

SECTION 4
PARKS AND GARDENS

Parks and gardens

Introduction and definition

- 4.1 This type of open space (as defined by PPG17) includes urban parks, formal gardens and country parks that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events, within settlement boundaries.
- 4.2 Parks often contain a variety of facilities and amenities, including some that fall within different classifications of open space, eg children’s play facilities, sport pitches and wildlife areas. For classification purposes, the different open spaces within parks have been separated according to the PPG17 typology under which they most appropriately fall.
- 4.3 Large green areas, footpaths, lakes and less dense woodland will provide the park area (total hectares) and the other facilities will be calculated separately under their own classification. This ensures that open space sites are not counted twice within the PPG17 assessment.
- 4.4 While parks (and other open spaces where appropriate) are subdivided in order to reflect the specific facilities within the site, the multifaceted nature of these facilities should also be recognised. In many instances, it is the variety and type of facility available at the site that attracts visitors.
- 4.5 Parks provide a sense of place for the local community and help to address social inclusion issues within wider society. According to the recently published Park Life Report (June 2007), 83% of those questioned feel that parks are a focal point of community life. Parks also provide an important recreational resource, and many residents enjoy visiting parks to walk or to undertake more physical exercise.
- 4.6 The Active People Survey (updated 2008) reveals that walking is the most popular recreational activity for people in England. Over eight million adults aged 16 and over did a recreational walk for at least 30 minutes in the last four weeks. Provision of parks therefore represents a key opportunity to increase levels of physical activity across the local population and to subsequently address health inequalities.
- 4.7 In addition to the recreational opportunities provided by parks, these large green spaces provide structural and landscaping benefits to the surrounding local area. They also frequently offer ecological benefits, particularly in more urban areas. The provision of parks to break up urban landscapes is becoming increasingly important, particularly in light of growing fears regarding climate change and the role that provision of green space can play in reducing this impact.



Raymill Island (ID 279)

- 4.8 Larger facilities tend to attract users from a wider catchment than the smaller parks and tend to have a higher local profile. The main strategic and publicly accessible park within the Borough is Windsor Great Park. Consultation highlighted the value of this site and the adjacent Long Walk both to local residents and also to those living further afield. However, it is important to note that for the purposes of this study Windsor Great Park has been categorised within the natural and semi-natural green space typology due to the fact that the majority of the site is grassland and therefore has more natural and semi natural, as opposed to park features.
- 4.9 As detailed in Section 2, the multi functionality of some types of open space can present a challenge during the audit process, therefore in addition to Windsor Great Park there are a number of other sites in the borough that could be perceived to be within the park and gardens typology but based on their primary purpose have been classified as an amenity greenspace, outdoor sports facilities or natural and semi-natural greenspace. The inter-relationships between different types of open space are therefore considered where appropriate throughout this and other relevant sections.

Context

- 4.10 There are no specific standards relating to the quantity of parks and gardens in the Borough and no specific Borough-wide park strategy. The key issues for parks and garden sites arising from a review of strategic documents are set out below:
- **Improving Urban Parks, Play Areas and Green Spaces (2002)** is a review by the Department for Transport, Local Government and Regions which identified the importance of parks within urban green spaces. Key barriers to use included poor condition of facilities, safety and environmental concerns. Access is also a major concern of many people and should be considered by any urban planner
 - Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) and Section 106 Agreements were seen as the most valuable external sources for capital development. In most cases private sponsorship is not significant. Evidence has been put forward to suggest that environmental enhancement not only makes places more attractive and pleasant, but that green space initiatives can result in community strengthening and local economic stimulation, as well as improvement to local environmental quality
 - **The Use of Public Parks in England (2003)**, produced by Sport England, identified that those people belonging to lower social economic groups were less likely to use public parks. This was similar with ethnic minorities and disabled groups
 - The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead conduct an annual **Analysis of Parks and Open Space Usage and Satisfaction**. Oaken Grove Park has consistently proven one of the most popular parks in the Borough.
 - the annual Park Survey conducted by the Borough reported:
 - for both 2006 and 2007 60% of respondents indicated that they walk to parks
 - in 2007, 77% of respondents indicated that they use the parks, a significant rise from 65% in 2006

- from 2003-07 there is a consistent pattern indicating that the most popular reasons for using parks are to take children to play (23% in 2007) and for exercise (17% in 2007)
- the average length of visit has fallen over the past few years. Possible reasons for this are that respondents indicated that they feel less safe while at parks because of teenage behaviour and the control of dogs
- the perceived quality of toilet provision has fallen between 2006 and 2007
- quality perceptions of cleanliness, cut grass, flowers, car parking, play areas, seats and bins, and signage have all risen
- overall the report identifies that there are just under 10 million visits per annum.

Consultation

4.11 Consultation undertaken as part of the study highlighted the following key issues:

- household survey findings indicated that parks and gardens were perceived to be particularly important to local residents, both in the rural and the urban areas. Parks were also a key theme of the drop-in sessions, with residents generally satisfied with provision, particularly in the larger urban settlements
- parks and gardens are one of the most frequently used types of open space within the Borough, with 65% of respondents to the household survey indicating that they use them at least once a month. Only 8% of respondents indicated that they never visit parks at all
- 50% of young people indicated through the internet survey that parks were their favourite type of open space, meaning that parks were the most popular of all typologies. The range of facilities and amenities offered in parks was a particularly attractive feature, as well as being a place that was free and easy to access. However, it is likely that in some instances, young children referred to parks but were also thinking about play areas
- the wider benefits of parks are far reaching, and it is evident that many residents use parks for informal recreation and walks, reinforcing the health benefits that these spaces offer. In addition, parks were also perceived to offer significant landscaping and environmental benefits, particularly within the urban area of Maidenhead and Windsor. Parks were also seen as a focal point of the community, encouraging social interaction and acting as a meeting place for the old and the young.

PG1	<p>Maximise the role that parks can play in increasing participation in health and physical activity across the Borough by effectively promoting these opportunities.</p> <p>Consider the provision of alternative means of exercise such as health walks, outdoor gyms and trim trails.</p>
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Quantity of existing provision

4.12 The provision of parks and gardens across the Borough is summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 – Provision of parks and gardens across the Borough

Analysis areas	Current provision (hectares)	Current provision per 1,000 population (hectares)	Number of sites	Smallest site (hectares)	Largest site (Hectares)	Projected population (2026)	Provision (hectares) per 1,000 population (2026)
Maidenhead	24.33	0.57	10	0.20	5.28	48,677	0.50
Windsor and Eton	7.99	0.24	6	0.37	3.18	37,075	0.22
Northern wards	3.52	0.02	1	0.62	0.62	28,808	0.02
Southern wards	2.92	0.11	3	0.05	2.77	33,092	0.09
Overall	38.76	0.27	20	0.05	5.28	147,652	0.24

4.13 The key issues emerging from Table 4.1 and consultations (primarily the household survey but also considers drop-in sessions and internal consultations) relating to the quantity of provision of parks and gardens across the Borough include:

- 61% of respondents to the household survey stated that the quantity of parks and gardens in the Borough is about right. However, a significant proportion of respondents (32%) also felt there was an undersupply
- across the individual analysis areas, the overarching perception is that the provision of parks and gardens is about right, with the majority of household survey respondents indicating this in each of the four analysis areas. The highest level of satisfaction can be found in the Southern wards, where 67% of respondents felt that provision was about right. In contrast, the lowest levels of satisfaction were in the Northern wards, where 22% believed there was not enough provision and a further 15% identified a slight shortfall. This is reflected in the lack of formal park and garden provision in this part of the borough
- the proximity of Windsor Great Park to residents in Windsor and those in the Southern wards has a key impact on overall levels of satisfaction as expressed through the household survey. Whilst listed in the audit as a natural and semi-natural site due to its ecological benefits, Windsor Great Park also offers extensive features associated with parks. Windsor and Eton residents recorded the second highest levels of satisfaction, proving the impact such an accessible open space can have.

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- the highest level of current provision is in Maidenhead, which has 24.33 ha equating to 0.50 ha per 1,000 population by 2026. Levels of satisfaction as expressed through the household survey are average for this analysis area and greater emphasis needs to be focussed on ensuring residents from the Northern wards have access to the significant number of sites in Maidenhead.

Setting provision standards – quantity

- 4.14 The recommended local quantity standard for parks and gardens has been derived from the local needs consultation and audit of provision and is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix I.

Quantity Standard (see Appendices I and J)

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.27 ha per 1,000 population	0.27 ha per 1,000 population
Justification	
<p>Parks are perceived to be particularly important to local residents. There is a greater level of satisfaction regarding the provision of parks than there is for most other types of open space.</p> <p>Variations in the level of satisfaction suggest that there may be some locational deficiencies in the distribution of parks and gardens.</p> <p>When benchmarked against other similar local authorities (Appendix K), the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead has a significant supply of parks and gardens which is supported by several natural and semi natural sites that have park features. The standard set ensures that all current sites are protected and the focus shifts to ensuring residents have the best possible access to these existing sites.</p> <p>Windsor Great Park has been omitted from the quantitative calculations due to its natural and semi natural features and ecological benefits it provides to the area. However, it is perceived by many residents as a park and is used regularly. As it is an extremely large strategic site serving the needs of residents across Windsor and Eton and the Southern wards it is unrealistic to consider the quantitative supply of the park typology exclusively in these analysis areas.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to the important role of the urban parks in the Maidenhead analysis area. It is vital that a high quality of provision is ensured if these sites are to justify being protected. When addressing the undersupply of parks in the Northern wards it is important to consider how the features of natural and semi natural and amenity green space areas can replicate many park features. For example, if certain sites such as the Maidenhead Thicket can be maintained so that, where appropriate, in places they offer similar features to parks, then satisfaction in the Northern wards should improve.</p>	
PG2	Identify natural and semi natural areas in the Northern wards analysis area that can be developed to offer levels of access and features associated with parks.

Current provision - quality

- 4.15 The quality of existing parks and gardens in the Borough was assessed through site visits. Key findings are summarised in Table 4.2. Detailed comments from each site assessment can be found in the Access database that accompanies this study. It is important to note that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and are therefore reflective of the quality of the site on one specific day.
- 4.16 The quality scores are weighted according to the findings of the local consultation. Those elements that were highlighted through consultation as being a particularly important determinant of the quality of a park have been weighted higher. This ensures that they have a greater influence on the overall quality score that each site achieves. The full rationale behind this approach is set out in Appendix L.
- 4.17 The Green Flag Award is a national standard for parks and greenspace and provides a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas. In 2008, Kidwells Park (ID 241) received Green Flag accreditation. The aim for the Council is to achieve this award for six parks across the Borough over the next two years.

Table 4.2 – Quality of parks and gardens across the Borough

Geographical area	Number of sites	Range of quality scores (%)	Average quality scores (%)	Lowest quality sites	Highest quality sites
Maidenhead	10	74 - 100	89.6	Grenfell Park (ID 239)	Kidwells Park (ID 241), Raymill Island (ID 279)
Windsor and Eton	6	50 - 92	78.4	Duke Street Communal Garden (ID 41)	Bachelors Acre Open Space (ID 47)
Northern wards	1	74	74.0	Walgrove Gardens (ID 340)	
Southern wards	3	68 - 86	78.0	Broomhall Rec Ground (ID 433)	Datchet Village Green (ID 10)
Overall	20	50 - 100	84.1	Duke Street Communal Garden (ID 41)	Kidwells Park (ID 241), Raymill Island (ID 279)

4.18 The key issues emerging from Table 4.2 and the consultation relating to the quality of parks and gardens are:

- results from the household survey show a split in opinion regarding the quality of parks and gardens. 64% of respondents feel the quality of this typology is good and 34% feel the quality is average. Only 2% of respondents feel that the quality of park and garden provision is poor. The overall perception from the drop-in consultations regarding quality of parks was generally positive, especially in the urban areas
- the lowest scoring analysis area on average was the Northern wards. This area also has the second lowest quantity supply of parks and a significant shortfall based on the local standard. Respondents from the Northern wards also reported the lowest satisfaction scores in the household survey with only 47% identifying parks as good, and with 49% of respondents suggesting this open space is average and 3% that it is poor
- general comments from the household survey regarding the quality of parks and gardens revolved around a lack of parking (particularly in Maidenhead), litter problems and the need for more bins, particularly to tackle dog fouling. It was also felt that not enough policing and enforcement of rules were carried out when it came to dog fouling, vandalism and graffiti in parks
- the highest scoring area was Maidenhead with two sites scoring 'very good' for each quality criteria (cleanliness and maintenance, security and safety, vegetation, ancillary accommodation) through the site assessments
- the site assessment quality scores for the parks that the Council wish to achieve Green Flag status over the next two years are detailed below. Comments are provided that identify areas for improvements:
 - Desborough Park, ID 235 (92%) – small amount of graffiti on trees and some litter
 - Oaken Grove Park, ID 303 (86%) – dog fouling issues, grass worn on pitches
 - Braywick Park, ID 255 (82%) – evidence of overuse of pitches
 - Kidwells Park, ID 241 (100%) – excellent condition
 - Clewer Memorial Park, ID 154 (74%) – benefit from lighting and benches.

Setting provision standards – quality

4.19 The recommended local quality standard for parks and gardens is summarised overleaf. Full justifications and consultation relating to the quality of provision for the local standard is provided within Appendix L. In order to produce applicable, objective quality standards, in conjunction with the Council a list of essential and desirable characteristics that parks and gardens sites should comprise were agreed. This provides a tool for future quality assessments.

Quality standard (see Appendix L)

Recommended standard – PARKS AND GARDENS	
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential to local residents and should be reflected in the quality of parks and garden provision in the Borough.	
Essential features:	Desirable features:
Clean and well maintained	Nature/ biodiversity/ conservation features
Flowers/ trees and shrubs	Parking on-site
Well kept grass	
Achieve Green Flag status	

Accessibility

- 4.20 42% of respondents to the household survey use parks and gardens more frequently than any other typology in the Borough. Of these respondents, most (52%) walk to this type of open space, with 36% indicating they travel by car.
- 4.21 Household survey results indicated that typical travel times to parks and gardens were split between 5 and 10 minutes (36%), 11 and 15 minutes (27%) and less than 5 minutes (22%).

Setting provision standards – accessibility

- 4.22 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultation.
- 4.23 Site specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the programme of site visits where information and signage, transport and general issues were assessed.
- 4.24 Consultation and analysis has shown that the key issues with regards accessibility are:
 - based on the household survey findings there is a preference for walking to local parks and gardens, both in terms of current travel patterns and expectations for the future. Across the individual analysis areas similar results are revealed, with the majority of household respondents in all areas stating walking as the preferred method of travel. However, in the more rural Northern analysis area a significantly higher proportion of residents (37%) indicate a preference to travel by car to access this type of open space

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- the 75th percentile response borough-wide shows that household respondents are willing to travel for 15 minutes on foot to access this typology, with the modal response being 10 minutes. This 75th percentile figure is consistent across all of the analysis areas, with the exception of the rural Northern wards (analysis area 3), where 20 minutes was recorded, indicating that respondents expect to have to walk further to reach parks and gardens
- for those who prefer to travel by car, the 75th percentile of household respondents would be willing to travel for up to 15 minutes to access a park or garden in the Borough, with the modal response time being 10 minutes
- consultation with officers highlighted that several parks are both poorly located and poorly served by public transport links. For example, it was felt that Grenfell Park in Maidenhead had limited access due to dual carriageways and railway lines and that there was insufficient open space networks to link these sites with the town centre.

PG3	Consider the location of both walking routes and public transport links when identifying the appropriate location for the future provision of parks and gardens across the Borough. Additionally, attempts should be made to improve access to public parks.
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4.25 The recommended local accessibility standard for parks and gardens is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix M.

Accessibility Standard (see Appendix M)

Recommended standard
10 MINUTE WALK TIME (480 METRES) – URBAN
10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME - RURAL
Justification
<p>Consultation illustrates an emphasis in favour of walking to local parks and gardens both in terms of current travel patterns and aspirations of local residents.</p> <p>The standard for urban areas is set at 10 minutes walk time to local parks and gardens. This reflects the modal response of 10 minutes from the main urban analysis area ie Maidenhead. The modal response for the Windsor and Eton analysis area (ie the other urban area in the Borough) was 5 minutes. Whilst, the 75th percentile for the urban area is 15 minutes it was agreed that 10 minutes is a more suitable and aspirational local standard. A 10 minute walk time for urban areas is also in line with benchmarking with other similar local authorities. This still leaves gaps in provision across the Borough but it is important that open space opportunities are exploited where natural and semi natural and amenity green space can offer park features.</p> <p>Given that parks tend to be larger more strategic facilities offering a range of activities it would not be realistic to expect this type of facility within a walking time or within each village in rural areas, therefore a drive time of 10 minutes has been set based on the findings from the household survey. The 75th percentile threshold for all those that prefer to drive to parks overall is 15 minutes but the 75th percentile is 10 minutes in both of the rural analysis areas (ie Northern and Southern wards). This means that setting the rural local</p>

standard at 10 minutes rather than the overall 75th percentile of 15 minutes is more directly applicable to local expectations ie those living in the rural areas of the Borough. The standard is therefore aspirational but should realistically be achieved.

Setting separate accessibility standards is reflective of the fact the current quantity of provision is deemed to be satisfactory. All those within the urban areas of Maidenhead and Windsor and Eton should be able to access a park within a 10 minute walk time, which is reflective of consultation findings. It is suggested that the Council should be pursuing improvements to the accessibility of the urban parks for rural residents (such as public transport networks or cycleways etc), offering an approach that facilitates the use of high quality sites and increases their value to all residents.

Setting a standard at this level will enable the Council to identify areas that do not have sufficient access to sites and explore the opportunities of investing in other typologies to provide park-style facilities. The standards will also be representative of resident’s propensity for travel to this typology and ensure that any relocation of current sites enhance the value of this open space.

*a straight-line distance of 720m has been used rather than the pedestrian distance of 1200m. This is based on average walking distances reduced by a factor of 40% to account for the fact that people do not walk in straight lines. The 40% factoring is based on the approach set out in the FIT Six Acre Standard.

Applying provision standards

- 4.26 The application of the recommended quantity, quality and accessibility standards is essential in understanding the existing distribution of open space and identifying areas where provision is insufficient to meet local need.
- 4.27 The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately.
- 4.28 The future level of provision required across the Borough to satisfy the local quantity standard is summarised in Table 4.3. Areas of under provision are shown as negatives and areas of surplus are shown as positives.

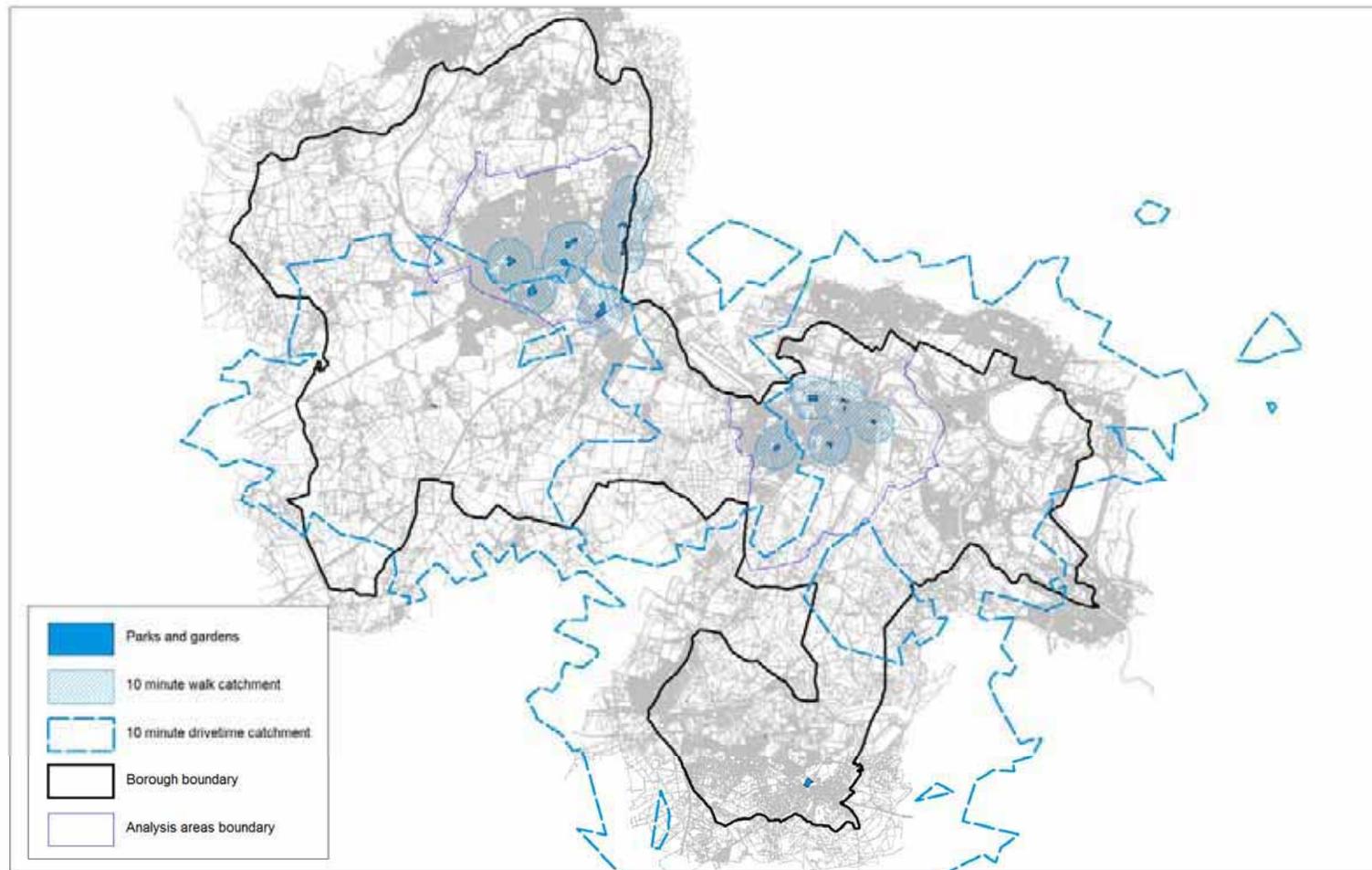
Table 4.3 – Application of quantity standard

Analysis areas	Future provision (2026) in hectares balanced against local standard (0.27 hectares per 1,000 population)
Maidenhead	11.27
Windsor and Eton	-1.97
Northern wards	-7.11
Southern wards	-5.96
Overall	-3.76

Green = above the standard, Red = below the standard

- 4.29 The key headlines in relation to the quantity of provision are:
- the local quantity standard has been set at the overall current level of provision. Due to projected population increase for 2026 it is predicted that there will be an aggregated shortfall of 3.76 ha per 1,000 population
 - when comparing the projected 2026 provision per 1,000 population against the local standard of 0.27, only provision in Maidenhead (11.27 ha per 1,000) exceeds the minimum level of provision. The remaining three analysis areas all show provision being below the minimum recommended level, with the greatest being in the Southern wards analysis area, resulting in an overall deficiency of 5.96 ha in 2026.
- 4.30 Whilst this table provides a starting point for the quantitative application of the local standards, it is particularly important to consider the spatial location of parks and their geographical relationships to one another. As the household survey indicates, parks are major facilities that may attract a significant proportion of their users from across the authority and potentially from outside of the borough.
- 4.31 The application of the local accessibility standards for parks and gardens is set out in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 - Provision of parks and gardens in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead



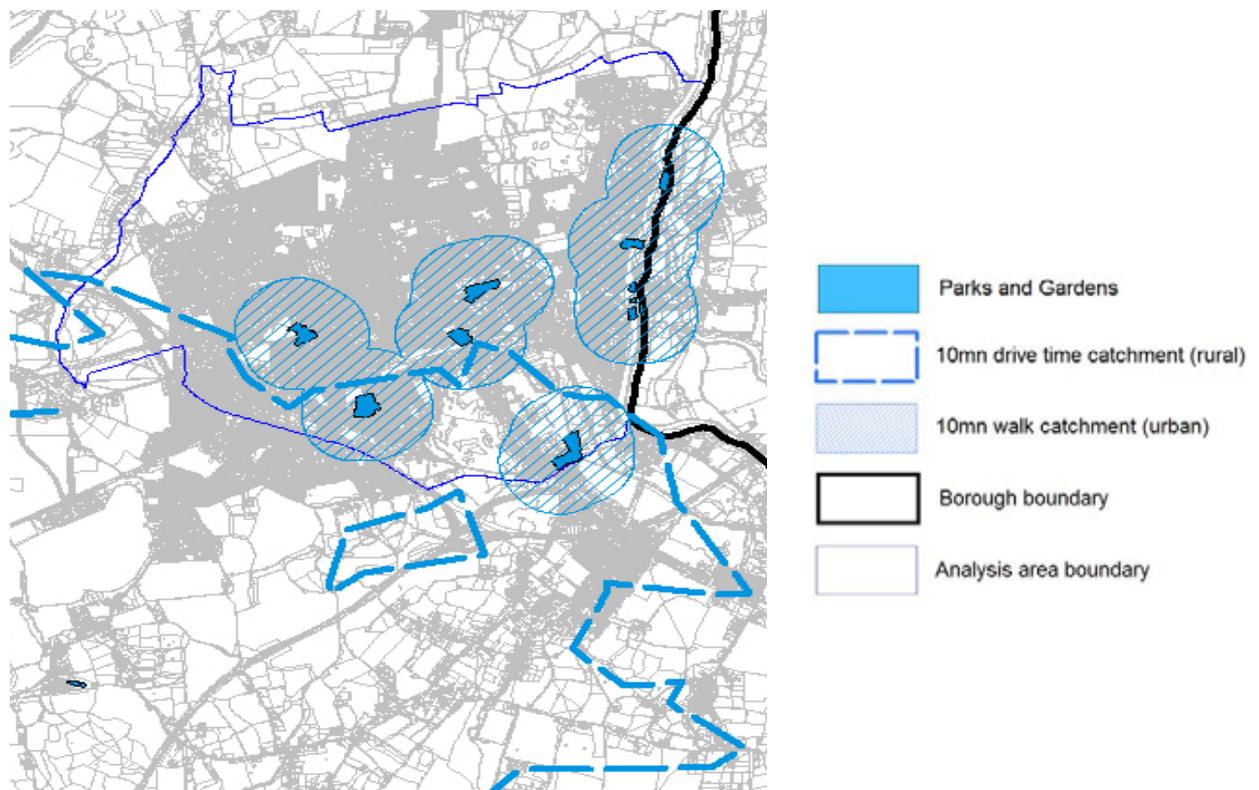
Parks and gardens

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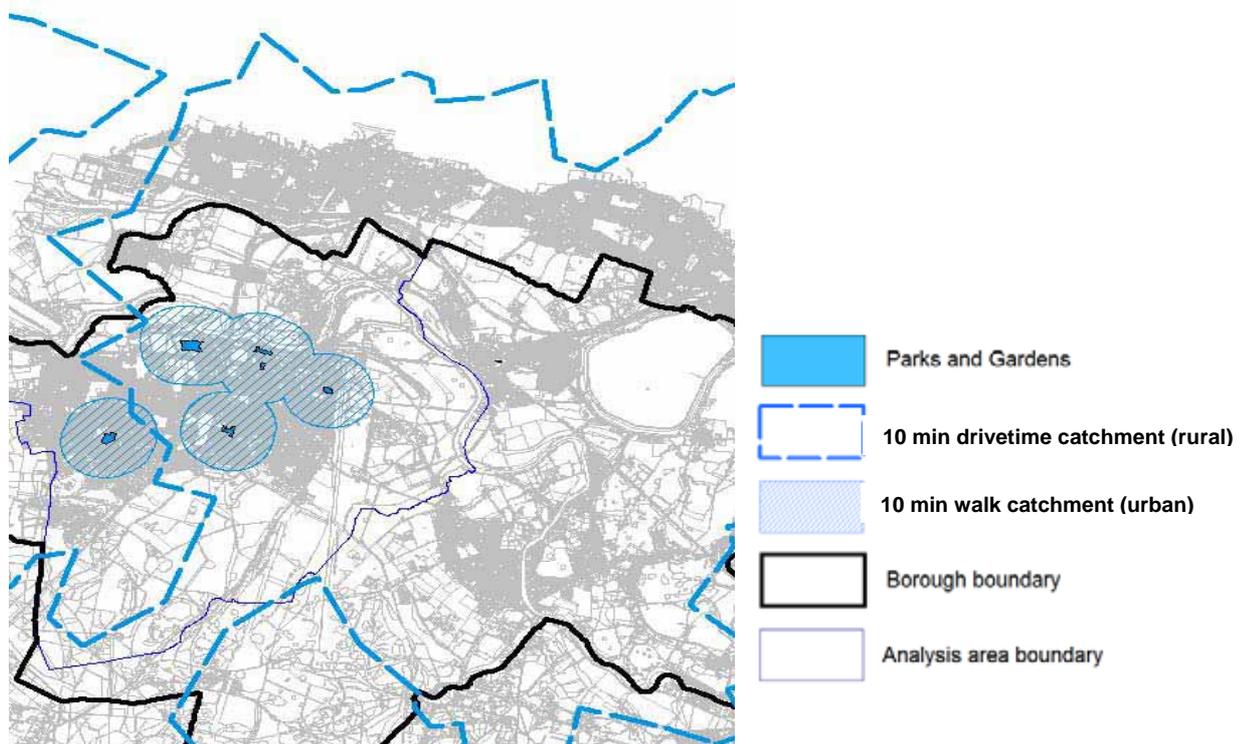
- 4.32 As can be seen in Figure 4.1, application of the local accessibility standard (for the rural area) indicates that the majority of residents living outside of the main towns of Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton are within the recommended 10-minute drive-time of a park and garden site. The main urban areas where residents cannot access a park within the recommended 10 minute drive-time are the Cookham area, and the Holyport/ Fifield/ Oakley Green areas.
- 4.33 In contrast, there are significantly higher expectations in the urban area of the town and there are numerous residents outside of the recommended catchment area (10 minute walk) of a park and garden site.
- 4.34 Figure 4.2 demonstrates that there is insufficient access in the north and west of the Maidenhead analysis area. This could be due to the high density of residential housing in these areas. When the distribution of natural and semi natural and amenity green spaces is also considered there is good coverage, especially when consideration is also given to several outdoor sport facilities that have an informal, community use.
- 4.35 The emphasis in the Maidenhead analysis area is therefore to improve the quality and accessibility of other typologies so that areas that are not currently within a 10 minute walk time of parks or garden sites have access to other open spaces with facilities that might typically be found in parks.

Figure 4.2 – Provision of parks and gardens in Maidenhead analysis area



- 4.36 Figure 4.3 displays the layout of parks and gardens within the Windsor and Eton analysis area. The main residential areas that do not have access to a park or garden within the recommended 10 minute walk time are Water Oakley, Eton Wick, Eton, and between Bolton Road, Kings Road, and Frances Road in Windsor. Again when natural and semi natural and amenity green spaces are considered, all residential areas are provided for (see paragraph 4.44 for more information). This is partly due to the significant size and strategic location of Windsor Great Park (categorised as a natural and semi-natural greenspace) which attracts visitors not only from across the analysis area but also from outside of the Borough boundaries.

Figure 4.3 - Provision of parks and gardens in Windsor and Eton analysis area



Applying the quantity, quality and accessibility standards

- 4.37 The recommended local quantity standard is equal to the current level of provision across the Borough. This ensures that all current parks are protected from development. Levels of satisfaction are relatively high across the Borough compared to other open space typologies. The only areas where residents specifically implied that shortfalls existed were to the north of Maidenhead and around Cookham.
- 4.38 The distribution of sites is reasonably even with the exception of east Maidenhead where several catchment areas overlap while the north and west of Maidenhead has a relatively low level of provision. There is also a significant residential area to the south west of Maidenhead. Although much of this is outside of the Maidenhead analysis area there is still a high residential density with few other open spaces to mitigate against provision being below the minimum level of provision.

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PG4	Given the low number of sites within the Borough, all park and garden sites should be afforded protection in line with Local Plan Policy R1 (Protection of urban open spaces).
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- 4.39 The quality of parks is predominantly good, with only four sites (Grenfell, Bath Island Pleasure Ground, Duke Street Communal Garden and Walgrove Gardens) achieving scores below 80% following the site visits. In light of the low numbers of parks and the value placed on parks, the quality of these sites should be maintained and any sites not reaching the quality vision be improved.
- 4.40 Given that the quantity shortfalls exist in the Southern and Northern ward analysis areas it is suggested that the focus is on qualitative improvements to sites to meet the recommended local quality standard.

PG5	Strive to achieve the recommended quality standard at all sites across the Borough and target improvements at sites where quality does not reach this level.
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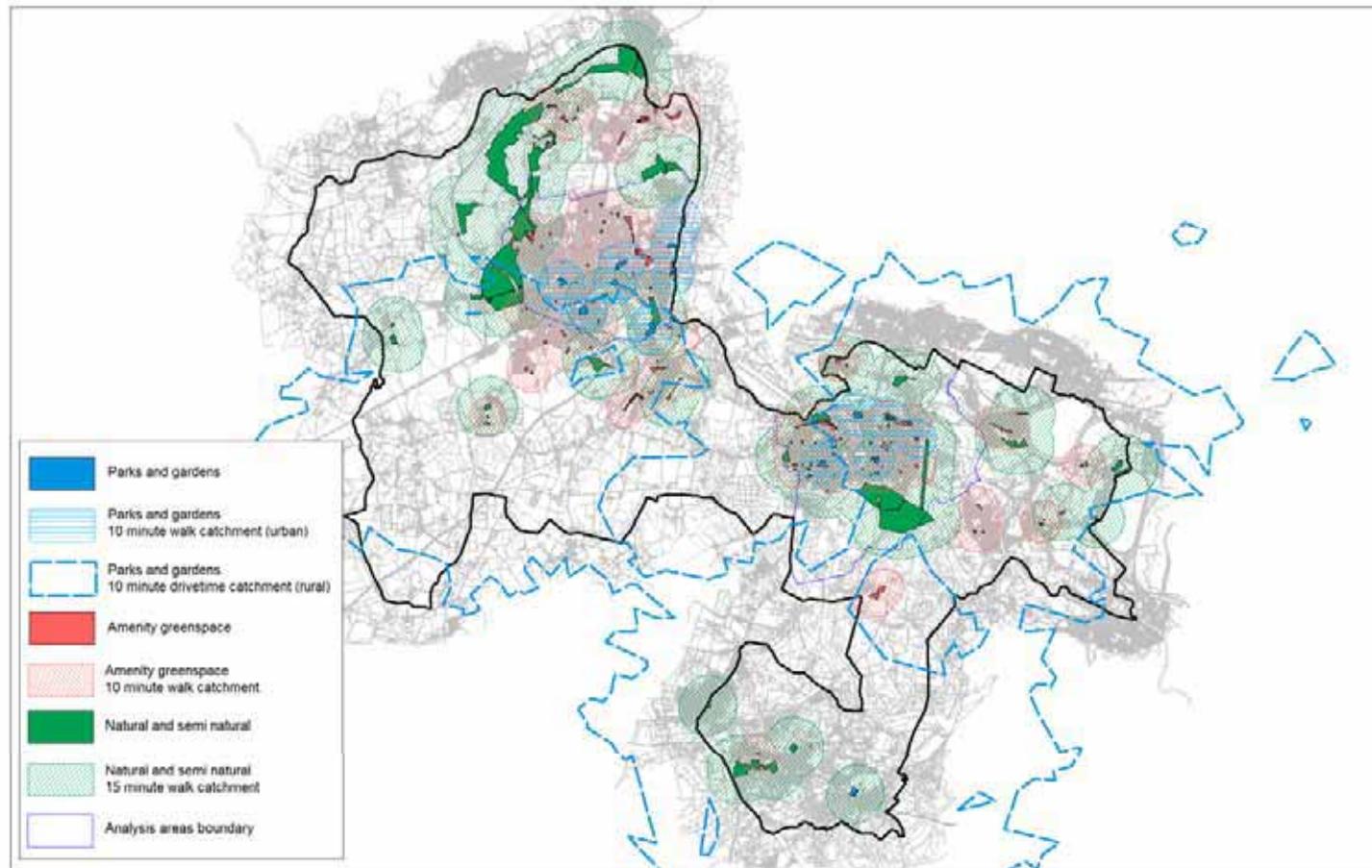
- 4.41 As highlighted, Windsor Great Park is a focal point for both residents of the Borough and visitors travelling into the Borough. As well as acting as a key strategic site, the park also meets the local needs of some residents living within the Southern wards. The quality of this site is covered further in Section 5, although it should be noted that the quality score is fairly low at 62% with issues over litter and lighting most prominent.
- 4.42 In light of the importance of the park to residents and the role of the park in both local community life and attracting visitors to the area, a Royal Borough Park strategic framework should be produced, which includes the following principles:
- continue to liaise with the Crown Estate over Windsor Great Park to provide a public green space and recreational resource of regional significance
 - achieve sufficient quality of provision to promote the park as a national example of best practice in park design and management
 - develop a sustainable approach to the evolution of the park to secure its long term role at the heart of Windsor for future generations
 - fully integrate the park with any future redevelopment of Windsor town centre to improve the spatial and visual relationship between the two and maximise benefit for the park from this relationship..

PG6	Continue to liaise with the Crown Estate over Windsor Great Park to ensure that it meets both local and regional needs and is afforded protection from adverse development proposals in line with Local Plan Policy HG1 (Historic Gardens and Formal Landscapes) . Promote the park as a resource for local people and an example of good practice regionally.
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- 4.43 Residents placed an emphasis on the need for local parks and hence a challenging accessibility standard of 10 minutes walk (480m) was set.

- 4.44 Figure 4.4 illustrates the provision of parks in the context of amenity space and natural and semi natural open space in the Borough. The presence of amenity green space and natural and semi natural open space in areas deficient of parks provide an opportunity to introduce more formal park like features within these spaces and better meet the needs of local residents. Examples are provided later in this section. It should be noted that these are examples for consideration only and that other sites may also be appropriate (or more appropriate).

Figure 4.4 - Provision of amenity green space, natural and semi natural areas, and parks and gardens



Amenity greenspace, parks and gardens and natural and semi natural

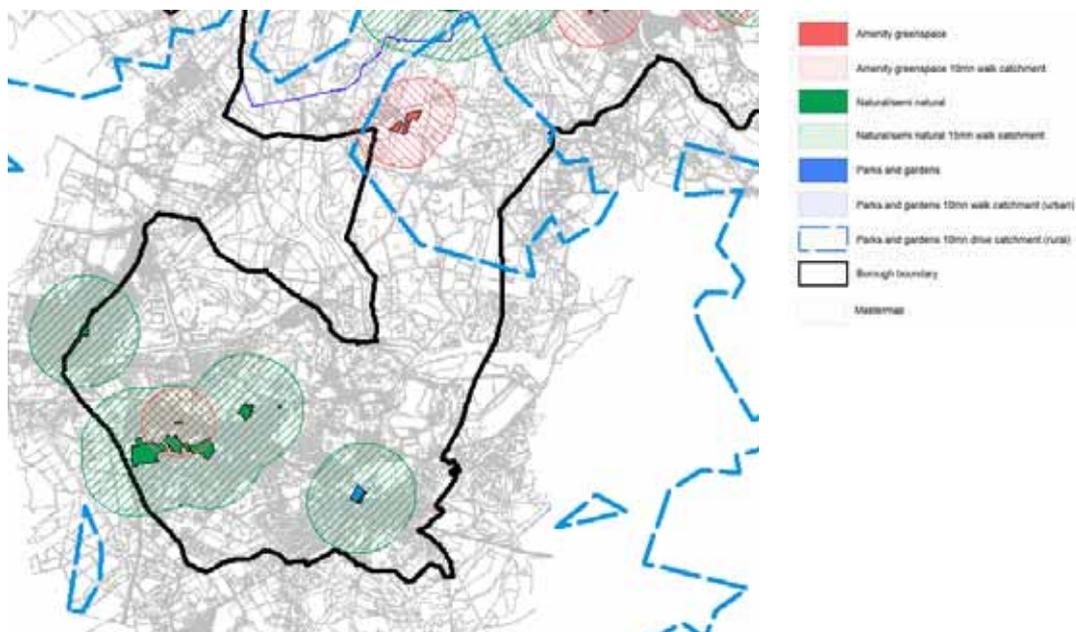
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- 4.45 As detailed in para 4.9, amenity green space fulfils many of the same roles as parks. Where parks are provided within a 10-minute walk time catchment (the recommended distance threshold for amenity space – set in Section 6) they may negate the need for further provision of amenity space (as a higher order facility they provide a greater range of facilities). This is discussed in Section 6.
- 4.46 Application of the quantitative and accessibility standards highlights the highest deficiency of parks is in the rural south and north of the Borough. The greatest current quantitative deficiencies (-6.21 and -4.24ha respectively) can also be found in these areas. Whilst there is formal park provision in the south of the borough, such as at Nell Gwynn Memorial Garden (ID 413) and Broomhall Lane (ID 433) it is also important to consider sites such as Victory Field Recreation Ground (ID 409), which also provides informal recreation opportunities to local residents but for the purpose of this study has been classified as an outdoor sport facility based on its primary purpose.

Figure 4.5 South of the Borough

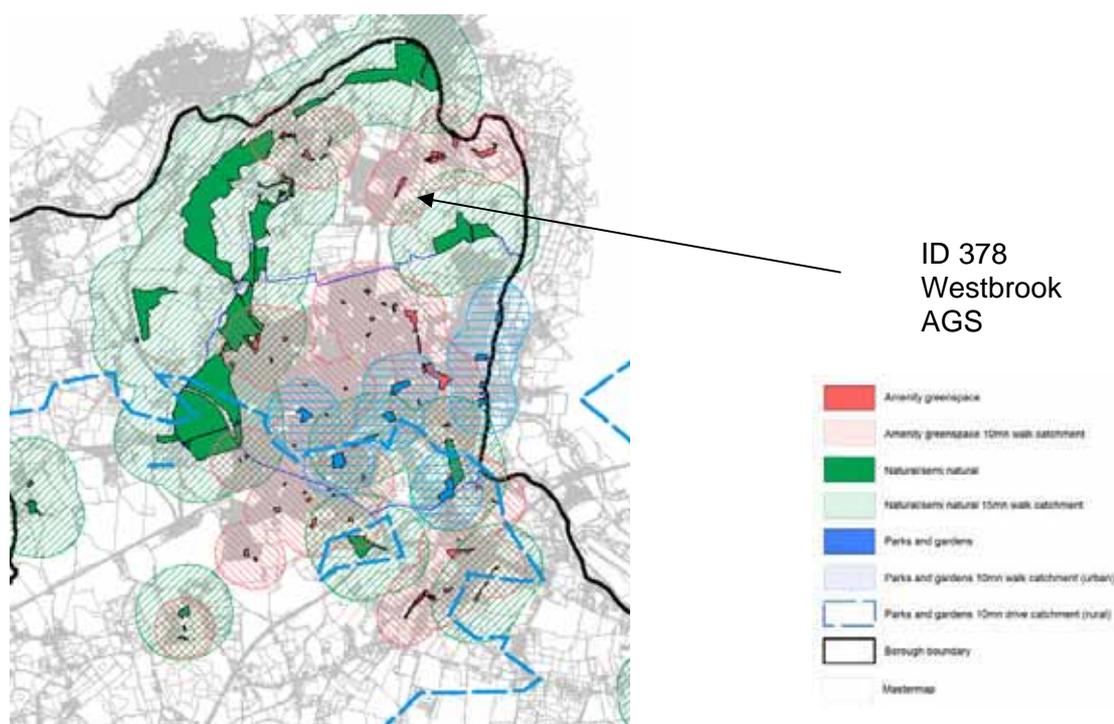


- 4.47 The obvious place to locate a new park would be in the Cookham and Bisham area. Figure 4.6 identifies the area that currently lies outside of the accessibility catchment area. Possible existing sites within this area that could be formalised to offer park features (such as additional bin, benches, paved paths and other features in line with the recommended standard) include Westbrook AGS (ID 378).

SECTION 4 – PARKS AND GARDENS

4.48 Pocket parks are growing in popularity across many local authorities as they provide park amenities in a compact and accessible setting. These sites are often amenity green spaces that are redeveloped to offer features common with parks yet are often owned and managed by local residents and associations. Their purpose can often be to protect and conserve local wildlife, heritage and landscape and can subsequently take on features that bear similarities to natural and semi natural sites, being as small as 0.02ha. A scheme that actively promotes pocket parks can deliver social and economic benefits to a local community and engage residents with their open space. This may be suitable in areas of the Borough where new park provision is being considered.

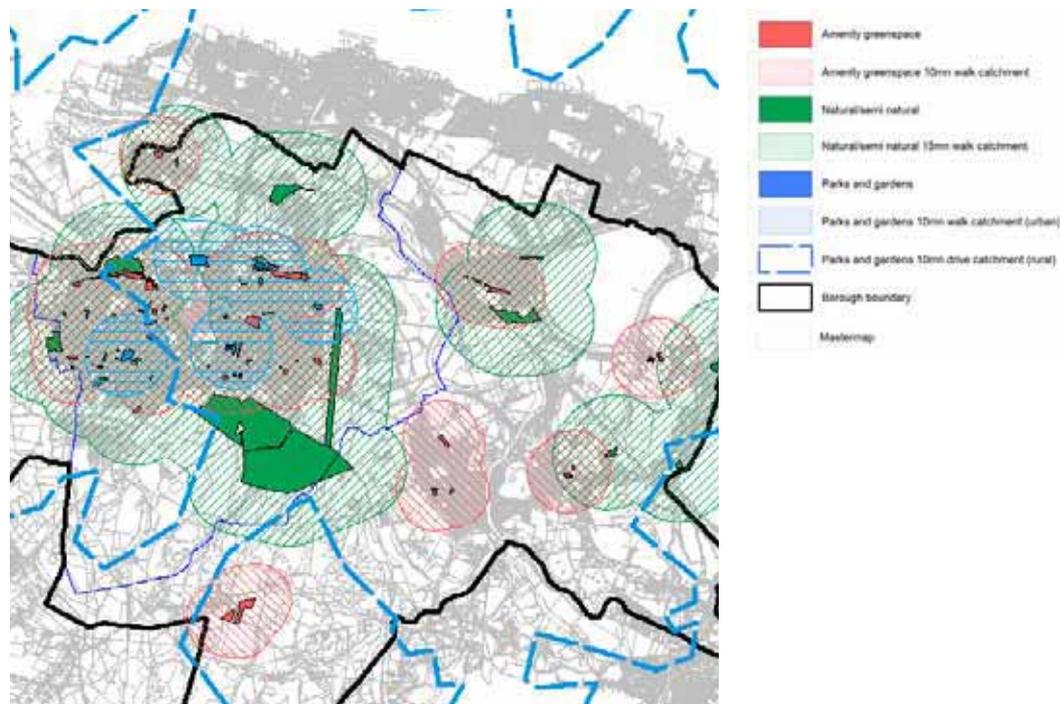
Figure 4.6 North east of the Borough



PG7	Investigate opportunities for providing at least one additional park within each of the Northern and Southern wards through the formalisation of an existing amenity green space. The new park should encompass the recommendations set out within the recommended quality standard. A possible location in the Northern area is Westbrook AGS.
PG8	Identify levels of resident interest in establishing a pocket park scheme, managed by local resident associations. Pocket parks should be prioritised in locations that are currently outside of park accessibility catchment areas and where residents have easy and direct access to sites.

4.49 Windsor is also deficient in parks. Although the provision of amenity green space is lower in this area (see Figure 4.7), there remain several opportunities to formalise amenity green space. Due to the significant size of Windsor Great Park any new development does not need to be substantial in size and could be a formal urban garden.

Figure 4.7 Windsor



PG9	Consider the re-designation of surplus amenity green space to formal parks and garden sites within Windsor or Eton in order to meet identified deficiencies in the provision of parks within these areas of the borough.
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4.50 While there is little quantitative provision of formal parks within the rural area, provision is not considered to be a priority in light of potential access to larger central sites on the boundaries of urban areas. The focus for investment in rural areas will be discussed later in this report. However, in light of the assumption that rural residents must travel to access formal parks, improvements to public transport links should be prioritised where possible in order to facilitate this. This is important in both the rural and urban areas and is reinforced through recommendation PG2.

Summary

- 4.51 Parks and gardens were perceived to be particularly important to local residents, both in the rural and urban areas and were one of the most frequently used types of open space within the Borough, with 65% of respondents to the household survey indicating that they use them more than once a month. Only 8% of respondents indicated that they never visit parks at all. Parks were also a key theme of the drop-in sessions. The wider benefits of parks were also recognised by residents.
- 4.52 The quality of parks and gardens varies across the Borough, with quality scores ranging from 50-100%. Windsor Great Park attracts both the local community and residents from far afield although requires further attention to bring it up to an accepted quality standard.
- 4.53 Although the importance of maintaining the high quality of the existing park stock is recognised, application of the accessibility standards highlights some key deficiencies in provision particularly in the rural Northern and Southern wards. In light of the emphasis placed on access to local formal parks by residents, addressing these deficiencies is considered to be a priority for action.
- 4.54 It is important to note that deficiencies will increase most rapidly in the areas that will see the greatest level of growth under the LDF. In almost all areas, formalising existing amenity or natural areas can address the identified shortfalls.