill Walk)	Local
St John the Evangelist Churchyard, Stanmore Park	Local
The Cedars Open Space	Local
Watling Chase planting site and environs	Local
Watling Street Verge	Local
Woodlands Open Space Spinney & Melrose Allotments	Local
Woodridings Brook	Local

### ***Local Nature Reserves***

6.48 Local authorities establish Local Nature Reserves (LNR) in consultation with Natural England. They make a contribution to conservation and are valuable for public education and enjoyment. There are three LNRs in Harrow:

- Bentley Priory Open Space - 65.6 ha
- Stanmore Common – 49.0 ha
- Stanmore Country Park<sup>129</sup> - 33.4 ha

### **Audit**

#### ***Quantity***

6.49 It is more appropriate to use a supply-led approach to natural greenspaces. It is difficult to plan effectively for any particular flora or fauna, and it is not possible to “design in” colonisation by plants or wildlife, so a demand-led approach would clearly be inappropriate. Accordingly, a supply-led methodology offers the best way of protecting established sites. Nevertheless, there may be opportunities to provide additional natural and semi natural greenspace where there are opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement or expanding habitat at both existing and new sites.

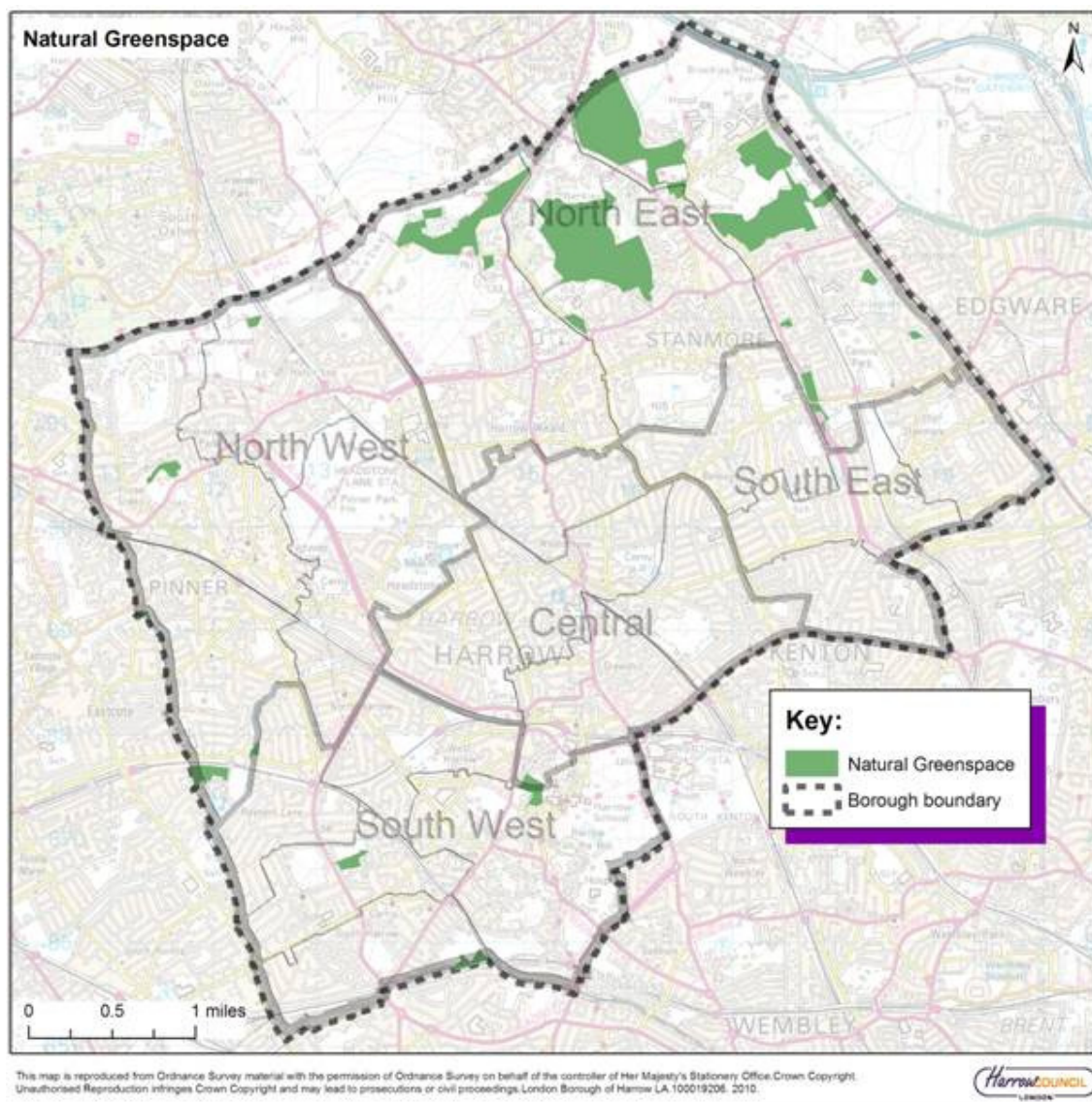
6.50 The supply of natural greenspaces has been determined by whether sites are accessible by the general public and whether or not they have been included under a different, more predominant typology. The sites that were visited and included in the audit are those that are readily accessible to the public. This accessibility ‘test’ has meant that a number of sites that were identified as natural and semi-natural greenspace have been excluded from the audit because they could not be readily accessed.

6.51 The principal natural and semi-natural greenspace sites in Harrow are listed in **Appendix 7**. A total of 28 sites were included in the audit; **Map 6.1** shows the locations of these.

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<sup>129</sup> Includes NGS012 Stanmore Country Park Extension

**Map 6.1: Location of natural and semi-natural greenspace**



6.52 **Table 6.2** shows that 64% of the sites are in the Northeast sub-area; about 18% are in the Northwest sub-area and 14% in the Southwest sub-area, with only one site in the Central sub-area. There are no sites at all in the Southeastern sub-area.

**Table 6.2: Numbers of Sites in each Sub-area**

Sub-area	Number of Sites
Central	1
Northeast	14
Northwest	9
Southeast	0
Southwest	4

6.53 The total area of natural and semi natural greenspace sites is 225.77 hectares (**Table 6.3**), including three sites that are over 20 hectares (**Table 6.4**). This equates to 1.02 hectares per 1000 population. The majority of sites are comparatively small, with 23 sites of less than 10 hectares in area.

**Table 6.3: Hectares per 1000 population of natural and semi-natural green space**

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Natural & semi-natural Greenspace (Hectares)	Hectares per 1000	Persons per Hectare
Central	52615	4.33	0.08	12154
Northeast	32732	206.45	6.31	159
Northwest	40178	8.87	0.22	4528
Southeast	40065	0	0.00	0
Southwest	55098	6.11	0.11	9011
<b>Total</b>	<b>220688</b>	<b>225.77</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>978</b>

**Table 6.4: Size of natural and semi-natural green spaces**

Size	Number of sites	Hectares
Under 10 ha	23	50.48
10 to 19.9 ha	2	29.74
20 to 99.9 ha	3	145.54
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>225.77</b>

6.54 Provision is highest in the Northeast sub-area (6.31 hectares per 1000 population) where 91.14% of the total area of natural and semi-natural greenspace in Harrow is located. There is no provision in the Southeast sub-area, and relatively small quantities of space in the remaining three sub-areas.

6.55 Provision in Harrow is low compared with other local authorities<sup>130</sup> shown in **Table 6.5**.

**Table 6.5: Comparison with other Local Authorities**

Local Authority	Hectares per 1000 population
Sevenoaks	21.4
Chelmsford	14.78
Thurrock	10.32
Three Rivers	10.06
East Herts	7.76
Reigate & Banstead	7.25
Mid Beds	5.4
Windsor and Maidenhead	4.8
Waveney	4.65
Erewash	3.39
Wandsworth	3.13
Bexley	2.58
Camden	2.09
Haringey	1.82
Mid Suffolk	1.7
Enfield	1.5
<b>Harrow</b>	<b>1.02</b>
Huntingdon	0.21
Islington	0.02

6.56 As regards Local Nature Reserves, Natural England recommends that at least 1ha of statutory Local Nature Reserve (LNR) should be provided per 1000 population.

6.57 The Local Nature Reserves in Harrow are listed in **Table 6.6** below.

<sup>130</sup> The choice of comparators is limited by the availability of data. The Local Authorities listed were chosen on the basis that they are either adjoining, or are located in similar districts.



**Table 6.6: Local Nature Reserves**

Local Nature Reserve	Hectares	Hectares per 1000 Population
Bentley Priory Open Space	65.60	0.30
Stanmore Common	48.98	0.22
Stanmore Country Park	33.37 <sup>131</sup>	0.15
<b>Total</b>	<b>147.95</b>	<b>0.67</b>

6.58 Overall, provision in Harrow is 0.67 Hectares of LNR per 1000 population, which is below the ANGSt quantity standard for LNRs. There is a medium term intention to incorporate part of Wood Farm (23.8 hectares) and Pear Wood (14.46 hectares) into Stanmore Country Park. This would increase the area of LNRs by 22.26 hectares and increase provision to 0.84 hectares per 1000 population.

### **Quality**

6.59 The median<sup>132</sup> score for the quality assessment for Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace is 71.4% and the median score for value is 62.5%. **Table 6.7** shows the quality and value rankings achieved by each of the natural greenspace sites, based on the median score calculation, and **Map 6.2** shows the distribution of these sites across the Borough.

<sup>131</sup> This figure includes the recently completed extension (2.42 hectares) at Cleopatra Close.

<sup>132</sup> The median of a population is the point that divides the distribution of scores in half. Numerically, half of the scores in a population will have values that are equal to or larger than the median and half will have values that are equal to or smaller than the median.

To work out the median:

a) Put the numbers in order. 3 6 6 6 7 9 11 11 13

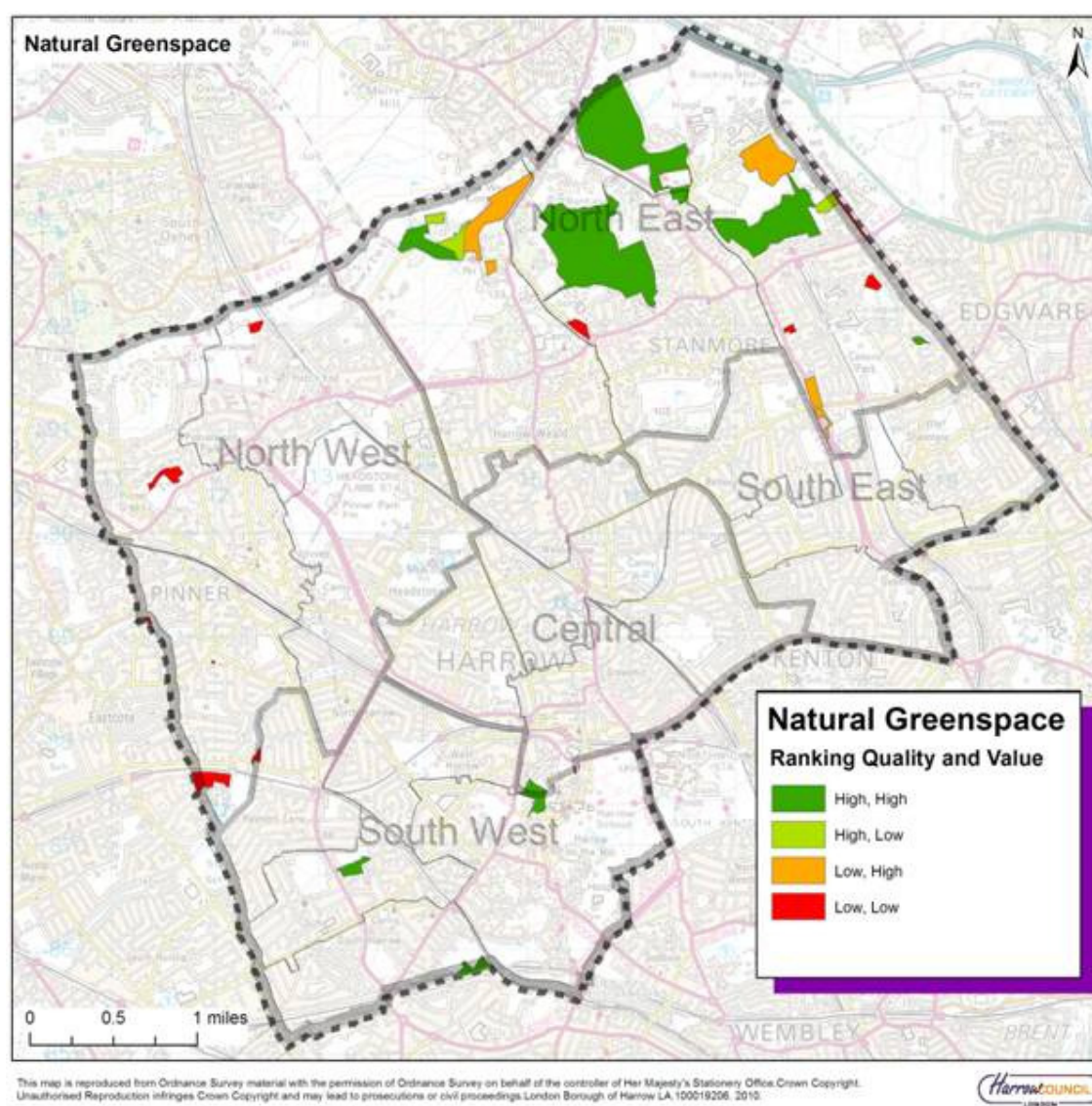
b) The number in the middle of the list is the median 7 is in the middle. So the median value is 7.

If there are two middle values, the median is halfway between them. For example, if the set of numbers were 3 6 6 6 7 8 9 11 11 13 There are two middle values, 7 and 8. The median is halfway between 7 and 8. The median is 7.5.

**Table 6.7: Quality and value scores for natural and semi-natural green space**

Quality Ranking	Value Ranking	Central	Northeast	Northwest	Southeast	Southwest	Total Number of Sites
High	High	1	8	0	0	2	11
High	Low	0	3	0	0	0	3
Low	High	0	3	0	0	0	3
Low	Low	0	4	5	0	2	11

**Map 6.2: Quality and value of Natural Greenspace**



6.60 **Table 6.7** shows that of the 28 sites that were assessed, 11 (39%) score high for both quality and value and 11 (39%) score low for both quality and value; 3 (11%) score high for quality but low for value and 3 (11%) score low for quality but high for value.

6.61 Of the sites that score high for quality and high for value; 8 are in the Northeast sub-area; 2 are in the Southwest sub-area; and 1 is in the Central sub-area. Conversely, low quality, low value sites number 5 in the Northwest sub-area; 4 in the Northeast sub-area and 2 in the Southwest sub-area. There is therefore a particular concern about the quality of sites in the northwest sub-area.

6.62 All the Local Nature Reserves surveyed scored highly for quality and value, as can be seen in **Table 6.8**.

**Table 6.8: Quality and Value Scores for LNRs**

Local Nature Reserve	Quality Score	Quality Ranking	Value Score	Value Ranking
Bentley Priory Open Space	95.7%	High	97.5%	High
Stanmore Common	90.7%	High	77.5%	High
Stanmore Country Park	72.5%	High	80.0%	High

## **Accessibility**

6.63 The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy defines<sup>133</sup> Areas of Deficiency as:

*'built-up areas more than one kilometre actual walking distance from an accessible Metropolitan or borough site.'*

6.64 In undertaking the mapping of areas of deficiency the Mayor has provided guidance about the certain factors which need to be taken into account.<sup>134</sup> The mapping process is based on actual walking routes to sites; also, the distance measured relates to access points into the sites and not just the boundary.

<sup>133</sup> The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy, 2002 Para A1.2.13

<sup>134</sup> Improving Londoners' Access to Nature, Mayor of London 2008

## Key consultation findings – Natural and semi-natural green space

### Quantity

- 6.65 The quantity question on natural space emphasises, as PPG17 itself does, the fact that this should be restricted to space which is accessible to the public; a perceived need for more space can therefore be addressed through opening up more existing space to public access as well as by providing more space on the ground.
- 6.66 In fact, there is a significant demand for more of this type of space in Harrow borough. Two thirds of residents (64%) say there is too little of this type of space, against just one third (36%) who think the level of provision is about right. Very few people want to see the amount of natural space in the borough reduced.

**Table 6.9: Residents' views on quantity of natural and semi-natural greenspace**

Sub-area	Proportion of residents wanting more natural greenspace provision
Central	69%
Northeast	51%
Northwest	59%
Southeast	58%
Southwest	71%
Overall	64%
N(=100%)	723

- 6.67 Demand is however much higher in some sub-areas than in others; opinion in the Northeast sub-area is evenly divided between those who want more natural space (50%) and those who are happy with existing provision (50%), but in the Southwest and Central sub-areas the split is nearly three to one in favour of increased provision. The Northwest largely reflects the overall position. No doubt demand in the northeast reflects the proximity of this area to accessible Green Belt land.

6.68 Demand is also much higher among younger residents; among over 65s, the strong balance of opinion is that there is enough of this type of space (60%) and the proportion wanting an increased level of provision is a substantial minority (40%). In other age-groups opinion is shifted towards an increased level of provision, and in the under 35s there are three proponents of increase for every one who wants to keep things as they are. The desire for more natural space is also much higher in the Asian community than among the other ethnic groups; 71% of Asians want to see an increased level of provision.

### **Usage**

6.69 The question on usage looks both at “casual” use of green space, and also visits to specific types of green space. This table shows how often people go for a walk, ride, jog, or cycle in a natural green space, other than in a green corridor:

**Table 6.10: Frequency of visits**

Frequency of visit	Proportion of people (%)
Every day	7%
Once or twice a week	12%
Two or three times a month	14%
Once a month	11%
Once every two or three months	12%
Once or twice a year	9%
Less often	5%
Never	31%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1040</i>

6.70 Natural green space is an undeniably popular part of life in this borough. Although a third of residents never visit (31%), there are two people who do for every one who abstains, and the frequency of visits is also high, with two in five

residents (44%) visiting at least monthly, and around half of these (19% of all residents) visiting on at least a weekly basis.

- 6.71 Levels of visiting are higher in some sub-areas than others, however. In the Northwest and Southwest sub-areas, almost half of all residents visit at least monthly (50% and 49% respectively), and in the Northwest sub-area only a quarter of residents (23%) say they never visit natural green space. In the Central and Southeast sub-areas, however, the level of visiting is much lower, with just two in five residents (39% and 38% respectively) visiting at least monthly.
- 6.72 Visiting this type of space is also heavily influenced by the age of the person concerned; over half of under 35s (53%) visit at least monthly, but this falls to just a third (33%) of over 65s. Correspondingly, the proportions who never visit rise from a quarter (23%) of under 35s to almost half (45%) of over 65s. Men and women visit in similar proportions. There is little difference in take-up between different major ethnic groups, but people with disabilities are significantly less likely to visit this kind of space; just one in five (21%) visit at least monthly, and well over half (57%) never visit this kind of space.
- 6.73 We can also look at how often people visit different, more specialised, types of space, as in this table:

**Table 6.11: Different types of natural greenspace and levels of visiting**

Type of space	Proportion of people (%) who visit at least monthly	Proportion of people (%) who never visit
Nature reserve or wildlife site	17%	40%
Woodland or forest trail	18%	43%
Country park	16%	32%
Lake or riverbank	16%	36%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 1032 to 1041</i>	

- 6.74 The results are actually quite similar as regards monthly visits, with around one in six residents in each instance visiting this particular type of space. The primary use of the countryside is thus for recreational walking, jogging and cycling, rather than more specific encounters with different types of natural space. However, although monthly visiting is consistently at a similar level for all four types of space, occasional visits to a country park or a lake or riverbank are a little more likely than to a wildlife site, nature reserve, or woodland.
- 6.75 Visits to nature reserves are especially unlikely for people living in the Southwest sub-area, where half of all residents (49%) say they never visit, and are much more likely in the Northwest sub-area (only 29% never visit). The same broad pattern is evident in woodland and waterside visiting. Country parks are much more likely to be visited by residents of the Northeast and Northwest sub-areas, where only a quarter of residents never visit (25% in each case); proximity clearly plays a significant role in this pattern.
- 6.76 Residents were asked to indicate which natural space they visit most often. It is not always easy to identify the sites in question, but the most commonly mentioned are listed here:

**Table 6.12: Most commonly mentioned sites**

Site	Number of mentions
Ruislip Lido/Woods	62
Bentley Priory	60
Stanmore Country Park	32
Rickmansworth Aquadrome	25
Canons Park	22
Old Redding <sup>135</sup>	16
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>618</i>

<sup>135</sup> The Council notes that residents may mean Harrow Weald Common here. If so, the total for this site would be 31 mentions.

6.77 There is a wide range of natural space mentioned, and although some of it is local, some is very far flung. Nearer to home, a substantial number of people make special trips to places such as Hampstead Heath, the Royal Parks, and Epping Forest in preference to visiting local spaces.

6.78 We also note with interest that the most commonly visited natural space mentioned by residents is not actually in the borough itself, but in one of the neighbouring boroughs, although Bentley Priory also features prominently in people's choices. This table shows, though, a distribution of visits between more local sites such as Bentley, Canons<sup>136</sup> and Stanmore, and slightly more distant sites in neighbouring local authority areas. We estimate that about half of those visiting natural sites prefer a location outside Harrow Borough.

### **Quality**

6.79 We asked residents who use natural spaces to assess them against selected quality criteria; the results have been split between those visiting local sites and sites outside the borough, and use mean scores<sup>137</sup> to compare the results:

**Table 6.13: Residents' views on the quality of spaces**

Attribute	Mean score for local spaces	Mean score for non-local spaces
Safety during the day	0.56	0.86
Diversity and enjoyment of nature	0.54	0.91
Planting and grassed areas	0.47	0.73
Quality of paths	0.42	0.75

<sup>136</sup> Canons is designated in this study as a park, rather than a natural space – but this does not prevent people from mentioning it in the context of natural greenspace.

<sup>137</sup> A mean score is calculated by applying a score to each response for each criterion. A rating of excellent attracts a score of 2, a rating of good is scored at 1, and ratings of below average or poor are scored at -1 or -2 respectively. "Average" and "don't know" are scored as zero and do not affect the result. The resulting score is then averaged across all respondents, giving an overall score somewhere between +2 and -2. A negative score indicates a balance of negative opinion, whilst a positive score indicates a positive opinion overall; the higher the score in either direction, the stronger that opinion is.



Information and signage	0.38	0.70
Cleanliness and litter	0.37	0.71
Accessibility for wheelchairs and buggies	0.06	0.50
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>185</i>	<i>76</i>

- 6.80 The quality scores are generally quite modest positives, with local spaces scoring relatively well on safety and diversity, but still falling well short of a “good” rating overall. Practical quality issues such as paths and signage also score modestly, as does cleanliness, but accessibility is only rated as “average”. There is considerable room for improvement represented here.
- 6.81 The local scores are lower than the non-local scores across the board, even on accessibility where Harrow outperforms its neighbours in other typologies. Scores for non-local sites tend towards an overall “good” rating, but do not push beyond this, and are not therefore being given terrifically high ratings.
- 6.82 There are no obvious patterns in these results according to the sub-area where people live. Residents in the Southwest sub-area score higher for daytime safety, but are the lowest on diversity; the Northeast residents score strongly on diversity (0.75) and give ratings near the top on all the attribute scores.
- 6.83 Younger people generally give higher scores; under 35s give the highest ratings for every attribute except one, diversity, where the score given by under 35s is actually the lowest. This is the age-group that visits most often, so a low score on a key attribute is to be noted carefully. The 50-65s give a lower score on accessibility (-0.01) than any of the other age-groups.
- 6.84 Black people give much higher overall scores than other ethnic groups, and most Black scores are close to “good”, while White people tend to give scores that are higher than those offered by Asian people.
- 6.85 Residents were also asked about the capacity of natural space to cater for the needs of different specialist interests, and answered as follows:

**Table 6.14: Residents' views on catering for different needs**

<b>Specialist interest</b>	<b>Proportion of people (%) who think caters well</b>	<b>Proportion of people (%) who think caters poorly</b>
Dog walkers	38%	7%
Walkers	34%	12%
Joggers	34%	11%
Birdwatchers/wildlife enthusiasts	22%	24%
Cyclists	21%	31%
Anglers	18%	45%
Mountain bikers	17%	44%
Equestrians	11%	45%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Ranges from 254 to 643</i>	

- 6.86 Some specialist needs are being catered for better than others. Two in five people think dog walkers are well provided for by natural green space, and very few residents feel dog walkers are disadvantaged at all by the borough's natural space. Walkers are similarly relatively well provided for, and so too are joggers.
- 6.87 Other specialist interests, however, are less well supported, and the proportion of residents who are critical outnumbers the proportion who think the group is well catered for. This is especially the case for three specialist groups: anglers, mountain bikers and equestrians, where nearly half of all those expressing view feel that needs are poorly supported by local natural space.
- 6.88 There are relatively few differences in opinion on these issues according to where people live, except in regard to birdwatchers and wildlife enthusiasts; residents of the Northeast and Central sub-areas feel these needs are better met than their counterparts in other areas of the borough.

## **Accessibility**

6.89 People were asked how they travel to their preferred natural green space, with these results:

**Table 6.15: Travel Modes**

Means of transport	Proportion of natural space users (%)
Walk/jog	27%
Car	62%
Bus/tube/rail	8%
Cycle	1%
Other	2%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>861</i>

6.90 Unlike most other forms of open space in the borough, access is primarily by car, with three in five visitors using the car to get to their preferred space; this is of course consistent with the finding that about half of all visits involve a trip across the borough boundary. Only 5% of visits to non-local sites take place on foot. Most of the rest – about a quarter of all visitors – walk to their preferred destination, but one in twelve uses public transport.

6.91 Car use is especially high in the Southeast sub-area, where 70% of visits involve a car; walking is highest in the Northeast, where one in three visits (33%) is made on foot, but even here well over half of all visits (56%) involve the use of a car.

6.92 There are few differences by age-group, except that over 65s are much more likely to be using public transport (14% do so), perhaps reflecting the advantages of free bus travel for this age-group. White and Asian people are more likely to travel by car than Black people; over half (54%) of Black people visiting natural space walk to their preferred site.

## **Standards**

### ***Quantity and Accessibility***

- 6.93 The results of the consultation suggest that a significant proportion of people consider that there is insufficient provision of natural and semi natural greenspace in their area. This view is particularly strong in the central and southeastern sub-area, but falls significantly in the northeast, where provision is at its highest. Current provision in Harrow is 1.02 hectares of accessible natural greenspace per 1000 population (including country parks). However, provision is concentrated on the Northeast sub-area where there is 6.31 hectares of accessible natural greenspace per 1000 population. Determining an appropriate quantity standard is therefore complicated by the fact that provision in this Borough is extremely uneven.
- 6.94 We consider that a borough-wide standard would be too heavily biased by the spatial distribution of existing provision. We therefore suggest that existing natural green space in the North East sub-area be retained and protected, and that the standard for the remaining sub-areas is set at 0.4 Ha per 1000 population.

#### **Quantity standard:**

**Provision should be made of at least 0.4 hectares of accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace per 1000 population in the South East, Central, South West and North West sub-areas. In the North East sub-area existing provision should be retained.**

**A minimum of one hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population (which can be included in the quantity standard set above).**

### **Quality**

6.95 The median score for the quality assessment for Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace is 71.4% and the median score for value is 62.5%. It is felt that NGS012 Stanmore Country Park (Quality 72.5%, value 80%) would establish a reasonable benchmark. This site should represent the minimum quality and value standard to which Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace sites in Harrow should aspire.

**The quality standard is 72.5 %.**

**The value standard is 80%.**

**The benchmark site for quality and value is Stanmore Country Park.**

### **Quality Criteria**

6.96 Good quality natural and semi natural greenspace sites can be achieved if the following criteria are satisfied:

- **First impressions**
  - Feeling that the site is open, safe and well used.
  - Natural appearance
- **Nature conservation, vegetation and trees**
  - Good diversity of vegetation
  - Open views across the site
  - Hedgerows fully planted without gaps
  - Distinctive characteristics
- **Entrances**
  - The entrances to sites should be well placed, in good condition and well maintained.

- ***Information and interpretation***
  - Sites are well signposted
  - Informative interpretation boards that provide good educational material
- ***Water***
  - Well maintained water areas
- ***Boundaries and paths***
  - Fencing maintained in a good state of repair
  - Gates in good working order
  - Paths well placed and in good condition
  - Gravel or grass paths not overgrown
  - Tarmac paths kept in good state of repair and potholes filled in.
- ***Access***
  - Sites are accessible to people with disabilities
  - Measures to facilitate access and overcome obstacles such as steep hills or rough terrain
- ***Safety, vandalism and graffiti***
  - Little evidence of graffiti and vandalism
- ***Cleanliness, dog fouling, litter and fly tipping***
  - Little evidence of litter, dog mess and fly tipping
- ***Facilities***
  - A sufficient number of seats maintained in good condition
  - Play areas/ buildings/toilets well maintained and functioning.

## Accessibility

6.97 The Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy defines areas of deficiency as those areas which are more than one kilometre actual walking distance from an accessible Metropolitan or borough site and a distance of around 500 metres for accessible natural greenspace that does not meet the criteria for selection as a Site of Local Importance. We have used a 1km rather than a 500m accessibility standard for local access to natural and semi natural greenspace as being more appropriate to Harrow in recognition of the fact that overall provision is good but unevenly distributed.as the basis for our standard.

**The recommended Accessibility Standard is that everyone, wherever they live, should have an accessible site of natural or semi-natural greenspace within one kilometre actual walking distance of home.**

## Deficiencies

### Quantity

6.98 **Table 6.16** shows the level of deficiency of natural or semi-natural greenspace for each of the sub-areas, when our recommended standards are applied.

**Table 6.16: Current Deficiencies in Provision of Natural/semi-natural Greenspace**

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Current level of provision (Hectares)	Current level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population	Amount of Natural Greenspace required to meet standard (hectares)	Deficiency (hectares)
Central	52615	4.33	0.08	0.4	21.05	16.72
Northeast	32732	206.45	6.31	6.31	206.45	0.00
Northwest	40178	8.87	0.22	0.4	16.07	7.20
Southeast	40065	0	0.00	0.4	16.03	16.03
Southwest	55098	6.11	0.11	0.4	22.04	15.92
<b>Total</b>	<b>220688</b>	<b>225.77</b>	<b>1.02</b>			<b>55.87</b>

6.99 There is a deficit in the provision of natural and semi natural greenspace in all the sub-areas with the exception of the Northeast. Overall there is a deficit of 55.87 hectares.

6.100 Currently there are 147.95 hectares of natural and semi-natural greenspace which are designated as an LNR providing 0.67 hectares per 1000 population. To achieve the level of provision recommended by Natural England of at least 1ha of statutory LNR per 1000 population, a total of 220.69 hectares is required. There are existing proposals to provide an additional 38.36 hectares. The shortfall is therefore 34.48 hectares.

**Table 6.17: Future Deficiencies in Provision of Natural/semi-natural Greenspace**

Sub-area	Population (2026 Estimates)	Current level of provision (Hectares)	Current level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population	Amount of Natural Greenspace required to meet standard (hectares)	Deficiency (hectares)
Central	52,315	4.33	0.08	0.40	20.93	16.60
Northeast	32,325	206.45	6.39	6.31	203.97	0.00
Northwest	41,612	8.87	0.21	0.40	16.64	7.77
Southeast	43,121	0	0.00	0.40	17.25	17.25
Southwest	59,644	6.11	0.10	0.40	23.86	17.74
<b>Total</b>	229,018	225.77	0.99			59.36

6.101 The overall deficiency increases to 59.36 hectares by 2026. Level of provision in all sub-areas apart from the North East sub-area are significantly below the standard.

6.102 **Table 6.18** shows the level of deficiency of LNRs for each of the sub-areas, when the recommended standards are applied.



**Table 6.18: Current Deficiencies in Provision of Local Nature Reserves**

Sub-area	Population (2026 Estimates)	Future level of provision (Hectares)	Future level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population	Amount of Natural Greenspace required to meet standard (hectares)	Deficiency (hectares)
Central	52615	0	0.00	1	52.6	52.6
Northeast	32732	147.95	4.52	1	32.7	115.2 in excess of standard
Northwest	40178	0	0.00	1	40.2	40.2
Southeast	40065	0	0.00	1	40.1	40.1
Southwest	55098	0	0.00	1	55.1	55.1
Total	220688	147.95	0.67	1	220.7	72.7

6.103 Currently there are 147.95 hectares of natural and semi-natural greenspace which are designated as an LNR providing 0.67 hectares per 1000 population. To achieve the level of provision recommended by Natural England of at least 1ha of statutory LNR per 1000 population, a total of 220.69 hectares is required. All the LNR provision is located in the northeast sub area which has 115.2 hectares in excess of the requirement of 32.7 hectares. All other areas have deficiencies and the overall deficiency is 72.7 hectares.

**Table 6.18: Future Deficiencies in Provision of Local Nature Reserves**

Sub-area	Population (2026 Estimates)	Future level of provision (Hectares)	Future level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population	Amount of Natural Greenspace required to meet standard (hectares)	Deficiency (hectares)
Central	52,315	0	0.00	1	52.3	52.3
Northeast	32,325	186.21	5.76	1	32.3	153.9 in excess of standard
Northwest	41,612	0	0.00	1	41.6	41.6
Southeast	43,121	0	0.00	1	43.1	43.1
Southwest	59,644	0	0.00	1	59.6	59.6
Total	229,018	186.21	0.81	1	229.0	42.8

6.104 There are existing proposals to provide an additional 38.36 hectares of natural and semi-natural greenspace. As a consequence, the overall deficiency decreases to 42.8 hectares by 2026 as can be seen in **Table 6.18** above. . The level of provision in all sub areas is significantly below the standard. However, the provision in excess of the standard the northeast sub area has risen to 153.9 hectares.

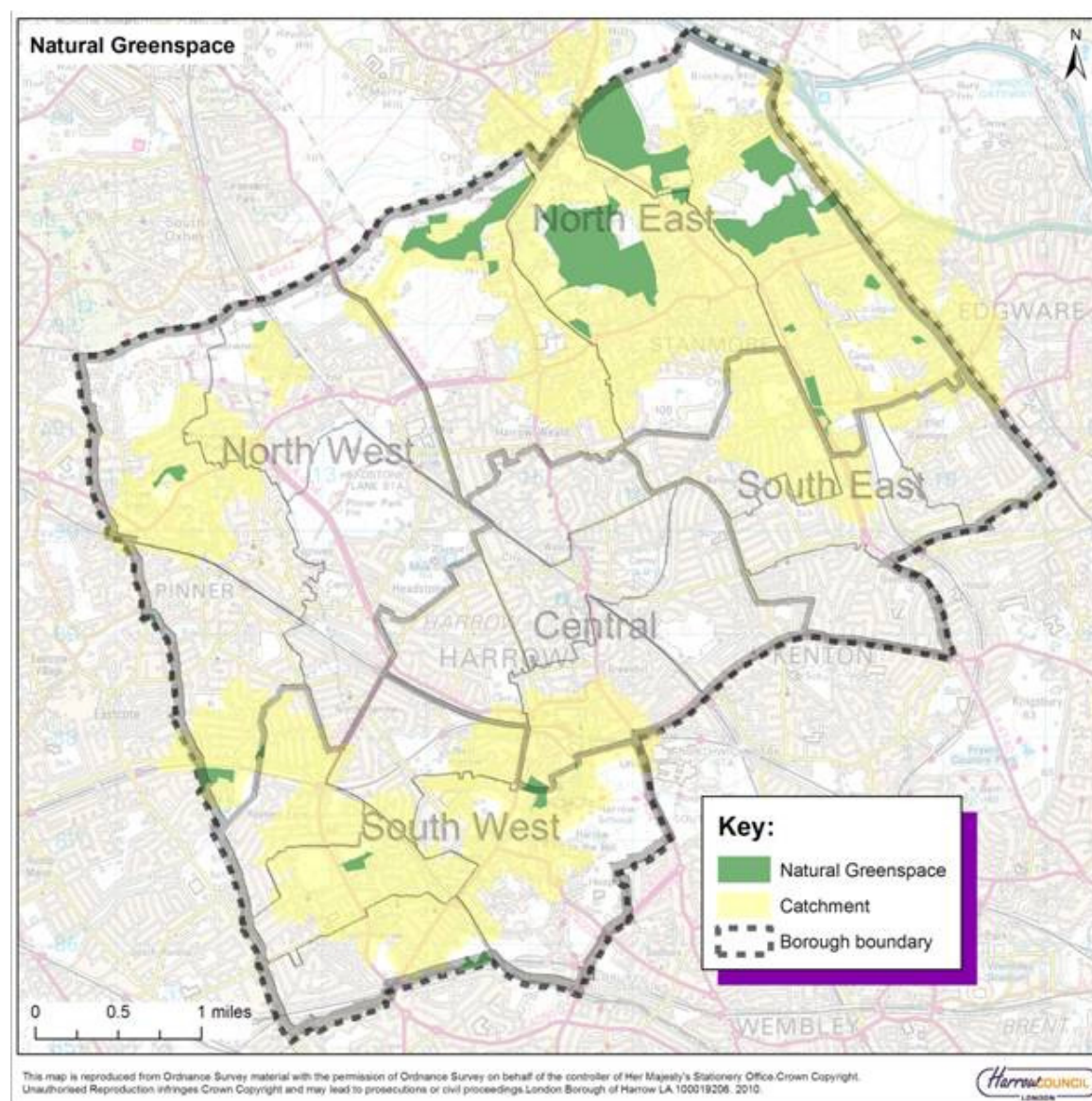
### ***Accessibility***

6.105 **Map 6.3** shows the application of the accessibility standard to existing natural greenspace sites. The catchment has been calculated as the actual walking distance from any known entrance to the site, and conforms to Policy 3D.14 of the London Plan (Biodiversity and Nature Conservation). Four small sites have no catchment area and are excluded from this analysis.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> The four sites were excluded on the grounds that they were difficult to access and lacked any features that would attract public use.

**Map 6.3: Natural greenspace accessibility and catchment areas**



6.106 The catchment areas cover much of the north east sub-area; localities in this sub-area outside the catchment are largely non-residential. There is also good coverage in the southwest sub-area, although some residential areas lie outside existing catchments. Elsewhere accessibility is more patchy, and large parts of the Central sub-area in particular lie outside the accessibility standard, as do a large part of the northwest sub-area, and much of the southeast sub-area also.<sup>139</sup>

<sup>139</sup> It should be noted that the areas of deficiency defined by this map are different from that produced by Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL). The reason for this difference is that some sites of

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metropolitan or borough importance for nature conservation are not considered to be accessible natural greenspaces.

## Green Corridors

### Definition

- 7.1 Access and transport networks, as well as natural features, create a variety of linear landscape components, including paths, railway lines, roads, rivers, streams and areas of open space. These features, and often the adjoining land, create a network, which provides links for people and wildlife. They can connect different localities within an area as part of a designated and managed network and are used for walking, cycling or horse riding, or can link towns and cities to their surrounding countryside, beaches, riverbanks or country parks. They may also link different pieces of green space to one another, to create a green infrastructure network.

### Strategic Context

- 7.2 Green corridors are linked to the concept of environmental infrastructure and the need to provide connected and substantial networks of accessible multi-functional green space, in urban fringe and adjacent countryside areas.
- 7.3 Green corridors are valued for recreation and for the migration of wildlife. However, for PPG17 purposes a green corridor must be publicly accessible.

The Companion Guide states

*“The need for green corridors arises from the need to promote environmentally sustainable forms of transport such as walking and cycling within urban areas”<sup>140</sup>*

- 7.4 This study has therefore sought to follow the guidance in the companion guide. This contrasts with the current interpretation provided in the Harrow Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which identifies the purpose of green corridors as being to serve as a wildlife corridor and enhance visual amenity and which may not have public access, for example railway embankments.
- 7.5 The UDP also distinguishes green chains as being different from green corridors:

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<sup>140</sup> Para A7 Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to PPG 17 DCLG 2006

*“Green chains are linked open spaces, which normally follow a river or other linear feature such as a former railway line. Green chains can take the form of narrow linear spaces or pedestrian/ cycle routes linking a series of open spaces.”<sup>141</sup>*

- 7.6 The Mayor’s London Plan (consultation Draft Replacement London Plan) promotes the development of a strategic network of open spaces for London (policy 2.18). A key element of this policy is to protect, promote, expand and manage access to London’s green infrastructure of multi-functional green and open spaces. The delivery of green infrastructure will be supported by the publication of guidance to apply the principles of the East London Green Grid SPG across London. This will establish a framework for the enhancement and integration of the open space network and complement the aims of the Green Arc initiative that aims to improve access to and quality of the countryside around London.
- 7.7 The value of a park or open space increases significantly when it is easily accessible and connected to a larger system. It is therefore important that existing open spaces, wherever possible, be incorporated into an overall network. Green corridors have a role to play in connecting places that are attractive to people, wildlife and business. Green corridors therefore are not just about green spaces. They are also concerned with connecting people via a network of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways from doorstep to countryside.
- 7.8 The Town and Country Planning Association has produced a guide<sup>142</sup> on ways to maximise the opportunities for biodiversity in the planning and design of sustainable communities. This promotes the concept of ‘Greenways’ - linear wildlife corridors which can provide linkages between greenspaces and larger areas of habitat. They can be either woodland or wetland, based on existing landscape features or designed as new functional elements.
- 7.9 Woodland greenways can incorporate pedestrian and cycle routes. There are many examples to be found in Sweden and the Netherlands. In this country a

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<sup>141</sup> Para 3.140 Harrow UDP

<sup>142</sup> Biodiversity by Design: A Guide for Sustainable Communities. Town & Country Planning Association.2004.

good example is the New England Quarter in Brighton where a new green walkway is being constructed to provide a traffic-free link from Brighton station through the historic North Laine over a Grade II listed bridge and beside the Brighton Station site of nature conservation importance (SNCI).

- 7.10 Wetland greenways can be designed as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) in order to provide ecological services. Buffer strips associated with SUDS can be integrated with linear greenspaces in order to maximise their habitat potential. The Council's Sustainable Building Design SPD promotes the use of SUDS to reduce surface water runoff by attenuating increased flows of surface water.
- 7.11 Some of the green corridors identified in the audit are rights of way, but not all rights of way were considered to be green corridors. Rights of way in Harrow include footpaths, bridleways and byways, most of which are in the Green Belt, open spaces and parks.<sup>143</sup> The existing rights of way are grouped around Harrow on the Hill and Greenhill wards in the south of the borough, throughout the Green Belt in the north of the borough and also through Pinner Park Farm, Stanmore Golf course and Canons Park.
- 7.12 Strategic routes in Harrow include the London LOOP and the Capital Ring, two of the Mayor of London's strategic walking routes.
- 7.13 In producing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the Council has undertaken a questionnaire survey on Harrow's rights of way. Issues identified by respondents include the need for:
- Improved surfacing
  - More/better information about the routes
  - Increased lighting/perception of safety
  - Rubbish and undergrowth cleared away
  - More/better signposts/waymarking.

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<sup>143</sup> Harrow Rights of Way Improvement Plan. 2007.

## **Audit**

### ***Quantity***

- 7.14 The audit identifies 18 green corridors which are listed in **Appendix 8**. These are concentrated mainly in the Northeast and Northwest sub-areas where twelve of them are found. They vary in character from green links within housing areas such as the Carmelite Way Green Corridor (GC004) linking Hampden Road and Augustine Road to wildlife corridors linking green spaces such as Woodlands Green Corridor (GC010).
- 7.15 The Belmont Rattler is a former railway line which runs from Stanmore Golf Course, south to Byron Park in Wealdstone, and is a Local Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Three separate sections have been identified: the first section runs alongside Stanmore Golf Course from Wolverton Road to Vernon Road (GC013) within a broad strip of mixed deciduous woodland. At present only the southern part of the corridor is accessible; the entrance from Wolverton Road is closed and overgrown.
- 7.16 The next section of the Rattler runs between Vernon Drive and Belmont Circle (GC005). This is a cutting overshadowed by hawthorn, silver birch, oak and other trees. The path surface easily becomes waterlogged.
- 7.17 The final section runs from Belmont Circle behind the houses in Kenmore Avenue (GC006) to Wealdstone Cemetery and Byron Park and Christchurch Avenue. This section is narrow in parts with mainly scrub, tall herbs and scattered trees.
- 7.18 Another Local SINC is Bonnersfield Lane (GC015) which is an ancient trackway, and appears in the Domesday Book and on Rocque's Map, as well as being the site of a Civil War skirmish<sup>144</sup>. It runs behind houses in Manor Road and links to a footbridge leading into Kenton Recreation Ground. It is bordered mainly by scrub but there are a number of large oak trees. The Lane is used as an access road to garages and other buildings and as a consequence is in a poor state of repair.

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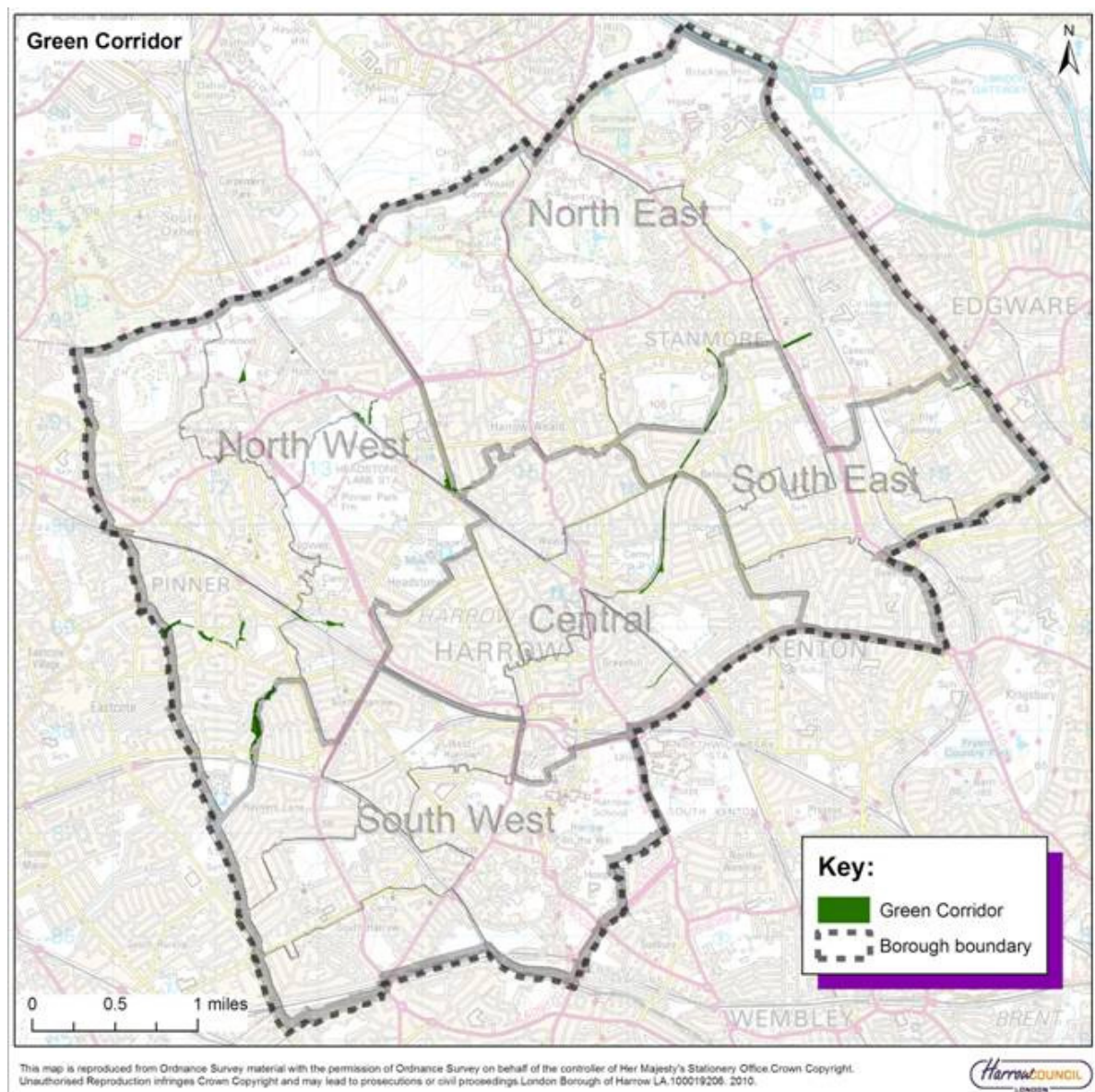
<sup>144</sup> London Wildweb.

<http://wildweb.london.gov.uk/wildweb/PublicSiteViewFull.do?pictureno=1&siteid=6848>



7.19 A new wetland green corridor has been created at Hatch End Playing Fields (GC016). Here a 600m section of the River Pinn running alongside the Playing Fields has been restored from an old brick culvert and a concrete lined channel to a more natural watercourse. The aim of the project is to relieve flooding pressures from adjacent urban areas by creating a natural storm water storage area. **Map 7.1** shows the green corridors in Harrow.

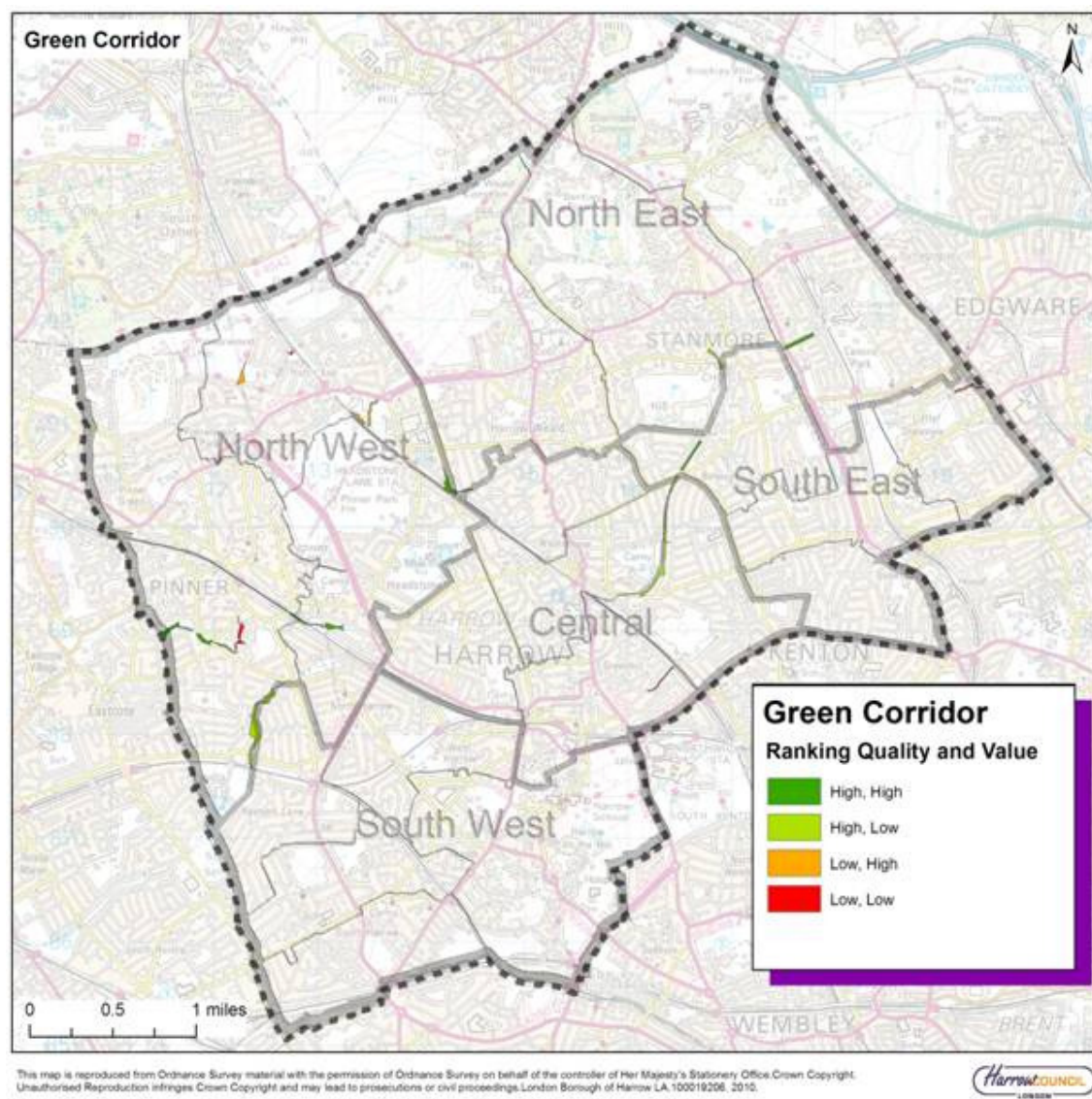
**Map 7.1**      *Location of Green Corridors*



7.20 Sites were ranked as high or low in relation to the median scores of 54.7% for quality and 56.7% for value GC013 Vernon Drive to Wolverton Road was not assessed because it was not fully accessible at the time. **Maps 7.2 – 7.4** show the distribution of sites, and the results are shown in **Appendix 8**.

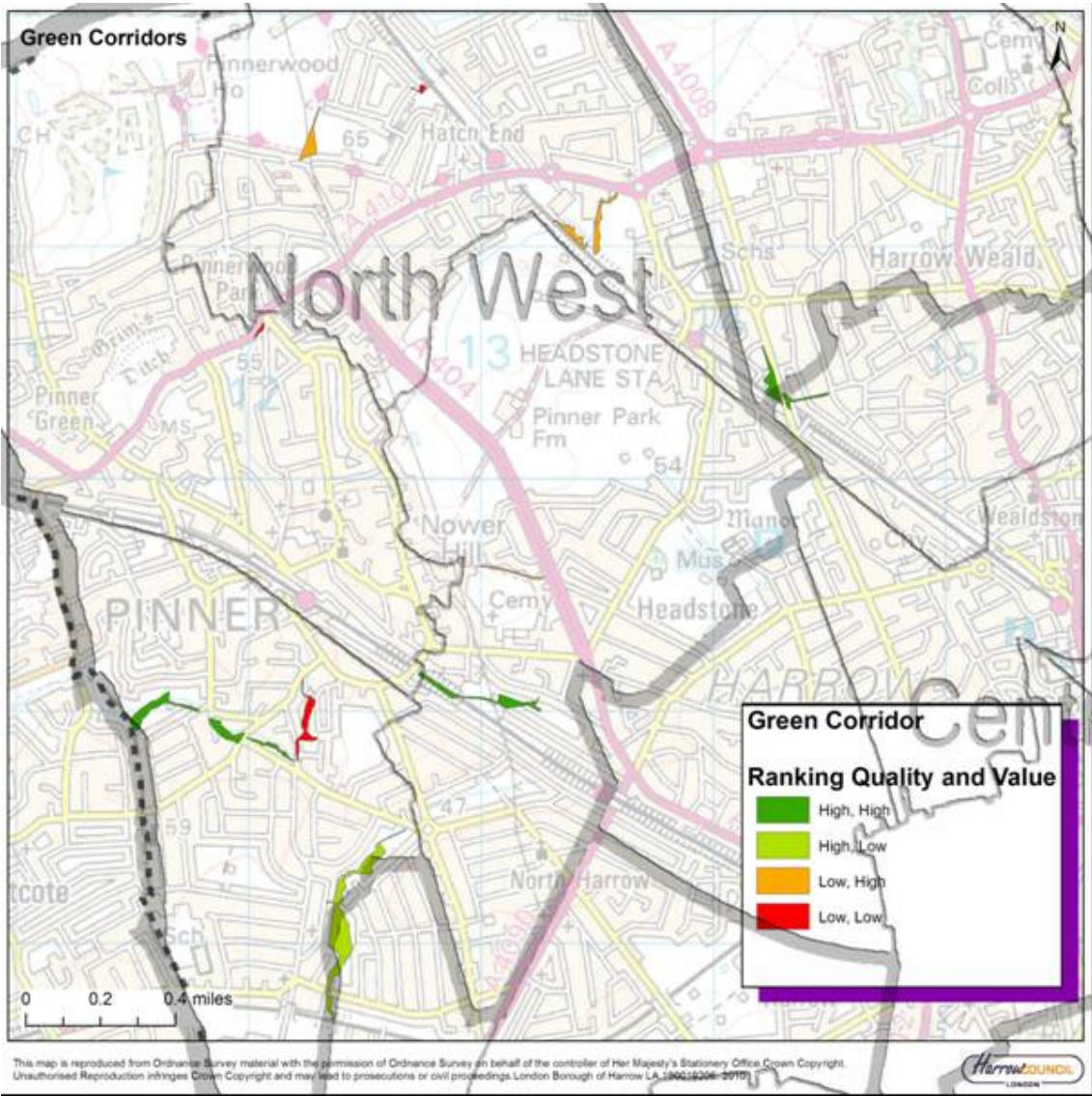
### ***Quality and Value of Green Corridors***

***Map 7.2: Quality and value of Green Corridors***

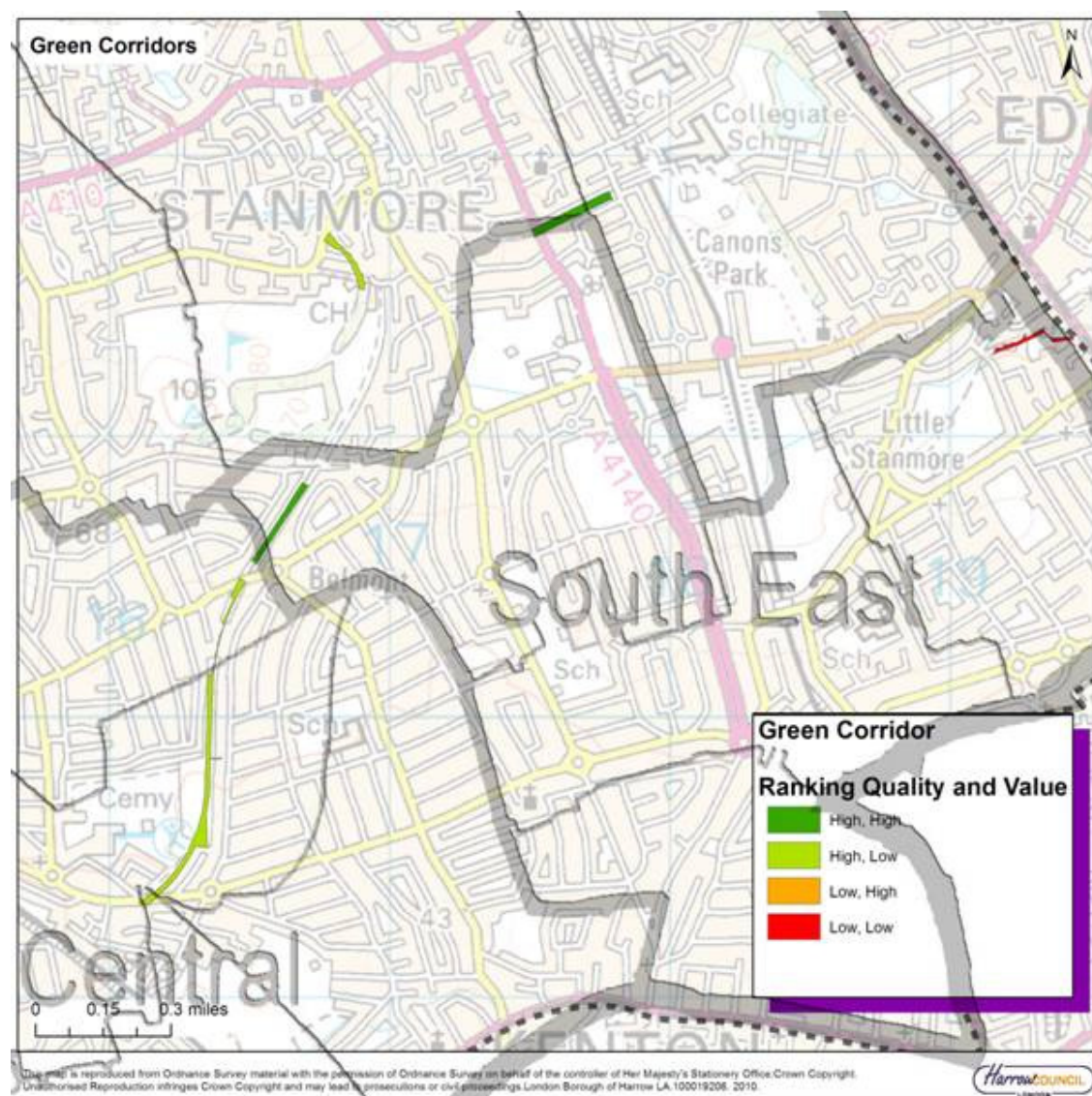




**Map 7.3: Quality and Value of Green Corridors, North-west sub-area**



**Map 7.4: Quality and Value of Green Corridors, South-east sub-area**



7.22 Overall, both quality and value scores are relatively low and this is reflected in the low median scores. The highest score is 70.5% for Carmelite Way (GC004) and the lowest is 29.3% for Woodridings Brook (GC017). Sites achieving a higher score are normally highly accessible with good linkages to other green spaces and elements that enhance their character and contribute to a diversity of habitats. Higher value corridors are those that could easily be reached by the local community, were well used and safe.

7.23 The main reasons for poor scores are the condition of paths, cleanliness in terms of litter and dog mess, a lack of character, entrances, lack of disabled access and a lack of diversity.

7.24 Of the 16 corridors that were assessed, eight are ranked as being high in both quality and value. These include Canons Park Green Corridor (GC001) which runs from Marsh Lane to the Park entrance and the middle section of the Belmont Rattler (GC005). Eight sites score low for both quality and value, including Woodridings Brook (GC017), Bonnersfield Lane (GC015) and Hill View Road Green Corridor (GC003).

### Key consultation findings – green corridors

#### **Quantity**

7.25 Residents of Harrow divide into two groups as regards the quantity of green corridors. Around a third (30%) think there are about the right number of this type of amenity, but the majority of people (69%) would like to see more of this type of provision.

**Table 7.1: Residents' views on quantity of green corridors**

Sub-area	Proportion of residents wanting more green corridor provision
Central	73%
Northeast	64%
Northwest	72%
Southeast	59%
Southwest	73%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>69%</b>
<i>N(= 100%)</i>	<i>533</i>

7.26 Demand for more green corridors is not consistent across the sub-areas however. It is high in the Southwest, Central and the Northwest, where 70% or

more of residents want an increase in provision, but is markedly lower in the Northeast, where just 64% (still a significant majority) want more provision, and much lower in the Southeast, where just 59% want more of this type of provision and 39% feel there is already enough.

- 7.27 This type of space is especially in demand from younger residents, and over three quarters (77%) of residents under 35 want to see more provision in this regard. In contrast, just 66% of over 65s want to see more of this space – a significantly lower figure, but nonetheless a significant majority in all age-groups.
- 7.28 There is also no difference of any significance between the views of people with and without disabilities, and although people with disabilities generally make less use of green space, they still want to see more green corridors; two thirds (66%) of them feel there should be more of these in Harrow.

### **Usage**

- 7.29 This table shows how often residents use green corridors:

**Table 7.2: Frequency of visits**

Frequency of visit	Proportion of people (%)
Every day	2%
Once or twice a week	6%
Two or three times a month	6%
Once a month	6%
Once every two or three months	7%
Less often	16%
Never	58%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1098</i>

- 7.30 In fact, although people claim to want more of this type of space, they make quite limited use of it – perhaps because there is little that is convenient for them, or available for public use, and perhaps because of quality issues. Just 2% of residents make everyday use of green corridors, and only one in five residents (20%) use them at least monthly. In contrast, well over half (58%) of residents never use a green corridor.
- 7.31 Use of green corridors varies by sub-area. Usage overall is greatest in the Southwest (25% visit at least once a month) but is markedly lower in the Southeast where just 15% use this type of amenity at least monthly. This sub-area thus combines low usage with relatively low demand for extra provision.
- 7.32 Use of green corridors is highest in younger age-groups (22% of under 35s use them at least monthly) but falls as age increases. Just one in eight over 65s (12%) uses a green corridor at least monthly. They are used much less by people with disabilities (10% use at least monthly, against 20% of people without disabilities).

## **Standards**

- 7.33 The Companion Guide to PPG17 expresses the view that there is no sensible way of stating a provision standard for green corridors. Policy should promote the use of green corridors to link existing open spaces, housing areas to cycle routes, town centres, places of employment and community facilities such as schools, shops, community centres and sports facilities. Opportunities to use established linear routes, such as disused railway lines, roads or river banks as green corridors should be exploited. Networks of green corridors are able to accommodate sustainable drainage facilities and can be designed to enhance the hedgerow and ditch network through the creation of new habitats. It may also be noted that there is substantial public interest in using this type of route not only for recreational purposes but also because it offers an alternative to traffic-clogged, polluted roads in accessing green spaces and other amenities such as public transport hubs.

- 7.34 Strategically green corridors will make an important contribution to realising the Green Grid Vision of a network of multi-functional open spaces. The network will include linkages and corridors along transport routes, footpaths and cycleways to provide access to open space, routes for walking and cycling, nature conservation, opportunities for informal and formal recreation and flood risk management.



## Indoor Sport and Recreation Facilities

8.1 This section sets out the findings of the indoor sports and recreation elements of the study. The main aim of this assessment is to highlight any deficiencies in the supply of specific facilities in the Borough and bring to the fore any issues with the quality and range of these facilities that the public may have. The assessment will therefore consider:

- the availability and location of indoor sports facilities;
- the accessibility of the facilities to the local community;
- the demand for the use of these facilities by local people;
- the quality of the facilities;
- whether there are any deficiencies in provision;
- options to address deficiencies.

### Aims and scope of the assessment

8.2 The Companion Guide to PPG17<sup>145</sup> establishes that assessments for urban areas should cover the following:

- schools (whose indoor sports facilities should normally be available for community use);
- those facilities which require a sizeable site and are likely to attract a large number of users or will generate significant environmental impacts;
- smaller facilities, such as community centres.

8.3 The audit was carried out using existing information taken from the Council's sports facility directory as a starting point, augmented by the Active Places database, and information gathered through consultation.

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<sup>145</sup> Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17. 2002.

## Strategic context

- 8.4 Sport is part of the culture of this country and it contributes significantly to people's perceived quality of life. Sport England is committed to enhancing the range and quality of sports facilities, to meet rising expectations so that everyone can have reasonable access to sport and to ensure that there is a network of facilities to support talented athletes.
- 8.5 Sport can make a difference to people's lives and to the communities in which they live. The benefits of sport include improved health for the individual and less demand on the health service by those of middle and older age, reduced criminal and anti-social behaviour among young people, and economic regeneration and improved employment opportunities.
- 8.6 Improving the health of individuals and communities is a priority for the Government. Considerable emphasis has been placed on health promotion in addition to modernising and increasing the capacity of health care provision. The contribution sport can make to people's activity levels has become increasingly important.
- 8.7 Evidence exists to show that sport can have an indirect impact on reducing juvenile crime by providing challenge, adventure, and giving meaning and a sense of purpose to young people's lives where previously there was a vacuum. Sport delivered in a sound ethical framework can engender self-respect, self-esteem, confidence and leadership abilities.
- 8.8 Sport is increasingly seen as a powerful tool to enhance the physical fabric of communities, to stimulate the local economy, and to improve its image with outside investors and tourists. There is a growing body of research evidence that demonstrates that sport makes a significant contribution to local economies.
- 8.9 Sport England promotes a planned approach to the provision of sports facilities<sup>146</sup> which:

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<sup>146</sup> Spatial Planning for Sport: Creating Local Policy

- is based on sound assessments of current and future needs for strategic and local sports facilities and which takes account of any deficiencies<sup>147</sup>;
- supports a mix of facilities which comprise strategic, local and specialist facilities; taking account of the priorities set out in local sports strategies, and national governing body facility strategies; and
- takes account of cross-boundary issues for major or specialist facilities which have extensive catchment areas.

8.10 Sport England is also concerned to prevent the loss of facilities which are important in terms of sports development. Sport England's view is that, should redevelopment be unavoidable, an equivalent (or better) replacement facility should be provided in a suitable location.

### **Trends in participation**

8.11 National Indicator 8 (**NI8**) is the indicator for sport and active recreation and Sport England's Active People Survey measures it. The definition for NI8 is: *the percentage of the adult population in a local area who participated in sport and active recreation, at moderate intensity, for at least 30 minutes on at least 12 days out of the last 4 weeks (equivalent to 30 minutes on 3 or more days a week)*. NI8 measures participation in at least moderate intensity sport and active recreation for adults aged 16 and over.

8.12 The level of participation in Harrow at the NI8 level<sup>148</sup> is 16.5%; this compares relatively well with an overall national result of 16.4% and is similar to the London borough of Brent (17.7%). However, it is the second lowest score for the London Boroughs and it is substantially lower than the level of participation seen in some other neighbouring authority areas, such as Three Rivers (24.3%), Hounslow (18.2%), Hammersmith & Fulham (28.2%), Ealing (19.8%), Barnet 20.6% and

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<sup>147</sup> Sport England Planning Policy Objective: PLANNING POLICY OBJECTIVE 1: Spatial Planning for Sport: Creating Local Policy.

<sup>148</sup> APS4 Rolling 24 months (Apr 2008 - Apr 2010)

Hillingdon (19.5%). The result represents a decline in participation since the Active People Survey 1 of 2.4 percentage points.

**Table 8.1: Active People Results**

	APS1 (Oct 2005 - Oct 2006)		APS2 (Oct 2007 - Oct 2008)		APS4 Rolling 24 months (Apr 2008 - Apr 2010)		Change between APS1 and Rolling 24 months (April 2008 - April 2010)	
L.A.	%	Base	%	Base	%	Base	%	Significant
Harrow	18.9%	999	15.3%	1,497	16.5%	1,488	-2.4%	3.1% <sup>149</sup>

## Market Research

8.13 Mintel<sup>150</sup> reported on leisure centres and swimming pools in April 2010. This report provides background to some of the issues and trends in the indoor sports market. A wide variety of factors influence both the propensity to visit leisure centres and swimming pools and the ability of operators to run them as economically viable businesses.

### *Rising energy costs*

8.14 Energy efficiency is becoming a big issue for leisure centres as a result of a combination of the 150% increase in gas and electricity prices between 2004 and 2009 and the impending introduction of a carbon-trading scheme that rewards the most efficient centres. Energy costs for leisure centres and swimming pools are a significant factor and are the second highest overhead in leisure centres after staffing. Rising energy costs have inevitably led to increasing admission prices, which have the potential to make a visit less accessible to the population that the centre serves.

<sup>149</sup> The difference of -2.6% is within possible statistical error margins and is not therefore statistically significant.

<sup>150</sup> Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools - UK Mintel International Group Limited, April 2010

### ***Ageing stock of buildings***

- 8.15 Many leisure centres and swimming pools were built in the 1970's and are approaching the end of their useful life, the point when it becomes cheaper to knock them down and rebuild rather than continue to maintain and repair the existing infrastructure with its limitations in terms of design and old equipment. Sport England estimates that it will cost over £10 billion to bring leisure centres and swimming pools in this country up to standard. The number of leisure centres and swimming pools peaked in 2006. Since then there has been a process of rationalisation and consolidation with fewer facilities located on larger sites.
- 8.16 Many new leisure projects are costing upward of £15-20 million, and this is a considerable hurdle. With rising energy costs, the energy efficiency of leisure centres and swimming pools is bringing forward the point at which they become unviable. Moreover, the standards expected by customers are getting higher and this means that more centres will require refurbishment if these standards are to be met.

### ***Economic factors***

- 8.17 A Mintel<sup>151</sup> report on health and fitness clubs in January 2010 indicated that the economic climate has had a big impact on how consumers feel about gym membership. Mintel's research reveals that 23% of consumers say they have already cancelled their gym membership, with a further 6% planning to do so. Furthermore, an additional 11% of consumers say they have reduced the frequency of going to the gym. In response a budget 'no frills' health club sector is emerging.
- 8.18 There has been an increase in secondary spending on items such as food, drink and merchandise, partly as a result of the government's free swimming initiative, and this has resulted in revenues going up 14% in the past five years and admissions 10% higher. This has been a lifeline for swimming pools and large leisure centres in the recession. The initiative has attracted many new users into leisure centres and people have been tending to linger longer. However, the

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<sup>151</sup> Health & Fitness Clubs, Mintel International Group Ltd January 2010.

Coalition Government has now cancelled programmes offering free swims to children and older people and this is likely to have a significant impact in terms of usage levels and secondary spend in the future.

- 8.19 Reductions in household disposable income through tax increases and income challenges may reduce discretionary spending on activities such as those offered in leisure centres. There is evidence that there has been an increase in the attrition rate of gym members<sup>152</sup> using leisure centres. Equally, however, those currently utilising expensive private gyms may seek out cheaper municipal alternatives. Local authority leisure centres are more affordable and offer more flexible ways of payment compared to private health clubs. Clearly, the market position of leisure centres is now less clear than it was.

### ***Users of leisure centres and swimming pools***

- 8.20 15% of adults visit a leisure centre or swimming pool once a week or more<sup>153</sup>. The majority of people using a leisure centre or swimming pool visit once per month, which indicates that there is scope for growth by increasing frequency.
- 8.21 Most visitors are from the 15 – 44 year age group. They are also from the ABC1 higher income groups. 51.5% of visitors aged 15 years and over use the gym<sup>154</sup>. The main users of gyms are men from social grade C1, younger pre-family singles and the 15-24 year age group.
- 8.22 Children accompany 20% of visitors. Most are females in 35-44 year age group. Over 25% of visitors participate in exercise classes. These are mainly younger women.
- 8.23 This analysis suggests that there has been a failure to engage with a wide spectrum of the population and that there is latent potential for increasing usage by making centres more attractive to those members of the population who do not use leisure centre or swimming pools.

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<sup>152</sup> Cancellation of membership.

<sup>153</sup> Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools, Mintel International Group Limited, April 2010

<sup>154</sup> TGI Survey of 25,000 adults 2010.

- 8.24 Mintel report that lack of interest in exercise is the main reason given by a third of non-users for not using leisure centres. This reflects a negative attitude to pursuing an active lifestyle.
- 8.25 Mintel found that over 6 people in 10 have not used a leisure centre or swimming pool in the last 12 months and 1 person in 3 has never visited a leisure centre or swimming pool.
- 8.26 Non-usage peaks with older, less affluent people with a higher proportion being men. Another significant group of non-users is the 15 - 24 age group who have given up exercise after attaining the age of 16. People in this group think they are fit enough already and have little need for exercise.
- 8.27 The other main reason for non-usage is participation in outdoor exercise like running and cycling and indoor home exercise. Outdoor exercisers are more likely to be men, with a peak in the 45-54 year age group largely from social grade AB. This group is concerned about the onset of old age and medical conditions both of which can be alleviated by exercise.
- 8.28 Family consumers are hardest pressed and most affected by recession. This group is the least likely to hold leisure centre membership.

### ***Demographic Factors***

- 8.29 The majority of leisure centre and swimming pool users are from the 15 – 44 year age group. In Harrow this group is projected to decline by 1,821 in the period 2011 to 2016 and by 8,389 between 2011 and 2026<sup>155</sup>. This indicates that there will be fewer potential users of leisure centres and swimming pools in the future unless steps are taken to retain existing users and widen take-up.
- 8.30 Population projections for the relevant age groups of leisure centre and swimming pool users are shown in **Table 8.2**.

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<sup>155</sup> GLA 2008 Round of Demographic Projections (Low Variant)

**Table 8.2: Population projections for the relevant age groups of leisure centre and swimming pool users in Harrow.**

Age Group	2011	2016	2021	2026
5 to 9	12,903	14,529	14,550	13,929
15 - 24	24,913	24,631	24,921	26,547
25 - 34	41,943	39,446	36,163	34,749
15 - 44	103,949	102,128	97,373	95,560

Source: GLA 2008 Round of Demographic Projections (Low Variant)

8.31 However, Mintel<sup>156</sup> suggests that there are some positive trends relating to the age structure of the population as a whole. An increase of around three times the national average in numbers of people in the 5-9 year age group is projected. This will benefit activities such as swimming tuition. There is a growth of 1,625 in this group in Harrow in the period 2011 to 2016 but numbers then remain relatively static up to 2026 with overall growth between 2011 and 2026 only 1,025.

8.32 In addition, the increase in people in the over 65 year age group could provide an opportunity to boost utilisation during off peak day time periods by ensuring that programmes and activities are tailored to meet the needs of the increasing 'grey' market.

**8.33** Mintel<sup>157</sup> report that, nationally, numbers of people in the 15 - 24 age group, who are key users of leisure centres particularly in terms of frequency, will decline in future years. However, in Harrow whilst this group is projected to decline by 282 in the period 2011 to 2016, the decline is reversed in the period 2016 to 2021 and there is then growth by 1,635 up to 2026.

8.34 People in the 25-34 year age group are the main users of gym, fitness and indoor sports halls. In Harrow this group will decline by 2,498 with further

<sup>156</sup> Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools, Mintel International Group Limited, April 2010

<sup>157</sup> Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools, Mintel International Group Limited, April 2010



reductions in numbers up to 2016. Overall, in the period 2011 to 2016 numbers will decline by 7,195. All the population changes are shown in **Table 8.3**.

**Table 8.3: Population changes in age groups of leisure centre and swimming pools**

Age Group	Change 2011-2016	Change 2016-2021	Change 2021-2026	Change 2011-2026
5 to 9	+1,625	+22	- 621	+1,025
15 - 24	- 282	+291	+1,626	+1,635
25 - 34	- 2,498	- 3,283	- 1,414	- 7,195
15 - 44	- 1,821	- 4,755	- 1,813	- 8,389

*Source: GLA 2008 Round of Demographic Projections (Low Variant)*

- 8.35 The numbers of people in social grades ABC1, who are most frequent visitors, are projected to rise. This contrasts with the number of DE consumers, which will contract. The latter are the group least likely to visit a leisure centre and this decline will have the least impact. However, this is the group that is most sedentary and are the people most in need of encouragement to adopt a healthier lifestyle..
- 8.36 The heaviest users of a leisure centre are households with 3/4 persons. The growth of this group will be below the national average. The decline in average household size means that there will be growth in the number of one-person households who are more likely to participate in fitness classes, gym and swimming.
- 8.37 Among ethnic minority communities, participation is well below the national average. Only 12.5% of Asian women do enough exercise each week to benefit their health compared to 18.8% of White women<sup>158</sup>. This clearly demonstrates that there is a need for specific interventions to be developed to ensure that

<sup>158</sup> 3 x 30 minutes – Active People Survey 2007

Muslim women specifically have the opportunity to participate in sport and physical activity, and also to gain from the associated health benefits that being active brings.<sup>159</sup>

### ***Future***

- 8.38 Nationally, prospects for leisure centres and swimming pools look mixed. The problem of an ageing infrastructure remains and the availability of investment funds needed to finance the opening of new sites has diminished dramatically. Government initiatives have now been withdrawn and this will impact on the numbers using leisure centres.
- 8.39 The emergence of budget health and fitness operations with low membership prices could pose a long term threat to leisure centres dependant on gym membership. However, budget fitness does not offer swimming or exercise studios. Local authority leisure centres will need to emphasise range of opportunities available at leisure centres and adapt to budget membership.

### ***Audit***

- 8.40 This section examines the current levels of indoor facility provision and the extent to which they meet current and future demand. In addition there is an assessment of the quality of indoor sports facilities.

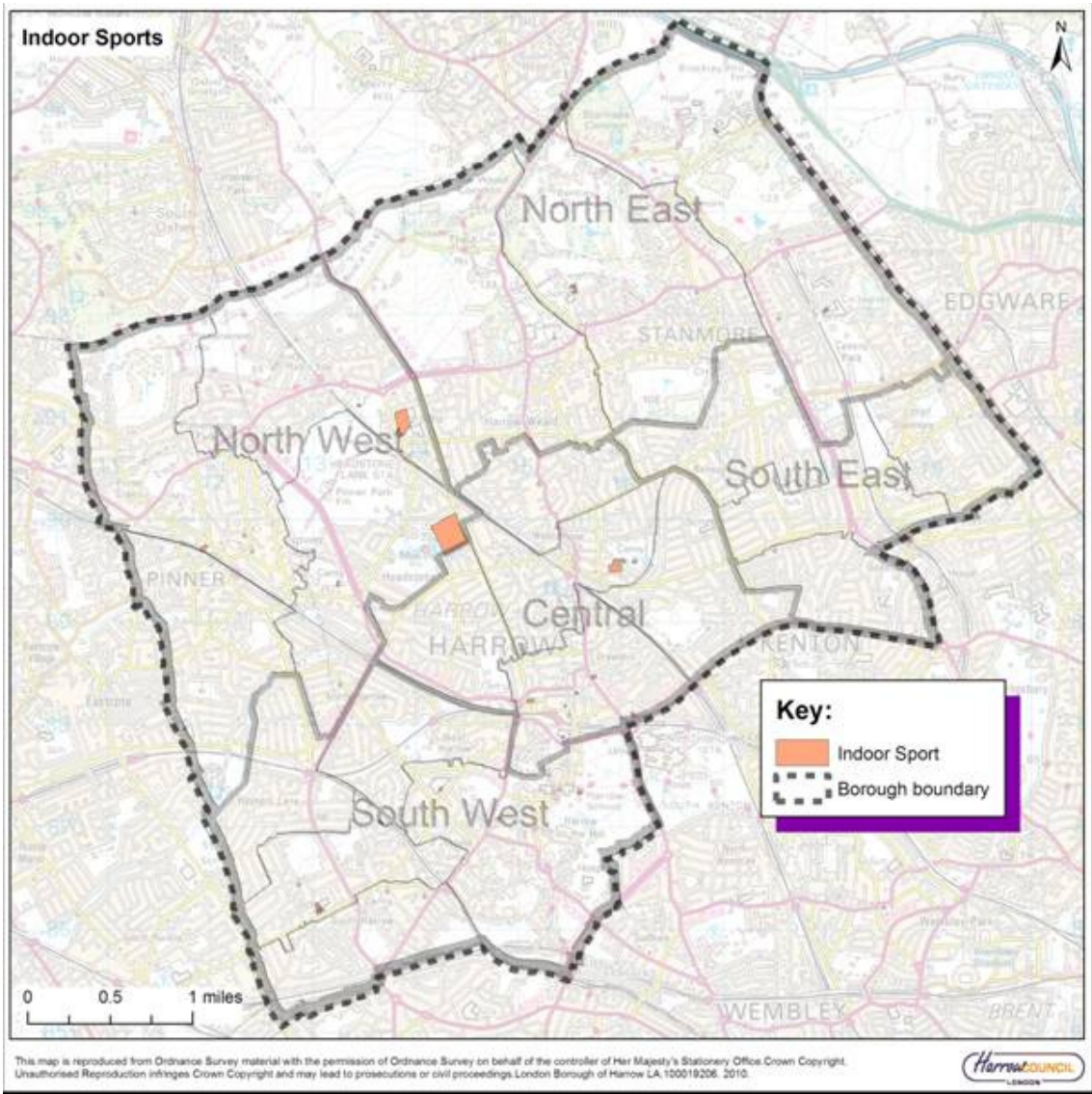
### ***Overview of Facility Provision***

- 8.41 Indoor sports facilities are provided in part by the Council, in part by the education sector and in part by the commercial/private sector. All the indoor sports facilities that are available for community use in Harrow are listed in **Appendix 9**, and they are mapped in **Maps 8.1-8.5** below.

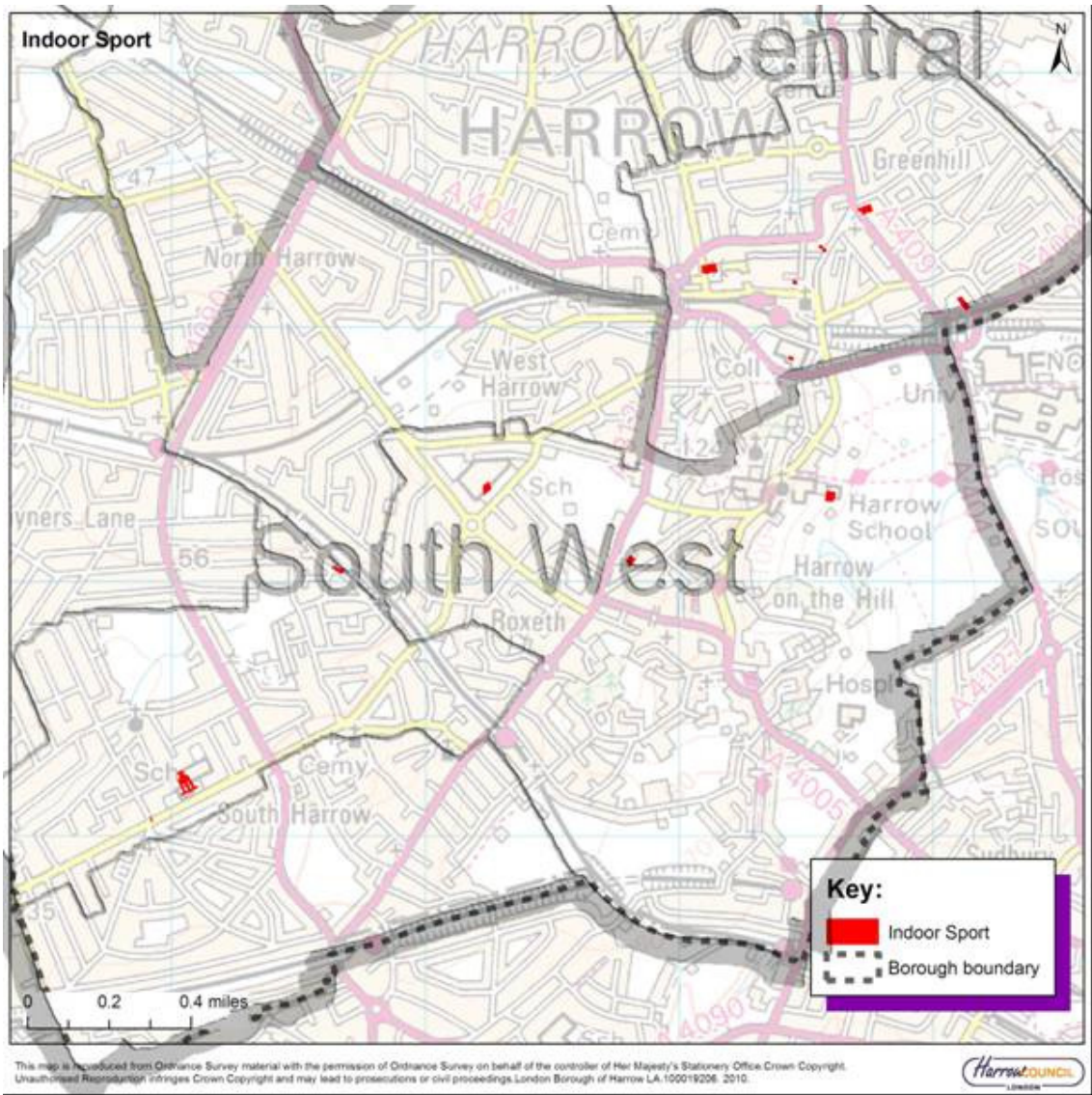
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<sup>159</sup> Source: Muslim Women in Sport. Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation and Sporting Equals.2010.

**Map 8.1 Location of indoor facilities**

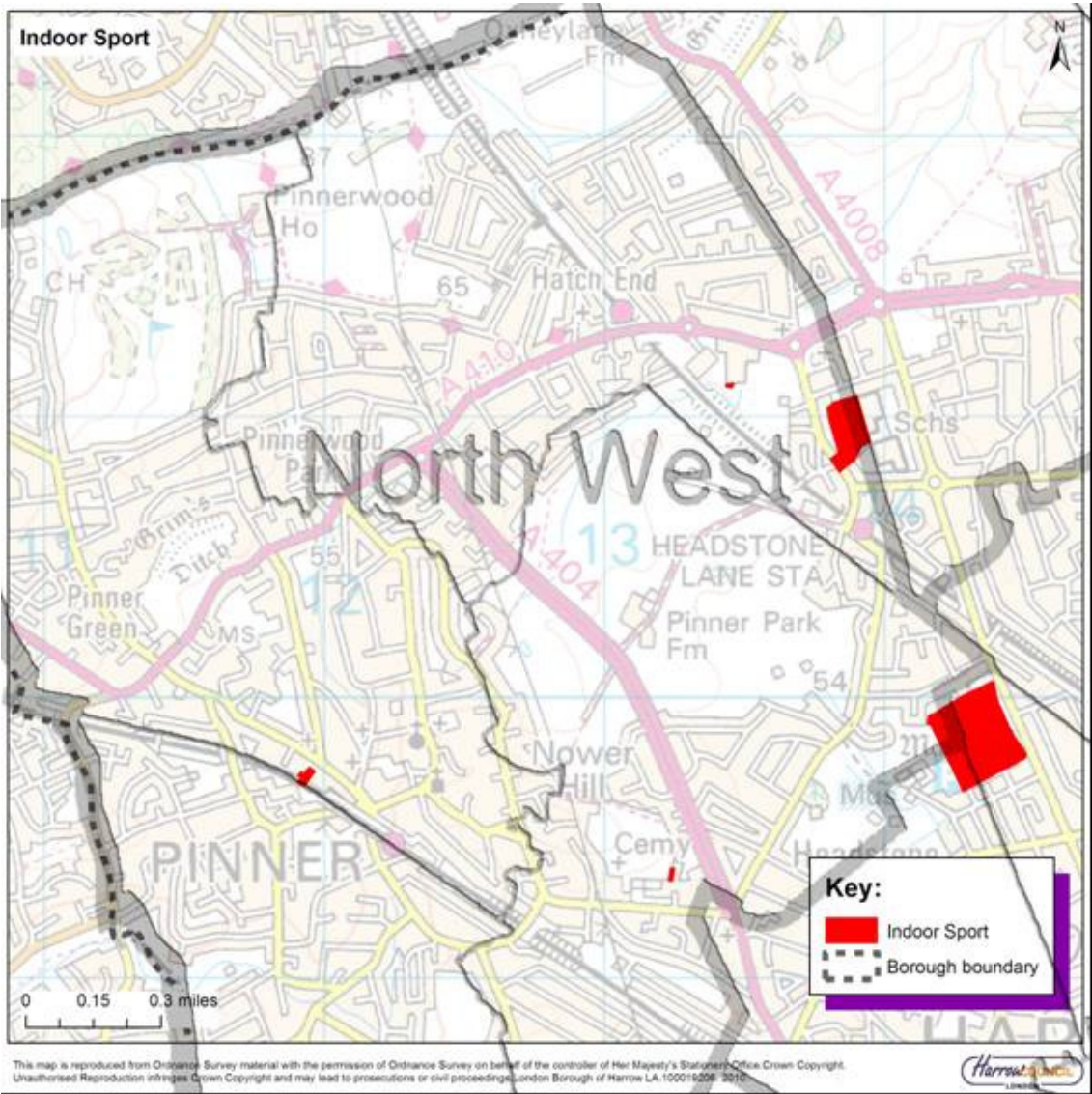


**Map 8.2 Location of indoor facilities**

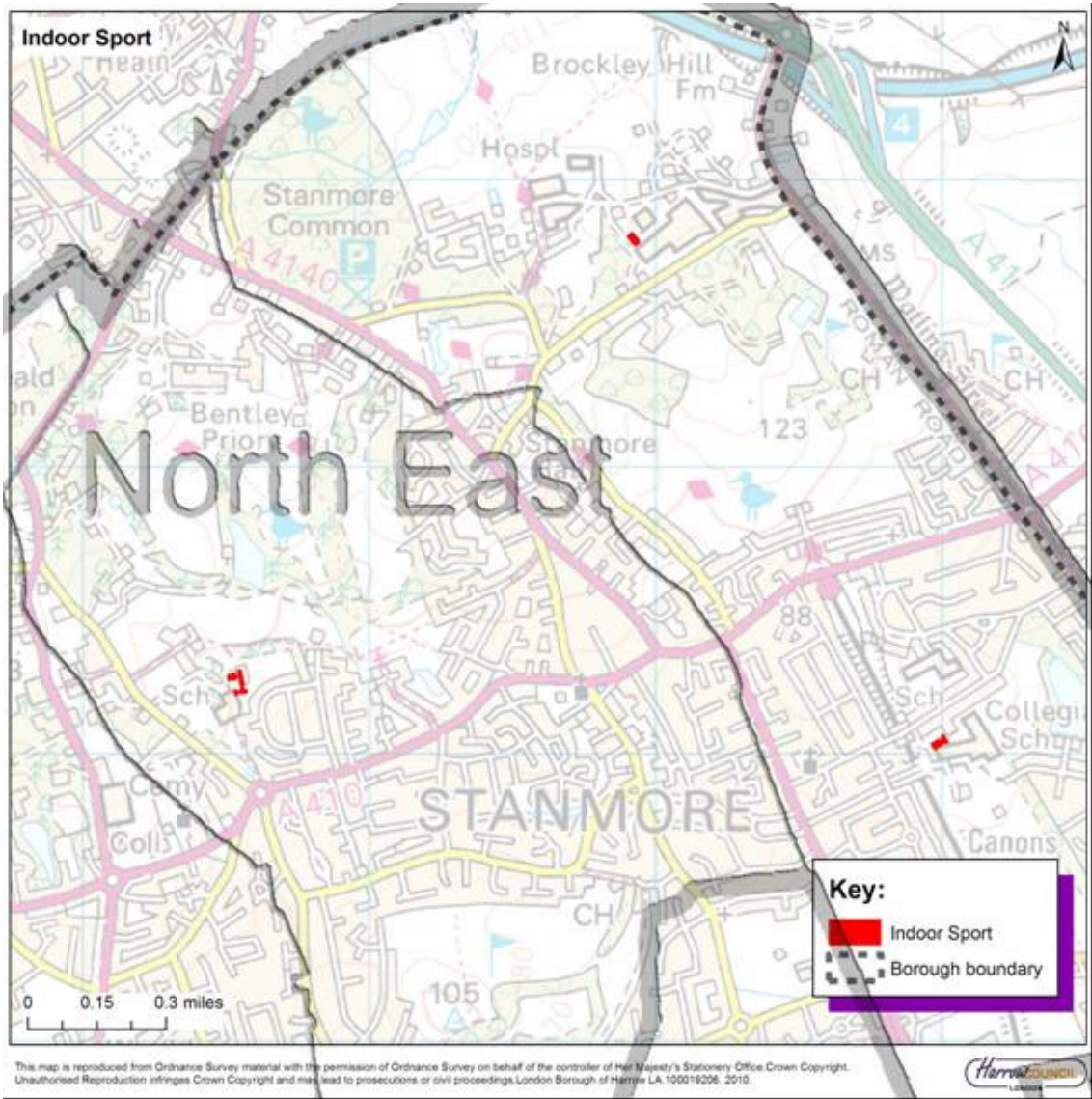




**Map 8.3 Location of indoor facilities**

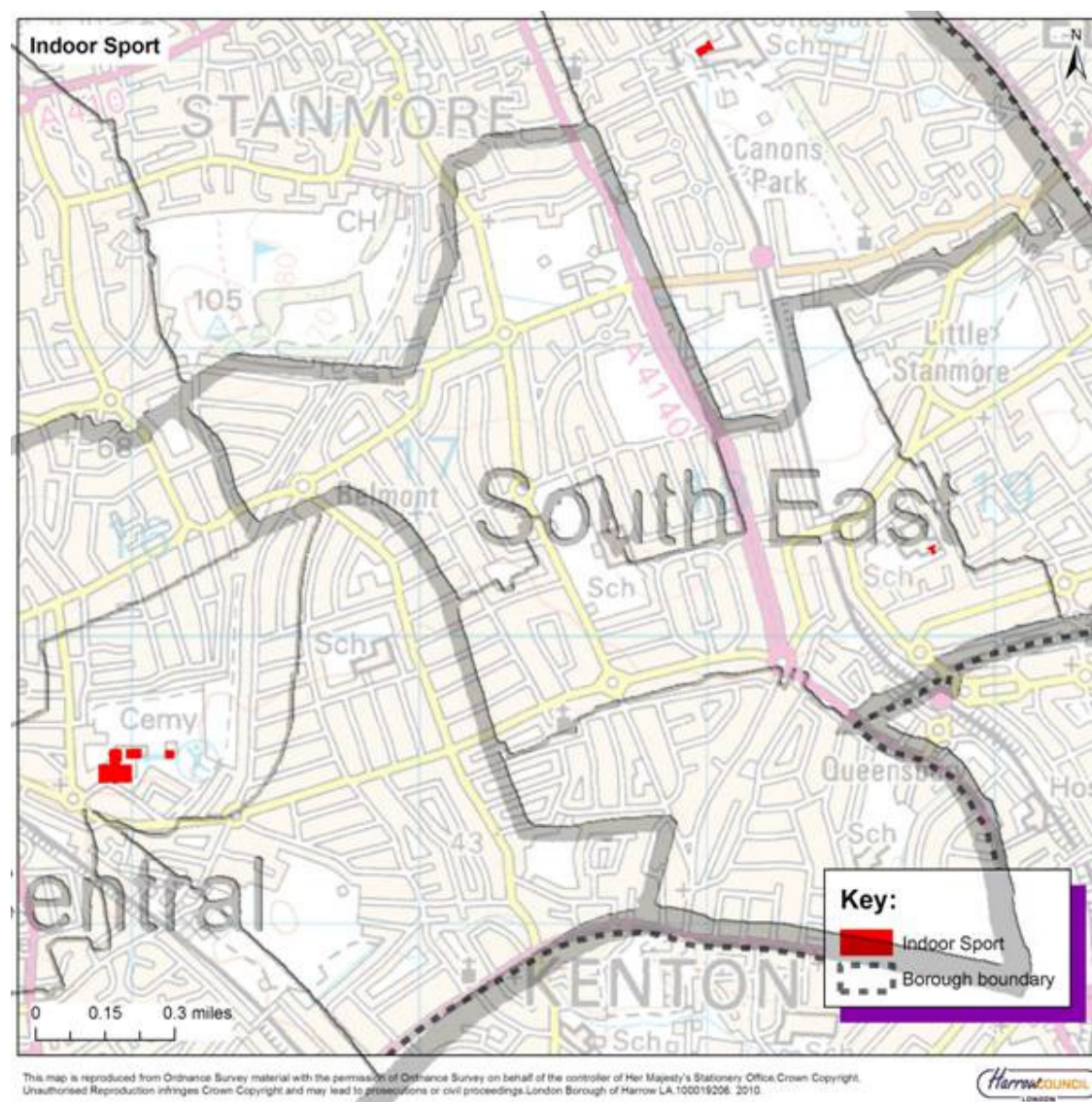


Map 8.4 Location of indoor facilities





**Map 8.5 Location of indoor facilities**



8.42 Sport England's Sport Facility Calculator<sup>160</sup> (SFC) has been used to estimate the current and future swimming and sports hall needs for the population of Harrow.

8.43 The Sports Facility Calculator (SFC)<sup>161</sup> helps to estimate the amount of community sports facilities required to meet the needs of the local population. It uses information on facility participation and applies these to the actual population profile of the local area. The SFC then turns this estimation of

<sup>160</sup> <http://www.sportengland.org/sportsfc.htm>

<sup>161</sup> Available on line on the Sport England website

demand into actual facilities. For swimming pools it uses square metres of water, lanes and 25m x four lane pools. For halls, it uses the number of badminton courts and four court halls. For indoor bowls, it uses rinks and centres.

8.44 In calculating the amount of sports facilities the current and future population would require, the SFC uses parameters developed for the Facility Planning Model to calculate how many visits in a week in the peak period the population would generate for a hall, pool and indoor bowls centre. It then converts the number of visits into the equivalent size of facilities to meet this demand, and indicates a cost for typical provision on this scale. The process assumes that any additional facilities would be open for community use throughout the whole week, including both peak and off peak periods.

**8.45** The SFC results are shown in **Table 8.4**.

**Table 8.4: Sports Facilities Calculator Results for Harrow**

Year	Population	Facility Requirements					
		Number of Swimming Pools	Projected Cost	Number of Sports Halls	Projected Cost	Number of Indoor Bowls Centres	Projected Cost
2010	220,688	10.81	£28,730,500	16.28	£51,476,700	1.9	£3,392,564
2021	229,373	11.23	£29,861,200	16.92	£53,502,500	1.98	£3,526,075
2026	229,018	11.22	£29,814,939	16.89	£53,419,736	1.98	£3,520,618

8.46 According to the SFC, population change over the period 2010 to 2026 will generate a demand for an additional 86.69m<sup>2</sup> of water for swimming pool provision which is less than one lane width of a standard 25 metre swimming pool; 2.46 courts for sports hall provision; and 0.43 rinks for indoor bowls provision.



### ***Facilities Planning Model (FPM)***

- 8.47 The FPM provides an objective assessment of the relationship between the likely demand for sports facilities in an area and the actual supply. It takes into account the distribution of the local population and its demographic structure, as well as the capacity and availability of facilities in the area and their catchment areas. Using this data, the model is able to distribute demand from the study area to available facilities on the basis of catchment areas, linking people (demand) to facilities (supply) in terms of realistic travel patterns. It then identifies “unmet demand” – that is, demand which cannot be accommodated by existing facilities. This may be because existing facilities are full to capacity, or because there is demand arising from outside their catchment areas.
- 8.48 In determining the ‘Harrow position’ it is necessary take full account of swimming pools and sports halls in all the neighbouring local authorities. The nearest facility for some Harrow residents will be located outside the local authority area (known as exported demand). For some residents of neighbouring local authorities, the nearest facility will be located in Harrow (known as imported demand). In order to take account of the effects of imported and exported demand, the FPM establishes a ‘study area’ with Harrow at the centre of a wider area. The study area comprises Harrow and the six local authorities which border Harrow.
- 8.49 FPM reports for both swimming pools and sports halls were prepared for Harrow in 2009.

### ***Supply and Demand Model***

- 8.50 In assessing the supply of indoor sports provision, the FPM excludes smaller facilities.
- 8.51 The following swimming pools are excluded:
- all pools not available for community use i.e. private use
  - all outdoor pools i.e. Lidos

- all pools where the main pool is less than 20 metres long and is less than 160 square metres.<sup>162</sup>

8.52 The following sports halls are excluded:

- all halls not available for community use i.e. private use
- all halls where the main hall is less than 3 courts in size
- all 'planned' facilities unless specifically identified.

8.53 In order to assess whether the indoor sports facilities currently available have the capacity to meet the demand from the resident population in the peak period, a supply and demand model has been employed which takes into account the smaller facilities excluded by the FPM.

8.54 The approach adopted is based in the key parameters used for the FPM<sup>163</sup>. However, it is not possible to emulate the Facilities Planning Model through manual calculations because there are a number of connected factors which the model uses when the calculations are computed and these are done over a number of iterations.

8.55 The supply and demand analysis undertaken provides an analysis of provision within Harrow. Unlike the FPM it takes no account of facilities in neighbouring boroughs. It also takes no account of the location of the facilities in relation to demand.

### ***Audit of Swimming Facilities***

8.56 There are currently nine locations with swimming pools in Harrow and these are listed in **Appendix 9**. The two main swimming pools are local authority run facilities, Harrow Leisure Centre which has a main pool (8 lanes) and a learner pool, and Hatch End Swimming Pool (3 lanes). There are four pools located in schools where access is available to registered members for part of the day. The

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<sup>162</sup> 160m is equivalent to a 20m x 8m pool. This assumption will exclude very small pools, such as plunge pools and hotel pools.

<sup>163</sup> The FPM is a computer model, developed and run by Edinburgh University, which helps to assess the strategic provision of sports halls, swimming pools, synthetic turf pitches & indoor bowls centres.

pool at Heathfield School is only available for swimming lessons and not for general swimming. Two of the swimming pools are within private health and fitness clubs where access is available to registered members. The remaining pool is the Aspire National Centre for people with spinal injuries, and is available to the general public who are registered members.

8.57 A 20 metre swimming pool is under construction at the Hive Football Centre. This pool will be fully accessible to the local community.

8.58 There are three pools in the Central sub-area; two pools in the Northeast, Northwest and Southwest sub-areas and currently none in the Southeast sub-area. However, there will be a pool in the Southeast sub-area when the pool at the Hive Football Centre is completed.

8.59 **Table 8.5** shows the ratio in terms of the area of swimming pool per 1000 population for Harrow compared to adjoining local authorities. Whilst the ratio for Harrow is currently higher than that for Brent, Ealing and Hillingdon, it is lower than for London and for England. These figures refer to all types of provision.

**Table 8.5: Facilities per 1000 Population – Swimming Pools**

Local Authority	Total Pool area In m <sup>2</sup>	Total Population (2001 Census)	Ratio Per 1000 (m <sup>2</sup> ) of Swimming Pools
Barnet	5173.75	314,506	16.45
Brent	1740	263,507	6.60
Ealing	4207.5	300,975	13.98
<b>Harrow</b>	<b>3107.5</b>	<b>206,822</b>	<b>15.03</b>
Hillingdon	3470.5	243,065	14.28
Hounslow	4395.96	212,340	20.70

Source: Active Places Power June 2010

- 8.60 Active Places is a database of sports facilities throughout England held by Sport England. It includes local authority leisure facilities as well as commercial and club sites, and contains information on specific facility details, such as location, size, opening times, contact numbers and activities. Active Places Power, which uses this information within additional analytical and planning tools, has been used here to provide an indication of facilities per 1000 population.
- 8.61 A Facilities Planning Model (FPM) Report prepared in January 2009 reviewed the provision for swimming pools in Harrow, providing an assessment of the extent to which the supply of swimming pools meets current demand based on the Borough's population. The impact of projected changes in swimming pool supply in Harrow and the surrounding Boroughs was also assessed, as was the impact of projected changes in population, up to 2018<sup>164</sup>.
- 8.62 This report presents the findings from an analysis of the supply and demand for swimming pools in Harrow and across the wider area of local authorities which border Harrow, so as to meet LBH's overall objectives from this study.
- 8.63 Supply is measured by the capacity of a swimming pool which is the "visits per week in the weekly peak period" or visits. The weekly peak period is 52 hours per week and it is estimated that 63% of the total weekly swimming throughput occurs in these hours.
- 8.64 The assessment of supply and demand for swimming pools necessarily takes account of the swimming pools in all the neighbouring local authorities to Harrow. The nearest swimming pool for some Harrow residents is located outside the authority (exported demand) and for some residents of neighbouring authorities their nearest swimming pool is inside Harrow (imported demand).
- 8.65 Demand being met at Harrow's pools came mainly from Barnet and Brent. In 2008 6% (463 visits) are imported from Barnet. This is projected to increase to 18% (1,971 visits) by 2018, an increase of 12% between the two years. Some 40% (3,112 visits) are imported from Brent in 2008. A reduction of 7% is projected by 2018 to 33%, (3,740 visits).

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<sup>164</sup> 'In addition LBH wish to consider what impact the projected changes in population, up to 2018, all have on the demand and supply for swimming pools across the authority.' Provision for Swimming Report, Genesis January 2009.

8.66 The report takes account of 8 swimming pool sites in Harrow (the small pool at Fitz Health Club is excluded because it is below the size threshold for inclusion in the FPM). The capacity of these sites is 2,639 square metres of water, which equates to 12.6 swimming pools each of 25 metres x 4 lanes.<sup>165</sup>

8.67 If accessibility to swimming pools is measured by the 20 minute drive time catchment area<sup>166</sup>, everyone in Harrow has access to at least 2 swimming pool sites. The report concludes that there is:

*‘an excellent location and coverage of swimming pools across the complete study area.’*

8.68 However, if a the 20 minute/1 mile walk to catchment area is used, there are areas to the North East and East of Hatch End extending across to the west of the Aspire and Canons pools which are outside this catchment.

8.69 A “comfort factor” is applied to the assessment of demand for swimming. This acknowledges that if swimming pools were full to their theoretical capacity, then there would be insufficient space to swim comfortably. In addition, account is taken of people circulating around the pool and/or changing. The capacity of a swimming pool is therefore reduced to 70% of its theoretical capacity and this is the level at which a pool is determined to be full.

8.70 In terms of the overall supply and demand for swimming in Harrow in 2008, the total capacity for swimming in Harrow at its 8 swimming pool sites is 15,508 visits, whilst total demand is 12,674 visits<sup>167</sup>. Total capacity is estimated to exceed total demand by some 2,834 visits per week. Total demand for swimming in Harrow in 2008 represented some 81.7% of total swimming pool capacity.

8.71 In analyzing the situation in 2018 the FPM identifies a decrease in swimming pool capacity from 15,508 visits 2008 to 15,159 visits. The reason for the decrease is whilst the new Hatch End swimming pool is increased to 325 square metres, up from 230 square metres, the new Harrow Leisure Centre would be 565 square metres of water, down from 752 square metres of water in the existing centre. However, it is now known that the proposed redevelopment of

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<sup>165</sup> A 25m x 4 lane pool is 212 sq metres of water

<sup>166</sup> It is estimated that around 78.4% of all visits to swimming pools in Harrow are by car

<sup>167</sup> Based on 2008 population.

Harrow Leisure Centre will not proceed.

- 8.72 In 2018 there is also a decrease in total demand for swimming from 12,674 visits in 2008 to 12,561 visits in 2018. The reason for the reduction in total demand is because the Harrow population only increases by 500 people between 2008 and 2018. Changes in the age structure could mean that there are less people in the main age group for swimming resulting in a reduction in total demand.
- 8.73 The model estimates that satisfied demand<sup>168</sup> is 96.2% of total demand which is a very high level of satisfied demand, and is reporting that some 96% of total demand for swimming can be met and is located within the catchment area of a swimming pool. There is not a high level of unmet demand, and the new Hive pool will reduce this still further by providing an additional 160 m<sup>2</sup> of water.
- 8.74 However, a very low level of satisfied demand is retained (25%) at Harrow's swimming pools because of choice and accessibility to a high number of pools based on the 20 minute drive time catchment. At the same time, Harrow is importing a considerable amount of demand from residents in neighbouring authorities.
- 8.75 Projected population change and swimming pool provision up to 2018 have very little impact on the level of satisfied demand.

### ***Supply and Demand Model for Swimming Pools***

- 8.76 The supply and demand model provides an opportunity to consider some of the changes that have occurred since the publication of the FPM report in 2009. It also facilitates a consideration of the supply and demand situation up to the end of the Plan period in 2026 rather than the end date of the FPM report which is 2018. This model cannot emulate the FPM analysis which has the capability of modelling supply and demand across a wider area.

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<sup>168</sup> The model assumes that all visits that can be made will be made, and that those visits that cannot be made will not be made. This is because the model is designed to identify the capacity required to meet likely expressed (satisfied) demand in the peak period. It is not possible for any Authority to achieve 100% satisfied demand. Diminishing returns set in as supply of facilities is increased.

- 8.77 The supply and demand model uses 2010 population data<sup>169</sup>. In terms of the overall supply and demand for swimming in Harrow in 2010, the total capacity for swimming in Harrow at 8 swimming pool sites<sup>170</sup> is estimated to be 2,640 square metres of water<sup>171</sup>. This equates to 11,920 visits per week in the peak period. This is a lower figure than that estimated by the FPM mainly because of differences in population and opening hours. If the attractiveness rating<sup>172</sup> is applied capacity is reduced to 9,200 peak visits per week.
- 8.78 The total demand is 13,060 peak visits. The water area (square metres) required to meet this potential demand is 1,599 square metres. The current capacity<sup>173</sup> available is 1,460 square metres so there is an estimated current shortfall in capacity of 139 square metres.
- 8.79 This analysis of the supply and demand for swimming pools, does not take account of the swimming pools in neighbouring local authorities. For some Harrow residents the nearest swimming pool is located outside the borough.
- 8.80 The projected capacity in 2026 increases to 13,088 visits per week in the peak period. The application of an attractiveness rating reduces this capacity to 10,017 peak visits per week.
- 8.81 Projecting the demand forward to 2026, total demand is anticipated to be 13,413 peak visits and the water area required increases to 1,642 square metres compared to the future capacity of 1,603 square metres, a shortfall of 39 square metres or 0.2 swimming pools.
- 8.82 This analysis does not take into account imported and exported demand. Neither does it take account of swimming pool facilities available in adjoining local authorities. In this respect there are two new facilities that are likely to attract visits from Harrow residents. These are the new centres at Hillingdon and

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<sup>169</sup> 2008 Ward Population Projections Low dated 21 January 2009 have been employed to produce population figures for 2010 and 2026.

<sup>170</sup> The pool at Fitz Health Centre was excluded on the grounds that it is too small.

<sup>171</sup> This includes the 'comfort factor',

<sup>172</sup> Attractiveness is affected by physical attributes such as changing accommodation, age and condition and perceived design quality and management policies.

<sup>173</sup> Capacity is a function of the facilities at a particular site, the available hours for public use within the peak period, hours open outside the peak period and facility size in relation to user requirements.

Northolt. Hillingdon has a new £31m Sports and Leisure Complex<sup>174</sup> which has a new 50 metre by 25 metres, eight lane indoor swimming pool which opened in 2010. It also has an outdoor Olympic sized 50metre pool. In addition, the new £15 million Northolt Leisure Centre<sup>175</sup> has a new 25 metre by 17 metre, eight lane swimming pool which also opened in 2010.

- 8.83** The FPM report found that there is sufficient swimming pool provision to meet both current and future demand in Harrow. This conclusion is broadly supported by the findings of the supply and demand model taking in to account the development of the new swimming pool in Harrow and the opening of the new swimming pools in adjoining boroughs.
- 8.84 The calculations for the supply and demand model for swimming pools can be found in **Appendix 9a**.

### ***Audit of Indoor Sports Halls***

- 8.85 There are twenty eight sports halls in Harrow, of which five are facility managed by the Council, nineteen are located in schools, three are run by third sector organisations and one is a private facility. All of these sports halls are available for community use, with the exception of the sports hall at Stanmore College.
- 8.86 There are five sports halls located in the Northwest sub-area, eleven in the Southwest sub-area, seven in the Central sub-area; four in the Northeast sub-area and none in the Southeast sub-area.
- 8.87 **Table 8.6** shows the capacity ratio in terms of m<sup>2</sup> of sports hall per 1000 population for Harrow compared to adjoining local authorities. Whilst the ratio for Harrow is higher than that for Ealing it is lower than for Hounslow Barnet, Brent and Hillingdon. It is also lower than the capacity ratio for the London Region and England.

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<sup>174</sup> Hillingdon Sport & Leisure Complex Gatting Way, Uxbridge-UB8 1ES

<sup>175</sup> Northolt Leisure Centre Eastcote Lane North, Northolt-UB5 4AB



**Table 8.6: Facilities per 1000 Population – Sports Halls**

Local Authority	Total Hall area In m <sup>2</sup>	Total Population (2001 Census)	Capacity Ratio Per 1000 (m <sup>2</sup> )
Barnet London Borough	21334.84	314,506	67.84
Brent London Borough	19697.25	263,507	74.75
Ealing London Borough	13089.08	300,975	43.49
<b>Harrow London Borough</b>	<b>11336</b>	<b>206,822</b>	<b>54.81</b>
Hillingdon London Borough	18649.5	243,065	76.73
Hounslow London Borough	14276.15	212,340	67.23

*Source: Active Places Power*

8.88 A Facilities Planning Model Report was prepared in January 2009 which reviewed the provision for sports halls in Harrow, and provided an assessment of the extent to which the supply of sports halls met current demand based on the Borough's population. The impact of projected changes in sports hall supply in Harrow and the surrounding Boroughs was also assessed, as was the impact of projected changes in population up to 2018.

8.89 Demand and supply (or capacity) for sports halls was measured in "visits per week in the weekly peak period". The weekly peak period is 40.5 hours per week and it is estimated that 60% of the total weekly sports hall throughput occurs in these hours. A "comfort factor" is applied to the assessment of demand for sports halls to account for the fact that there must be enough space available for activity to take place comfortably including sufficient circulation space and changing accommodation. To allow for these factors, the theoretical capacity of a sports hall is reduced to 80% and this is the level at which a sports hall is determined to be full.

8.90 The model only takes account of indoor sports halls of at least 3 badminton court sizes and which are available for community use, for all or part of the weekly

peak period. If a sports hall does not have any public access, it is excluded from the assessment.

8.91 The supply and demand for sports halls in Harrow and the surrounding area is based on the current levels of participation and frequency of participation in indoor sports; the 2008 population estimate and the existing supply of sports halls in Harrow and the surrounding local authorities.

8.92 The model includes 9 sports hall sites in Harrow which have a total capacity (or supply) of 6,754 visits per week, available for community use for all or part of the weekly peak period. The total sports hall capacity represents some 65% of the total sports hall demand in Harrow, so demand exceeds current supply at peak times.

8.93 The nine sports hall sites in Harrow are:

- Harrow High School
- Harrow School
- John Lyon School
- Zoom Leisure Centre
- Heathfield School
- Canons Sports Centre
- Aspire National Centre
- Gristwood Centre at Nower Hill High School
- Harrow Leisure Centre

8.94 The 9 Harrow sports hall sites constitute 11% of the total sports hall capacity out of 83 sports hall sites across the study area. This compares with Hillingdon where there are 17 sports halls sites which represent some 21.5% of the total sports hall capacity. Three Rivers has the lowest with 4 sites, some 6.4% of the sports hall capacity across the study area.

8.95 In terms of accessibility to sports halls, all of Harrow's population has access to 2 or more sports halls based on a 20 minute drive time as a catchment area, so

there is a very high level of accessibility. It is estimated that in Harrow some 84% of all visits to sports halls are by car (and 79.6% in the study area)<sup>176</sup>.

- 8.96 If the 20 minutes' walk/1 mile walk catchment area is used, 11% of the Borough population live outside this; these are concentrated along the North and North East boundary of the Borough where there are also nearby sports halls located in neighbouring local authorities.
- 8.97 Nearly all of the Harrow sports halls in this catchment area are self contained to Harrow i.e. their catchments do not overlap the borders of neighbouring authorities. The exceptions to this are Heathfield sports hall and the Canons and Aspire sports sites, which are close to the Barnet and Hertsmere borders respectively.
- 8.98 The total capacity of the 9 sports halls sites is 6,754 visits, whilst total demand is 10,270 visits. Capacity therefore meets 65.7% of total demand for sports halls. Total demand for sports halls in Harrow in 2008 is estimated to exceed total capacity by some 3,516 visits per week.
- 8.99 It is estimated that, of the total demand, some 8,952 visits (87.2%)<sup>177</sup> are satisfied demand, with unmet demand representing 1,318 visits, 12.8% of the total. Some of the Harrow unmet demand is within the catchment area of a sports hall in a neighbouring Borough and can be accommodated there.
- 8.100 The model estimated that around 86.3% of the total capacity of all the sports halls in Harrow was currently being used at peak times. This is above the "sports halls full" level of 80%, based on the comfort factor.
- 8.101 Putting this unmet demand into a scale of provision context, 1,318 visits equates to the equivalent of providing around 6.5 badminton courts (a badminton court has a capacity of 202 visits per week in the weekly peak period).
- 8.102 The model estimates that the sports halls that are full are: Canons Sports Centre, Harrow Leisure Centre, Gristwood Centre and Zoom Leisure Centre. The model estimates that around 86.3% of the total capacity of all the sports halls in Harrow is currently being used at peak times (after taking into account the effect

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<sup>176</sup> FPM Report on Sports Halls, Sport England, 2009

<sup>177</sup> For swimming satisfied demand was 96.2%.

of the exported and imported demand). It is therefore estimated that there is no spare sports halls capacity in Harrow at peak times.

- 8.103 Only 2,227 visits, some 25% of satisfied demand from Harrow residents, is retained at Harrow's sports halls. The low level of retained demand in Harrow is explained by the very good supply of sports halls with a high level of choice and accessibility across the wider area.
- 8.104 Most exported demand goes to Hillingdon (25%). Most of the demand which is imported into Harrow from residents in neighbouring authorities and is satisfied at Harrow's sports halls is from Brent (47%) and Barnet (28%).
- 8.105 By 2018, it is assumed that an additional 8 sports hall sites across the whole study area will have opened with 1 in Harrow and 7 elsewhere. Some upgrading of existing sports halls will also take place.
- 8.106** The new Whitmore High School 4-court sports hall extensively overlaps the catchment areas of the Harrow High School, Harrow School, John Lyon School and to a lesser extent the Harrow Leisure Centre and Zoom Leisure Centre. This will not change or improve accessibility to sports halls for the Harrow population, based on the 20 minutes/1 mile walk to catchment area.
- 8.107 By 2018, the total capacity at the 10 Harrow sports hall sites is predicted to be 7,463 visits, an increase of 709 visits. Total demand is expected to decrease by 212 visits as a consequence of population changes. Total capacity for sports halls in Harrow will represent some 74.1% of total sports hall demand in 2018 compared to 65.7% in 2008. Satisfied demand in 2018 represents some 87.5% of total demand, almost unchanged from the 87.2% in 2008. Unmet demand for sports halls in Harrow is estimated to be 12.5% of the total demand, again almost unchanged from 2008.
- 8.108 Notwithstanding the addition of 9 new sports hall sites across the study area, there is virtually no change with regard to retained, exported and imported demand for sports halls in Harrow.
- 8.109 In 2018 total capacity at the 10 Harrow sports hall sites is projected to be 7,463 visits and total demand is 10,058 visits. The shortfall is therefore 2,595 visits which equates to 14 badminton courts.

- 8.110 In summary, there are not enough sports halls in Harrow to meet the estimated demand based on current rates and frequencies of participation in hall sports. However, the location of the existing sports halls means there is good accessibility within the 20 minute/1 mile walk to catchment.
- 8.111 Since the report was prepared a further sports hall has been commissioned at the Hive Football Centre.
- 8.112 The FPM does not take into account the contribution to the provision of sports hall space from sports halls that are less than 3 courts in size. There are sixteen sports halls that are less than 3 courts in size and these provide a total of 17 courts equivalent to four standard size sports halls<sup>178</sup>. Fourteen of these courts are located in schools. There are 2 courts at the new sports hall at the Beacon Centre and one court at the church hall at St George's.

### ***Supply and Demand Model for Sports Halls***

- 8.113 In terms of the overall supply and demand for sports halls in Harrow in 2010, the total capacity for sports halls in Harrow at 28 sports hall sites<sup>179</sup> is estimated to be 8,372<sup>180</sup> visits per week in the peak period which equates to 45 badminton courts. Demand is for 10,584 visits which equates to 57 badminton courts. The shortfall under this scenario is 12 badminton courts.
- 8.114 In reality, many of the sports halls included in this analysis contribute very little to community provision. This is because many are old school gymnasiums that simply fail to meet the expectations of most community sports clubs. Whilst these are advertised as being available for hire to community sports clubs their use is largely confined to other activities.
- 8.115 A more realistic analysis can be undertaken when the following facilities are excluded from the analysis:

Canons High School

Hatch End High School

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<sup>178</sup> The standard size of a sports hall is 4 courts or 694 m<sup>2</sup> (34 metres x 19 metres x 7.6 metres)

<sup>179</sup> This includes **all** sports halls, school gymnasiums etc regardless of size.

<sup>180</sup> This includes the 'comfort factor',

Orley Farm School  
Rooks Heath College  
Stanmore College  
St. George's Hall  
Bentley Wood High School

- 8.116 Under this scenario current capacity is available at 11 sports hall sites including both the Beacon Centre and Whitmore High School. Demand is for 10,584 visits. The total capacity for sports halls is estimated to be 5,964 visits per week in the peak period. This equates to 32 badminton courts. The number of badminton courts required to meet the demand is 57 so the shortfall is 25 badminton courts.
- 8.117 In the future (2026), demand is predicted to increase to 10,643 visits which and will require 58 badminton courts to accommodate this demand. Supply increases to 6612 visits, which equates to 36 badminton courts, a shortfall of 22 badminton courts.
- 8.118 This analysis of the supply and demand for sports halls does not take account of sports halls in neighbouring local authorities.
- 8.119 The calculations for the supply and demand model for sports halls can be found in **Appendix 9a**.
- 8.120 In conclusion, the FPM report for sports halls found that current capacity is 6,754 visits whilst total demand is 10,270 visits. This equates to a current supply of 37 badminton courts and a demand for 56 badminton courts, a shortfall of 19 badminton courts. The situation in 2018 is that capacity is 7,463 visits and total demand is 10,058 visits. This equates to a supply of 40 badminton courts and a demand for 54 badminton courts, a shortfall of 14 badminton courts.
- 8.121 The supply and demand analysis found that when smaller school facilities are excluded from the available supply, current provision is estimated to be slightly lower than indicated by the FPM analysis. However, this analysis does not take into account provision in neighbouring local authorities. The estimated demand is higher than the FPM analysis, mainly because of the difference in the population figures. The supply and demand analysis seeks to model the situation in 2026,

the end of the Plan period, compared to an end date of 2018 for the FPM. This partly explains the differences in the identified shortfalls.

8.122 The FPM identifies a requirement for 54 badminton courts in 2018. The supply and demand analysis identifies a requirement for 58 badminton courts in 2026.

### ***Audit of Health and Fitness Facilities***

8.123 Health and fitness facilities are of three types:

- those associated with public-access leisure centres which can be used on both pay and play and membership basis;
- those which are operated on a fully commercial basis and charge a comparatively high membership fee;
- those provided at schools where there is community use.

8.124 There are nineteen health & fitness suites located in Harrow, and these are listed in **Appendix 9**. However, two of these are on school sites which currently do not have any community access; these are the small facilities at Stanmore College and Park High School. Two are currently under construction at the Hive Football Centre and Whitmore College.

8.125 There are three health & fitness suites located in each of the Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest sub-areas, with seven facilities in the Central sub-area. There is one health and fitness suite in a local authority managed site with full public access; this is Harrow Leisure Centre where there are 122 stations<sup>181</sup>.

8.126 There are six commercially operated health and fitness suites located in private health clubs or gyms providing 640 stations. Four of these are in the Central sub-area. Finally, there are seven schools sites with health and fitness equipment.

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<sup>181</sup> Station is one item of gym equipment.

**Table 8.7: Facilities per 1000 Population – Health & Fitness**

Location	Number of Stations	Total Population (2001 Census)	Capacity Ratio stations per 1000
Enfield	1217	273530	4.45
<b>Harrow</b>	<b>928</b>	<b>206822</b>	<b>4.49</b>
Brent	1316	263507	4.99
Ealing	2189	300975	7.27
Hounslow	1543	212340	7.27
Hillingdon	2006	243065	8.25

8.127 **Table 8.7** shows the capacity ratio in terms of the number of stations per 1000 population for Harrow compared to adjoining local authorities. The ratio for Harrow is higher than that for Enfield. However, it is lower than for the other adjoining boroughs and for the London Region and England.

8.128 The Fitness Industry Association's (FIA) Health & Fitness Penetration rate for 2009 is 12% of the total population over 16 years; this results in a need for 613 fitness stations within the Borough. The actual supply of accessible fitness stations is 928 indicating a surplus in provision of 315 stations.

### ***Audit of Other Indoor Sports Facilities***

8.129 The Herga Indoor Bowls Club is located adjacent to the Harrow Leisure Centre. The club was opened in 1984, and membership now stands at over 600 with 340 men and 210 ladies regularly bowling, in addition to 70 social and junior members. There are seven rinks (36m x 4.1m) of carpet laid on a wooden floor, with overhead lighting.

8.130 Harrow School of Gymnastics is situated at the rear of the car park for Harrow Leisure Centre. It has a purpose-built Gym that was built in 1991. It has all the



main items of equipment including floor exercise mat, vault, parallel bars, high bar, rings, balance beam, trampoline and pommel horse. Harrow School of Gymnastics is affiliated with British Gymnastics, the governing body for the sport of gymnastics in the United Kingdom.

- 8.131 Harrow School of Gymnastics provides recreational gymnastics coaching typically in classes of one hour per week, for all ages from toddlers to adults. Competitive gymnastics coaching is provided for two separate squads (Men's Artistic and Women's Artistic Gymnastics) for age 5 up to early 20's, In 2008 there were 972 members.
- 8.132 There is one indoor Tennis court at Harrow Leisure Centre. This was built in 1997.
- 8.133 Harrow Leisure Centre has eight fully sprung squash courts, three of which are glass-backed. There are number of activity halls and dance studios located in schools that are available for limited community use.

### ***Community Centres***

- 8.134 A list of 40 Community Centres and Halls was compiled from Local Authority records. Questionnaires were sent to all centres asking for details of facilities and usage and whether sport and recreation took place in the centre. Six responses were received and telephone follow up resulted in a further 17 responses giving an overall response rate of 57.5%.
- 8.135 Of those responding, nine gave information which resulted in their centre being deleted from the list, either because the centre no longer exists or because it was not a community hall but had a different function such as a church hall available solely for its members. **Appendix 9** holds data on the remaining 14 centres.
- 8.136 The majority of the Community Centres (11) were built before 1975; 6 of these buildings were pre-war. The exceptions are the Kadwa Patinder Centre, Pinner and District Community Association and the Wealdstone Centre which are housed in more modern buildings. Major refurbishments have been undertaken at the Sangat Centre and Kenton Hall. When asked to rate the overall condition

of the centre 8 rate this as good, 3 as average, one as poor and two did not respond.

- 8.137 Ownership and management of the facilities include Parochial Church Council, Faith Groups, Community Associations, Charities and Local Authority.
- 8.138 All the Centres have a Main Hall and most also have a kitchen and toilets. Many also have a smaller hall, meeting room(s), a bar or coffee bar and a car park. Virtually none have changing facilities, the one exception being the Kadwa Patinder Centre in Kenmore Avenue, which has showers.
- 8.139 The amount of sport and recreation held in the Community Centres varies considerably. The Canons Community Association appears to have the largest amount of sport with yoga on 6 sessions per week, 2 karate sessions, 3 ballroom dancing sessions and pilates.
- 8.140 The Kadwa Patinder Centre is a very large facility with a main hall (7,400 square feet) which accommodates badminton (two courts) and table tennis tables. A dining hall extension proposed and this will provide additional facilities for badminton courts and table tennis.
- 8.141 The Belmont Community Hall and St Georges Hall are also used for several sporting sessions per week including Dance, Taekwondo, Aerobics, Badminton, Yoga, Short Mat Bowls and Keep Fit.
- 8.142 However, the focus at many of these centres is not sports related although most do undertake a small proportion of sport in their activities. Many facilities are faith centres and exist mainly for prayer, meetings, social events and family activities. Examples are Kadwa Patinder Centre, Sangat Centre, Woodcock Hall (Gujerati Association) and Sindhi Association. Two facilities are Local Authority run Youth Centres, one focused mainly on sport and the other on multi-media. Several are Church Halls which are open to members of the local community but mainly exist for church related activities; many have nurseries and mother and toddler groups, scouts and guides and youth clubs.
- 8.143 The Cedars Youth and Community Centre, is being built on the Cedars Estate as part of a partnership between Harrow Council and Watford Football Club's Community Sports and Education Trust at a cost of £4.2 million funded by the

Department for Education. The project, which is called 'The Pitch - A Place to Go' will provide a new multi-use sports hall, gymnasium, IT suite, art room, recording studio together with a cafe, play equipment for younger children and multi-use outdoor pitch.

- 8.144 Respondents were asked if any sporting activities had increased in popularity in recent years. Yoga was reported by several as having become more popular as has Taekwondo, Dance and Football. Activities, which had seen a decline in interest included Carpet Bowls, Keep Fit and Aerobics.
- 8.145 The age of users varies from those which catered for all age groups and many for families to those where the majority of users were pre-school, young people or the elderly. The majority of centres (10) are used by people with disabilities and one centre runs a dance class specifically for disabled children.
- 8.146 Although community centres clearly offer some additional capacity for indoor sport, this is dependent on several variables including some which can change in the short term, such as activity leadership, or the attitudes of trustees. Sports activities are also constrained by physical features such as the condition of the floor, court markings and safety margins, and ceiling height which are less easily adapted to meet the requirements of different sports as these evolve. Our view is that community centres should be seen as having some potential for relieving pressure on more specific sports provision, but we do not think they should be included in the standard setting process for indoor sport because their availability is unpredictable and their priorities may well lie across a much broader spectrum of activity that may well limit their capacity to provide sports space.

### ***Quality***

- 8.147 A quality assessment for indoor sports facilities in Harrow has been undertaken. The main sports halls and swimming pools have been assessed for quality against a series of attributes including the layout of the reception area, the quality of the facilities, accessibility for people with disabilities, cleanliness and overall appearance. The scoring also takes into account external factors such as ease of access by different forms of transport and whether the entrance is easy to find.

The scores have been weighted to reflect the importance of the main elements of the centre i.e. the main sports hall, swimming pool and changing. The results are shown in **Table 8.8**.

**Table 8.8: Quality Assessment Scores for Main Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools**

<b>Large Leisure Centre/Swimming pool</b>	<b>% Score</b>
Zoom Leisure	75.5%
Harrow Leisure Centre	78.2%
Aspire Centre	77.4%
<b>Schools and Smaller Sports Halls and Swimming Pools</b>	<b>% Score</b>
Beacon Centre	87.8%
Gristwood Sports Centre, Nower Hill School	83.3%
Canons High School	82.5%
Canons Sports Centre (North London Collegiate School)	79.8%
John Lyon School Sports Centre	77.5%
Harrow High School Sports Centre (Sports College)	74.0%
Heathfield School	71.1%
Harrow School Sports Centre	69.7%
Rooks Heath College	67.4%
Bentley Wood High School	65.9%
Harrow College (Harrow on the Hill Campus)	61.7%
Nower Hill School Gymnasium	36.8%

- 8.148 The quality assessments have been split into those for the three larger facilities and those for the smaller facilities mostly located in schools. Hatch End Swimming Pool was undergoing refurbishment at the time of this study and could not be included in the assessment.
- 8.149 The Beacon Centre achieved the highest overall score and is also the highest scoring of the smaller centres. This facility is only two years old with a two court sports hall and good quality changing facilities. The lowest score is that of the gymnasium at Nower Hill School, an old facility, in a poor state of repair with a poor quality floor. The median score for the smaller centres is 72.5%.
- 8.150 The highest score for the three large centres is Harrow Leisure Centre (78.1%). Whilst this is an old centre, the building is reasonably well maintained and standards of cleanliness are good. Since the survey was undertaken, the changing rooms in the swimming pool have been significantly improved following a £300,000 refurbishment programme. There are significant parts of the building which are unused, and these have not been taken into account in the quality scoring. The assessment framework also does not allow for the relatively poor energy efficiency of the building.
- 8.151 The overall median score is 75.5%, which is best represented by the John Lyon Sports Centre (77.5%).

### ***National Benchmarking Service***

- 8.152 The aim of the National Benchmarking Service (NBS) for sports halls and swimming pools is to provide local authorities with robust information on the performance of their sports halls and swimming pools, compared with that of equivalent 'family' facilities in similar locations elsewhere in the country. Reports provide results for key performance indicators for access, finance, utilisation and satisfaction. For each performance indicator, the benchmarks employed are at the 25%, 50% and 75% points in the distribution of scores. In other words they represent the individual authorities at the quarter, half and three-quarters marks when all authorities are placed in order of performance according to the indicator.

These three benchmarks identify the facility scores which separate four quartiles of performance.

- 8.153 The NBS report for Harrow Leisure Centre is based on a survey of users undertaken in June/July 2007. However, the survey sample for the centre was below the recommended number and this will have affected the reliability of the results.
- 8.154 Access by people over 60 is in the top quartile of scores. However, the indicator for young people 11 to 19 years is below the 25% benchmark. This is a result of young people in this age group constituting 14% of the population in the catchment area but contribute only 7% of visits. Other indicators such as visits by people from BME groups, discount card holders NS-Sec 6&7 are at or just above the 50% benchmark. Visits by females is at the 75% benchmark.
- 8.155 Financial performance is very good with four subsidy related indicators in the top quartiles. A high income per square metre combines with a high volume of visits to drive income levels. However, this is offset to a degree by relatively high operation costs. Direct income per visit is in the bottom quartile. One specific component of cost, energy costs per square metre is below the 25% benchmark.
- 8.156 In terms of utilisation, the throughput indicators of visits per square metre and weekly number of people visiting are above the 75% benchmark. This suggest that there is a high level of market penetration in the local catchment area.
- 8.157 Satisfaction is low for cleanliness of the changing rooms<sup>182</sup> with 44% of respondents registering dissatisfaction and is also considered important. There is a relative problem with the sports hall with respondents citing poor quality lighting and floor surface. The report concludes that:

*'Altogether there is a significant scale of customer dissatisfaction across an array of attributes'*

- 8.158 Nevertheless, according to the customers surveyed, the strengths of the centre involve staff, quality and accessibility attributes. The availability of activities is appreciated.

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<sup>182</sup> These have subsequently been refurbished.

## Quest

8.159 Quest is the UK Quality Scheme for Sport and Leisure, and provides the industry standard for the management of leisure facilities. Harrow now has 3 Quest quality-approved facilities, which have been assessed against a series of attributes including the quality of the facilities, accessibility for people with disabilities, cleanliness and overall appearance. The scores are shown in **Table 8.9**.

**Table 8.9: Quest Quality Assessment Scores for Main Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools**

Leisure Centre/Swimming pool	% Score
Aspire National Training Centre	75%
Harrow Leisure Centre	68%
Hatch End Swimming Pool	60% <sup>183</sup>

8.160 The highest score is achieved by Aspire National Training Centre, with 75% - 'Highly Commended'.

## Key consultation findings – indoor sports facilities and community centres

### Quantity

8.161 Opinions on the provision of indoor sport facilities divide into two camps. The majority is in favour of increased provision, with three in five residents (58%) saying there is too little provision at present, while almost everyone else (42%) says that current provision is adequate. There are very few residents who feel there is too much indoor sports provision in this borough.

<sup>183</sup> Renewal due in September 2010

**Table 8.10: Residents' views on quantity of indoor sport**

Sub-area	Proportion of residents wanting more indoor sport provision
Central	50%
Northeast	60%
Northwest	59%
Southeast	54%
Southwest	67%
Overall	58%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>854</i>

8.162 Demand for more provision is strongest in the Southwest sub-area, where two thirds (67%) of residents want to see an increased quantity of indoor sport space. It is lowest in the Central sub-area, but here the balance is absolutely evenly divided, with 50% of residents wanting more space and 50% saying provision is sufficient as things stand. In the other three sub-areas, demand for more facilities outweighs those who want no change in a similar way to the overall picture.

8.163 Younger residents are keener on increased provision, by and large, and as age increases so does satisfaction with existing quantities of space; among over 65s, more people are content with existing provision than want to see change, but the minority looking for an increase is still a substantial proportion (47%). Men are especially demanding more provision, and two thirds of men (62%) want an increase, while just 55% of women want more.

8.164 People with children are also more keen to see an increase in provision, with 61% wanting more, in comparison with 55% of those with no children. The desire for more provision is fairly consistent across all ethnic groups, and is also not substantially affected by the existence or otherwise of a disability.



## Usage

**Table 8.11: How often people visit Harrow's indoor sports facilities**

Frequency of visit	Proportion of people (%)
Every day	2%
Once or twice a week	20%
Two or three times a month	9%
Once a month	5%
Once every two or three months	8%
Less often	17%
Never	39%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1057</i>

8.165 Over a third of people (36%) visit an indoor sport facility at least once a month, and two thirds of these (22% of all residents) visit at least weekly. On the other hand, two in five residents say they never visit an indoor sports facility, and a quarter of residents (25%) are only occasional visitors.

8.166 Use of indoor sports facilities is higher in the Central and Southeast sub-areas than in the others; in these two sub-areas, the proportion who never visit such sites is only around a third of residents (32% and 36% respectively). On the other hand, in the Central sub-area almost half of all residents (47%) say they visit this type of facility at least monthly, but this falls to only a quarter (28%) of residents in the Southwest sub-area.

8.167 Take up of indoor sports is higher in the under 35s, where two in five (41%) of residents visit at least monthly. This proportion holds good for the 31-50 age-group as well, though here there is a more consistent pattern of weekly visiting.

Among the 50-65s, the proportion visiting at least monthly falls to 31%, and although there are still regular customers among over 65s they are much rarer, with just one in six (17%) visiting on a monthly or better basis.

- 8.168 Men are a little more likely to use these facilities than women, but the difference is not significant. Asian people use indoor sports facilities more than any other ethnic subgroup; nearly half of all Asian residents (46%) visit at least monthly, while just a third of White residents (31%) do so. Take up among the Black community is very low; only 15% of Black residents visit at least monthly, and visits from this group are much less regular and more sporadic in nature. People with disabilities are much less likely to use these spaces and over half (54%) never visit.
- 8.169 One in ten indoor sports visitors uses a facility outside the borough of Harrow, so far as we can tell (it is not always obvious which specific indoor facility is meant by their answer, and some answers could be within or beyond the boundary depending on which branch of particular gym chain is being utilised). Those using facilities outside the borough visit a little less often than those using local facilities, and two thirds of non-local visitors uses a site at least monthly, against three quarters of local visitors.
- 8.170 The sites people visit most are listed here (it is not possible to distinguish clearly between different branches of gym chains).

**Table 8.12: Sites people visit most**

Indoor facility most visited	Number of times mentioned
Harrow Leisure Centre	204
Aspire	27
Highgrove	21
Hatch End	20
David Lloyd	11
<i>N</i>	<i>444</i>

8.171 One site dominates the indoor sports scene in this borough, and that is Harrow Leisure Centre, which is used by around half of all those who use a leisure centre at all. No other site even approaches Harrow LC in popularity, although the table shows how much private gyms are coming into play as part of leisure provision nowadays.

### **Quality**

8.172 Residents were asked to give an overall quality rating for indoor sports. The picture is a mixed one, as this table shows:

**Table 8.13: Residents views on overall quality of indoor sports provision**

Overall rating	Proportion of residents (%)
Excellent	6%
Good	32%
Average	39%
Below average	16%
Poor	7%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>641</i>

8.173 The consensus here is a broadly positive one, with over three quarters of residents (77%) saying the overall quality of indoor facilities is average or better, and two in five giving an overall positive rating (38%), against just a quarter who score these facilities in a negative way (23%). We also noted that people were not necessarily commenting more positively about private facilities; some of these also received negative comments, though many are regarded as excellent or good.

8.174 Opinions of the quality of indoor sports vary across the sub-areas, with Northwest sub-area residents actually much less positive about the facilities available locally. Residents of the Central and Northeast sub-areas are the most positive overall. There are also variations by age-group, with those aged 50-65 the least happy with quality, and again giving a negative view. Men are much more positive than women, and White people are much more negative about quality than non-White ethnic groups. It is also noted that those using non-local facilities are much more critical about the quality of Harrow borough facilities and this indicates that the choice of non-local provision is a quality-based one, rather than a matter of convenience.

8.175 Asked how local facilities could be improved, residents home in on a few key areas:

**Table 8.14: Residents' views on how local facilities could be improved**

Area for improvement	Number of suggestions
Cleaning	102
Showers and changing facilities	56
More space/more sites	36
Modernise/improve	30
Cost	22
More classes/activities	17
Supervision and management	16
Lighting	16
CCTV and security	16
Easier booking	16
More/better music/events	16
Better customer service	16
Warmer water in the pool	16
<i>N</i>	<i>477</i>

8.176 One issue dominates this table, and it is that residents are deeply critical of the cleanliness at Harrow's indoor facilities. Cleanliness is often a concern especially in the context of swimming and changing facilities where polluted surfaces are both unpleasant and uncomfortable and where higher standards are expected. Indeed, the quality of shower and changing facilities is the next most common are for comment, and improvements in this regard would also be welcomed by a high proportion of facility users. There are also substantial numbers of residents calling for more space for indoor sport (which might for some mean a wider choice of venue) and for a general modernisation of the

existing facilities. Although other areas for improvement are identified, none approaches these in significance.

### ***User survey***

8.177 A user survey of limited quality undertaken as part of the 2005 study of indoor sport facilities largely echoes the findings of the more recent study.<sup>184</sup> Centre users identified problems with cleanliness, customer service quality and cost, alongside information. A significant problem over security in relation to the car park at that time seems now to be less significant, however.

8.178 The user survey also found that

- 87% of centre users travel by car, and 84% travel for 20 minutes or less.
- Greater importance was attached to cleanliness than any other attribute in the survey, although staffing, value for money, car parking and opening hours were also important.
- The greatest dissatisfaction among users was in cleanliness, in catering provision, and in some aspects of value for money, with a significant gap in expectations between aspiration and achievement in cleanliness at the Leisure Centre and Hatch End in particular.

8.179 These findings are largely consistent with those in the household survey.

### ***Community centres***

8.180 Residents were also asked to indicate how often, if at all, they use local community centres and similar premises for playing indoor sports (they were reminded about sports such as indoor bowls, darts and so on which are sometimes overlooked in sports surveys). In fact there is very limited use of

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<sup>184</sup> 973 exit surveys at Harrow LC, Aspire, Hatch End, Harrow High School only; data not weighted for user volumes, and must be treated with some circumspection

community buildings for sport, with 87% of residents saying they never visit a facility of this type for sports purposes, and just 6% saying they used this type of facility on a monthly basis. This figure is consistently low across all subgroups and only differs to any significant extent among the Asian ethnic subgroup, where 10% of local Asian residents use a community centre (perhaps for cultural reasons). With such low usage, further analysis is both difficult and inconclusive.

- 8.181 The Council also asked about Community Centres in a survey in June 2008.<sup>185</sup> The focus here was on hiring a community centre, rather than just using one, and just 8% of people said they had ever hired a local community centre for any type of activity, though exercise was one of the main reasons for doing so. There was general support for the idea of having community centres available for a variety of social and other purposes, but also a low level of awareness of the provision and the facilities on offer across the range of centres. Factors identified by people as limiting their possible use of centres were opening hours, costs, travelling distances and condition.

## **Standards**

### ***Quantity***

- 8.182 For swimming pools, the quantity standard proposed is based on maintaining the current level of provision in Harrow. Taking into account the new pool at the Hive Football centre, the capacity ratio in terms of square metres of swimming pool per 1000 population is 7.17 square metres. The FPM report indicates that there is not a high level of unmet demand in Harrow and that this situation is unlikely to change in the future. This conclusion is supported by the supply and demand analysis. Similarly, the Sports Facilities Calculator indicates that the number of swimming pools required is equivalent to current provision. Consultation indicates a demand for increased levels of provision of indoor sport generally, though this is not overwhelming and does not seem to focus especially on swimming pools. On the basis that overall, taking into account provision in

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<sup>185</sup> Residents Panel survey, response of 712 from 1,152 questionnaires issued.

adjoining local authorities, there is a balance of supply and demand, there is no justification for a higher standard.

8.183 The FPM report indicates that there are not enough sports halls in Harrow to meet estimated demand. The supply and demand analysis confirms that there is a shortfall even when sports halls of less than 3 courts are taken into account. Consultation suggests a demand for increased levels of provision, with comment calling for more space for activities. Even allowing for the one new sports halls that is planned there is a need for an additional 18 badminton courts.

8.184 Typically, a badminton court has an area of around 18 metres by 9 metres (161 square metres). A multiplier of 2.5 needs to be applied to the floor area of a main sports hall to account for changing accommodation, plant, circulation space, office and other accommodation to give a figure for the total building area required. Therefore 58 badminton courts will require a total building area of around 23,345 square metres, equivalent to around 0.102 square metres of sports hall building per person or 102 square metres per 1000 population.

8.185 The current level of provision of Health & Fitness facilities is considered to be adequate, and will be augmented shortly. On this basis the new level of provision should be the standard.

#### ***Quantity Standards***

<b><i>Swimming Pools</i></b>	<b><i>7.17 m<sup>2</sup> per 1000 population</i></b>
<b><i>Sports Halls</i></b>	<b><i>102 m<sup>2</sup> per 1000 population</i></b>
<b><i>Health &amp; Fitness</i></b>	<b><i>4.5 stations per 1000 population</i></b>

#### ***Quality***

8.186 Our Quality Vision for Indoor Sport in Harrow is as follows:

- To ensure that everyone, including people with disabilities, has an opportunity to participate in sport and/or exercise.



- To provide facilities that are welcoming, family friendly, comfortable, 'fit for purpose' and safe, enabling activities to be enjoyed by all sections of the community
- To provide facilities that encourage all members of the community to follow a lifestyle that includes active involvement in sport and recreation.

8.187 This, we believe, would also address the issues raised in the consultation.

### ***Quality Standards***

***To provide facilities that are both sustainable and energy efficient.***

***The recommended quality standard is:***

***A score of 78% on the Indoor Sports Facilities Quality Assessment***

***Quest Scores as follows:***

<b><i>Harrow Leisure Centre</i></b>	<b><i>70%</i></b>
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<b><i>Hatch End Swimming Pool</i></b>	<b><i>70%</i></b>
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<b><i>Aspire National Training Centre</i></b>	<b><i>75%</i></b>
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***Centres to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act***

### ***Accessibility***

#### ***Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools***

8.188 Consultation suggests that a 20 minute drive time is acceptable to the vast majority of potential users, while the audit indicates that most people in Harrow live within a 20 minute drive of existing provision, including out-of-borough facilities. Our recommended standard is therefore that people should have **access to indoor sports within a 20 minute drive time from their homes**. This emphasises the need for provision to be reasonably local to people and recognises that different, particularly sustainable forms of transport, will have an

increasingly important part to play in determining the accessibility of provision in the future. In addition, attention should be given to accessibility in respect of people without independent transport, and people with disabilities, to increase access for these important, and currently significantly excluded, groups.

***Accessibility Standards***

***Leisure Centres and Swimming Pools - 20 minute drive time***

**Deficiencies**

8.189 Current swimming pool deficiencies have been calculated on the basis of the supply and demand model results and these are shown in **Table 8.15**. This shows a small current deficiency of 140 square metres.

***Table 8.15: Current Swimming Pool Deficiencies<sup>186</sup>***

<b>Population (2010 Estimates)</b>	<b>Current level of provision (Square Metres)</b>	<b>Current level of provision (Square Metres per 1000)</b>	<b>Required level of provision (Square Metres)</b>	<b>Required level of provision (Square Metres per 1000)</b>	<b>Deficiency (Square Metres)</b>
220688	1460	6.61	1599	7.25	140

8.190 By 2026 the supply of water space will have increased to 1602 square metres and the deficiency will decrease to just 39 square metres. This is shown in **Table 8.16** below.

<sup>186</sup> Based on FPM Swimming Pools Report

**Table 8.16: Future Swimming Pool Deficiencies**

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Population (2026 Estimates)	Future level of provision (Square Metres)	Future level of provision (Square Metres per 1000)	Required level of future provision in 2026 (Square Metres)	Required future level of provision (Square Metres per 1000)	Deficiency (Square Metres)
229,018	1603	7.00	1642	7.17	39

8.191 Currently, the total capacity for sports halls is estimated to be 5,964 visits per week in the peak period. This equates to 32 badminton courts. The number of badminton courts required to meet the demand is 57 so the shortfall is 25 badminton courts.

**Table 8.17: Current Sports Halls Deficiencies**

Population (2010 Estimates)	Current level of provision (Badminton Courts)	Current level of provision (Badminton Courts per 1000)	Required level of provision (Badminton Courts )	Required level of provision (Badminton Courts per 1000)	Deficiency (Badminton Courts )
220688	32	0.15	57	0.26	25

8.192 In the future (2026), demand is predicted to increase to 10,643 visits which and will require 58 badminton courts to accommodate this demand. Supply increases to 6612 visits, which equates to 36 badminton courts, a shortfall of 22 badminton courts.

**Table 8.18: Future Sports Halls Deficiencies**

Population (2026 Estimates)	Current level of provision (Badminton Courts)	Current level of provision (Badminton Courts per 1000)	Required level of provision (Badminton Courts )	Required level of provision (Badminton Courts per 1000)	Deficiency (Badminton Courts )
229,018	36	0.16	58	0.25	22

8.193 The number of fitness stations required currently is 613 fitness stations within the Borough. The actual supply of accessible fitness stations is 928 indicating a surplus in provision of 315 stations. The future requirement will be for 633 stations and assuming that the number of stations remains the same, provision will exceed the standard by 295 stations. The position is summarized in **Table 8.19** below.

***Table 8.19: Current and Future Provision for Health & Fitness***

2010 Population	Current Number of Stations	Number of Stations Required	Surplus/Deficiency
178,256	928	613	315 in excess of standard
184,085	928	633	295 in excess of standard

## Outdoor sports facilities

### Definition

- 9.1 For the purposes of this report, outdoor sport and recreational facilities are defined as playing pitches (natural or artificial surfaces), greens, courts, athletic tracks, golf courses and other facilities, whether publicly or privately owned, with the primary purpose of participation in outdoor sports.

### Strategic Context

- 9.2 Millions of people take part in sport and physical activity, and it is now recognised that sport has a valuable role to play across a range of key policy agendas including:

- improving fitness and health;
- improving the environment;
- making a positive contribution to young people's attitude to learning;
- contributing towards reducing youth crime; and
- providing opportunities for 'active citizenship' through volunteering.<sup>187</sup>

- 9.3 The benefits of physical activity on health are clear, well evidenced and widely accepted. Thirty minutes of moderate activity five times a week can help to reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases, some cancers, strokes and obesity. Conversely, physical inactivity is an increasing problem, as the continuing rise in obesity and other inactivity-related health problems demonstrate. Government policy therefore aims to achieve a major increase in participation in sport and physical activity, primarily because of the significant health benefits, and also to reduce the growing social and health costs of inactivity.

- 9.4 A number of reports in recent years have highlighted the fact that people from ethnic minority communities are less likely to participate in sport and physical

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<sup>187</sup> "Realising the Potential: The Value of Sport", LGA 2001

activity and that Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities are the least active.<sup>188</sup>

9.5 Barriers to participation include:

- A lack of affordable facilities, 67% of ethnic minority groups live in the 88 most deprived local authority districts<sup>189</sup>. Studies have suggested that up to 57% of ethnic minority groups are excluded from participation in sport on the grounds of poverty.
- Lack of safe and culturally accessible facilities such as women only sessions.
- Lack of awareness amongst ethnic minority groups of the facilities and opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity locally.
- Lack of training and awareness amongst providers of diversity and cultural services.
- Fear of racism is a particular barrier to women accessing sporting facilities

9.6 Successful interventions to address these issues include:

- Where trust with the organisation and its staff has been established and a group feel safe that their religious and cultural needs are understood and respected.
- Projects that take place in local facilities that are familiar, easy to access and affordable.
- Projects that are developed and delivered through existing ethnic minority community groups
- Initiatives that offer single sex sessions and make clear in the service information how the environment and delivery will take into account religious and cultural needs

9.7 Other initiatives aiming to increase participation in sport focus on economically disadvantaged groups, in particular young people, women and older people.

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<sup>188</sup> Briefing Paper – Ethnic Minorities and Physical Activity, Sporting Equals, 2007.

<sup>189</sup> Ethnic Minorities and Physical Activity, Sporting Equals, 2007.

- 9.8 One significant known barrier to participation is lack of facilities, or of suitable facilities. Maintaining an adequate supply of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities to support the participation objective should therefore be a high priority.
- 9.9 Playing pitches are also important as recreational and amenity features and as an element of open space in the urban landscape. The loss of playing pitches to development has had serious repercussions, not only through the reduction of leisure facilities and the resulting pressure on those remaining, but also in the visual impact of loss of open space. The importance of pitches is demonstrated by Sport England's role as a statutory consultee on proposals for development affecting pitches<sup>190</sup>, and in the fact that PPG17 makes a presumption against development on this type of site. When a planning application is submitted that involves the loss of a playing field, it will be necessary to show not only that the area has a surplus of playing fields, but also a surplus of all other types of open space. Sport England will generally resist the loss of playing pitches and outdoor sports facilities unless strict criteria are met.

### **The Need for Outdoor Sports Facilities**

- 9.10 The need for outdoor sports facilities is a function of the numbers of potentially active people in the population and the levels of participation in individual sports.

### ***Active Population***

- 9.11 The Sport England Playing Pitch Model considers that the demand for playing pitches will come from the 'Active Population', which is considered to be between the ages of 6 and 55 years. However, for pitch sports such as football, with the highest levels of participation, the model indicates that demand will be from participants between the ages of 6 and 45. It is therefore pertinent to consider what changes are projected for these age groups in Harrow over the period to 2026.

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<sup>190</sup> Sport England has been a Statutory Consultee on planning applications that affect playing fields since 1996 (Statutory Instrument 1817, as amended by Statutory Instrument 2009/453).

**Table 9.1: Projected Changes in the ‘Active Population’ of Harrow 2010-2026**

Year/Age Group	Male	Female	Total
<b>2010</b>			
6-55	76,439	78,324	154,763
6-45	62,717	63,604	126,321
<b>2016</b>			
6-55	78,535	81,752	160,287
6-45	63,712	65,960	129,671
<b>2021</b>			
6-55	77,747	80,465	158,211
6-45	62,257	64,431	126,689
<b>2026</b>			
6-55	76,673	79,514	156,187
6-45	61,068	63,035	124,102

Source: GLA 2008 Round Low Ward Population Projections

- 9.12 The 6-55 age group shows an increase of 5,523 (3.6%) between 2010 and 2016. However, the numbers in this age group then decline by 2,075 up to 2021, although they remain 3,448 (2.2%) over the 2010 baseline. Numbers again decline to 2026, with the overall change between 2010 and 2026 being an increase of 1,424 (0.9%) over the 2010 baseline.
- 9.13 The 6-45 age group also shows an increase between 2010 and 2016 of 3,350 (2.7%). However, numbers drop back by 2021 with an increase of just 368 (0.2%) over the 2010 baseline. Numbers in this age group then decline by 2,218 (-1.4%) from the 2010 baseline.
- 9.14 On this basis and depending on levels of participation, the population that generates the demand for facilities for pitch sports will continue to grow up to 2016 but will then plateau in the period to 2026.



## ***Participation in Outdoor Sports***

9.15 The Active People Survey (APS)<sup>191</sup> of sport and recreation provides a detailed analysis of how participation varies between individual sports. Participation in a sport is defined as the number of adults in England (aged 16 plus) who have taken part in the sport at moderate intensity for 30 minutes or more at least once in the last week (at least four days out of the previous 28 days). The results for Harrow are compared with the England results and those of the adjoining local authorities in **Table 9.2** below.

9.16 A key goal for Sport England is to increase the ‘once a week’ adult participation<sup>192</sup> rates in individual sports, to get one million people doing more sport by 2012/2013.

***Table 9.2: Active People 3 - Percentage of adult population participating at least once in the last four weeks***

	<b>Harrow</b>	<b>England</b>	<b>Brent</b>	<b>Barnet</b>	<b>Hillingdon</b>	<b>Ealing</b>
Athletics	4.19%	6.39 %	6.06%	6.39%	4.53	7.47%
Bowls <sup>193</sup>	0.74%	1.01 %	0.33%	*	1.21%	*
Cricket	2.58%	1.02%	2.49%	*	*	*
Football	8.74%	7.44 %	8.66%	6.24%	9.74%	7.47%
Golf	2.98%	3.52 %	1.67%	2.05%	4.50%	1.80%
Hockey	*	0.37 %	0%	0%	0%	0%
Rugby	*	0.74 %	0.57%	*	*	*
Tennis	2.26%	2.37 %	2.84%	4.32%	2.96%	3.27%

*\* Numbers too small to be statistically reliable.*

9.17 **Table 9.2** shows that participation in Athletics, Bowls, Golf, Hockey, Rugby and Tennis is lower in Harrow than for England as a whole. However, ‘once a week’ participation shows that for Cricket and Football, the level of participation is

<sup>191</sup> The Active People Survey was carried out by Ipsos MORI on behalf of Sport England. APS 3, from which these figures are drawn, took place in 2009.

<sup>192</sup> Participation is defined as the number of adults (age 16 plus) who have taken part in the sport at moderate intensity for 30 minutes or more at least once in the last week (at least four days out of the previous 28 days).

<sup>193</sup> Only includes those aged 65 years and over.

higher than the national average<sup>194</sup>. Participation in these two sports is also higher than in adjoining local authorities with the exception of participation in football in Hillingdon.

- 9.18 These results indicate a continuing demand for the outdoor sports facilities in Cricket and Football, which are the sports that attract a participation level above the national average.
- 9.19 We have reviewed data from the 2005 study on sports clubs and teams. However, there will have been changes in patterns of participation for individual sports since then (for example, a significant growth in junior sport, and in women's participation, and a decline in participation by adults in some sports). We are also advised by the FA that the data they provided for this study is inaccurate and incomplete. In view of these uncertainties, we are reluctant to rely on this data to project any measure of demand for outdoor sports facilities. This would require a detailed playing pitch and outdoor sport assessment to be undertaken in accordance with the guidelines prepared by Sport England.<sup>195</sup>

### ***Trends in Participation***

- 9.20 Nationally, in the period between 2007/8 (APS 2) and 2008/9 (APS 3), 12 out of 33 sports have seen an increase in overall participant numbers, with athletics and tennis showing a statistically significant increase in participation rates.
- 9.21 Participation in athletics (including running and jogging) has grown from 1.61 million adults (3.9%) in 2007/8 to 1.74 million adults (4.2%) in 2008/9, an increase of 128,000 participants, while tennis participation has increased from 487,500 adults (1.2%) to 530,000 adults (1.3%), an increase of 43,000 participants.

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<sup>194</sup> It should be borne in mind that the sample size for the survey is 1007 base and that the numbers responding positively to the participation question are relatively small.

<sup>195</sup> Towards a level playing field : a guide to the production of playing pitch strategies Sport England, 2003 and revised in 2006.

- 9.22 Three outdoor sports - golf, rugby union and bowls<sup>196</sup> - have seen a statistically significant decrease in weekly participation rates between 2007/8 and 2008/9.

### **Football**

- 9.23 The “average” club consists of 3.8 teams, has 2 qualified (mostly level 1) coaches and 8.7 volunteers<sup>197</sup>. National participation trends indicate a decline in male adult 11-a-side football, especially in Sunday morning football<sup>198</sup>, with players defecting to five-a-side. There has been substantial growth in informal 5-a-side football<sup>199</sup> with 35% of 11-a-side players also playing 5-a-side football<sup>200</sup>, a growth which is attributed to changing leisure/work patterns, better facilities and improved team organisation. There are now more mid-week fixtures and greater use of non-grass pitches. Participation in football declines significantly after the age of 30 years<sup>201</sup>.
- 9.24 There has been an increase in the numbers of disabled children and adults participating in football with over 10,000 disabled children and adults participating in Ability Counts sessions. Over 600 football coaches have attended the Coaching Disabled Footballers Course and 45 Football in the Community schemes offer regular playing and coaching opportunities for disabled players.<sup>202</sup>
- 9.25 Key facts about football in Harrow are based on records of clubs affiliating for the season 2010-2011<sup>203</sup>. The FA has reported that Harrow has 12 Youth clubs with 143 teams. This is an average of 11.9 teams per club which is very much higher than the national average of 3.8 teams per club. 97.2% of youth teams have achieved the Charter Standard status. The FA report that given the high level of Charter Standard status the ratio of qualified coaches per team is likely to be close to 1:1.

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<sup>196</sup> The figure for bowls refers to participants aged over 65 participating for at least 30 minutes at any intensity

<sup>197</sup> The Football Development Strategy 2001–2006

<sup>198</sup> Reported by County FAs

<sup>199</sup> Data provided by FA (unpublished).

<sup>200</sup> Football Development Strategy 2001-06, Football Association

<sup>201</sup> 30.8% for age 16-19 years down to 8.8% age 30-44 years. General Household Survey (GHS) 2002.

<sup>202</sup> Football Facility Development Strategy 2003-2006, The Football Association

<sup>203</sup> Middlesex FA data.

- 9.26 The number of adult clubs is 26 with 39 teams, an average of 1.5 teams per club. There are 13 female teams playing in Harrow.

### ***Junior Football***

- 9.27 Mini-soccer has experienced a rapid growth since 1997, with 250,000 participants nationally under the age of ten. There has been a growth of 30% in the numbers of 7 – 10 year olds (of both genders) playing mini-soccer between 2003 and 2006, and the FA is currently examining the feasibility of introducing a new non-competitive 4 a side game for 5/6 year olds and a 9 a side game for under 11's.
- 9.28 A major quantitative survey, undertaken on behalf of the FA, interviewed 1,200 children throughout England in three age groups, 7-9, 10-12 and 13-15. The research showed that 60 per cent of the population of 7-15 year old girls in England - nearly 1.5 million girls - played football in 2002<sup>204</sup>.
- 9.29 Out of school, football has experienced the biggest growth of all sports in 'frequent' participation from 37% in 1994 to 43% in 2000. More children are playing due to the popularity of mini-soccer. Small-sided soccer and park matches account for a large proportion of football activity, while school-based participation only accounts for 19 per cent.

### ***Women's Football***

- 9.30 Football is now the most popular sport for females in England, with more players competing in affiliated competition than any other team sport, and overtook netball in 2002. There has been a huge increase in the number of women and girls who are regularly playing affiliated football from 96,044 in 2005 to 138,354 in 2009.<sup>205</sup>
- 9.31 In 1993 there were just 80 girls' teams, but by season 2004/2005 there were over 8,000 teams. Women's football is also the fastest growing participation

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<sup>204</sup> Research conducted on behalf of The FA conducted by BRMB.2003.

<sup>205</sup> Memorandum submitted by the Football Association to the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee on Women's Football (Fourth Report of Session 2005–06)

sport in the country, with 1.6 million women and girls taking part in recreational football. There has been an increase in the number of active accredited clubs within the sport from 490 in 2005 to 2,490 by 2009.

- 9.32 It is worth noting that, whilst between APS2 and APS3 participation amongst men decreased, female participant numbers increased over the same period.

### ***Rugby***

- 9.33 During the year Oct 08 to Oct 09 (APS3) 207,500 (0.5%) adults participated in 30 minutes moderate intensity rugby union at least once a week. This was a decrease of 22,800 from the APS2 baseline of 230,300. The decreases have been seen across all age groups, and also in the number of women playing rugby union.
- 9.34 A survey of rugby clubs undertaken by the RFU in 2006 had shown a growth of 13% in the number of players, including showed a growth in Mini rugby (+2%) and Youth rugby (+1%), offsetting a small decline in adult participants (-0.9%).
- 9.35 In 2006, the RFU estimated that overall participation in all club rugby had risen from 567,000 to 677,000 over the period 2003 to 2006, representing growth of 19 per cent.
- 9.36 The RFU's strategic plan target for 2005-13 is 2% per year increase in adult and youth participants which would mean another 25,000 adults and 15,000 13 to 18-year-olds coming into the sport. However, the APS3 survey results indicate that this target is not being achieved.

### ***Cricket***

- 9.37 National participation trends in cricket are showing an increase in interest and participation at all levels. This interest may be due in part to the introduction of the Chance 2 Shine programme into state schools, and the marketing of the professional game, through the introduction of Twenty20 cricket, which has taken the game to a new and more diverse audience.

- 9.38 The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) reports that there are 8,500 cricket clubs in England and Wales, all but a thousand of which are affiliated to the ECB through 39 County Boards. About 3,600 of those affiliated clubs have junior sections, and since 2004-5 there has been a 51 per cent rise in participation in cricket. Membership is up by 40%, and the numbers of women and girls playing the game has increased by 48 per cent.<sup>206</sup>
- 9.39 The ECB announced in April 2009 that there had been an increase in participation across the recreational game in 2008; an overall increase of 24% included
- a 49% increase in the number of women and girls taking part in cricket;
  - a 137% increase in disability cricket participation;
  - and a 30% increase in Black and ethnic minority participation.
- 9.40 A recent ECB report which used data collated from ECB Focus Clubs across England and Wales also recorded a 48% increase in Years 5, 6 and 7 school participation and a 33% increase in 5-16 year old participation across both schools and clubs.
- 9.41 APS 3 results show 206,600 adults (0.49%) are taking part in at least one moderate intensity, 30 minute session of cricket each week, a rise of 1,800 in weekly participation from the APS 2 results of 204,800.
- 9.42 There was an increase in the number of men participating in cricket and a decline in the number of women playing cricket between APS 2 and 3. The number of 35–54 year olds participating in cricket increased, but there were decreases in participation in the 16-19 and 25-29 year old groups, and an increase in the 20–24 year old group.

## ***Hockey***

- 9.43 English Hockey is seeking to attract more young people into the sport by developing the Single System for Hockey, which aims to ensure a clear and

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<sup>206</sup> Play Cricket - Making a Difference, ECB 2009

consistent pathway for juniors (girls and boys) aged 13-17 to progress from their Club or school through to (potentially) national level.

- 9.44 APS3 results show 95,700 adults (0.23%) took part in at least one moderate, 30 minute session of hockey a week, a decrease of 4,100 since APS2; an increase in male participation was more than offset by the fall in female participation over the same interval. Harrow Hockey Club is the only hockey club in Harrow and is based at Kenton Sports Club. The club uses two facilities, both of which are located in neighbouring local authority areas; home games are played at the Jewish Free School in Kingsbury (London Borough of Brent), and the club also uses the synthetic turf pitch (STP) at West London Academy in Northolt (London Borough of Ealing).

### ***Tennis***

- 9.45 Tennis is increasing in popularity and is now one of the most regularly played sports in the country. APS3 reported 530,200 (1.27%) adults participated in 30 minutes moderate intensity tennis at least once a week, an increase of 42,700 from the APS2 baseline of 487,500 (1.17%). Increases in participation have taken place in all age-groups bar those aged 35–44 years.
- 9.46 There was an increase in the number of men playing tennis between APS2 and 3. Also, between APS2 and 3 the number of tennis players increased across all socio-economic groups, particularly In NS-SEC groups 1-4, the professionals.<sup>207</sup>

### ***Bowls***

- 9.47 The APS2 Survey showed that 274,100 adults (age 16 and over) had participated in bowls at least once a week (0.65%). However APS3 showed a decrease to 249,800 (0.58%), a decline of 24,300 participants. Clubs are at the heart of everything that happens in bowls and this is reflected in the fact that 48.89% of participants were members of a club.

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<sup>207</sup> The NS-SEC (National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification) grouping is a classification scheme an individual's occupation, used to distinguish between different occupational groups and to classify occupations into different social-economic groupings.

### ***Athletics***

9.48 Active People 3 found that 1,739,700 (4.16%) of adults participated in 30 minutes moderate intensity athletics at least once a week, an increase from the APS2 baseline of 1,612,100 concentrated among those aged 25 - 29 and 45 - 64 years. There was an increase in the number of women taking part in athletics between APS2 and 3 and a smaller increase in the number of men.

### ***Netball***

9.49 APS3 indicated that 133,500 (0.32%) adults participated in 30 minutes moderate intensity netball at least once a week, an increase of 14,700. with particular focus in the 20 to 24 year age group. The number of netballers from professional socio-economic groups also showed an increase.

### ***Golf***

9.50 APS3 reported that 897,600 adults (2.15%) adults participated in 30 minutes moderate intensity golf at least once a week; this was a significant decrease of 50,700 between APS2 and 3. The decrease occurred in both genders but was especially concentrated among males.

9.51 All age groups apart from those aged 16 to 19 years showed some decrease in participation between APS2 and 3, with significant reduction among over 35s., and among professional groups.

### ***Conclusion***

9.52 Whilst there is some growth in the 'Active Population' in the period up to 2016, the numbers in the relevant age groups remain relatively stable. The outdoor sports predicting higher levels of participation in Harrow are Cricket, Football and Tennis, with the most likely need for facilities in the future to be to accommodate these sports. In addition, the lack of a suitable venue for Harrow Hockey Club within the borough indicates a latent demand for synthetic turf pitch facilities.



## Other Standards

### *Fields in Trust*

9.53 Fields in Trust (FIT) recommend Benchmark Standards based on the results of a survey of local planning authorities in the United Kingdom.<sup>208</sup> These Benchmark Standards are recommended by FIT as a tool for assisting in the development of local standards.

**Table 9.3: Fields in Trust Benchmark Standard Recommendations for Outdoor Sport**

Quantity Standard	
Playing Pitches	Benchmark Standard (hectares per 1000 population)
Urban Local Authority	1.15
Rural Local Authority	1.72
Overall	1.20
All Outdoor Sport	
Urban Local Authority	1.60
Rural Local Authority	1.76
Overall	1.60
Quality – Outdoor Sport	
Fields in Trust recommends the use of the Technical Performance Quality Standards published in 'Design and Maintenance of Outdoor Sports Facilities' <sup>209</sup> for both pitches and other outdoor facilities.	
Accessibility	
Playing Pitches	Playing pitches should be available within 1.2 kilometres of all dwellings in major residential areas.
Athletics Track	One synthetic track with floodlighting per 250,000 people living within 30 minutes drive time.
Tennis	Community tennis courts within 20 minutes travel time (walking in urban areas, by car in rural areas)
Bowls	One green within 20 minutes travel time (walking in urban areas, by car in rural areas)

<sup>208</sup> Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play. Fields in Trust. 2009.

<sup>209</sup> 'The Design and Maintenance of Outdoor Sports Facilities' Peter Dury, NPFA, Fields in Trust (2004)

### ***The Performance Quality Standard (PQS)***

9.54 The Institute of Groundsmanship (IoG) has developed the Performance Quality Standard (PQS) which has been adopted by the National Governing Bodies of Sport for cricket, football and rugby.

9.55 The Performance Quality Standard (PQS) sets the basic standard recommended for natural grass pitches, which may be located at a variety of locations including a club site, within a park or recreational ground. Principally, this recommends that a natural grass pitch must:

- have adequate grass cover
- have a low level of weed coverage
- be flat
- have the ability to drain water

If met, the PQS ensures a flat drained surface suitable for 'recreational' and competitive pitch sports.

## **Audit**

### ***Quantity and Quality of Outdoor Sports Pitches***

9.56 PPG17 recommends that the audit for outdoor sport should include golf courses, school playing fields and private recreation grounds on the basis that they may provide some recreational value to users, even though these may not be available for formal community use.

9.57 Golf courses have been included in the audit. However, they occupy a large area which means that they are not comparable with other types of outdoor sports facilities. They have been excluded from the quantity calculations and standard setting because their large hectarage would distort the results.

**Table 9.4: Area of Sports Pitches per 1000 population**

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Sports Pitches (Hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population	Persons per Hectare
Central	52615	22.21	0.42	2,369
Northeast	32732	23.73	0.72	1,379
Northwest	40178	60.51	1.51	664
Southeast	40065	29.93	0.75	1,339
Southwest	55098	23.40	0.42	2,355
<b>Total</b>	<b>220688</b>	<b>159.77</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>1,381</b>

9.58 The total area of outdoor sports pitch sites in Harrow is 159.77 hectares. The Northwest sub-area has the largest area of sports pitches with 60.51 hectares, just under two fifths (38%) of the total for the borough. There is a relatively even spread across the remaining sub-areas.

9.59 This area equates to 0.72 ha per 1000 population. The Northwest sub-area has more than double the overall figure at 1.51 hectares per 1,000, while the Northeast and Southeast sub-areas have provision close to that for Harrow overall at 0.72 hectares and 0.75 hectares respectively. The lowest provision is in the Central and Southwest sub-areas, both with 0.42 hectares per 1,000.

9.60 When the number of persons per hectare of playing pitches is considered the overall figure for Harrow is 1,381. A similar pattern emerges when the sub-areas are considered separately, with the lowest number of people per hectare being in the Northwest (664) and the highest in the Central sub-area with 2,369 persons per hectare. The Southwest sub-area also has a high number of people per hectare (2,355). Figures for the Northeast and Southeast sub-areas are close to the overall for Harrow. (see **Table 9.5** above).

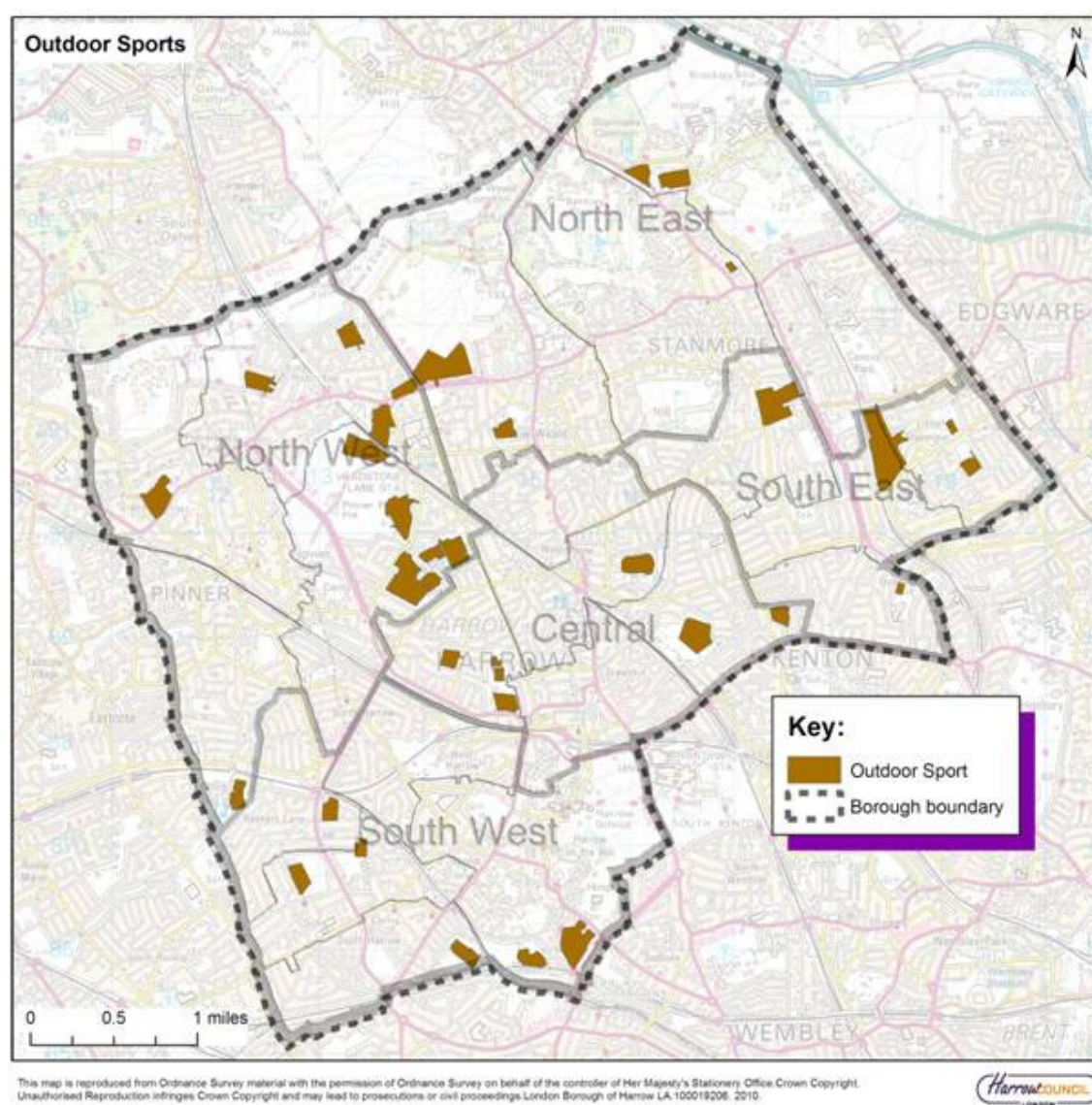
**Table 9.5: Outdoor pitches in Harrow**

Sub-area	Adult Football Pitches	Junior Football Pitches	Mini Football Pitches	Cricket Pitches	Rugby Pitches	Total Pitches	Total sites
Central	11	5	2	4		22	6
Northeast	4	3	5		7	19	5
Northwest	20	10	14	9	2	55	11
Southeast	8	4	4			16	5
Southwest	9	2	4	8		23	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>33</b>

9.61 **Table 9.6** shows the number of outdoor sports pitches in Harrow, including all types of grass football pitches, cricket and rugby pitches. The total is 135 pitches situated on 33 sites. Playing Pitch sites are shown on **Map 9.1**.

9.62 The sub-area with the largest number of pitches is the Northwest with 55 pitches which represents 41% of the total number of pitches and is more than twice that in any other sub-area. The remaining sub-areas have between 16 and 23 pitches each, the lowest provision being in the Southeast sub-area

**Map 9.1: All pitch sites in Harrow**



### **Football - Quantity**

- 9.63 The total number of football pitches in Harrow is 105 on 25 sites; half are adult pitches, just under one quarter are junior pitches and the rest are mini sized pitches.
- 9.64 The sub-area with by far the greatest proportion of football pitches is the Northwest with 42%; the remaining sub-areas all have fewer than half this number, the lowest provision being in the Northeast with 11% of all football pitches. The figures are shown in **Table 9.6**.

**Table 9.6: Numbers of football pitches**

Sub-area	Outdoor Adult Pitches	Outdoor Junior Pitches	Outdoor Mini Pitches	Total Number of Football Pitches
Central	11	5	2	18
Northeast	4	3	5	12
Northwest	20	10	14	44
Southeast	8	4	4	16
Southwest	9	2	4	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>105</b>

9.65 In terms of the proportion of small sided pitches to adult pitches, the sub-area with the highest proportion of these is the Northeast where two thirds of all pitches are either junior or mini. The other sub-areas have more adult pitches than either junior or mini pitches. The sub-areas with the highest proportion of adult pitches are the Central and Southwest with 61% and 60% of all pitches respectively.

### **Quality of Football Pitches**

9.66 Quality Assessments were undertaken of all pitches using a slightly modified version of the Sport England Visual Quality Assessment. This covers 19 categories including such attributes as the extent of grass cover, weeds, adequacy of safety margins, slope, evenness and problem areas of pitches. The median quality score for football pitches was 59%.

**Table 9.7: Quality of Football Pitches**

Sub-area	No. of pitches on or above the median score	No. of pitches below the median score	Total
Central	3	15	18
Northeast	6	6	12
Northwest	31	13	44
Southeast	6	10	16
Southwest	9	6	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>105</b>

9.67 **Table 9.7** shows the distribution of pitches above and below the borough-wide median quality score, for each sub-area.

9.68 The Northwest sub-area has the greatest proportion of pitches above the median score (70%). Contrasting with this, only 17% of pitches in the Central sub-area score above the median score. Quality scores for individual pitches can be found in **Appendix 10**.

9.69 Apart from the pitches used by semi – professional clubs, which usually score very highly, examples of sites with good pitches include those at Broadfields Country Club and John Lyon School where all pitches were either good or excellent.

9.70 There is huge disparity between scores achieved by pitches in private clubs and private schools and those at Local Authority sites. No Local Authority site had pitches which all scored above the median. Several Local Authority sites had pitches both below and above the median, notably the large sites at Headstone Manor with most pitches scoring just above the median and Whitchurch Playing Field with most below the median. All the pitches at Byron Recreation Ground, Kenton Recreation Ground, Newton Park, Roxeth Park and the sole pitches at Chandos Recreation Ground, Stanmore Recreation Ground and Queensbury Recreation Ground scored below the median. The worst pitches were at Queensbury Recreation Ground, Byron Recreation Ground and Newton Park.

9.71 Sport England's Quality Assessment includes a definition of the quality of pitches as shown in **Table 9.8** below. The median score for Harrow's football pitches was 59% which represents a "below average pitch".

**Table 9.8: Sport England Pitch Quality Ratings**

Score	Rating
Score 91% or greater	An excellent pitch
Score 71 to 90%	A good pitch
Score 61 to 70%	An average pitch
Score 40 to 60%	A below average pitch
Score less than 40%	A poor pitch

9.72 **Table 9.19** below shows the distribution of scores in relation to the Sport England definition of quality.

**Table 9.9: Pitch Ratings**

Sub-area	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor	Total
Central	0	0	3	13	2	18
Northeast	0	0	5	7	0	12
Northwest	1	8	17	18	0	44
Southeast	0	0	4	10	2	16
Southwest	1	6	2	3	3	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>105</b>

9.73 Only 15% of Harrow's pitches rate as good or excellent; over half score as below average or poor (55%). Only in the Northwest and Southwest sub-areas do the majority of pitches score average or above (59% and 60% respectively). In the Central and Southeast sub-areas at least three quarters of pitches are below average or poor (83% and 75% respectively).



9.74 Thus the Northwest sub-area has by far the highest quantity of football pitches, and these pitches tend to be of better quality than those in the rest of the Borough.

### **Cricket**

**Table 9.10: Number of Cricket Pitches**

Sub-area	Cricket Pitches
Central	4
Northeast	0
Northwest	9
Southeast	0
Southwest	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>

9.75 Harrow has a total of 21 cricket pitches on 15 sites. These are unevenly distributed across the Borough with the majority of pitches in the Northwest and Southwest sub-areas (17 pitches). The central sub-area has 4 pitches; there are no cricket sites in either the Northeast or Southeast sub-areas.

9.76 Quality assessments of all cricket pitches were undertaken using the modified version of Sport England's Quality Assessment.<sup>210</sup> The median quality score for cricket pitches is 84%.

<sup>210</sup> In the opinion of the ECB, the VQA provides a poor assessment of cricket pitches and that for a true understanding a Pitch Quality Standard (PQS) report would need to be conducted. The ECB considers that without a core sample taken, it is impossible from a visual inspection alone to know how the pitch will play. To get a proper assessment of the quality of the pitches a cricket PQS assessment would need to be undertaken on each square.

**Table 9.11: Quality of Cricket Pitches**

Sub-area	No. of pitches on or above the median score	No. of pitches below the median score	Total
Central	2	2	4
Northeast	0	0	0
Northwest	2	7	9
Southeast	0	0	0
Southwest	6	2	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>21</b>

9.77 Half the pitches (10 of them) are at or above the median score, while 11 pitches score below this level.

9.78 The Central sub-area has equal numbers of pitches which score above and below the median (2 each). However, nearly all the pitches in the Northwest sub-area score below the median (7 out of a total of 9 pitches.) Conversely, the majority of the pitches in the Southwest sub-area score above the median (6 out of 8 pitches).

9.79 The highest scoring pitches were mainly found at the private club and private school sites, the majority of which are situated in the southwest of the Borough. The best pitches were found at John Lyon school (97%) and Harrow Cricket Club (93%), both private sites, and also at Headstone Manor Recreation Ground (93%).

**Table 9.12: Pitch Ratings - cricket**

Sub-area	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor	Total
Central	0	4	0	0	0	4
Northeast	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northwest	1	7	1	0	0	9
Southeast	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southwest	4	4	0	0	0	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>

9.80 According to Sport England's definition, virtually all the pitches are either good or excellent (20 out of a total of 21). One pitch was rated average and no pitches score below this level. The majority of the excellent pitches are in the Southwest sub-area where half the pitches are excellent. All the pitches in the Central sub-area are rated as good, as are the majority of pitches in the Northwest sub-area.

### **Rugby**

9.81 There are 7 rugby pitches in Harrow on three sites; these are distributed unevenly across the Borough with 5 pitches in the Northeast sub-area and 2 pitches in the Northwest sub-area. There are no rugby pitches in the Central, Southeast or Southwest sub-areas.

**Table 9.13: Number of Rugby Pitches**

Sub-area	Rugby Pitches
Central	0
Northeast	5
Northwest	2
Southeast	0
Southwest	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>

**Table 9.14 Quality of Rugby Pitches**

Sub-area	No. of pitches on or above the median score	No. of pitches below the median score	Total
Central	0	0	0
Northeast	2	3	5
Northwest	2	0	2
Southeast	0	0	0
Southwest	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>

9.82 The median score for rugby pitches is 66%; four pitches score at or above this median level and 3 below the median. However most of the scores are relatively close to the median, ranging from 77% to 61%. The two pitches in the Northwest sub-area score above the median; the Northeast contains 2 pitches above and 3 below the median score.

**Table 9.15: Pitch Ratings - rugby**

Sub-area	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor	Total
Central	0	0	0	0	0	0
Northeast	0	5	0	0	0	5
Northwest	0	2	0	0	0	2
Southeast	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southwest	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>

9.83 All the rugby pitches are rated as good using the Sport England definition of pitch ratings.

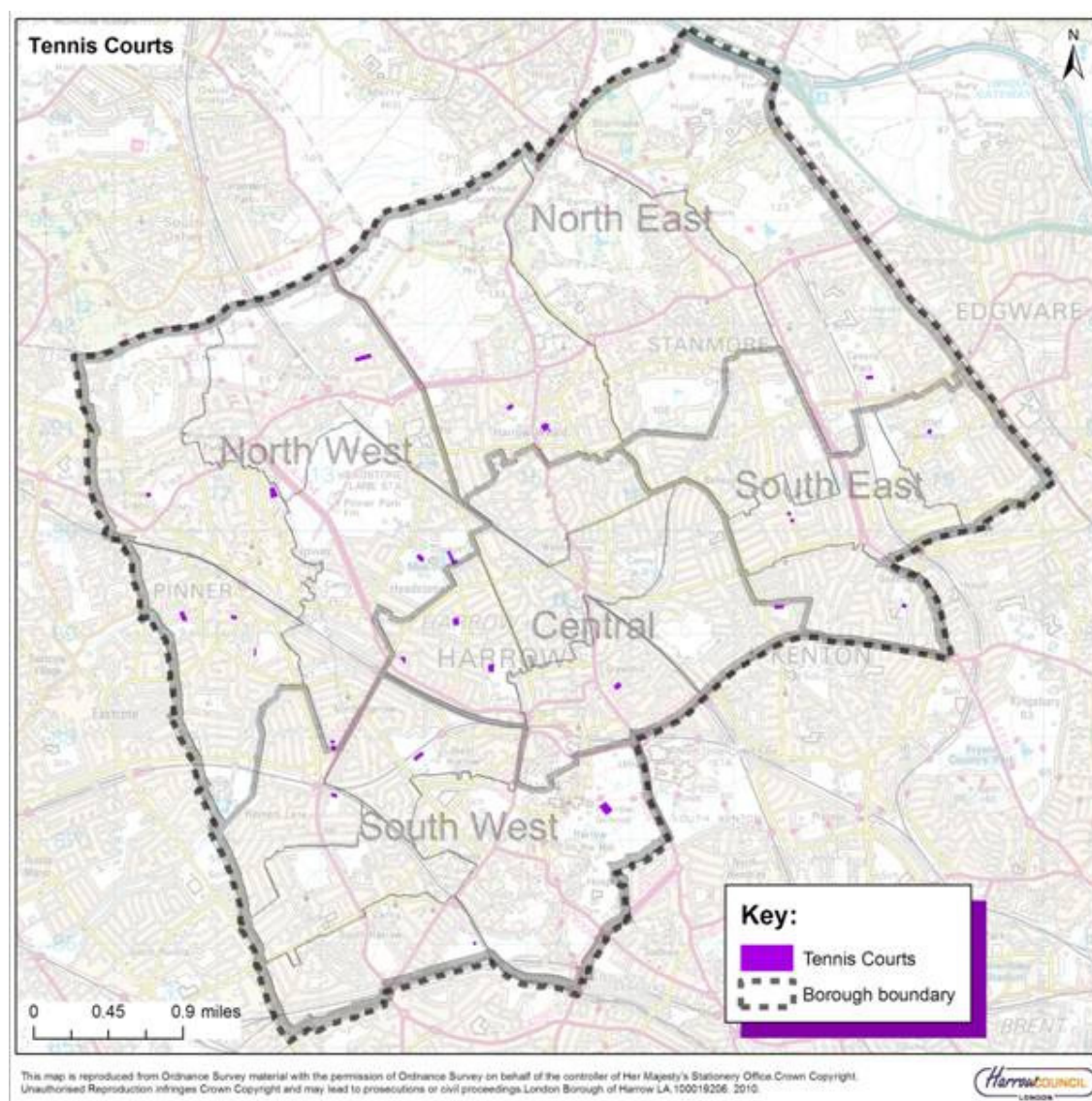
### ***Pitch Changing Accommodation***

- 9.84 Changing accommodation premises were assessed using the Sport England assessment, which covers features such as the quality of toilets and showers and fitments, presence of non slip floor, fire safety arrangements, provision for disabled and segregated changing.
- 9.85 There is great contrast between the quality of the private facilities and those managed by the Local Authority. The highest score is achieved by the brand new facility, Barnet Football Academy at 100%; other high scoring changing sites are John Lyon School and Zoom Leisure (93% and 95% respectively). The lowest score is Headstone Manor changing at 29% followed by Kenton Recreation Ground at 40% and Montesoles at 44%.
- 9.86 The majority of Local Authority changing facilities do not make specific provision for female participants and are of such poor quality they would be likely to deter most women from using them.
- 9.87 The changing scores for all sites can be found in **Appendix 10**.

### ***Quantity and quality - Tennis***

- 9.88 Harrow contains 114 tennis courts on 24 sites; 14 of these are private clubs and the remaining 10 are Local Authority sites situated in Parks and Recreation Grounds. The number of courts varies from one at Roxeth Recreation Ground to 12 at Harrow School, home of the Harrow Tennis Club. Most sites have more than one court. Tennis Courts are shown on **Map 9.2**.

**Map 9.2 Tennis Courts in Harrow**



9.89 The distribution of tennis sites across the sub-area is uneven; the Northwest sub-area contains 9 sites, more than twice as many sites as any other sub-area. The Northeast sub-area has the lowest number of sites (3) and the Central, Southeast and Southwest sub-areas each have 4 tennis sites.

9.90 In terms of the number of courts the distribution shows a similar pattern with the Northwest sub-area containing just under 40% of all courts (45 courts) and the Northeast containing 15 courts (13%). The Southeast and Central sub-areas contain 16 courts each and the Southwest sub-area has slightly more at 22 courts. (See **Table 9.16**)

**Table 9.16: Number of Tennis Courts**

Sub-area	Tennis Courts	Number of Tennis Sites
Central	16	4
Northeast	15	3
Northwest	45	9
Southeast	16	4
Southwest	22	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>24</b>

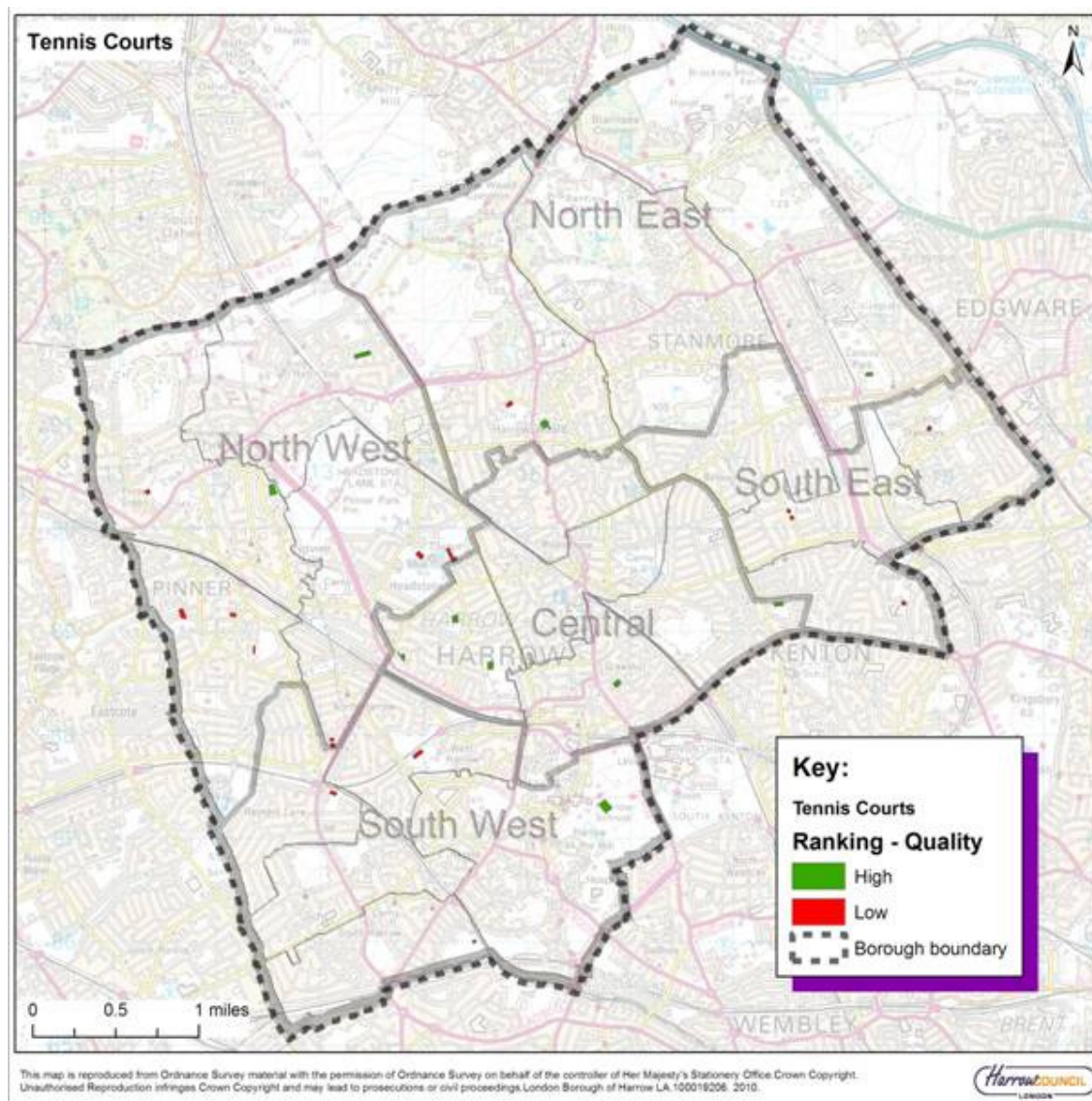
9.91 All the courts were assessed using criteria such as surface condition, condition of nets, lines and fences. The median score for quality is 87.5%. There is great polarisation of the scores, with the lowest scoring courts being those at West Harrow Recreation Ground, Montesoles and Pinner Village Gardens - all of which score less than 40% - and the highest scoring courts at Harrow School and Clonard Way Tennis Club scoring 100%. **Map 9.3** shows the distribution of these scores.

**Table 9.17: Quality of Tennis Courts**

Sub-area	No. of pitches on or above the median score	No. of pitches below the median score	Total
Central	16	0	16
Northeast	11	4	15
Northwest	13	32	45
Southeast	6	10	16
Southwest	15	7	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>114</b>



**Map 9.3: Quality and value of tennis courts**



- 9.92 Overall 61 tennis courts score on or above the median score for quality and 53 courts score below this level. All the courts in the Central sub-area and the majority of courts in the Northeast and Southwest sub-areas score above the median. Conversely over 70% of the courts in the Northwest sub-area and the majority of courts in the Southeast sub-area score below the median level.
- 9.93 The highest scoring courts are located in private clubs; the only courts on Local Authority sites to score above the median level are those at Harrow Recreation Ground at 90.6%. The median quality score is high, though, and the courts at



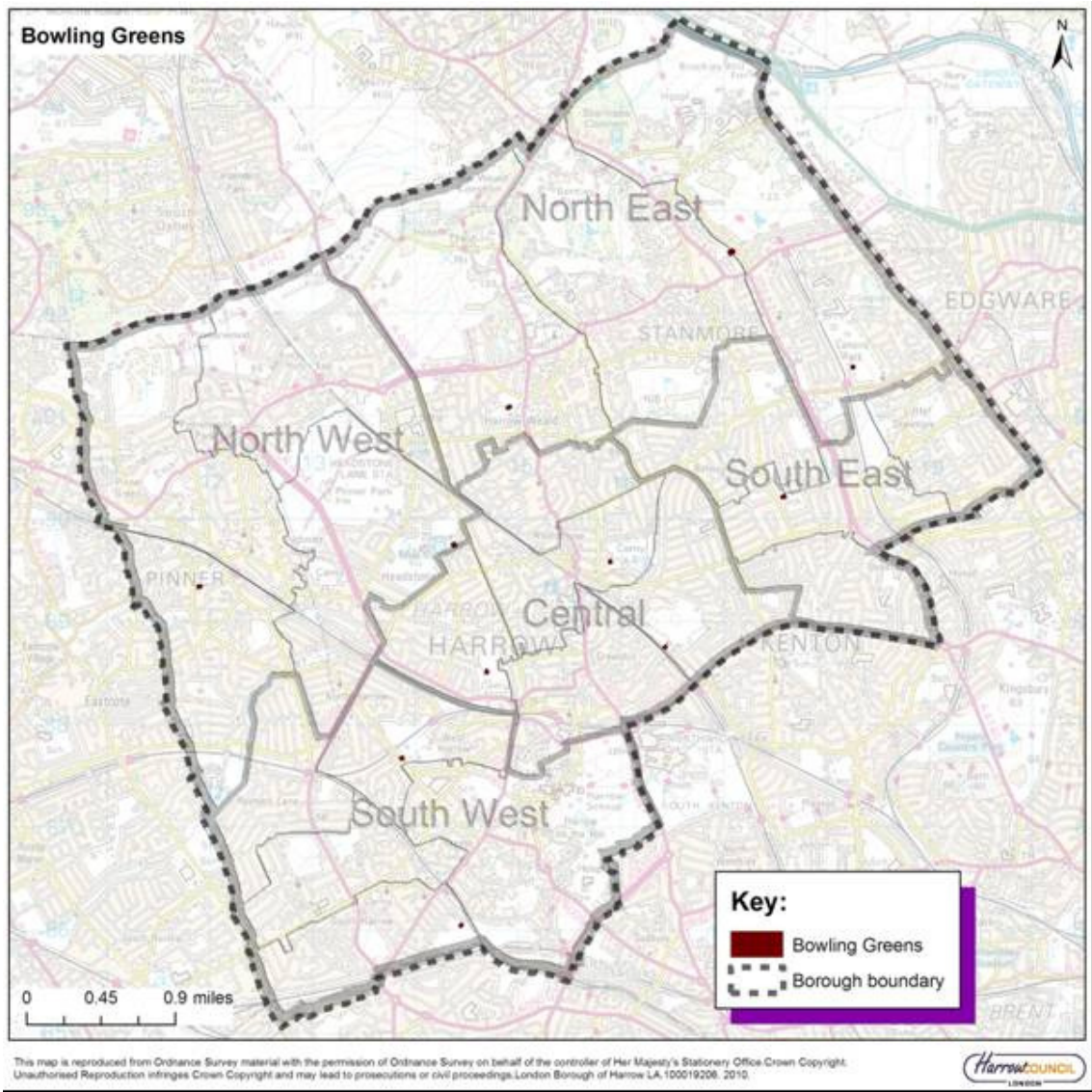
Centenary Park and Harrow Weald Recreation ground are only just below it at 84.4%.

- 9.94 Private tennis clubs operate a membership scheme so that availability is very different from local authority courts, which are mostly available to residents free of charge. It is therefore important to bear in mind that, although Harrow has a large number of tennis courts, many are only available to those willing and able to afford membership fees.
- 9.95 Private courts are located at 14 out of 24 sites. They account for two thirds (75 courts) of all tennis courts in Harrow. Thirty-nine courts, a third of the total, are openly accessible to the public (**Table 9.17**).

***Quantity and quality - bowls***

- 9.96 Harrow contains 11 bowling greens, either within Parks and Recreation Grounds or as free standing private clubs. (see **Table 9.18**). These are shown on **Map 9.3**.

**Map 9.3: Bowling Greens in Harrow**



**Table 9.18: Distribution of Bowling Greens**

Sub-area	Bowling Greens
Central	4
Northeast	3
Northwest	1
Southeast	1
Southwest	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

9.97 The bowling greens are unevenly distributed across the sub-areas with the highest number in the Central sub-area (4 greens), 3 greens in the Northeast, 2 in the Southwest and one in each of the Northwest and Southeast sub-areas. However two of the greens, one in the Central sub-area and one in the Southwest, are not in use at present.

9.98 Most greens are located within Parks and Recreation Grounds and are maintained by the Local Authority; the exceptions are the private clubs at Kodak Bowls Club and Acorn Bowls Club.

### **Quality of Bowling Greens**

9.99 The bowling greens were assessed using a quality assessment developed in consultation with the English Bowling Association (now Bowls England). This covers twelve attributes, including firmness of ground, grass cover, playing surface, condition of gully, bank and surrounds. All the bowling greens were assessed except Roxeth and Kenton which were not in use at the time of the survey.

9.100 The bowling greens are all of good quality with the median score being 81.5%; scores range from 63% to 91%.

**Table 9.19: Quality of Bowling Greens**

Sub-area	No. of greens on or above the median score	No. of greens below the median score	Total
Central	3	0	3
Northeast	1	2	3
Northwest	1	0	1
Southeast	1	0	1
Southwest	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>

9.101 Seven greens score on or above the median score. Two greens score below the median level; both are in the Northeast sub-area. Greens in all the other sub-areas score on or above the median.

9.102 The highest scoring green is at Pinner Bowls Club, adjoining Pinner Memorial Park, and the lowest scoring is the privately owned Acorn Bowls Club, adjacent to Canons Park.

### ***Quantity and quality - Croquet***

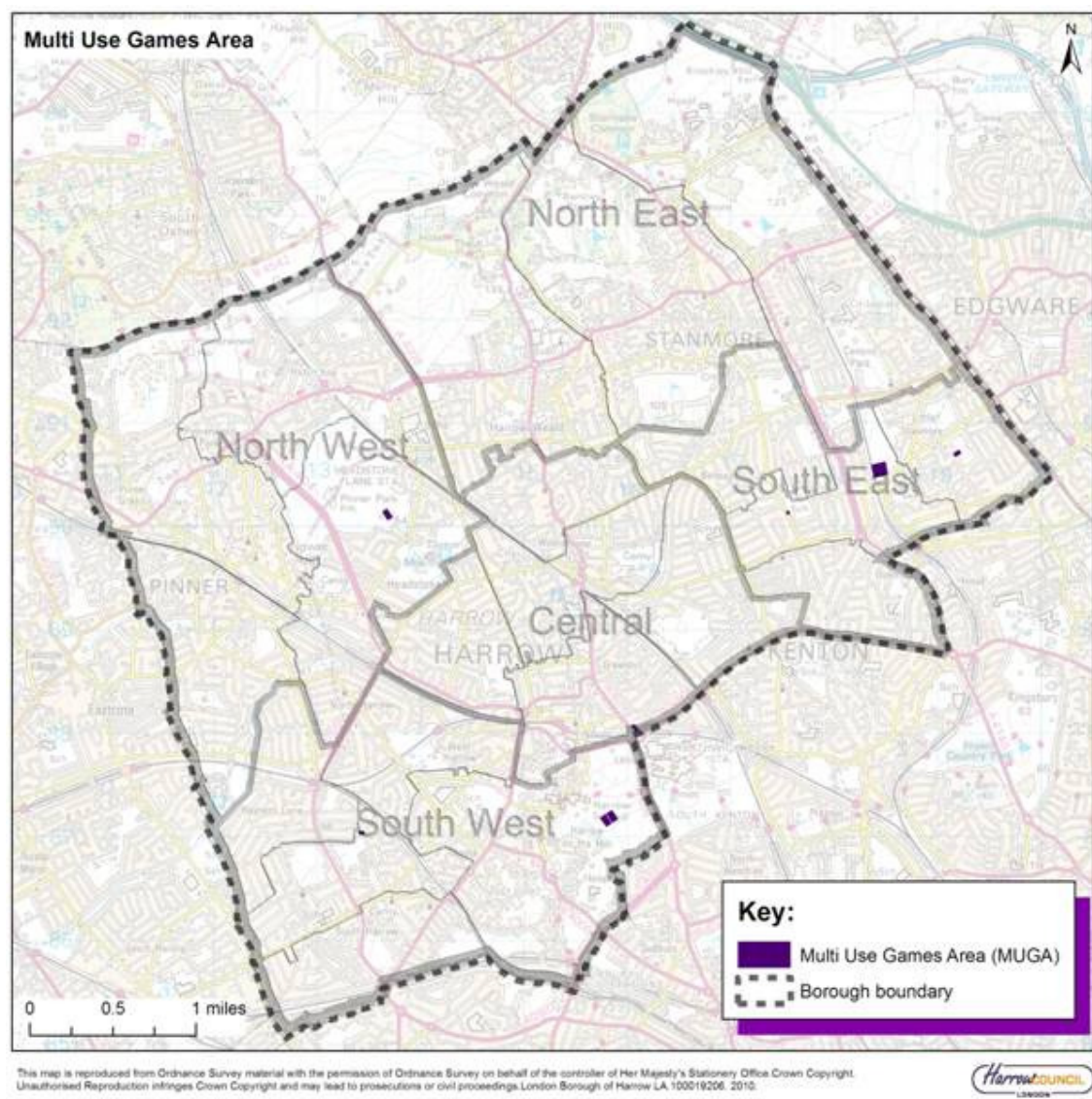
9.103 Croquet was played in the Harrow Recreation Ground until a fire destroyed the pavilion in 2001. The lawn hosted national competitions at one time, but it is no longer used for croquet and has more recently been used for five a side football and arts events.

### ***Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs) and Synthetic Turf Pitches (STPs)***

9.104 Harrow has seven sites with MUGAs or Synthetic Turf Pitches which are available to the community and are used for sport. These are shown on **Map 9.4**. These usually have lighting and proper fencing. Smaller MUGAs of a more informal nature and Ball Courts have been excluded from this section of the report as they are considered to be primarily used for play and informal

recreation; these have been included as part of provision for teenagers in the section on play.

**Map 9.4 MUGA sites in Harrow**



9.105 MUGAs and STPs all exist on sites which contain other outdoor sports facilities. There are a total of 14 MUGAs and 5 STPs on the 7 sites. (see **Table 9.21**).

**Table 9.20: Location of MUGAs and STPs**

Sub-area	No. of sites	No. of MUGAs	No. of STPs
Central	1	4	0
Northeast	0	0	0
Northwest	1	8	0
Southeast	3	1	3
Southwest	2	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>5</b>

9.106 Provision of MUGAs and STPs is unevenly spread with no facilities in the Northeast sub-area. The Central and Northwest sub-areas each have one site containing 4 and 8 MUGAs respectively. The Southeast and Southwest are better served with 3 and 2 sites respectively with both MUGAs and STPs.

9.107 All the STPs are in the Southeast and Southwest, the Southeast having 2 full size STPs at Barnet Football Club (the HIVE site) and one three quarter size at William Ellis School. The Southwest has 2 full size STPs at Harrow School.

### **Quality of MUGAs and STPs**

9.108 The MUGAs and STPs were assessed against attributes such as evenness, surface condition, line markings, condition of lighting and fencing.

9.109 Quality of MUGAs is generally good and the quality of STPs is very good. The best facilities are the new 3G type STPs at Barnet Football Club, which score 100%, followed by the two STPs at Harrow School each scoring 97.3% (one sand based and one 3G type). The highest scoring MUGAs are at Centenary Park (91.9%) and Harrow Sports College (86.5%). The MUGA with the lowest score is the training MUGA at Rayners Lane FC with 56.8%.

### ***Quantity and quality - Golf***

9.110 Harrow is home to three 18-hole and four 9-hole courses totalling 90 holes.

These are detailed in **Table 9.21** below. The ratio of holes per 1000 population is 0.41 compared to a ratio of 0.68 per 1000 population for England.

***Table 9.21: Golf Course Provision in Harrow***

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Holes</b>	<b>Yardage</b>	<b>Standard Scratch Score</b>	<b>Access</b>
Centenary Park Golf Course	9	785	27	Pay and Play
Grims Dyke Golf Club	18	5,600	67	Sports Club / Community Association
Harrow Hill Golf Course	9	1,200	27	Pay and Play
Harrow School Golf Club	9	3,690	57	Registered Membership use
Pinner Hill Golf Club	18	6,393	Men: 71 / Ladies: 73	Sports Club / Community Association
Stanmore Golf Club	18	5,885	68	Pay and Play
Stanmore and Edgware Golf Centre	9	1,102	27	Pay and Play

9.111 The English Golf Union (EGU) does not currently have a recommended standard of provision, but this is likely to change as part of the EGP facility strategy. In the view of the EGU, the focus should be on ensuring appropriate accessibility and affordability to get into golf and remain a regular participant. The EGU's GolfMark<sup>211</sup> accreditation would support this.

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<sup>211</sup> [www.golfmark.org](http://www.golfmark.org)

## Key consultation findings - outdoor sport

### Quantity

9.112 As with some of the other less well-used types of space, a substantial proportion of local residents feel unable to comment on the quantity of outdoor sport space, so there is a large “don’t know” group here.<sup>212</sup> Among those who do respond on this issue, though, the majority view is that provision is about right (56% say this), with a significant minority view that the area needs more outdoor sports provision (43% say this). Very few respondents suggest that the borough has too much outdoor sport space.

**Table 9.22: Residents’ views on the quantity of outdoor sports provision**

Sub-area	Proportion of residents wanting more outdoor sport provision
Central	44%
Northeast	39%
Northwest	35%
Southeast	46%
Southwest	46%
Overall	43%
N(=100%)	780

9.113 This general balance of opinion pertains across all five sub-areas, with minor variations; demand for more space is lower in the Northeast and the Northwest, but the difference between these sub-areas and their neighbours is not especially marked. This difference may in fact be rooted in the respective age-profiles of these sub-areas, rather than being purely geographical.

9.114 Age certainly is a stronger determinant of demand; the older a person is the less likely they are to see a need for more outdoor sports space, but even in the younger age-groups the majority view is still that there is enough space of this

<sup>212</sup> A total of 780 residents express an opinion here. This response is accurate to within +/- 3.5% at the 95% confidence interval.



type, and although men, and families with children, are more likely to want more outdoor sports space, again the demand for more does not challenge the prevailing view that there is adequate provision already.

9.115 In fact the only demographic group where demand for more space is a majority view is among the borough's Asian community; here, over half (51%) want to see more provision, while just 48% think there is enough already.

### **Usage**

9.116 The frequency with which local people play organised outdoor sports is shown in this table:

**Table 9.23: Frequency of use**

Frequency of use	Proportion of people (%)
Once or twice a week	10%
Two or three times a month	6%
Once a month	2%
Once every two or three months	4%
Once or twice a year	5%
Less often	7%
Never	66%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1055</i>

9.117 Outdoor sports are not a prominent feature of life in the borough for many people, and are a comparative minority interest at present; two thirds of local residents (66%) say they never play organised outdoor sports. Among those who do participate, levels of commitment vary but around one in five residents (18%) say they take part in outdoor sports at least monthly, and half of these play at least weekly.

9.118 Participation follows this general pattern in all sub-areas, but it is noticeable that the proportion of residents who never play outdoor sports is much higher in the Northwest (74%) and the Northeast (68%) than in the other three sub-areas.

The frequency of participation is also higher in the Southwest, Central and Southeast than in the other sub-areas, with a stronger commitment to weekly activity.

- 9.119 Perhaps unsurprisingly, outdoor sports participation is higher among the younger age-groups, and tends to fall away among middle-aged residents; over a quarter of under 35s (27%) play at least monthly, but this falls to just 5% of those aged 51 to 65. After retirement, however, participation rises again and one in eight over 65s (12%) is active at least once a month (in fact most of these play at least weekly). People with disabilities, however, are relatively unlikely to participate in outdoor sport and just 11% do so on a monthly basis; this is primarily because of the overlap between disability and older age, which also limits interest in outdoor sport.
- 9.120 Men are twice as likely to play sport at least monthly - a quarter (25%) do so, against just 12% of women who play this often. Asian and Black people also play more often than their White counterparts – participation at least monthly in the Asian ethnic group is 21%, and is similar in the Black community, but just 13% of White people take part this often.
- 9.121 The locations for playing outdoor sport are many and varied and no one site gets mentioned more than a few times; the most mentions are for Kenton Recreation Ground. What is evident is that private sports grounds are being widely used alongside local authority provision, some school sites are mentioned, and some people travel outside the borough to play. In fact around 22% of the sites mentioned are outside the borough itself (this number might understate the extent of travel, as some club names are valid both inside and outside the borough and it is not always clear whether a local facility is being meant).

### ***Quality***

- 9.122 Many respondents are reluctant to express a view on quality as they do not have the knowledge to do so. With outdoor sport, it is also more helpful to distinguish between the comments of those visiting local sites and those travelling further afield, as the latter are a large minority of users.

9.123 This table shows people's opinion of different attributes of outdoor sport in Harrow, using mean scores<sup>213</sup> to enable a comparison of the results. The numbers involved are small, though, and should be interpreted with caution.

**Table 9.24: Views about the quality of outdoor sports provision**

Attribute	Mean score for local outdoor sport	Mean score for non-local outdoor sport
Quality of playing surface	0.25	1.18
Quality of changing/shower facilities	-0.52	0.80
N (=100%)	119	35

9.124 A very modest positive rating is given to the quality of the playing surface at local Harrow sites, but the rating for changing facilities and showers is very much lower and is a modest negative score. If we look at how the different genders score local Harrow facilities, there is a marked difference in opinion; women score both attributes lower than men, and are especially critical of the changing and shower facilities, which they rate at -0.71, in comparison with a male rating of -0.32.

9.125 The potential for improvement is well illustrated by the comparison with out-of-borough sites, where higher scores pertain especially on the playing surface issue.

9.126 This table lists the most common suggestions for improvement to outdoor sports facilities:

<sup>213</sup> A mean score is calculated by applying a score to each response for each criterion. A rating of excellent attracts a score of 2, a rating of good is scored at 1, and ratings of below average or poor are scored at -1 or -2 respectively. "Average" and "don't know" are scored as zero and do not affect the result. The resulting score is then averaged across all respondents, giving an overall score somewhere between +2 and -2. A negative score indicates a balance of negative opinion, whilst a positive score indicates a positive opinion overall; the higher the score in either direction, the stronger that opinion is.

**Table 9.25: Suggestions for improvement**

Area for improvement	No. of mentions
Improve playing surface	41
Improve showers/changing facilities	26
Improve pitch/court markings	24
Improve maintenance	17
<i>N</i>	<i>267</i>

9.127 The results here are consistent with the preceding question exploring quality attributes and highlight the main areas for improvement.

### **Accessibility**

9.128 This table shows how people normally travel to their preferred outdoor sports sites:

**Table 9.26: Mode of travel**

Mode of travel	Proportion of respondents who play sports
Walk/jog	41%
Car	49%
Public transport	3%
Cycle	1%
Other	5%
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>361</i>

9.129 About half of all travel to outdoor sports sites is by car, and most of the rest is on foot; very few participants use any other mode of transport. The “others” include those travelling by minibus.

9.130 Walking is more common in the Southwest, and in Central, than in the other sub-areas; in the Southwest, it is the most common mode and over half of all participants (53%) walk to their preferred facility. Younger people are much

more likely to walk than middle aged or older people, and women much more likely to walk than men.

- 9.131 Interestingly, one in five (19%) of those using non-local facilities walks to the site, suggesting that many of these are located close to the borough boundary and thus have a potential market in Harrow.

## **Standards**

### ***Quantity***

- 9.132 Whilst the consultation suggests only a limited need for additional sports space, the audit and projected trends in participation indicate that the current level of 0.72 hectares per 1,000 population does not meet local expectations. Provision in the Central and Southwest sub-areas in particular is below the level expected by local people. Nevertheless, there is only justification for a modest increase in provision against the consultation results. Consultation does not however measure actual demand for sports facilities, only opinion about provision.
- 9.133 We therefore suggest that a standard of 0.78 ha per 1000 population would be adequate to address known shortfalls at the present time. This can only be an interim standard to be reviewed in the light of a full Playing Pitch and outdoor sport assessment, which we recommend should be undertaken.

<p><b>The quantity standard for playing pitches is 0.78 Hectares per 1000 population.</b></p>
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### ***Quality***

- 9.134 The median score for football pitches was 59%; this represents a standard of “below average” according to Sport England’s classification. We propose a standard which is somewhat higher than this at 71%; this represents the minimum score which would represent a “good pitch” in Sport England’s terms. An example of a pitch achieving this score is either of the two adult football pitches at Zoom Leisure. The median score for cricket pitches was 84%, which

represents a “ good pitch” in Sports England's classification. We propose a standard which is equal to this at 84%. This is in the middle range of the Sport England rating for a ‘Good’ pitch. An example of a pitch achieving this score is the cricket pitch at Harrow Recreation Ground at 83%.

- 9.135 The median score for rugby pitches was 66%, which is the mid-point on Sport England's classification of an “average pitch”. We propose a standard which is slightly higher than this at 71% and is the minimum score which would represent a “good pitch”. The example of a pitch achieving this score is one of the three pitches at Grove Field.
- 9.136 The median score for changing rooms is 63%. This is the proposed quality standard and is represented by the changing accommodation at Saddlers Mead.
- 9.137 The median score for tennis is 87.5%. This is the proposed quality standard and is represented by the tennis courts at North Harrow Tennis Club.
- 9.138 The median score for Bowls is 81.5%. This is the proposed quality standard and is represented by the Bowling Green at Stanmore Recreation Ground.
- 9.139 Quality scores in the consultation highlight the need for better pitches and achieving a higher quality standard would also have beneficial repercussions for quantity, since better quality pitches are more resilient and can carry higher levels of use, especially in poor weather.
- 9.140 The consultation also draws attention to shortcomings in changing facilities, which are echoed in the audit. These have particular potential to adversely affect female participation, at a time when women's involvement in sport is increasing rapidly. The standards of changing facilities also have equalities implications for the authority and require to be addressed, so a standard has been set in this regard as well.

**The recommended quality standards for sports pitches are:-**

**Football      71%**

**Cricket        84%**

**Rugby          71%**

**The recommended minimum quality standard for bowling greens is 81.5%.**

**The recommended minimum quality standard for tennis courts is 87.5%.**

**The recommended minimum standard for changing facilities is 63% which equates to a ‘good’ score for the Visual Quality Assessment. Changing facilities for women should be brought up to this minimum standard as a priority.**

**All new natural grass pitches and bowling greens should meet the Performance Quality Standard (PQS), which is the recommended minimum quality standard for the maintenance and construction of pitches.**

### ***Accessibility***

9.141 A notional catchment area of 1,200 metres is applied for outdoor sports. This is based on an approximate 15 minute walking time.<sup>214</sup> However, there is evidence<sup>215</sup> that players will travel greater distances to play for specific teams where better coaching or facilities are available. The lack of pitches in inner London boroughs, and the availability of good transport links, means that outdoor sport locations may well have wider catchment areas. In addition, Sport England’s playing fields policy<sup>216</sup> recognizes that the higher a team’s level in the league pyramid, the larger the potential catchment area of players becomes.

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<sup>214</sup> Based on Kit Campbell’s calculations in Wealden DC’s PPG17 Assessment, Kit Campbell Associates, 2007

<sup>215</sup> Draft Thurrock Outdoor Sports Strategy, Ashley Godfrey Associates 2010.

<sup>216</sup> Planning Policy Statement – A Sporting Future for the Playing Fields of England

### ***Synthetic Turf Pitches***

9.142 Research undertaken by Sport Scotland and Sport England<sup>217</sup> found that 76% of users travel by car and 14% walk to an STP. The average distance travelled is six miles with most users, 70%, travelling under 5 miles. However, football players travel 5 miles on average, and hockey players 11 miles on average. Among football players 19% travel less than 1 mile and 39% travel less than 2 miles. The average journey time is 22 minutes for all users, (20 minutes for football, 33 minutes for hockey.)

**The recommended accessibility standards for outdoor sport are :**

**Sports pitches – 15 minutes walking time**

**MUGAs/Tennis courts – 15 minutes walking time**

**Bowling greens – 15 minutes walking time**

**Synthetic Turf Pitches – 15 minutes walking time**

### **Deficiencies**

#### ***Quantity***

9.143 **Table 9.27** shows the level of deficiency in playing pitches for four of the five sub-areas, when the quantity standard is applied. The deficiency overall is 12.37 hectares, concentrated mainly in the Central and Southwest sub-areas. The standard is exceeded in the Northwest sub-area; however this cannot be considered to be surplus provision because patterns of use of outdoor sports pitches involve considerable movement across sub-area boundaries by local teams.

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<sup>217</sup> Synthetic Turf Pitch User Survey Summary & Key Findings by Sport England and Sportscotland. 2007.



**Table 9.27: Current deficiencies in Area of Outdoor Sports Pitches**

Sub-area	Population	Playing Pitches (Hectares)	Ha per 1000 population	Playing pitch local standard	Total Hectares required to meet hectares per 1000 standard local standard	Deficiency (Hectares)
Central	52615	22.21	0.42	0.78	41.04	18.83
Northeast	32732	23.73	0.72	0.78	25.53	1.80
Northwest	40178	60.51	1.51	0.78	31.34	(-29.17)
Southeast	40065	29.93	0.75	0.78	31.25	1.32
Southwest	55098	23.40	0.42	0.78	42.98	19.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>220688</b>	<b>159.77</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>172.14</b>	<b>12.37</b>

9.144 **Table 9.28** shows the level of deficiency in playing pitches in the future in four of the sub-areas. The deficiency overall will increase to 18.86 hectares. The amount of provision in the Northwest sub-area is in excess of the standard by 28.05 hectares.

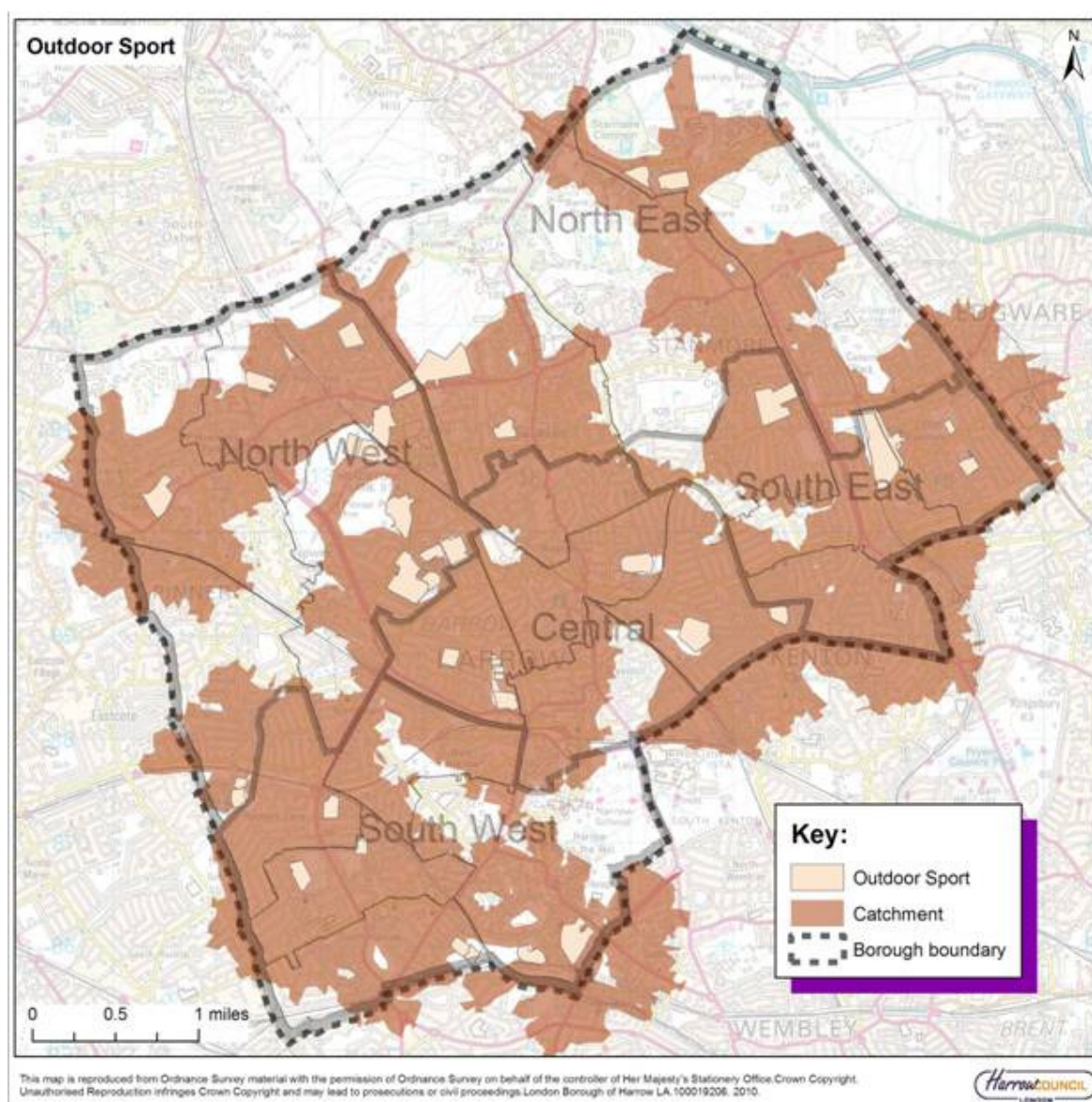
**Table 9.28: Deficiencies in Area of Outdoor Sports Pitches in 2026**

Sub-area	Population	Playing Pitches (Hectares)	Ha per 1000 population	Playing pitch local standard	Total Hectares required to meet hectares per 1000 standard local standard	Deficiency (Hectares)
Central	52315	22.21	0.42	0.78	40.81	18.60
Northeast	32325	23.73	0.73	0.78	25.21	1.48
Northwest	41612	60.51	1.45	0.78	32.46	(-28.05)
Southeast	43121	29.93	0.69	0.78	33.63	3.70
Southwest	59644	23.4	0.39	0.78	46.52	23.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>229018</b>	<b>159.77</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>178.63</b>	<b>18.86</b>

### **Accessibility**

9.145 The application of the accessibility standards for pitches, MUGAs, bowling greens and tennis courts has generated the maps that follow. For pitches, the catchment area is taken as being the area within a 1200m actual walking distance of any entrance to a pitch site, this distance being taken to represent a 15 minute walking distance.

**Map 9.5: Pitch sites and catchment areas**

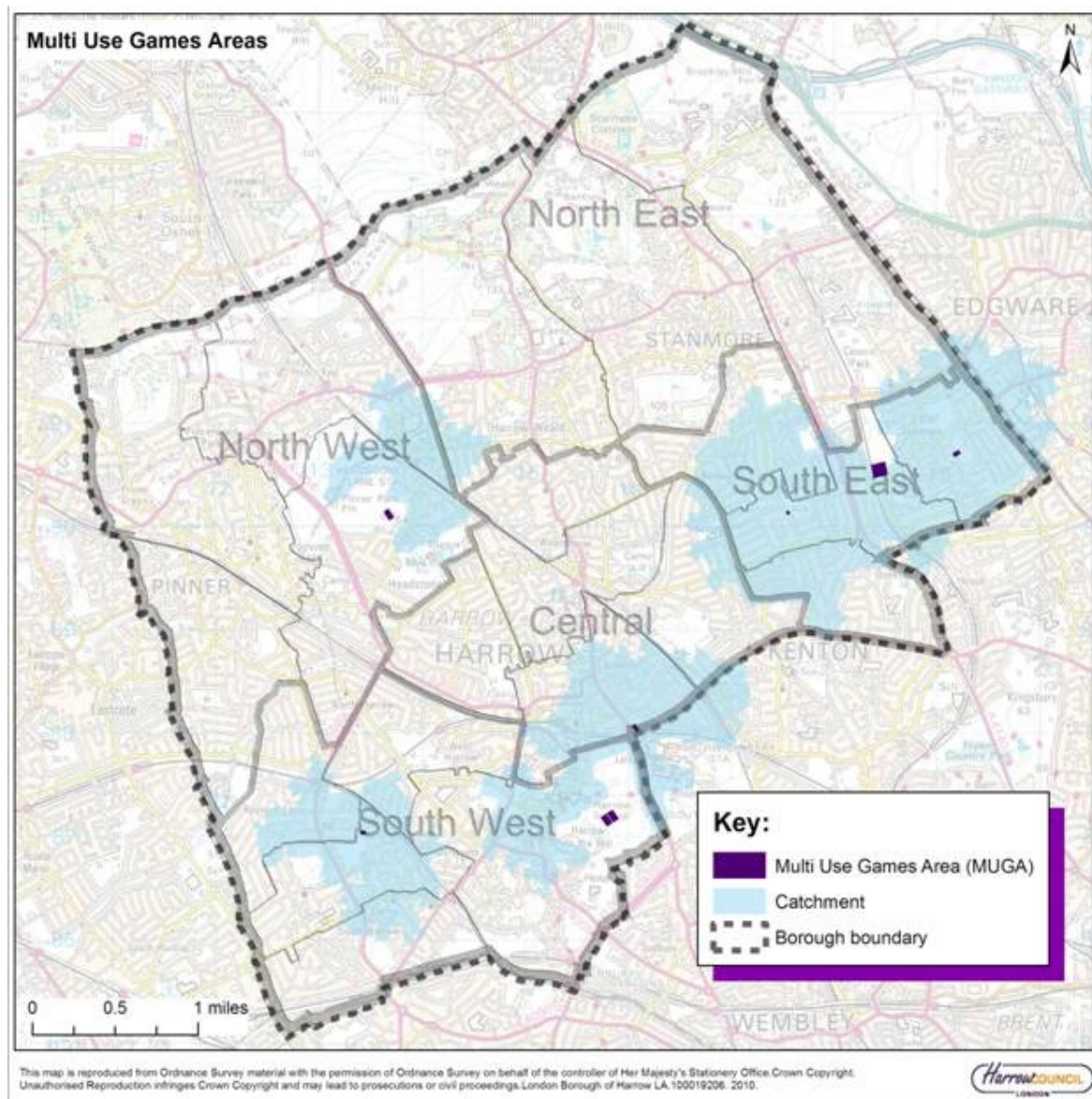


9.146 Most areas of the Borough have outdoor sports pitches within the catchment set by our proposed accessibility standard. The Central, Southeast and Southwest

sub-areas have particularly good coverage, with relatively few residents living outside the suggested accessibility catchments. Coverage in the north of the Borough is less comprehensive, though, with larger residential localities in both the northeast and northwest sub-areas lying outside the recommended accessibility standard.

9.147 **Map 9.6** shows the application of the accessibility standard for MUGAs; in this instance the catchment is measured from the nearest entrance to a court (when MUGAs are located within parks, the relevant entrance is the MUGA entrance, not the park entrance.)

***Map 9.6: MUGAs and catchment areas***



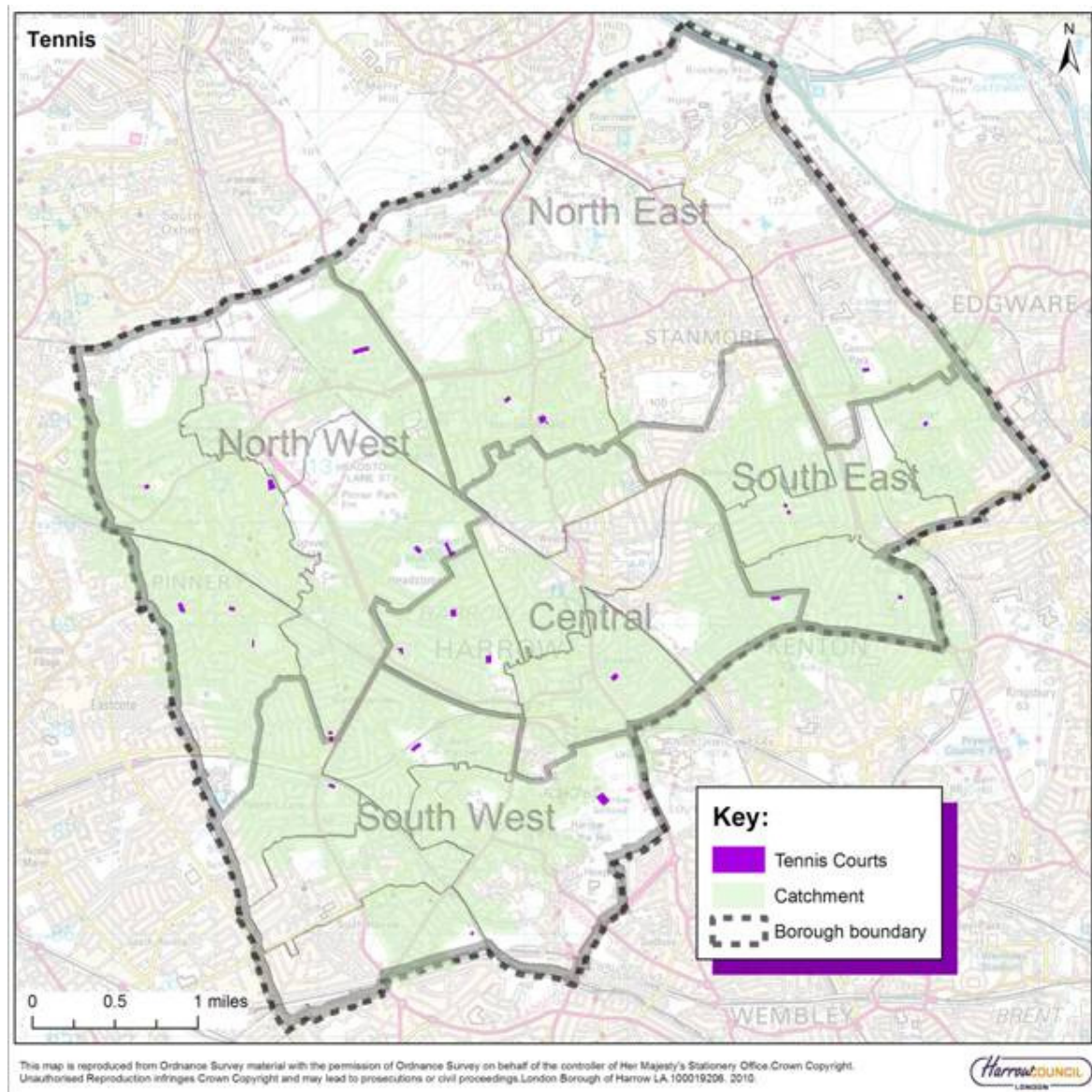
9.148 Access to a MUGA is very limited; the southeastern sub-area has the best coverage, but otherwise access to these spaces is patchy at best. Large parts of the southwestern and central sub-areas have no access to a MUGA, as measured by applying our recommended standard; coverage in the two northern sub-areas is even more limited, with just one site whose catchment is restricted by its location.

9.149 In Map 9.7, the accessibility standard for tennis is applied to tennis courts in Harrow. Again, the catchment is calculated by applying the distance criterion to



the nearest entrance to the court (and not to any park within which it may be situated).

**Map 9.7: Tennis courts and catchment areas**

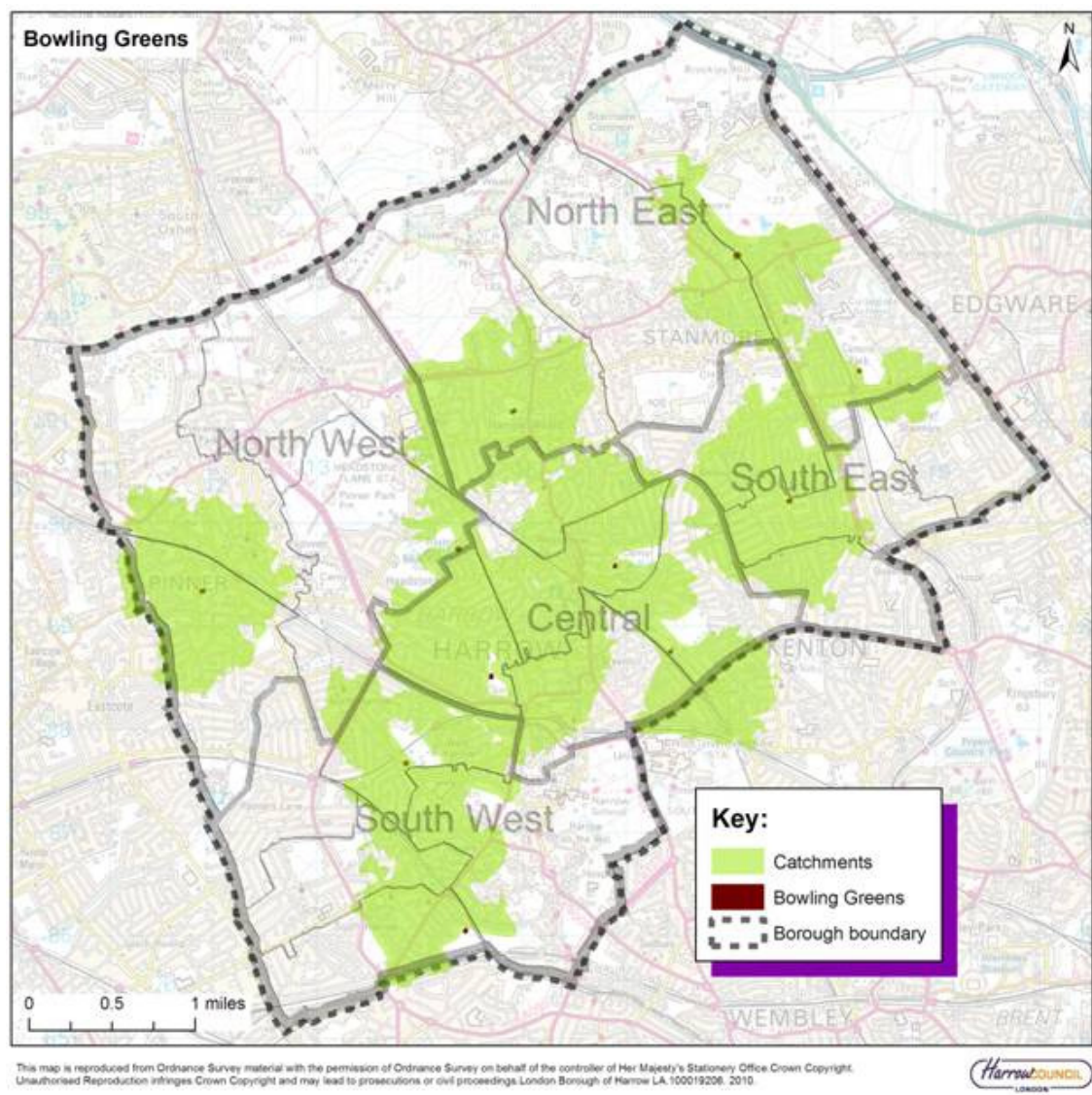


9.150 Access to tennis courts in Harrow is good for most sub-areas; the southeast in particular has good coverage with most homes within the catchment of a tennis court. There are gaps in coverage in the north-west, but these are largely areas with few houses, and again most people live within a tennis court catchment. There are larger gaps in coverage in the southwest and central sub-areas, but still most people live within the catchment area of at least one court. Access to

tennis is much more difficult in the northeast sub-area, where most people live outside a catchment area, and many live well outside a catchment area.

9.151 **Map 9.8** applies the accessibility standard to bowling greens. As with tennis, the catchment is calculated by applying the distance criterion to the nearest entrance to the court (and not to any park within which it may be situated).

**Map 9.8: Bowling greens and catchment areas**



9.152 Most of the central sub-area, and much of the southeastern and southwestern sub-areas, are within the catchment area of a bowling green. Accessibility is

more limited in the northeastern and northwestern sub-areas, with substantial areas of both lying outside a bowling green catchment.

## Allotments and Community Gardens

### Definition

- 10.1 An allotment is an area of land in, or on the edge of, a developed area which can be rented by local people for the growing of vegetables, flowers or fruit. Allotments provide opportunities for those who wish to do so to grow their own produce, and support health, sustainability and social inclusion. They also provide garden space for those with no gardens, such as flat-dwellers.
- 10.2 An "allotment garden" is defined in the Allotments Act 1922 as an allotment not exceeding 40 poles<sup>218</sup> (or 1,011 square metres) which is wholly or mainly cultivated by the occupier for the production of fruit or vegetables for consumption by himself and his family, and this definition is common to all the statutes in which the term occurs. An "allotment garden" is what people commonly mean by the term allotment, in other words a plot let out to an individual within a larger allotment field.
- 10.3 Statutory allotments are parcels of land acquired or appropriated by the local authority specifically for use as allotments. These sites cannot be sold or used for other purposes without the consent of the Secretary of State. Allotments transferred by a local authority to a parish council will automatically become statutory allotments because they will have been acquired by the parish council specifically for use as allotments. Of the 37 allotment sites in Harrow, 23 are statutory allotment sites.
- 10.4 Temporary allotments are on land that is allocated for other uses but leased or rented by an allotments authority. Temporary allotments are not protected from disposal in the same way that statutory allotments are. Of the 37 allotment sites in Harrow, 10 are temporary allotment sites.
- 10.5 Privately owned land can also be let for use as allotments. These plots have the same legal status as temporary allotment sites. The local council has control over the status of these sites through the planning system.

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<sup>218</sup> One pole measures 25.29 square metres. The size of an allotment is measured in poles, and rent is paid per pole. The standard size of an allotment is 10 poles.



## Strategic context

- 10.6 The government has stated<sup>219</sup> that it believes that allotments make an important contribution to the quality of people's lives in our towns and cities, and in creating and maintaining healthy neighbourhoods and sustainable communities. Allotments are considered to be important social assets and the government is keen to ensure that they are better appreciated and properly managed and maintained.
- 10.7 Allotments are an important asset to Harrow, providing a wide range of benefits to local communities and the environment. They are a valuable green sustainable open space that benefits wildlife and provides a recreational activity that offers health, exercise, and social contact at a low cost. They are also readily accessible to those members of the community who find themselves socially or economically disadvantaged.
- 10.8 In July 2009 the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee published a report *Securing food supplies up to 2050: the challenges faced by the UK*<sup>220</sup> which concluded that "When it has been established that there is an unmet demand for allotments in a local authority area, the Government should require the local authority to publish, within three years, a plan setting out how it proposes to meet the demand."
- 10.9 The Food Strategy<sup>221</sup>, published by Defra<sup>222</sup>, notes that the popularity of 'grow-your-own' has risen significantly over recent years. An estimated 33% of people already grow or intend to grow their own vegetables. Growing food is considered to have a range of benefits, 'including better mental and physical health, bringing people together and improved skills.'<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> 'Growing in the Community, a good practice guide for the management of allotments growing in the community', Professor David Crouch, Dr Joe Sempik and Dr Richard Wiltshire for the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions, The Greater London Authority, the Local Government Association and the Shell Better Britain Campaign.

<sup>220</sup> *Securing food supplies up to 2050: the challenges faced by the UK* (2009) House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee,  
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmenvfru/213/213i.pdf>

<sup>221</sup> *Food 2030* (2010) Defra, [www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/food/pdf/food2030strategy.pdf](http://www.defra.gov.uk/foodfarm/food/pdf/food2030strategy.pdf)

<sup>222</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

<sup>223</sup> Defra (2010) UK Food Security Assessment;

- 10.10 The Defra strategy includes making land available for community food growing, so that more people should have the chance to grow their own food.
- 10.11 In 2006, the London Assembly concluded that the case for maintaining, promoting and protecting allotments is a strong one, on public health and environmental grounds as well as a means of enhancing community cohesion. Furthermore:
- ‘Any policy decision on the future of allotments must have full regard to the very considerable benefits they bring to the individual and the wider community.’<sup>224</sup>*
- 10.12 In 2008 the Government launched the Healthy Towns Initiative which aims to get more people more active, help them make healthy food choices and tackle the problem of obesity. Two ‘Healthy Towns’ – Middlesbrough and Halifax – have incorporated food growing as part of plans to make their towns healthier.

### **The need for allotments**

- 10.13 PPG17 states that in preparing development plans, local authorities should undertake an assessment of the likely demand for allotments and their existing allotment provision, and prepare policies which aim to meet the needs in their area. Local Authorities are required to provide allotments for their residents if they consider there is demand under section 23 of the 1908 Allotments Acts (as amended).
- 10.14 The 1969 Thorpe Report recommended a minimum standard of allotment provision of 0.2 hectares (0.5 acres) per 1000 population. In the context of Harrow this would equate to an area of 44.14 hectares.
- 10.15 In 1996, the National Allotment survey identified an average provision in England of 15 plots per 1000 households<sup>225</sup>. The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners considers that the target for provision, based on the findings of a national survey, should be 20 allotment plots<sup>226</sup> per 1000

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<sup>224</sup> *A Lot to Lose: London's disappearing allotments* (2006) London Assembly.  
[www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/environment/allotments.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/environment/allotments.pdf)

<sup>225</sup> Equates to 0.14 hectares per 1000 population based on average household size of 2.59 in Harrow (2001 Census).

<sup>226</sup> Where a plot is defined as 250 m<sup>2</sup>.

households<sup>227</sup>. This target allows for some growth in demand as forecast in the House of Commons Select Committee report 'The Future of Allotments' (1998), and equates to a recommended spatial standard of 0.25 hectares per 1000 population.

### **Ownership and management**

- 10.16 Out of 37 allotment sites in Harrow, 35 are owned and managed by the Council. One site, Dabbs Hill Allotments (AL034) is owned and managed by the London Borough of Ealing. There is one small private site owned and managed by Queensbury Horticultural Society (AL007). The site at Roch Avenue is currently derelict. Most council sites have an allotments representative who oversees the site and liaises with the allotments officer over issues such as uncultivated plots.
- 10.17 In addition to the 37 accessible allotment sites, there is one small Council owned site at Vale Croft which is not available for community use and has therefore been excluded from the audit.
- 10.18 Harrow in Leaf is an umbrella organisation for allotment and horticultural groups in Harrow, whose aim is to encourage allotment use in the Borough.
- 10.19 The current price of a council allotment (10 pole plot) with water is £3.20 per pole and 90p per pole for water, making a total of £41.00 per annum. There is a concessionary rate of £22.00 for tenants who qualify<sup>228</sup>. A 50% discount is available for new tenants.

### **Demand for Allotments**

- 10.20 PPG17 promotes a demand led approach to the provision of allotment space based on local authority records. It suggests that a waiting list be kept to help identify the level of unmet demand and its spatial distribution.

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<sup>227</sup> Equates to 0.19 hectares per 1000 population based on average household size of 2.59 in Harrow (2001 Census).

<sup>228</sup> Students, retired people, unemployed persons or someone on benefits

- 10.21 Demand for allotments in Harrow has been increasing and most active sites have waiting lists. This renewed interest in allotments has been stimulated by the desire for good quality, sustainably grown, local, organic food. The current trend is for more women and families to take up allotments.
- 10.22 The most recent data available on the number of plots available in Harrow shows that 35 sites provide a total of 1351 plots.<sup>229</sup> These figures include the site at Dabbs Hill but exclude Roch Avenue and Vale Croft Allotments. Waiting list data is available for 32 of the sites managed by Harrow; at the time of writing there were 488 names on the waiting list and 44 vacancies
- 10.23 This situation can be compared to the rest of the country and in particular to the surrounding local authorities. Surveys of the allotment waiting lists held by 323 English principal local authorities were carried out in 2009 and 2010.<sup>230</sup>
- 10.24 The total number of allotment plots for which English principal councils have waiting list data was 158,796 in the 2010 survey, and the total number of people waiting for these was 94,124. This is an average of 59 people waiting per 100 plots.
- 10.25 This average waiting list is a 20% increase on the figure of 49 per 100 plots found in the 2009 survey. A survey in 1996 found that there were only 4 people waiting per 100 plots.
- 10.26 **Table 10.1** shows the situation in adjoining local authorities at the time of the national survey. This National Survey found that Harrow had the greatest number of sites (31),<sup>231</sup> providing a reported 1316 plots.<sup>232</sup> The National Survey figure for Harrow is similar to that for Ealing, where there are 30 sites providing 1814 plots. Barnet has the highest number of plots (1827) on 23 sites. The lowest provision is in Three Rivers where there is one site providing 22 plots. The number of people waiting per 100 plots is highest in Barnet where there are 300 people waiting per 100 plots compared to Harrow, which has the lowest

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<sup>229</sup> This figure includes both 10 pole and 5 pole plots.

<sup>230</sup> Waiting lists in England 2010. Margaret Campbell and Ian Campbell, Transition Town West Kirby in conjunction with the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners

<sup>231</sup> The audit found 37 sites, one of which is currently not in use.

<sup>232</sup> The National Survey was conducted by telephone with local authorities and came up with a different number of sites; our totals are based on site by site audit, and are more comprehensive.

with 20 people waiting per 100 plots. The audit for this study has found the current figure in Harrow is an average of 32 people waiting per 100 plots.

**Table 10.1: Waiting Lists in Neighbouring Local Authorities**

Council	Number of sites	Number of plots	Number waiting	People waiting per 100 plots	Lists closed
Hertsmere BC	5	194	188	97	No
Three Rivers DC	1	22	66	300	No
Barnet LB	23	1827	357	20	Yes
Harrow BC	31	1316	488	37	No
Hillingdon LB	18	579	213	37	No
Brent LB	21	900	615	68	Yes
Ealing LB	30	1814	385	21	No

Source: Waiting lists in England 2010

10.27 There are some uncertainties about the accuracy of the allotment waiting list figures. Reasons for this include the fact that there are different allotment providers with different management arrangements; people may add their names to lists at more than one site; changes in the circumstances of people on the list which mean that they are no longer ‘active’; long waiting lists may deter some people from applying; and allotment providers may close their waiting lists once they reach a certain size. These factors mean that the survey may have overestimated or underestimated the true figure. However, the increase in waiting lists between the two surveys is probably a fairly accurate estimate because the surveys’ methodologies are similar. It is clear that demand for allotments continues to grow.

10.28 The National Survey found that, despite the increase in demand for allotments, there seems to have been little increase in supply. The number of plots in new allotment sites brought into use by local authorities in the period 2009-2010 was only 483. This figure represents only 0.3% of the number of plots on which local authorities hold waiting list data.

- 10.29 The situation with regard to the waiting list in Harrow is not static. The council has responded to the growth in interest in allotment gardening by appointing an allotment officer. The waiting list has been reviewed and those no longer interested in taking an allotment have been removed from the list. The council is able to expand the capacity of those allotment sites located in parks to accommodate additional demand; however this approach results in a loss of park space. The site at Kenton Recreation Ground (AL016) has recently been extended to provide additional plots. In addition, the disused site at Orchard Grove (AL0020) is currently being restored to full use. The council also has a 'reserve' site at Roch Avenue with the potential to provide approximately 22 plots<sup>233</sup>.
- 10.30 Experience has shown that a 10 pole plot<sup>234</sup> is often too large for many people who are starting out as allotment gardeners. Plots have therefore been subdivided, as they become available, into 5 pole plots. A successful allotment gardener might then take on a second plot once they are established, subject to availability.
- 10.31 A system of site representatives has been established for all council owned and managed sites. The allotments officer now serves warning letters and ultimately notices to quit to ploholders who fail to cultivate their plots. As a consequence, there has been a greater turnover of plots and the number of vacant and uncultivated plots has been decreasing affording more opportunities for people on the waiting list. The length of time that people are waiting for an allotment varies. This is because most applicants are specific about the allotment site where they wish to have their allotment. Larger sites have a greater choice of plots and a higher turnover of ploholders compared to small sites with just a few plots.

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<sup>233</sup> 10 pole

<sup>234</sup> The origin of the 10 pole plot is that it provides an area which, if properly husbanded, should feed a family of four for one year.

- 10.32 Whilst the council has a statutory obligation to provide a sufficient number of allotments,<sup>235</sup> steps are being taken to meet the needs of people currently on the waiting list.

## **Audit**

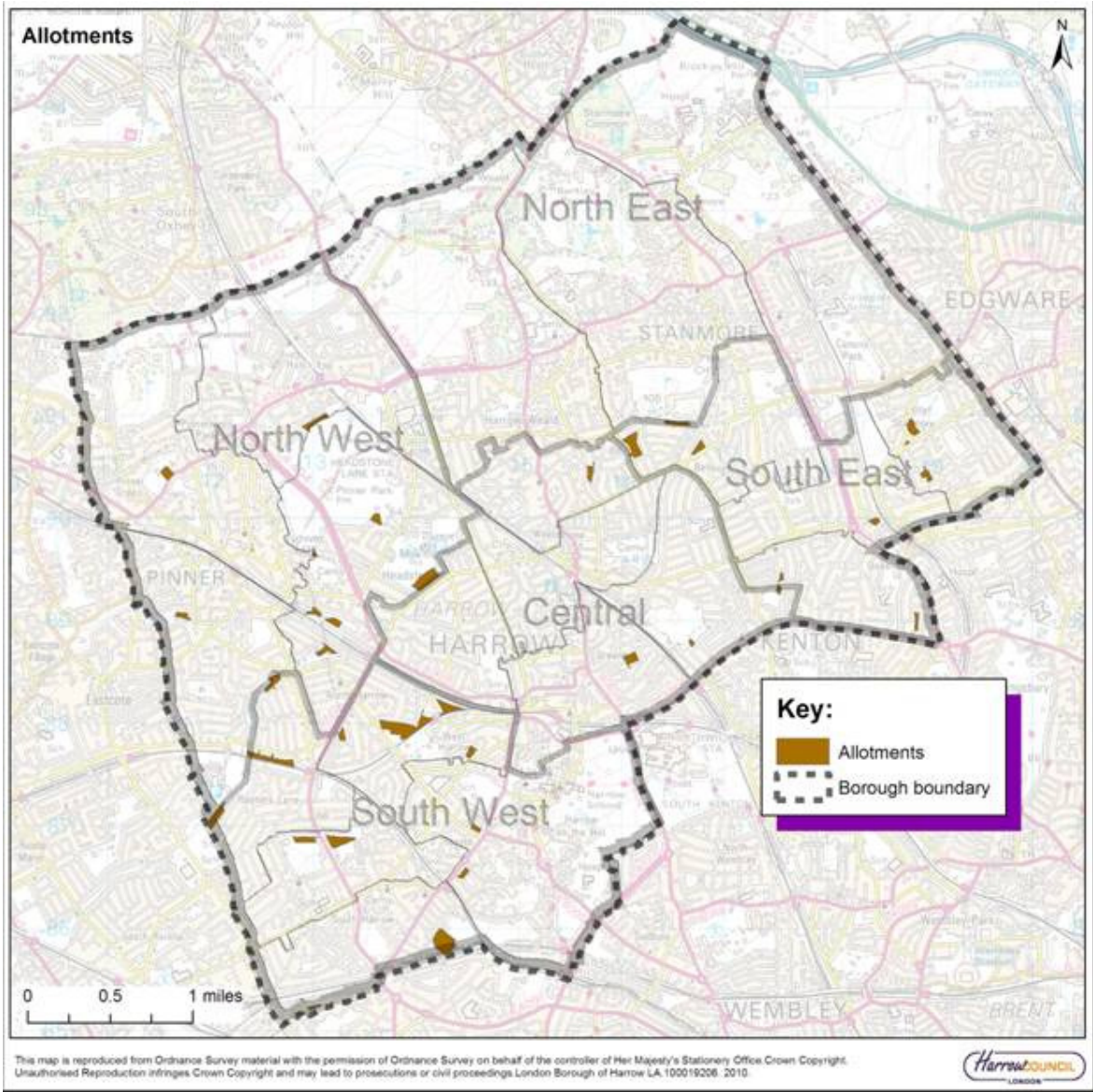
### ***Quantity***

- 10.33 There are 36 active allotment sites in Harrow providing 1,351 plots. There is one site (Roch Avenue) which is currently derelict and not used for allotment purposes, while one further site has been excluded from the audit on the grounds that it is not accessible to the local community. This is the small site at Vale Croft where there are 3 plots located to the rear of residential properties where access can only be gained via the gardens of the property. Dabbs Hill Allotments has been included in the quantity on the grounds that it is located within the borough. The sites are shown on **Map 10.1**.

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<sup>235</sup> Section 23 subsection (1) Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908.

**Map 10.1 Allotments in Harrow**





10.34 Overall, Harrow has 16.64 plots per 1000 households. National comparison indicates that Harrow has an above average number of plots per 1000 households, as shown in **Table 10.2** below.

**Table 10.2: Allotment plots per 1000 households in different authorities**

Location	Plots per 1000 households
Liverpool	4.2
Sheffield	6.7
Teignmouth	7
Cheshire	9
Bristol	11.9
Devon	12
Cambridge	12.01
Stevenage	12.7
<b>Harrow</b>	<b>16.64</b>
Thurrock	16.7
Erewash	18.7
Hartlepool	26.1

10.35 **Appendix 12** provides details of the location of individual sites, and the number of plots that were available on each site. Of the 36 sites listed, 11 have 20 or less plots and there are 2 relatively large sites of over 100 plots.

10.36 **Table 10.3** shows an overall provision of 0.17 hectares per 1000 population, which is lower than the Thorpe report recommended level of provision of 0.2 hectares per 1000 population. However, the distribution of provision is significantly skewed. Two of the sub-areas meet the standard; the Northwest sub-area (0.201 hectares per 1000 population) and the Southwest sub-area (0.36 hectares per 1000 population). However, there is no provision in the Northeast sub-area and only 0.04 hectares per 1000 population in the Central sub-area. The Southeast sub-area almost attains the standard with 0.18 hectares per 1000 population; but this figure includes the statutory site at Roch Avenue which is derelict.

**Table 10.3: Allotments by Sub-area**

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Allotments (Hectares)	Hectares per 1000 population	Persons per Hectare
Central	52615	1.94	0.04	27,153
Northeast	32732	0.0	0.00	0
Northwest	40178	8.19	0.21	4905
Southeast	40065	7.04	0.18	5690
Southwest	55098	19.74	0.36	2792
<b>Total</b>	<b>220688</b>	<b>36.91</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>5978</b>

10.37 **Table 10.4** shows the current level of provision per 1000 households in each of the sub-areas in Harrow.

**Table 10.4: Plots per Household**

Sub-area	Households (2001 Census)	Allotments (Hectares)	Equivalent 10 Pole Plots <sup>236</sup>	Plots per 1000 Households
Central	18,202	1.94	72	3.9
Northeast	12,140	0	0	0.0
Northwest	15,215	8.19	312	19.9
Southeast	17,053	7.04	261	15.3
Southwest	19,987	19.74	732	36.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>82,597</b>	<b>36.91</b>	<b>1376</b>	<b>16.6</b>

10.38 The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners considers that the target for provision, based on the findings of a national survey, should be 20 allotment plots<sup>237</sup> per 1000 households<sup>238</sup>.

<sup>236</sup> NSALG indicate that the optimum number of 10 pole plots on 1 acre of land would be 15—allowing for haulage ways (Advice Note – Creating a New Allotment)

<sup>237</sup> Where a plot is defined as 250 m<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>238</sup> Household numbers are taken from the 2001 Census.

10.39 Using this benchmark it can be seen that overall provision in Harrow (16.6 plots per 1000 households) falls below the standard. However, this masks a wide difference in provision across the sub-areas. Both the Southwest sub-area (36.6 plots per 1000 households) and the Northwest sub-area (19.9 plots per 1000 households) satisfy the standard. The least well provided areas are the Northeast sub-area with none and the Central sub-area (3.9 plots per 1000 households). The Southeast sub-area 15.3 plots per 1000 households) also falls below the standard.

### ***Derelict Allotment Sites***

10.40 Two of the sites allocated for allotment use have fallen into disuse. One of these, Orchard Grove (AL020) is currently being restored to provide additional space in the Southeast sub-area. Also in the Southeast sub-area is the statutory site at Roch Avenue (AL008) which remains derelict although it is still designated as allotment land. This has the potential to provide an additional 29 full size plots or 56 five pole plots. There is one further derelict allotment site located between the boundary of Roxeth Park and the railway line, and owned by Transport for London. This site has been excluded from this study on the grounds that it has been disused for many years and the council has no power to influence its future for allotment purposes.

### ***Quality Assessment***

10.41 A quality assessment was undertaken for 34 allotment sites. These are summarized in **Table 10.5** below. Details of the criteria used in the assessment can be found at **Appendix 1**.

10.42 The median<sup>239</sup> score is 70.4% which reflects the fact that most sites are well cultivated, with good soil conditions, are mainly occupied and have a

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<sup>239</sup> The median of a population is the point that divides the distribution of scores in half. Numerically, half of the scores in a population will have values that are equal to or larger than the median and half will have values that are equal to or smaller than the median.

To work out the median:

a) Put the numbers in order. 3 6 6 6 7 9 11 11 13

reasonable range of facilities. The sites with similar scores to the median are Montesoles Allotments (AL001) and Park View Allotments (AL015). High scores are those above the median and low scores are below the median.

- 10.43 The scores range from 44.3% for Pleasant Place, South Harrow (AL031) to 92.9% for the Weston Drive Allotments (AL005). **Table 10.5** provides a breakdown of the quality scores. Poorer quality sites tend to be concentrated in the sub-areas to the south of the borough.

**Table 10.5: Quality Scores for Allotment Sites**

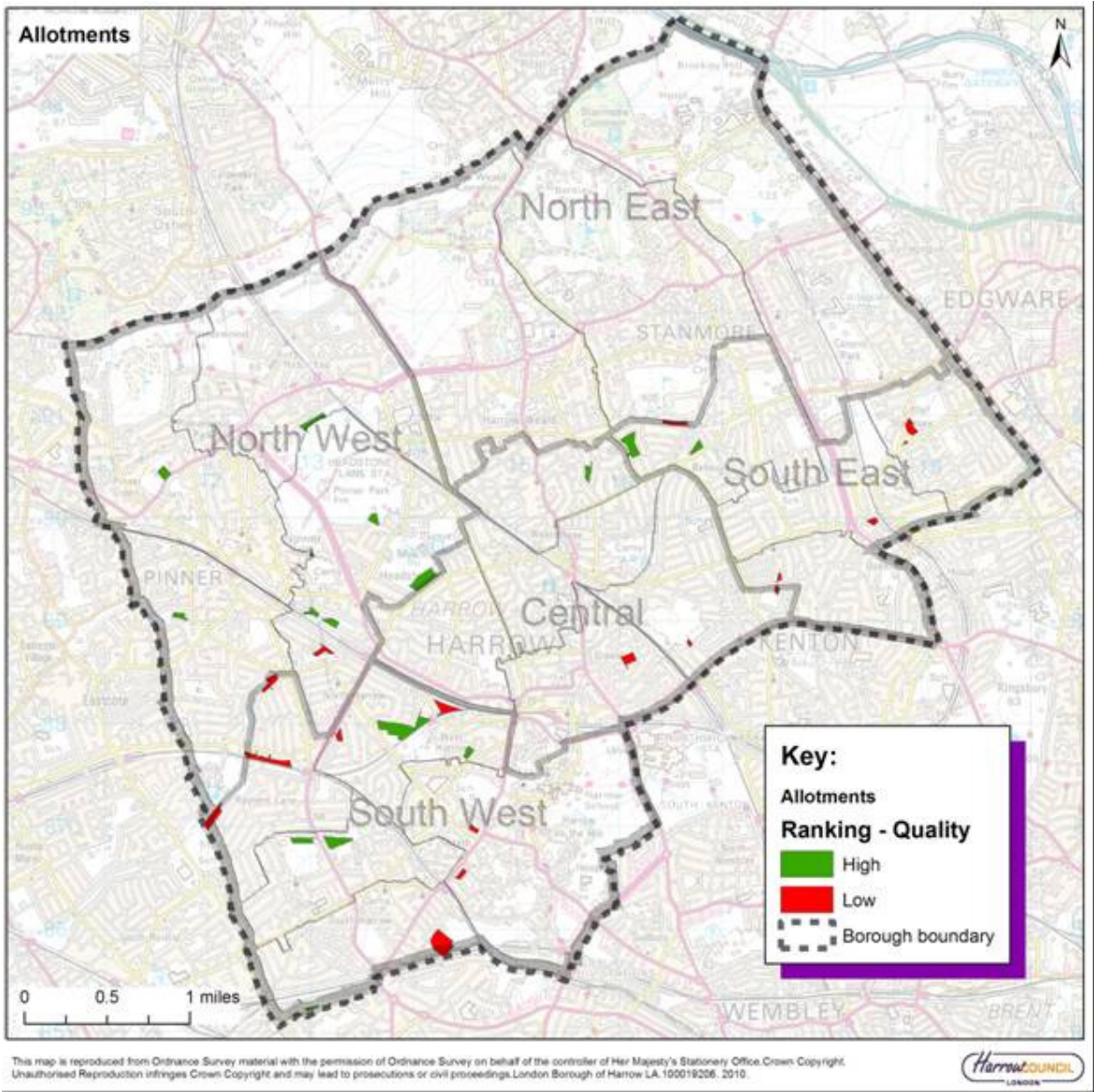
Sub-area	High Scores	Low Scores
Central	1	2
Northeast	0	0
Northwest	8	1
Southeast	2	6
Southwest	6	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>

- 10.44 The main reasons for the poorer scores were a lack of good access and parking, lack of a communal shed, a limited range of plot sizes, the number of neglected plots and poor pathways. The distribution of these sites is shown in **Map 10.2**.

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b) The number in the middle of the list is the median. 7 is in the middle. So the median value is 7. If there are two middle values, the median is halfway between them. For example, if the set of numbers were 3 6 6 6 7 8 9 11 11 13. There are two middle values, 7 and 8. The median is halfway between 7 and 8. The median is 7.5.

Map 10.2 Quality and value of allotments



### ***Accessibility***

10.45 The catchment areas for allotments in Harrow are based on the following criteria:

- Over 50 plots = 1200 metres radius
- 21 to 50 plots = 900 metres radius
- 20 or fewer plots = 600 metres radius

10.46 These criteria are based on an analysis of current plotholder records and an appraisal of the distances people are currently travelling to access an allotment site. For each site, we have calculated a distance within which 70% of the plotholders live, and then explored the relationship between that distance and the size of the site in question, as measured by the number of plots regardless of plot size.<sup>240</sup> The correlation overall is not a strong one, but after removing outliers there is an underlying strong correlation between smaller sites and the distances travelled, and also between the larger sites and the distances travelled, which leads us to set these effective catchments for the smallest and largest sites; the catchment for sites of intermediate size then follows logically.

10.47 **Appendix 12** provides an estimate of the number of 10 pole plots on each allotment site based on NASLG guidance. This is not an accurate measure of the actual number of plots on the ground because many plots have been subdivided into smaller size plots. The allotments and their catchments are shown on **Map 10.1**.

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<sup>240</sup> The Companion Guide suggests an approach along these lines (though not specifically for allotments) in para 10.18; PPG17's effective catchment limit around the 70-75% mark is derived from work undertaken by Edinburgh University which found a significant change in concentration of users at that approximate percentile.

## Key consultation findings – allotments

### Quantity

10.48 Many people are unable to give a view on the quantity of allotments, and answered “Don’t know” rather than guess<sup>241</sup>. Among those able to give a view, however, the prevailing opinion is that there are enough spaces of this type. Over half (54%) of residents think the number of allotments is about right, but a substantial minority (44%) say there should be more spaces of this type. Just 2% of residents expressing a view say there are too many allotments in the borough.

**Table 10.6: Residents’ views on the quantity of allotments**

Sub-area	Proportion of residents wanting more allotment provision
Central	48%
Northeast	49%
Northwest	43%
Southeast	52%
Southwest	37%
Overall	45%
N(=100%)	377

10.49 Demand for more allotments is highest in the Southeast sub-area, where over half (52%) of residents want to see more space of this type, but falls away in the Southwest where just over a third (37%) say there is too little space of this type, and nearly two thirds (62%) say the quantity is about right at present. Demand is highest among Asians where half (51%) of those residents expressing a view want to see more allotment space.

<sup>241</sup> The numbers actually responding with an opinion are accurate to within +/- 5% at the 95% confidence level

- 10.50 Demand is also higher among younger residents, and reduces as the age of the respondent increases. Almost half (46%) of under 35s want more allotment spaces, but this falls to just 39% of over 65s. In spite of this, allotment demand is a little higher in households with no children.

### ***Usage and demand***

- 10.51 As is usual in surveys of this type, we found very few people who use an allotment. Just 3% of respondents actually have an allotment, with a very small number of respondents on the waiting list. However, there is a small but significant group (8% of all respondents) who say they would like to have the use of an allotment.
- 10.52 Looking more closely at this group, it is noted that Black respondents are especially keen to have this opportunity. It is also a more common choice among younger residents, women, and those with children in the household.
- 10.53 In terms of geography, interest in an allotment is consistent across much of the borough at around 8% of residents, but a lower interest in the Southeast suggests that the higher demand for space here would not necessarily be translated into active use or take-up.

### ***Quality***

- 10.54 As with quantity, many respondents are reluctant to express a view on quality as they do not have the knowledge to do so. Among those residents expressing an opinion, the general view is that allotments are reasonable in quality; a third of residents (34%) say their quality is good, and most of the rest (45%) describe it as average. A significant minority (16%) say allotments in the borough are below average or poor, and just 5% say they are excellent.



## Standards

### Quantity

- 10.55 The current level of provision is 0.17ha per 1000. PPG17 promotes a demand led approach to the provision of allotment space based on local authority records. It suggests that the waiting list is used to help identify the level of unmet demand and its spatial distribution.
- 10.56 In setting the standard it is necessary to take into account the waiting list and the current demand for allotment plots. Demand at present equates to 5.55 extra hectares. However, it is reasonable to assume that the demand expressed in the waiting list will not be realised (for the reasons outlined above, such as duplication of names, relocation etc.) and that this figure could be halved to 2.78 hectares.
- 10.57 Current provision is 36.91 hectares. However this includes the sites at Orchard Grove and Roch Avenue. In view of the fact that Orchard Grove is being reclaimed and will therefore meet some of the unmet demand and Roch Avenue has the potential to do the same, the total area required for allotments to satisfy demand is 39.69 hectares.
- 10.58 This level of provision would be achieved by a standard of 0.18 hectares per 1000 population. The increased space such a standard would generate would address consultation concerns over quantity of provision.

<b>Quantity Standard</b>
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<b><i>0.18 hectares per 1000 people</i></b>
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### Quality

- 10.59 The median quality score is 70.4%, and the agreed benchmark site is Headstone Allotments (AL014) which achieved a score of 77.1%. Twenty two Council owned sites and one private allotment site did not attain this level of quality, and the Council might wish to consider bringing these sites

up to this level as a minimum benchmark. This would address the concerns in the consultation over quality issues.

**Quality Standard**

***The quality standard for allotments is 77.1%.***

***Accessibility***

10.60 These criteria are considered to be the reasonable distances that people would expect to travel to an allotment site, taking into account the size of the allotment site and the number of plots available. They are based on an analysis of existing plotholders described above in para. 10.45.

10.61 It may be noted that the standard relates to the number of plots, rather than the size of the site or of the plots themselves. Smaller plot sizes would, we believe, tend to increase the catchment area of a site.

**Accessibility Standard**

***The Accessibility Standard for allotments in Harrow are based on the following criteria:***

***Over 50 plots = 1200 metres radius***

***21 to 50 plots = 900 metres radius***

***20 or fewer plots = 600 metres radius***

## Deficiencies

### Quantity

10.62 **Table 10.7** shows the level of deficiency for each of the sub-areas, when our recommended standards are applied.

**Table 10.7: Deficiencies in Current Provision of Allotments**

Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Current level of provision (Hectares)	Current level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population (hectares)	Amount of Allotments required to meet standard (hectares)	Deficiency (hectares)
Central	52615	1.94	0.04	0.18	9.47	7.53
Northeast	32732	0.00	0.00	0.18	5.89	5.89
Northwest	40178	8.19	0.20	0.18	7.23	+0.96
Southeast	40065	7.04	0.18	0.18	7.21	0.17
Southwest	55098	19.74	0.36	0.18	9.92	+9.82
<b>Total</b>	<b>220688</b>	<b>36.91</b>	<b>0.17</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>39.72</b>	<b>2.81</b>

10.63 The standard generates a deficiency of allotment space in the Central, Northeast and Southeast sub-areas. The most significant deficiencies are in the Central sub-area where there is a shortfall of 7.53 hectares and the Northeast sub-area where there currently is no provision.

**Table 10.7: Deficiencies in Future Provision of Allotments**

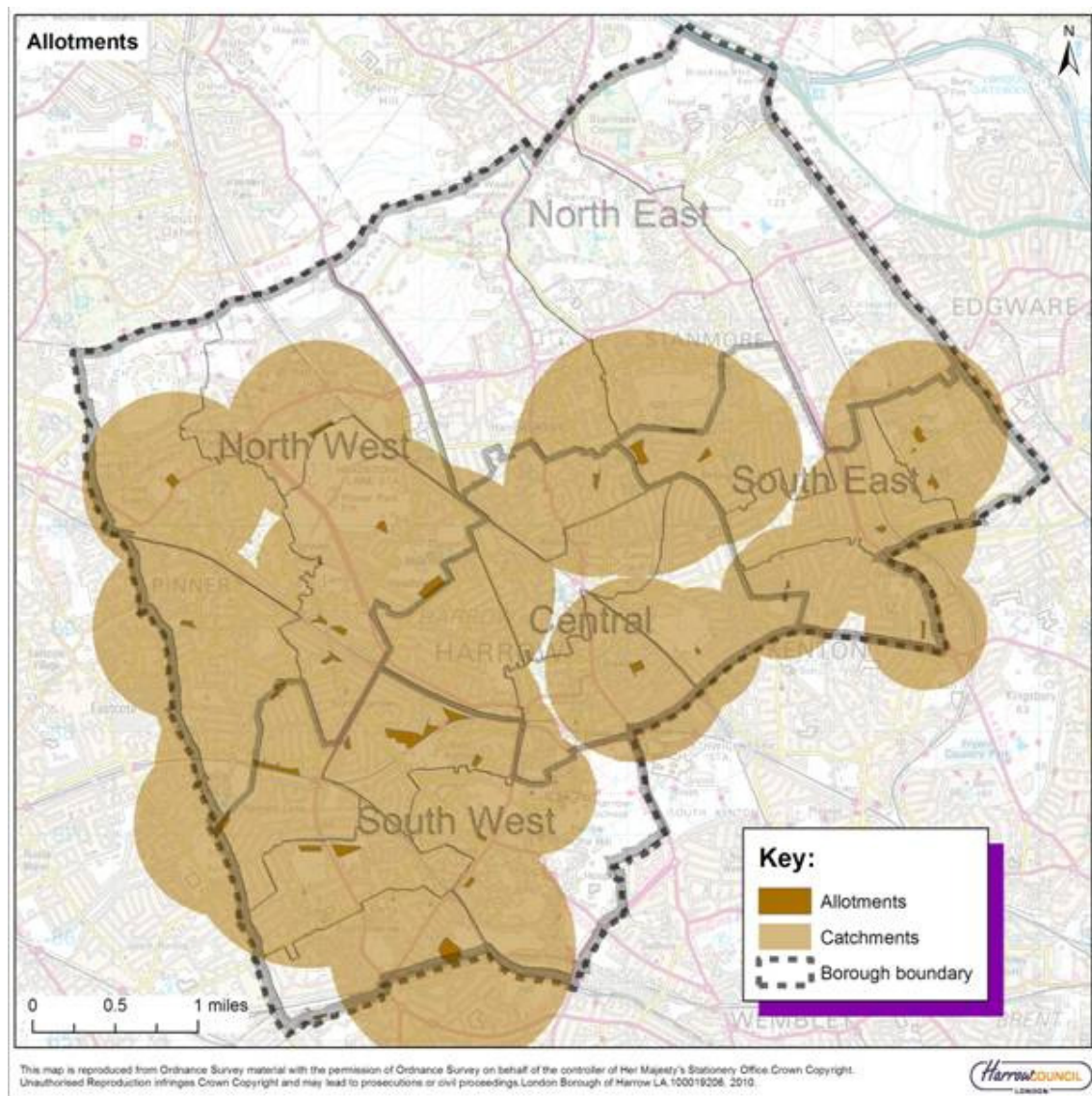
Sub-area	Population (2010 Estimates)	Current level of provision (Hectares)	Future level of provision (Hectares per 1000)	Standard per 1000 population (hectares)	Amount of Allotments required to meet standard (hectares)	Deficiency (hectares)
Central	52,315	1.94	0.04	0.18	9.42	7.48
Northeast	32,325	0	0.00	0.18	5.82	5.82
Northwest	41,612	8.19	0.20	0.18	7.49	+0.70
Southeast	43,121	7.04	0.16	0.18	7.76	0.72
Southwest	59,644	19.74	0.33	0.18	10.74	+9.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>229,018</b>	<b>36.91</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.18</b>	<b>41.22</b>	<b>4.31</b>

10.64 The deficiencies in allotment provision in 2026 continue to be in the Central, Northeast and Southeast sub-areas. The deficiency in the Central sub-area is slightly reduced and the Northeast sub-area will require 5.82 hectares of allotment provision to meet the standard.

### **Accessibility**

10.65 **Map 10.3** shows the application of our proposed accessibility standard to allotment sites in the Borough. The catchments are determined on a site-by-site basis by measuring the distance within which 70% of the ploholders live.

**Map 10.3: Allotments and catchment areas**



10.66 Almost everyone in the south and west of the Borough lives within an allotment catchment, and can therefore be considered as having access to an allotment. Only in the northeast sub-area are there significant accessibility deficiencies, with a large proportion of residents in this locality living outside an allotment catchment.

## **Churchyards and Cemeteries**

### **Background**

- 11.1 Cemeteries and churchyards are spaces set aside for the burial of the dead, either through interment of the body or of cremated remains, or for memorials to those who have died. They are important for quiet contemplation and reflection linked to death. They have a secondary, but nonetheless important, role in the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity. Churchyards lie within the curtilage of a church, and are most often consecrated ground; cemeteries lie outside church confines, and will commonly have a chapel or other religious building on the site (though many such buildings are being lost). PPG17 notes the potential significance of churchyards and cemeteries as “important places for quiet contemplation”, especially in the busy urban context, and also notes their value in promoting biodiversity. However, there is ongoing debate about the importance of cemeteries and churchyards in modern Britain, centering not only on the need for space for burial but also on the purpose and focus of these spaces.

### **Strategic context**

- 11.2 There are important differences between churchyards and cemeteries, as well as the obvious similarities of purpose. Churchyards are generally historic in nature, and many, though not all, have existed for centuries. They are generally fairly small – often no more than around an acre (0.4ha) in size – and are usually owned by the denominational authorities of the church to which they are attached, which is most commonly (but by no means always) the Church of England. Many urban churchyards became full in Victorian times; some urban churchyards are also among the oldest remaining green spaces in their localities, having existed when communities that are now part of the urban sprawl were isolated, rural or semi-rural villages.
- 11.3 Cemeteries, on the other hand, began to come into being in the early nineteenth century and most are now owned or managed by local

authorities, including parish as well as district councils. A typical cemetery may be around 4ha in extent, and there are around 7000ha of cemetery space in England in total.<sup>242</sup> However, there is at present no statutory duty on an authority to provide burial space, and as such provision tends to be rather ad hoc. Some historic or otherwise significant cemeteries have active “Friends” groups which take a measure of responsibility for upkeep and care; others are often neglected, vandalised, or even desecrated.

- 11.4 In recent years, a private sector involvement in burials has begun to re-emerge, linked to the environmental movement, in the form of provision for “green burials”. These involve the deceased being buried in a biodegradable casket, sometimes in municipal cemeteries but increasingly in privately run facilities, often located in tranquil rural surroundings.
- 11.5 Practice in relation to burial has changed in the twentieth century, with an increasing preference to cremate rather than inter the deceased. The Cemetery Research Group estimates that 72% of deaths are now followed by cremation, leaving a minority (but a significant one) opting for full interment.<sup>243</sup> The eminent bereavement sociologist Tony Walter, however, notes that this proportion has now levelled off, and suggests that the demand for interment is now likely to remain relatively consistent for the foreseeable future.<sup>244</sup>
- 11.6 A survey undertaken by the Home Office<sup>245</sup> reveals that there are nearly 10,000 burial grounds in England and Wales, of which just 21% are managed by a first or second tier authority. Most of the rest are provided by ecclesiastical bodies, with a small proportion provided by parish councils, charitable trusts, and by the private sector. Around three quarters of local authority burial grounds are open for new burials; about half of the remainder accept new interments in existing graves. Overall, about a fifth of designated burial space remains available for new graves; a similar

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<sup>242</sup> Paradise Preserved, English Heritage, 2002 p 19

<sup>243</sup> Dr Julie Rugg, Report of the Cemetery Research Group, University of York, 2002

<sup>244</sup> Dr Tony Walter, evidence to Select Committee, 2001

<sup>245</sup> Subsequently published by the Ministry of Justice: Burial Grounds: the results of a survey of burial grounds in England and Wales, June 2007

proportion is occupied by graves over 100 years old. The median time remaining until burial grounds are full is around 25-30 years, suggesting that by 2040 there will be a lack of burial space in much of the country unless action is taken to provide further burial options.

- 11.7 This situation has led to repeated calls for consideration of the possible re-use of old graves. This discussion began in 1994, and led to a funded research project on the viability of the idea, which indicated widespread public acceptance provided that a time limit of 100 years was set.<sup>246</sup> This ultimately led on to a consultation paper “Burial Law and Policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”<sup>247</sup> following a detailed report by a Select Committee, aiming at a widespread review of law and current practice.
- 11.8 The results of this consultation were published in 2006,<sup>248</sup> and the Government’s conclusions, following further discussion, were announced in June 2007.<sup>249</sup> A ministerial statement at that time indicated Government agreement to reuse, subject to safeguards, and a time limit of 100 years.<sup>250</sup> The Minister also indicated an intention to produce Good Practice guidance to assist burial authorities in the re-use of old graves, and in more general maintenance issues around burial grounds; this has yet to emerge. In the meantime, a note to MPs on this topic<sup>251</sup> suggests that the pace of change may be slowing, with a junior Minister indicating that the matter was still under review.
- 11.9 In fact, London authorities already have their own provisions<sup>252</sup> enabling them to reuse graves under certain circumstances after 75 years, and the

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<sup>246</sup> Reusing Old Graves: A Report on Popular British Attitudes, Douglas Davies and Alastair Shaw, Shaw & Sons, 1995

<sup>247</sup> Burial Law and Policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Home Office Consultation paper, 2004.

<sup>248</sup> Burial Law and policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, DCA paper CP @ DCA/HO 1/05 (Responsibility for this consultation was passed to the DCA during the consultation period)

<sup>249</sup> Burial Law and Practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Government response to the Consultation, Ministry of Justice, June 2007 (The Ministry of Justice inherited responsibility from the DCA)

<sup>250</sup> Ministerial statement by the Rt Hon Harriet Harman, Minister of State, 5 June 2007

<sup>251</sup> Reuse of Graves, SN/HA/4060, from the Home Affairs Section, produced for the House of Commons library 14 May 2010

<sup>252</sup> GLC (General Powers) Act 1976, which allows reuse without disturbance of existing remains, and the London Local Authorities Act 2007, which allows disturbance, subject to veto by the owner of the right to inter.



Minister stated in 2007<sup>253</sup> that Government wished to encourage local authorities in London to begin reusing graves of this age.

- 11.10 Take up of the re-use option has been very slow, and has not been aided by media reports that have tended to be sensationalized, talking of “bodies dug up”<sup>254</sup> or “stacked double.”<sup>255</sup> In Ayrshire, where a 75 year rule operates, the plans do not seem to have the support claimed when the proposal was first discussed, while in Exeter the launch of a reuse scheme at Heavitree cemetery has attracted little interest.<sup>256</sup>
- 11.11 One further factor which may affect the levels of cremation and interment, though, and thus the demand for burial space, is the increasingly diverse religious adherence of the population. Most religions have established rules and practices in relation to the disposal of the dead, and in many cases these include instructions to believers as to the approval or otherwise of cremation, and specific requirements in relation to interment.
- 11.12 The traditional Christian preference has been for burial, and until the late nineteenth century almost all disposals were carried out in this way. Mainstream Protestant denominations, which predominate in British forms of Christianity, have never forbidden cremation and some in the church welcomed and promoted it. Roman Catholic hierarchies have traditionally discouraged cremation (Canon Law forbade the practice from 1917) but this restriction has been relaxed since the mid-sixties, with provisos as to the rites of passage and the interment of cremated remains. The Orthodox church, and some smaller Protestant groups, forbid cremation for their adherents. A weakening of religious authority over adherents in the second half of the twentieth century has also allowed more people to opt for cremation, for other reasons, without being over-troubled by their denominational guidance.

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<sup>253</sup> Rt Hon Harriet Harman, speech at Westminster Hall, 27 Feb 2007

<sup>254</sup> Ayrshire Post, April 2, 2010

<sup>255</sup> Daily Telegraph, 6 June 2007

<sup>256</sup> Not least, perhaps, because the work to introduce the scheme has identified a number of completely unused plots that can be made available. Western Morning News, 10 April 2010.

- 11.13 Islam, however, categorically forbids cremation and requires the interment of the deceased. Funeral ceremonies are managed within the Mosque and religious requirements are therefore very strongly enforced; Funeral Directors are rarely involved in Islamic funerals. The deceased should be moved as little as possible, so interments normally take place in the locality where the death occurs. Islam also requires that a grave be unique to the person buried there; shared graves, or re-use of a grave, would not be permitted.
- 11.14 Judaism has traditionally discouraged cremation, and this remains the position of Orthodox Jews, although more liberal Jews do allow cremation, and the subject is a controversial one within Judaism. Jews often have their own cemeteries, or areas set aside for Jewish burials; cremated remains are often not permitted in such cemeteries, at least partly as a deterrent to cremation. Some secular Jews also reject cremation because of its association with the Holocaust. Israel's first cremator was installed only as recently as 2007.
- 11.15 In Hinduism, and also in the Sikh religion, cremation is the traditional method of disposal, and the preference (where it is permitted) is for an open-air cremation allowing the sunlight to fall on the body as it is consumed. The Cremation Act 1902 has generally been regarded as forbidding this practice in the UK (though some open air cremations have taken place<sup>257</sup>), and most Hindus accept a normal British cremation as meeting their requirements, but a recent case in Newcastle threatens this position after the Appeal Court held that the Cremation Act does not forbid the practice.<sup>258</sup> There is however no crematorium at present that would be able to do this within existing environmental regulations, though there are plans to construct one in rural Northumberland.
- 11.16 Religious preferences have little impact on cremation take-up in many locations, where Christianity is the predominant cultural influence, but in an

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<sup>257</sup> For instance, at Brighton during World War One, when a burning ghat was constructed on the Downs to cremate Indian soldiers who had died in local hospitals. The ghat and a memorial are still in situ.

<sup>258</sup> Reported in the Independent (and elsewhere) 10 Feb 2010

area such as Harrow the religious diversity of the area does impact on the levels of provision of different types of disposal. In particular, this may affect the rate at which available burial land is taken up.

- 11.17 Another factor that is increasingly affecting burial and disposal preferences is the growth of the natural burial, in which the deceased is buried in a biodegradable casket in a more natural or semi-natural setting such as a woodland, normally without a memorial. This choice appeals to those concerned about the environmental impact of burial, and also the cost of more traditional interment, and its popularity has been reflected in a substantial increase in the number of dedicated sites for such burials, and by increased local authority provision in this regard. In the vicinity of Harrow, Carpenders Park cemetery, West Drayton cemetery, and Woodwells cemetery (Hemel Hempstead) all offer this option, and there is a dedicated woodland burial site at Woodcock Hill, Rickmansworth which appears to be privately managed.<sup>259</sup>
- 11.18 As essentially quiet and undisturbed places, churchyards and cemeteries have also become a place where biodiversity can thrive, and provide habitats that are becoming scarce such as heathland and hedges. Flora and fauna have taken sanctuary in cemeteries and they make an important contribution to the protection of uncommon species in the British Isles. This is recognised, among others, by the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) which, in conjunction with the Arthur Rank Centre, set up in 1989 a “Living Churchyards” initiative which claims to have worked with over 5,000 projects nationwide.<sup>260</sup>
- 11.19 Harrow’s Biodiversity Action Plan recognises this and includes specific targets linked to maintaining and developing the biodiversity potential of cemeteries and churchyards.<sup>261</sup>
- 11.20 Having said that, it is important to recognise that churchyards and cemeteries are not primarily intended as open space or semi-natural

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<sup>259</sup> Natural Death handbook, list of sites offering natural burial, accessed at [www.naturaldeath.org.uk](http://www.naturaldeath.org.uk) July 2010.

<sup>260</sup> The UK Church and Conservation Project, [www.ecen.org.uk/ch&cons.shtml](http://www.ecen.org.uk/ch&cons.shtml), accessed 11/4/2005

<sup>261</sup> Harrow Biodiversity Action Plan 2009, Target 3, p 69

environments. English Heritage recognises this and notes that “first and foremost, cemeteries are places to respect and commemorate the dead”.<sup>262</sup> However, they go on to add that cemeteries are also “thoughtful places, reflecting the impact of time on humankind....places for quiet communion.” This echoes the evidence of Tony Walter to the Select Committee investigating cemeteries in 2001, when he drew attention to their prime purpose as a place to bury the dead, and their prime significance as a *memento mori* reminding the living of their transitory nature. Walter suggested that burial grounds need to be “local, sustainable, accessible and safe”, and stated that “British burial grounds were the worst in Europe on all these counts”.<sup>263</sup>

- 11.21 There is, indeed, a widespread and growing concern over the quality and management of many churchyards and cemeteries, prompted initially by the unsafe and unstable condition of many memorials and monuments. In the early 1990s the Association of Burial Authorities drew attention to injuries and even deaths caused by unstable gravestones; this situation had not improved by 2002, when the Environmental Health Journal reported that accidents to cemetery workers and visitors were causing some councils significant problems in securing adequate insurance cover.<sup>264</sup>
- 11.22 Two frameworks have been developed which potentially contribute towards improvement of cemeteries and churchyards. One, which is of universal relevance to local authorities, is the “Charter for the Bereaved”<sup>265</sup>, which includes recommended quality standards for cemetery provision as well as for the service provided to the bereaved. In addition, English Heritage has published in “Paradise Preserved” recommendations of particular relevance to the protection and preservation of those sites that are of historic significance.<sup>266</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> English Heritage, Paradise Preserved, p4

<sup>263</sup> Dr Tony Walter, Memorandum CEM 45 Select Committee on Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Memoranda, December 2000

<sup>264</sup> Environmental Health Journal, February 2002

<sup>265</sup> Charter for the Bereaved, Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management

<sup>266</sup> Paradise Preserved, English Heritage

- 11.23 English Heritage have also produced guidance on conservation of what are often complex sites that call for an inter-disciplinary approach.<sup>267</sup> This guidance points out that the absence of an official designation should not be regarded as indicating that a particular site has little or no value or significance, and calls for an assessment of cemetery quality that takes due account of the quality of buildings (including walls and entrances), monuments, the graves of famous people, historic layout and planting, and biodiversity.
- 11.24 English Heritage commend a rounded approach to cemetery management that respects all the special meanings and characteristics of these places. It suggests a Conservation Management Plan approach and sets out in detail how this might be developed, acknowledging the considerable difficulties that its standards may cause, not least because so many cemeteries have yet to be properly surveyed and assessed. The standard is an exacting one and is really only appropriate for historic and heritage sites..

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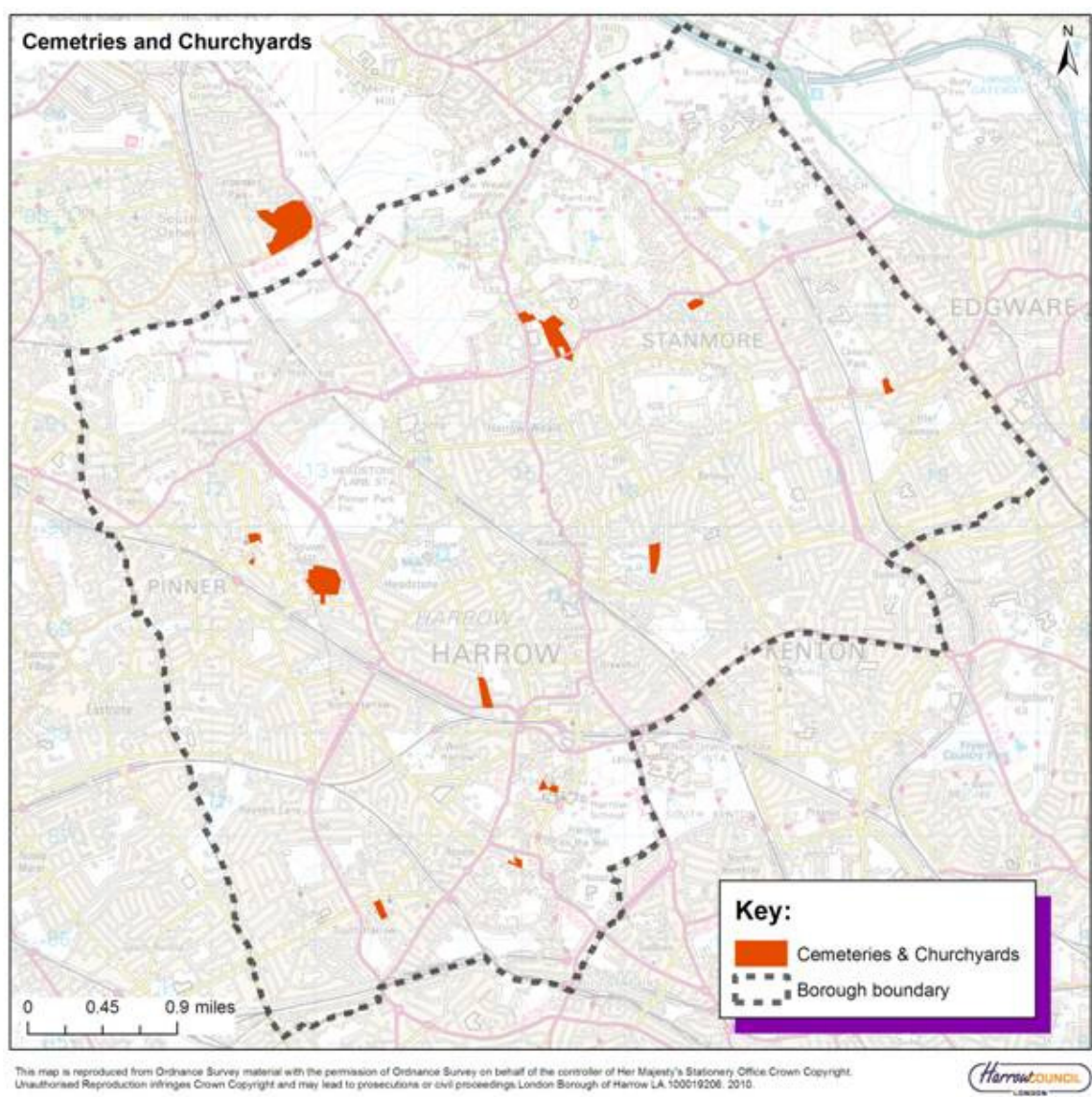
<sup>267</sup> English Heritage, Conservation Management Plans, available on [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

## Audit

### Quantity

11.25 There are 14 burial grounds in the borough; seven of these are churchyards, with six cemeteries and a burial ground in the care of the local authority. In addition, Harrow Borough has land at Carpenders Park Cemetery, outside the Borough boundary, which is managed by Brent Council. The sites are shown in **Appendix 11**, with their individual areas, and in **Map 11.1** below.

**Map 11.1** *Location of cemeteries and churchyards*



- 11.26 The total land space allocated to burials is 27.25Ha, excluding land set aside at Carpenders Park (shown in the map as the site north of the Borough boundary). Most of this is in the north of the Borough, with about a third of the space in each of the northeast and northwest sub-areas. Most of the rest – about a fifth of the total – is in the central sub-area, with a small amount in the southwest. There is no burial land in the southeast sub-area at all.
- 11.27 Harrow has no crematorium within the borough, and people needing crematorium services are referred to Breakspear Crematorium at Ruislip. However there is still space at several borough cemeteries for the interment of cremated remains.
- 11.28 Apart from Muslim and Greek Orthodox burial areas at Harrow Weald and Pinner New Cemetery respectively, all the cemeteries within Harrow Borough are full<sup>268</sup>, and new interments are therefore being directed to Carpenders Park.

### ***Quality and value***

- 11.29 An assessment has been made of the quality and value of local cemeteries and churchyards, using an appropriate assessment tool developed specifically for this type of site (**appendix 1**). Sites are scored against a range of criteria and emerge with percentage scores that represent their result out of a possible 100% score. Carpenders Park has not been assessed for quality and value, however, as it is not under Harrow Council management and lies outside the borough boundary.
- 11.30 The median<sup>269</sup> score for quality is 72.3% and for value is 61.7%; the site that most closely matches these figures is All Saints Churchyard, Harrow Weald, a site that has received support from the Nature Conservancy Council in the

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<sup>268</sup> [http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/329/funerals\\_and\\_burials/1390/burial\\_plots/2](http://www.harrow.gov.uk/info/329/funerals_and_burials/1390/burial_plots/2), accessed 21/7/2010

<sup>269</sup> The median of a population is the point that divides the distribution of scores in half. Numerically, half of the scores in a population will have values that are equal to or larger than the median and half will have values that are equal to or smaller than the median.

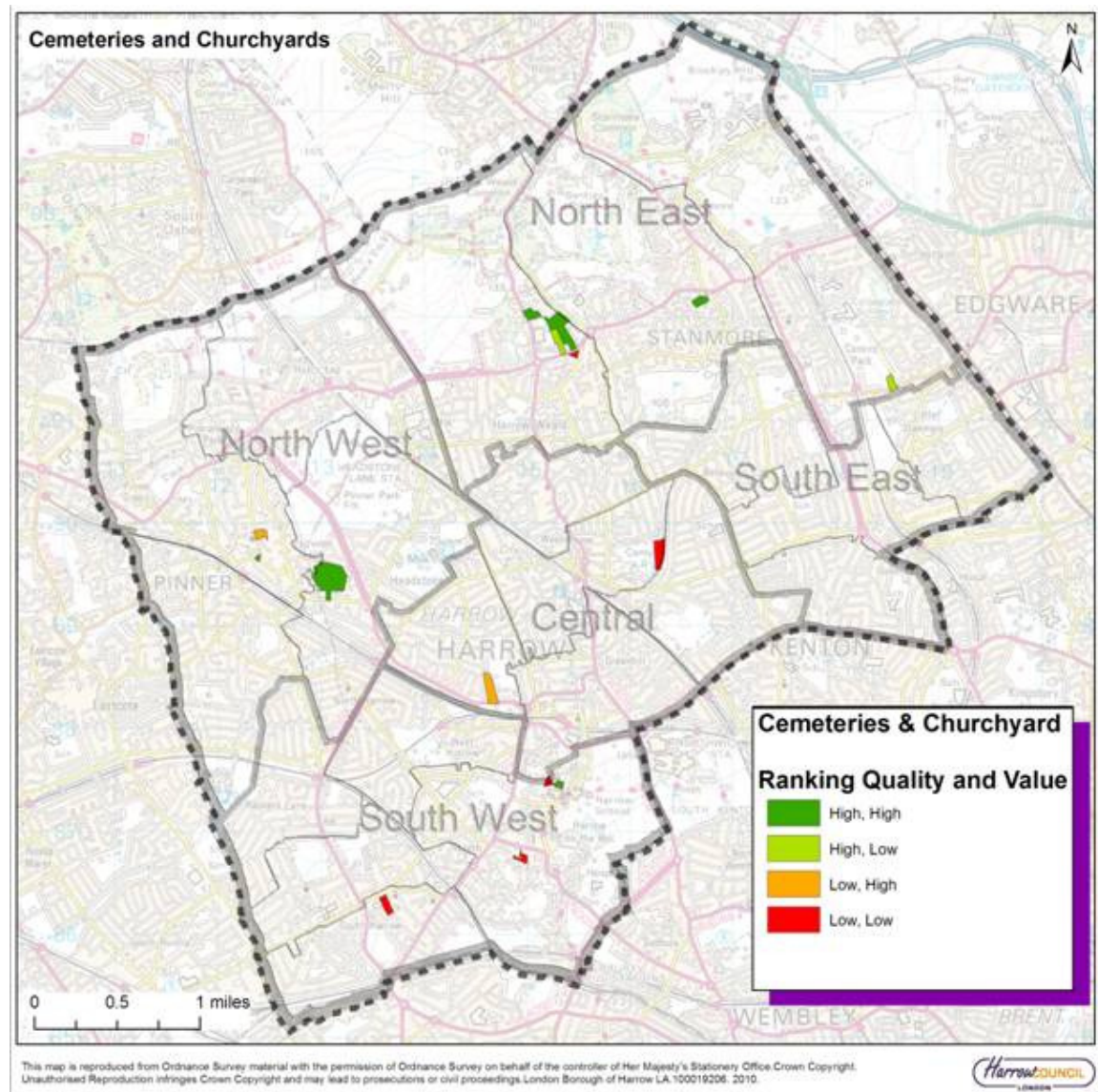
past. This could serve as a benchmark site that sets a target for improving sites below these medians. **Table 11.1** shows the proportions of sites that achieve scores above and below this median point, and **Map 11.2** shows their locations.

***Table 11.1: Quality and value assessment – cemeteries and churchyards***

Quality	Value	Number of sites
High	High	5
High	Low	2
Low	High	2
Low	Low	5



**Map 11.2: Quality and value of cemeteries and churchyards**



11.31 Five sites score above the median for both quality and value; these include the major borough cemeteries at Harrow Weald (CH001) and Pinner New (CH007). Five sites are below the median level for both quality and value, however, and these include the churchyard at Elms Road (CH003) and the cemetery at Eastcote Lane (CH014). Two borough cemeteries, at Paines Lane (CH006) and at Harrow (CH009) score poorly on quality but high on value, suggesting that these sites are the ones most in need of attention.

- 11.32 However, the authority wishes to set its benchmark higher than this and has suggested that cemeteries in Harrow should aspire to the scores achieved by Pinner New Cemetery, at 87% for quality and 90% for value. This is one of the highest scoring sites in the borough and would represent a major uplift in quality and value for many existing sites.

### ***Accessibility***

- 11.33 As **Map 11.1** shows, the distribution of burial space is uneven, with most sites in the north of the borough and none at all in the southeastern sub-area. Accessibility is less of an issue for cemeteries, because visits tend to be concentrated on those places where a loved one is laid to rest, rather than on one that happens to be nearby. Nevertheless, if the borough wishes to make cemeteries and churchyards a more significant element of natural provision, accessibility does become more important. There is, however, no realistic catchment area for a cemetery or churchyard.
- 11.34 The main issue as regards accessibility is the fact that most interments (other than Muslim and Greek Orthodox burials, and additional interments in existing graves) are now to be carried out at Carpenders Park, a location which is far from convenient for a large part of the borough population, and which is outside the borough boundary.
- 11.35 Should Harrow determine to reuse existing graves, of course, accessibility patterns would change significantly.

## Consultation – key findings in relation to cemeteries and churchyards

### Quantity

11.36 As with some of the other less well-used types of space, a significant proportion of local residents feel unable to comment on the quantity of burial space, so there is a substantial “don’t know” group here. Among those who do respond on this issue, though, there is a strong view that the borough has enough burial space, with 80% of residents indicating that they think the current provision is about right. Almost all the remainder would like to see more burial space, with 18% saying there is too little of this kind of space; very few people (2%) think there is too much.

**Table 11.2: Residents’ views on the quantity of cemetery provision**

Sub-area	Proportion of residents wanting more cemetery provision
Central	16%
Northeast	21%
Northwest	10%
Southeast	21%
Southwest	20%
Overall	18%
N(=100%)	462

11.37 This view is consistent across all the five sub-areas, with a substantial majority in each saying that they think that provision is about right; in the Northwest sub-area, the proportion rises to over 90%. In no sub-area does the demand for more burial space exceed 22% of local residents, so such views are always in a minority.

11.38 Interestingly, older people – the age-group most likely to visit cemeteries and churchyards – are also the group where demand for more space is lowest. Differences between age-groups on this issue are not especially marked, however. Women are more likely to seek more space, but even so well over three quarters of women (78%) think provision is about right. Demand for more space is higher among the smaller ethnic groups – Black, mixed race and other – but the numbers answering are small and are therefore unreliable.

### **Usage**

11.39 The frequency with which local people visit a burial ground is shown in this table:

**Table 11.3: Frequency of visits to burial grounds**

Frequency of visit	Proportion of people (%)
Every day	1%
Once or twice a week	2%
Two or three times a month	3%
Once a month	4%
Once every two or three months	6%
Once or twice a year	9%
Less often	12%
Never	63%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1029</i>

11.40 Cemeteries and churchyards are not significant features of everyday habit. Two thirds (63%) of local residents never visit a local burial ground, and those who do visit tend to do so occasionally; two thirds of those who do visit

do so only once or twice a year, a pattern normally linked to anniversary or holy days.

- 11.41 There are, however, a small number of people for whom the cemetery is a frequent destination, with a handful visiting every week, and one in ten (10%) residents visit at least monthly.
- 11.42 Looking at the sites people visit (names are not always easy to identify, particularly of churchyards) we suspect that around a third of those who do visit cemeteries are visiting a location outside the borough – a figure which is strongly influenced by the lack of a local crematorium. Although Harrow manages its cemeteries and churchyards as part of the network of open spaces, rather than as operational burial grounds, a cemetery visit is nevertheless almost always specific to a particular site, and distance and accessibility to the specific site of their loved ones' plots may be limiting some people's frequency of visit. Within the borough, the cemeteries most often mentioned are these:

**Table 11.4: Cemeteries most visited**

Site	Number of mentions
Harrow Weald	55
Pinner	47
Harrow on the Hill	15
Wealdstone	5
Paines Lane	4
Eastcote Lane	3
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>273</i>

- 11.43 All of the borough's cemeteries have their adherents (with the exception of the Roxeth Burial Ground, which is not mentioned at all), but some attract more visitors than others. The Harrow Weald site, also known as Clamp Hill, is the most visited, but the Pinner cemeteries are also relatively well visited (it is not always evident which burial ground is being referred to here).
- 11.44 Outside the borough, two sites dominate for visitors: Breakspear Crematorium in Ruislip, which was mentioned by 28 people, and Carpenders

Park, mentioned ten times. Several other north London burial sites are also mentioned including the Jewish cemetery at Bushey, Golders Green, and Hendon.

11.45 Not surprisingly, those with loved ones buried locally tend to visit more often than those who travel further afield.

### **Quality**

11.46 As with allotments, respondents are reluctant to express a view on quality as they do not have the knowledge to do so. With cemeteries and churchyards, it is also more helpful to distinguish between the comments of those visiting local sites and those travelling further afield, as the latter are a large proportion of all visitors.

11.47 This table shows people's opinion of different attributes of Harrow burial grounds, using mean scores<sup>270</sup> to enable a comparison of the results:

**Table 11.5: Quality ratings for Cemeteries**

Attribute	Mean score for local cemeteries	Mean score for non-local cemeteries
Cleanliness and litter	0.93	1.43
Safety during the day	0.79	1.35
Planting and grassed areas	0.58	1.38
Care of headstones/graves	0.30	1.13
Seating	-0.10	0.73
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>185</i>	<i>76</i>

<sup>270</sup> A mean score is calculated by applying a score to each response for each criterion. A rating of excellent attracts a score of 2, a rating of good is scored at 1, and ratings of below average or poor are scored at -1 or -2 respectively. "Average" and "don't know" are scored as zero and do not affect the result. The resulting score is then averaged across all respondents, giving an overall score somewhere between +2 and -2. A negative score indicates a balance of negative opinion, whilst a positive score indicates a positive opinion overall; the higher the score in either direction, the stronger that opinion is.

- 11.48 Cemeteries score reasonably well on most attributes, though there is clearly room for improvement nevertheless. Attributes like cleanliness and litter, which can often be a problem for local authorities, are rated fairly well and approach an overall consensus of “good”, and so too does safety during the day, an attribute which is especially important given the vulnerability of many visitors. Local cemeteries do less well, but still score positively, on planting and grassed areas. However, the score for care of graves and headstones, whilst still positive, must be a concern, and there is also a significant concern about seating, which actually attracts a negative score in Harrow. The borough currently has a policy of allowing the donation of seats as memorials.
- 11.49 The potential for improvement is well illustrated by the comparison with out-of-borough sites, which are dominated by the two crematoria used by local funeral directors. Although the attributes are ranked in the same order, those using external sites give consistently higher scores that for some attributes tend towards excellent.

## **Standards**

### ***Quantity***

- 11.50 The public consultation does not suggest any significant level of demand for additional burial space, in spite of the absence of local plots for new interments. The Council also has options in respect of burial space in that the re-use of old graves is a potential solution to the lack of space, at least for certain types of burial, and in the older, and less used, burial grounds. Whilst this would not be acceptable for a Muslim burial, there is less pressure on space from this quarter as Harrow Weald still has space in its Muslim area.
- 11.51 However, it is possible to calculate the likely requirement for burial space in the area based on current death rates and the proportion of people who

choose to bury their loved ones, taking some account of religious preferences. According to the Cemetery Research Group, approximately 28% of deaths are followed by full body interment<sup>271</sup>, and 40% of these require new graves. We also know that some religions have a much greater, if not universal, preference for particular methods of disposal, so different combinations of religious groups in the local population have some effect on these proportions, but in fact the overall difference is negligible for Harrow, where Muslim and Jewish preferences are counterbalanced by those for Hindus.

11.52 Applying Harrow's current mortality rate of 7.52 deaths per 1000 population<sup>272</sup> to the population figures now and into the future suggests the progression in demand for grave spaces shown in Table 11.6, assuming population growth as projected by the authority and no change in overall demography, death rates or preference for cremation.

**Table 11.6: Deaths and burials, 2006 onwards**

Year	Population	Projected deaths per annum	Burials per annum	New graves per annum
2006	213,885	1,617	453	181
2011	225,228	1,634	458	183
2016	229,937	1,721	482	193
2021	229,373	1,757	492	197
2026	229,018	1,753	491	196
2031	231,672	1,750	490	196

Source of population figures: GLA 2008 Round Low ward projections

11.53 An ongoing need for new graves is thus projected, with around 180 - 195 grave spaces per annum being added to the current occupancy of the cemeteries. Were the borough to explore re-use as an option, this demand

<sup>271</sup> <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/chp/crg/crgcontext.htm#buriedcremated>, accessed 21/7 2010; this figure is confirmed by the Cremation Society's statistics 1960-2008, which show cremation levels steady at 70-72% for the past decade.

<sup>272</sup> National Statistics report 1617 deaths of people ordinarily resident in Harrow for 2005.



for grave space would potentially be significantly reduced, but would not be eliminated because some religious groups would not permit this.

### **Quality**

- 11.54 Public consultation indicates that quality perceptions are reasonable, but with substantial room for improvement especially in some key areas such as care of headstones and plots, and seating. The benchmark site for quality is Pinner New cemetery, Nower Hill. Other cemeteries and churchyards should be brought to that level as a minimum, and this would make a significant impact on quality perceptions and be likely to address the concerns raised in the consultation.
- 11.55 There is no definitive national quality standard for churchyards and cemeteries at present. English Heritage publishes suggested quality standards in *Paradise Preserved*, but these are more appropriate to cemeteries capable of listing in the English Heritage Register, and a locally derived standard is more appropriate for most sites.
- 11.56 The Council should consider adopting the Charter for the Bereaved published by the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. This covers a wide range of issues linked to bereavement, including matters focused on the bereaved themselves (procedures, choices, dignity, monuments and inscriptions) and others focused on the responsibilities of the authority (staff, maintenance, ceremonies, equality and cultural differences, and health and safety, for instance). The charter is thus a very comprehensive document which forms a very good basis not only for setting standards in relation to quality but also wider aspects of the authority's interaction and relationship with the bereaved.
- 11.57 Specifically in relation to quality, the charter expects subscribers to provide
- Grass cutting at least seven times a year, every four weeks from April to October (other than in cemeteries where grass is being allowed to

grow freely for habitat purposes) with care taken to avoid damage to stones or tributes

- Weekly removal of litter and of dead wreaths from recent funerals (though not from subsequent visits, which are the responsibility of visitors)
- Accessible water supplies
- Clear paths and walking surfaces that are safe for the elderly and disabled people
- Minimal damage to existing graves, memorials and tributes when preparing adjacent new graves
- A statement of service standards

11.58 The ICCM indicates that charter members will be working on a national standard but it seems likely to include these minimum standards of maintenance and care. We recommend this as a basis for cemetery quality in Harrow.

#### **Quality Standard**

***The quality standard for cemeteries is 87% for quality and 90% for value.***

***We also recommend adoption of the Charter for the Bereaved as a means of raising quality standards.***

#### **Accessibility**

11.59 There is no appropriate accessibility standard for cemeteries, although the importance of these places to the elderly and infirm suggests strongly a need to take account of public transport when planning sites (and vice versa), and to provide sites that are reasonably easily accessed in terms of distance, provided with level access into and within the site, and with seating. This is an issue with some relevance to Harrow, where sites are unevenly distributed geographically, and particularly in relation to Carpenders Park.

## Civic space

### Definition

- 12.1 Civic spaces include civic and market squares and other hard-surfaced community areas designed for pedestrians with the primary purpose of providing a setting for civic buildings, public congregations and community events.

### Strategic Context

- 12.2 In a survey by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), 85% of respondents said that they believed that the quality of local public spaces impacted on their quality of life, and that the quality of the built environment directly impacted on the way they felt.

- 12.3 The Companion Guide to PPG17 states:

*‘the purpose of civic spaces, mainly in town and city centres, is to provide a setting for civic buildings, and opportunities for open air markets, demonstrations and civic events’.*

- 12.4 Civic spaces are an extension of the community. When they work well, they serve as a stage for public life. If they function in their true civic role, they can be the settings where celebrations are held, where social and economic exchanges take place, where people meet, and where cultures mix. They often provide the main entrance to key public buildings.

- 12.5 In town centres and local neighbourhoods, civic spaces provide social arenas for a variety of people – residents, workers, shoppers, visitors, and children at play.

- 12.6 A study undertaken for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation<sup>273</sup> found that:

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<sup>273</sup> Social interactions in urban public places, by Caroline Holland, Andrew Clark, Jeanne Katz and Sheila Peace, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007.

- Different age groups tend to use public spaces at different times of day and for different reasons.
- Civic spaces have a social function although some people use them to support a sense of territorial ownership, particularly groups of young people and marginalised groups.
- Places acquire reputations (fairly or unfairly) that persist and affect whether and how people use them. But people are drawn to spaces that offer interest, stimulation, comfort and amenity. These aspects can positively change reputation and overcome the physical barriers experienced by some users.
- Management can enable a broader spectrum of the community to use public spaces by providing and maintaining basic comfort amenities such as seating, lighting, and toilets.

12.7 The study found that young people often meet together in town centre civic spaces and regard these gatherings as essential to their social lives. They are considered to provide neutral ground away from home and direct adult surveillance, so for many younger people they are essential for self-expression and development of social skills.

12.8 The most common activities observed in all the spaces included in the study<sup>274</sup> are sitting, waiting, watching and chatting. The public spaces provide opportunities for all individuals and groups to see and be seen by others. People who would not otherwise routinely share space could do so in these spaces.

12.9 The researchers also found that the physical attributes of civic spaces contributed to their local reputations and the ways that different groups used them. The provision (or lack) of toilets, suitable seating, lighting, car parking and signage influence people's attitudes to the public spaces.

12.10 Good quality civic spaces are recognised and valued in their cities and towns as places with their own special character that relate to the larger community

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<sup>274</sup> The study was undertaken in Aylesbury.

and bring the public together; the best civic spaces can even be iconic in nature, helping to define and identify the locality. They enrich the lives of their users and enhance the surrounding buildings and neighbourhood, whilst also contributing to the social, economic, cultural and environmental well being of the community.

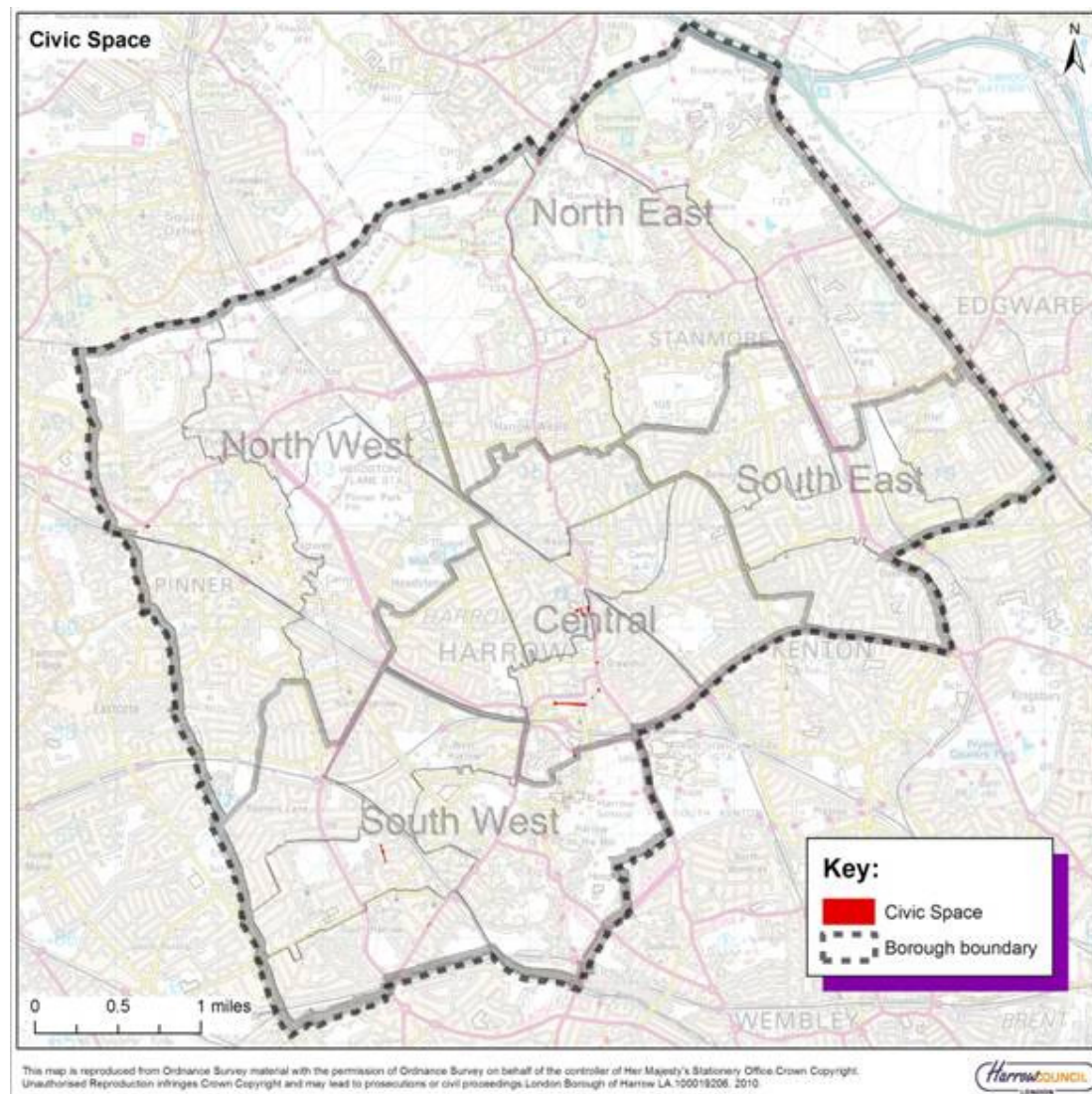
- 12.11 Their contribution to the public realm goes beyond the visual; they provide a sense of character and a forum for public activities. They can act as focal points for definition and foundations for prosperity. Civic spaces also offer the opportunity for people to relax and enjoy themselves. All of these benefits add up to greater liveability for the community as a whole.
- 12.12 Civic spaces are important to the identity of towns and cities because they are where the people who live and work in a community experience their neighbourhoods and each other. These special places have the capacity to instil a mutual sense of pride and ownership among diverse groups. They also offer a degree of distinctiveness; many such spaces are individual and prominent local features that are part of the character of their locality.
- 12.13 Good quality civic spaces have measurable economic benefits because they can contribute significantly to land values, and can act as a catalyst in revitalising town centres. Providing places for walking, gathering, and shopping is perhaps the most direct example of how place-making can benefit a city or town economically.
- 12.14 They also have environmental benefits because they give relief to urban living. They can offer free space for people to encounter art, to enjoy performances, and to participate in other cultural activities. Increasingly water features offer an opportunity for children to play and families to meet, while cultural events bring a great variety of people together and set the stage for positive social interaction.

## Audit

### Quantity

12.15 There are just fifteen civic spaces identified in Harrow. These are shown on **Map 12.1** and the subsequent maps. Nine of the spaces are in the Central sub-area, including sites within Harrow Town Centre and Wealdstone Town Centre.

**Map 12.1 Civic Spaces**



12.16 Four spaces are in the Southwest sub-area. One is a Home Zone<sup>275</sup>, in Maryatt Avenue, which was chosen as a Pilot for this type of approach in the adjacent Rayners Lane Estate. Finally, there are two spaces in the Northwest sub-area in Pinner.

12.17 Many of the spaces are in town centre locations e.g. St Anns Road (CIV005). Some are adjacent to buildings of local significance such as the tube station e.g. Rayners Lane Station (CIV007) or library e.g. Central Library (CIV006).

12.18 Details of the audit can be found in **Appendix 13**.

### ***Quality***

12.19 Quality and value assessments on civic spaces indicate a median score of 90.7% for quality and 82.5% for value; the results are summarised below and in **Maps 12.2 and 12.3**.

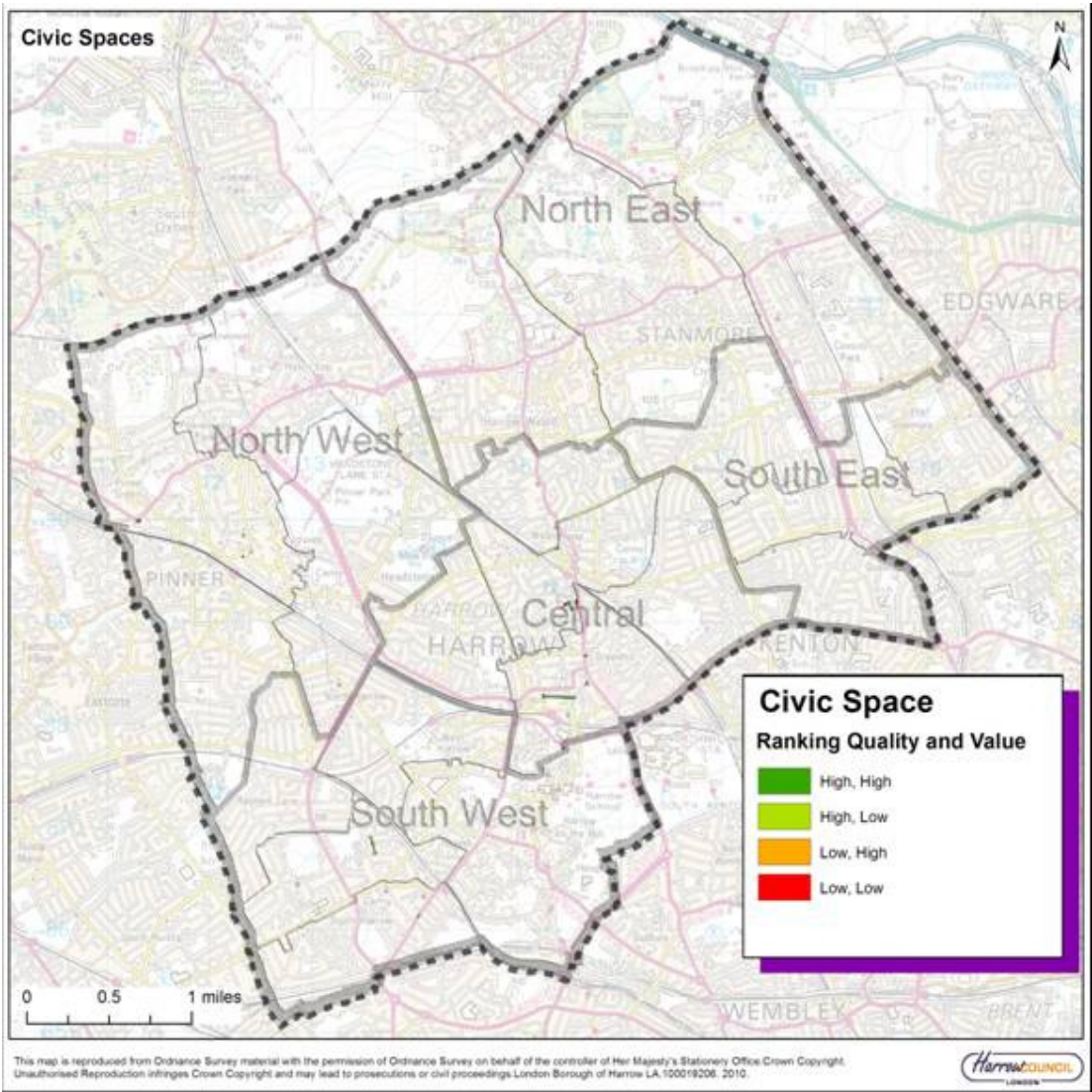
***Table 12.1: Quality and value scores for civic space***

Quality Ranking	Value Ranking	Number of Sites
High	High	6
Low	Low	6
High	Low	1
Low	High	1

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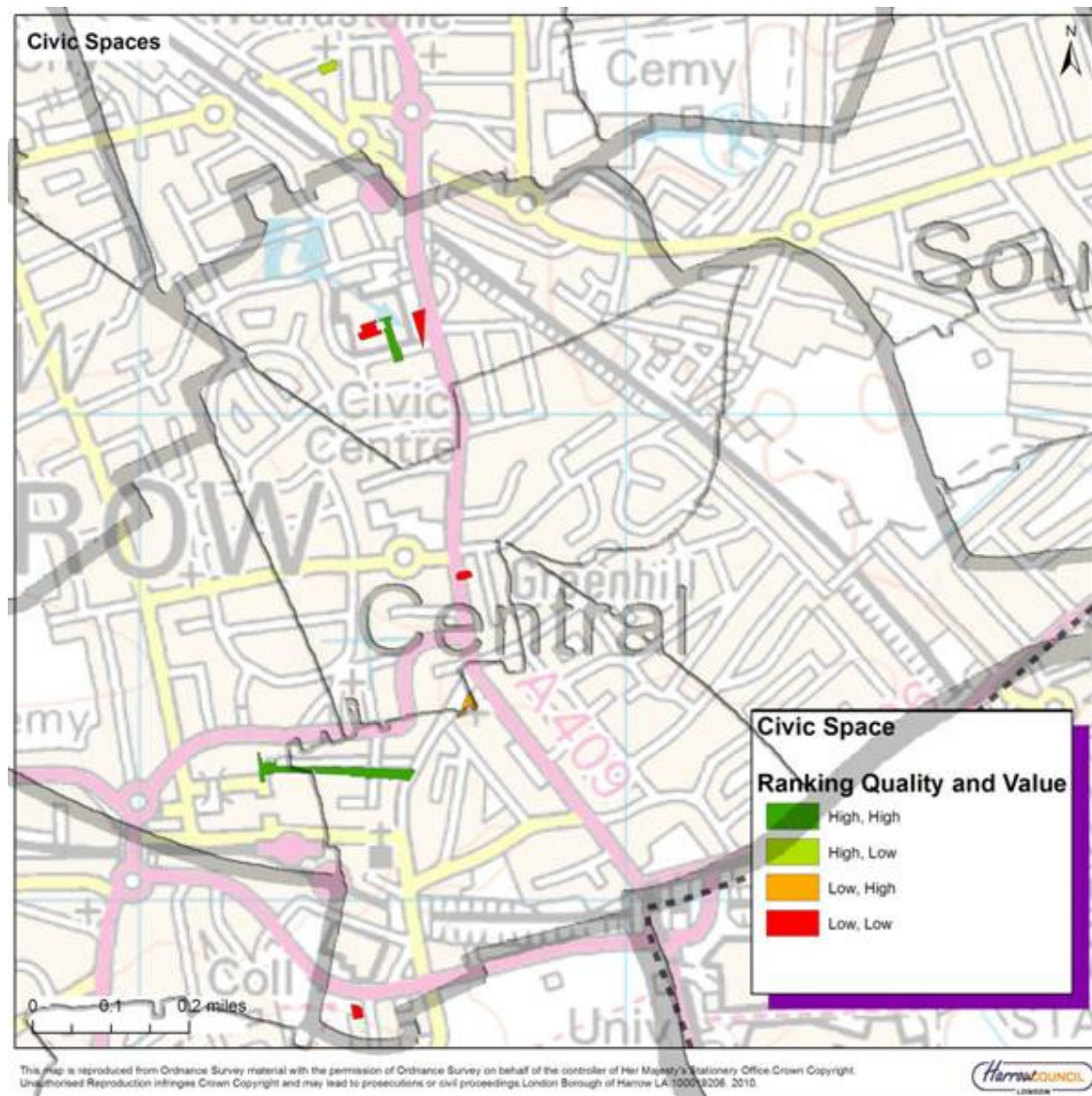
<sup>275</sup> A 'Home Zone' is a residential street where the road space is shared between drivers of motor vehicles and other road users, with the wider needs of residents (including people who walk, cycle, and children) in mind. The aim is to improve the quality of life in residential streets by making them places for people, not just traffic.

**Map 12.2: Quality and value of civic spaces**





**Map 12.3: Quality and Value of civic spaces, central sub-area**



12.20 Generally, most sites scored well. There was very little difference in the scores of the sites that achieved a high rating; all scored over 90%, reflecting the high quality of these spaces as a result of the significant investment in features such as paving, seats and street furniture. They were all in highly accessible, safe locations with good lighting, a lack of litter and no evidence of vandalism.

12.21 Lower scoring sites include Pinner Green on Uxbridge Road (CIV001) a rather dated precinct adjacent to some local shops. Elmgrove Road / Station Road

(CIV015) scored less well due to limited features and a lack of distinctiveness. It has a low value as a space in terms of amenity, and as a place to rest or meet other people, despite its position on a busy pedestrian thoroughfare.

### ***Accessibility***

12.22 By definition civic space is normally accessible space, and all the civic spaces in Harrow are reasonably accessible within the communities they serve. Civic space is often essentially local in character and need not of itself draw people in from other separate communities, though it can support the role of retail and leisure in promoting economic development or cultural activity. The majority of people walk to civic spaces, whether from home or from a car park or bus station. This suggests that priority should be given to the pedestrian accessibility of civic spaces.

12.23 There is no realistic basis for catchments for civic space. These are very specific types of space, usually with limited opportunities to extend provision; additional spaces are only likely to become available through the development or redevelopment of civic or other large buildings or through the realignment of roads and redirection of traffic in towns and large villages.

## **Key Consultation Findings – Civic Space**

### ***Quantity***

12.24 As with every other open space typology in this borough, opinion is divided between those who think there is about the right quantity of this type of space and those who would like to see more. In this instance, the dominant proportion are those who think provision is about right; just over half of all residents (54%) think this, whilst 45% want to see an increase in provision of civic spaces.

**Table 12.2: Residents' views about the quantity of civic space**

Sub-area	Proportion of residents wanting more civic space provision
Central	39%
Northeast	53%
Northwest	49%
Southeast	52%
Southwest	42%
Overall	45%
N(=100%)	736

12.25 The demand for more civic space is higher in some sub-areas than others, however. In the Southwest, and in Central, the view that provision is about right is a strong one, with three in five residents supporting the status quo in each instance (57% in the Southwest, 61% in Central), and proportionately fewer people in favour of further provision. In the Northwest, the views are almost evenly balanced between those wanting more (49%) and those comfortable with what they have (51%). In the Southeast and Northeast, there is a modest majority in favour of increased provision, with 53% of Northeast sub-area residents and 52% of Southeast residents indicating that there are too few of these spaces locally.

12.26 Generally speaking, the older a person is the more likely they are to feel provision is about right, and the less likely they are to want more civic space; the balance is a fine one among under 35s, but a clear majority of over 65s like things as they are. There is also an interesting difference of view among the ethnic subgroups, with White people markedly less keen on increasing the amount of civic space, and Asian people much more in favour of increase.

## Usage

12.27 This table shows how often people visit Harrow's civic spaces:

**Table 12.3: Frequency of visits**

Frequency of visit	Proportion of people (%)
Every day	7%
Once or twice a week	18%
Two or three times a month	14%
Once a month	7%
Once every two or three months	9%
Less often	12%
Never	33%
<i>N (=100%)</i>	<i>1047</i>

12.28 Two thirds of local residents visit a civic space at some time, and most of these use the spaces fairly regularly; nearly half (46%) of all residents visit at least once a month, and half of these (25%) use the spaces on a weekly basis. Civic spaces include pedestrianised shopping areas as well as civic squares and it is possible that some of these responses reflect weekly shopping patterns. A small number of people visit a civic space every day, and these are probably people who live or work in the vicinity of such spaces.

12.29 Variations between different sub-areas on visiting civic spaces are enormous. In the Southwest sub-area, half of all residents visit a civic space at least once a month, and in the Central sub-area almost two thirds of residents (63%) do so. However this is in marked contrast to the Northeast sub-area, where less than a third (30%) of residents visits this often, and where almost half of residents (47%) never visit a civic space.

12.30 Middle aged people are the most likely to visit a civic space, but the variation by age is marginal and all age-groups contain regular visitors in significant numbers. Similarly, there is little difference in visiting between men and women. Among the different ethnic groups, however, it is noticeable that White people visit far more often than Asians; 60% of White people visit a civic space at least monthly, but just 40% of Asian people visit this often, and

this proportion falls still further for Black residents (37%); paradoxically, though, Black residents are the group most likely to be visiting every day, and 13% of Black residents do so.

12.31 People with disabilities visit rather less often than those with no disability; 39% of disabled people visit at least monthly, against 47% of those with no disability.

### **Quality**

12.32 Residents were asked to comment on different quality aspects of civic spaces; the criteria concerned, and the mean score<sup>276</sup> each achieved, are listed below:

**Table 12.4: Residents views about the quality of civic spaces**

<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Mean score for local civic spaces</b>
Accessibility for wheelchairs and buggies	0.59
Safety during the day	0.42
Lighting	0.36
Information and signage	0.33
Cleanliness and litter	0.21
Litter bins	0.19
Seating	0.05
Level of vandalism and graffiti	-0.02
Safety after dark	-0.36
<i>N(=100%)</i>	<i>Varies from 462 to 633</i>

<sup>276</sup> A mean score is calculated by applying a score to each response for each criterion. A rating of excellent attracts a score of 2, a rating of good is scored at 1, and ratings of below average or poor are scored at -1 or -2 respectively. "Average" and "don't know" are scored as zero and do not affect the result. The resulting score is then averaged across all respondents, giving an overall score somewhere between +2 and -2. A negative score indicates a balance of negative opinion, whilst a positive score indicates a positive opinion overall; the higher the score in either direction, the stronger that opinion is.

- 12.33 The scores are mostly modest positives, clustered around the “average” mark and tending in some instances towards good. As with other quality ratings, the highest score is for accessibility, which is a strong score in this context, although still with room for improvement. Civic spaces are also seen as fairly safe during the day, although this reduces sharply after dark and attracts a negative score of similar intensity.
- 12.34 Civic spaces are seen as fairly clean, and have some litter bins, but both these scores could be much higher; they have only an average level of seating. Vandalism is not sufficiently bad to be negative, but only scores as “average” overall.
- 12.35 Within the sub-areas, daytime safety is highest in the Northeast (0.54) but is still only a modest positive score. The least safe spaces after dark are perceived to be those in the Central sub-area (-0.48) and the Northwest (-0.43). Seating is better in the Southwest and the Northeast than elsewhere; it attracts a negative rating in the other three sub-areas, but is a modest positive in these two. Cleanliness is better in the Southeast and the Northeast than elsewhere; vandalism is a bigger problem in the Southwest than elsewhere. There is no clear pattern emerging from the results.
- 12.36 Variations by age-group are especially prominent on safety issues. Safety is much less of an issue for under 35s, but perceptions of safety retreat as age increases. After dark this is even more marked and over 65s rate safety after dark at -0.87, a score that equates to “below average”. Women also tend to give lower scores for safety than do men. In the ethnic subgroups, Black people feel much safer than either Asians or White people; White people feel markedly less safe than other ethnic groups. Black people actually give a positive score to both daytime and night-time safety in civic spaces.

## **Standards**

- 12.37 No provision standard is proposed, and there is no imperative from the consultation that would press for an increase in this type of space, especially in comparison with other open space needs. However, PPG17 indicates that

it is desirable for planning authorities to promote urban design frameworks for their town and city centres. This approach will also ensure that space is accessible within communities, and that economic development opportunities are maximised. The quality and value benchmark for civic space is Pinner High Street (CIV002) which provides a key focal point in the local shopping centre.

- 12.38 A wider quality aspiration for civic spaces could be considered to reflect the importance attached to this type of space, and would also reflect the quality aspirations set out in the consultation, which show a reasonably high level of quality but with some aspects that need to be improved:

**A civic space that is attractive to all sections of the community and which functions as a setting where people meet, and where cultures mix. They will be clean, safe, litter and graffiti free spaces, which encourage a sense of place where local distinctiveness and traditions can be celebrated and which enhance the surrounding buildings and neighbourhood. They will provide public art and ancillary facilities, where appropriate.**