

SECTION 6

AMENITY GREEN SPACE

Amenity green space

Introduction and definition

- 6.1 This type of open space is most commonly found in housing areas. It includes informal recreation spaces and green spaces in and around housing, with a primary purpose of providing opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancing the appearance of residential or other areas.
- 6.2 Amenity green space is also often found in villages, in the form of village greens. Amenity green spaces can have an overlapping function with parks and gardens and natural green space areas and can also be used as informal areas for children's play where there are no other facilities. It is important therefore to consider the provision of amenity green spaces in the context of other types of open space.
- 6.3 Green space is a central feature of the urban areas in Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton and is integral to their characters. This open space type also offers those in settlements in the rural north and south of the Borough to access open space where parks are not in their locality. In addition to vast grass verges and green links, there are large quantities of amenity green space. As well as providing a recreational resource, these spaces provide a key contribution to the landscape and setting.
- 6.4 This section relates to amenity green spaces and sets out the strategic context, key findings of the consultations and recommended local standards. The standards are then applied, considering the adequacy of the existing amenity green space and the associated demand for these spaces. Standards are also applied in the context of other open spaces with overlapping functions.
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- 6.5 The key issues for amenity green space arising from a review of strategic documents are:
- the **RBWM Local Plan (2003)** states that the loss of existing areas of important urban land will not be permitted unless they are replaced by a similar site or can be best retained and enhanced through a redevelopment scheme
 - whilst encouraging enjoyment and activity, these areas should also be safe and free from harm
 - the **Local Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance: Interpretation of policies R3, R4 and R5 (Public Open Space Provision (February 2003))** states that an overall open space provision target of 4.3 ha per 1,000 population has been adopted by the Council. Of this 2.5 ha per 1,000 population of informal open space should be provided

Consultation

6.6 Consultation undertaken as part of the study highlighted that:

- amenity green space is one of the most infrequently used of all of the types of informal open space, with only 33% of respondents to the household survey visiting these more than once a month. 35% of residents never use amenity green space
- the lower levels of use of amenity green space in comparison to some other typologies of open space reflect the nature of amenity spaces. The wider benefits of these sites were recognised by local residents, particularly with respect to landscape benefits
- an improvement scheme is currently being developed for the Town Moor which will be implemented using S106 funds that have been accrued for this purpose
- the importance of the protection of amenity green space was a key theme during consultation. While the maintenance of sites was perceived as good there were specific site issues relating to vandalism and litter
- several residents commented that while the provision of multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and small play areas on amenity green space was suitable in various locations, there was the feeling that these facilities could become overwhelming, if automatically built on all amenity green space sites in the Borough. Certain sites should therefore remain as informal, natural open spaces. This links with the need for more natural and semi natural provision, particularly in the north of Maidenhead.

Quantity of existing provision

6.7 The provision of amenity green space in the Borough is summarised in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 – Provision of amenity green space 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 (ha) per 1,000 population (2016)
Maidenhead	17.06	0.40	19	0.06	6.45	48,677	0.35
Windsor and Eton	17.11	0.51	35	0.05	2.72	37,075	0.46
Northern wards	24.54	0.78	26	0.06	3.79	28,808	0.85
Southern wards	12.92	0.50	13	0.05	4.37	33,092	0.39
Overall	71.63	0.54	93	0.05	6.45	147,652	0.49

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- 6.8 The key issues emerging from Table 6.1 and consultation relating to the quantity of provision of amenity green space across the Borough are:
- while 26% of household survey respondents state that there is not enough amenity green space provision, 42% indicate that provision of amenity green space is about right. Dissatisfaction with the quantity of provision is particularly high within the Windsor and Eton analysis area of the Borough. The provision of amenity green space in the Windsor and Eton analysis area reflects the level of overall provision. However, due to the population density of the settlements this may be deemed by residents in this analysis area as insufficient
 - the largest percentage of household survey respondents with no opinion from a particular analysis area was in the Northern wards. This may be due to the rural nature of these areas which may mitigate the need for as much amenity green space provision. The Southern wards had the highest satisfaction levels although this again could be down to the rural nature of the area
 - the overall current level of provision in the Borough equates to 71.63 hectares. It can be seen that this is spread unevenly across the Borough with 24.54 hectares in the Northern wards and 12.92 hectares in the Southern wards. The smallest site was 0.05ha (Sinclair Road AGS, ID 60) and the largest amenity green space in the Borough was 6.45ha (Maidenhead Moor AGS, ID 267).

Setting provision standards – quantity

- 6.9 The recommended local quantity standard for amenity green space has been derived from the local needs consultation and audit of provision and is summarised overleaf. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix I.

Quantity Standard (see Appendices I and J)

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
0.54 ha per 1000 population	0.59 ha per 1000 population
Justification	
<p>Whilst feedback indicates that amenity green space is valued by Borough residents, there is a split in opinion regarding the adequacy of the current level of provision. The majority of residents in all analysis areas, with the exception of the Southern wards, perceived there to be an inadequate level of amenity green space.</p> <p>Analysis indicates that there may be locational deficiencies in provision. Local access is particularly important to residents and young children, and many residents highlighted that a lack of localised provision is a key determinant of their perception of the overall quantity. New housing developments are also not perceived as providing adequate new open space to address the increase in population.</p> <p>Many residents highlighted the importance of the protection of existing provision of amenity green space in the Borough and expressed concerns about the potential further loss of green spaces to development.</p> <p>The findings from the consultations indicated a balance between meeting the current recommended minimum level of provision in specific localities through increasing the amount of amenity green space and ensuring that the quality of sites are maintained and specific sites are improved. The imminent housing developments are seen as an opportunity to increase the overall quantitative level across the Borough. On this basis, a slight increase in provision has been deemed most appropriate.</p>	

Current provision - quality

- 6.10 The quality of existing amenity green space in the Borough was assessed through site visits and is set out in Table 6.2. 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.
- 6.11 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 green spaces have a higher weighting to ensure that they have a greater influence on the overall quality score that each site achieves. In particular, the cleanliness of sites and quality and variety of the vegetation was perceived to be important for amenity green spaces. The full rationale behind this approach is set out in Appendix L.

Table 6.2 – Quality of amenity green space across the Borough

Geographical area	Number of sites	Range of quality scores (%)	Average quality scores (%)	Lowest quality sites	Highest quality sites
Maidenhead	19	28 – 90	56.3	Shifford Crescent Amenity Area (ID 300)	Maudsley Memorial Garden) (ID 248)
Windsor and Eton	35	40 – 96	58.9	Sydney Road (ID 123)	Vansittart Road Recreation Ground AGS (ID 55)
Northern wards	26	30 – 95.6	71.7	Cox Green Road AGS (ID 214)	Heynes Green (ID 220)
Southern wards	13	47.5 – 96	68.7	Horton Rec Ground (ID 166)	Cornwall Road Open Space (ID 401)
Overall	93	28 – 96	63.4	Shifford Crescent Amenity Area (ID 300)	Vansittart Road Recreation Ground AGS (ID 55), Cornwall Road Open Space (ID 401)

6.12 The key issues emerging from Table 6.2 and the consultation relating to the quality of amenity green space include:

- the household consultation indicated that the quality of amenity areas is perceived to be good by 32%, average by 56%, and poor by 13%
- the lowest levels of satisfaction were in Maidenhead and the Northern wards, with 14% of household survey respondents in both analysis areas citing amenity areas to be of poor quality. The highest levels of satisfaction are in the Southern wards, with 48% of respondents indicating that they are satisfied with the quality of amenity space in their locality
- respondents to the household survey suggested that the items that were most satisfactory were seats and benches and pathways. The items that were deemed least satisfactory and should subsequently be addressed were lighting, general maintenance and management, planted and grassed areas, and a ranger/monitoring service

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- the parish council surveys identified that the quality of grounds maintenance was generally perceived as high. However, there were some comments which need addressing in relation to the quality of provision. The issue of vandalism and graffiti was cited as a problem, with some more minor concerns about litter. Signage was considered to be only average and was not perceived as presenting a welcome to visitors.
- the average quality scores from site assessments generally reflect the quantitative provision for each analysis area with the Northern wards having the highest levels and Maidenhead the lowest. Brief details of the sites scoring below 40% for quality are provided below:
 - Shifford Crescent Amenity Area, ID 300 (28%) – litter and long grass
 - Green Lane AGS, Maidenhead ID 263 (30%) – large amount of litter dumped, no ancillary features
 - Cox Green Road AGS, ID 214 (30%) – not regularly maintained, safety poor as no proper boundaries
 - Switchback Road AGS, ID 297 (38%) – litter, grass not maintained

Setting provision standards – quality

- 6.13 The recommended local quality standard for amenity green space is summarised overleaf. Full justifications and consultation relating to the quality of provision for the local standard is provided within Appendix L.

Quality Standard (see Appendix L)

Recommended standard – AMENITY GREEN SPACE	
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:	
Essential	Desirable
Clean and well maintained	Dog mess bins
Suitable soft landscaping	
Flowers/ trees and shrubs	
Designed to enhance passive security	
<i>Analysis suggests the improvement in quality of amenity green space is considered to be equally important as increasing its provision.</i>	

Accessibility

- 6.14 Only a small percentage of respondents to the household survey stated that they use this type of open space most frequently (1.4%). It is therefore difficult to produce sound analysis on current usage patterns based on the sample size provided. A more detailed analysis is given below in terms of expected mode of transport and travel time in relation to all respondents. Analysis of the regularity of use of amenity spaces indicates that they are less frequently used than other typologies, with many having a greater landscape value rather than recreational use.

Setting provision standards – accessibility

- 6.15 The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage as well as providing an opportunity for all people to use the site. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultation.
- 6.16 Site specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the site visits where information and signage, transport and general accessibility issues were assessed.
- 6.17 Consultation and analysis shows that the key issues with regards to accessibility include:
- Council officers agreed that the borough-wide target of providing all residents with access to informal open space within 400m of their house should be supported. Again ensuring safe access to these sites will be dependent on a complete network of paths and cycleways
 - the importance of ensuring that amenity green spaces are located in proximity to housing is further reinforced by the expectation that 72% of household survey respondents expect to reach an amenity green space by foot. Of these respondents, 75% expect the journey time to be under 10 minutes
 - site assessments reveal that general access to sites is varied, with results ranging from very good to very poor. The information and signage at sites received relatively poor scores. However, this may be a result of the nature of the typology.
- 6.18 The recommended local accessibility standard for amenity green space is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix M.

Accessibility Standard (see Appendix M)

Recommended standard
10 MINUTE (480 METRES) WALK TIME
Justification
<p>Given the emphasis on walking rather than driving in terms of the expectations of household survey respondents it is recommended that a local standard is set based on a walk time. The emphasis throughout consultation on protecting existing amenity green space highlights the localised value of this type of open space provision and in turn supports the recommendation that an accessibility standard based on walking is most appropriate.</p> <p>At a borough-wide level, the 75th percentile threshold based on household survey responses is a 10 minute walk. The modal response was also 10 minutes. As a result, the recommended local accessibility standard is a 10-minute walk time.</p> <p>In the absence of other forms of open space provision within close proximity of residents, the value of localised amenity green spaces is particularly important. This was apparent during consultation with children and young people as great emphasis was placed on the importance of the provision of local open spaces where individuals could easily and safely meet. Whilst identifying a 10-minute walk as a recommended local standard borough-wide, it was agreed that in certain localities, provision within a 5-minute walk time should be an aspiration.</p> <p>A local accessibility walk time catchment of 10-minutes was also set for the parks and gardens typology, which will support localised provision for all Borough residents and facilitate delivery of increased participation in informal sport and physical activity. The importance of local amenity green space provision to break up the urban landscape also needs to be taken in to consideration.</p>

Applying provision standards

- 6.19 The application of the recommended local quality, quantity and accessibility standards is essential in understanding the existing distribution of open space and identifying areas where provision is insufficient to meet local need.
- 6.20 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.
- 6.21 The application of the local standard for quantity results in the following:

Table 6.3 – Application of quantity standard

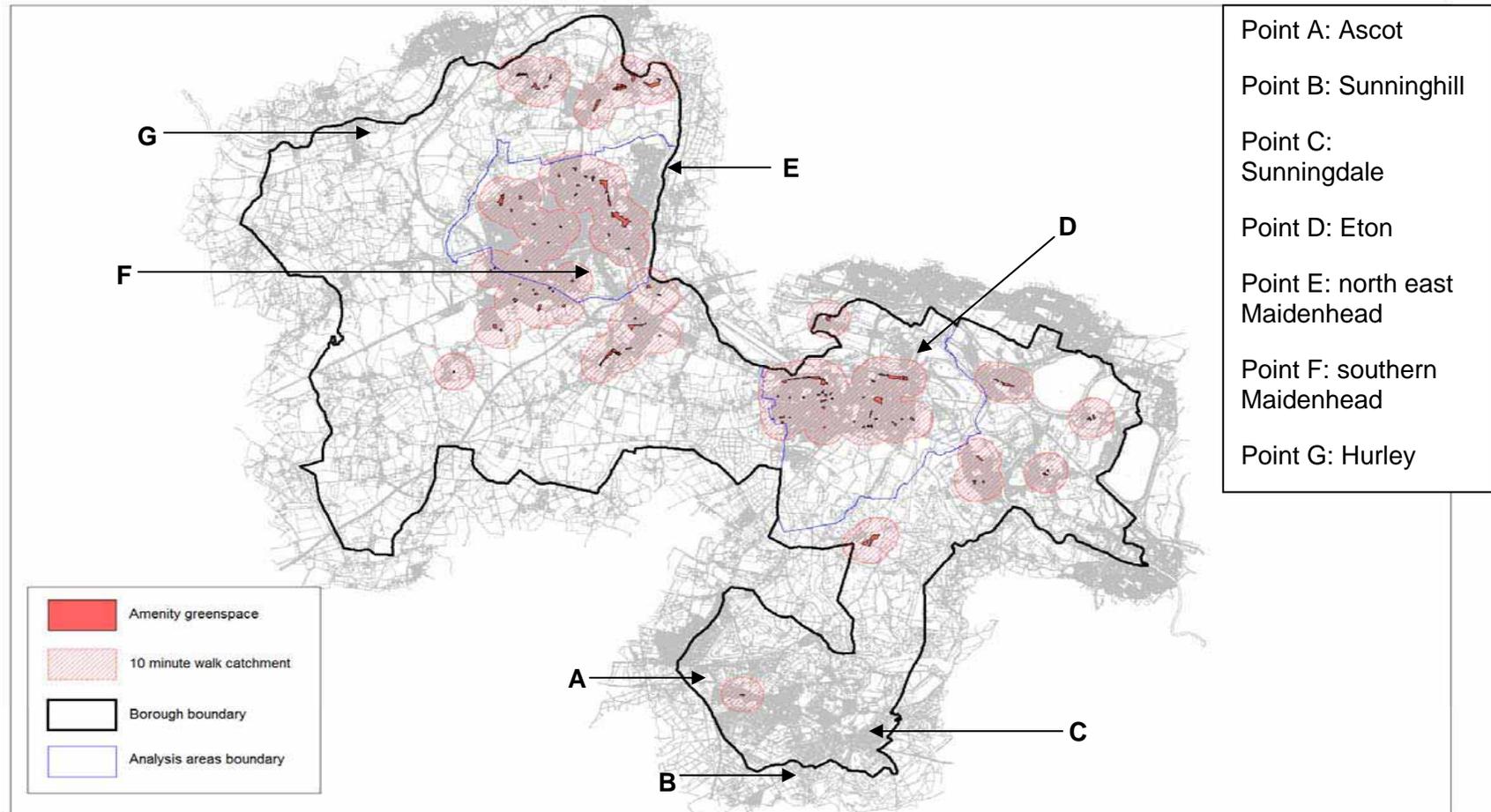
Analysis areas	Future provision (2026) in hectares balanced against local standard (0.59 hectares per 1,000 population)
Maidenhead	-11.66
Windsor and Eton	-4.76
Northern wards	7.54
Southern wards	-6.60
Overall	-15.48

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

- the local quantity standard is set above the current level of provision, which means that existing provision is below the recommended minimum level. By 2026, due to population increases, there will be an increased shortfall in amenity green space provision, equating to circa 15 hectares
- when looking at the future provision in terms of hectares per 1,000 population balanced against the standard of 0.59 hectares per 1,000 population, three of the analysis areas show a deficiency, the greatest being in Maidenhead (-11.66 hectares)
- the Northern wards analysis area currently has a level of provision that exceeds the minimum recommended level (by 7.54 hectares).

6.22 The application of the local accessibility and quality standards for amenity green space is set out overleaf. Provision of amenity space is also considered in relation to the location of parks and gardens and natural and semi natural open space, which is discussed later in this section.

Figure 6.1- Provision of amenity space (general areas of potential provision)



Amenity greenspace

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6.23 The key issues arising from the accessibility mapping (Figure 6.1) regarding the distribution of sites are:

- the application of the accessibility standard reveals several areas across the Borough that fall outside of the 10 minute walk time catchment for amenity green space
- there is an uneven distribution of sites across the analysis areas, with several sites in close proximity to one another. Points A, B and C on Figure 6.1 identify key residential areas that do not meet the accessibility standard for amenity green space but also lack significant provision of natural and semi natural open space and parks
- Point D identifies a shortfall of amenity open space in Eton. Analysis area of Windsor and Eton has a projected shortfall of 4.76ha in 2026 and much of the current amenity green space is clustered in a small geographic area. Despite this cluster being where the majority of residents live, opportunities should identify areas in Eton and Eton Wick that can accommodate public space
- Maidenhead analysis area has a projected shortfall in 2026 of 11.6ha. Points E and F identify areas that have a deficiency of amenity green space and that are not served adequately by other forms of informal open space. Opportunities around Point E should definitely be explored given the plans to extend the residential area of Maidenhead to the north
- despite the current oversupply of amenity green space in the Northern wards there is a lack of public open space around Hurley on the northern fridges of the Borough. The potential for an informal open space with natural features in Hurley around Point G on Figure 6.1 should be explored.

AGS1	The council should aim to increase the provision of amenity green space across the Borough. Areas of immediate importance are in the Southern wards around Ascot and to the north of the Maidenhead analysis area, as well as responding to any new residential developments.
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Applying the quantity, quality and accessibility standards

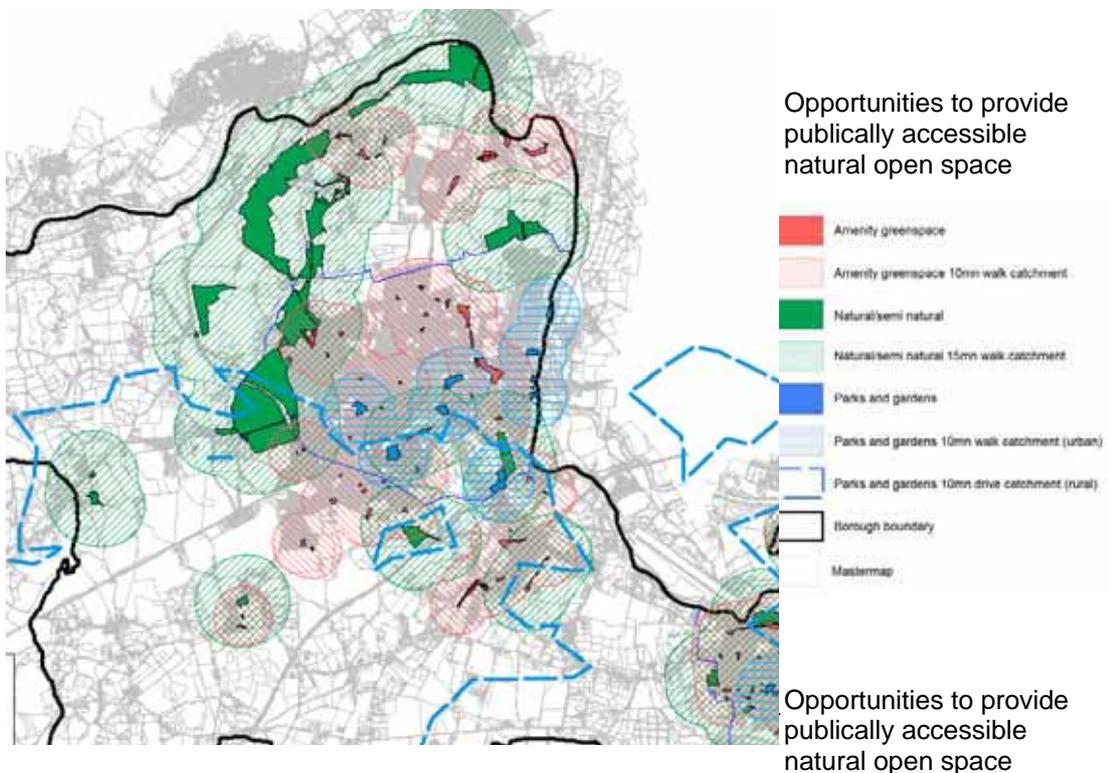
6.24 The current supply of amenity green space is below the recommended local standard of 0.59 ha per 1,000 population. The accessibility mapping shows that there are significant accessibility deficiencies within all analysis areas.

AGS2	Strive to improve the quality of amenity sites, aiming to improve the quality of all sites so that they achieve 60% (the score required to fall within the top 50% of sites). In particular, it is likely that improvements to the provision of ancillary facilities will be of particular benefit to the overall quality of amenity green space.
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- 6.25 The breakdown of provision by analysis areas has revealed a requirement for further provision up to 2026 in three of the four analysis areas, with only the Northern wards containing sufficient provision. This is supported by the application of the accessibility standard, which suggests that there are pockets of residents within each analysis area outside of the recommended amenity green space distance threshold. However, the majority of these residents have access to open space in the form of a formal park or natural and semi natural provision. The exception is in the Southern ward which has substantial areas that require additional informal land provision where residents have limited access to any typology.
- 6.26 In order to ensure the future quality of open spaces, consideration should be given to the size of sites. Smaller sites (particularly those located in proximity to larger facilities) may be of limited value to the residents and costly in terms of maintenance to the provider.
- 6.27 The most appropriate priorities for each area of the Borough are therefore discussed taking into account the relationship between quality, quantity and accessibility, considering all forms of informal open space.
- 6.28 As indicated, the application of the local quantity standard suggests there is currently adequate provision within the Northern wards. However, due to the distribution of these sites, a number of residents in Hurley and Waltham St Lawrence have limited access to open space types, as illustrated in Figure 6.2.

Figure 6.2 Northern wards (general areas of potential provision)



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- 6.29 As highlighted in Section 4, the north and west of Maidenhead analysis area has a shortfall of parks. Section 5 identified that the north of Maidenhead also had a shortfall of natural and semi natural areas. Figure 6.1 suggests that there is an abundance of amenity green space in this area. While there is still an overall shortfall of amenity space in Maidenhead (which could be catered for in the north east of the analysis area) there is the opportunity to develop several of the current sites. Ideally opportunities to enlarge these sites will be sought and natural or park features can be incorporated so that they meet additional requirements of local residents.
- 6.30 Opportunities to upgrade one or more of these sites into a park to offset existing deficiencies should be seized. North Town Moor (Site ID 283), Maidenhead Moor AGS (Site ID 267), Pinkeys Green AGS (Site ID 314), St Marks Crescent AGS (site ID 326) and Maudsley Memorial Garden (Site ID 248) are all examples of particularly large facilities, which could be upgraded to perform park (or pocket park with natural features) functions. A pocket park is usually a small area within a residential estate that is owned and maintained by a community association. Often these sites have natural features such as trees, bushes and long grass but are supplemented by benches, bins and paths.

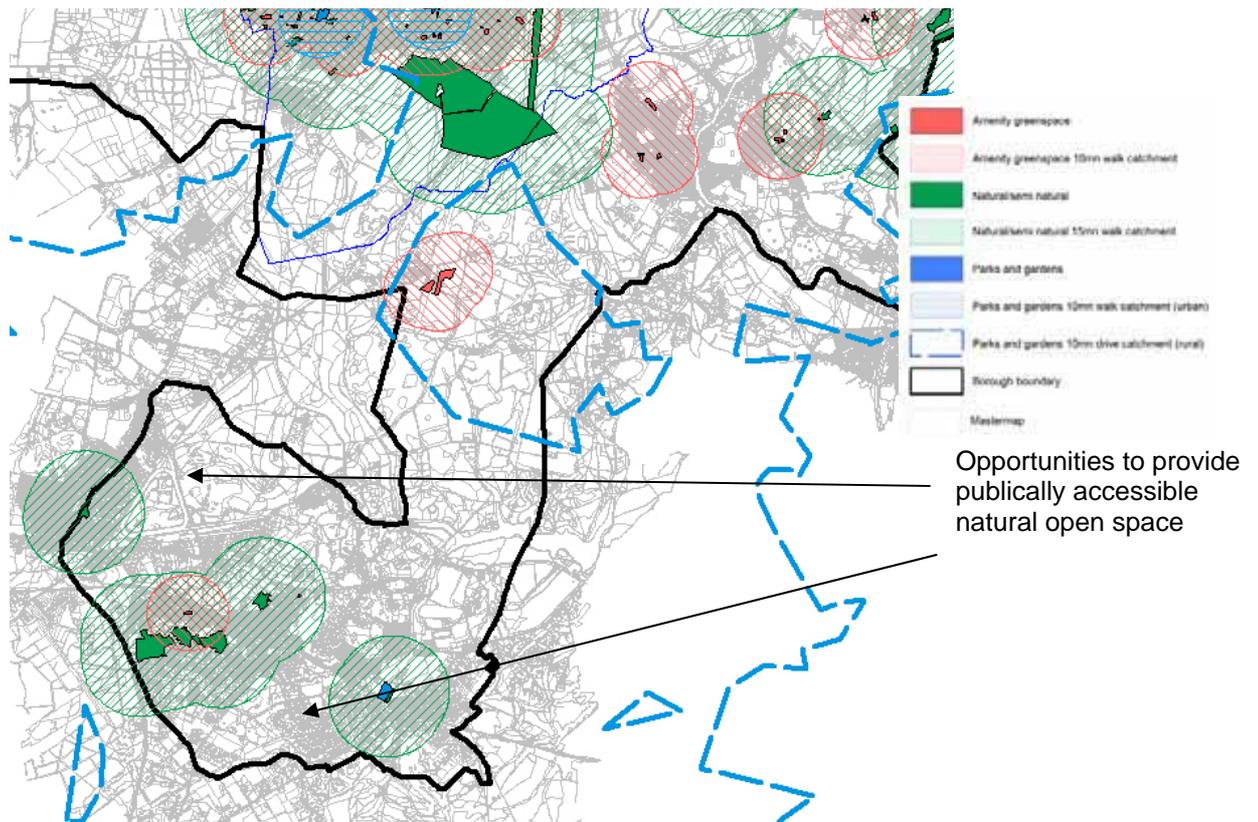
AGS3	Investigate opportunities of formalising an amenity green space in the north of Maidenhead to provide more formal pocket park sites
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- 6.31 In light of the quantitative surplus and overlapping catchments of amenity spaces across the Northern wards, there may be some opportunities for the re-designation of sites in this area. Only sites with limited value to residents (ie poor quality, low accessibility and overlapping catchments) should be considered and sites should be assessed in terms of their value as other open space types prior to their loss as amenity sites.

AGS4	Consider the appropriateness for re-designation of sites in the Northern wards. Capital received through the release of any land should be reinvested in areas of low provision and high demand or qualitative improvements to high value sites
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- 6.32 Recommendation AGS4 has been based on the application of the local standard against the future population figures as shown in Table 6.2.
- 6.33 In quantitative terms, the largest deficiency is to the south of the Borough. This is reflected through the application of the accessibility standards, where it can be seen that there are large areas (for instance around Ascot) outside of the catchment area for amenity green space. A large proportion of these areas are also outside of the catchment for parks and natural and semi natural open space, indicating that there is a real need for local recreational space (Figure 6.3).

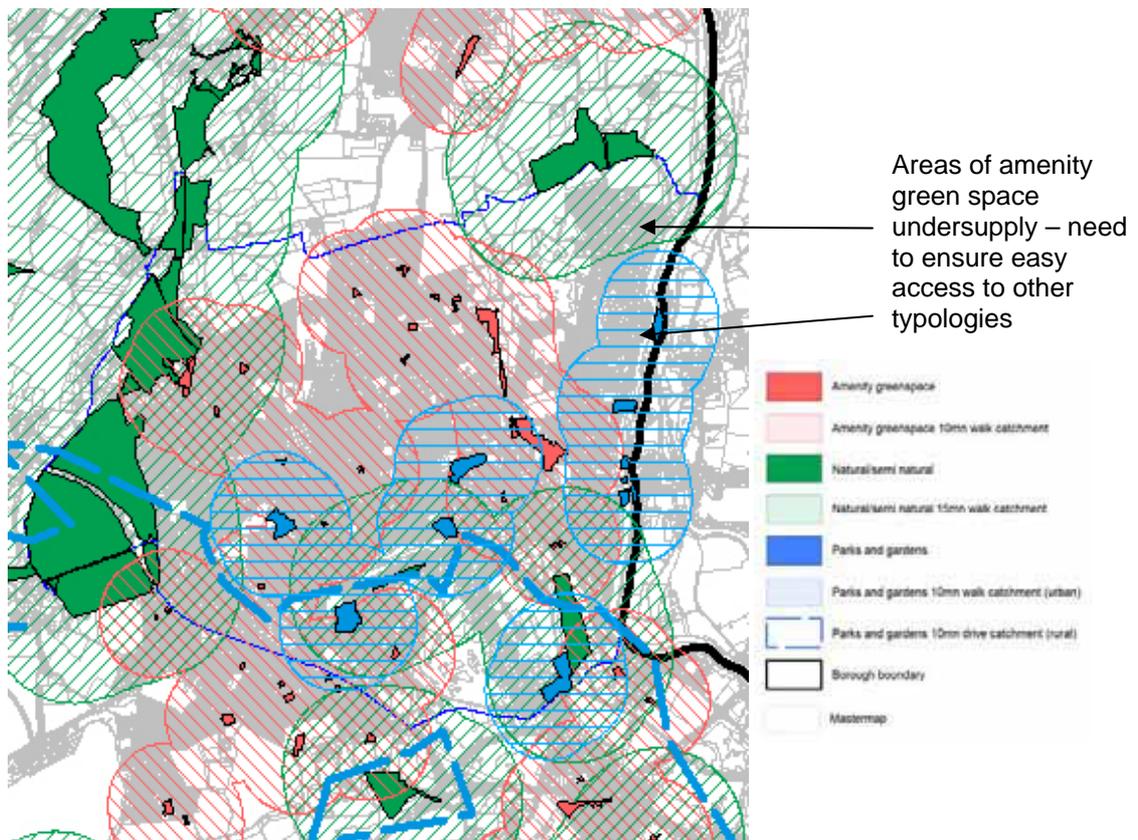
Figure 6.3 Southern wards (general areas of potential provision)



AGS5	Opportunities to provide new amenity spaces to the south of the Borough should be identified. Areas where there is a specific deficiency include Ascot, South Ascot and Sunninghill. Where no deficiency exists, the focus should be on quality enhancement of existing sites.
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6.34 Like the Southern wards, Maidenhead also exhibits deficiencies in terms of the provision of amenity green space. Deficiencies in the north east of Maidenhead are particularly important, as this area has a high residential density. As shown by Figure 6.4 it is vital that access to the nearby parks such as Raymill Island (ID 279) and Riverside Gardens (ID 279) is easy and obvious.

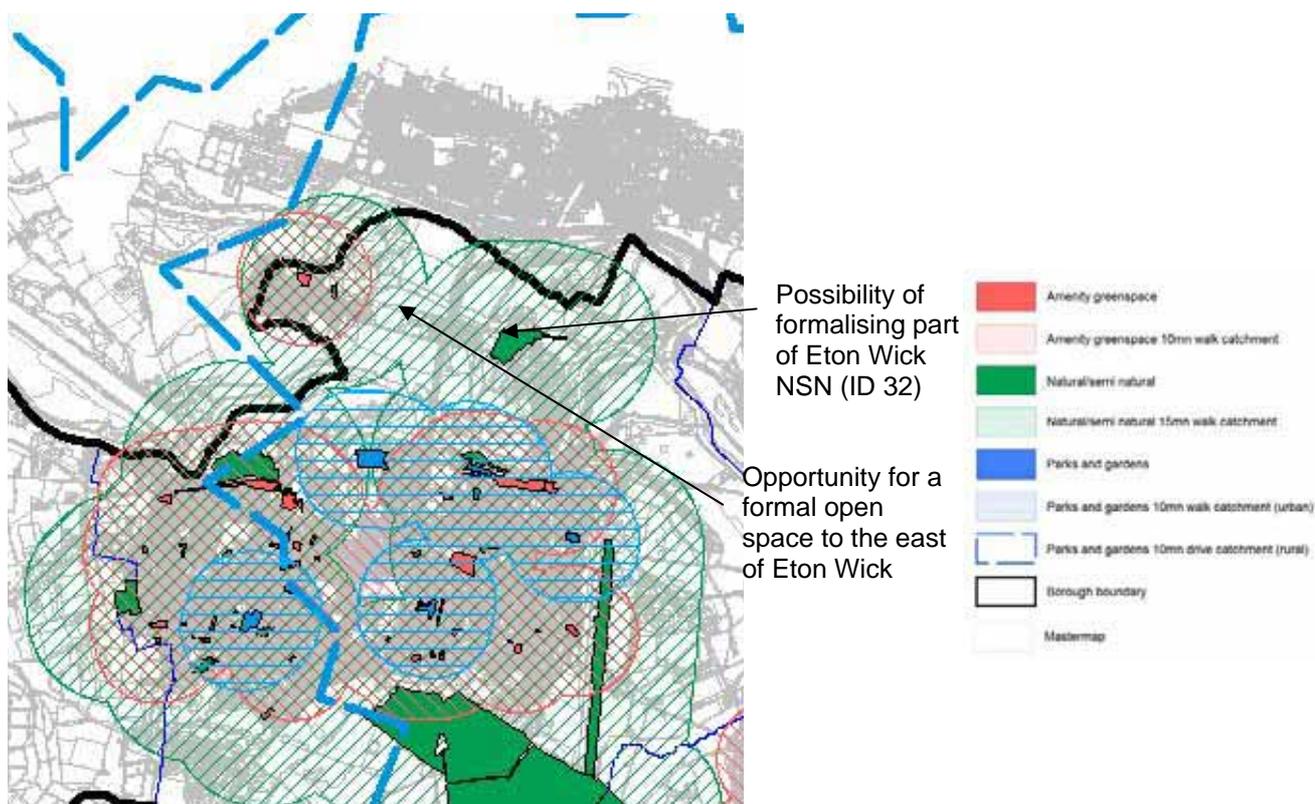
Figure 6.4 North East Maidenhead (general areas of potential provision)



AGS6	Identify any opportunity for an amenity green space in the north east of Maidenhead. Facilitate easy access to park and natural and semi natural open spaces for all residents in this area.
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- 6.35 Application of the standards to the Windsor and Eton analysis area has identified that while Windsor is well served, there are accessibility deficiencies around Eton and Eton Wick. This is also reflected through the application of the quantity standard, which reveals a shortfall in provision.
- 6.36 As illustrated in Figure 6.5, the majority of residents within the Eton area have access to natural and semi natural areas although there is little provision of AGS. It is recommended that the Council identify an opportunity to locate a formal open space within the Eton Wick area. There is a lack of young people facilities (Section 7) in this area and the provision of a formal AGS or park site could allow for this type of development.

Figure 6.5 Eton and Eton Wick (general areas of potential provision)



AGS7	Provide a new formal open space or formalise an existing open space to the east of Eton Wick with the intention of exploring possibilities of equipment provision for children or young people. Any new provision should ensure clear public rights of way to Eton and Windsor.
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6.37 Based on the local quantity standard and the minimum required size of an amenity green space (used to define the minimum size), amenity green space should be provided in settlements where the population exceeds 70. Those settlements without sufficient provision should therefore be prioritised for improvement.

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6.38 Given the importance of providing amenity space in every area, while priority should be given to larger settlements, it should be ensured that all settlements have access to informal space. High quality amenity green space can play an important role in village life. Those settlements currently devoid of any open space and therefore requiring further investigation include:

- North: Hurley, Knowl Hill, Waltham St Lawrence, Paley Street, Fifield, Oakley Green
- South: Ascot, Sunningdale, Sunninghill,

AGS8	Ensure that all villages with over 70 residents contain an amenity green space. Consideration should also be given to providing amenity space in settlements devoid of any other open space.
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6.39 The quality of facilities in the rural area was generally adequate with most sites falling below an adequate quality level in the urban areas of Windsor and Maidenhead. Vansittart Road Recreation Ground AGS (ID 55) and Cornwall Road Open Space (ID 401) were the highest scoring sites and should be viewed as a benchmark of what should be provided for new amenity green spaces.

Summary

6.40 For many residents amenity green space will be the most accessible form of open space provision. The value of amenity green spaces within proximity to residents was noted through the local consultation. While amenity green space often fulfils a similar role to larger informal open spaces (eg parks and natural areas) the local nature of this type of open space is of particular importance.

6.41 Local consultation highlighted the importance of the balance between quality and quantity.

6.42 Application of the local standards highlighted that there is an imbalance in provision, with large quantities of amenity green space in the Northern wards but with a sporadic distribution everywhere apart from Maidenhead and Windsor. In many instances those areas deficient in amenity green space also exhibit shortfalls in the provision of parks and natural and semi natural areas, indicating that there are limited opportunities for informal recreation.

6.43 While the overall direction should remain on enhancing the quality of amenity spaces (particularly with regards cleanliness and maintenance, suitable soft landscaping and ensuring they are designed to enhance security), opportunities to address the identified deficiencies should also be taken.