

**BOLTON COUNCIL**  
**OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY:**  
**SECTION ONE INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

This report is Section I of the open space, sport and recreation study for Bolton, undertaken by Knight, Kavanagh & Page (KKP) on behalf of Bolton Council (BC). It provides an introduction and context for the study by setting out:

- Study aims.
- Summary of study methodology.
- National policy context.
- Regional policy context.
- Local policy context

#### **STUDY AIMS**

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 “Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation” requires local authorities to prepare proactive strategies for the provision and enhancement of open spaces, sporting and recreational facilities. These should be based on up to date audits of provision and assessments of the need for new provision.

Within Bolton various studies have been carried out covering these issues. However these have only covered particular elements of the range required by PPG17 (for example, strategies covering playing pitches and play areas have been produced previously).

The overall purpose of this project is therefore to complement, and update where necessary, these existing studies, to provide a comprehensive needs assessment and strategy in accordance with the requirements of PPG17 and the methodology set out in its Companion Guide “Assessing needs and opportunities”. The project will form the starting point for establishing an effective strategy for open space, sport and recreation, providing an overall framework to guide the planning, delivery, management and monitoring of open space, sport and recreation facilities in Bolton. It will also provide a significant evidence base for the production in due course of Bolton’s Local Development Framework (the replacement of the recently adopted Unitary Development Plan) and any review or production of new supplementary Planning Documents, which involve open space or its future provision.

#### **Objectives**

The objectives of this study are to:

- Provide a comprehensive audit of existing provision of different types of greenspace, sporting and recreational facility in terms of quantity, quality, accessibility, and wider value to the community;
- Identify local needs and recommend standards of provision for all types of green space, sporting and recreational facility in accordance with PPG17; and
- Identify any deficiencies or surpluses in provision together with strategic options/policies for addressing any shortfalls in provision (either current or future).



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The study also:

- Provides a comprehensive and robust evidence base for any review of adopted planning policies through the development of the Local Development Framework and any supporting Supplementary Planning (which the Council may wish to publish subsequently).
- Informs the local response to Corporate and Departmental strategies/initiatives including the Bolton Community Plan, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy, ODPM PSA Liveability Agenda, People, Places and Prosperity Strategic Priority V, Healthy Living Action Plan and the Health Inequalities Strategy and others.

### **SUMMARY OF STUDY METHODOLOGY**

Each element of the study (open spaces and outdoor sports facilities) adopts a slightly different methodology to reflect the nature of the typology and national guidance. Consequently, a detailed methodology can be found within Section 2. The following is a summary of the main methodology elements adopted:

- Review of existing documentation.
- Face-to-face consultation with stakeholders and key local agencies/organisations.
- Household survey – undertaken with 1,000 respondents across Bolton.
- Site visits to open spaces and outdoor sports facilities to assess their quality and value.
- Development of a database for data analysis and to facilitate GIS mapping of open spaces in relation to their catchment and the settlements of Bolton.



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#### **NATIONAL CONTEXT**

This section identifies the national policy context within which the study has been conducted. The strategy and action plan will identify ways in which the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities in Bolton supports and reflects national policy.

#### **Planning policy**

##### ***Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002)***

The revised Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (PPG17), published in 2002, advises local planning authorities to provide the strongest protection for open space, to resist development pressures that could diminish recreational provision and to adopt a strategic approach to the provision and protection of sports facilities. PPG17 identifies the requirement for all local authorities to assess the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sport and recreational facilities. Local authorities should undertake audits of existing open space, sports and recreational facilities to consider the quantitative and qualitative elements such as the use made of existing facilities, access in terms of location and opportunities for new open space and facilities. The assessment and audit will allow identification of specific needs and quantitative and/or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space and facilities. This report will address these issues in Bolton.

##### ***Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport (1994)***

PPG 13 sets out the Government's objectives for the development of Britain's transport system. Local authorities are encouraged to produce planning policies, which will stimulate and assist people in using bicycles. Routes should be proposed in local plans where cycling can be made safer and more attractive. These routes may be combined with horse riders and pedestrians to create multi user routes, away from traffic.



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#### ***Planning Policy Guidance 3: Housing (2000)***

PPG3 details the Government's objectives for housing policy. It focuses on ensuring that the housing needs of all in the community are recognised and promoting more sustainable patterns of development. In particular, it requires local planning authorities to give priority to re-using previously developed land within urban areas, bringing empty homes back into use and converting existing buildings in preference to the development of greenfield sites. They are also required to seek to reduce car dependence by facilitating more walking and cycling and promoting good design in new housing developments in order to create attractive, high-quality living environments in which people will choose to live.

#### ***Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)***

PPS1 outlines the Government's view that sustainable development is the core principle underpinning planning. It is defined as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.' Planning should facilitate and promote sustainable and inclusive patterns of urban and rural development by making suitable land available for development in line with economic, social and environmental objectives to improve people's quality of life, contributing to sustainable economic development; protecting and enhancing the natural and historic environment, the quality and character of the countryside, and existing communities; ensuring high quality development through good and inclusive design, and the efficient use of resources; and ensuring that development supports existing communities and contributes to the creation of safe, sustainable, liveable and mixed communities with good access to jobs and key services for all members of the community.

#### ***Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and geological conservation***

PPS9 sets out the Government's vision for conserving and enhancing biological diversity in England, together with a programme of work to achieve it. It includes the broad aim that planning, development and regeneration should have minimal impacts on biodiversity and enhance it wherever possible. In moving towards this vision, the Government's objectives for planning are to promote sustainable development; to conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology; and to contribute to rural renewal and urban renaissance.



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#### **Open spaces policy**

Over the past decade, a significant number of reports has been published in relation to open and green spaces.

#### ***DEFRA: Rural White Paper (2000)***

The Rural White Paper sets out the Government's vision of a living, working, protected and vibrant countryside. Key issues in respect of open spaces include proposals to improve rural transport, policies to conserve and enhance the countryside, restoring and maintaining wildlife diversity and the natural environment. Key success identified in the review undertaken in 2004 include added emphasis on sites of special scientific interest and the England Biodiversity Strategy, which integrates biodiversity conservation into key policies and programmes.

#### ***DTLR: The Urban Green Spaces Taskforce: Green Spaces, Better Places (2002)***

The final report of the Urban Green Spaces Taskforce identifies the need for an urban renaissance of parks and green spaces. It details:

- The benefits of parks and green spaces for urban life and their contribution to long-term social, economic and environmental progress (e.g., urban regeneration and renewal; health; social cohesion, community development and citizenship; education and lifelong learning; environmental sustainability; heritage and culture).
- The problems affecting urban parks and green spaces and ways in which they might be overcome (e.g., serving marginalised groups, investment, partnership and information systems).
- The need for a strategic policy framework within which all decision makers can operate and contribute to deliver networks of urban green spaces.
- Identification of ways to deliver the report's vision of 'liveable', sustainable modern towns and cities – strong civic and local pride, reinforced by a green spaces strategy; common criteria to measure quality and care; strong local leadership and greater national support; a scheme to fund enablers to work with local groups and create partnerships; the creation of a new national agency for urban parks and green spaces.



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#### ***Urban Parks Forum: Public Park Assessment (2002)***

This report highlights the decline of urban parks in the United Kingdom. Despite receiving over 1.5 billion visits per year, cuts in revenue expenditure over the previous 20 years were estimated at £1.3 billion. The report identifies the key challenge of arresting the decline in parks and starting a renaissance in open spaces.

#### ***DEFRA 'Working with the grain of nature: a biodiversity strategy for England' (2002)***

This strategy sets out a vision for the Country of landscapes 'where wild species and habitats are part of healthy functioning ecosystems; where we nurture, treasure and enhance our biodiversity, and where biodiversity is a natural consideration of policies and decisions, and in society as a whole.'

The Biodiversity Strategy for England seeks to ensure that biodiversity considerations become embedded in all the main sectors of economic activity, public and private. It sets out a programme to make the changes necessary to conserve, enhance and work with the grain of nature and ecosystems rather than against them. It takes account of climate change as one of the most important factors affecting biodiversity and influencing policies.

#### ***ODPM: Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future (2003)***

The Sustainable Communities Plan (Sustainable Communities: Building for the future) sets out a long-term programme of action for delivering sustainable communities in both urban and rural areas. It aims to tackle housing supply issues in the South East, low demand in other parts of the country, and the quality of our public spaces.

The Plan includes not just a significant increase in resources and major reforms of housing and planning, but a new approach to how we build and what we build.

The programme of action aims to focus the attention and co-ordinate the efforts of all levels of Government and stakeholders in bringing about development that meets the economic, social and environmental needs of future generations as well as succeeding now.

Key policy areas include the introduction of the 'Cleaner, Safer, Greener' programme (309 Green Flag awards, 71% satisfaction with the quality of green space and £24.7 million awarded to 1,100 Living Space community projects).

#### ***CABE Space: Manifesto for better public spaces (2004)***

This documents seeks to help create a national consensus that parks and public spaces are a genuine political and financial priority by encouraging national and local agencies to sign up to the 'manifesto.'



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### ***CABE Space: The value of public space: how high quality parks and public spaces create economic, social and environmental value (2004)***

The value of public space shows how cities in the UK and around the world have received far-reaching economic, health and social benefits from making the best of their public spaces.

### ***CABE Space: Parks need parkforce (2005)***

Parks need parkforce sets out the case for increasing the number of on-site staff to create safe, popular and beautiful parks.

### ***CABE Space: Start with the park: creating sustainable urban green spaces in areas of housing growth and renewal (2005)***

Start with the park is a good practice guide for everyone involved in the processes of sustainable growth and renewal in England. It is particularly relevant to the creation and care of green spaces in housing growth areas and housing market renewal areas. It will inform and inspire strategic decision-makers working in local delivery and partnership bodies, local and regional authorities, government departments and other national agencies, private developers, housebuilders and registered social landlords and community and voluntary sector groups.

### ***CABE Space: Urban parks: Do you know what you're getting for your money? (2006)***

This report seeks to establish the extent to which simply providing more resources would automatically improve green space quality. It highlights a number of key issues:

- ❑ The importance of assessing the existing quality of parks and green spaces and to set clear and measurable aspirations for the future.
- ❑ The difference between cutting budgets and making efficiency gains is not always appreciated.
- ❑ Increases in national funding do not necessarily lead to more resources at a local level.
- ❑ The level of local importance does not always carry through the decision-making hierarchy, with parks and green spaces slipping down the agenda as financial decision-making moves onto a higher and more strategic level.
- ❑ The importance of a corporate strategy and a strategic approach.





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### National agencies

This section briefly summarises the policy aims of the key organisations working in the field of open space, sport and recreation.

Agency	Comment
<b>National agencies</b>	
<b>CABE Space</b>	<p>CABE Space, established in 2003, is part of CABE, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, which champions the quality of our buildings and spaces. CABE Space is publicly funded by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). It aims to bring excellence to the design, management and maintenance of parks and public space in our towns and cities.</p> <p>CABE Space works with local authorities and other bodies responsible for public space to help them provide a better service. Its work encourages local councils to think holistically about their green space, and what it means for residents' health and well being, routes to school and work, and recreation through play and sport. CABE Space's goal is to ensure that every person in England has easy access to well designed and well looked after public space.</p>
<b>Civic Trust</b>	<p>The Civic Trust was founded in 1957 to encourage high standards of planning and architecture. It is concerned with the quality of the built environment and its impact on people. It raises awareness of the need to create environments, which bring out the best in people, celebrate the best places, and expect the highest quality for all communities.</p> <p>The Civic Trust manages the Green Flag Award, which is the national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales. The award scheme began in 1996 as a means of recognising and rewarding the best green spaces in the country. It was also seen as a way of encouraging others to achieve the same high environmental standards, creating a benchmark of excellence in recreational green areas.</p>
<b>English Heritage</b>	<p>English Heritage's role is to make sure that the historic environment of England is properly maintained and cared for. It also aims to help people understand and appreciate why the historic buildings and landscapes around them matter. It provides a range of grants and advice and helps designate special places.</p>
<b>Entrust</b>	<p>ENTRUST regulates the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme, which encourages and enables landfill operators to support a wide range of environmental projects by giving them a tax credit against their donations to environmental bodies. Around half of this is spent on parks, green spaces and the restoration of buildings.</p>
<b>Environment Agency</b>	<p>The Environment Agency is the leading public body for protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales and ensuring that air, land and water are managed sustainably. Its work encompasses town planning and the funding of improvements to green spaces.</p>
<b>Groundwork UK</b>	<p>Groundwork UK is a leading environmental regeneration charity, aiming to make sustainable development a reality in the UK's poorest neighbourhoods. Sub-regional trusts deliver projects.</p>
<b>Land Restoration Trust</b>	<p>A partnership between English Partnerships, Groundwork UK, the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency, this venture aims to tackle</p>



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<b>Agency</b>	<b>Comment</b>
	enduring dereliction across England. It will provide environmentally informed, community-led, long-term regeneration solutions through local partnerships.
<b>National Trust</b>	The National Trust holds many areas of natural beauty and special buildings in perpetuity for the nation.
<b>Natural England</b>	<p>Following publication of the draft Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill in February 2005, English Nature, the environment activities of the Rural Development Service and the Countryside Agency's Landscape, Access and Recreation division are working together to enhance landscapes and wildlife, promote countryside access and recreation.</p> <p>In 2007, the three organisations will be united in a single body with responsibility for enhancing biodiversity and landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public well-being, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed.</p>
<b>Urban parks</b>	
<b>GreenSpace</b>	GreenSpace is a charitable organisation set up to help those committed to the planning, design, management and use of public parks and open spaces. It is dedicated to promoting the importance of public spaces and increasing awareness of related issues.
<b>Heritage Lottery Fund</b>	The HLF enables communities to look after, learn about and celebrate the UK's diverse heritage. Since establishing its Urban Parks Programme in 1995, it has committed £320 million to regenerating over 200 parks.



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<b>Provision for children and young people</b>	
<b>Children's Play Council</b>	The CPC is a campaigning and research organisation promoting children's policy development in England. It is an alliance of national and regional voluntary organisations, local authorities and partnerships. It aims to raise awareness of the importance of play, promotes consultation with children and young people of all abilities and facilitates networks between children's services.
<b>Learning Through Landscapes</b>	Learning Through Landscapes is the national school grounds charity. It works with schools, early-years settings, organisations and individuals across the Country to help them improve and develop their grounds.
<b>National Playing Fields Association</b>	The NPFA is the only organisation with specific responsibility for acquiring, protecting and improving playing fields, playgrounds and play space.
<b>The Sensory Trust</b>	The Sensory Trust raises awareness of good practice in green space design and management; makes green space more accessible and offers consultancy and advice on inclusive design.
<b>Natural/semi-natural provision</b>	
<b>Forestry Commission</b>	The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible for forestry throughout Great Britain. It aims to protect and expand Britain's forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment.
<b>Tree Council</b>	The Tree Council's aim is to improve the environment in town and country by promoting the planting and conservation of trees and woods throughout the UK.
<b>Wildlife trusts</b>	The Wildlife Trusts partnership is the UK's leading conservation charity exclusively dedicated to wildlife. Its network of 47 local wildlife trusts work together to protect wildlife in towns and the countryside. The trusts cater for over 2,560 nature reserves.
<b>Green corridors</b>	
<b>British Waterways</b>	British Waterways is responsible for maintaining 2,000 miles of the UK's inland waterway network so that people can use it for a wide range of leisure activities. It is also seeking to extend the network as part of the UK's tourism industry.
<b>Sustrans</b>	Sustrans works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport in order to reduce motor traffic. It is responsible for the National Cycle Network, a project that has delivered nearly 10,000 miles of routes in the UK.



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<b>Allotments</b>	
<b>National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners</b>	The National Society of Allotments and Leisure Gardeners deals with the promotion, protection and preservation of allotment gardening. The Society aims to ensure that facilities are made available to all who desire to follow the recreation of gardening.
<b>The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens</b>	The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens is a charity dedicated to supporting, promoting and representing city farms and community gardens throughout the UK. The Federation offers advice and support and works to ensure that its aspirations are on the political agenda. The Federation also promotes good practice, works to improve networks and create training and development opportunities.
<b>Others</b>	
<b>ENCAMS</b>	ENCAMS is the charity that runs the Keep Britain Tidy campaign. Its aims are to convince its targeted groups to take effective action to enable others to improve, maintain and own their local environments; correctly dispose of material that could become litter; deter gum deposition; deter graffiti; reduce nuisance and abandoned vehicles and reduce the nuisance of neighbourhood noise.



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### Sports policy

#### **Game Plan**

Game Plan is the Government's strategy for sport and physical activity through to 2020. It was published in December 2002 and presents a new vision for England to become the most active and successful sporting nation in the world. It now provides the lead for all sports plans in England. It identifies the two overarching objectives for government as:

- ❑ A major increase in participation in sport and physical activity, primarily because of the significant health benefits and to reduce the growing costs of inactivity.
- ❑ A sustainable improvement in success in international competition, particularly in the sports which matter most to the public, primarily because of the 'feelgood factor' associated with winning.

Three distinct aims arise from these objectives:

- ❑ To encourage a mass participation culture, with a target for 70% of the population to be reasonably active (for example 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week) by 2020.
- ❑ To enhance international success, with a target for British and English teams and individuals to sustain rankings within the top five, particularly in more popular sports.
- ❑ To adopt a different approach to hosting mega sporting events. They should be seen as an occasional celebration of success rather than as a means to achieving other government objectives.

#### **Sport England**

Sport England is the strategic lead for delivering the Government's sporting objectives in England. It distributes both Lottery and Exchequer funds to sport.

Sport England has recently clarified its primary role; to sustain and increase participation in community sport. Its ambition is to increase participation across two million people by 2012. This equates to 251,303 people in the Northwest. It seeks to achieve this through promoting, investing in and advising on high quality sporting pathways which release potential through a combination of community sports activities, sports clubs, coaches, officiating, player pathways, volunteering and sports facilities.

The key sporting outcomes upon which Sport England performance will be judged are the:

- ❑ Number of people over 16 participating, volunteering and receiving coaching.
- ❑ Number of children and young people (aged 5-16) participating, volunteering and receiving coaching.
- ❑ Development of high quality clubs and sporting pathways.

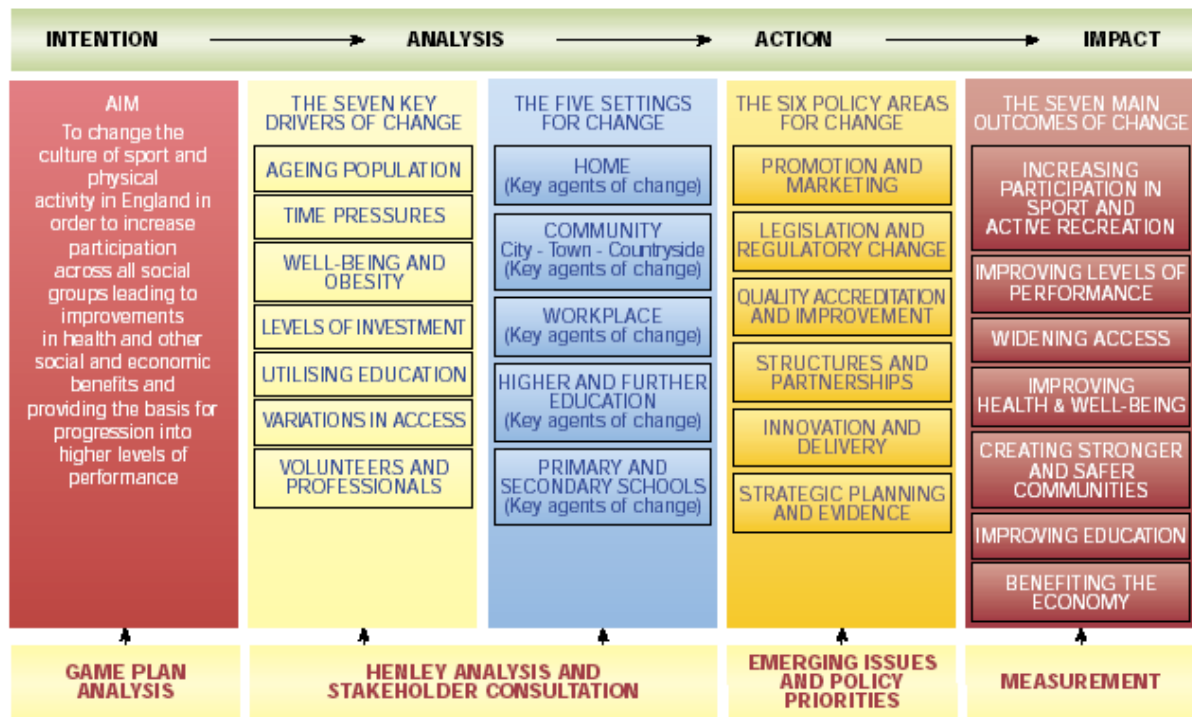


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Sport England has developed the framework for sport. It identifies the seven main drivers for change and the five major settings where sport can take place. The six policy areas identify where actions need to be focused. The identified outcomes provide the structure for this strategy.

Figure 1: National framework for sport



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#### **REGIONAL CONTEXT**

This section identifies the regional policy context within which the study has been conducted. The subsequent strategy and action plan will identify ways in which the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities in Bolton supports and reflects regional policy.

#### **North West Regional Spatial Strategy**

The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for North West England provides a framework for the physical development of the region over the next fifteen to twenty years. Incorporating the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS), it addresses the scale and distribution of future housing development and sets priorities for dealing with environmental issues, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals and the treatment and disposal of waste.

RSS is part of the statutory development plan for every local authority in the North West. Each local planning authority must prepare a Local Development Framework (LDF), which is required to be in general conformity with the provisions of RSS. Planning applications will be considered against the provisions of RSS and relevant Local Development Document(s).

By 2021 it is intended to achieve the following, through the whole range of RSS policies and proposals:

- ❑ Improved, sustainable economic growth, closing the gap with parts of the country that have the highest economic performance;
- ❑ A more competitive, productive and inclusive regional economy, with more people in employment that uses and develops their knowledge and skills;
- ❑ The development of urban, rural and coastal communities as safe, sustainable, attractive and distinctive places to live, work and visit;
- ❑ The reduction of economic, environmental, educational, health and other social inequalities between North West communities;
- ❑ The protection and enhancement of the region's built and natural environmental assets, its coastal areas and unique culture and heritage;
- ❑ The active management and prudent use of our natural and man made resources, with fewer emissions of key greenhouse gases, and the most efficient use of infrastructure; and
- ❑ The introduction of a safe, reliable and effective integrated transport network that supports opportunities for sustainable growth and provides better links with jobs and services.

In terms of housing, between 2003 and 2021 the Plan will provide 411,160 new dwellings (net of clearance replacement) in the Region. The figure for Bolton over the plan period is 9,200, with a target for at least 80% to be on brownfield land or buildings.



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In terms of environmental enhancement and protection, the RSS identifies the importance of sustainable development. There is a strong emphasis on ensuring that proposals and schemes for investment or development are of much higher quality and take into account the wider environmental costs associated with them.

Accordingly the Plan will ensure that sound environmental management is delivered across the North West, by:

- Requiring protection and enhancement of the most significant biodiversity, landscape, heritage and woodlands assets, as well as more sustainable approaches to land remediation;
- Promoting a more integrated approach to delivering a better environment through land and water management, including better relationship of new development to water resources, flood risk and adaptation to the impacts of climate change;
- As part of this, developing approaches for delivering green infrastructure as an implementation priority – creating multifunctional networks of green spaces which are important not only in terms of environmental quality, but also in providing recreation, in improving health, adapting to changing climate as well as other social and economic benefits.
- Continuing to develop strategic frameworks for, and to implement, Regional Parks in three broad locations – the North West Coast, Mersey Basin, and East Lancashire;
- Ensuring that the coast, as an important but complex set of ecological and human systems, is properly managed.

This open space, sport and recreation study provides robust evidence for Bolton as part of its LDF process. It takes into account the key policies laid down in the RSS and details standards of open space, sport and recreation provision to be used in seeking contributions from developers providing new housing in the Borough.

### North West Regional Economic Strategy

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) is the blueprint for the economic development of England's Northwest. The current RES was launched in March 2006. It sets out a clear vision for the region's economy and identifies specific priority actions to meet the economic challenges and opportunities of the next ten years and close the economic gap with the rest of England.

The RES identifies three major drivers to improving the Northwest's economic performance:

- **Improving productivity and market growth** - increasing the number of higher added value jobs in the region, as well as retaining existing high-value jobs through investment in innovation, research and leadership.
- **Growing the size and capability of the workforce** - getting more people into work, especially in the region's most deprived areas, among its most disadvantaged communities and areas remote from growth.





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- ❑ **Creating the right conditions for sustainable growth and private sector investment** - through investing in the region's environment, culture, infrastructure and communities.

The RES sets out 122 actions for achieving this vision, across five themes - business, skills and education, people and jobs, infrastructure and quality of life. Under the theme of quality of life, highlighted actions relevant to this study include:

- ❑ Support cleaner, safer, greener communities.
- ❑ Realise and nurture the natural and built heritage assets.
- ❑ Improve the physical environment.

#### **North West Cultural Strategy**

The North West Cultural Strategy sets out the overall context for the region including its cultural strengths and assets and what the Northwest Cultural Consortium believes can and should be done together with its partners to develop and improve the cultural opportunities and add significantly to the well being of the North West. The Strategy focuses on 'high level' strategic initiatives and includes objectives around:

- ❑ Advocacy – making the case for cultural and creativity within all aspects of regional policy.
- ❑ Image – marketing culture central to self image and the external marketing of the region.
- ❑ Cultural economy – developing a sustainable and innovative cultural and creative economy.
- ❑ Social economy – developing the role of culture in sustainable, healthy communities.
- ❑ Environment – promoting heritage and landscape as central to the culture of the region.

#### **The North West Plan for Sport: North West On The Move**

North West On The Move has been developed by partnerships and key stakeholders to state how the region will achieve a number of objective with the aim of increasing participation in sport and physical activity from 33% in 2003 to 50% in 2020 (1% increase per year) to 1.14m.

- ❑ To develop a world class sports system for the North West.
- ❑ To use sport and physical activity within learning and workplace settings to promote lifelong learning and participation in sport to the benefit of the individual and the economy.
- ❑ To use sport and physical activity to improve the physical, social and mental health and well being of people in the North West focusing on those areas with the greatest health needs and inequalities.
- ❑ To use sport and physical activity to contribute to the economic growth of the region by:



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- Increasing the interests and skills of its people.
  - Developing its attractiveness for inward investment.
  - Using sport to contribute to a positive image of the North West.
- To use sport and physical activity to unify communities, unlock local skills and help people at risk to adopt a positive lifestyle.

In order to make the north west an active and successful sporting region, it will be vital to work in partnership to tackle the strategic issues which have the greatest impact on communities. To achieve this it is necessary to have a well connected network of regional agencies, sub-regional and local partners, delivery mechanisms and providers that are empowered to deliver activity at a local level.

The open space, sport and recreation study for Bolton identifies how such provision can contribute to increases in physical activity, focusing on ensuring that there will be an adequate level of facilities and provision across the Borough.



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## LOCAL CONTEXT

This section identifies the local context within which the study has been conducted.

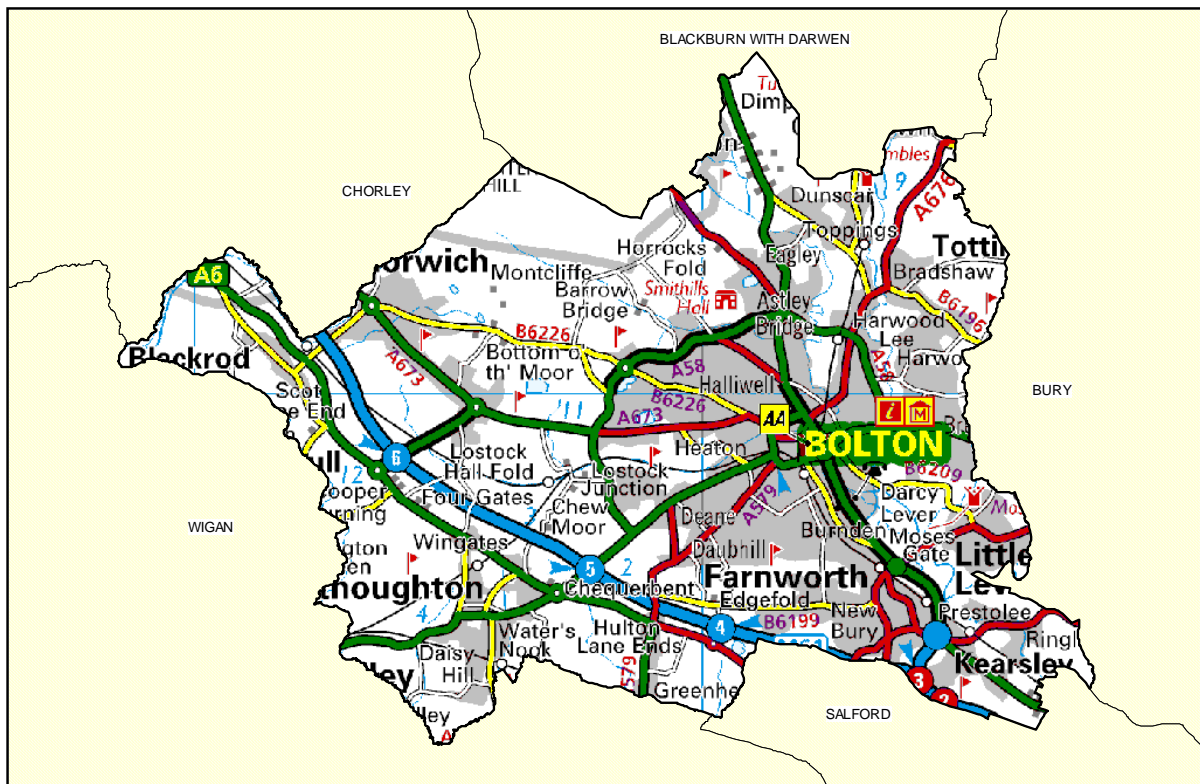
### Local demographics

Bolton Council covers an area of 13,980 hectares with a population of approximately 265,400 (Office for National Statistics Mid-year population estimates 2005). This represents an increase from the 2001 Census figure of 261,037. Population density is 18.7 people per hectare.

Bolton has a slightly higher proportion of children and a slightly lower proportion of older people than the national average. Over the past 20 years, however, the Borough's population has become more elderly with a declining number of children and young adults and growing numbers in other age groups, especially those aged 75 and over.

In 2001, 11% of the population identified themselves as part of non-white ethnic groups. The largest group is the Indian community (6.1%), followed by the Pakistani community (2.5%).

Figure 1: Bolton location map



# **BOLTON COUNCIL**

## **OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY:**

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Bolton is one of the largest boroughs in England. It comprises eight towns:

- ❑ Blackrod.
- ❑ Kearsley.
- ❑ Bolton.
- ❑ Little Lever.
- ❑ Farnworth.
- ❑ South Turton.
- ❑ Horwich.
- ❑ Westhoughton.

It lies in a densely populated area with 750,000 people within a 20 minute drive time, five million people in a 30 minute drive time and 16 million (over a quarter of the U.K. population) within 2 hours drive time. Travel links are good with direct access to the M61 and M60 and a variety of rail links. The Borough is neighboured by Wigan and Chorley to the West, Blackburn with Darwen to the North, Salford to the South and Bury to the East.

#### **Index of multiple deprivation (IMD)**

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now Communities and Local Government) commissioned the Social Disadvantage Research Centre (SDRC) at the Department of Social Policy and Social Research at the University of Oxford to update the Indices of Deprivation 2000 (ID 2000) for England. These were published in 2004 and are measures of deprivation for every Super Output Area and local authority area in England.

Bolton is one of the more deprived boroughs in England. Overall, it is ranked 50<sup>th</sup> (out of 354 local authorities, with 1 being the most deprived area), but is ranked as more deprived for certain criteria, most notably employment (28<sup>th</sup>) and income (39<sup>th</sup>).

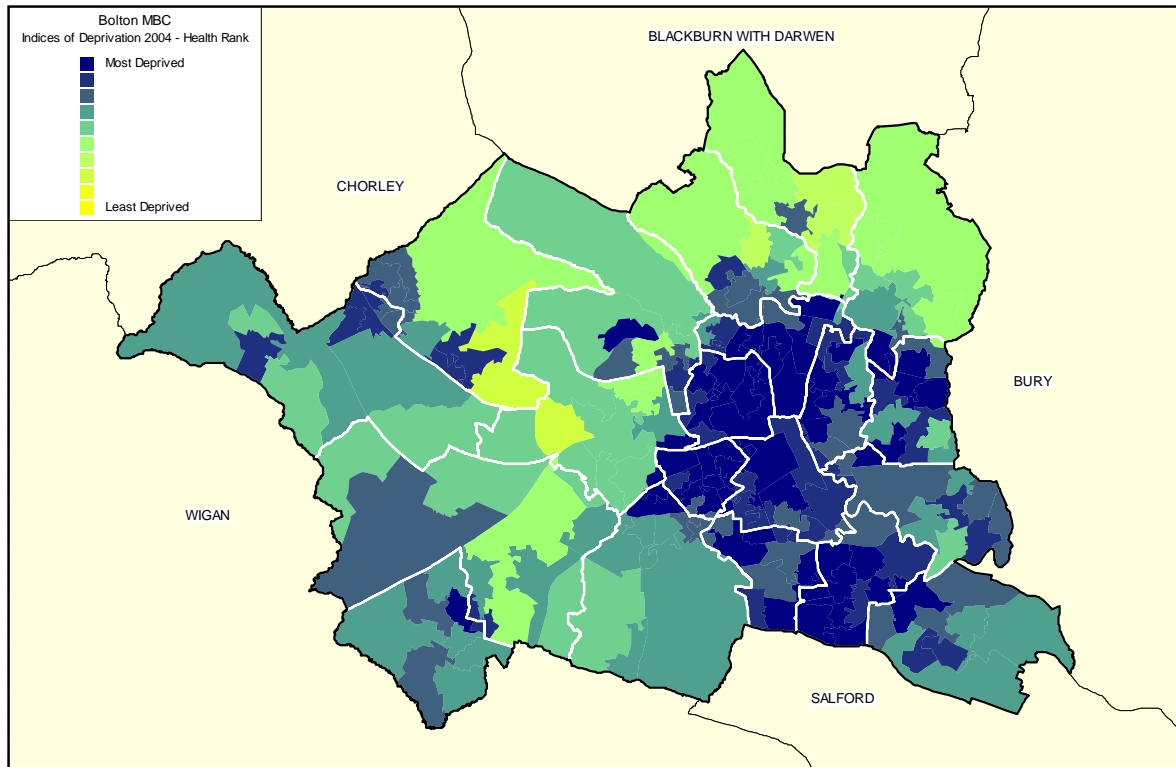
Over a fifth (22%) of Bolton's super output areas are amongst the 10% most deprived in England; this rises to 37% amongst the 20% most deprived. In terms of population, more than a third of Bolton's residents live in disadvantaged areas, while a little less than a tenth live in neighbourhoods that rank among the least disadvantaged in England.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: SECTION ONE INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

## Health

Figure 2: Bolton - Indices of Deprivation (2004) - Health Rank



The Bolton Health Survey 2001 identifies that:

- 28.8% of respondents do not take part in any physical activity.
- 13.4% of respondents are classified as obese.
- 18% of respondents think their neighbourhood is not a good place to bring children up.
- 9.8% of respondents report being in poor health over the last 12 months.
- 29.6% of respondents were current smokers.

The open space, sport and recreation study, therefore, clearly has a key role to play in addressing these issues – it identifies need and audits provision, setting standards for future provision in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility to ensure it is appropriate to work designed to improve the health of Bolton's population.

# BOLTON COUNCIL

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#### Bolton Community Strategy

The Community Strategy for Bolton, developed by Bolton Vision (the local strategic partnership) – Bolton; Our vision 2007-2017 – sets out a vision for Bolton in 2017 ‘for it to be a place everyone has an improved quality of life and the confidence to achieve their ambitions.’

The two main aims are to **narrow the gap** between the most and the least well off and to ensure **economic prosperity**. To support the achievement of these two main aims, six priority themes have been identified:

- ❑ Healthy Bolton.
- ❑ Achieving Bolton.
- ❑ Prosperous Bolton.
- ❑ Safe Bolton.
- ❑ Cleaner and greener Bolton.
- ❑ Strong and confident Bolton.

Of particular relevance to this study are ‘health’, which identifies the importance of increasing participation in sport and physical activity, and ‘cleaner and greener’. The latter identifies that the public in Bolton believes that clean public spaces contribute to making Bolton a good place to live and access to high quality open spaces is important.

The improvement of parks and open spaces is highlighted as a specific objectives in terms of safe, clean and well maintained parks and open spaces encouraging more people to get out and about, lead healthier lives and helping to cut the fear of crime. The specific target is to increase the number of local people who are satisfied with local parks and open spaces from 67% in 2006/2007 to 75% by 2010, 78% by 2012 and have maintained a presence in the top 25% of all boroughs by 2017.

This open space, sport and recreation study identifies need, audits provision and makes recommendations about future provision to ensure that the network of open spaces, sport and recreational facilities is appropriate to support delivery of the wider vision for Bolton and specific aims in relation to improving health and make Bolton cleaner and greener.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL**

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#### **Local area agreement**

The Bolton Local Area Agreement (LAA) identifies 14 priority outcomes for delivery. These are sub-divided into outcomes focused on disadvantage and inequalities impacting on specific areas/groups; outcomes focused on general disadvantage impacting across the Borough and outcomes focusing on Borough wide/universal aspirations.

Priority outcomes to which the provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities can contribute include:

- ❑ Improved quality of life for people in the Borough with a focus on the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and vulnerable groups.
- ❑ Reduced inequalities in health between deprived areas and the Borough as a whole and between socially excluded groups and the Borough as a whole.
- ❑ Increased life expectancy in the Borough.
- ❑ Improved safety and health for children and young people.
- ❑ Improved achievement of and enjoyment for children and young people.
- ❑ Reduced number of young people engaging in anti-social, disorder and criminal behaviour.
- ❑ Safer local communities (and increased confidence of local communities in their ability to tackle issues affecting their quality of life).
- ❑ Cleaner, greener and safer public places.
- ❑ Bolton seen as a place where people enjoy living, learn, work, do business, want their children to grow up and positively want to stay.

Resident satisfaction with local parks and open spaces is identified within the LAA as a key indicator. Bolton currently stands at 73%, slightly below the national average of 76%, with an aspiration to raise this to 75% by 2008/09.

#### **Bolton Children and Young People's Plan 2007-10**

This Plan identifies how the work of the Bolton Children's Trust (which formalises the work of the Children and Young People's Partnership) will help children and young people in Bolton to do well. The Trust will ensure that:

- ❑ All children and young people are safe and feel safe – in their communities, their schools and their homes.
- ❑ The health and well-being of all children and young people is promoted actively.
- ❑ There are opportunities for all children and young people to learn well – acquiring knowledge and understanding and through gaining the skills needed to achieve their full potential.
- ❑ Children and young people enjoy their childhood and adolescence and are able to access leisure, cultural and sporting activities that support their interests and development.
- ❑ Parents and carers are supported to help their children become independent.
- ❑ The aspirations of all children and young people are nurtured so that they can fulfil their ambitions.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL**

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- The future prosperity of all children and young people is an integral part of the regeneration and prosperity of Bolton.

Specific actions to which the provision of open spaces, sport and recreational facilities can contribute are opportunities to take part in activities out of school and appropriate opportunities for play, leisure and sport in high quality environments.

#### **Bolton UDP/LDF**

Bolton MBC's planning policy is outlined in its unitary development plan (UDP), which was adopted in 2005. Planning applications have to be determined in line with the UDP unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In 2004, the Planning and Compensation Act introduced a new style of development plan, which replaces the system under which Bolton's UDP was prepared. The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a folder of local development documents (LDDs) that collectively deliver the spatial strategy for Bolton. This open space, sport and recreation study provides evidence for this process.

#### **UDP**

The overarching purpose of this plan is to achieve sustainable development through the themes of:

- Environmental protection.
- Prudent use of natural resources.
- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone.
- Economic growth and employment.

#### ***Recreational land and facilities***

The UDP identifies that 'the Council will permit development proposals that protect and improve recreational land and facilities.' It highlights that recreational activities can make an important contribution to the quality of life by increasing people's physical and mental well being. The policy seeks to improve the provision of recreational facilities to meet the needs of the Borough's residents. It sets out to protect existing recreational facilities from development for other purposes, to remedy deficiencies where resources allow, and to facilitate recreational use of the Countryside in appropriate parts of the Borough, as informed by the Borough-wide Landscape Assessment. The policy details that the Council will seek to improve the retention, provision, attractiveness and accessibility of recreational open spaces, whilst having regard to nature conservation in its management, thereby contributing to the environmental quality of Bolton. It also highlights the need to audit provision in terms of quality, quantity and location – this study fulfils this.





# BOLTON COUNCIL

## OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: SECTION ONE INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

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Other relevant policies are detailed below

### **Protection of recreational open space**

The Council will permit development proposals that result in the loss of, or damage to, public or private recreational open space – including parks, children’s play areas, playing fields, sports grounds, allotments and amenity open space - provided that:

- (i) alternative open space provision, to either an equivalent or better standard or of equivalent community benefit, is made as part of the proposal. It should be in place before the commencement of the development;
- (ii) the site is in need of significant improvement that can be secured by the development of a small part of the site, provided that this can be achieved without adversely affecting the recreational, townscape or nature conservation value of the site;
- (iii) the development is for a non-commercial community use; is ancillary to the recreational use of the area; and does not adversely affect the recreational, townscape or nature conservation area of the site; or
- (iv) it is established that limited benefit would result from retaining the site as recreational open space when assessed against present or future needs. Existing sites of 0.1 hectares or more subject to this policy, and within the urban area, are shown on the Proposals Map. Development proposals will not be permitted that would adversely affect a Green Corridor

### **Protection of Education Recreation Facilities**

The Council will permit development proposals that would result in the loss of school or college playing fields, provided that:

- (i) the development is for educational purposes and the educational requirements for playing fields now and in the future can still be met, or
- (ii) the land is not needed for educational purposes now or in the longer term, and there is no need to retain the land for wider community recreational use.

### **Provision of open space in new developments**

The Council will permit proposals for housing development that make provision for landscaping, amenity open space and children’s play. In assessing proposals, the following considerations will apply:

- (i) the use of landscape features at the site;
- (ii) development sites of 30 or more dwellings should include a minimum of 0.4 hectares per 1000 population (0.1 hectares per 100 houses and 0.05 hectares per 100 flats) of landscaped amenity open space - including the use of existing natural landscape features, site perimeter planting and the provision of landscaped buffers to play areas;
- (iii) development sites of 30 or more houses suitable for family accommodation should include provision for children’s play.
- (iv) very large developments, likely to accommodate 600 or more occupants, should provide open space provision to full NPFA standards - including that for youths and adults; and
- (v) developments requiring the provision of land and/or equipment under this policy will include an agreement to ensure its maintenance for at least 10 years

### **Canals & Waterways**

The Council will protect the line of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal. It will seek the conservation and reinstatement of the canals and ancillary buildings and promote their use for recreation. Development which would prejudice the recreation use or restoration of either canal will not be allowed.

The Council will only permit developments at waterside locations that are sited and designed to protect or enhance the visual and physical quality and natural history interest of rivers or canals, and their landscape setting. Where possible, the Council will seek to encourage their use for recreation purposes.



# BOLTON COUNCIL

## OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: SECTION ONE INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

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### **Public Rights of Way**

Development proposals affecting public rights of way will be permitted, provided that they retain their integrity.

### **The Croal/Irwell Valley**

The Council will permit development proposals that maintain the open character and recreational value of the Croal/Irwell Valley.

This open space, sport and recreation study provides up to date and robust evidence to underpin the LDF and associated policy development.

### **Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS)**

When the Government launched the National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal in 2001, it set a target of ensuring that within 10-20 years, no-one would be disadvantaged by where they live. The revised Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy (NRS) for Bolton has been developed to take into account the numerous changes that have taken place over the last 4-5 years since our first NRS was launched. These changes have been not only in the Borough itself, but also in the wider range of information now available and the development of relevant, national policy.

Within the NRS there are six main strands:

- To develop strong, healthy and stable communities.
- To address crime, the fear of crime and drugs misuse.
- To ensure a positive future for our children and young people.
- To improve the local environment.
- To meet standards of decency in housing.
- To target areas to become more economically active.

The Strategy aims to ensure that people can enjoy the same quality of life in all neighbourhoods by encouraging public services to take into account communities' differing needs.

By ensuring that all neighbourhood renewal activity is firmly focused on achieving neighbourhood renewal targets, the intention is to reduce the gap between deprived areas and Bolton as a whole. The provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities plays an important role in improving the local environment and work to develop strong healthy and stable communities.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL**

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#### **Bolton 2002 – 2007 A Cultural Strategy**

Bolton's Cultural Strategy identifies its aim as 'to enhance the quality of life for individuals and the community of Bolton Borough as a whole.' To achieve this, identified priorities are:

- ❑ Making it easier for everyone to take part in activities.
- ❑ Listening to what people say about culture and tracking changes.
- ❑ Making it easier to get information,
- ❑ Helping people develop and grow through culture.
- ❑ Celebrating Bolton and its people.
- ❑ Promoting different cultural activities.
- ❑ Influencing where and how resources are used.

The provision of open spaces, sport and recreational facilities in Bolton has an important contribution to the quality of life for individuals and the community as a whole.

#### **Bolton Sport & Physical Activity Strategy 2007-10**

The Bolton Sport & Physical Activity Alliance (BoSPAA) was established to effectively represent and lobby in support of the interests of a range of sports. Its mission is:

'to adopt an integrated and co-ordinated approach to the development of sport and physical activity for all residents of Bolton, that is consistent with local, regional and national strategies in order to increase participation, widen access and raise standards, which will ensure that Bolton is a more active and successful sporting town.'

The provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities is essential to achieving this mission. This report outlines current provision and identifies where enhancement (quality or quantity) is required.

#### **Playing Pitch Strategy**

The Bolton Playing Pitch Strategy, completed in 2003, recognises with high value placed on outdoor sports provision by Bolton residents. The study identified that current provision in the Borough was not meeting demand. In a number of cases, sports clubs indicated that if more pitches of the right quality were available they would be in a position to produce and run additional teams. There was also evidence to suggest that if existing facilities were to be improved they would be able to develop and run additional teams.

It was recommended that the shortfall could be addressed by carrying out improvements to existing facilities. School sites, where there was no current community access, were identified as a potential resource to enable the Borough to meet the shortfall (especially for mini football).



# **BOLTON COUNCIL**

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At the time, no surplus provision was identified in any of the Community Forum areas within the Borough. However, it was suggested that the impact over the long-term (say 15-20 years) of the development of superior facilities should result in increased capacity at some sites and, possibly, some surplus capacity at others.

It was identified that a number of school facilities, unavailable for use, could start to address latent demand and future requirements. The level of provision within Westhoughton and Horwich was substantially lower than that in the other areas. Participation rates and a lack of provision was said to be inhibiting demand. It was recommended that BC work to distribute provision equally across the Borough and to attempt to meet demand from sports clubs and local communities by improving provision within identified areas.

In relation to non-pitch facilities the Strategy sought to make land use provision to meet the NPFA national and minimum standard of 0.4 hectares per 1000 population within each community forum area.

Provision for rounders which, in Bolton, predominantly shared pitch facilities, was recognised through action targeted at (principally) football and cricket. To this extent no sports specific recommendations were made although it is important to note that access, particularly linked to effective and equitable management and use of ancillary accommodation was recommended to be considered at all stages.

This study updates the existing Bolton Playing Pitch Strategy in order to comply with the new Sport England methodology. It is based on Sport England's (SE) playing pitch strategy methodology, 'Towards A Level Playing Field' (2003).

#### **Play Strategy**

The Bolton Play Strategy, completed in 2006, recognises the importance of play in contributing to wider corporate and community aims, particularly the vision for children and young people. It focuses on providing a framework for investment in play facilities and opportunities, to ensure that they reflect need and are part of a co-ordinated network of provision in the Borough.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

This is the Assessment Report considering supply and demand issues for open spaces in Bolton. It covers the predominant issues for all the typologies, except provision for children and young people, defined in 'Assessing Needs & Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG 17':

- ❑ Parks and gardens.
- ❑ Natural and semi-natural greenspaces.
- ❑ Green corridors.
- ❑ Amenity greenspace.
- ❑ Allotments, community gardens and city farms.
- ❑ Cemeteries, churchyards and other burial grounds.
- ❑ Civic spaces.

As Bolton Council (BC) has a play strategy in place this study does not cover provision for children and young people.

This report sets out the principles to be adopted in calculating provision standards (provided with the Strategy document).

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## Context

A detailed exploration of the national, regional and local context for open space provision is provided in Section 1: Introduction and context.

The assessment covers the following open space typologies as set out in ‘Assessing needs and opportunities: Planning Policy Guidance 17 companion guide.’

*Table 1.1: PPG17 definitions*

	<b>PPG17 typology</b>	<b>Primary purpose</b>
<b>Greenspaces</b>	Parks and gardens	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
	Natural and semi-natural greenspaces, including urban woodland	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.
	Green corridors	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, and opportunities for wildlife migration.
	Amenity greenspace	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
	Provision for children and young people	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.
	Allotments, community gardens and urban farms	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.
	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 spaces</b>	Civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians	Providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events.

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## **PART 2: OPEN SPACE METHODOLOGY AND BACKGROUND**

This part of the report details the methodology employed in the study. It also identifies a series of generic issues relating to open space provision in Bolton that are applicable to more than one typology.

### **Methodology**

#### ***Background information***

An extensive range of desk background information has been reviewed and incorporated into the assessment of key issues for each typology. The national, regional and local policy context is detailed in Section 1. Other background documentation reviewed for the study is listed below:

- ❑ Friends of Old Station Park, Public Attitude Survey, Autumn 2003.
- ❑ Friends of Old Station Park, Old Station Park Feasibility Study, 2005.
- ❑ BC/Friends of Old Station Park, Regeneration works masterplan.
- ❑ Friends of Queens Park, Annual Report, 2003 – 2004.
- ❑ BC, Bradford Street Park–Development proposals.
- ❑ Local Development Framework – Local Development Scheme (June 2006).
- ❑ BC, Improving Farnworth Town Centre – Draft Action Plan.
- ❑ BC, Improving Horwich Town Centre – Draft Action Plan.
- ❑ BC, Improving Little Lever – Draft Action Plan.
- ❑ BC, Improving Westhoughton Town Centre – Draft Action Plan.
- ❑ Town Centre Action Framework (2005 – 2008).
- ❑ BC, A Management Strategy for Bolton – Bolton’s Parks and Greenspaces, 2001.
- ❑ BC, Bolton Cycling Strategy and Action Plan, 2006/07 – 2011/12.

#### ***Consultation***

The core of this phase revolved around extensive consultation with key individuals, interest and community groups, sports clubs, BC officers, and agencies working in and around Bolton. Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted either face-to-face or by telephone with consultees provided by BC and those uncovered by KKP during consultation. A full list of consultees is included at Appendix 5.

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#### ***Database development***

All information relating to open space in Bolton is collated in the project open space database (supplied as an electronic file). Polygons and sites were originally supplied by BC. Additional sites identified during consultation have been digitised by KKP based on plans drawn and provided by BC. Polygons and sites have been agreed as accurate and comprehensive by BC.

As recommended in PPG17, each site has been identified and classed based on its primary open space purpose, so that each type of space is counted only once. Some sites contain multiple open space uses, for example parks can include children's play areas. Where this occurs, each open space use within the site has been identified separately and the relevant assessment undertaken by KKP.

The database details for each site:

#### **Data held on open spaces database (summary)**

- KKP reference number (used for mapping).
- Site name.
- Local authority reference number.
- Nearest road/settlement.
- Ownership.
- Typology.
- Sub-typology.
- Size (hectares).
- Access.
- Site visit data.

Sites are identified using road names and locations as opposed to official site names. For the key sites, identification has been enhanced with actual site names. However, for some typologies this is impossible, e.g. amenity greenspaces and natural and semi natural sites which, in the main, do not have official names anyway.

#### ***Site visits***

In total, 320 open space assessments were carried out to evaluate the quality and value of sites. The open space assessment form is tailored to reflect the individual characteristics of different open spaces and a scoring system (i.e. different maximum scores) is applied to each typology to provide a more meaningful evaluation. Examples of the different assessment forms used can be found in Appendix 2-3.

KKP assesses both quality and value during site visits. Quality and value are fundamentally different and can be completely unrelated. For example, a high quality space may be located where it is inaccessible and therefore of little value; while, if a run down space is the only one in an area, it may be immensely valuable. Therefore, they are also treated separately in terms of scoring. Each type of open space assessed receives a quality score and a separate value score.



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#### ***Analysis of quality***

Data collated from site visits has been utilised to calculate a quality score for each site visited. Scores in the database are presented as a total score and percentage figure.

#### *Open space assessment form*

The criteria used for the main open space assessments are summarised below and are based upon those used for Green Flag (national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales, operated by the Civic Trust) and 'Green Space Strategies: A good practice guide', published by CABI Space (2004).

#### **Open space site visit criteria for quality (summary)**

- Physical access, e.g., public transport links, directional signposts.
- Access-social, e.g., appropriate minimum entrance widths.
- Parking, e.g., disabled parking.
- Information signage, e.g., presence of up to date site information.
- Equipment and facilities, e.g., assessment of both adequacy and maintenance of provision such as seats, benches, bins, toilets.
- Location value, e.g., proximity of housing, other greenspace.
- Site problems, e.g., presence of vandalism, graffiti.
- Healthy, safe and secure, e.g., staff on site.
- Maintenance and cleanliness, e.g., condition of landscape.
- Typology specific profile, e.g., presence of environmental education facilities (natural/semi-natural provision).
- Groups site meets the needs of, e.g., elderly, young people.
- Site potential.

#### ***Analysis of value***

The value of sites has been assessed by analysis of two sets of criteria: (i) site visit assessment data; and (ii) other data and information as detailed in the table below. Scores in the database are presented as a total score and percentage figure.

PPG17 describes value of sites as relating to the following three issues:

- Context of the site, i.e. its accessibility, scarcity value and historic value.
- Level and type of use.
- The wider benefits it generates for people, biodiversity and the wider environment.

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## **Value - site visit criteria (summary)**

- Level of use (observations only).
- Context of site in relation to other open spaces.
- Structural and landscape benefits.
- Ecological benefits.
- Educational benefits.
- Social inclusion and health benefits.
- Cultural and heritage benefits.
- Amenity benefits and a sense of place.
- Economic benefits.

## **Value - non site visit criteria (summary)**

- Designated site such as LNR or SSSI.
- Educational programme in place.
- Historic site.
- Listed building or historical monument on site.
- Registered 'friends of group' to the site.

## **Weighting and scoring system**

KKP utilises one site visit assessment sheet to assess all typologies of open space (allotments, amenity greenspace, parks and gardens, green corridors, natural and semi natural greenspace). It has developed a weighting and scoring system to take account of the individual typologies and reflect their different natures and characteristics (each typology will therefore have a different maximum score). For example, the maximum score for allotments does not include scores for picnic benches. Similarly, the maximum score for amenity greenspace does not include scores for toilets. The maximum scores achievable for each typology are set out below together with the equivalent data for value.

*Table 2.1: Maximum scores for quality and value of open spaces in Bolton.*

<b>Open space assessment form</b>		
<b>Typology</b>	<b>Quality - maximum score</b>	<b>Value – maximum score</b>
Allotments	91	115
Amenity greenspace	86	110
Cemeteries	125	105
Civic spaces	99	105
Green corridors	71	105
Parks and gardens	137	130
Natural/semi-natural greenspaces	75	115



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On the assessment form itself some elements receive a direct score (1 – 5 scale) and other elements simply have a tick option if present (receiving a score of 3 for every tick). Some tick options are simply collated and analysed as additional data, receiving no score. Examples of the applied scoring and weighting can be found in Appendix 4.

## ***Setting thresholds for quality and value***

In order to determine sites as high or low quality and value, (as suggested by PPG17) the database colour codes each site visited against a set threshold (high is green and low is red).

### ***Quality score thresholds***

The threshold for assessing quality has been set predominately at 60%; this is based on the pass rate for Green Flag, which is the only national quality benchmark available (site visit criteria are also based on Green Flag criteria).

### ***Value score thresholds***

The threshold for assessing value has been set at 20%; this is based on KKP's experience and expertise in carrying out PPG17 assessments and has been tried and tested with a number of local authorities. If a site only scores high for one element (i.e. educational benefits) the site is still of high value. However, this is not necessarily reflected in the total score and therefore the threshold is reduced to better reflect this. There are no national benchmarks available for assessing value.

### ***Using value scores***

As a result of the analysis of sites against the assessment criteria, sites with a low value score are identified for further detailed consideration to assess their potential future role.

Value scores provide a rational basis for determining where to focus investment in order to maximise the value of a space. The assessment of value allows an objective approach to identifying those spaces which should be given the highest level of protection in the planning system, those which require enhancement and those which may no longer be needed for their present purpose.



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## **GIS analysis**

All sites in the open spaces database have been mapped using MapInfo. Catchment areas have been applied to each site depending on its typology, size and classification. The effective catchments have been identified using data and guidance issued by the Greater London Authority (GLA) (2002): 'Guide to preparing open space strategies' and distances reinforced by the findings of the survey of residents.

The following catchments are used to identify the coverage of current provision:

*Table 2.2: Summary of catchment areas*

<b>Classification</b>	<b>Size of site</b>	<b>Catchment area</b>
<b>Parks:</b>		
Local parks	2 ha or less	400 metres
Borough parks	2 – 20 ha	1,200 metres
Borough parks	20 – 60 ha	3,200 metres
<b>Amenity greenspace, natural and semi natural</b>		
Borough-wide significance	More than 10ha	1,600 metres
Settlement significance	Between 1ha and 10ha	900 metres
Neighbourhood significance	Between 0.66ha and 1ha	600 metres
Local significance	Up to 0.66ha	120 metres
<b>Allotments, cemeteries, civic space</b>		
Borough-wide significance	More than 10ha	3,200 metres
Settlement significance	Between 1ha and 10ha	1,800 metres
Neighbourhood significance	Between 0.66ha and 1ha	1,200 metres
Local significance	Up to 0.66ha	240 metres

It is difficult to assess green corridors against catchment areas due to their very nature and usage, often as access to other open spaces. Instead maps demonstrate the coverage of existing provision and a more accurate picture of accessibility is built up through the consultation.



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Catchment areas for play areas are assessed through the following distances and walking times, provided by the NPFA.

Table 2.3: Methodology to calculate play catchment areas:

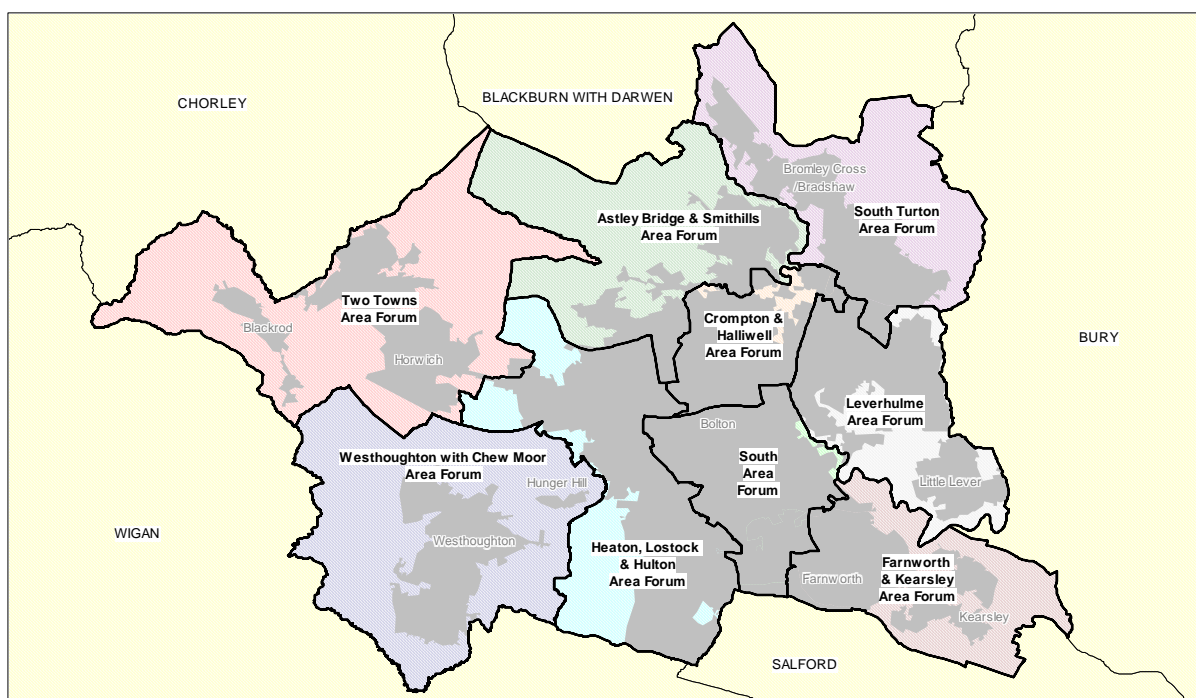
Facility	Time	Pedestrian route	Straight line distance
LAP	1 minute	100 metres	60 metres
LEAP	5 minutes	400 metres	240 metres
NEAP	15 minutes	1,000 metres	600 metres.
SEAP			Over 1,000 metres

The straight-line distance is used as the radial distance of each facility's catchment area. This distance has been used to plot the play sites' catchment areas in this study. As pedestrian routes to play areas vary between households the straight-line distance indicated by the NPFA is more defensible. The report therefore uses the straight-line distances to plot catchment areas.

## Analysis areas

Bolton has been divided into analysis areas. These have been adopted to create a more localised assessment of provision and for examination of open space/facility surplus and deficiencies at a local level. The use of analysis areas allows local circumstances and issues to be taken into account.

Figure 2.1: Analysis areas in Bolton



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*Table 2.4: Analysis areas in Bolton*

<b>Analysis area (area forums)</b>	<b>Population</b>
Astley Bridge and Smithills	26,444
Crompton and Halliwell	26,505
Farnworth and Kearsley	28,540
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	25,891
Leverhulme	38,279
South	41,144
South Turton	24,509
Two Towns	24,548
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	25,227

## ***Residents and visitors survey***

KKP carried out a resident street survey to identify the attitudes and needs of the broader local community.

People interviewed were approached, and after a series of selection questions, to establish eligibility, were invited to take part in a short interview (please see Appendix 6 for sample survey). Interviews normally last no more than 10 minutes (to minimise the risk of respondent interview termination).

800 surveys have been completed across the Borough:

<input type="checkbox"/> Bolton Town Centre	340
<input type="checkbox"/> Farnworth Town Centre	100
<input type="checkbox"/> Horwich Town Centre	100
<input type="checkbox"/> Westhoughton Town Centre	100
<input type="checkbox"/> Tonge Fold Shopping Centre	100
<input type="checkbox"/> Blackrod	20
<input type="checkbox"/> Astley Bridge	40

This provides a robust sample, capable of sub-analysis, e.g., by area, gender, age etc. Variations are highlighted in analysis for the individual typologies. Data is particularly useful when assessing walk/cycle/drive-time catchments. Key issues covered include the following:

- Current usage of open spaces.
- Reasons for usage/non-usage of open spaces.
- Time taken/distance travelled to open spaces.
- Attitudes to open spaces (e.g., adequacy, quality, accessibility).

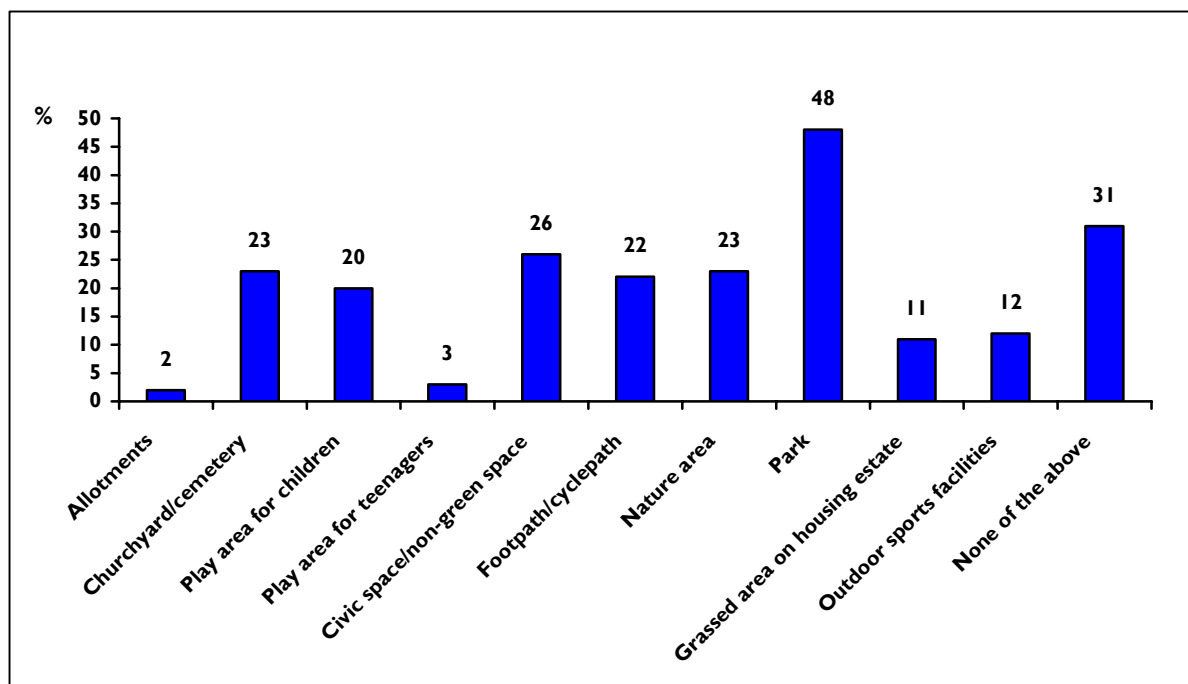
# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

The summary of results (generic issues, which cut across more than one typology) of the survey has been analysed and are presented in graph format with commentary below. Questions relevant to individual typologies are covered in the relevant sections of the Report.

## **Usage of open spaces**

The most commonly visited open space in the previous 12 months is a park (48%). The only other type of provision visited by more than a quarter of residents is civic/non-green space (26%). A range of provision has similar levels of usage – Churchyard/cemetery (23%), nature area (23%), footpath/cycle path (22%) and play area for children (20%). Very low levels are recorded for play areas for teenagers (3%) and allotments (2%). About a third of residents (31%) have not visited any open space in the previous 12 months.

Figure 2.2: Types of open spaces visited in the previous 12 months

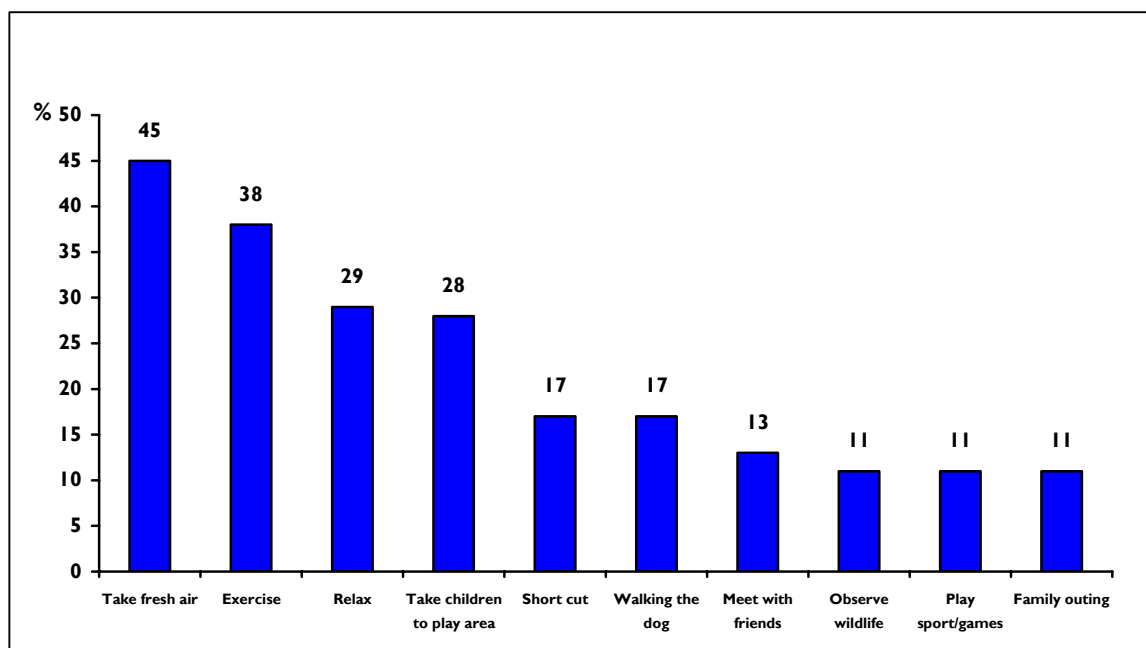


# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## *Reason for usage*

The most popular reasons for visiting open spaces, sports and recreational facilities are to take fresh air and for exercise (45% and 38%). Other popular reasons are to relax/contemplate (29%), to use the play area (28%), taking a short cut/pleasant route (17%) and walking the dog (17%). Relatively few respondents use such provision to play sports or games (11% informally, 6% formally). Both Horwich and Westhoughton have high levels of residents using open space for relaxation/contemplation (44% and 42%) with relatively few in Blackrod and Astley Bridge (17% and 10%). By far the largest group of respondents taking their children to play areas are, unsurprisingly, female (39%) and those 25-44 (46%). Meeting with friends is also significant particularly in the 16-24 age group (23% citing this as a reason for visiting open spaces, sports and recreational facilities).

Figure 2.3 Reasons for usage of open space in the previous 12 months

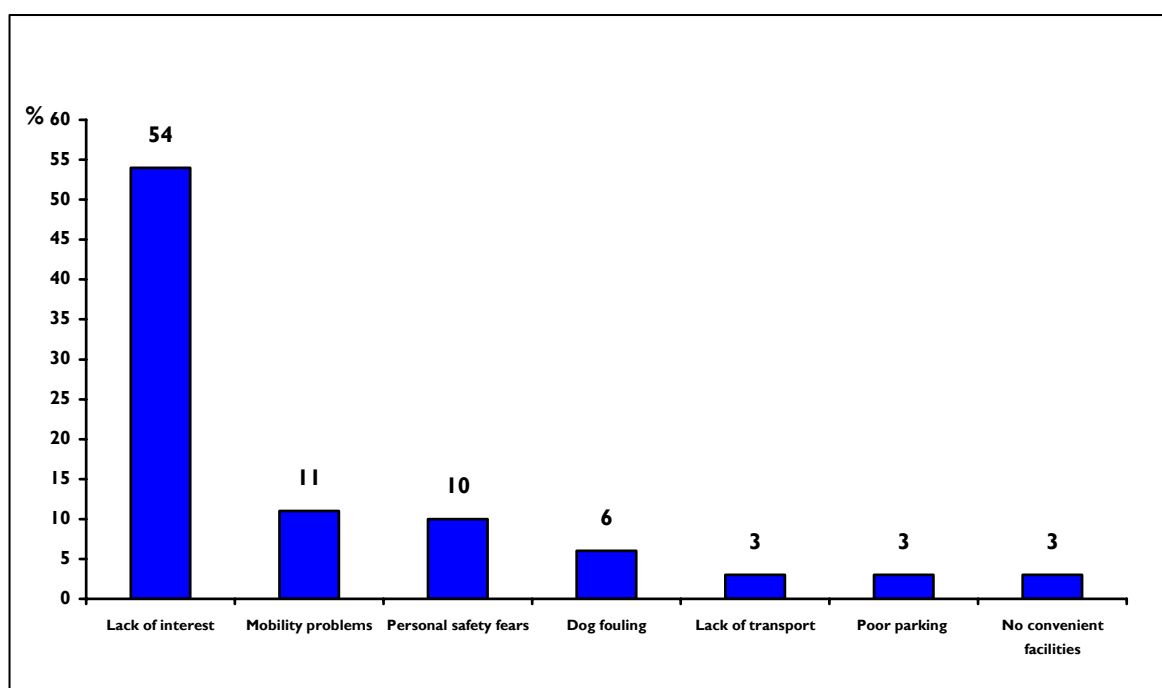


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## *Reason for non-usage*

By far the most commonly cited reason for not visiting open spaces, sports and recreational facilities is a lack of interest (54%). This is most common in the 16-24 age group (65%). Astley Bridge has a significantly higher percentage of respondents not visiting open spaces due to problems of mobility/access (44%). This may highlight a deficiency in the provision of disabled access facilities in the area. Other reasons include fears over public safety particularly in Westhoughton and Farnworth (24% and 21%).

*Figure 2.4: Reasons for non-usage of open spaces*

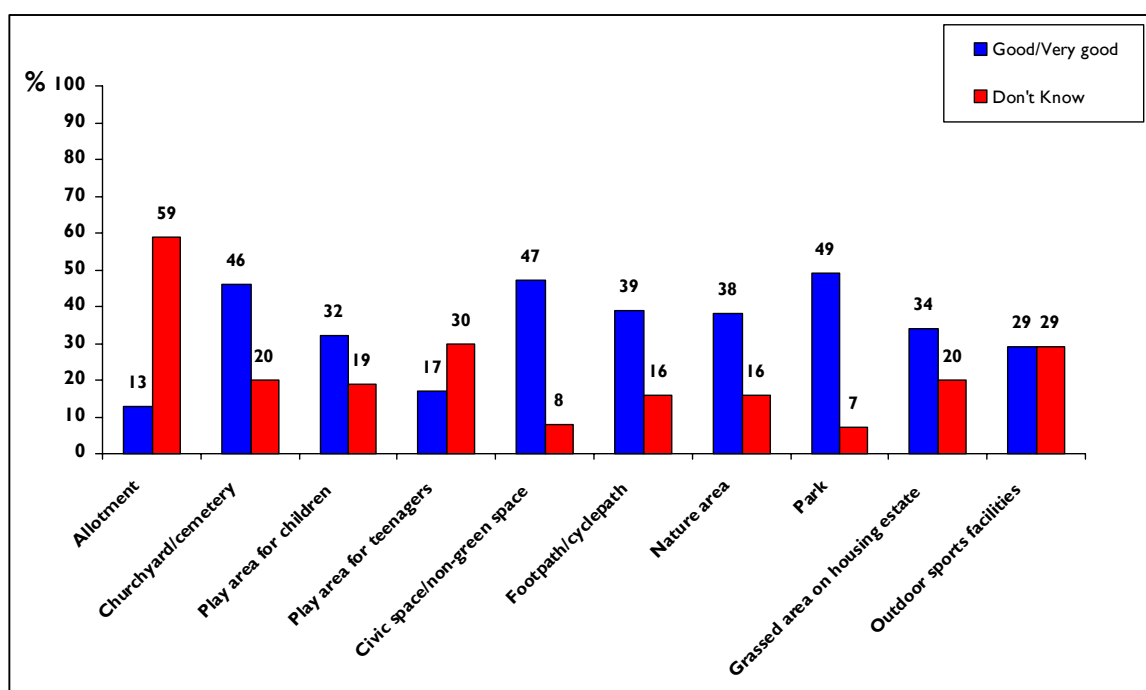


# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Availability of provision

The highest ratings for the availability of provision are parks (49% rating it as good or very good) and civic space (47%). These are also the two most commonly used types of provision. In most cases, lack of usage is reflected in residents not being able to comment on availability rather than considering it to be poor. The exception to this is play areas for teenagers – provision is rated as poor or very poor by over a fifth (22%) of residents. This suggests that awareness needs raising.

Figure 2.5: Perception of availability

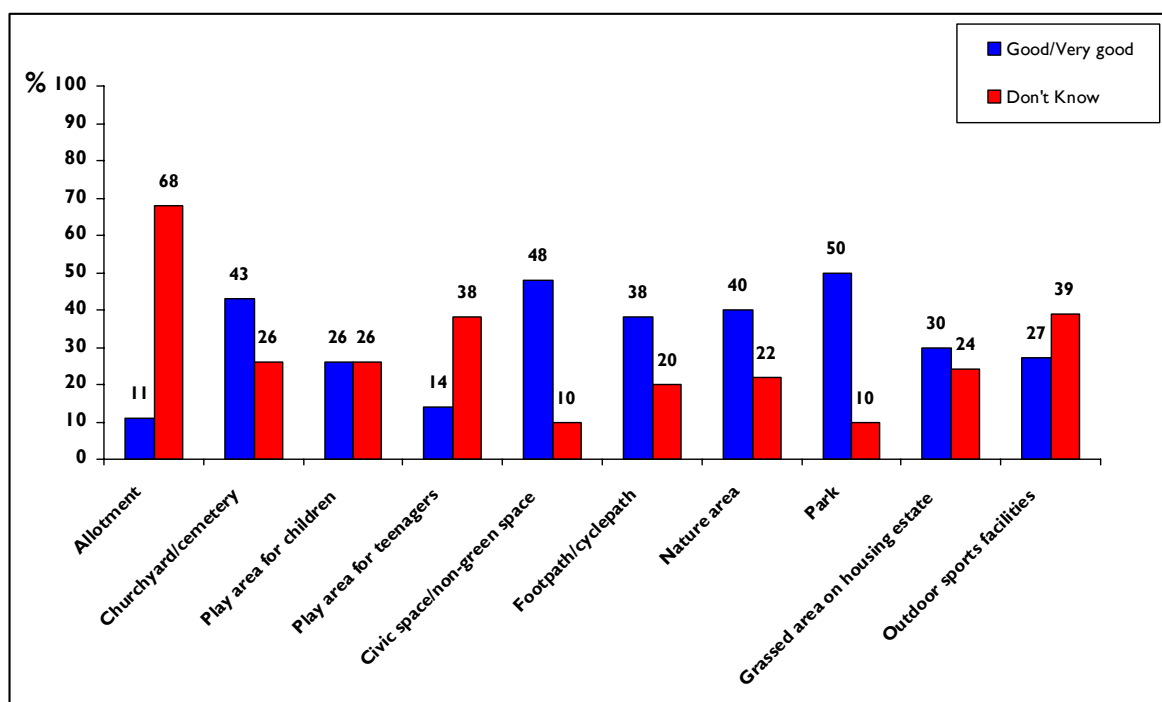


# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Quality of provision

Perceptions of quality reflect a similar proportion to resident's views of availability. Again half the residents rate parks and civic/non-green space as having a high quality of provision (50% and 48%). Sizeable proportions are unable to comment on quality of provision. For example two thirds of residents (68%) are unable to comment on the quality of allotments reflecting low levels of use. The only typology where the proportion rating provision as poor or very poor equals that rating it as good or very good is play areas for teenagers (20% and 14% respectively).

Figure 2.6: Perception of quality





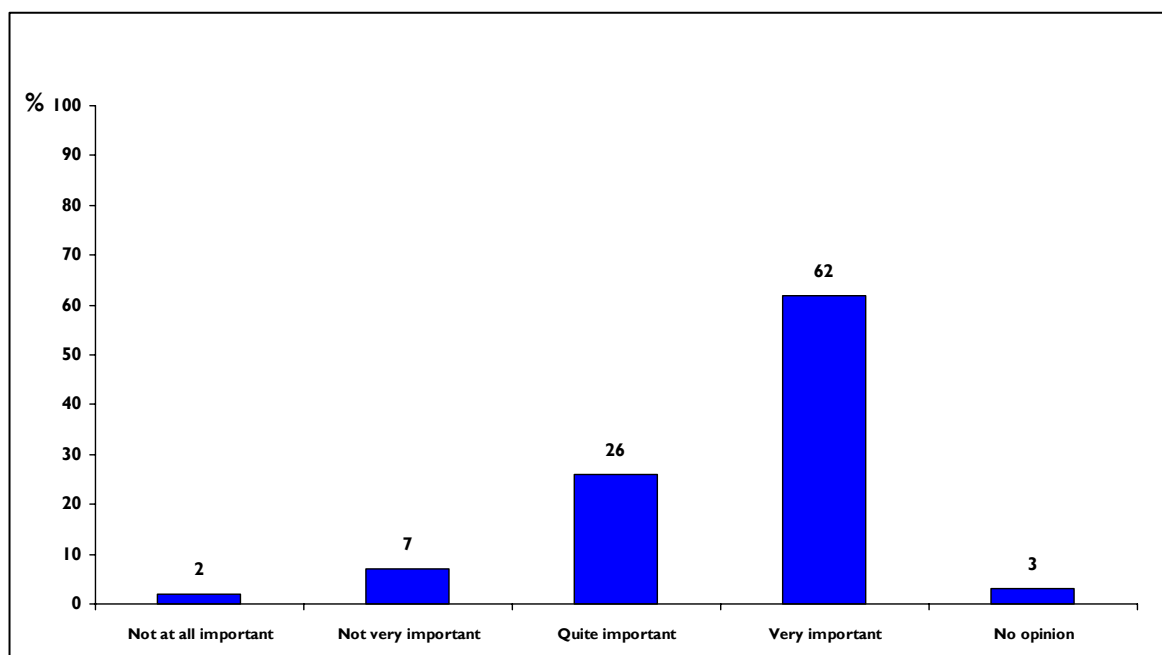
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## *Importance of open spaces*

The provision of open spaces is rated as very or quite important by the majority of respondents (88%). This reinforces the value that is placed on open spaces by the residents of Bolton. A very small proportion (9%) do not consider open spaces to be important.

Figure 2.7: Importance of open spaces



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## General open space issues

KKP has carried out extensive consultation with users and non-users of open spaces throughout Bolton, during which, many issues concerning open spaces in the Borough have been raised and discussed. Typology and site specific issues are covered in the relevant sections of this report. This section sets out those generic issues, which cut across more than one typology.

## Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of all the quality assessment for open spaces in Bolton. The threshold for assessing quality has been set at 60%; this is based on Green Flag criteria. A summary of data by analysis areas is provided in each typology section.

Table 2.5: Quality scores for all open space typologies

Typology	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60%	above 60%
Allotments	91	0%	53%	78%	78%	25	19
Amenity greenspace	86	26%	45%	76%	50%	127	8
Cemeteries	125	27%	51%	73%	46%	18	5
Civic spaces	99	40%	60%	76%	37%	2	3
Green corridors	71	31%	45%	58%	27%	5	-
Parks and Gardens	137	24%	60%	71%	47%	57	5
Semi / Natural greenspace	75	-5%	23%	67%	72%	45	1

The average quality scores for the different typologies of open space vary greatly across Bolton, from 60% for civic spaces and parks and gardens to only 23% for natural and semi-natural open spaces. The mean score for the majority of typologies, with the exception of parks and gardens (60%) and civic spaces (60%) falls below the 60% threshold.

Over three quarters (94%) of amenity greenspace has been assessed as poor quality. This may be an artificially low score because the criteria against which amenity greenspaces were assessed covers elements such as seating, litterbins and paths which are not always appropriate to sites such as highway verges and roundabouts. Site assessments note that seating provision will be of benefit/appropriate to only 25 of the 130 amenity greenspaces currently without any and litter bins would be of benefit/appropriate at 44 of the 117 amenity greenspaces currently without any.

## **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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The main problem impacting on the quality of open spaces across Bolton is dog fouling. It is a problem across many sites, including semi-natural green spaces, parks and amenity greenspaces. Users express the need for increased enforcement and education regarding the associated health risks and potential penalties. Site visits identify that 33% of sites that do not already have dog foul bins provided would benefit from having bins which can be used for dog waste on site. These are mainly semi natural sites, parks and amenity greenspaces. Dog waste can be disposed of in ordinary litterbins. Awareness of this can be raised to encourage responsible behaviour by dog owners.

Not uncommon throughout the Country, the use of quad bikes/off-road motorbikes is an issue across Bolton open spaces, particularly parks and gardens, natural/semi-natural sites and amenity open spaces. This issue was raised strongly through consultation. However, site assessments noted evidence of quad bike/motorbike usage at only 16 sites. Local residents feel that there is need for greater enforcement of illegal use of open spaces by quad bikes and motorbikes. There is demand for greater publicity regarding penalties and enforcement of illegal use of motorbikes on public open spaces. Site assessments record that there are no controls to prevent illegal use at 42% of the open spaces across the Borough. In restricting motorbike access to open space, care must be taken not to compromise access issues, particularly for wheelchairs.

The presence of glass, particularly in parks and gardens and natural/semi-natural open spaces, is a quality issue highlighted by the site assessments. Glass was noted to be present at 12% of the open space sites that were assessed. In the main this is associated with low quality un-maintained sites.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of all the value assessments for open spaces in Bolton. The threshold for assessing value differs depending on the typology. A summary of data by analysis areas is provided in each typology section.

Table 2.6: Value scores for all open space typologies

Typology	VALUE Scores					Number:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below the threshold	above the threshold
Allotments	115	3%	25%	43%	39%	11	33
Amenity greenspace	110	5%	29%	55%	51%	34	101
Cemeteries	105	12%	24%	42%	30%	8	15
Civic spaces	105	18%	24%	38%	20%	2	3
Green corridors	105	22%	49%	69%	47%	-	5
Parks and Gardens	130	7%	33%	72%	65%	10	52
Semi / Natural greenspaces	115	3%	22%	69%	66%	24	22

Generally, value scores across all the typologies are high. Site assessments recognise the health, social and well-being benefits offered by open space and reflected this in the site assessment scoring with all mean scores lying above the value threshold (20%). A large number (70%) of sites that are assessed as low quality have in fact been assessed as high value. This reinforces that low quality sites can be of high value to local communities, particularly if they are the only accessible provision in an area.

## Community safety

Consultation responses suggest that many people are fearful of using open spaces due to the vandalism that is evident at some sites and intimidation by youth congregation. The public's perception of crime within open space sites appears to be much higher than its actual occurrence. Suggestions, identified through consultation, to improve safety perception in parks and open spaces includes improved lighting and CCTV installation.

A major issue is the design of open space. It is not always a primary consideration in site development. However, the design of open space has an impact on its use. BC officers and open space users believe that the 'secure by design' principle should be used for open spaces such as parks and play areas to provide better natural surveillance. National evidence shows that, if housing overlooks a site, antisocial behaviour is usually reduced.



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## PART 3: PARKS AND GARDENS

### Introduction

The typology of Parks and Gardens, as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide, covers urban parks, country parks and formal gardens (including designed landscapes), which provide 'accessible high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.'

### Context

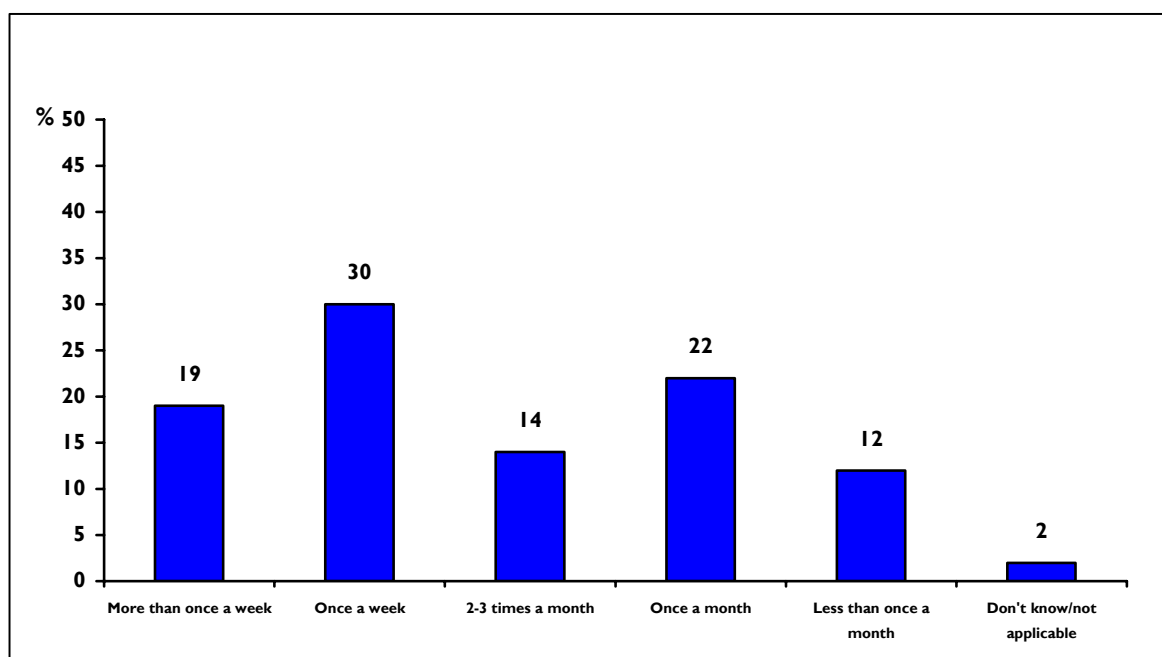
This section outlines findings from the survey of residents in relation to their use of and attitudes towards the provision of parks and gardens in Bolton. It provides a context for the subsequent sections, which address the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision.

Results are provided for the descriptions used in the survey itself.

### Usage

In the previous 12 months, just under half (48%) of Bolton residents visited a park. Nearly half (49%) of those who visit parks do so once a week or more often. A significant proportion visit at least once a month (36%) with a further 12% visiting less than once a month.

Figure 3.1: Frequency of usage of parks in the previous 12 months

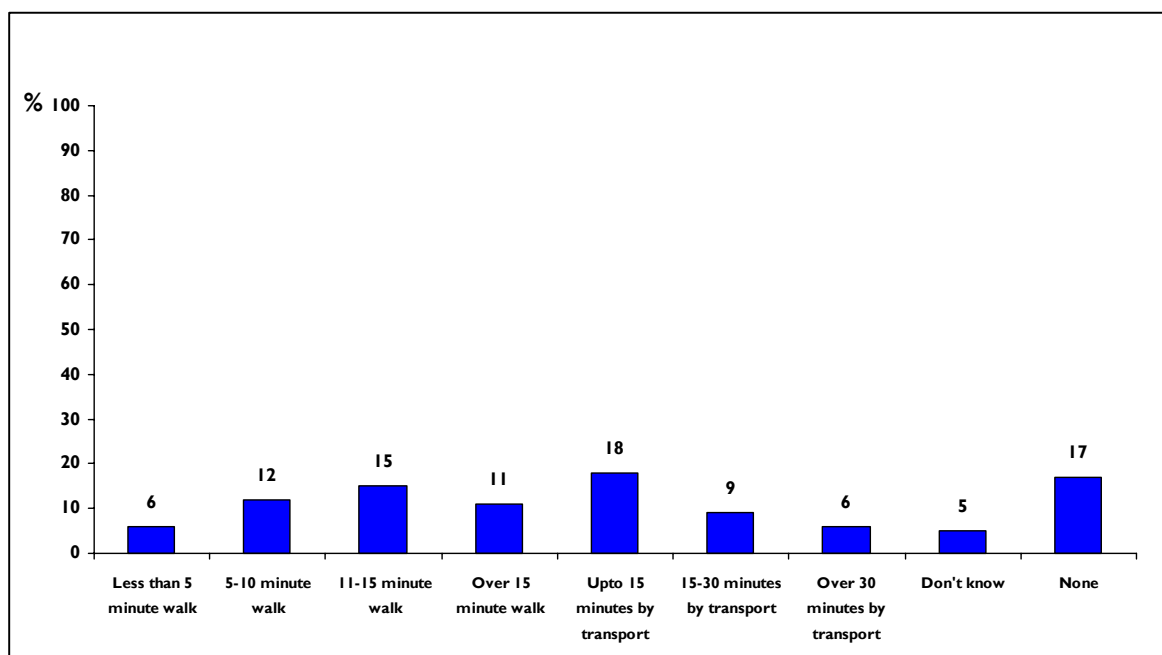


# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Travel time

A third (33%) of residents are prepared to walk for up to 15 minutes to access a park. This varies significantly across Bolton – those interviewed in Farnworth are much less likely to walk (15%). Similar proportions would walk for 15 minutes (11%), travel for up to 15 minutes by transport (18%) and for over 15 minutes by transport (15%).

Figure 3.2: Time prepared to travel to access a park



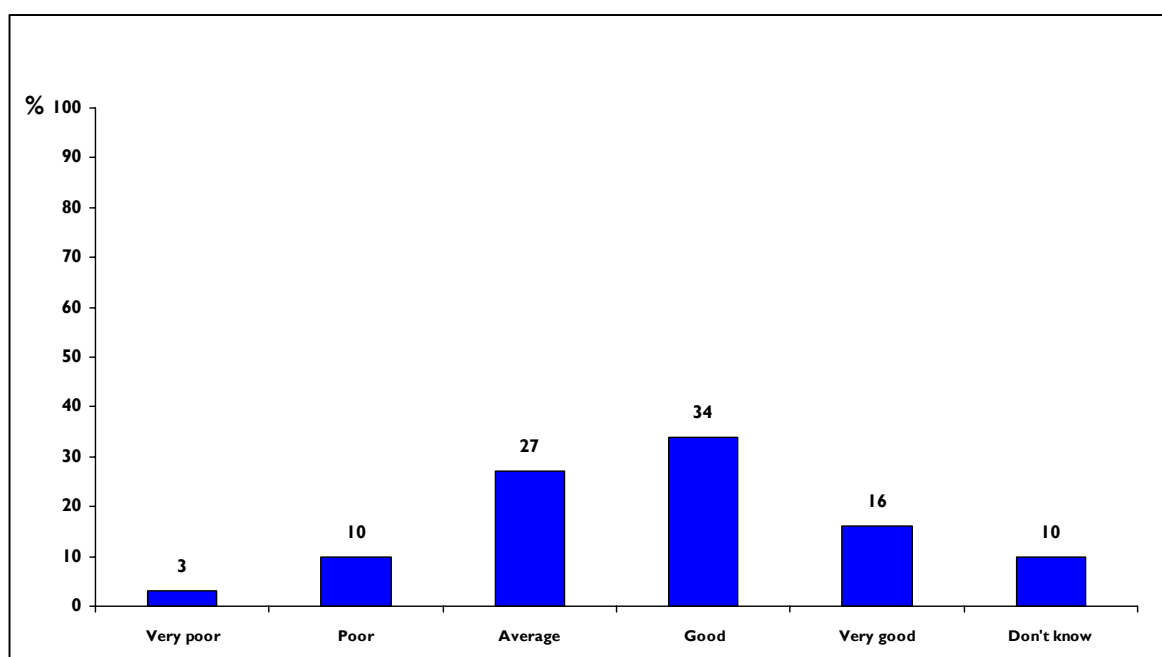
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## **Quality of provision**

Exactly half of the respondents (50%) consider the quality of the provision of parks to be good or very good. A much smaller proportion (13%) rate the quality as poor or very poor. Quality is most highly rated in Horwich with over three quarters (76%) rating good or very good and just 3% as poor or very poor. Perceptions of quality are low in Farnworth (22% rating it as poor or very poor), Westhoughton (21%) and Astley Bridge (35%).

Figure 3.3: Quality of provision of parks



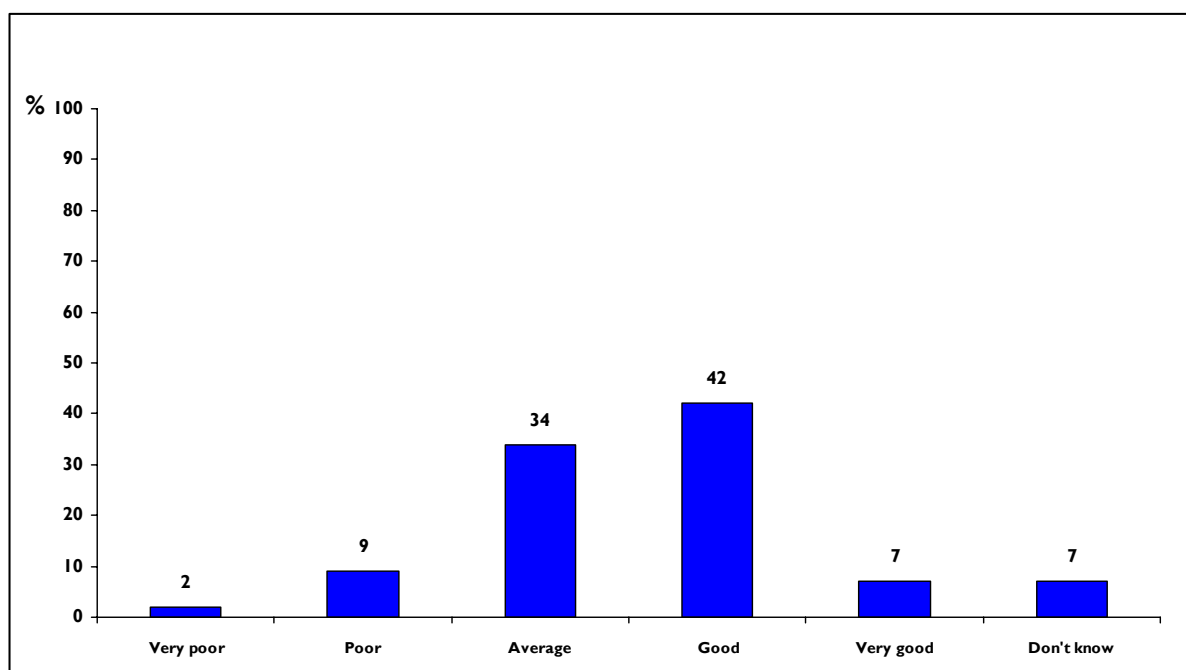
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## Availability

The availability of parks in Bolton is rated as good or very good by nearly half of residents (49%). In particular, respondents in Horwich and Blackrod (85% and 60%) rated availability as good or very good. Astley Bridge has a relatively high proportion (30%) of residents rating availability as poor or very poor. This may highlight a need to address perceptions of availability and/or accessibility in the area.

Figure 3.4: Availability of parks





# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Key issues

### *Current provision*

There are 62 sites classified as parks and gardens totalling 426 hectares<sup>1</sup>. Parks and gardens have been classified in the following ways to identify their effective catchment:

- Borough park – sites between 20 and 60 ha, large specialised areas, attracting a large number of visitors from a wide area.
- District park – sites between 2 and 20 ha, areas that attract a significant proportion of users from particular parts of the local area, designed principally for passive recreation, serving the recreational needs of the local population.
- Local park – sites of 2 ha or less, smaller areas that attract almost all users from a particular area, normally located on the edge of housing estates and serve the immediate population.

*Table 3.1: Distribution of parks and garden sites by analysis area*

Analysis area	Local park		District park		Borough park		TOTAL provision	
	number	Size(ha)	number	Size(ha)	number	Size(ha)	number	Size(ha)
Astley Bridge and Smithills Area Forum	2	2.55	2	26.94	1	29.64	5	59.14
Crompton and Halliwell Area Forum	6	5.03	2	9.68	1	23.79	9	38.52
Farnworth and Kearsley Area Forum	6	5.46	5	16.16	-	-	11	21.63
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton Area Forum	2	1.16	-	-	-	-	2	1.16
Leverhulme Area Forum	5	4.64	3	11.79	2	195.06	10	211.50
South Area Forum	2	3.35	7	29.41	-	-	9	32.76
South Turton Area Forum	3	1.40	4	27.65	-	-	7	29.05
Two Towns Area Forum	2	1.36	4	15.54	-	-	6	16.90
Westhoughton with Chew Moor Area Forum	1	1.63	2	13.78	-	-	3	15.41
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>26.62</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>150.98</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>248.50</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>426.11</b>

<sup>1</sup> Figures rounded up



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Accessibility

The effective catchments of parks has been identified using data from the street survey (see Figure 3.2) and guidance issued by the Greater London Authority (GLA)<sup>1</sup>. The following catchments are used to identify the coverage of current provision:

- ❑ Local parks – 400 metres.
- ❑ District parks – 1,200 metres.
- ❑ Borough parks – 3,200 metres.

Figure 3.5: Parks and gardens mapped against settlement areas with catchments applied

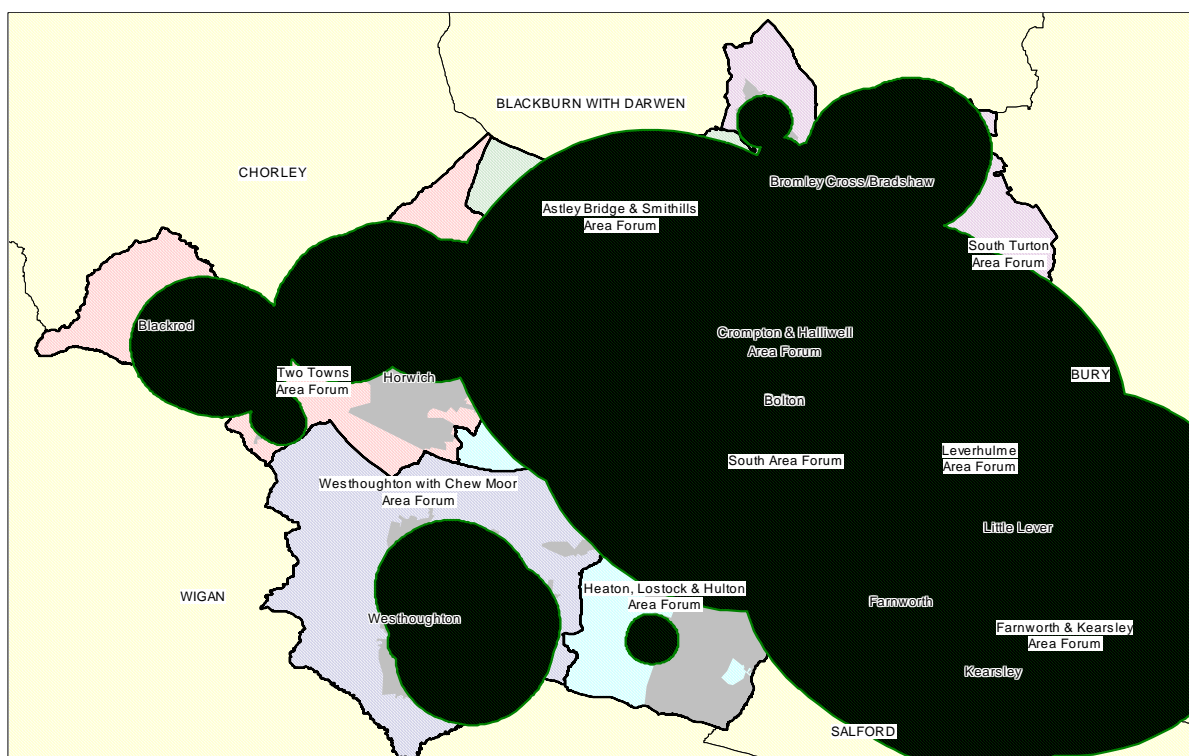


Table 3.2: Gaps in provision of parks and gardens across Bolton

Analysis area	Catchment gaps
Astley Bridge and Smithills Area Forum	❑ No catchment gap
Crompton and Halliwell Area Forum	❑ No catchment gap
Farnworth and Kearsley Area Forum	❑ No catchment gap
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton Area Forum	❑ South and East of Over Hulton (mainly agricultural land)
Leverhulme Area Forum	❑ No catchment gap

<sup>1</sup> Greater London Authority (2002): Guide to preparing open space strategies

# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Analysis area	Catchment gaps
South Area Forum	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap
South Turton Area Forum	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor catchment gap in Egerton
Two Towns Area Forum	<input type="checkbox"/> South Horwich
Westhoughton with Chew Moor Area Forum	<input type="checkbox"/> Hunger Hill <input type="checkbox"/> Minor gap South West Westhoughton <input type="checkbox"/> Minor gap North Westhoughton

Catchment mapping, based on all current provision, shows that there is good coverage of park and garden provision across the Borough with only a small number of catchment gaps. This is partly due to the fact that there are four sites classified as Borough parks, Leverhulme Park, Moss Bank Park, Queens Park and Moses Gate Country Park, with large catchment areas.

Consultation with residents' groups suggests that there is a perceived lack of parks provision across Bolton. This is mainly due to a large number of park sites, such as Haslam Park, being geared towards formal sporting/recreational provision e.g. marked sports pitches. This is exacerbated by fencing off individual sporting facilities, such as bowling greens, multi use games areas, which, residents consider, detracts from the sense of being within a park environment. Kearsley Park and Haslam Park in particular are considered by users to be over fenced, with each individual bowling greens being fenced as well as the entire site, which impacts on the overall visual site appearance.

It is felt, by users and residents, that the traditional 'park' has been lost in some areas of Bolton. A number of sites classed as parks within Bolton are little more than a playing field and a play area. This is reflected in the site assessments, which highlight a lack of formal footpaths with seating and bins. There is also demand for additional features such as more attractive landscaping at a number of 'bland' sites e.g. Barlow Park. BC could go some way to restoring a traditional park feel by implementing features such as garden areas, play areas and attractions, as at Moss Bank Park which retains a true 'park' feel to it.

During consultation, a number of open space users expressed concern that Bolton's country parks are managed with an urban park focus, risking the loss of natural features. For example, the loss of a wildflower area at Moses Gate Country Park, replaced by formal planting.

BC's signage strategy covers all green spaces and aims to feature the new, corporate re-branding. It recognises a need for improved access and signage within parks. As a priority, the focus for signage improvements is on four major parks; Moses Gate Country Park, Moss Bank Park, Queens Park and Haslam Park. BC's Greenspace Service is currently investigating the signage needs at these sites. It is envisaged that the entrance signage at Moses Gate Country Park will be enhanced to raise visual awareness of the site. Consultation and site visits identify the need for greater interpretation signage throughout the site to encourage visitors to explore beyond the visitor centre.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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## ***Management – strategic***

As stated in 'Bolton's Parks and Greenspaces – A Management Strategy for Bolton', the overall aim for parks and open spaces is to 'aspire to be amongst the best, providing attractive and accessible, safe and sustainable facilities.' BC aims to strive to be recognised locally, and nationally within the top 25% of comparable parks.

## ***Management – operational***

Grounds maintenance lies within Environmental Services and is run alongside the Street Cleansing Service. Since February 2006, grounds maintenance and street cleansing has been carried out in-house, led by eight area managers and a combined staff of 60. Grounds maintenance in Bolton has moved away from the strict compulsory competitive tendering (CCT) specifications towards a more flexible approach to improve efficiency and quality. A future aspiration for the Service is to develop a nucleus of staff with horticultural training and skills, which can focus on the parks across the Borough.

There are three major park team leaders. One team leader oversees the management and grounds maintenance of Moss Bank Park and Smithills Country Park, which are in close proximity and one oversees the management and grounds maintenance of Moses Gate Country Park and Leverhulme Park and the third deals with management and grounds maintenance at Queens Park. This allows focused and site specific management.

Moss Bank Park and Moses Gates Country Park both have management plans in place to support bids for Green Flag Award 2007. In starting to work towards achieving Green Flag, action plans have been developed for both sites. These action plans follow the main criteria of the award. Working to these action plans will ensure that relevant policies and regimes, required to be successful in achieving the Green Flag Award, are in place.

## ***Staffing***

User group consultation found demand for greater staff presence in the Borough's parks. A permanent/semi-permanent staff presence creates an improved safety perception. It can facilitate user engagement in order to create a sense of community ownership. Currently, only the five major parks, - Moss Bank Park, Smithills Country Park, Moses Gate Country Park, Leverhulme Park and Queens Park; have a permanent staff presence in the form of rangers and/or grounds maintenance staff. For the remaining smaller parks, the desire for increased staff presence can, subject to budget availability, perhaps be met through the initiation of a patrolling ranger service.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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The countryside ranger service covers Moses Gate Country Park, Smithills Country Park and Moss Bank Park. Users are highly aware of the ranger presence at these sites and would like to see it rolled out to Queens Park, as this is a key site close to Bolton Town Centre. The ranger service based at Moses Gate Country Park provides environmental education activities, popular with local primary schools and children's groups. There is demand for this to be extended to Smithills Country Park and Moss Bank Park where the provision of educational activities is lacking. BC recognises that opportunities exist at these sites and plans to develop an environmental education programme. This firstly requires recruitment of an additional ranger to fulfil the role adequately.

The Greenspace service organises and delivers an extensive events programme based predominately around the major parks, such as seasonal and festival walks. These popular activities raise awareness of sites and encourage greater user participation.

In partnership with Bury and Salford, a volunteer ranger service covers the Croal Irwell Valley. Rangers patrol open spaces throughout the Valley inspecting footpath and furniture quality, noting any other issues that require attention. Volunteers also support the BC ranger service with practical conservation tasks.

## **Security**

Consultation highlights that, in general, safety within parks is perceived to be poor. This was particularly prevalent during consultation with black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. In some cases, poor safety perception is due to the secluded nature of certain sites and, in other cases, feelings of insecurity arise through the perceived lack of staff presence in parks. However, overgrown vegetation can exacerbate feelings of unease, as lines of vision can become obscured and a perception of seclusion develops. User groups identified demand for vegetation clearance, particularly at Queens Park and Haslam Park to create more welcoming and safer sites.

Toilets in parks, particularly in Queens Park and Sunnyside Park, suffer from serious misuse. This is preventing other users making use of the facilities. Where possible toilet facilities within parks should be attached to secure facilities such a café or a shop as this allows for a certain degree of monitoring of usage. This should be considered as part of potential future café developments in Moss Bank Park and Queens Park.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Quality

Table 3.3: Quality scores for parks and garden sites by analysis area

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60%	above 60%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	137	42%	52%	65%	23%	3	2
Crompton and Halliwell	137	26%	41%	57%	31%	9	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	137	24%	37%	49%	25%	11	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	137	33%	43%	54%	21%	2	-
Leverhulme	137	25%	46%	62%	37%	9	1
South	137	35%	46%	55%	19%	9	-
South Turton	137	35%	47%	71%	36%	6	1
Two Towns	137	25%	39%	53%	28%	6	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	137	36%	49%	63%	26%	2	1
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>5</b>

A large proportion of sites are assessed as low quality. The local authority mean score lies below the threshold set at 60%. The low quality sites generally fail against criteria such as seating and litterbin provision, car parking and lighting. As mentioned earlier this is, in part, due to a large number of park sites being geared towards formal sporting/recreational provision with little more than a playing field and a play area.

The Green Flag Award Scheme, managed by the Civic Trust, provides a national standard for parks and greenspaces across England and Wales. Public service agreements, identified by Communities and Local Government (CLG) highlight the importance placed on working towards Green Flag status as an indicator of high quality parks. The Green Pennant Award, also a part of the Green Flag Award Scheme, recognises high quality green spaces that are managed by voluntary and community groups.

At present there are no Green Flag sites in Bolton. However, as stated earlier, BC plans to enter either Moss Bank Park and/or Moses Gate Country Park for the Award in 2007/08. The qualitative scores from site visits undertaken by KKP suggest that either site would be suitable. Site assessments also indicate that Westhoughton Central Park (63%), The Jumbles (71%) and Smithills Hall Country Park (65%) all have a good chance of success in the field assessment element of the award if considered for Green Flag entry in the future. In particular, consultation suggests the need to concentrate on improving interpretation in parks.



## **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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Queens Park is in the early stages of progressing towards a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant. Once completed, this should lead to the Park pursuing Green Flag status, in so much as a management plan will already be in place and investment in the necessary improvements will have been achieved.

There is one site, Banktop Community Garden, which, for a second consecutive year, has been awarded a Green Pennant Award for 2006/07. This site has strong community involvement through Bank Top Community Group, which has input into the site management plan and the site business plan.

Mini-motorbikes/dirt bikes present a problem in many parks across Bolton. Consultation identifies a particular issue of motorbike usage interrupting play on the sport pitches at Leverhulme Park. Users of the pitches suggest that BC investigates the possibility of establishing a dedicated off-road biking area in a secluded and informal area of the Park. This could help to alleviate the usage of motorbikes across the remainder of the Park. Site assessments identify that few parks have adequate and appropriate controls to prevent illegal use. Greater publicity and enforcement on illegal use of motorbikes on public open spaces across Bolton could also act as a deterrent.

Dog foul is a major issue affecting most parks in Bolton. Consultation identifies user demand for this issue to be tackled through greater education, greater enforcement through the use of fines and visible dog warden patrols throughout open spaces. Site assessments note that 39 of the 61 parks and gardens currently without bins which can be used for dog waste, would benefit from the provision.



# BOLTON COUNCIL

## OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY:

### ASSESSMENT REPORT

#### Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for parks and gardens in Bolton. A score of 20% or less is considered to indicate that a site has low value. A list of low value sites and an indication of their position relative to the threshold can be found in Appendix I.

Table 3.4: Value scores for parks and garden sites by analysis area

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 20%	above 20%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	130	17%	36%	50%	33%	1	4
Crompton and Halliwell	130	7%	25%	42%	35%	3	6
Farnworth and Kearsley	130	14%	27%	45%	32%	3	8
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	130	30%	37%	44%	14%	-	2
Leverhulme	130	20%	39%	72%	52%	-	10
South	130	7%	33%	50%	43%	1	8
South Turton	130	21%	40%	64%	43%	-	7
Two Towns	130	14%	34%	45%	31%	1	5
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	130	27%	46%	57%	30%	-	3
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>53</b>

In terms of value, the average score across Bolton lies above the 20% threshold, ranging from 72% for Moses Gate Country Park, to just 7% for Mortfield Park and Pikes Mill Recreation Ground. Recognising the social inclusion and health benefits, ecological value and amenity and sense of place offered by park and gardens site assessments find 85% of sites across the Borough to be of high value. All of the nine sites classified as low value are also assessed as being low quality.

#### Community involvement

There is high community involvement in parks and gardens within Bolton, with a large number of well-established and active friends of groups. These focus upon improving their local parks and organising and promoting events to encourage greater usage. Support from BC in the establishment and operation of these groups encourages community involvement in the management of parks and is commended by a number of the groups. Evidence from consultation suggests that the significant community engagement, evident throughout Bolton's parks, is constructive in improving site quality and value to local residents. This support should be sustained to ensure the continual improvement and increased usage of the Borough's parks.





# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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## **Events**

The importance of parks and gardens in the provision of annual community events within Bolton is evident, with several large annual community events e.g. the Bolton Mela Festival, being hosted in parks and open spaces. Residents often associate events with the parks in which they are held. This demonstrates the effectiveness of events in the further promotion of the usage of parks.

In order for parks and gardens to continue to facilitate events, the infrastructure of sites requires improvement. Consultation identifies that a major limiting factor preventing parks from hosting events is poor drainage. A number of sites, such as Moss Bank Park and Queens Park, often become boggy in wet weather. This can lead to surface damage, particularly when under pressure from heavy vehicles during events. To reduce this damage there is a need for improved drainage and for ground reinforcement to be installed on sites that are intended to host annual events.

There are two amphitheatres within Bolton's parks, at Moss Bank Park and Queens Park. Consultation identifies potential for these areas to be brought back into use with the enhancements of power supplies and drainage improvements. These offer potential opportunities to widen the usage of the two parks. The possibility to reinstate and make use of the two amphitheatres should be further investigated by BC.

BC is currently considering designating an area within Moss Bank Park as an events area. The area, located on the playing fields behind the bowling greens, would require upgrading with improved drainage, ground reinforcement and electricity points. If this were to go ahead the football field would not be impacted.

# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## **Summary of site consultation**

This section collates issues raised during consultation regarding provision of parks and gardens in Bolton. This is presented alongside site visit quality and value scores for comparison. It is not a comprehensive list of sites and only covers sites raised during consultation.

Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Bank Top Community Garden	<b>39%</b>	<b>25%</b>	A business plan and management plan covers the site and is implemented by a management committee, representing BC, Bolton Wildlife Project, local groups and local residents. Consultation establishes that the site, a designated doorstep green, is well used within the local community and there is a strong sense of ownership amongst local residents. In particular, this is due to Bank Top community group having strong involvement with its management and maintenance. The Group aims to ensure effective maintenance, develop a wildlife habitat and encourage community use and activities. The strong community involvement has been instrumental in the site achieving its second consecutive Green Pennant Award for the year in 2006/07.
Barlow Park	<b>45%</b>	<b>40%</b>	An ongoing problem, identified through consultation and site assessment, is unofficial use by mini-motorbikes. The site assessment notes that there is a lack of appropriate access controls.  There is currently no sufficient provision for young people at the site. The MUGA is in disrepair even though there appears to be demand for use of such a facility at the site.  The tennis courts have fallen into disrepair due to lack of usage and suffers from vandalism. This detracts from the overall visual quality of the site and users would like the area to be improved and brought back into use as either tennis courts or for the space to be utilised in another way e.g. for provision of a MUGA.  Dog fouling is a significant issue and there is demand for greater enforcement.



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Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Bradford Park, Radcliffe Road	<b>42%</b>	<b>34%</b>	At present there is no public access or use of the site. BC is currently undertaking improvement work including tree thinning and footpath improvement with an aspiration to open the Park to public use. Once this has been achieved Bradford Park can be used in conjunction with Leverhulme Park for hosting of events such as cross-country running.
Bradford St Park	<b>36%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<p>A master plan is currently guiding the phased refurbishment of the Park, which is being funded by BC and Coalfields Regeneration Trust. The refurbishment will be undertaken zone by zone with the play area and playing fields being the first priorities. The structured project has already begun following consultation with local residents and much involvement with the local community association. The new play area was recently opened and has been commended by local residents and users.</p> <p>This site is a highly valued open space for local residents and they commend the improvements that have already been made to the Park such as the installation of bins to serve the playing fields and improving the fencing. However, it is felt that further improvements are required to the playing fields including drainage work and levelling.</p> <p>Local users have expressed demand for dog foul bin provision to serve the playing fields due to the popularity of the area with dog walkers. There are also requests for bins and benches to be provided in the new play area and for further improvements to be made to the quality of paths within the site</p> <p>Consultation also identifies demand for signage to be installed throughout the site to state ownership and to display relevant contact numbers and information about applicable by-laws.</p>
Brightmet Park	<b>47%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<p>Users consider the seating within the Park to be in need of upgrading. Consultation indicates that the majority of the seating is unusable due to vandalism. However, the site assessment does not identify this.</p> <p>Users would also request greater litterbin provision. Currently only one litterbin serves the large site, located at the entrance on Milnthorpe Road. There is demand for additional provision at the opposite side to encourage responsible users.</p>



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Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Doe Hey Park	<b>36%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<p>The Park has recently undergone improvement work including fencing the bowling green area and installation of a new play area. Users feel that this has improved the quality of the site as mis-use of the bowling green has reduced and the play area attracts greater usage by families.</p> <p>The 'friends of' group would like the car park at the site to be extended in order to facilitate greater use of the community building currently used by bowlers. BC is investigating this possibility. It is also attempting to obtain funding for drainage of the field. At the moment the field suffers from poor drainage resulting in it becoming marshy.</p> <p>Mini-motorbikes are a common problem at the site. Consultation identifies demand for greater access controls to limit access by unauthorised vehicles. The Park does not have complete perimeter fencing and therefore access by motor vehicles is currently easy.</p>



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Egerton Park	49%	40%	<p>This previously neglected and vandalised site has been much improved through the formation and involvement of the 'friends of' group. Incidents of vandalism have now significantly decreased and the toilets have been reinstated. The visual quality of the Park has been improved through hedgerow and shrub planting and installation of flower baskets. Consultation identifies the need for the entrance to the Park to be more attractive and for the boundary railings to be improved.</p> <p>Dog foul has also been highlighted as a pertinent issue and the site assessment highlights that provision of dog foul bins would benefit the site. Broken glass was also evident during the site assessment. However, this was not identified as a concern through consultation.</p> <p>There is a 'Grade A' listed building within the site which is partially used as a bowling club hut and partially used by the 'friends of' group. It has proved to be a successful attraction for users. However, the condition of the building needs improvement, particularly the roof requires particular attention. There is also a room within the building that is currently unused and the 'friends of' group plans to consult with local residents regarding potential uses. Ideas include creation of a Victorian classroom, with involvement from the community and local schools. However, this space cannot be used until the roof is attended to and heating installed to facilitate use all year round. Funding for this is required and friends of Egerton Park is currently considering applying for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant with the listed building being the main focus.</p> <p>The steep gradient of the site and the presence of steps in certain areas results in poor access for users in wheelchairs and with pushchairs. BC has plans to create an access path through the tennis court area to bypass steps and improve access from the lower end of the site to the tearoom at the top end.</p>
Farnworth Park	49%	31%	<p>The Park has benefited from community involvement in the past. However, consultation finds that local interest has reduced and this may result in the 'friends of' group disbanding. Consultation identifies anti-social behaviour to be the main issue affecting the usage of the Park. Youths congregate at the monument creating an intimidating atmosphere.</p> <p>Although consultation identified that the main paths within the site are in need of re-surfacing, this was not identified during the site assessment.</p>



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Great Lever Park	<b>47%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<p>The Park has recently undergone some refurbishment to improve footpaths and the play area. However, users feel that investment is required to improve the quality of the paths serving the bowling green.</p> <p>Consultation highlights that, due to a lack of user consultation undertaken prior to the refurbishment, a newly installed path has resulted in the loss of the facility for playing rounders as it dissects area that was the playing field.</p> <p>Bolton Wildlife Project has created a wildlife garden in a section of the Park. However, there has been no subsequent management of the area for wildlife and it has become unattractive and low value.</p>
Morris Green Park	<b>54%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<p>A number of recent improvements have been made, including provision of new perimeter railings, resurfacing and edging the paths and improving drainage. New benches and bins have also been installed. Since the improvements there has been a noticeable increase in visitors.</p> <p>The site is considered to be a valuable open space to the local residents since the majority of nearby housing does not have gardens. There is desire for more attractive planting to increase its visual quality and interest.</p> <p>With the involvement of the local community association, this site could be considered for future entry into the Green Pennant Award run by the Civic Trust.</p>
Moses Gate Country Park	<b>62%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<p>A Heritage Lottery Fund bid for a 'Your Heritage' project is currently being drafted. This is to develop interpretation facilities to depict the history of the site.</p> <p>The Gravel Pits Action Group works to enhance the gravel pit area. There is also potential to establish a 'friends of group to encourage greater community involvement with representation from the bridleway users and the model aircraft user group.</p>
Moss Bank Park	<b>62%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<p>There is an underused building within the site that is currently used for BC storage. BC has an aspiration to make use of this building as a café, to be managed by an external partner. The building that currently hosts the park café could then be knocked down and a picnic area created. There is also potential for the creation of a crazy golf course around the tennis court area. Again, this would be managed externally.</p> <p>The Park suffers from vandalism and anti-social behaviour with sporadic problems from illegal use of motorbikes. This does deter users. However, the Police provides a good response to serious problems.</p>



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Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Old Station Park	<b>53%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<p>The Park is subject to a Heritage Lottery Bid, which is currently in its early stages. Enhancement work is also underway which will improve the drainage and path quality. BC also plans to install a new play area to attract greater usage. Local users identify that the current play area is of poor quality and they would like to see improved landscaping of the Park through interesting and colourful planting.</p> <p>Dog foul is also a common issue brought up during user consultation. There is a need for greater awareness of penalties and enforcement. The site assessment identified that dog foul bin provision would be of benefit.</p> <p>The area under the bridge is felt by users to portray a negative image. It is currently litter filled and prone to youth congregation, which creates an intimidating environment and deters users. Local residents expressed a desire to have this area cleared and opened up to create an additional access point into the Park.</p> <p>Demand for toilet facilities has been identified through the residents survey undertaken by the 'friends of' group.</p>



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Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Queens Park	49%	30%	<p>This valuable town centre park is considered by a number of consultees to be greatly underused. Attracting increased usage of the site is an aspiration of the active 'friends of group, which undertakes practical work and campaigns for improvements.</p> <p>There is demand for the provision of information boards to supply relevant contact numbers for BC and for use by the friends of Queens Park group to promote its existence and work being undertaken. In order to raise the profile of the Park it plans to produce a park leaflet detailing heritage information.</p> <p>User consultation identifies demand for a staff presence within the Park in the form of a warden in order to organise events and generate greater community ownership. There is also demand for a staff presence to improve the safety perception of the site, which is currently poor. The main concern is associated with the area leading to Chorley Street. In the past users were able to walk straight out of the Park and through the adjoining car park to access the town centre. However, this is now fenced off. The alternate access is over the park bridge where users feel vulnerable due to overgrowing vegetation obstructing view lines.</p> <p>Consultation also identifies a general perception that anti-social activities are taking place, which requires a police presence to tackle.</p> <p>Consultation identifies potential for the old butterfly house to be reinstated as a restaurant/café. This could help to raise the profile and increase presence within the Park. However, the building is not visible from the road and so would generate no passing trade unless it is well advertised/signed.</p> <p>Users consider the grounds maintenance of the site to be adequate and this was the finding of the site assessment. However, consultation highlights that only one area within the ornamental garden, the Mayor flowerbed, receives adequate attention. The rest of the garden is considered by users to be neglected in terms of horticultural attention and is overgrown impacting on the visual quality of the site.</p> <p>The site suffers with unofficial use by motorbikes. The 'friends of group' would like to see bollards installed by the Park Lodge to prevent vehicle access.</p>





# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Sunnyside Park	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<p>This once run down park has been transformed through a Living Spaces grant, providing a new play area and improved perimeter fencing. The funding was also used to create a perception of openness throughout the Park with the removal of trees, shrubs and re-landscaping. The football pitch is in the process of getting levelled and re-surfaced in conjunction with Great Lever Management Committee and Fairshare Funding.</p> <p>Before the improvements there was a poor perception of safety and quality associated with the site. This perception still poses a barrier to usage. The 'friends of' group is attempting to overcome this through the organisation of events to attract local residents back.</p> <p>Consultation identifies issues with vandalism and inappropriate use of the site by mini-motorbikes and for playing golf. The 'friends of' group would like BC to create a wildflower meadow in the area that is prone to golf playing. This would deter the inappropriate use and could also be established as an outdoor classroom for the use by school groups.</p> <p>There is demand for access to be improved for users in wheelchairs and with pushchairs. The main access point is difficult to negotiate for a wheelchair user due to the placement of bollards. There is also a large amount of cobbled pathways and paths in general considered to need resurfacing.</p> <p>Consultation identifies potential for the site to be entered for the Green Pennant Award in the near future.</p>
Victory Road	<b>43%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<p>Currently the site is a grassed area with a footpath running through. The main users are dog walkers and young people who congregate in the evening. There is demand from local residents to increase the functionality of the site through landscaping and provision of seating. There is also demand for the installation of a youth shelter and a play area.</p> <p>Consultation also highlights that drainage at the site requires attention to increase usage and there is need for greater litterbin provision to serve the whole site.</p> <p>In the past a fun day has been held at the site for local residents. The local residents association has an aspiration to provide this annually if enough local interest can be generated.</p>



# BOLTON COUNCIL

## OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY:

### ASSESSMENT REPORT

#### *Parks and gardens summary*

- ❑ There are 62 sites classified as parks and gardens totalling 426ha<sup>1</sup> across Bolton. Of those, 5 sites are identified as high quality and 53 as high value with 57 sites identified as low quality and 9 as low value.
- ❑ There is good coverage of park and garden provision across the Borough with only a small number of catchment gaps. This is partly due to the fact that there are four sites classified as Borough parks, Leverhulme Park, Moss Bank Park, Queens Park and Moses Gate Country Park, with large catchment areas.
- ❑ There is a recognised requirement to submit one site for Green Flag submission in the near future. KKP site visit scores reinforce that Moss Bank Park or Moses Gate Country Park could be eligible for the site assessment part of Green Flag. However, prior to entry, some infrastructure improvements and a written management plan are required.
- ❑ There is a perceived lack of formal parks provision across Bolton. This is mainly due to a large number of park sites being geared towards formal sporting/recreational provision e.g. marked sports pitches. There is also user concern regarding the formal management of country parks in the Borough.
- ❑ There is demand for greater staff presence in the Borough's parks to deter anti-social behaviour, increase safety perception and facilitate user engagement in order to create a sense of community ownership.
- ❑ There is high community involvement in parks and gardens within Bolton, with a large number of well-established and active friends of groups. The support offered by BC should be sustained to ensure the continual improvement and increased usage of Bolton's parks.

# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 4: NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACES

### Introduction

The typology of natural and semi natural greenspaces, as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide includes woodland (coniferous, deciduous, mixed) and scrub, grassland (e.g. downland, meadow), heath or moor, wetlands (e.g. marsh, fen), open running water, wastelands (including disturbed ground), and bare rock habitats (e.g. cliffs, quarries, pits). These provide 'wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.'

### Context

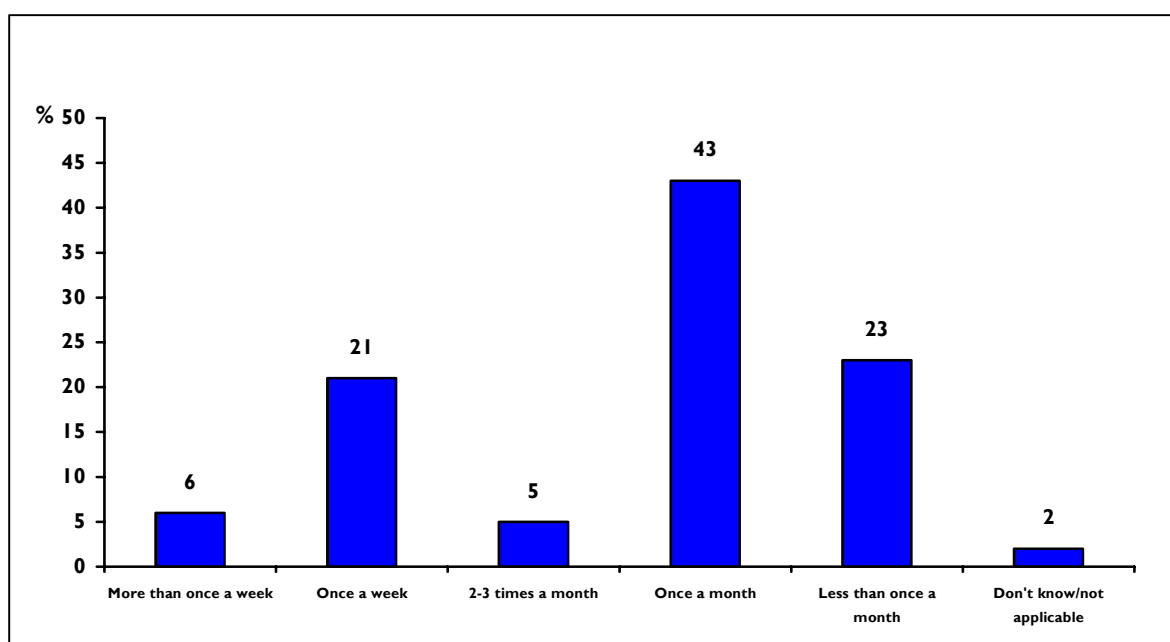
This section outlines findings from the survey of residents in relation to their use of and attitudes towards the provision of natural and semi-natural greenspaces in Bolton. It provides a context for the subsequent sections, which address the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision.

Results are provided for the descriptions used in the survey itself.

### Usage

In the previous 12 months 23% of respondents had visited a nature area. Amongst those that visited nature areas, over a quarter (27%) visit once a week or more. The majority visit infrequently with two thirds (66%) visiting once a month or less often.

Figure 4.1: Frequency of usage of nature areas in the previous 12 months

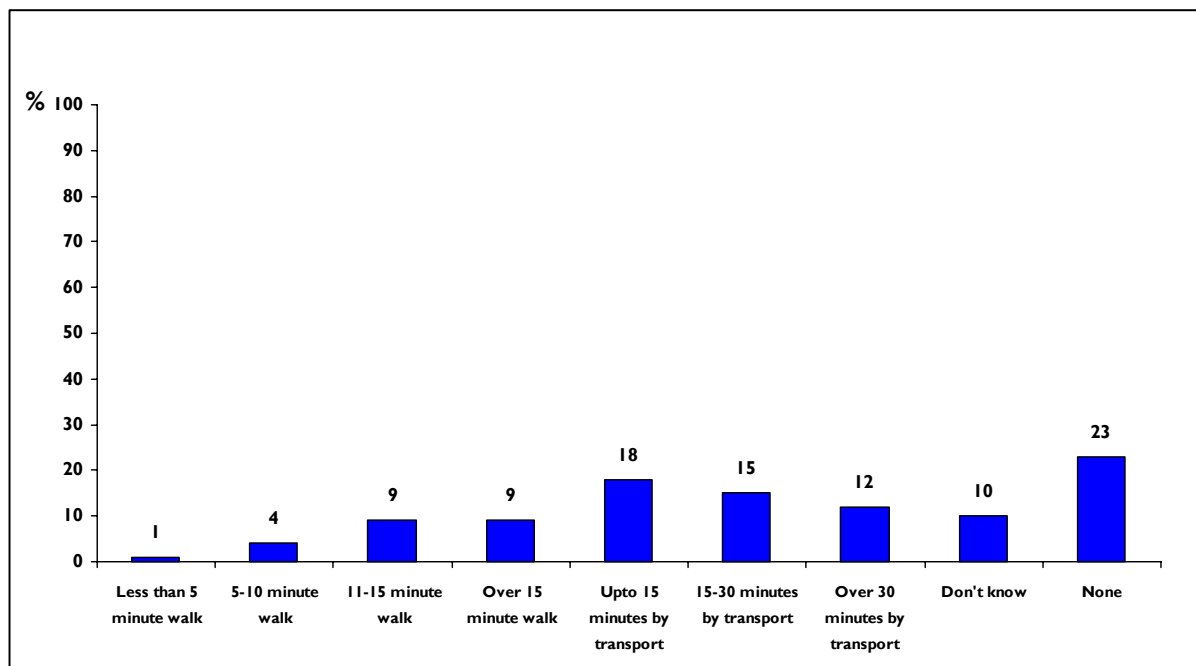


# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Travel time

Generally, residents are prepared to travel further than for many other typologies to access a nature area. This probably reflects the nature of such provision. Only 14% would walk no further than 15 minutes, whilst over a quarter (27%) would travel for at least 15 minutes by transport.

Figure 4.2: Time prepared to travel to reach a nature area

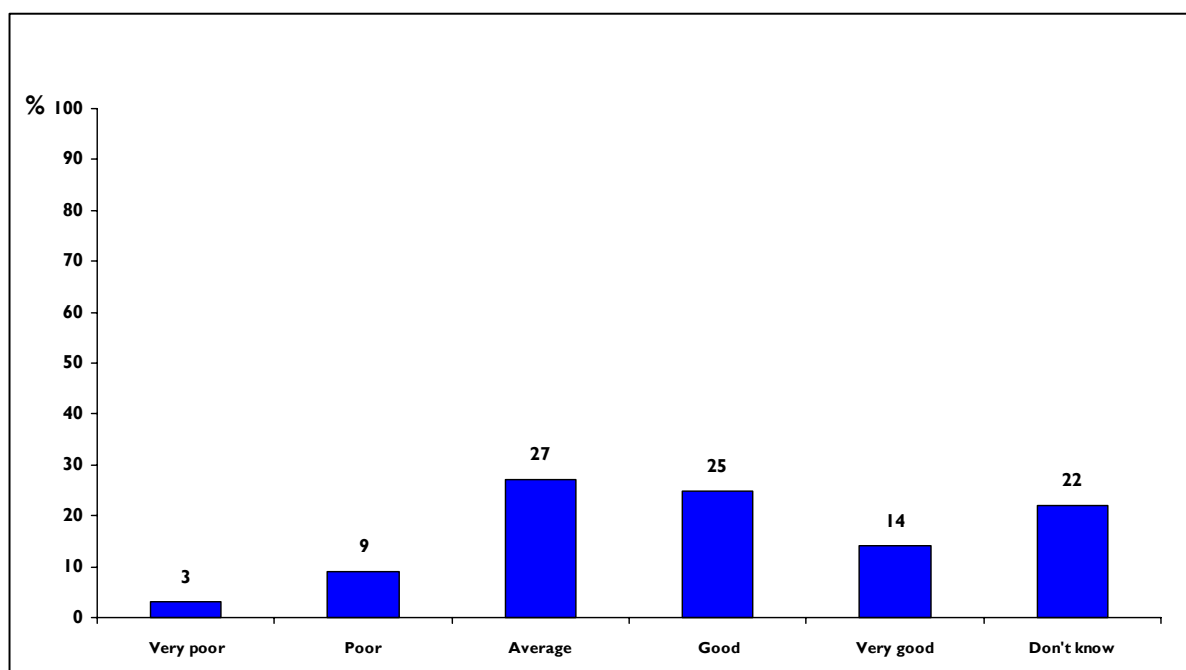


# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Quality of provision

Just under two fifths of residents (39%) rate the provision of nature areas as good or very good. Similar proportions rate it as average (27%) or are unable to rate provision (22%). A very small proportion (12%) rate it as poor or very poor. Provision is particularly highly rated in Horwich (75%) and Farnworth has higher than average proportions rating nature areas as good in some degree (49%) and poor (19%).

Figure 4.3: Quality of provision of nature areas



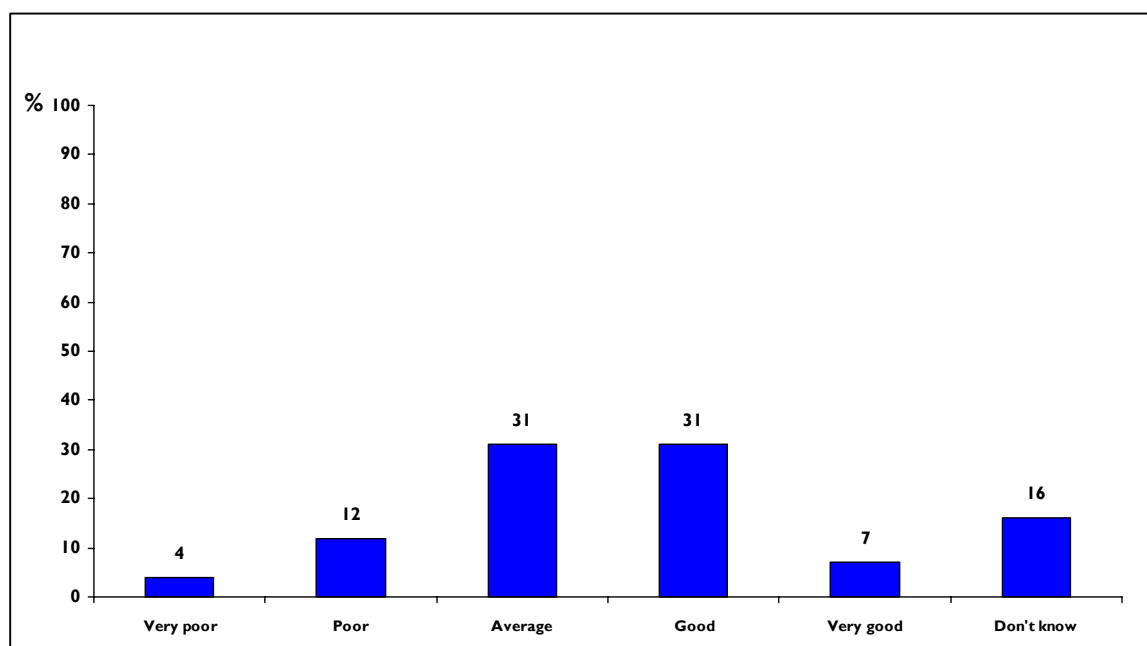
# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Availability

Perception of the availability of nature areas shows a similar pattern to that for quality. Just over a third (33%) rate availability as good or very good. A third (31%) rate it as average and just 16% as poor or very poor. Availability is particularly highly rated in Horwich (75% rating as good or very good), possibly because of the proximity of Rivington Country Park, and lowest in Westhoughton (24%).

Figure 4.4: Availability of natural and semi-natural greenspaces



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Key issues

### *Current provision*

In total, there are 47 open spaces classified as natural and semi-natural greenspaces in the Borough, totalling 171<sup>1</sup> hectares.

*Table 4.1: Distribution of natural and semi-natural greenspaces sites by analysis area*

Analysis area	Semi / Natural greenspaces	
	number	Size(ha)
Astley Bridge and Smithills Area Forum	7	24
Crompton and Halliwell Area Forum	2	1.82
Farnworth and Kearsley Area Forum	9	42.51
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton Area Forum	7	15.74
Leverhulme Area Forum	4	53.40
South Area Forum	4	14.94
South Turton Area Forum	7	8.40
Two Towns Area Forum	4	3.98
Westhoughton with Chew Moor Area Forum	3	6.51
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>171.34</b>

Bolton has a large proportion of locally and regionally important natural and semi-natural sites, many of which are sites of biological importance or sites of special scientific interest (SSSI).

There are four SSSI sites, totalling 62.45 hectares, and currently six designated local nature reserves (LNR) sites in Bolton. In 1996, English Nature recommended that there should be one hectare of designated LNR per 1,000 population. BC has adopted this as a target for LNR provision across the Borough. To put this into local context, with a population of 264,800 (2001 census data), Bolton should have at least 264.8 hectares of LNR. However, to date only 52.37 hectares has been designated, leaving a shortfall of some 212.43 hectares. BC has a target to achieve 261 hectares of designated LNR by 2010. Long term it feels that this is achievable and consultation identifies a number of potential sites, such as Darcy Lever Gravel Pits within Moses Gate Country Park that have potential for future LNR designation. The feasibility of achieving the LNR target depends on future funding opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures rounded up



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

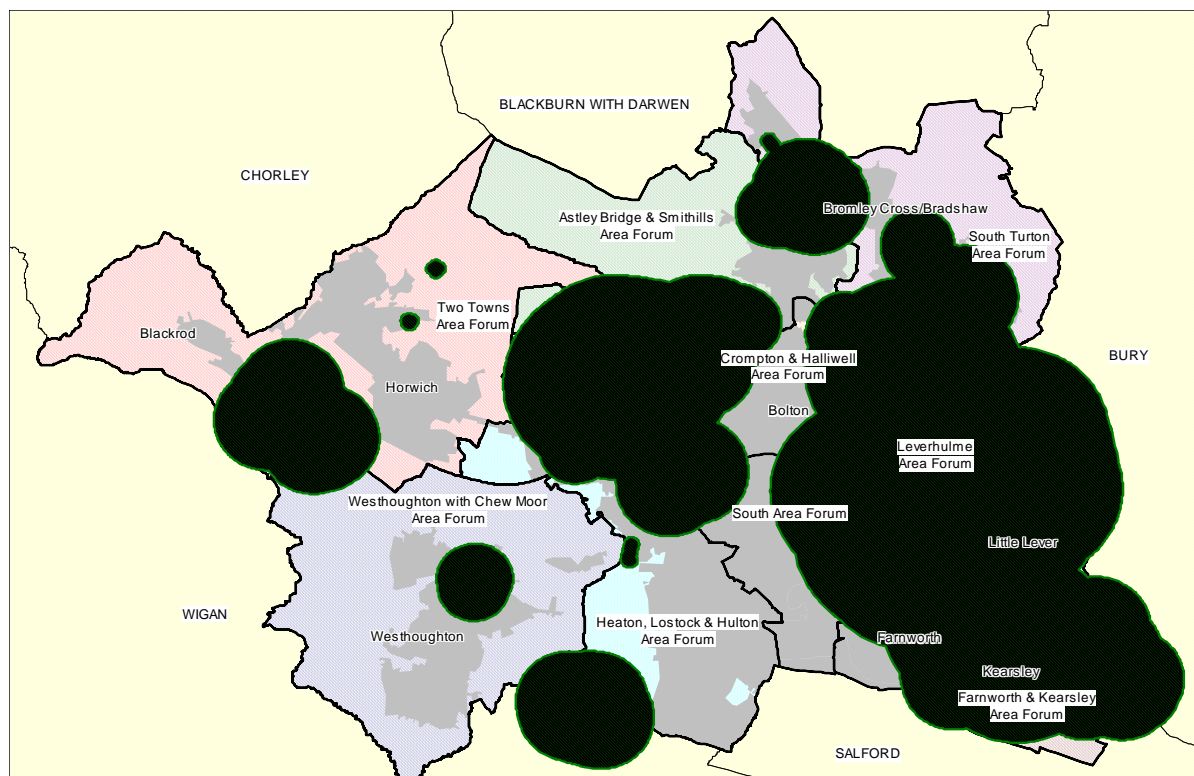
For the purpose of this assessment Eatock Lodge LNR is assessed as its primary typology of amenity greenspace, Hall Lee Bank Park is assessed as its primary typology of park and garden and Nob End LNR is assessed as part of Moses Gate County Park.

There are good opportunities for Bolton residents to access the countryside with the north of the Borough being dominated by open moorland forming part of the West Pennine Moors. Past industrial activities in the Borough have also left a variety of sites that are now valued for their biodiversity such as quarries, lodges and reservoirs, canals and spoil heaps. Many of these sites are open access providing valuable educational and wildlife observation opportunities.

Woodland is also an important resource in Bolton. Ancient examples are found at Arley Wood, Borsdane Wood and Hulton Park with other smaller examples associated with cloughs dotted across the borough. As part of the Red Rose Forest, BC has been proactive in identifying tree planting opportunities. Over recent years a large amount of work has been undertaken to increase tree cover and enhance current provision with over 100 hectares of new woodland planted across Bolton.

## Accessibility

Figure 4.5: natural and semi-natural greenspaces mapped against settlement areas with catchment areas applied





# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 4.2: Gaps in provision of natural and semi natural greenspace across Bolton

Analysis area	Catchment gaps
Astley Bridge and Smithills	<input type="checkbox"/> Astley Bridge and Smithills (north of Bolton Town Centre)
Crompton and Halliwell	<input type="checkbox"/> Bolton Town Centre
Farnworth and Kearsley	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor catchment gap east of Farnworth
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	<input type="checkbox"/> Fernhill Gate <input type="checkbox"/> Over Hulton
Leverhulme	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap
South	<input type="checkbox"/> East of analysis area
South Turton	<input type="checkbox"/> Egerton <input type="checkbox"/> Bromley cross/Toppings
Two Towns	<input type="checkbox"/> Horwich <input type="checkbox"/> Blackrod
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	<input type="checkbox"/> Major catchment gap in Westhoughton <input type="checkbox"/> Blackrod

Catchment mapping demonstrates a number of catchment gaps across Bolton with the most significant gaps in Horwich, Westhoughton and Hulton.

The promotion of access to LNRs has to be managed in accordance with protecting the wildlife habitats. Consultation highlights that some of the LNR sites in the Borough are multi-functional and are well used for recreational activities such as walking, cycling and fishing. However, an overall lack of promotion and active community engagement limits the accessibility of a number of LNRs. There is a need for raised awareness to improve access to provision. This can be achieved through increased information accessible on the BC website, production and distribution of a promotional leaflet and greater engagement of local schools.

## **Management**

A large amount of management of natural and semi-natural open spaces taking place through partnerships with external organisations such as Lancashire Wildlife Trust (LWT), Bolton Conservation Volunteers and voluntary sector groups and organisations. Through the Bolton Wildlife Project, LWT undertakes conservation tasks and enhancement work at a number of sites, such as Doffcocker LNR and Cunningham Clough. Bolton Conservation Volunteers have a strong working relationship with BC woodlands section and ranger service and often undertakes management tasks such as tree planting, restoring woodlands through encouraging regeneration and establishing woodland wildflowers throughout sites such as Raven's Wood and Colliers Row Wood.



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The LNRs in Bolton are managed in partnership between BC and LWT. Written management plans are in place for a number of the sites, e.g. Seven Acres, and BC has aspirations to draft management plans covering all sites in the near future. The management plans, along with the management committees in place, guide management and decisions about the LNRs to ensure that the sites are high quality accessible open spaces promoting the protection and conservation of wildlife habitats. Consultation with users of the LNRs and local residents identifies strong demand for a greater staff presence within them to oversee the management and usage of the sites. A ranger service covering the LNR could encourage community engagement and increased usage of the sites through the provision of environmental education opportunities, community conservation activities and events and improving safety perception of sites. Evidence shows that a site specific presence often results in increased site quality.

Although there is currently no tree/woodland strategy covering woodlands in Bolton, woodland management is well structured within BC. It has an aspiration to draft a woodland strategy in the near future, which will be made easier by the fact that management plans are currently in place covering five different areas of the Borough. These management plans set out site-by-site actions where appropriate.

#### Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for natural and semi-natural greenspaces in Bolton. The threshold for assessing quality has been set at 60%; this is based on Green Flag criteria. Individual site summaries can be found at the end of this section.

Table 4.3: Quality scores for natural and semi-natural greenspaces sites by analysis area

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60%	above 60%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	75	13%	29%	67%	54%	6	1
Crompton and Halliwell	75	1%	12%	23%	21%	2	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	75	15%	25%	36%	21%	9	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	75	-5%	16%	28%	33%	7	-
Leverhulme	75	32%	36%	47%	15%	4	-
South	75	16%	21%	27%	11%	4	-
South Turton	75	9%	22%	36%	27%	7	-
Two Towns	75	17%	18%	20%	3%	4	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	75	27%	33%	40%	13%	3	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	75	-5%	24%	67%	72%	46	1



## **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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Along with catchment mapping demonstrating a number of deficiencies in the provision of accessible natural and semi-natural open space, the site assessments highlight that provision of high quality natural and semi-natural open spaces is lacking. The average quality score sits well below the threshold set at 60%. Sites are therefore generally of poor quality with one site, Junction Road, North of, adjacent railway line (KKP Ref 365), having a negative quality score (-5%) due to evidence of motorbikes/quad bikes, glass, abandoned cars, fire damage and flytipping. Almost all (98%) of sites have been assessed as low quality with only Doffcocker Lodge LNR receiving a high quality score. The high quality score for Doffcocker Lodge reflects that the site is a designated LNR with good community involvement and a written management plan.

As noted earlier quad bikes and motorbikes are an issue across many open spaces in Bolton. Semi-natural sites are particularly vulnerable. Abuse by quad/motor bikes is prevalent within woodland sites and the LNR's, resulting in damage and deterring visitors. There is demand from user groups for greater access controls, where possible and without interfering with DDA compliance, and also greater enforcement in partnership with the Police to tackle the problem. Options could be explored for the potential to develop an official site for motorbike use, although this would not necessarily resolve all problems.

Although the Police do get involved with providing an enforcement presence in some sites, such as Doffcocker LNR, users consider this to be inadequate to effectively deter anti-social behaviour. There is user demand for a greater authoritative presence within the LNR's in the form of a ranger service specifically covering the sites. In addition to providing a greater presence to deter and enforce anti-social behaviour issues a ranger service would also facilitate environmental education and community engagement encourage greater involvement and usage of the sites.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for natural and semi-natural greenspaces in Bolton. A score of 20% or less is considered to indicate that a site has low value. A list of low value sites and an indication of their position relative to the threshold can be found in Appendix I.

Table 4.4: Value scores for natural and semi-natural greenspaces by analysis area

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 20%	above 20%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	115	3%	30%	69%	66%	2	5
Crompton and Halliwell	115	13%	17%	20%	7%	1	1
Farnworth and Kearsley	115	11%	15%	20%	9%	7	2
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	115	17%	22%	33%	16%	3	4
Leverhulme	115	29%	37%	52%	23%	-	4
South	115	9%	15%	24%	16%	3	1
South Turton	115	15%	22%	33%	18%	3	4
Two Towns	115	16%	18%	19%	3%	4	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	115	17%	23%	27%	10%	1	2
<b>BOLTON</b>	115	3%	22%	69%	66%	24	23

Although 98% of the sites are classified as low quality, site assessments recognise the landscape and ecological benefits offered by natural/semi-natural open space and almost half (49%) are assessed as high value. Few sites scored for educational opportunities

## Community involvement

There is good community involvement in the management of natural and semi-natural open spaces across the Borough. In particular this is facilitated through the Bolton Wildlife Project being led by LWT. A number of projects, such as the school grounds project and the community food growing project, encourage local school children, community groups and residents to become involved with enhancing sites for both local biodiversity and benefits for local residents. The projects work towards creating high quality and well used open spaces that offer environmental education opportunities and promote healthy living.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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Community participation in the management of the six LNRs is being encouraged through the LNR committees. These consist of BC officers, LWT and local residents and guide policy and management decisions regarding the LNRs and input into the management plan. A future aspiration is for 'friends of' groups to develop and branch out from the committees to take a more 'hands on' approach in the management of the individual LNRs. This will help create a sense of 'community ownership' of sites, which should result in site enhancement and increased usage.

Volunteer groups are a valuable resource in the physical habitat management and conservation tasks undertaken at a number of natural/semi-natural open spaces across the Borough. It results in high community involvement with across a range of sites and the importance of this resource should be recognised and supported by BC. Consultation suggests that many volunteers feel that the work carried out by various groups is unrecognised by BC in the main.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## *Summary of site consultation*

This section collates issues raised during consultation regarding provision of natural/semi-natural openspaces in Bolton. This is presented alongside site visit quality and value scores for comparison. It is not a comprehensive list of sites and only covers sites raised during consultation.

Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Doffcocker LNR	<b>67%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<p>The site assessment recognises that this is a highly used and well-managed LNR, with involvement from conservation voluntary and professional organisations and local community. Management is guided through the management committee and the written management plan.</p> <p>Consultation identifies that the site is well used by local residents for recreational activities such as dog walking, bird watching and fishing. The popularity of the site for dog walking results in a continual problem with dog foul. There is demand for greater encouragement for dog owners to be responsible through an increased site presence and enforcement and awareness regarding the penalty to be raised. Users highlight that the by-law signs present within the site are faded and require replacing.</p> <p>An occasional common problem experienced by the site is misuse by quad and motor bikes. This results in the paths being churned up and deters other users. Although the site assessment does not note there this is a problem it does recognise that there are no access controls. The Police has been actively involved with providing an ad hoc presence at the site to attempt to tack the issue with off-road motorbikes and also youth congregation during the evenings. However, users would like a more permanent site presence e.g. ranger. A ranger would also be able to facilitate environmental education opportunities, which are currently limited to those provided through the LWT. There is also potential for guided walks to be established with greater officer resource.</p> <p>Consultation finds that interpretation is considered to be limited within the site and there is demand for information to be provided regarding the wildlife that can be found at the site and the history of the site to create greater interest.</p>



# BOLTON COUNCIL

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Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Eatock Lodge LNR (assessed as amenity greenspace)	46%	46%	<p>Consultation establishes that the site provides an important recreational resource for local residents, including fishing, walking and nature observation. The site has several formal surfaced footpaths. A central area is managed for recreational activities, e.g. football.</p> <p>Users indicate that the LNR suffers from vandalism and anti-social behaviour including mis-use by motorbikes and youth congregation. This impacts on the safety perception associated with the site and deters genuine users. The site is also popular with dog walkers. However, not all are responsible and consultation highlights that there is an issue with dog foul. There is demand for greater enforcement and for penalty warning signs.</p> <p>Users would like to see greater opportunities user interaction through provision of interpretation opportunities. There are currently fishing platforms located around the lodge and consultation identifies potential to upgrade these to make them suitable for use as dipping platforms for schools.</p>
Hall Lee Bank LNR (assessed as park and garden)	47%	55%	<p>The seclusion of the site renders it vulnerable to vandalism and anti-social behaviour and youth congregation. User and resident consultation highlights litter to be a regular problem impacting on the visual quality of the site. Although the site assessment does not identify litter to be an issue it does indicate that more bins are required. There is user demand for greater provision of litterbins. Broken glass was present within the site at the time of the assessment indicating that the LNR is used as a 'drinking place' for young people. This was also identified through consultation.</p> <p>Consultation identifies that there is opportunity to increase environmental education at the site through a ranger service offering this and conservation activities. There is also demand for better interpretation to be provided throughout the site.</p>
Nob End LNR (assessed as part of Moses Gate Country Park).	62%	72%	<p>Consultation identifies that the site is important to local people for informal recreation e.g. walking.</p>
Seven Acres LNR	47%	52%	<p>A perception survey undertaken in 2004 highlighted that the inaccessibility of some of the paths, flytipping in the river and at hot spots, together with motorbike misuse and congregation of young people, were key concerns for local residents and users. As a result much improvement work has been undertaken by BC, LWT and East Bolton Regeneration. Consultation suggests that the site is now a well-used and highly valued site of high quality.</p> <p>Although the site remains vulnerable to misuse by off-road motorbikes and flytipping, users commend the improvement work that has been carried out and the role of the friends of group in bringing about these improvements is recognised.</p>



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Darcy Lever Gravel Pits (assessed as part of Moses Gate Country Park)	62%	72%	<p>As a sub-group of Red Lee Conservation Trust the gravel pits action group has undertaken major enhancement work at the site to protect the heritage of the site, conserve the wildlife habitats, improve access and increase usage.</p> <p>Through a combination of drainage improvements, resurfacing and widening work, access to the area, which lies within Moses Gate Country Park, has greatly improved for people of all abilities and users with pushchairs. Interpretation signage has also been installed and together these improvements have resulted in increased usage of the area.</p> <p>The action group has also facilitated school involvement and a programme of events to help local people understand the environmental value of the area.</p>
Cunningham Clough LNR	40%	27%	<p>The secluded nature of the site attracts anti-social behaviour and youth congregation, which deters genuine users. There is demand for a greater presence.</p> <p>The site is well used for informal recreation, e.g. for walking. There is an aspiration to establish a 'friends of' group to assist BC with management of the site.</p>

### **Natural and semi-natural summary**

- ❑ There are 47 open spaces classified as natural and semi-natural greenspaces in the Borough, totalling 171 hectares. Of those, only one site is identified as high quality and 46 sites identified as low quality. In terms of value, 23 sites are identified as high value, reinforcing the importance of these sites, and 24 are identified as low value.
- ❑ Catchment mapping demonstrates a number of catchment gaps across Bolton with the most significant gaps in Horwich, Westhoughton and Hulton.
- ❑ Consultation identifies the main quality issues afflicting natural/semi-natural open space across the Borough to be fly tipping, dog foul, vandalism and the misuse of sites by off-road motorbikes.
- ❑ There is high community involvement in the management of natural and semi-natural open spaces across the Borough through partnership working with LWT and voluntary sector groups.
- ❑ There is demand for a ranger service to cover the LNRs in order to facilitate greater community engagement and usage of the sites and also to provide on-site presence to deter mis-use of the sites.





# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 5: GREEN CORRIDORS

### Introduction

The typology of green corridors, as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide includes sites that offer opportunities for 'walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel and opportunities for wildlife migration'. This also includes river and canal banks, road and rail corridors, cycling routes within towns and cities, pedestrian paths within towns and cities, rights of way and permissive paths.

### Context

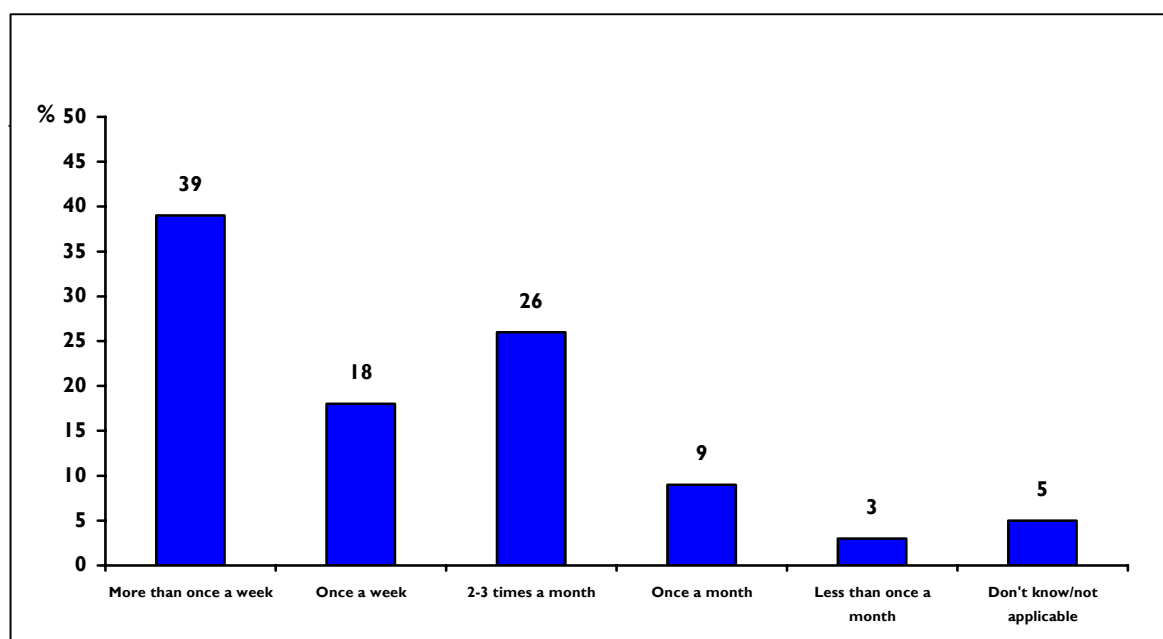
This section outlines findings from the survey of residents in relation to their use of and attitudes towards the provision of green corridors in Bolton. It provides a context for the subsequent sections, which address the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision.

Results are provided for the descriptions used in the survey itself.

### Usage

Of the 22% of residents who have used foot or cycle paths in the last 12 months the majority do so frequently (57% using them once a week or more). A very small percentage (3%) uses this typology less than once a month. This reflects the nature of such open space as it is used for travel on a daily basis.

Figure 5.1: Frequency of usage of footpaths/cyclepaths in the previous 12 months



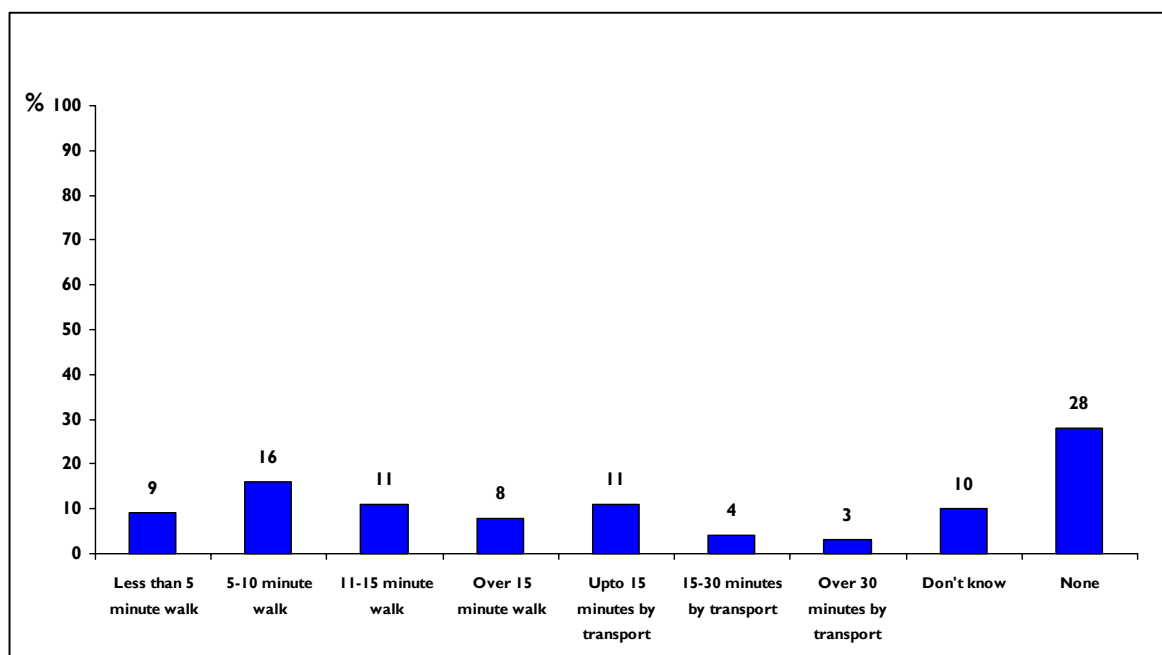
# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## *Travel time*

Reflecting the nature of their usage, just over a third (36%) of respondents would be willing to travel no further than a 15 minute walk. This is further reinforced by the small proportions prepared to travel by transport.

*Figure 5.2: Time prepared to travel to reach a footpath/cyclepath*

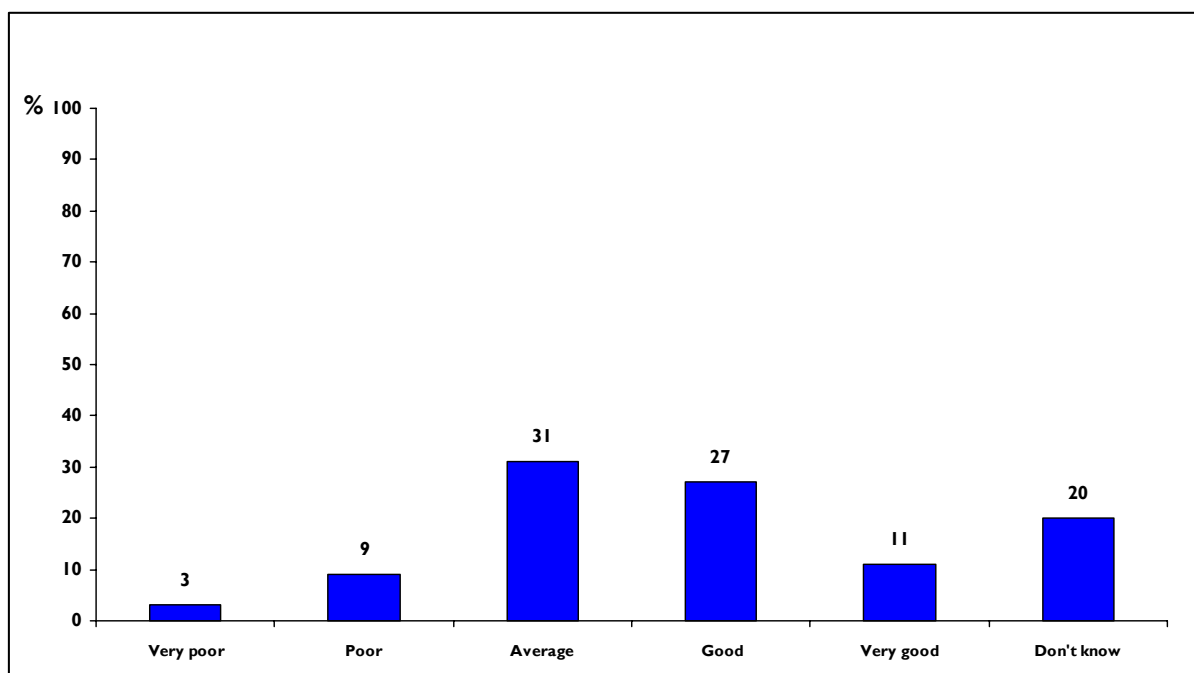


# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Quality of provision

Just over a third of residents (38%) rate the provision of foot/cycle paths as good or very good. A third (31%) rate it as average and only a very small proportion (12%) rate it as poor to some degree. The proportion rating provision as good or very good is particularly high in Horwich (63%) and lowest in Westhoughton (22%). Just under a quarter (24%) of residents in Farnworth rate the provision of foot/cycle paths as poor.

Figure 5.3: Quality of provision of footpath/cyclepath



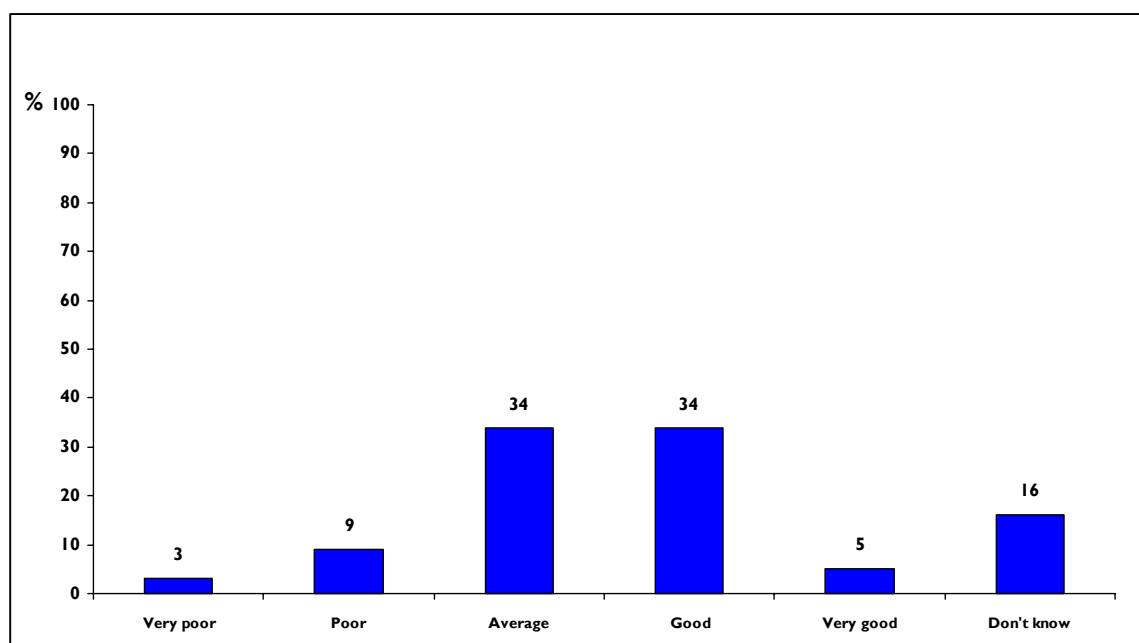
# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Availability

As with other typologies, the perceptions of availability broadly reflect views on quality. Just under two fifths rate it as good or very good (39%) and just over a tenth (12%) as poor or very poor. Over a third (34%) rate availability as average. Horwich has the highest percentage rating provision as good or very good (59%) with Westthoughton the lowest (16%).

Figure 5.4: Availability of footpaths/cyclepaths



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Key issues

### *Current provision*

There are five sites defined as green corridors in Bolton equating to five hectares<sup>1</sup>. That is sites defined as 'off road' opportunities for walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel and opportunities for wildlife migration.

*Table 5.1: Distribution of green corridors sites by analysis area*

Analysis area	Green corridors	
	number	Size(ha)
Astley Bridge and Smithills	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	-	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	-	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	2	1.2549
Leverhulme	-	-
South	3	4.0180
South Turton	-	-
Two Towns	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	-	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5.2729</b>

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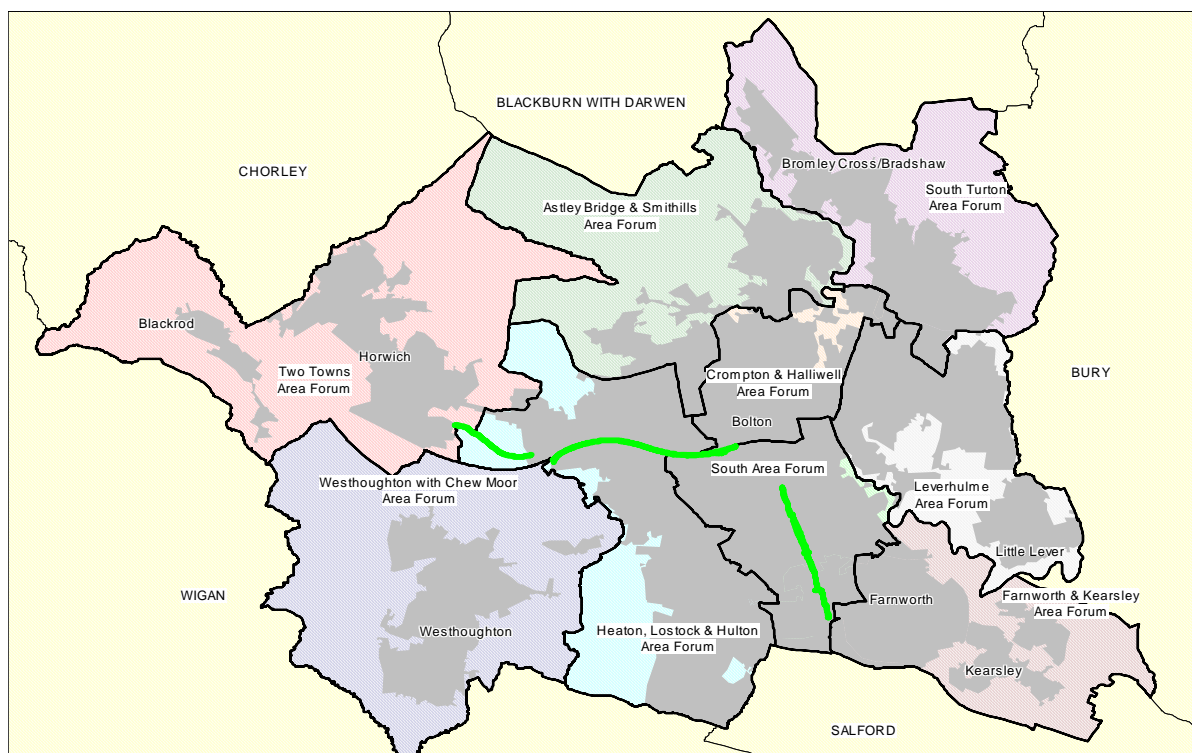
<sup>1</sup> Figures rounded up.

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## Accessibility

It is difficult to assess green corridors against catchment areas due to the very nature and usage of green corridors, often as access to other open spaces. The map below demonstrates the coverage of the existing provision within Bolton. A comprehensive picture of accessibility has been built up through the consultation.

Figure 5.5: Green corridors mapped against settlement areas



Consultation suggests that provision of off-road cycle and bridleway routes in Bolton is insufficient in terms of both quality and quantity. Many user groups consulted feel that further investment needs to be made in the off-road green corridor provision, which is, at present, disconnected. There are currently no circular riding routes that do not take in roads and are longer than a couple of miles. Demand exists for the creation of circular, off-road, bridleway routes.

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Many cyclists report that they often travel outside the Borough to find off-road cycle routes. However, at present, there are a large number of off-road cycle routes being established, such as the Middlebrook Valley route, which would greatly improve the off-road cycleway provision if taken forward. The only issue is that many of these proposed routes are or would be permissive routes rather than adopted cycleways. Landowners will have to follow maintenance agreements in order for the routes to remain useable. BC would have little control over the standard to which the routes are maintained and may have to consider adoption of the routes. BC, in partnership with Bolton Cycle Forum, has recently prepared a new Bolton cycle map that shows all existing on-road and off-road cycle facilities and details future plans for cycling.

During consultation, users expressed a desire for the provision of traffic free cycling routes through Bolton town centre. This would aid links between East and West Bolton and North and South Bolton. Improvements to the provision of the cycleway network through the upgrade of canal towpaths to cycleways, where possible, would also increase the quality and quantity of provision.

Bridleway users express a strong opinion that major roads pose a barrier to access and usage of PROW. There is demand for safe crossing places to be installed at points where bridleways are divided by major roads. An example of where this would improve linkages, (through installation of a Pegasus crossing) is on Chorley Old Road, at the junction with Fleet Street. A number of users also express desire for a safe crossing point on Hall Lane (A6053), which divides the two sections of Moses Gate Country Park. This would also enable increased usage of the bridleways within the Country Park. Usage of the site's bridleways could be further encouraged by the improvement and re-opening of the car park located off Hacken Bridge Road, as horse boxes could then be facilitated.

There is a perception amongst PROW users and residents that there are few PROW routes within Bolton that provide appropriate access for users in wheelchairs or with pushchairs. This is mainly due to the character of PROW which naturally render them inaccessible for wheelchair users and users with pushchairs. However, consultation also identifies that poor maintenance of stiles and lack of accessible information also acts as a barrier. The Middlebrook Valley route, once complete, will be fully accessible. This route is commended by many PROW users.

Obstructive landowners are a common obstacle to access in Bolton. Consultees report a number of incidents of PROW being obstructed through the erection of fencing, the use of barded wire, threatening behaviour from landowners and poorly maintained gates and stiles preventing passage. Concerns were raised regarding new housing estates constructed on previous farmland and the growing number of barn conversions resulting in PROW access becoming blocked or diverted.

There is a need to raise awareness of the bridleway provision throughout Bolton. Queries are often received by the local bridleway association requesting information on the location of riding routes. It is felt that there is a lack of leaflets providing detail about riding routes with exception those at Moses Gate Country Park and Smithills Country Park, which are well publicised on site.



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## **Management**

Responsibility for management and maintenance of Bolton's 220 mile network of PROW lies within highway management. BC is in the process of drafting a public right of way improvement plan (ROWIP) to help support the management and development of the PROW network. Following consultation with key stakeholders and user groups an outline strategy will be produced. This will give direction for a detailed action and implementation plan, which is due to be created by early 2007. Draft objectives for ROW improvements are:

- ❑ To improve the accessibility, environment, attractiveness and safety of the regional centre, town and district centres and employment areas.
- ❑ To improve road and community safety.
- ❑ To minimise environmental damage caused by transport, thereby improving the quality of life and health of the population.
- ❑ To increase the proportion of trips by non car modes.
- ❑ To improve accessibility by ensuring the ROW network meets the needs of all sections of the community and the rural economy, promotes social inclusion and widens choices.
- ❑ To improve links with the rest of the county.
- ❑ To maintain, improve and make best use of the existing ROW, and ensure all schemes offer long term value for money.
- ❑ To assist in improving health, the local economy and recreational opportunities.

A full network survey has recently been carried out and findings will be fed back into the ROWIP.

The 2006 best value performance indicator (BVPI 178) reported that 65% of the PROW network in Bolton is easy to use. BC has a target of improving on the result by 2.5% annually. The main downfall, recognised by BC, is the signage of the restricted by-ways. BC aims to install improved signage in the near future to overcome this barrier to ease of use.

BC is reactive rather than proactive in regards to identifying faults concerning the PROW network. Due to a lack of resources there is a reliance on reports fed back from user groups regarding issues such as blockages and damages. Local users would like to see the development of an improved reporting system that allows for BC to feed back as and when issues have been dealt with.





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## Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for green corridors in Bolton. The threshold for assessing quality has been set at 60%; this is based on Green Flag criteria. Individual site summaries can be found at the end of this section.

Table 5.2: Quality scores for green corridors by analysis area

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60%	above 60%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	71	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	71	-	-	-	-	-	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	71	-	-	-	-	-	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	71	41%	44%	46%	6%	2	-
Leverhulme	71	-	-	-	-	-	-
South	71	31%	46%	58%	27%	3	-
South Turton	71	-	-	-	-	-	-
Two Towns	71	-	-	-	-	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	71	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	71	31%	45%	58%	27%	5	-

The mean score for the Borough sits below the threshold (45%). All of the green corridors visited are assessed are low quality with two sites, the Bolton Hospital route and Middlebrook Valley cycle route having evidence of abandoned cars and one site, Pennington cycle route having evidence of glass during the site visit.

Consultees report that the quality of off-road PROW provision within Bolton is considered to be in need of improvement. A common complaint amongst footpath users is poorly maintained stiles. Many users report difficulty using PROW due to broken stiles or stiles which are obstructed due to overgrowth.

Users report that areas with natural surfacing are prone to flooding and erosion. Although BC has undertaken drainage improvements to upgrade PROW prone to flooding, surface quality has been raised, by users, as an area where remedial work is required. There remains demand for surface improvements on a number of PROW, e.g. TEQ013, TEG 14 and THG 47, through the use of road plainings. Consultation finds that use of footpaths by other users such as horse riders and motorbikes results in the surface being churned up. Greater provision of bridleway provision would help to reduce this.



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Off-road cycle routes within Bolton often finish without leading to a particular destination or area of interest. In order to increase the usage of the off-road cycle network user groups identify the need for the network to be better connected, creating links between trip generators e.g. retail areas, leisure facilities and schools and also large open space sites e.g. Smithills Hall Country Park and The Jumbles.

#### **Value**

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for green corridors in Bolton. A score of 20% or less is considered to indicate that a site has low value.

*Table 5.3: Value scores for green corridors by analysis area*

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 20%	above 20%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	105	40%	54%	69%	29%	-	2
Leverhulme	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
South	105	22%	45%	62%	40%	-	3
South Turton	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
Two Towns	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	105	22%	49%	69%	47%	-	5

All the green corridors score high in terms of value. This is due to the ecological value associated with green corridors as wildlife corridors and also the amenity and health benefits offered by the provision.

#### **Signage**

Currently, users feel that there is a lack of signage of the off-road cycleway network. In particular, route 6 of the National Cycle Network (NCN), is regarded by users as being poorly signed. The cycling strategy identifies this as one of the key areas requiring attention. BC has a future aspiration to provide details about route distances and destinations on signage in order to raise awareness.



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Poor quality signage is also an issue identified by users of off-road bridleways and footpaths throughout Bolton. There is demand for signage to be improved to ease usage of the network. There is desire for footpath numbers to be provided on PROW signage to assist the procedure of reporting problems. Signage quality is felt to be inconsistent across the network and incidents have occurred where landowners remove the signs.

## ***Community involvement***

The Bolton Cycle Forum has been established to improve working relationships between the Highways Service and cycleway users. The Forum meets regularly to discuss cycleway provision, problems and moving forward. During consultation, the Forum was commended and is considered to be successful at ensuring users are involved in the development of the cycle network.

The Greater Manchester districts of Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside have set up a joint local access forum. The Forum comprises representatives of user groups, landowners, local authority elected members and other organisations with an interest in access issues in the countryside and the towns. The Forum considers and advises on access issues affecting the areas; including close involvement in the preparation of the individual local authority ROWIPs and other related issues. The Forum appears to be popular and attendance is high. It is a successful method of user engagement that could be replicated in other areas.



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#### **Summary of site consultation**

This section collates issues raised during consultation regarding provision of green corridors in Bolton. It is not a comprehensive list of sites and only covers sites raised during consultation.

Site	Comments
Disused Railway Line, Haulgh	Consultation with local residents identifies potential to open the disused railway line to provide a formal walking route/cycle route.
The River Tonge, Haulgh	The River Tonge is currently inaccessible through Haulgh. There is demand for the provision of a path following the River past Bradford Park and Tonge Fold Cemetery. This would then provide a green corridor link to other open spaces e.g. Moses Gate Country Park.
Middlebrook Valley route	<p>'Valleys to Alleys' is a three year project, due to end in March 2007. The project is working to create a 4.2 mile, totally off-road, walking and cycling route running from Queens Park to Horwich. The route will enhance the links between the employment centres of Bolton Town Centre and the Middlebrook retail and leisure park.</p> <p>In order to increase community involvement in the project it has been suggested to incorporate artwork/sculptures along the trail. Environmental education will also be involved as the project aims to enhance the environment and raise awareness of local heritage. Local schools are engaged through the provision of an information pack based around conservation. There is currently one 'health walk' programme established at Gilnow, which is proving to be popular and demand has been identified to increase the programme.</p> <p>The project aims to establish a 'friends of' group for the Middlebrook Valley. Local residents have already expressed an interest. Due to the nature of the site the best approach may be to establish a number of small groups responsible for specific sections along the route.</p> <p>Maintenance resource for the site requires consideration. Highways may take on the maintenance responsibility. However, there is potential for funding to be sought through the 'friends of' group/s once established and a possibility to make use of the Croal Irwell Valley voluntary ranger service to patrol the route and police issues such as fly tipping.</p> <p>Currently, on BC's website, there is no promotion regarding the project and the provision of this major route. This is a key opportunity for raising awareness and encouraging use of the route.</p> <p>Consultation finds that a number of walking and cycling groups in Bolton are keen to use the route and commend the work that is being undertaken.</p>
The Bolton Hospital Route	Currently in progress, this route will result in an entirely off-road traffic free route connecting with the regional route 80 near to Bolton University and will travel south through Farnworth connecting to an existing off-road route in Salford.
Chequerbent – Branker Street	<p>This disused Bolton to Leigh railway line is open as a leisure walk and consultation identifies that it is a popular route. Access to the line is via Branker Street. User groups express concern regarding a development proposal that may result in the closure of Branker Street and the loss of this access to the green corridor.</p> <p>Users identify potential for the site to be enhanced through the establishment of an archaeology heritage trail.</p>



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Site	Comments
Smithills Estate	Consultation identifies that a number of existing footpaths are being upgraded to bridleway status to enhance the provision of off-road bridleways.
Longworth Clough	Users of the PROW report that poor drainage results in substantial erosion, which restricts usage.

## ***Green corridor summary***

- In total there is 5<sup>1</sup> hectares of green corridor provision across Bolton. All sites are assessed as low quality but high value.
- There is a shortfall of bridleway and off-road cycling provision across Bolton. Footpath provision is generally good in terms of quantity and the need to investigate the feasibility of upgrading PROW to cater for more uses was identified.
- Consultation suggests that provision of off-road cycle and bridleway routes in Bolton is insufficient in terms of both quality and quantity.
- BC is reactive rather than proactive in regards to identifying faults concerning the PROW network. There is a reliance on reports fed back from user groups regarding issues such as blockages and damages. Local users would like to see the development of an improved reporting system that allows for BC to feed back as and when issues have been dealt with.
- The key quality issues, identified through user consultation, regarding PROW relate to overgrown or blocked footpaths, poor way marking/signage, poor drainage and broken or difficult stiles/gates.

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## PART 6: AMENITY GREENSPACE

### Introduction

The typology of amenity greenspace, as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide includes sites that offer 'opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas' are classed as amenity greenspace. These include informal recreation spaces, housing green spaces, village greens and other incidental space.'

### Context

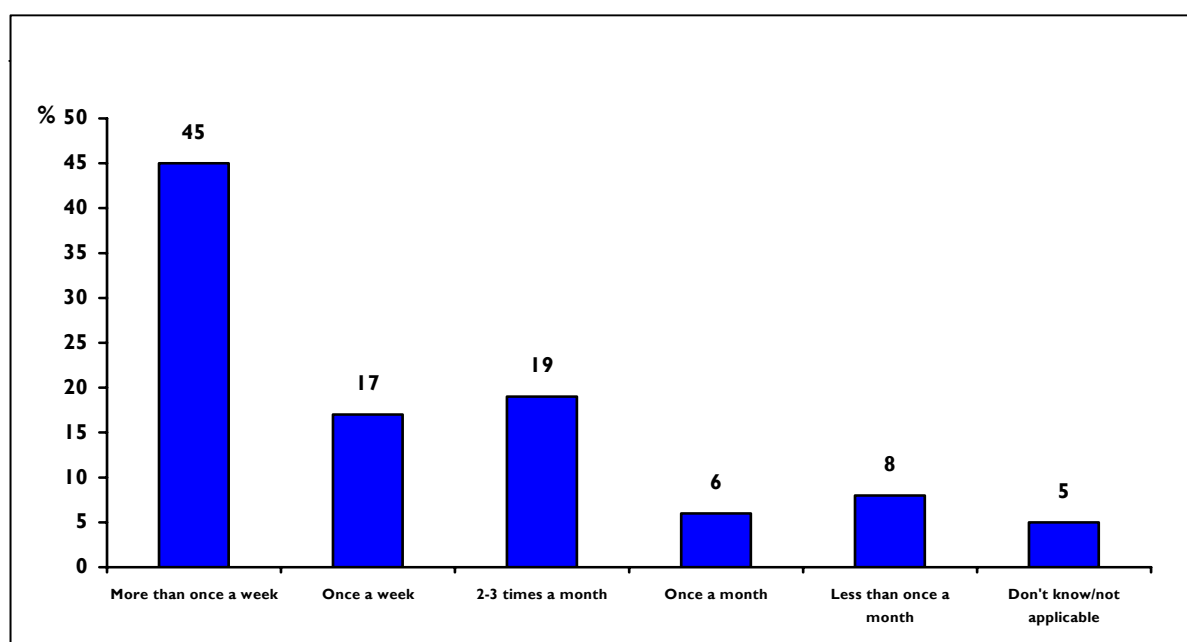
This section outlines findings from the survey of residents in relation to their use of and attitudes towards the provision of grassed areas on housing estates in Bolton. It provides a context for the subsequent sections, which address the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision.

Results are provided for the descriptions used in the survey itself.

### Usage

Just over a tenth (11%) have used a grassed area on a housing estate in the previous 12 months. Of these nearly two thirds (62%) use grassed areas on housing estates once a week or more. This may reflect the nature of this typology as they would predominantly be used by those in close proximity. This is further reinforced by the fact that just 14% visit grassed areas on a housing estate once a month or less often.

Figure 6.1: Frequency of usage of grassed area on housing estate in the previous 12 months

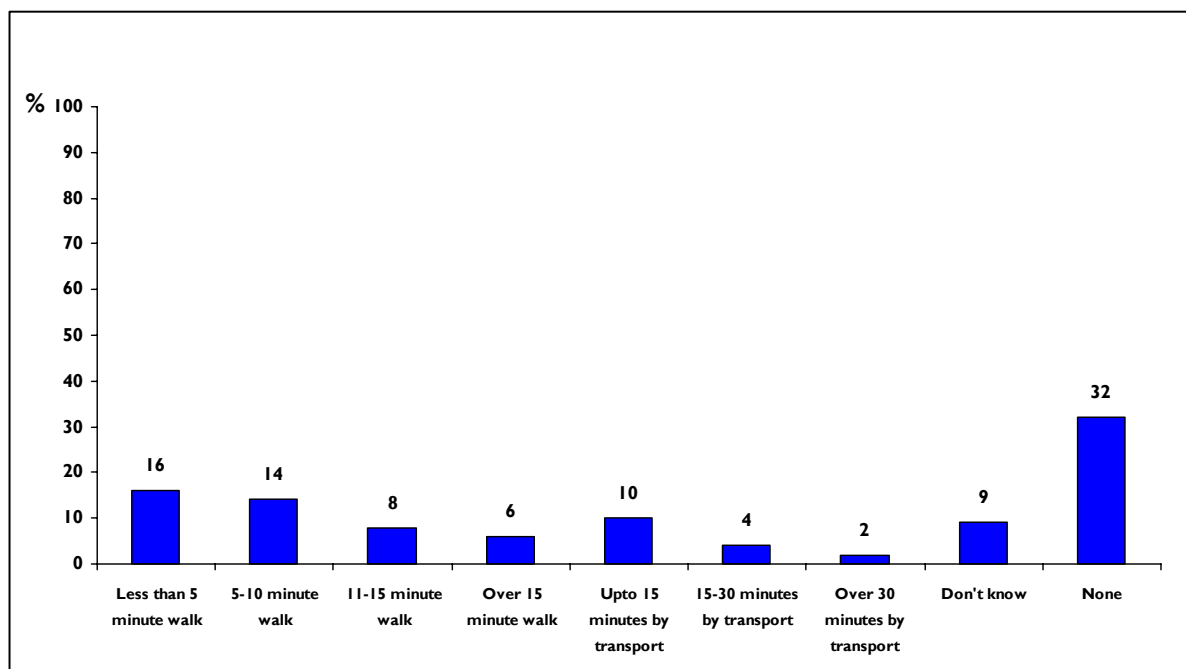


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## Travel time

Although grassed areas on a housing estate are generally perceived to be local provision, less than two fifths (38%) of residents are prepared to walk for up to 15 minutes to access such provision. A sizeable proportion (32%) records no time for travel. Whilst overall sample numbers are low, a large proportion of Blackrod residents (70%) records no time.

Figure 6.2: Time prepared to travel to reach a grassed area on housing estate

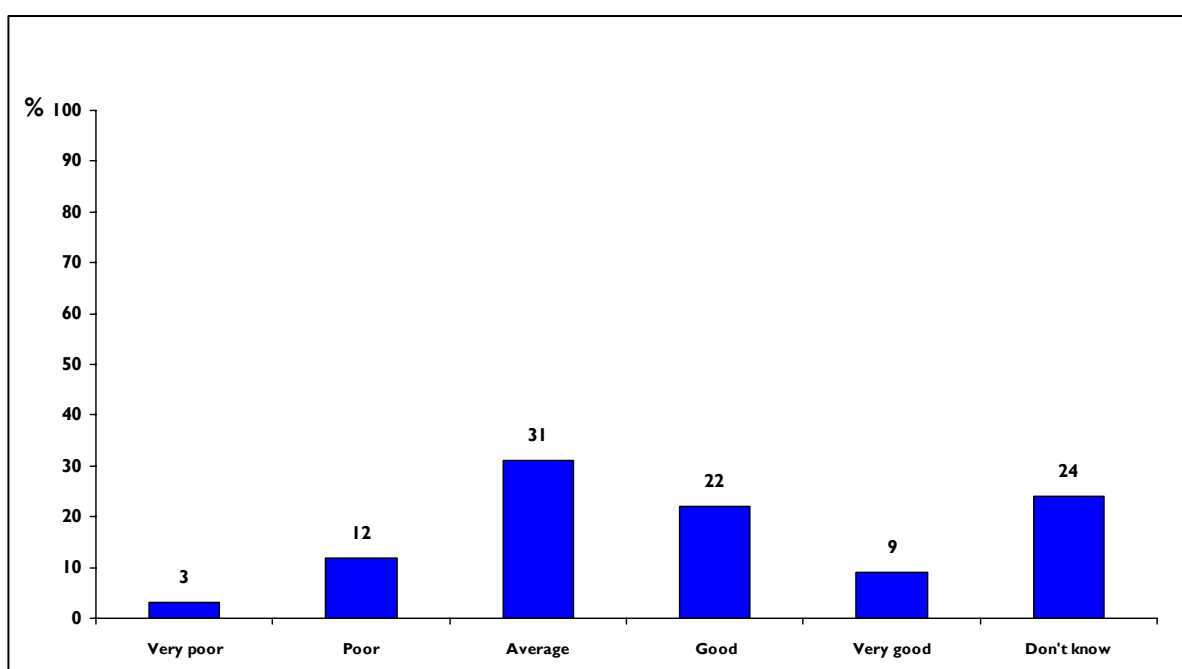


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## Quality of provision

Nearly a third (31%) of residents perceive the quality of grassed areas on a housing estate as good or very good as opposed to poor or very poor (15%). The proportion rating as good or very good is significantly higher in Horwich (70%) with only 3% of residents rating it as poor in this area. Over a quarter (27%) of residents in Westhoughton consider grassed areas on housing estates to be poor or very poor. There is also nearly a quarter of residents (24%) who are unable to comment reflecting low levels of use by a significant proportion.

Figure 6.3: Quality of grassed area on housing estate





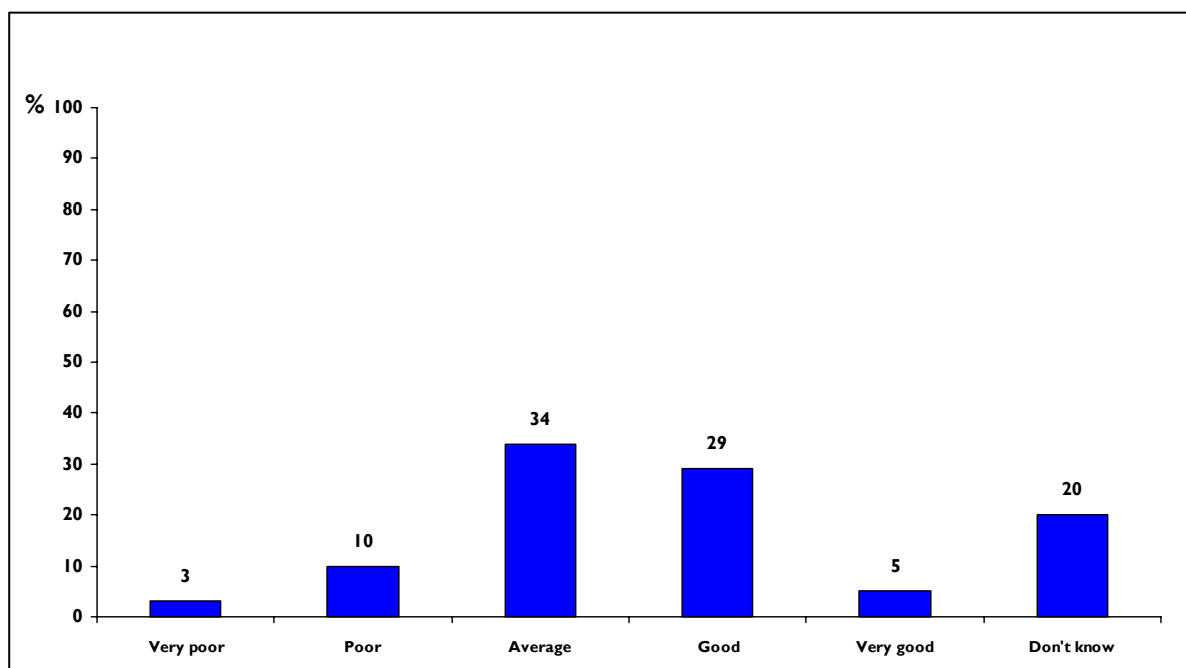
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## Availability

Just over a third (34%) of residents rate the availability of grassed areas on housing estates as good or very good compared to just 13% as poor or very poor. A fifth are however, unable to comment again reflecting overall levels of usage. A significantly higher percentage (68%) in Horwich view the availability of such sites as good to some degree compared to the rest of Bolton.

Figure 6.4: Availability of grassed area on housing estate



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## Key issues

### *Current provision*

There are 134 amenity greenspace sites totalling 279<sup>1</sup>T hectares of amenity greenspace in Bolton. However, there are many more sites, identified during consultation, which residents associate with, and identify as, amenity greenspaces. These are included within the assessment of key issues even though these sites may not have received a site visit as amenity greenspaces.

*Table 6.1: Distribution of amenity greenspace sites by analysis area*

Analysis area	Amenity greenspaces	
	number	Size(ha)
Astley Bridge and Smithills	12	12.84
Crompton and Halliwell	9	13
Farnworth and Kearsley	23	52.74
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	15	36.02
Leverhulme	20	59.61
South	13	14.24
South Turton	12	36.36
Two Towns	10	21.50
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	20	32.85
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>279.19</b>

### *Accessibility*

The effective catchments of amenity greenspaces has been identified using data from the street survey (see Figure 6.2) and guidance issued by the Greater London Authority (GLA)<sup>2</sup>. The following catchments are used to identify the coverage of current provision:

- Borough-wide significance (site more than 10ha) – 1,600 metres.
- Settlement significance (site between 1ha and 10ha) – 900 metres.
- Neighbourhood significance (site between 0.66ha and 1ha) – 600 metres.
- Local significance (site up to 0.66ha ) – 120 metres.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures rounded up

<sup>2</sup> Greater London Authority (2002): Guide to preparing open space strategies



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Figure 6.5: Amenity greenspace sites mapped against settlement areas with catchment applied

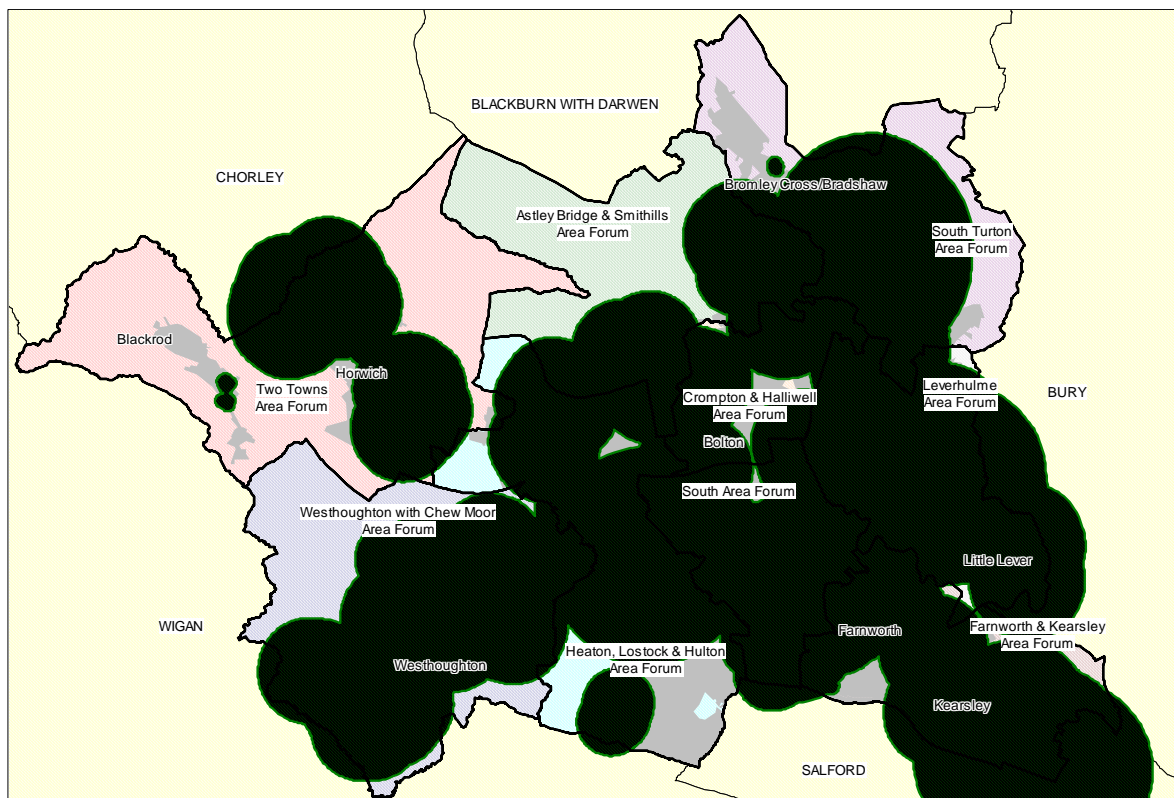


Table 6.2: Gaps in provision of amenity greenspace across Bolton

Analysis area	Catchment gaps
Astley Bridge and Smithills	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap
Crompton and Halliwell	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap
Farnworth and Kearsley	<input type="checkbox"/> South Farnworth
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	<input type="checkbox"/> South and East of Over Hulton (mainly agricultural land)
Leverhulme	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap
South	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap
South Turton	<input type="checkbox"/> Egerton
Two Towns	<input type="checkbox"/> Blackrod <input type="checkbox"/> Minor catchment gap west of Horwich
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap

Catchment mapping based on all current provision shows that Bolton is well catered for in terms of accessible amenity open space provision with only a few gaps identified. The most significant gaps are in Blackrod and Egerton.

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Consultation identifies a perceived lack of amenity greenspace in the Flower Estate. The main focal point, as the only greenspace within the estate, is the roundabout. Children play on it, which is a concern to residents due to the hazardous nature of the open space. This is also where most local residents walk their dogs resulting in a continuous problem with dog foul. Mapping shows that the closest amenity greenspace to the estate is Harper Green Playing Fields. Site assessment indicate that this site is more like a sports ground than an informal recreational space and therefore it would not meet the need for children's play or for an area for dog walkers. Although there is no other amenity greenspace in close proximity of the estate catchment mapping shows that the area is adequately covered in terms of accessible provision.

A common concern highlighted throughout the Borough is the lack of amenity greenspace offering play opportunities, e.g., for the playing of informal ball games. This is a particular issue on Johnson Fold Estate where parents report that there is a lack of open space available for their children to play safely. The closest equipped play area is located at Moss Bank Park, which is felt to be far away for children to access safely without parental supervision.

Although there is demand across the Borough for the functionality of amenity greenspaces to be enhanced, e.g. through provision of informal play opportunities, litterbins and seating provision, there is differing and conflicting opinion amongst residents. In some areas within the Borough the playing of ball games on amenity greenspaces is felt, by local residents, to be inappropriate. In areas such as the Brightmet Estate amenity greenspaces have been designed in a way that discourages use by young people, e.g. through the planting of trees so that the playing of ball games is not possible. Residents in this area suggest that particular sites are designed to offer informal play space to reduce the pressure on amenity greenspace. A possible area identified by residents is the dis-used play area on Silchester Way, which no-longer has equipment.



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## Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for amenity greenspaces in Bolton. The threshold for assessing quality has been set at 60%; this is based on Green Flag criteria. Individual site summaries can be found at the end of this section.

Table 6.3: Quality scores for amenity greenspace sites by analysis area

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60%	above 60%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	86	26%	48%	66%	40%	10	2
Crompton and Halliwell	86	28%	47%	60%	32%	8	1
Farnworth and Kearsley	86	27%	39%	59%	32%	23	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	86	26%	42%	50%	24%	15	-
Leverhulme	86	27%	44%	59%	32%	20	-
South	86	26%	43%	56%	31%	13	-
South Turton	86	33%	48%	68%	35%	10	2
Two Towns	86	40%	52%	59%	20%	10	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	86	26%	46%	76%	50%	17	3
<b>BOLTON</b>	86	26%	45%	76%	50%	126	8

Over two thirds (94%) of amenity greenspace has been assessed as poor quality. Site assessments note that seating provision will be of benefit/appropriate to 25 of the 130 amenity greenspaces currently without any.

Amenity greenspaces are popular sites for recreational dog walking. The associated issue of dog foul is a common concern amongst residents and other users of such space. Site assessments note that the provision of dog foul bins will be of benefit at 43% of the amenity greenspaces visited that do not currently have them. This indicates that dog foul was evident at these sites during assessment. However, the resource implications of providing dog foul bins are significant, as they require regular emptying, particularly in summer. As dog waste is no longer considered hazardous waste it can now be disposed off in ordinary litterbins. BC is currently in the process of phasing out the provision of dog foul bins and replacing them with dual use bins. Awareness of this could be raised to encourage responsible behaviour by dog owners. BC also operates an environmental education and enforcement scheme covering the Borough with enforcement officers being responsible for issuing fixed penalty notices. However, consultation suggests that greater awareness of the wardens and their powers is required.



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Residents across the Borough also express concern regarding the amount of litter and fly tipping on amenity open spaces. Site assessments note a number of amenity greenspaces suffering from litter or dumping at the time of the visit and the assessments highlight the impact this has on the visual quality of the sites. In terms of tackling the issue of litter on amenity greenspaces there is demand for greater litterbin provision and litter collection. Site assessments highlight that, out of 85 amenity greenspaces currently without litterbins, the provision of bins would be beneficial at 39% of these, for example site KKP ref 471, rear of Cartmel Crescent.

Consultation highlights that the impression of many residents is that amenity greenspaces suffer from lack of grounds maintenance, which creates a negative visual image, and this, in turn, exacerbates the problem of fly tipping and dumping at these sites, for example site KKP ref 344, Ferncrest Wigan Road/Beaumont Road.

## Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for amenity greenspaces in Bolton. A score of 10% or less is considered to indicate that a site has low value. This is lower than other typologies as the scoring system tends to discriminate slightly against amenity greenspaces. A list of low value sites and an indication of their position relative to the threshold can be found in Appendix I.

Table 6.4: Value scores for amenity greenspaces by analysis area

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 10%	above 10%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	110	20%	32%	45%	25%	-	12
Crompton and Halliwell	110	19%	38%	49%	30%	1	8
Farnworth and Kearsley	110	5%	18%	30%	25%	16	7
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	110	5%	29%	52%	46%	2	13
Leverhulme	110	6%	33%	55%	48%	2	18
South	110	6%	28%	49%	43%	3	10
South Turton	110	14%	33%	43%	29%	1	11
Two Towns	110	8%	24%	44%	35%	3	7
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	110	5%	31%	55%	50%	6	14
<b>BOLTON</b>	110	5%	29%	55%	51%	34	100



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Although 94% of the sites are identified as low quality over 75% are assessed as high value with the mean score for the Borough sitting above the value threshold. Site assessments recognise the landscape and ecological/biodiversity value, social inclusion and health benefits and the sense of place that that amenity greenspaces offer.

## ***Community involvement***

Bolton@Home has engaged residents in ensuring its estates are good quality through the establishment of a network of trained resident green inspectors. The inspectors undertake monthly inspections of their 'patch', looking at issues such as fly tipping and litter, graffiti and dog fouling. Any issues are noted down and fed back to the relevant housing officer to act upon. Issues most often identified by the inspectors include litter, grass cutting and dog foul.

## ***Security***

In common with other open spaces in Bolton, consultation indicates that amenity greenspace suffers from illegal use of mini-motorbikes and/or quad bikes. By their nature, amenity greenspaces, particularly informal recreation areas, tend to be open and have little or no controls to prevent illegal use. Site assessments noted evidence of illegal quad/motorbike use at six amenity greenspace sites and just under half (46%) of all sites have little or no access controls.

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## *Summary of site consultation*

This section collates issues raised during consultation regarding provision of amenity greenspace in Bolton. This is presented alongside site visit quality and value scores for comparison. It is not a comprehensive list of sites and only covers sites raised during consultation.

Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Village Green, Thistleton Road	<b>50%</b>	<b>21%</b>	This site is a valuable visual amenity to the local residents. There is possibility that the site could be lost to development. Although the nearby playing fields would be upgraded as part of the development, residents living adjacent to the amenity greenspace are of the opinion that this is not adequate in terms of compensation for the visual amenity that would be lost.
Ivy Road, West of.	<b>26%</b>	<b>40%</b>	Both consultation and site assessment highlight that there is potential to enhance the site and increase its usage as an amenity greenspace. The site currently suffers from litter and vandalism and has no footpaths. Local residents believe that provision of internal footpaths would improve the access of the site and encourage greater usage. Seating and litter bins would also enhance the quality of the site.
Gloster Street, Haulgh	<b>27%</b>	<b>20%</b>	There is an area of landscaped amenity open space, which currently has a 'use for ball games are not permitted' sign erected. Due to the perceived lack of provision for children and young people in the Haulgh area, local residents would like the space to become functional. This may be achieved simply through the lifting of the ball game restriction and through installation of seating to encourage use.
Edith Street, Farnworth	<b>36%</b>	<b>19%</b>	Local residents express concern regarding the lack of management of this open space.  The land is an ex-council storage/depot area which was cleared and enhanced through the erection of new fencing, levelling the area and laying grass. Residents expected the area to become an informal recreation space for them, particularly children. However, consultation suggests that, following the improvements undertaken by BC, maintenance of the site ceased and the site became neglected. There is demand from local residents for greater management of the site and improved grounds maintenance to enhance the quality and encourage greater usage as an amenity greenspace.

The sites below have been raised during consultation as potential amenity greenspaces but are not currently included within the open spaces database and therefore are not included in any calculations.





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Site	Comments
Back Dorset Street, Haulgh	Although this area is heavily neglected the footpath running through is a well used link to the town centre. Consultation identifies this site to be a prime location for improvement. Currently safety perception is poor due to regular anti-social behaviour and the seclusion of the site. Local residents would like to see the site becoming more formal through the clearing of litter and fly tipping and attractive landscaping.
Watermillock Gardens, Astley Bridge	The square amenity greenspace situated within the centre of Watermillock Gardens has, in the past, had seating provision. This provided a purpose for local residents to use the site. However, the seating also attracted congregation of young people and has since been removed.  Consultation indicates that the overgrown trees on the site obscures the view from local resident housing, decreasing the natural surveillance of the site.

### ***Amenity greenspace summary***

- ❑ There are 134 amenity greenspace sites totalling 279<sup>1</sup> hectares of amenity greenspace in Bolton. Of those, 8 sites are identified as high quality and 126 sites identified as low quality. In terms of value, 100 sites are identified as high value and 34 sites are identified as low value.
- ❑ Catchment mapping based on all current provision shows that Bolton is well catered for in terms of accessible amenity open space provision with only a few gaps identified. The most significant gaps are in Blackrod and Egerton.
- ❑ A common concern highlighted throughout the Borough is the lack of amenity greenspace offering play opportunities, e.g. for the playing of informal ball games. There is demand across the Borough for the functionality of amenity greenspaces, where appropriate, to be enhanced, e.g. through provision of informal play opportunities, litterbins and seating provision.
- ❑ Consultation highlights that residents believe amenity greenspaces suffer from lack of grounds maintenance, which creates a negative visual image, and this, in turn, exacerbates the problem of fly tipping and dumping at these sites.



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## PART 7: ALLOTMENTS, COMMUNITY GARDENS AND CITY FARMS

### Introduction

The typology of allotments, community gardens and city farms, as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide includes sites, which provide ‘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 interaction.’

### Context

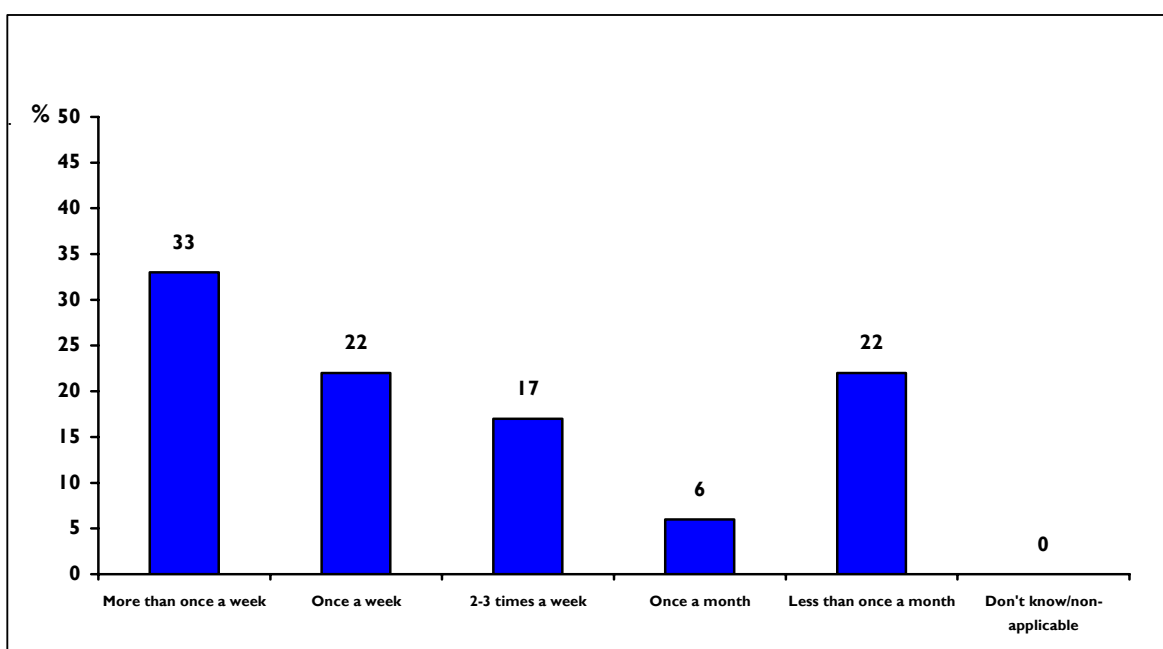
This section outlines findings from the survey of residents in relation to their use of and attitudes towards the provision of allotments in Bolton. It provides a context for the subsequent sections, which address the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision.

Results are provided for the descriptions used in the survey itself.

### Usage

In the previous 12 months only a very small number of residents have visited an allotment (2%). Of the residents who visited allotments over half (55%) do so once a week or more. This high percentage reflects the nature of the typology as plot owners regularly check their crop. However there is also another type of user who visit less than once a month (22%).

Figure 7.1: Frequency of usage of allotments in the previous 12 months

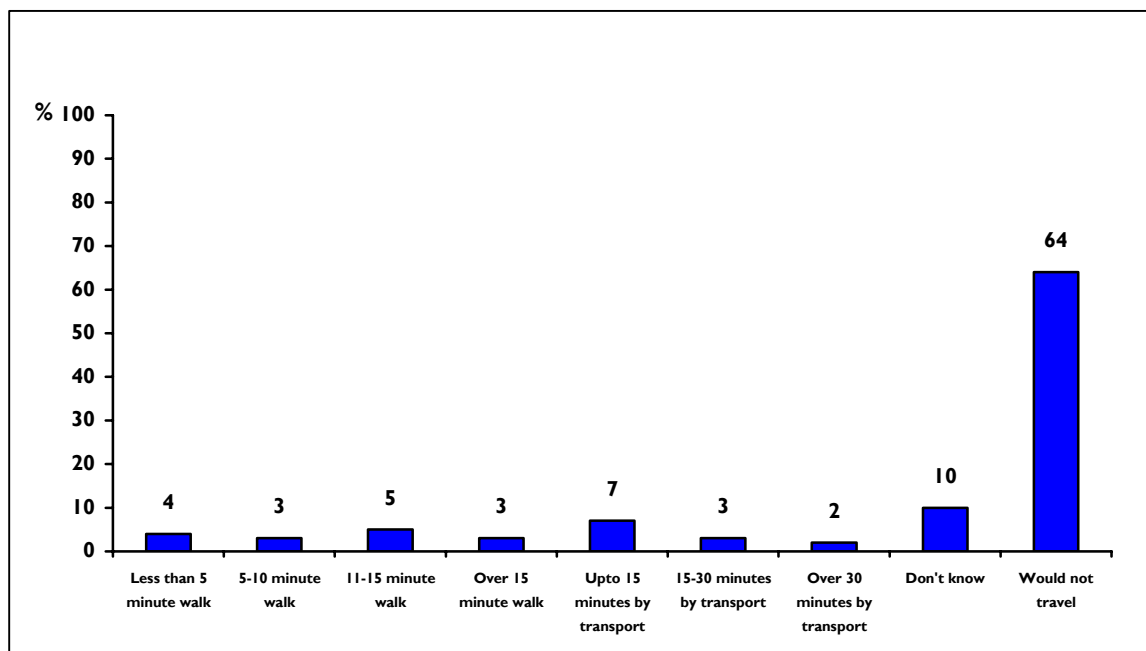


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## Travel time

Nearly three quarters (74%) of residents don't know or would not travel to this typology reflecting the low levels of use.

Figure 7.2: Time prepared to travel to access an allotment



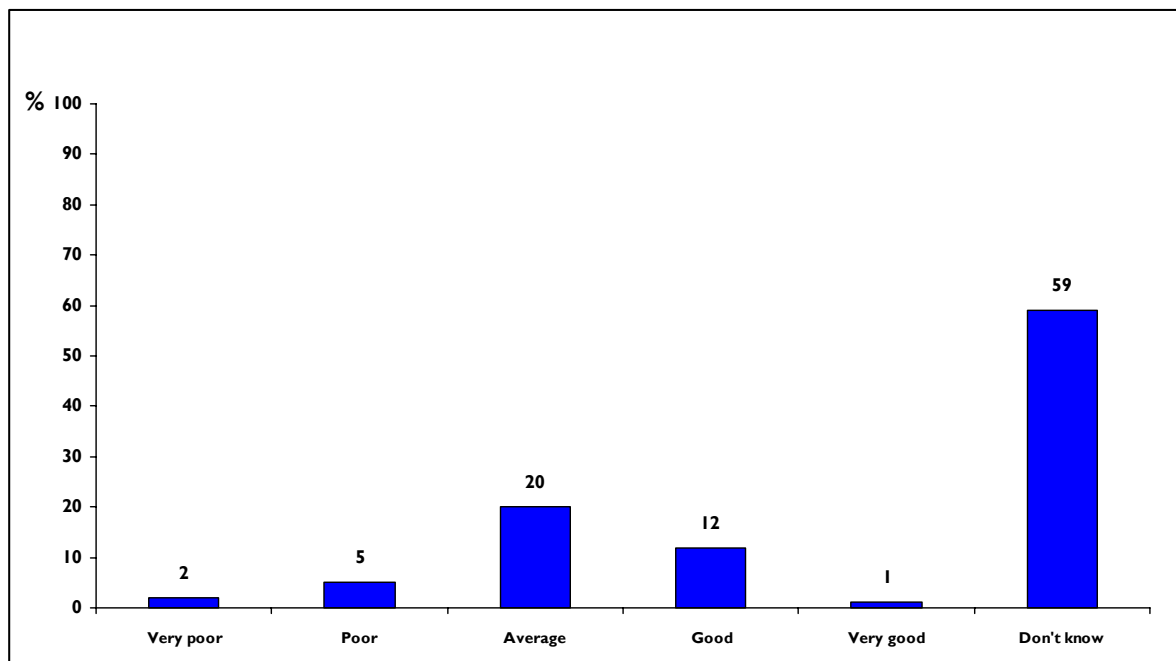
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## **Quality of provision**

Over two thirds (68%) are unable to rate the quality of provision of allotments. A higher proportion of residents (11%) rate quality as good or very good than those who rate it as poor or very poor (4%). A further 18% rate the quality as average.

Figure 7.3: Quality of provision of allotments

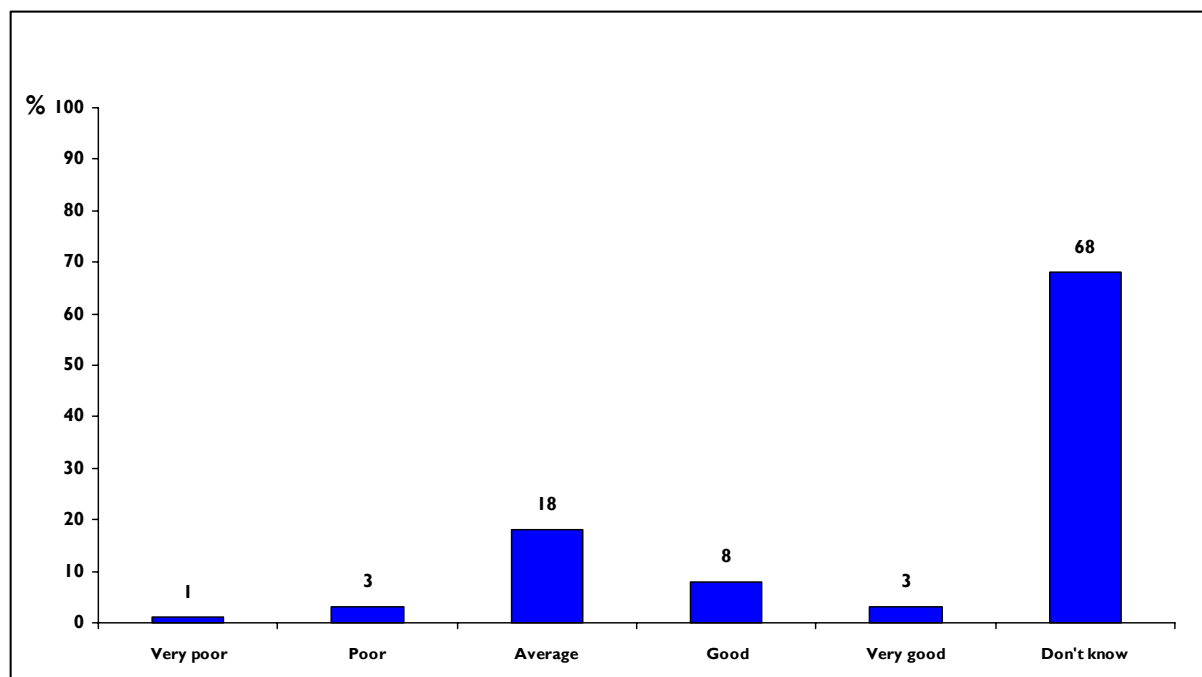


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## Availability

Again, indicative of the low levels of use of this typology a significant proportion of respondents (59%) are unable to rate the availability of allotments. Around one in eight (12%) rate the availability as good with the figure in the areas of Bolton town centre and Tonge Fold slightly higher (18%).

Figure 7.4: Availability of allotments



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## Key issues

### *Current provision*

There are 44 sites classified as an allotment in Bolton equating to 35<sup>1</sup> hectares.

*Table 7.1: Distribution of allotment sites by analysis area*

Analysis area	Allotments	
	number	Size(ha)
Astley Bridge and Smithills	7	11.04
Crompton and Halliwell	6	5.01
Farnworth and Kearsley	4	1.33
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	2	2.09
Leverhulme	5	1.95
South	6	6.50
South Turton	2	2.01
Two Towns	8	4.41
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	4	0.24
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>34.63</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Figures rounded up



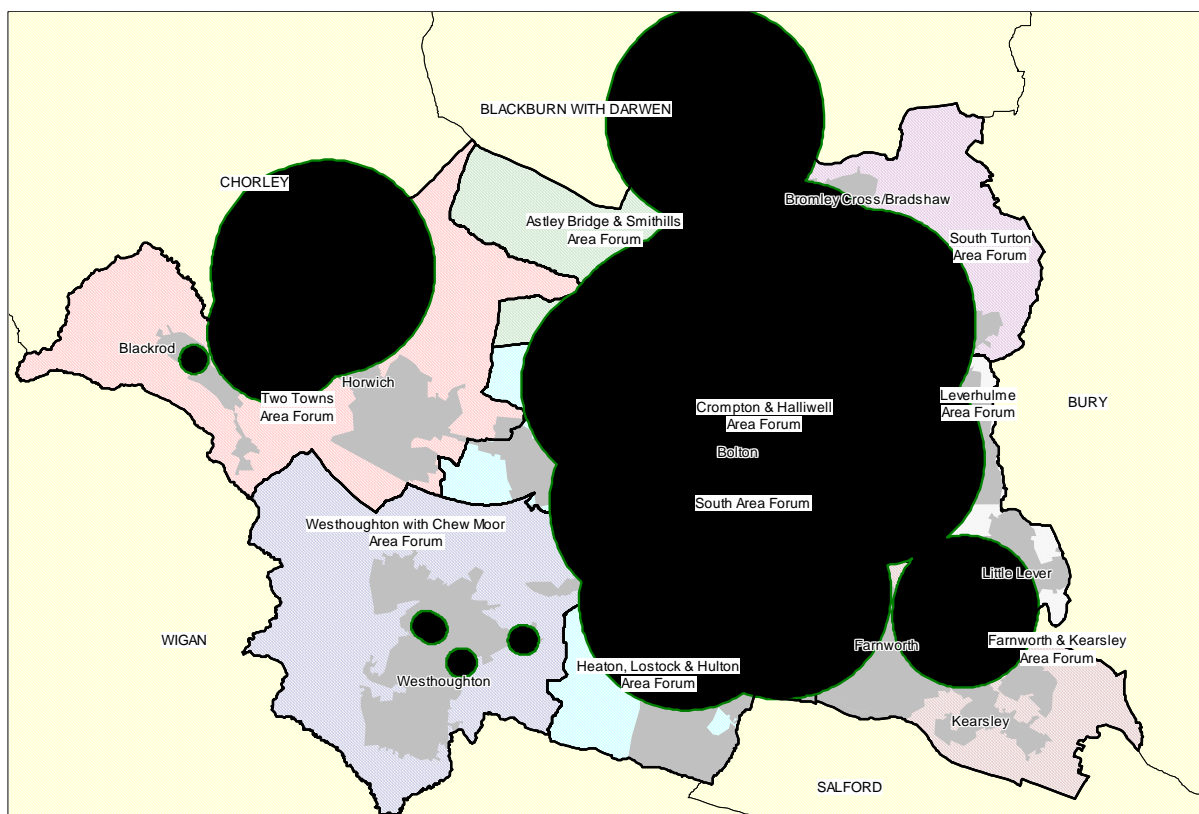
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## Accessibility

The effective catchments of allotments has been identified using data from the street survey (see Figure 7.2) and guidance issued by the Greater London Authority (GLA)<sup>3</sup>. The following catchments are used to identify the coverage of current provision:

- ❑ Borough-wide significance (site more than 10ha) – 3,200 metres.
- ❑ Settlement significance (site between 1ha and 10ha) – 1,800 metres.
- ❑ Neighbourhood significance (site between 0.66ha and 1ha) – 1,200 metres.
- ❑ Local significance (site up to 0.66ha) – 240 metres.

Figure 7.5: Allotment sites mapped against settlement areas with catchments applied



<sup>3</sup> Greater London Authority (2002): Guide to preparing open space strategies

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Table 7.2: Gaps in provision of allotments across Bolton

Analysis area	Catchment gaps
Astley Bridge and Smithills	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap
Crompton and Halliwell	<input type="checkbox"/> No gap identified
Farnworth and Kearsley	<input type="checkbox"/> Farnworth <input type="checkbox"/> Kearsley
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	<input type="checkbox"/> South of analysis area
Leverhulme	<input type="checkbox"/> East of analysis area
South	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap
South Turton	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor catchment gaps to the east of the analysis area
Two Towns	<input type="checkbox"/> South of Howrich <input type="checkbox"/> Blackrod
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	<input type="checkbox"/> Significant catchment gap in Westhoughton <input type="checkbox"/> Significant catchment gap in Chew Moor <input type="checkbox"/> Hunger Hill

Catchment mapping identifies significant catchment gaps to the west of the Borough, particularly in Horwich and Westhoughton. The central analysis areas are adequately provided for in terms of accessible allotment provision based on mapping. However, the majority of allotment sites are currently operating at almost 100% capacity. The combined allotment waiting list, across the Borough, of 258 demonstrates that the high demand for allotments in Bolton is not currently being met by provision. Consultation identifies call for greater provision, particularly in Farnworth, Horwich, Little Lever and Kearsley where there is a combined waiting list of 93. Catchment mapping demonstrates catchment gaps in all of these four areas.

BC has a selection of accessible plots for users with limited mobility. It is keen to provide raised beds as and when the need arises from users and will support any community groups in the establishment of raised beds on plots that they rent. There are a number of raised beds currently in use.

There is an area of neglected and unused land located on Selkirk Road. Consultation identifies potential for the area to be brought back into use as allotments. There is demand for allotment provision in the area expressed through the combined waiting list of 36 for existing sites in the local area (Moss Lea, Harpers Lane, Shepherd Cross Street and Florence Avenue). If brought back into use as allotment provision this open space has capacity to absorb a proportion of the current local demand for plots.





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There is a perceived lack of allotment provision in the Horwich and Blackrod ward. There are currently six sites serving the areas, which have a combined waiting list of 55. Along with current provision not meeting waiting list demand catchment mapping also demonstrates that there are significant gaps in accessible provision to the south of Horwich and in Blackrod.

#### ***Management***

Council allotment management currently lies within BC Environmental Services. A specific allotment officer oversees the running and maintenance of the sites and deals with the allotment waiting list and plot allocations. A team of two grounds maintenance officers undertake clearance of overgrown plots and maintain the main pathways within allotment sites along with general grounds maintenance tasks.

There is currently no written allotment strategy and there are no plans to draft one in the near future. This results in a lack of strategic management of allotments in terms of priorities for work. For example, consultation found that work such as replacing fencing is not undertaken effectively as it carried out in stages rather than all at the same time. This can leave some sites vulnerable to theft and vandalism.

An effective management system is in place to ensure that any malcultivation issues are identified effectively. Site secretaries conduct regular inspections of their sites which are incorporated into a monthly report provided to the BC allotment officer. Any plots that are reported as becoming or being overgrown due to non-cultivation are identified and issued with a malcultivation notice from the allotment officer. The tenant is given a period of time in which to improve the condition of the plot and if no improvement is made, without a valid reason, the tenancy is terminated and the plot re-allocated.

A common issue, raised through consultation, is the management of vacant plots and waiting lists. On 16 sites with vacant plots there is also a current waiting list. This issue arises partly due to a number of vacant plots being overgrown and awaiting clearance by BC. At Crown Lane allotments, Horwich, there are seven vacant plots, all awaiting clearance by BC. These vacant plots are not therefore being utilised to meet the waiting list demand (there is a waiting list of 24). Tonge Moor Road allotments has five vacant plots and Rawlyn Road have seven vacant plots that are also awaiting clearance by BC before being re-let to those on the waiting lists. Officer consultation highlights that potential plot holders opt to remain on a waiting list until a preferred plot becomes vacant rather than taking on vacant plots in unfavourable condition. Therefore, although there is a large resource requirement, BC endeavours to restore vacant plots to a cultivatable condition before re-allocating them. There is potential for BC to trial the offering of an incentive to potential users to encourage take up of vacant plots in unfavourable condition. For example, BC could propose that, if a new tenant takes on a vacant plot, which requires remedial work, and undertakes the necessary improvements, in return BC will offer a year's free rent. If successful the impact on BC resources would be reduced and the grounds maintenance team will have greater capacity to focus on issues such as improving main path surfaces and perimeter fencing.



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To tackle the problem of insufficient resource, a possibility for BC is to move towards self-management of allotments. Currently none of the established allotment societies hold a lease over any sites. Moving towards self-management will reduce BMDC management responsibilities, e.g. tenant management. It will also allow associations to obtain external funding and feel secure enough, if given a long term lease of at least 5-10 years, to invest in the relevant sites.

#### Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for allotments in Bolton. The threshold for assessing quality has been set at 60%; this is based on Green Flag criteria. Individual site summaries can be found at the end of this section.

Table 7.3: Quality scores for allotment sites by analysis area

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60%	above 60%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	91	40%	59%	69%	30%	3	4
Crompton and Halliwell	91	19%	52%	71%	53%	4	2
Farnworth and Kearsley	91	41%	45%	54%	13%	4	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	91	65%	66%	67%	2%	-	2
Leverhulme	91	0%	42%	66%	66%	3	2
South	91	43%	55%	64%	21%	3	3
South Turton	91	38%	42%	46%	8%	2	-
Two Towns	91	34%	53%	66%	32%	4	4
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	91	42%	61%	78%	36%	2	2
<b>BOLTON</b>	91	0%	53%	78%	78%	25	19

Over half (57%) of allotment provision in the Borough has been assessed as poor quality, with a mean score of 53%. This, in part, is due to poor quality paths within sites and poor quality boundary fencing. Consultation also identifies demand for improvement of these particular features.



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The majority of allotment sites have access to toilet facilities, with either on-site permanent facilities or temporary chemical toilets provided between March and September. Consultation has identified the need for year round provision on all sites, particularly at Tonge Moor as this would benefit both ploholders and the regular visits from schoolchildren. User consultation identifies strong demand for the provision of permanent toilet facilities on all allotment sites. This is recognised by BC and there is an aspiration to install permanent toilet facilities at two allotment sites per year, as funding allows. There are 13 allotment sites, four of which (Cemetery Road, Kearsley; Crown Lane, Horwich; Tippings Road and Willows Mercadale) are large sites of 10 or more plots, which currently do not have any form of toilet provision.

Currently there are only seven allotment sites without a water supply. Although there is demand for a water supply at every site it is noted that none of these sites are bigger than five plots and that three sites have plots that are being used as garage/garden extensions rather than being cultivated. This indicates that providing a water supply at these sites does not need to be a priority.

User consultation highlights that fly tipping is an issue impacting on a number of sites across the Borough, particularly around site entrances. Some of this results from tenant wastage, the unsightly nature of which attracts further dumping of rubbish. There is a need to raise the awareness, amongst plot holders, of the free skip service offered by BC to assist users in the disposal of allotment waste. This may go some way to reduce the problem of fly tipping around the sites. However, consultation suggests there is a need for penalty warning signs and greater enforcement to tackle the issue.



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## Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for allotments in Bolton. A score of 20% or less is considered to indicate that a site has low value. A full list of low value sites and an indication of their position relative to the threshold can be found in Appendix I.

Table 7.4: Value scores for allotment sites by analysis area

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 20%	above 20%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	115	15%	26%	34%	19%	1	6
Crompton and Halliwell	115	4%	25%	43%	38%	2	4
Farnworth and Kearsley	115	12%	22%	30%	18%	2	2
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	115	28%	30%	33%	5%	-	2
Leverhulme	115	3%	21%	35%	31%	2	3
South	115	19%	29%	35%	16%	1	5
South Turton	115	11%	20%	28%	17%	1	1
Two Towns	115	10%	24%	34%	23%	2	6
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	115	23%	27%	30%	7%	-	4
<b>BOLTON</b>	115	3%	25%	43%	39%	11	33

Although 57% of allotment sites scored poorly on quality, 75% have been assessed as high value, with the average value score across the Borough being above the value threshold (25%). This is due to the associated social inclusion and health benefits of allotments and also the amenity benefits and sense of place offered by the provision.

## Community involvement

There is high community involvement in allotments in Bolton. Over 14 different community groups and projects utilise allotment sites for the health, social and well being benefits.

Respect Charity runs 'the going back to my roots' project in Bolton to engage with Bolton's asylum seekers, refugees communities and hard to reach individuals/groups. The project, based at Sheperd Cross Street allotments, runs after school and weekend activities to provide horticultural skills to children through the growing of their own cultural vegetables and spices. The group is now looking at approximately 100 children in the near future who will use the plot and learn more about cultural foods.



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Lancashire Wildlife Trust runs allotment projects on a number of sites across Bolton offering environmental education and healthy eating opportunities. Community groups, including young people and people with disabilities, have successfully been engaged at Rawlyn Road allotments (Heaton), Shepherds Cross Street allotments (Halliwell), Tonge Moor Road allotments (Hall'ith Wood) and Lever Park Avenue allotments (Horwich). The high level of enthusiastic community participation has led to the trust being able to establish independent allotment user groups which have gone on to sustain themselves. The Trust frequently uses the plot at Tonge Moor allotments to provide educational training for adults with learning difficulties.

The Bolton Gathering of Organic Growers is a successful network of community organic food initiative groups working on allotment plots throughout Bolton. The project targets members of the community who are disadvantaged and/or hard to reach and encourages the use of allotment provision to provide social and health benefits.

#### **Security**

One of the key issues highlighted during user consultation is the security of allotment sites. This is also the most common issue raised at the monthly secretary forum held by Bolton Allotment Council. Although each site is locked with key access only for tenants, vandalism is a common occurrence among sites. This is due to a number of sites having incomplete or poor quality fencing e.g. Harpers Lane (partially fenced), Tonge Moor (fencing replacement required), Florence Avenue (poor quality fencing) and Sapling Road (fencing replacement required). BC has identified two sites, which currently have no fencing, and 20 sites as having fencing in need of improvement in terms of providing security. Although many sites are fenced the common type of fencing is mesh. Users do not consider this type of fencing to be an adequate barrier to prevent vandalism and burglary. To combat this problem users, would like to see mesh fencing being replaced by palatine fencing at all sites. BC has an aspiration to undertake this replacement. However, limited resources result in the replacement programme being piecemeal leading fencing at a number of sites being only partially upgraded. To improve efficiency BC should prioritise sites in need of fencing upgrades and then tackle one site at a time as and when funding allows ensuring that one site is complete before another site is started. Site assessments and consultation identify that the following sites require improved fencing:

- Ainsdale Road
- Farnworth & Kearsley Organic Plot
- Florence Avenue
- Moss Lea Allotments
- Sapling Road
- Smedley Avenue
- Cherquebent Gardens
- Clammerclough Farnworth



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## *Summary of site consultation*

This section collates issues raised during consultation regarding provision of allotments in Bolton. This is presented alongside site visit quality and value scores for comparison. It is not a comprehensive list of sites and only covers sites raised during consultation.

Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Ainsdale Road	64%	35%	Consultation found that paths within the site become slippery in wet weather. There is demand for woodchip to be added to the surface of the paths to reduce this.  The presence of Japanese Knotweed is currently restricting the use of one plot. The site has an orchard and wildlife area within the site which has potential to encourage greater community use of the site e.g. by local schools as an outdoor classroom.
Avondale Road	43%	29%	This small site is currently uncultivated. One plot is used as a garden extension while the other plot has become overgrown. There is no water supply at this site.
Back Plodder Lane	42%	12%	All the plots on this site are currently used as garden extensions. There is no water supply serving the five plots.
Cemetery Road, Kearsley	41%	26%	The allotment site has partially upgraded perimeter fencing. The remaining sections await replacement.
Chequerbent Gardens	42%	23%	There is no water supply serving this site. Site assessment noted poor quality perimeter fencing, which requires replacement.
Clammerclough Farnworth	54%	30%	The site suffers from vandalism and theft. This could be due to easy site access from adjoining Moses Gate Country Park. Consultation and site assessment identified that the perimeter fencing is of variable quality. BC recognises that the perimeter fencing is in need of upgrading and that access via Moses Gate Country Park requires restriction.
Cross Street	58%	6%	The site is not currently in use as allotments but there is potential for seven plots to be provided.
Crown Lane, Horwich	34%	24%	There is currently a large waiting list of 24 at this site, although there are also, at present, seven vacant plots. However these vacant plots require clearance by BC before they can be re-let to meet waiting list demand. Also the site visit notes that a number of plots are being used as garden extensions.



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Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Dealey Road Deane	<b>67%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<p>Although the site currently has chemical toilets, consultation identifies user demand for permanent toilet facilities to be provided.</p> <p>The site suffers from vandalism and theft, which is partly due to poor security fencing. BC recognises that the mesh fencing requires replacing by palatine fencing to improve security.</p> <p>A piece of land adjoining the site is owned by the neighbouring primary school. This area is currently unused by the School and suffers from neglect and littering. There is potential for this land to be incorporated into the allotment site, which would increase the number of plots available and help to meet the waiting list demand for the site. There would then also be opportunity to encourage the school to take on a plot or area to use for environmental education or as an outdoor classroom. BC should investigate further.</p>
Firwood Lane	<b>66%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<p>The recent installation of a new lockable gate has significantly decreased the occurrence of vandalism at the site. However, user consultation establishes that it remains an issue. To achieve greater security the poor quality chestnut fencing requires replacement by palatine fencing. The allotment society, in partnership with the local police service, is also hoping for the installation of dummy CCTV to deter vandals.</p> <p>BC has future plans for extension to the car parking area to increase the currently limited car park capacity.</p>



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Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Florence Avenue	67%	24%	Recent vandalism of the site notice board and perimeter fencing has highlighted the need for improved security. BC plans to replace and upgrade the fencing to prevent future vandalism. Fly tipping by plot holders is an issue. Florence Allotment Association wants to introduce communal bays to help reduce the level of fly tipping.
Garstang Avenue	44%	11%	The site has three plots, these plots are not specifically being used as a plot to grow fruit and vegetables.
Glebe Street	55%	30%	Good well maintained site with good access paths, although no toilets or water on site. The site has community use and a plot is tenanted by Green Residents of Westhoughton.
Green Lane	62%	30%	This is a good site with access to a chemical toilet. It has no water and has recently benefited from approximately 50% of new fencing.
Hall Lea Bank Community Plot, Westhoughton	78%	27%	This is a good example of allotments within Bolton. The site is well maintained and is tenanted by Westhoughton Food Co-operative with raised beds on site. A chemical toilet and a poly tunnel are available on site and the majority of fencing is metal and is reasonable good condition.
Harpers Lane	65%	28%	There is currently a waiting list of 11 at this site, although there are also, at present, five vacant plots. However these vacant plots require clearance by BC before they can be re-let to meet waiting list demand. A plot is tenanted and cultivated by the South East Network Adults with Learning Disabilities.
Hatfield Road	58%	37%	Good Companions Group Disabled Persons Group uses a plot within the site. The majority of users of this plot have a disability, with some wheelchair users. Consultation identified demand for disabled toilets to be installed in close proximity to the group cultivate, plot 25. Currently access to the site toilets is difficult due to the location at the rear of the site.  Consultation has also identified the need for fencing replacement.





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Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Lever Park, Horwich	63%	34%	<p>There is a waiting list of seven at the site and two vacant plots awaiting clearance by BC before they can be re-let to meet waiting list demand.</p> <p>Sheds and the poly tunnel within the site suffer from spates of vandalism. Users would like the fencing provision at the bottom end of the site to be improved to reduce incidents of vandalism and theft.</p> <p>There is high community involvement at the site with a local disability groups using the raised bed provision. Lancashire Wildlife Trust (LWT) also rents a number of plots for use by community groups and to provide activities for a children's after school club.</p>
Longworth Road, Edgerton	46%	28%	<p>There is a high waiting list of 29 at this site. At present three vacant plots await clearance by BC before they can be re-let. Consultation and site assessment identifies an area of land within the site which is currently out of use due to poor drainage resulting in problematic water logging. BC also plans to increase the number of plots, through drainage improvements, by up to 10. If the vacant plots are cleared and drainage works undertaken BC will be some way towards meeting the waiting list demand.</p>
Manningham Road	58%	30%	<p>Site assessment notes that the quality of the perimeter fencing is variable.</p> <p>At present there are three vacant plots awaiting clearance by BC before they can be re-let to meet demand on the waiting list. The site is used by The Greenhouse Project and by Bolton MBC Education &amp; Culture Play &amp; Childrens Services.</p>
Moss Lea	55%	34%	<p>The site has four communal greenhouses for use by all tenants. Consultation identifies a need for the two older and poor quality greenhouses to be replaced. BC plans to replace these by the end of 2007.</p> <p>The amenity building suffers from vandalism due to poor site security. User consultation identifies demand for an upgrade in the perimeter fence quality to palatine.</p> <p>There are currently six vacant plots awaiting clearance by BC before they can be re-let to meet the waiting list demand.</p>
Nasmyth Street Horwich	66%	29%	<p>Consultation identifies the need for replacement perimeter fencing to improve site quality and security.</p>



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Rawlyn Road	<b>60%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<p>This is a good, well-maintained site.</p> <p>There is currently a waiting list of eight at this site, although there are also, at present, seven vacant plots. However these vacant plots require clearance by BC before they can be re-let to meet waiting list demand. Three plots are currently unusable due to the presence of Merce Tail and/or Japanese Knotweed.</p> <p>Vandalism is a common occurrence at the site due to poor quality perimeter fencing. There is demand for the chestnut fencing to be replaced by palatine fencing to improve security and site quality. The site is used by Lancashire Wildlife Trust.</p>
Sapling Road	<b>65%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<p>BC is in the process of replacing and upgrading the fencing. This is being carried out in stages due to funding limitations.</p> <p>St Bede's Primary School, Morris Green, uses the allotments as part of their lessons in nature studies and gardening.</p> <p>User consultation identifies demand for general site improvements such as additional storage facilities for a stock shop and improved path and car park surfacing.</p>
Settle Street	<b>60%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<p>Toilets are available to plot holders at the adjoining community centre.</p> <p>The site suffers from vandalism and fly tipping due to low-level fencing. This impacts on the quality of the site.</p> <p>An overgrown area to the rear of the site is unsuitable for cultivation. BC has future aspirations to clear the area and provide picnic benches for use by tenants and the local community.</p>
Seymour Road	<b>19%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<p>The site is currently overgrown and in a poor condition with only one plot currently in use. BC plans to install perimeter fencing and undertake clearance work and infrastructure improvements in order to create an additional six plots.</p>
Shepherd Cross Street	<b>68%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<p>Consultation and site assessment identifies that there are currently three plots which suffer from poor drainage and often become waterlogged. This limits the usability of these plots therefore drainage improvement is required.</p> <p>There is a high level of community involvement at the site. LWT rents a number of plots and provides support to the Halliwell community food plot and the Four seasons community group. The site is also used by Respect Charity to facilitate the 'going back to my roots' project.</p>



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Smedley Avenue	62%	35%	The vacant plot at this site is awaiting clearance by BC before it can be re-let.  Consultation identifies the need for partial fencing replacement and replacement of the washers on the water taps.
Thicketford Road	37%	28%	Over recent years vandalism has been a common issue at the site. There is demand for the chestnut perimeter fencing to be replaced with palatine fencing to improve site quality and security.
Tippings Road	39%	28%	The vacant plot is awaiting clearance by BC and will then be re-let.  Incidents of vandalism are common at the site. Consultation identifies that the perimeter fencing is in need of replacement and upgrading to improve site quality and security.
Tonge Fold	64%	35%	Site assessment noted that the quality of fencing around the site is variable and requires upgrading to an improved standard. This would help to deter vandalism at the site and would improve site quality.
Tonge Moor Road	71%	33%	There is high level of demand for plots at this site with a waiting list, which currently stands at 14. Five plots are in an unused condition suffering from Merce Tail and Japanese Knotweed. These are awaiting clearance by BC which will then be re-let to meet partial waiting list demand.  Consultation identifies that, at present, a number of plots are out of use due to the presence of Japanese knotweed.  Lancashire Wildlife Trust rents a plot at the site, which is in turn used by a children disability group. Due to the high number of women and children using the site consultation identifies demand for greater toilet provision.
Willows Mercadale	46%	19%	Consultation identifies demand for the mesh perimeter fencing to be replaced by palatine metal high rise fencing to improve site quality and overall security.



# BOLTON COUNCIL

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#### **Allotment summary**

- ❑ There are 44 sites classified as an allotment in Bolton equating to 35 hectares. 19 sites are identified as high quality and 25 sites are identified as low quality. In terms of value, 33 sites are identified as high value and 11 sites as low value. This reinforces the importance of allotment provision Bolton.
- ❑ Catchment mapping identifies significant catchment gaps to the west of the Borough, particularly in Horwich and Westhoughton. The central analysis areas are adequately provided for in terms of accessible allotment provision based on mapping.
- ❑ In total there are 16 sites that have vacant plots that are not currently meeting waiting list demand. The majority of these are too overgrown or not in suitable condition to let.
- ❑ There is a lack of strategic allotment management.
- ❑ There is opportunity for BC to move towards self-management of allotments
- ❑ Security is a key concern for users. Although each site is locked with access only for tenants, vandalism is a common occurrence due to a number of sites having incomplete or poor quality fencing. There is demand for fencing improvements to be better co-ordinated so that sites are secured fully rather than partially.
- ❑ There is high community involvement in allotments in Bolton. Over 14 different community groups and projects utilise allotment sites for the health, social and well being benefits. This should continue to be encouraged and supported.

# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 8: CEMETERIES, CHURCHYARDS AND BURIAL GROUNDS

### Introduction

The typology of cemeteries, churchyards and burial grounds, as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide includes areas for 'quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.'

### Context

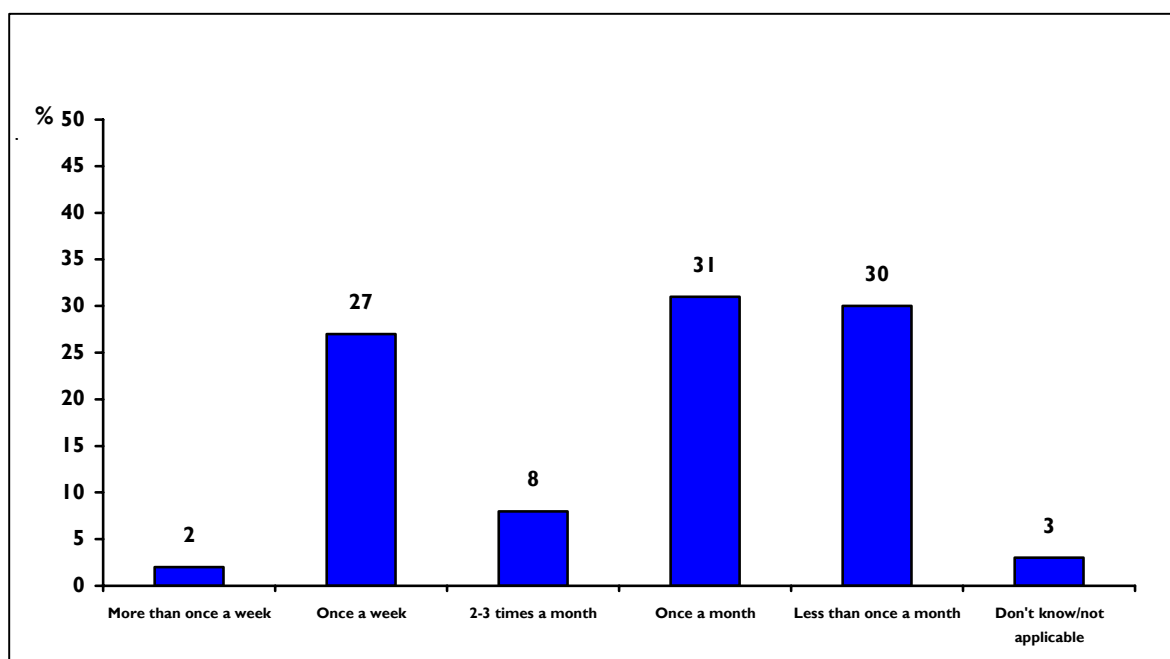
This section outlines findings from the survey of residents in relation to their use of and attitudes towards the provision of cemeteries in Bolton. It provides a context for the subsequent sections, which address the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision.

Results are provided for the descriptions used in the survey itself.

### Usage

Just under a quarter (23%) of residents have visited this typology in the previous 12 months. Nearly two thirds (61%) of respondents visit churchyards/cemeteries once a month or less often. This is a likely reflection of the prime reason why people visit such sites and that is likely to be undertaken annually. However there is also over quarter (29%) who visit once a week or more. This figure is highest in Westhoughton where nearly half (47%) visit once a week.

Figure 8.1: Frequency of usage of cemeteries/churchyards in the previous 12 months

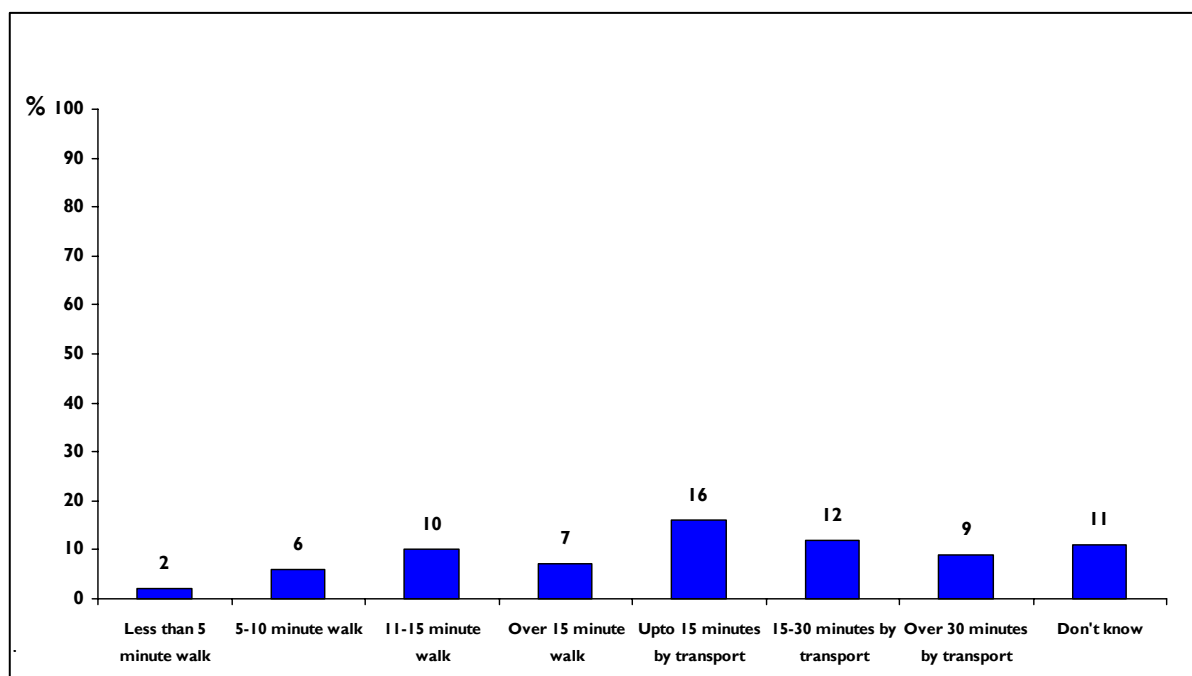


# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Travel time

There is significant variation in the amount of time respondents are willing to travel to reach churchyards/cemeteries. Nearly two fifths (37%) will use transport compared to a quarter (25%) who will walk. Over a fifth (21%) are prepared to travel for more than 15 minutes by transport. Less than a fifth (18%) will walk no further than for 15 minutes to access such provision. Tonge Fold shopping centre has the highest proportion willing to travel via the use of transport with nearly two thirds (60%) willing to travel this way.

Figure 8.2: Time prepared to travel to reach a cemetery/churchyard

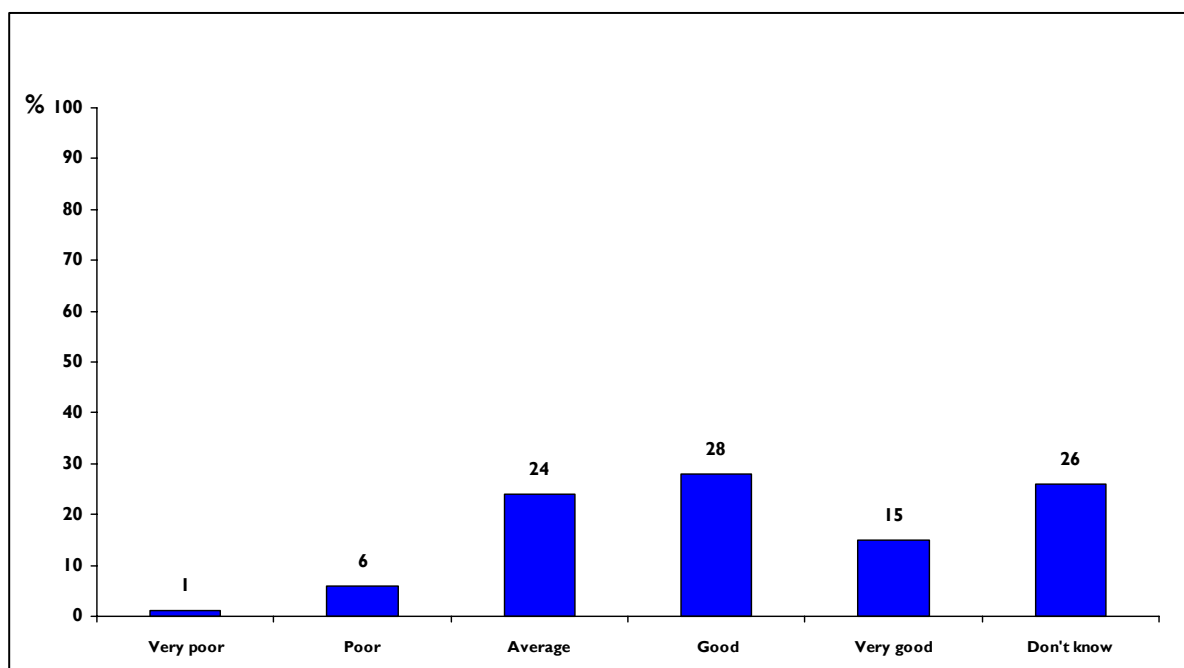


# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Quality of provision

The quality of churchyards/cemeteries is rated as good or very good by nearly half of the respondents (43%). A further quarter (24%) rate the quality as average with only 5% rating it as poor or very poor. The 60+ age group has the highest proportion of residents rating the quality as good overall (55%).

Figure 8.3: Quality of provision of cemetery/churchyard



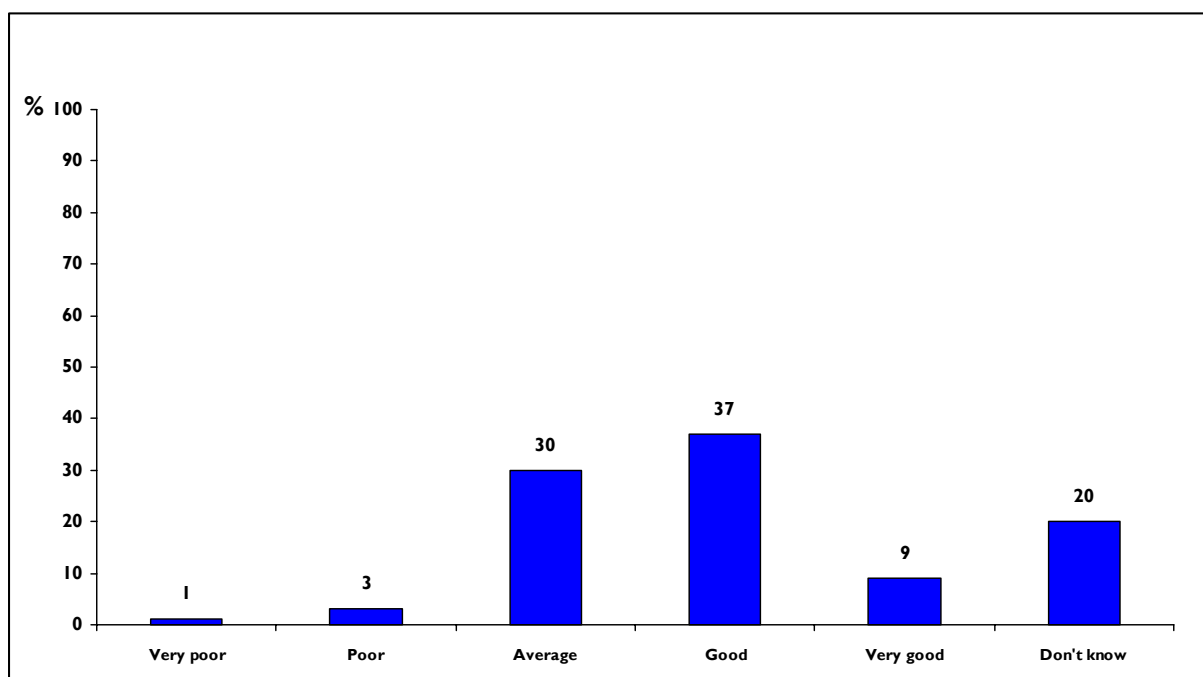
# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Availability

The availability of churchyards/cemeteries in Bolton is rated as good overall by nearly half (46%) of residents with only 4% rating poor overall. There is also a significant proportion (30%) rating the availability as average. Respondents in Horwich are most satisfied with the availability of churchyards/cemeteries with over half (57%) rating the availability as good or very good compared to Blackrod (10%) and Westhoughton (26%).

Figure 8.4: Availability of cemeteries/churchyards





# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Key issues

### *Current provision*

There are 23 sites classified under this typology equating to 62<sup>1</sup> hectares of provision in Bolton.

*Table 8.1: Distribution of cemeteries sites by analysis area*

Analysis area	Cemeteries	
	number	Size(ha)
Astley Bridge and Smithills	1	4.22
Crompton and Halliwell	1	0.41
Farnworth and Kearsley	4	5.55
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	3	25.65
Leverhulme	3	14.91
South	3	1.29
South Turton	2	0.31
Two Towns	3	6.90
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	3	3.04
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>62.33</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Figures rounded up



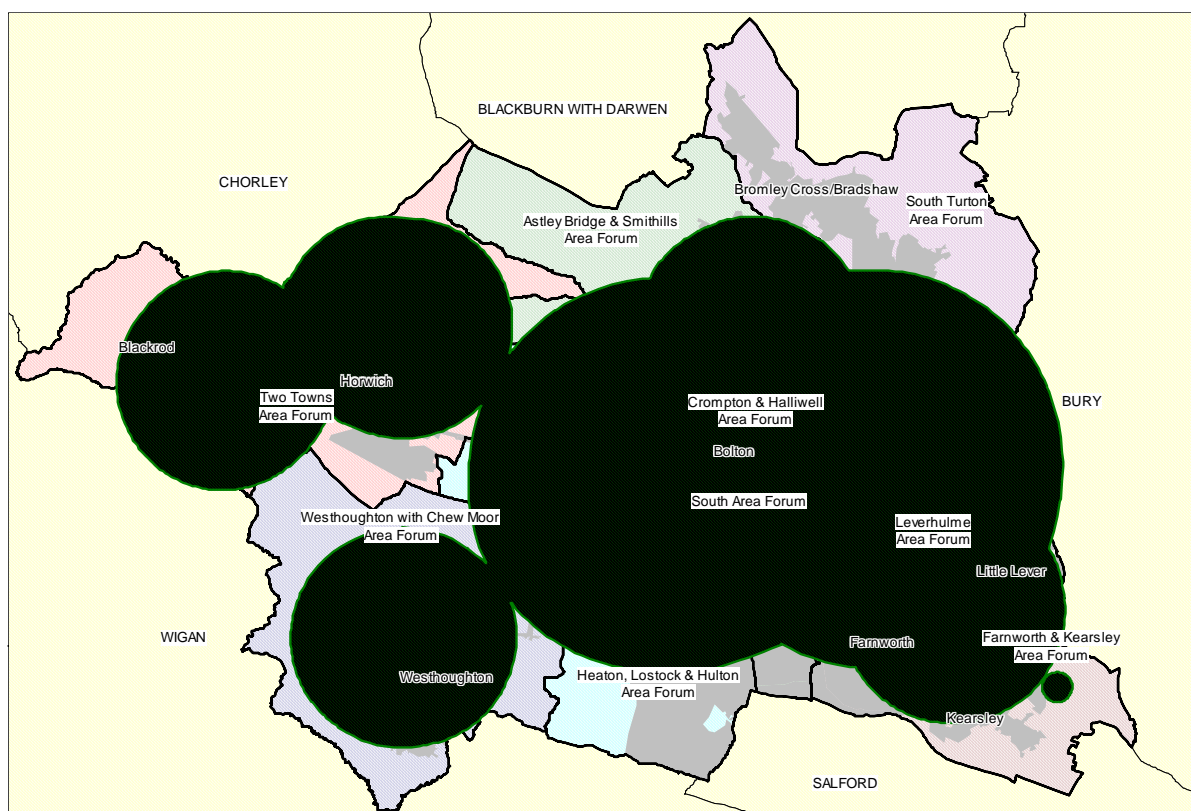
# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Accessibility

The effective catchments of cemeteries has been identified using data from the street survey (see Figure 9.2) and guidance issued by the Greater London Authority (GLA)<sup>4</sup>. The following catchments are used to identify the coverage of current provision:

- ❑ Borough-wide significance (Area more than 10ha) – 3,200 metres.
- ❑ Settlement significance (Area between 1ha and 10ha) – 1,800 metres.
- ❑ Neighbourhood significance (Area between 0.66ha and 1ha) – 1,200 metres.
- ❑ Local significance (Area up to 0.66ha) – 240 metres.

Figure 8.5: Cemeteries sites mapped against settlement areas with catchment applied



Catchment mapping, based on all current provision, shows catchment gaps in four of the area forum analysis areas (South Turton; Two Towns; Heaton, Lostock and Hulton and Farnworth and Kearsley). However, it is not considered appropriate to cover all these catchment gaps through new provision of this typology because of its nature. Many of the sites in Bolton have spare burial capacity, reinforcing the fact that additional provision is not required.

<sup>4</sup> Greater London Authority (2002): Guide to preparing open space strategies

# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

*Table 8.2: Gaps in provision of cemeteries across Bolton*

Analysis area	Catchment gaps
Astley Bridge and Smithills	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap
Crompton and Halliwell	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap
Farnworth and Kearsley	<input type="checkbox"/> Minor catchment gap south and Farnworth <input type="checkbox"/> Minor catchment gap in south Kearsley
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	<input type="checkbox"/> South of the analysis area
Leverhulme	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap
South	<input type="checkbox"/> Small catchment gap in south analysis area
South Turton	<input type="checkbox"/> North and east of analysis area
Two Towns	<input type="checkbox"/> South Horwich
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap

There are seven municipal cemeteries and one crematorium, all catering for different religions, within Bolton. However, none of these sites have areas specifically catering for children. There is demand for children areas and this provision is currently being investigated at Overdale Crematorium.

## **Management**

BC owned sites are managed by BC Bereavement Services. Within Bereavement Services, there is an in-house seasonal grounds maintenance team, dedicated to the upkeep e.g. mowing and pruning, of these sites between April and November. When required gravediggers will also carry out maintenance between November and April.

During normal working hours there is a staff presence at Overdale Crematorium, where the cemetery office and the crematorium are located. There are also members of staff based at Heaton Cemetery and Astley Bridge Cemetery and staff who move between the remaining sites. This presence helps to deter incidents of vandalism and other anti-social behaviour activities. However, these issues are still regarded as being pertinent issues across Bolton's cemeteries.

A full headstone survey has been completed at five cemeteries and is still in progress at Heaton Cemetery and Farnworth Cemetery. As a result of the surveys BC is to introduce a system of anchoring headstones to fully secure them.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for cemeteries in Bolton. The threshold for assessing quality has been set at 60%; this is based on Green Flag criteria. Individual site summaries can be found at the end of this section.

Table 8.3: Quality scores for cemeteries sites by analysis area

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60%	above 60%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	125	50%	50%	50%	-	1	-
Crompton and Halliwell	125	27%	27%	27%	-	1	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	125	38%	50%	60%	22%	3	1
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	125	42%	59%	73%	31%	1	2
Leverhulme	125	39%	52%	61%	22%	2	1
South	125	41%	50%	61%	20%	2	1
South Turton	125	41%	49%	57%	17%	2	-
Two Towns	125	50%	55%	59%	10%	3	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	125	47%	51%	57%	10%	3	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	125	27%	51%	73%	46%	18	5

There is some considerable variation in the mean quality scores across the analysis areas (from 27% to 59%), none of which lie above the threshold. Although only five sites, are assessed as high quality consultation does not identify any concerning issues regarding the quality of cemeteries and churchyards in the Borough. Site assessments highlight that the majority of the sites score highly for planting and landscape design and maintenance. However, a number of sites fail to score against criteria such as parking facilities, toilet facilities and lighting.

The main issue affecting the quality of cemeteries and churchyards is irresponsible dog walkers using the sites. Despite numerous signs situated throughout the sites indicating the penalty of being irresponsible, dog foul remains a pertinent problem. Site assessments indicate that dog foul bins would be appropriate in Tonge Cemetery and consultation highlights demand for greater enforcement officer patrols, particular in Farnworth Cemetery, to enforce the dog foul penalties and act as a deterrent.

# BOLTON COUNCIL

## OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Consultation identifies the need for greater provision of bins at cemetery sites, particularly at Heaton Cemetery, Tonge Cemetery and Astley Bridge Cemetery. Site assessments note that a number (60%) of cemeteries and/or churchyards e.g., Astley Bridge Cemetery, Westhoughton Garden of Remembrance and Deane Churchyard, do not have any litter bins but would in fact benefit from the provision of them. BC has increased the provision of basket bins at a number of sites and regularly empty them to keep up with demand.

### Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for cemeteries in Bolton. A score of 20% or less is considered to indicate that a site has low value. A full list of low value sites and an indication of their position relative to the threshold can be found in Appendix I.

*Table 8.4: Value scores for cemeteries by analysis area*

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 20%	above 20%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	105	14%	14%	14%	-	1	-
Crompton and Halliwell	105	35%	35%	35%	-	-	1
Farnworth and Kearsley	105	17%	24%	36%	19%	2	2
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	105	26%	32%	42%	16%	-	3
Leverhulme	105	15%	22%	33%	18%	2	1
South	105	15%	18%	21%	6%	2	1
South Turton	105	20%	22%	24%	4%	-	2
Two Towns	105	23%	28%	31%	9%	-	3
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	105	12%	23%	30%	17%	1	2
<b>BOLTON</b>	105	12%	24%	42%	30%	8	15

There is considerable variation in the value scores, ranging from 12% for Westhoughton Garden of Remembrance to 42% for Heaton Cemetery. Over half of the sites (65%) have been assessed as high value. A number of the sites have high ecological/biodiversity value, high cultural and heritage value and also high amenity and landscape benefits. This recognises the variety of opportunities that a cemetery can offer. There is potential for the value of cemeteries in the Borough to be recognised through increased educational opportunities and wildlife habitats. Cemeteries can also offer a valuable amenity resource and can be used by local residents for walking and uncovering historical interest. There is a need to encourage this informal use of cemeteries through, for example, the provision of seating areas where it is currently lacking and would be of benefit e.g. Tonge Cemetery and Farnworth Cemetery.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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## ***Community involvement***

There are currently no community groups actively involved in the management and improvement of cemeteries in Bolton. The formation of such groups would assist in bringing about improvements throughout the sites. An example of the benefits that a group can bring to a site can be clearly seen in Batley Cemetery, in Kirklees. The Batley Cemetery Support Group helped secure £140,000 funding to purchase and renovate the cemetery lodge which now houses a conference/training facility, a café and an IT suite. This has been very successful at attracting visitors to the site and, as a result, deters undesirable use. BC recognises that the formation of 'friend of' groups would be particularly beneficial at Astley Bridge Cemetery and Tonge Cemetery.

There are a number of history groups within the community, which have approached BC and expressed interest in using cemeteries for investigating family histories. This usage should be encouraged by BC in sites where it is possible and safe to do so. Cemeteries can provide a valuable education resource in terms of history and habitats provided within.

## ***Security***

The seven BC owned cemeteries are opened and locked by the in-house security team. Due to the geographical dispersion of the seven sites they are not always opened and closed at the correct time stated at the entrances. However, during consultation it was noted that sites are occasionally closed earlier than the times stated and this has, in the past, led to users being accidentally locked in. This perhaps should be investigated and opening/closing times adjusted according to the route taken by the security team to avoid user confusion.

Consultation identifies demand for a greater presence within cemeteries in the form of a police community support officer patrol. Although the presence would be ad hoc the knowledge that the sites are patrolled could act as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour and reassurance of safety for responsible users.



# BOLTON COUNCIL

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#### **Summary of site consultation**

This section collates issues raised during consultation regarding provision of cemeteries in Bolton. This is presented alongside site visit quality and value scores for comparison. It is not a comprehensive list of sites and only covers sites raised during consultation.

Site	Quality Score	Value Score	Comments
Astley Bridge Cemetery	50%	14%	<p>Within this small, quiet site, there is a disused chapel, which is currently in poor condition and will require demolishing if an alternative use is not found. However, potential to bring the chapel back into use should be investigated further by BC.</p> <p>The site currently suffers from vandalism and anti-social behaviour, which deters responsible users. There is potential to enhance the amenity value of the site and to encourage greater usage by the local community through the formation of a 'friends of' group. There is approximately two years' burial space left.</p>
Blackrod Cemetery	59%	31%	<p>Although this is a small site consultation found that it experiences problems with youth congregation.</p> <p>There is approximately 30 years' burial space left.</p>
Farnworth Cemetery	60%	18%	<p>There are many years' burial space left and the site has the potential to extend, if needed.</p> <p>It experiences continuous problems with youth congregation and also suffers from illegal motorbike and quad bike use. Consultation found that the workmen storage huts are subjected to graffiti. The one access gate is now locked to tackle the problems. However, the site is a popular cut through from local residential areas to Moses Gate Country Park. The restricted access could negatively impact on the informal presence within and use of the site.</p>
Heaton Cemetery	61%	42%	<p>Although the largest cemetery in Bolton there is a proposal for extension of the well used site. There is approximately 15 – 20 years' burial space left.</p> <p>In an attempt to open up the PROW network there is potential to create a cycle path along the perimeter of the site. Development of a cycleway would create opportunity to develop the amenity value of the area and to encourage greater usage of the site by local residents.</p>
Horwich Cemetery (Ridgmont)	50%	23%	<p>Spacious cemetery. Large areas unused. Naturalised areas around perimeter. There is approximately 20 years' burial space left.</p>



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site	Quality Score	Value Score	Comments
Overdale Crematorium	73%	26%	The site suffers with poor footpath quality and in inclement weather conditions, the paths are prone to flooding. There is a need to improve the drainage at the site. Although this was not recognised during the site assessment it should be noted that the site assessment was undertaken during sunny weather.
Tonge Cemetery	61%	33%	<p>The site is of particular historic interest, recognised in 2002 by English Nature and placed on the Register of Parks and Gardens as a Grade II listed site. There is approximately 15 – 20 years' burial space left.</p> <p>The Cemetery suffers from anti-social behaviour, particularly associated with the toilets which are in poor condition. Shrubbery and planting has been cut back to open vision lines and to increase natural surveillance of the Site. It is hoped that this will deter anti-social behaviour and increase safety perception.</p> <p>There is potential to enhance the amenity value of the site and to encourage greater usage by the local community through the formation of a 'friends of' group. Consultation also identifies the potential to bring the currently disused building into community use.</p> <p>The site has no car parking area although there are areas to park.</p>
West Houghton Cemetery	57%	27%	The site is currently being extended by one hectare and there is approximately 50 years' burial space left. Consultation highlights that the poor condition of the paths has led to complaints to BC from users. BC plans to invest in path improvements once funding is available in order to tackle problems with potholes.

### Cemeteries summary

- ❑ There are 23 sites classified under this typology equating to 62 hectares of provision in Bolton. Of these, 5 sites are identified as high quality and 18 as low quality. In terms of value, 15 sites are identified as high value and 8 as low value.
- ❑ Catchment mapping, based on all current provision, shows catchment gaps in four of the area forum analysis areas. However, it is not considered appropriate to cover all these catchment gaps through new provision of this typology because of its nature.
- ❑ The main issue affecting the quality of cemeteries and churchyards is irresponsible dog walkers using the sites. There is demand for greater enforcement, particularly in Farnworth Cemetery, to enforce penalties, act as a deterrent and raise awareness.
- ❑ There are no formal community groups working in cemeteries.





# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## PART 9: CIVIC SPACES

### Introduction

The typology of civic space, as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide includes civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians, providing a setting for civic buildings, public demonstrations and community events.

### Context

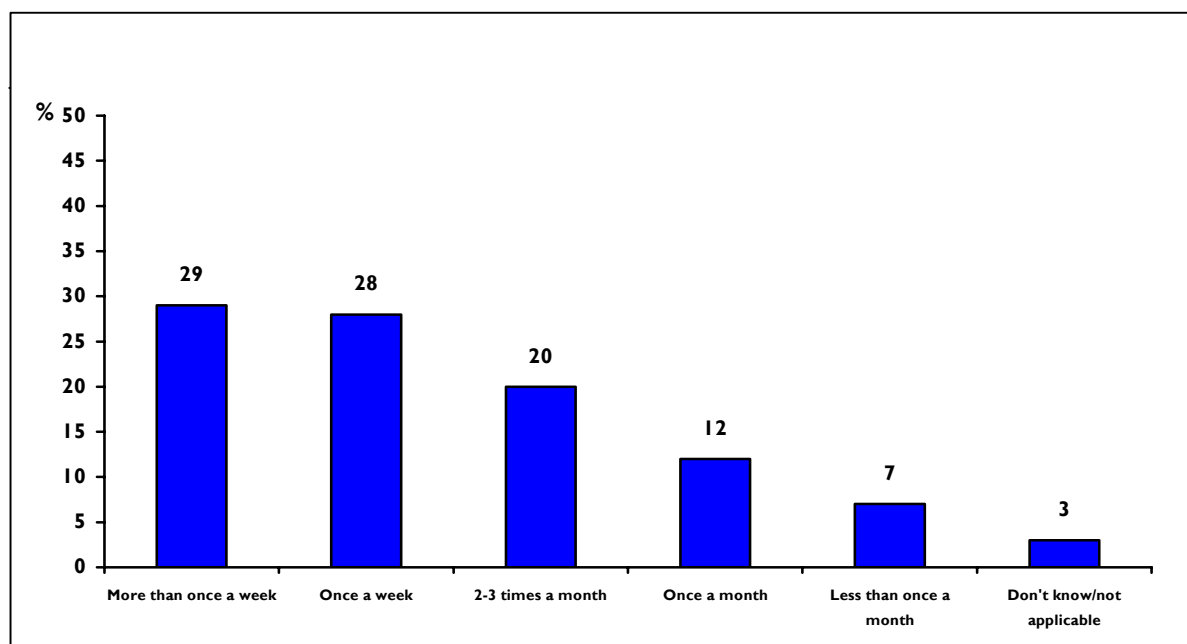
This section outlines findings from the survey of residents in relation to their use of and attitudes towards the provision of civic spaces in Bolton. It provides a context for the subsequent sections, which address the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision.

Results are provided for the descriptions used in the survey itself.

### Usage

In the previous 12 months 26% of respondents have visited civic space/non-green space. Amongst residents who visit civic space, over three quarters (77%) visit frequently (more than once a month). This reflects the nature of civic space in that people will often use it while doing other activities such as shopping for example. Less than a tenth (7%) visit civic space less than once a month. The areas with highest proportions of frequent visitors are Tonge Fold (95% once a week or more) and Blackrod (94%).

Figure 9.1: Frequency of usage of civic space/non-green spaces in the previous 12 months

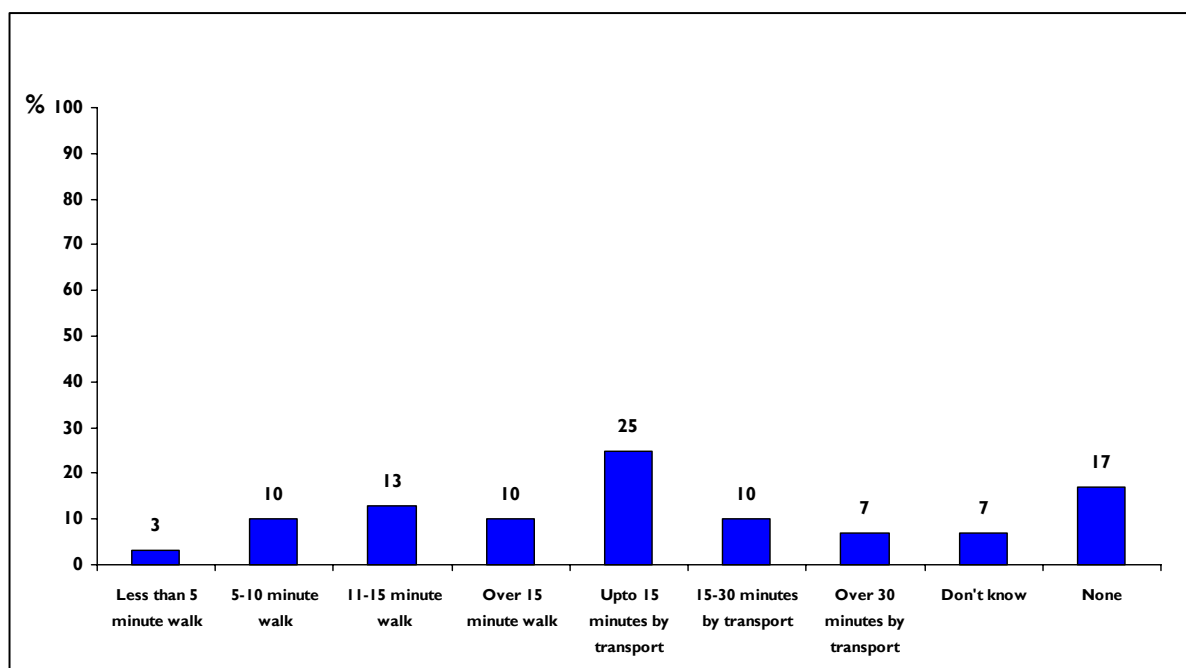


# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Travel time

There is significant variation in the amount of time residents are willing to travel to visit civic/non-green space. Over a quarter (26%) of residents would walk up to 15 minutes with a similar proportion (25%) up to 15 minutes by transport.

Figure 9.2: Time prepared to travel to reach a civic space/non-green space

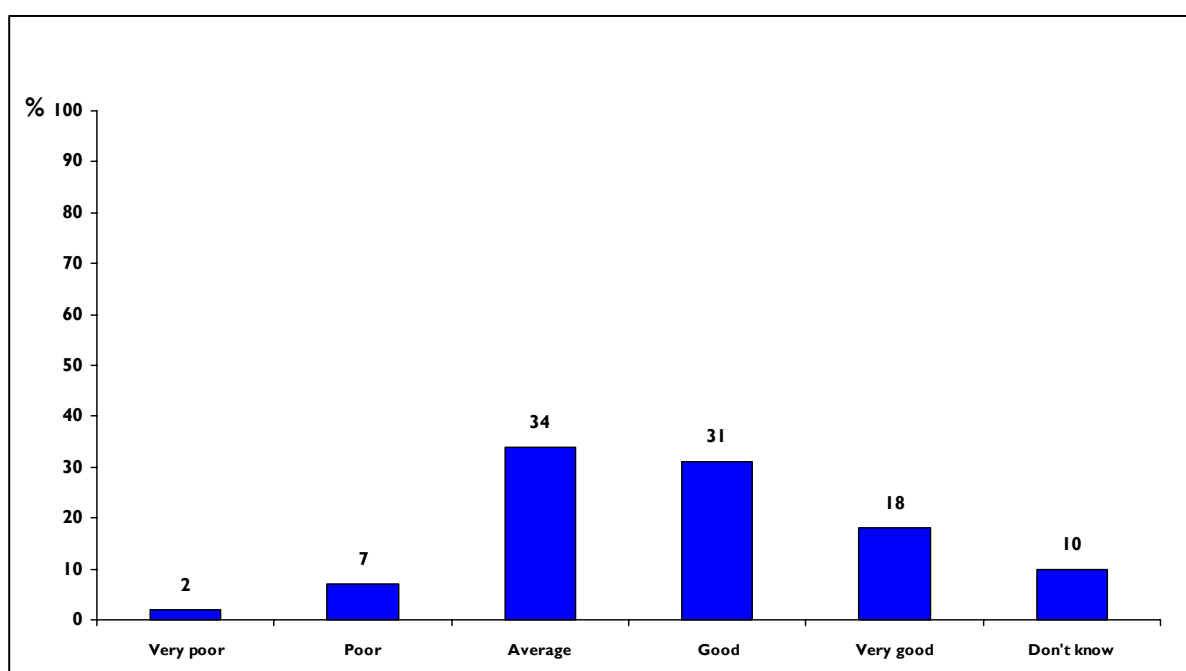


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## Quality of provision

Nearly half (49%) of residents rate the quality of civic space to be good or very good. Only around one in ten (9%) rate it as poor or very poor. A good indicator of the high usage of this typology is that only 10% of respondents could not rate the quality of civic space. The most satisfied of residents are in Blackrod where three quarters (75%) regard the quality as good or very good compared to Westhoughton where the perception is much lower with only a fifth (19%) rating it in the same way.

Figure 9.3: Quality of provision of civic space/non-green space

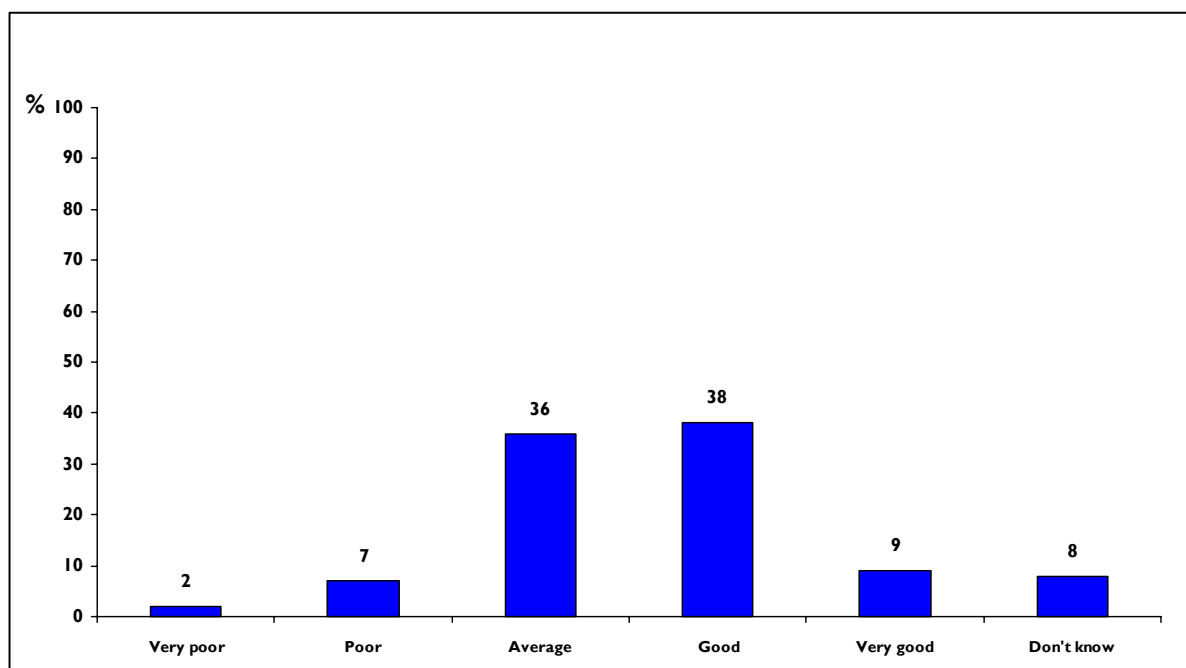


# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Availability

Nearly half (47%) of residents rate the availability of civic space to be good or very good compared to just under one in ten (9%) rating as poor or very poor. Again it is Blackrod where there is the highest perception of availability with four fifths (80%) regarding availability as good and Westhoughton with the lowest proportion (16%).

Figure 9.4: Availability of civic space/non-green space



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## Key issues

### *Current provision*

Five sites have been identified as civic spaces within Bolton, equating to one hectare<sup>1</sup> of civic space.

*Table 9.1: Distribution of civic spaces sites by analysis area*

Analysis area	Civic spaces	
	number	Size(ha)
Astley Bridge and Smithills	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	2	0.85
Farnworth and Kearsley	1	0.15
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	-
Leverhulme	1	0.06
South	1	0.03
South Turton	-	-
Two Towns	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	-	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1.10</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Figures rounded up



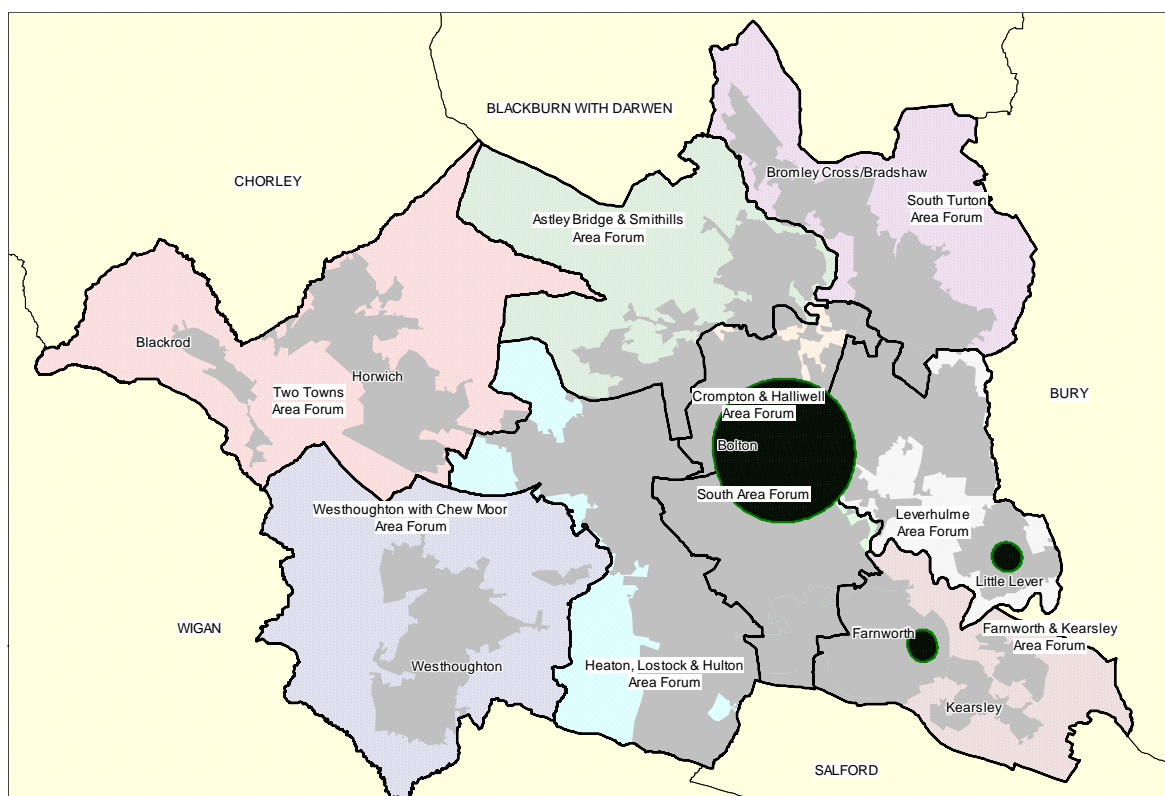
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## Accessibility

The effective catchments of civic spaces has been identified using data from the street survey (see Figure 9.2) and guidance issued by the Greater London Authority (GLA)<sup>5</sup>. The following catchments are used to identify the coverage of current provision:

- ❑ Borough-wide significance (Area more than 10ha) – 3,200 metres.
- ❑ Settlement significance (Area between 1ha and 10ha) – 1,800 metres.
- ❑ Neighbourhood significance (Area between 0.66ha and 1ha) – 1,200 metres.
- ❑ Local significance (Area up to 0.66ha) – 240 metres.

Figure 9.5: Civic space sites mapped against settlement areas with catchment areas applied



Catchment mapping, based on all current provision, shows that there are a number of gaps across the settlements of Bolton in terms of civic spaces. Meeting all these catchment gaps would result in a requirement for significant extra civic space provision, which is not considered realistic. No shortfall in provision has been identified through consultation, suggesting that there is no need for additional civic spaces to be developed in Bolton.

<sup>5</sup> Greater London Authority (2002): Guide to preparing open space strategies

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## ***Management***

Bolton Town Centre management works in partnership with businesses, BC and other stakeholders to create an attractive, safe, accessible and lively environment. The organisation is dedicated to improving the vitality and viability of the Town Centre and provides stakeholder representation and input at a number of strategic groups including the Bolton's Vision for the Future Partnership, Bolton Town Centre Steering Group and Bolton Town Centre Policy Development Group.

The Bolton Town Centre Action Framework (2005-2008) sets out the strategic objectives and required actions for BC to realise its vision of Bolton being “a great place to grow up, live, learn, work, do business and visit; so that the potential of each community and the Borough as a whole can be realised”. The Town Centre Steering Group, organised by BC, oversees the process of bringing forward implementation of the actions.

Action plans have been drafted by BC for Farnworth, Horwich, Little Lever and Westhoughton town centres. The drafts are currently going through a public consultation process and are awaiting approval. Each sets out a vision and details key aims and actions to be met and undertaken in order to create a long-term sustainable future for the four towns.

## ***Events***

A number of organised events and exhibitions utilise civic spaces in Bolton Town Centre. The most significant civic space used for public events is Victoria Square due to its large size, the availability of an electricity supply and the level surface that is of good quality. Churchgate is used to host medieval festivals and consultation finds the area is popular with workers and shoppers at lunchtime. Creating capacity for events to take place is an important priority for civic spaces in exploiting their full functional potential.

Farnworth Town Centre draft action plan, sets out an aspiration to stage events in the Town Centre. The site assessment to Farnworth Mosaic indicates that this may be a suitable location for the hosting of events, particularly since electricity points are already provided.

# BOLTON COUNCIL

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#### Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for civic spaces in Bolton. The threshold for assessing quality has been set at 60%; this is based on Green Flag criteria. Individual site summaries can be found at the end of this section.

Table 9.2: Quality scores for civic spaces sites by analysis area

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60%	above 60%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	99	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	99	40%	58%	76%	37%	1	1
Farnworth and Kearsley	99	64%	64%	64%	-	-	1
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	99	-	-	-	-	-	-
Leverhulme	99	54%	54%	54%	-	1	-
South	99	64%	64%	64%	-	-	1
South Turton	99	-	-	-	-	-	-
Two Towns	99	-	-	-	-	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	99	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	99	40%	60%	76%	37%	2	3

In particular, Farnworth Town Centre draft action plan recognises that public spaces within the Town Centre are generally of poor quality and do not provide a welcoming environment for visitors. There is a strong perception that the Town Centre is not regularly maintained/managed. In particular, the amount of litter, problems with vandalism, security and anti-social behaviour are issues of concern for local residents. However the site assessment undertaken at Farnworth Mosaic indicates a high quality site (64%) with adequate provision of seating and litterbins.

Consultation carried out in preparation for the Westhoughton Town Centre action plan highlighted a perceived lack of seating within the Town Centre and the lack of a focal point. There are no identified civic spaces in Westhoughton in the open space database.

Street ambassadors, working closely with the Police, deal with issues such as street damage, fly posting, and littering throughout Bolton Town Centre. Annual 'grot spot' lists are compiled identifying particular areas that are regularly litter strewn and vandalised. The street ambassadors report that graffiti regularly occurs on the steps of the Town Hall. However, BC is engaging with young people who 'hang out' around the Town Hall and as a result the occurrence of graffiti has noticeably decreased.





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BC has recognised the importance of public art in enhancing the aesthetics of Bolton Town Centre. In order to increase public perceptions, BC has identified aspirations to provide more public art in town centres. However, user consultation identified possible opposition to this by local residents who perceive it to be an unnecessary expenditure rather than an enhancement. BC is currently in the process of drafting a strategy to assess and guide provision of public art.

Consultation identifies issues associated with youth congregation in Victoria Square. This is a popular meeting and ‘hanging out’ space for teenagers and for unofficial skateboarding. Although young people are genuine users of the open space, consultation identified that the large number of young people congregating in groups does create an intimidating environment for other town centre users and does result in regular defacing of the Town Hall steps and surrounding area. BC is actively engaging with the various groups of young people who gather at the site to encourage responsible behaviour and attempt to break down barriers/perceptions between the young people and other users.

Churchgate and Bradshaw Gate are both regarded by consultees as being picturesque sites with attractive buildings. The public tend to use these areas as a thinking place and to eat lunch.

### Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for civic spaces in Bolton. A score of 20% or less is considered to indicate that a site has low value. A full list of low value sites and an indication of their position relative to the threshold can be found in Appendix I.

Table 9.3: Value scores for civic spaces by analysis area

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 20%	above 20%
Astley Bridge and Smithills	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	105	18%	21%	24%	6%	1	1
Farnworth and Kearsley	105	38%	38%	38%	-	-	1
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
Leverhulme	105	23%	23%	23%	-	-	1
South	105	18%	18%	18%	-	1	-
South Turton	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
Two Towns	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	105	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	105	18%	24%	38%	20%	2	3



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The mean value score for civic space lies above the threshold of 20% with the lowest scoring sites being close to the threshold at 18%. Recognising the amenity and sense of place benefits and cultural and heritage value offered by civic space site assessments classify three sites, Little Lever Precinct, Farnworth Mosaic and Victoria Square as high value.

Cheadle Square is the only site to receive a low quality and a low value score. However, at the time of site assessment the site was host to a fair indicating that the site is valuable for the hosting of events.

## **Summary of site consultation**

This section collates issues raised during consultation regarding provision of civic spaces in Bolton. This is presented alongside site visit quality and value scores for comparison. It is not a comprehensive list of sites and only covers sites raised during consultation.

Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Nelson Square	65%	18%	Consultation identifies potential for development to become more European in style, incorporating café bars. This is considered to be a pleasant town centre open space. However consultation highlights that there is currently a problem with litter during the evenings and weekends.
Victoria Square	76%	24%	Victoria Square is the main civic space within Bolton town centre and is a popular area for town centre visitors to spend time. It is also a popular area for youth congregation, during both the day and evening and especially during school holidays. Consultation identifies that youth congregation, of particularly large group sizes, creates an intimidating environment for other users.  Victoria Square is used throughout the year for promotional activities and events including Continental/food markets, exhibitions, marquee events, and civic ceremonies.

### **Civic space summary**

- There are five sites classified under this typology equating to one hectare of provision in Bolton. Of these, three sites are identified as high quality and two as low quality. In terms of value, three sites are identified as high value and two as low value.
- Meeting the identified catchment gaps would result in a requirement for significant extra civic space provision, which is not considered realistic.
- The importance of public art in enhancing the aesthetics of town centres is recognised. A strategy is currently being drafted to assess and guide the provision of public art. However, user consultation identifies possible opposition to this by local residents who perceive it to be an unnecessary expenditure rather than an enhancement.



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## PART 10: OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

### 10.1 Introduction

This report forms part of a larger open space report and assesses the provision of pitch and non-pitch outdoor sports facilities in Bolton. The analysis in this report is based on Sport England's (SE) playing pitch strategy methodology, 'Towards A Level Playing Field' (2003) and updates the existing Bolton Playing Pitch Assessment carried out in 2002 in order to comply with the new Sport England methodology. This document outlines specific criteria for assessing the quantity, quality, capacity and accessibility of playing pitches and ancillary facilities. These criterion and the principles of the assessment have been applied to outdoor sports facilities.

**This report does not include strategic recommendations and policy objectives. These are included within the Strategy document.**

### 10.2 Context

#### ***Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 17***

PPG 17 defines outdoor sports facilities as those with either natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned and should include:

- Playing pitches.
- Tennis courts.
- Bowling greens.
- Golf courses.
- Athletics tracks.
- School and other institutional playing fields.
- Other outdoor sports areas.

As outlined in the introduction to the accompanying 'Open Spaces Assessment Report', PPG 17 recognises the value of outdoor sports facilities along with other types of open spaces in delivering the following broad Government objectives:

- Supporting an urban renaissance.
- Supporting rural renewal.
- Promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion.
- Health and well-being.
- Promoting more sustainable development.

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## ***Assessing Needs & Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG 17***

The Companion Guide states the long term outcomes, which PPG 17 aims to deliver as:

- ❑ Networks of accessible high quality open spaces and sport and recreation facilities, in both urban and rural areas, which meet the needs of residents and visitors, are fit for purpose and economically and environmentally sustainable.
- ❑ An appropriate balance between new provision and the enhancement of existing provision.
- ❑ Clarity and reasonable certainty for developers and landowners in relation to the requirements and expectations of local planning authorities in respect of open space and sport and recreation provision.

In order to deliver these aims, each local authority needs to establish local needs and opportunities and develop and apply provision standards in a way, which is equitable to both developers and local communities.

The Companion Guide outlines a five-step approach to deliver the aims:

- ❑ Step 1: Identifying local needs.
- ❑ Step 2: Auditing local provision.
- ❑ Step 3: Setting provision standards.
- ❑ Step 4: Applying provision standards.
- ❑ Step 5: Drafting policies.

## ***Towards a Level Playing Field***

The aims and objectives outlined in Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG 17) and the Companion Guide are reiterated in the Sport England playing pitch strategy methodology, 'Towards a Level Playing Field' (February 2003).

It should be noted that 'Towards A Level Playing Field' only deals with the assessment of playing pitch provision and does not cover assessments for other outdoor sports facilities. However, the principles and basic methodology can be applied to the assessment of these other sports.

The benefits of having a playing pitch strategy are identified as follows:

### *Corporate and strategic*

- ❑ It ensures a strategic approach to playing pitch provision.
- ❑ It provides robust evidence for capital funding.
- ❑ It helps deliver government policies.
- ❑ It helps demonstrate the value of leisure services.
- ❑ It helps the Best Value process.

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#### *Planning*

- ❑ It provides a basis for establishing new pitch requirements arising from new housing developments.
- ❑ It is one of the best tools for the protection of pitches.
- ❑ It provides a holistic approach to open space improvement and protection.

#### *Operational*

- ❑ Can result in more efficient use of resources.
- ❑ Quality of provision can be enhanced.

#### *Sports development*

- ❑ It helps identify where community use of school sports pitches is most needed.
- ❑ It provides better information to residents and other users of sports pitches.
- ❑ It promotes sports development and can help unlock latent demand.

The approach and guidance outlined in 'Towards A Level Playing Field' are fully endorsed by Sport England and the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR) as the appropriate methodology to provide detailed local assessments of playing pitch requirements and as such have been used in this study.

Details of the methodology are outlined in Part Two of this document.

#### ***National Playing Fields Association (NPFA)***

Both PPG 17 and 'Towards A Level Playing Field' identify the need to develop local standards of provision for playing pitches and other outdoor sports facilities.

Traditionally, the NPFA 'Six Acre Standard' (reviewed in 2001) has been used. This recommends a minimum standard of 1.6 hectares (four acres) per 1,000 people for outdoor sports. Within this, there is to be a specific allocation of at least 1.2 hectares (three acres) of land for pitch sports. The balance (i.e. 0.4 hectares or one acre) is required for non-pitch sports including athletics, tennis and bowls.

However, PPG 17 now requires local authorities to undertake detailed local assessments to provide evidence as a basis for developing a local standard, taking into account the quality, capacity and accessibility of outdoor sports facilities rather than just the quantity.





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'Towards A Level Playing Field' does not give definitive instruction on how to calculate local standards for sports pitches but advises that the following need to be taken into consideration:

- ❑ Only pitches available for community use should be included.
- ❑ Quality of pitches.
- ❑ Provision of changing facilities.
- ❑ Pitch capacity.
- ❑ Future population estimates.

The methodology for the calculation of local standards in Bolton is outlined in Part 2 of this report.

### 10.3 Research methodology

#### *Introduction*

The methodology used in this report varies from the open space report to reflect the demand-led assessment of the provision of outdoor sports facilities. The methodology:

- ❑ Provides an up-to-date audit of pitch and non-pitch sports facilities in Bolton.
- ❑ Assesses the quality of pitch and non-pitch sports facilities using a robust procedure.
- ❑ Establishes, through detailed consultation with clubs, governing bodies, local sports development officers and other relevant stakeholders, the demand for existing and, where appropriate, future, outdoor sports provision in Bolton.

### 10.4 Site visits

It should be noted that the club and school questionnaires and the non-technical pitch assessment sheet in the electronic toolkit all have different scales for rating the quality of pitches and ancillary facilities. On this basis, KKP uses the 'non-technical pitch assessment sheet' to assess **all** pitches in order that consistent information is presented.

The pitch assessment sheet is a 'tick box' assessment, which rates various elements of pitch quality with a separate assessment sheet for changing accommodation. This information is scored, converted into a percentage (of the highest score possible) and also into a qualitative rating. The qualitative ratings for pitch quality are:

90% +	An excellent pitch
64-90%	A good pitch
55-64%	An average pitch
30-54%	A below average pitch
Less than 30%	A poor pitch

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For ease of analysis KKP has reduced this to a three-point scale. In this report pitches are rated as:

- ❑ An excellent pitch or good pitch = **good quality**.
- ❑ An average pitch = **adequate quality**.
- ❑ A below average pitch or poor pitch = **poor quality**.

The qualitative ratings for changing accommodation quality are listed as:

90% +	Excellent
60-89%	Good
40-59%	Average
30-39%	Poor
Less than 30%	Very poor

Copies of the assessment sheets can be found in the appendices.

#### 10.5 Capacity analysis

Pitch capacity ratings will assist with the identification of sites for improvement/development, rationalisation etc. In doing so the qualitative rating of the site has also been taken into consideration (see below).

Each pitch site that has been identified as offering community use is included and the following details are provided where available:

- ❑ Location.
- ❑ Number and type of pitches.
- ❑ Provision of ancillary facilities.
- ❑ Usage including when games are played (temporal demand).
- ❑ Qualitative information from pitch managers and users.

Each pitch, whether football, cricket, rugby or hockey, has been given a quality grading. This was calculated taking into account Sport England visual assessment<sup>1</sup> (see appendix for example) and comments from site users and managers. The following scale is used:

- ❑ Good.
- ❑ Acceptable.
- ❑ Poor.

The column entitled 'matches per week' is split into three sections – play, capacity and rating.

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<sup>1</sup> From the Electronic Toolkit accompanying 'Towards A Level Playing Field'



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#### ***Football and rugby***

*Play* refers to temporal demand or when the teams play. A figure of 1.0 in this column for instance would be representative of two teams using that pitch on a home and away basis (every other week). This means that that pitch is receiving one game at that time every week. This is taken from the 2004/05 season as this was the latest completed set of data to which we could analyse.

Calculation of *capacity* is based on the qualitative ratings. Taking into consideration SE guidelines<sup>1</sup> on capacity the following was concluded:

- ❑ If a pitch is rated as 'good' its capacity is specified as two matches per week.
- ❑ If a pitch is rated as 'acceptable' its capacity is specified as one match per week.
- ❑ If a pitch is rated as 'poor' its capacity is specified as one match every other week.

School pitches have been issued with a different capacity rating. This is due to the fact that school pitches generally have more usage because of curricular and extra curricular school based use and therefore should generally have higher levels of maintenance. School pitches have thus been identified to have the following capacity ratings:

- ❑ If a pitch is rated as 'good' its capacity is specified as four matches per week.
- ❑ If a pitch is rated as 'acceptable' its capacity is specified as two matches per week.
- ❑ If a pitch is rated as 'poor' its capacity is specified as one match per week.

A colour coded *rating* is then given by comparing the above information:

- ❑ Red - the pitch is being used over capacity.
- ❑ Amber - the pitch is played to capacity.
- ❑ Green - the pitch is being used under capacity.

This is followed by commentary relating the capacity rating to specific site/pitch issues. Where it is indicated that the level of provision is 'sufficient', this indicates that none of the pitches in the area (for the particular sports), are rated as poor quality and/or played 'over capacity', neither has any latent demand been identified by users. This is not to say that improvements to sites are not required. Conversely, where an insufficient level of provision has been identified this is because one or more sites/pitches have been rated as poor quality and/or are being over-played and/or latent demand has been expressed.

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<sup>1</sup> Sport England – 'Towards A Level Playing Field'



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## **Provisos**

There are a number of provisos that need to be taken into account with regards to the following analysis tables as there may be some discrepancies between the SE visual rating and the consultation comments:

- ❑ Schools may have been rated as poor via the SE rating and acceptable/good through consultation. This may arise as the SE quality assessment increases rating if there is changing accommodation available. A number of the schools however have no changing accommodation available for community use.
- ❑ There may be some user information missing from some of the sites. This is because, although questionnaires were sent out to all users, some did not respond.
- ❑ The columns entitled matches refer to temporal demand or when the teams play. A figure of 1.0 for instance would be representative of two teams using that pitch on a home and away basis (every other week). This means that that pitch is receiving one game at that time every week.

## **10.6 Consultation**

A variety of consultation methods have been used to collate information about leagues, clubs, county associations and national/regional governing bodies. They are generally as follows:

<b>Consultee</b>	<b>Method of consultation</b>
Local authority officers	Face to face interview
League/county association representatives	Telephone interview
Football clubs	Face to face, postal questionnaire, telephone interview
Cricket/rugby/hockey/tennis/netball clubs	Face to face/ telephone interview
Bowls clubs	Postal questionnaire, telephone interview
Golf clubs	Face to face/ telephone interview
Secondary schools	Face to face interview
Primary and junior schools	Email/postal questionnaire
County associations	Face to face interview
Regional governing body officers	Face to face, telephone interview

Local sports development officers, county associations and regional governing body officers advised which of the clubs should be included in the face-to-face consultation. Issues identified by football clubs returning questionnaires were also followed up by telephone or face-to-face interviews.

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#### 10.7 Playing pitch strategy methodology

The assessment and analysis in this report are based on Sport England's (SE) playing pitch strategy methodology, 'Towards A Level Playing Field' (2003). This document outlines specific criteria for assessing the quantity, quality, capacity and accessibility of playing pitches and ancillary facilities. These criteria and the principles of the assessment have also been applied to outdoor sports facilities other than pitches.

'Towards A Level Playing Field' provides clear guidance on the assessment of supply and demand for sports pitches and the types and levels of analysis, which need to be carried out in order for the local authority to plan effectively to meet local needs. These include:

- ❑ The playing pitch model (PPM).
- ❑ Team generation rates (TGRs).
- ❑ Local standards for provision.

#### *Playing Pitch Model (PPM)*

The PPM is a temporal supply and demand analysis and is largely used as a numerical, model. There are three main ways in which the model is used:

- ❑ To reflect the existing situation using data on existing teams and pitches.
- ❑ To test the adequacy of current provision by manipulating the variables in the model.
- ❑ To predict future requirements for pitches, by incorporating planned pitches and projected changes in population and participation.

An eight-stage process is outlined to produce the PPM:

- Stage 1: Identify teams/team equivalents.
- Stage 2: Calculating home games per team per week.
- Stage 3: Assessing total home games per week.
- Stage 4: Establishing temporal demand for games.
- Stage 5: Defining pitches used/required on each day.
- Stage 6: Establishing pitches available.
- Stage 7: Assessing the findings.
- Stage 8: Identifying policy options and solutions.

The first seven stages of this process are covered in this report. Stage 8 is covered in the accompanying Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy & Action Plan.

The 'electronic toolkit', which accompanies 'Towards A Level Playing Field', provides tools for collecting some of the information above.

Identifying teams has been undertaken through consultation with leagues, local authority officers (pitch booking records), as well as with governing bodies and clubs.

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'Team equivalents' refers to use of pitches by groups other than those playing formal matches. This includes school games lessons, club and school training sessions, sports development sessions etc. By including these in the 'demand equation' a more accurate picture is presented. Information from schools and clubs is collected using the electronic toolkit school and club questionnaires.

Establishing how many pitches are available is largely done through site visits. All local authority playing pitch sites have been visited by KKP accompanied by local area grounds maintenance managers. All secondary schools in the Borough have also been visited and a postal questionnaire was sent to primary schools. Audit information for private and voluntary sector clubs was gathered in a variety of ways:

- Face to face consultation/site visit to key sports clubs, leagues and governing bodies of sport.
- Telephone questionnaire to other/outstanding clubs and leagues.

### *Team generation rates (TGRs)*

TGRs indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team based on current population and participation. TGRs for each pitch sport and each age group have been calculated.

TGRs can be used with the PPM for modelling purposes, e.g., by looking at population projections, future TGRs can be estimated. If these are entered into the PPM, it is possible to predict whether current supply would meet future demand.

### *Local standard calculation*

As stated in Part I of this report, local authorities have previously used the NPFA 'Six Acre Standard' to define local minimum standards for provision of outdoor sports facilities. It is now recognised that this standard does not take into account the quality and accessibility of facilities or indeed any local expressions of unmet demand.

In order that this report sits within the wider context of open spaces and PPG17 requirements, KKP has provided locally derived standards. The Government believes that open space standards are best set locally. National standards cannot cater for local circumstances, such as differing demographic profiles and the extent of existing built development in an area. This is particularly the case in Bolton where the authority has both rural and urban areas.

Within this report local standards or 'local aspirations targets for provision' in hectares per 1,000 population are derived as follows:

Existing provision (within this a recognition of 'poor quality' provision)	+	Additional provision to meet current unmet demand	+	Additional provision to meet future demand	=	Local aspirational target for provision
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## **10.8 Sport specific summary**

### ***Introduction***

The following sections summarise the local administration of the main outdoor sports within Bolton.

It provides a quantitative summary of provision and a map showing the distribution of facilities. It also provides information about the availability of facilities to the local community and the governing body of each sport and regional strategic plans (where they exist). Details of local leagues are provided in order to outline the competitive structure for each sport. The findings of club consultation and key issues for each sport are summarised.

The sports covered are as follows:

- 10.10 Football.
- 10.11 Cricket.
- 10.12 Rugby union.
- 10.13 Rugby league.
- 10.14 Hockey.
- 10.15 Rounders
- 10.16 Bowls.
- 10.17 Tennis.
- 10.18 Athletics
- 10.19 Golf.
- 10.20 Netball.

### **10.9 Summary of shortfall from 2002 Bolton Playing Pitch Strategy**

The study identified that current provision in the Borough was not meeting demand. In a number of cases, sports clubs indicated that if more pitches of the right quality were available they would be in a position to produce and run additional teams. There was also evidence to suggest that if existing facilities were to be improved they would be able to develop and run additional teams.

It was recommended that the shortfall could be addressed by carrying out improvements to existing facilities. School sites, where there was no current community access, were identified as a potential resource to enable the Borough to meet the shortfall (especially for mini football).

At the time, no surplus provision was identified in any of the Community Forum areas within the Borough. However, it was suggested that the impact over the long-term (say 15-20 years) of the development of superior facilities should result in increased capacity at some sites and, possibly, some surplus capacity at others.

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It was identified that a number of school facilities, unavailable for use, could start to address latent demand and future requirements. The level of provision within Westhoughton and Horwich was substantially lower than that in the other areas. Participation rates and a lack of provision was said to be inhibiting demand. It was recommended that BC work to distribute provision equally across the Borough and to attempt to meet demand from sports clubs and local communities by improving provision within identified areas.

In relation to non-pitch facilities the Strategy sought to make land use provision to meet the NPFA national and minimum standard of 0.4 hectares per 1000 population within each community forum area.

Provision for rounders which, in Bolton, predominantly shared pitch facilities, was recognised through action targeted at (principally) football and cricket. To this extent no sports specific recommendations were made although it is important to note that access, particularly linked to effective and equitable management and use of ancillary accommodation was recommended to be considered at all stages.

## ***Community Forum summaries***

The 2002 Playing Pitch Strategy, used community forums as analysis areas, of which there were six at the time. Due to political changes, there are currently nine community forums. This report uses the nine areas.

*Astley Bridge and Bromley Cross: Community Forum* – within the Barlow Park area there was some latent demand identified for football pitches and one ATP. One site, although large, was deemed to be of inadequate quality. It was suggested that the football pitch shortfall could be met without the creation of additional pitches but through targeted investment in improving Barlow Park. It was recommended that a feasibility study be carried out for the provision of one additional ATP for the Borough within this area, possibly located at a school site.

There appeared to be an over provision of available outdoor facilities. It was recommended that this be treated with caution, as the levels of demand in the area may be relatively high and require a greater number of facilities. This would require a review of the need for some provision within the wider context of the facility, for example Astley Bridge Park.

*Bradshaw, Breightmet and Tonge: Community Forum* – within this area there was identified latent demand for junior football pitches and one cricket pitch. A large number of pitches were deemed inadequate quality. Due to the large number of inadequate pitches it was recommended that a number of localised improvements should be carried out at the key sites.

There appeared to be an over provision of available outdoor facilities. It was recommended that this be treated with caution as the levels of demand in this area may be relatively high and require a greater number of facilities. Many of the current facilities were also of poor quality.



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*Burden, Daubhill and Derby: Community Forum* – within this area there was a low provision of available pitches. This resulted in no identified latent demand. Without having the facilities available, it is difficult to identify demand. This probably related to migration of teams to other areas where provision is higher. Some pitches were deemed as inadequate but with improvements would meet some of the shortfall.

There seemed to be some shortfall of pitch and non-pitch provision. It was suggested that no additional land was required to service this shortfall. Many mini soccer pitches exist in this forum area but were located on school sites and were inaccessible. It was recommended to work more closely with the schools to develop more opportunity for community use and therefore increase the local standard.

*Centre North: Community Forum* – within this area there was some latent demand identified for rugby and junior football pitches. There were a large number of inadequate facilities (including bowling greens). Some of these sites were key sites within the context of the Forum and the Borough. Due to the large number of inadequate pitches it was recommended that a number of localised improvements were carried out at the key sites.

There seemed to be an over provision of available outdoor facilities. It was recommended that this be treated with caution as the levels of demand in this area were relatively high and require a greater number of facilities. This would require a review of the need for some provision within the wider context of the facility.

*South East Bolton: Community Forum* – within this area there was a large amount of identified latent demand, in particular for junior football pitches. There were a large number of inadequate pitches. Even with improvements, these would not be sufficient in terms of junior pitches to satisfy the shortfall. This would require some sites to be given over to self-management and for the clubs to develop the sites as required.

There seemed to be an over provision of available outdoor facilities. It was recommended that this be treated with caution as the levels of demand in this area were high (according to identified latent demand) and required a greater number of facilities.

*The Three Towns: Community Forum* - within this area there was a large amount of identified latent demand, in particular for mini football pitches. Some of this shortfall was due to be met with development of a new mini soccer centre at Ladybridge FC. There were a large number of inadequate pitches, in particular linked to mini pitches, which were not serviced by changing rooms. It was recommended in the action plans that the shortfall of pitches could be met by making improvements to sites.

There appeared to be an over provision of available outdoor facilities. It was recommended that this be treated with caution as the levels of demand in the area were high (according to identified latent demand) and required a greater number of facilities.

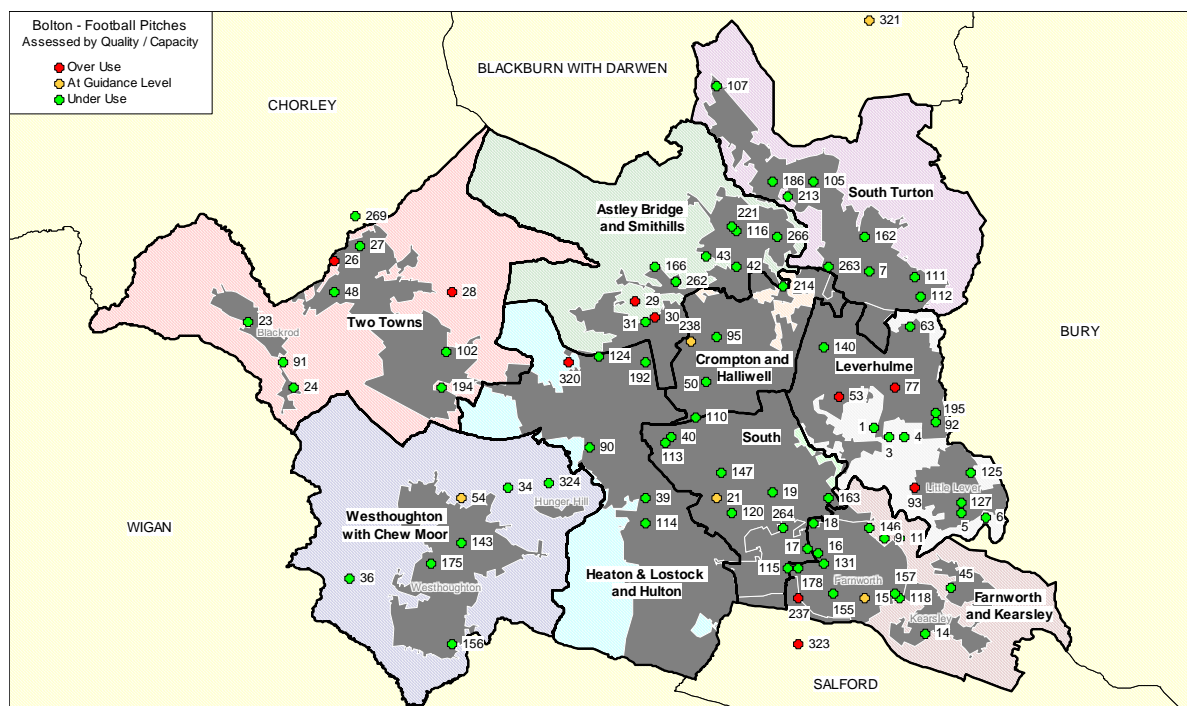
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## 10.10 Football

Table 10.1: Summary of pitches available for community use and teams by analysis area

Analysis area (area forums)	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior mens	Senior womens	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini-soccer
Astley Bridge and Smithills	10	1	6	11	-	15	-	8
Crompton and Halliwell	4	-	-	3	-	4	-	10
Farnworth and Kearsley	8	3	1	4	-	8	-	9
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	4	2	1	-	-	-	-	12
Leverhulme	18	5	10	24	3	40	7	26
South	14	3	1	8	-	4	-	7
South Turton	9	3	1	6	-	5	-	1
Two Towns	13	8	2	8	-	11	-	16
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	3	2	2	5	1	6	-	8
<b>BOLTON MBC</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>97</b>

Figure 10.1: Provision of football pitch sites in Bolton assessed by quality/capacity



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Table 10.2: Key to football map

Site name	KKP ref	Analysis area (area forums)	Comm. Use	Senior pitches	Junior pitches	Mini pitches	Capacity rating
Astley Bridge Park	42	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes			1	
Barlow Park	43	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	2	1	1	
Captains Clough	30	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	2			
Church Road Playing Fields	31	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	1		2	
High Lawn Primary School	116	Astley Bridge and Smithills	No			2	
High View	221	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes			2	
Lancashire Pipe and Tube Company Sports Ground	214	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	1			
Moss Bank Park	29	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	1			
Sharples Secondary School (Community Use)	266	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	3			
Smithills Secondary School (No Community Use)	262	Astley Bridge and Smithills	No	6			
St Peter Smithills Dean Primary School	166	Astley Bridge and Smithills	No		1		
Brownlow Fold Primary School	95	Crompton and Halliwell	Yes		1		
Gilnow Primary School	110	Crompton and Halliwell	No		1		
Queens Park Playing Fields	50	Crompton and Halliwell	Yes	2			
Shepherd Cross St Playing Fields	238	Crompton and Halliwell	Yes	1			
All Saints Primary School	146	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes		1		
Bradford Street Park	15	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1			
Brook Street Park	45	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1			



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Site name	KKP ref	Analysis area (area forums)	Comm. Use	Senior pitches	Junior pitches	Mini pitches	Capacity rating
Darley Park	11	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1			
Doe Hey Recreation Ground	18	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1			
Fern Street Playing Fields / Old Farnworth Grammar School	9	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	2			
Kearsley West Primary School	118	Farnworth and Kearsley	No			1	
Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School	178	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes		1		
Plodder lane Primary School	131	Farnworth and Kearsley	No		1		
South Avenue Playing Field	14	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1			
St James Primary School	155	Farnworth and Kearsley	No		1		
St James St Playing Fields / Blindhill Playing Fields	237	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes			1	
St John Kearsley Primary School	157	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes		1		
Beaumont Primary School	90	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	Yes		1	1	
Heathfield Primary School	114	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	No		1		
Hulton Lane Playing Fields	39	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	Yes	4	1		
Markland Hill Primary School	124	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	No		1		
St Thomas of Canterbury Primary School	192	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	No		1		
Blackshaw Primary School	92	Leverhulme	No		1		
Bolton County AFC	4	Leverhulme	Yes	2			
Bolton Wyresdale AFC	195	Leverhulme	Yes	2			
Bowness Primary School	93	Leverhulme	Yes		1		
Crompton Fold Primary School	77	Leverhulme	Yes		1		



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Site name	KKP ref	Analysis area (area forums)	Comm. Use	Senior pitches	Junior pitches	Mini pitches	Capacity rating
Leverhulme Park (Tonge Fold)	53	Leverhulme	Yes	1			
Leverhulme Park (Long Lane)	1	Leverhulme	Yes	4		4	
Little Lever Sports Club	5	Leverhulme	Yes	2			
Masefield Primary School	125	Leverhulme	Yes			2	
Meadow Playing Fields	6	Leverhulme	Yes	1			
Mytham Primary School	127	Leverhulme	Yes		1		
Newhouse Farm	3	Leverhulme	Yes	4	2	4	
Tonge Moor Primary School	140	Leverhulme	No		1		
Withins High School (Community Use)	63	Leverhulme	Yes	2			
Bishop Bridgeman Primary School	147	South	Yes		1		
Harper Green Playing Fields	17	South	Yes	6			
Harper Green School	16	South	Yes	2	1	1	
Haslam Park	40	South	Yes	2			
Haslam Park Primary School	113	South	No		1		
Highfield Primary School	115	South	No			1	
Lever Edge Primary School	120	South	No		1	1	
Mount St. Josephs Secondary School (Community Use)	264	South	Yes	2	1		
St Michael Primary School	163	South	No		1	1	
Sunnyside Park	21	South	Yes		1		
Walkers Playing Field	19	South	Yes	1			
Canon Slade Secondary School (Community Use)	263	South Turton	Yes	3			
Eagley Juniors Primary School	105	South Turton	Yes		2		
Egerton Primary School	107	South Turton	Yes		1		

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Site name	KKP ref	Analysis area (area forums)	Comm. Use	Senior pitches	Junior pitches	Mini pitches	Capacity rating
Hardy Mill Primary School	111	South Turton	No		1		
Harwood Meadows Primary School	112	South Turton	Yes			1	
John Street	213	South Turton	Yes	1			
Longsight Park	7	South Turton	Yes	3	1		
St John Bromley Cross Primary School	186	South Turton	No		1	1	
St Maxentius Primary School	162	South Turton	No			1	
Blackrod Primary School	91	Two Towns	Yes		1	1	
Claypool	102	Two Towns	Yes		1		
Green Lane Playing Field	27	Two Towns	Yes	2			
Hilton Estate Playing Fields	48	Two Towns	Yes	2			
Lostock - BAe Sports Club	194	Two Towns	Yes	1			
Ridgmont Park	28	Two Towns	Yes		3		
Rivington & Blackrod High School (Community Use)	269	Two Towns	Yes	2	1		
Scholes Bank	26	Two Towns	Yes	2	2	1	
Scott Lane	24	Two Towns	Yes		1		
Vicarage Road	23	Two Towns	Yes	2			
Mill Street Playing Field	36	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Yes	1			
St James Daisy Hill Primary School	156	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Yes			2	
Tempest Utd	34	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Yes	1			
Westhoughton Park / Central Park	54	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Yes		1		
Westhoughton Parochial Primary School	175	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Yes		1		
Westhoughton Primary School	143	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Yes	1			
Amblecote	323	Outside	Yes	1			

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Site name	KKP ref	Analysis area (area forums)	Comm. Use	Senior pitches	Junior pitches	Mini pitches	Capacity rating
Hart Common	322	Outside	Yes	1			
Loch Lane	324	Outside	Yes	1			
Stapleton Avenue	320	Outside	Yes	1			
Thomasson Fold	321	Outside	Yes	1			

## ***Issues from 2002 Bolton Playing Pitch Strategy***

- ❑ Although Saturday senior football was considered to be of a relatively high standard (majority of privately owned facilities), the highest level of temporal demand was on a Sunday.
- ❑ Sunday leagues reported that poor quality local authority pitches and associated facilities were perceived to be causing a decrease in membership.
- ❑ Youth football was considered to be well serviced by leagues and reported a growth in the number of teams participating from Bolton.
- ❑ Junior and mini soccer leagues reported a substantial increase in membership. However, changing accommodation in general was failing to adequately accommodate junior and in particular girls.

## ***Administration***

Football in Bolton is administered by the Lancashire Football Association and is supported by the Bolton Sports Development Unit and Bolton Wanderers Football in the Community.

The Lancashire Local Football Partnership Facility Strategy 2003-2006 identifies the priorities for investment in football facilities across the Borough. A number of objectives underpin the strategy, including to:

1. Stop the decline in adult league football.
2. Develop a strategic network of public multi-pitch outdoor grass pitch sites.
3. Encourage the devolution of facility responsibility to clubs.
4. Support to the development of FA Community Clubs.
5. Promote the game to black and ethnic minorities.
6. Promote the women's game.
7. Address the current under provision of mini soccer pitches.
8. Promote community access of school facilities.
9. Address the local issues of lack of full size grass football pitches.
10. Use football as a tool to promote social inclusion.
11. Support community facilities in rural areas.
12. Ensure all facilities provide disability access.



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Football is one of the nine focus sports identified by the BC Sports Development Unit and as such, receives their support, hosts a development group and has a four year plan in place until 2009.

## ***Development***

During 2005/06 season, The Bolton, Bury and District Junior League made efforts for each of its clubs to gain FA Charter Standard in order to create a Charter Standard League. The aspiration is that this will be in place by the end of 2007. However, the League considers that the facilities are not in place to support its continuing development and expansion particularly a lack of pitches and their decreasing quality.

Since 2002, 9-a-side football has grown in popularity across the Borough and additional facilities are required to support this increasingly popular trend. BC has also identified the increasing demand for 9-a-side pitches, particularly for girls' football. This is reflected in a slight rise of mini soccer teams recorded in 2006 compared to 2002.

The previous Playing Pitch Assessment 2002 identified a strong competitive structure for football in Bolton. However, there was an evident lack of the promotion of girls' football through education structures. There are continued developments in competitive structures for girls' football. Although educational structures for girls' football remain comparatively weak, particularly within primary schools, efforts are being made to ameliorate this situation.

Bolton Wanderers Football in the Community has been instrumental in the delivery of the Three Lions Project which is addressing the need by targeting football activity at 23 schools in the area, working with 368 girls overall. Football in the Community believes that many of the girls that took part in the scheme have continued to train with it through the Girls' Development Centre and holiday courses. Thirty to forty girls attend the Development Centre each week. Bolton Wanderers Football in the Community is currently examining the potential of a second girls' development centre at Smithills High School.

Indicative of the increase in participation in women's and girls' football in competitive structures, Bolton Wanderers Ladies Football Club has experienced an increase in the number of teams from seven girls' teams in 2002 to eight girls' and women's teams by 2006, from U10 to open age. The Club is generally able to access pitches at New House Farm at a convenient time and its development is not hindered by the availability of facilities.

Since 2002, there has since been some development of disability football structures in the Borough. There are six schools catering for a variety of disabilities. Additionally, there is an 'Ability Counts' club for football at U16 to open age. The open age training session has been moved from St Joseph's School to Horwich Leisure Centre and is regarded as being more accessible. An inter-schools girls' tournament has been organised by the Manchester FA every six weeks throughout the season, for which Bolton is represented by Rumworth Special School, which uses facilities co-located with Ladybridge High School.





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Clubs are increasingly keen to take on ownership of their home grounds through leasing arrangements. The Playing Pitch Assessment 2002 recommended examining self-management options at a number of sites. There has been some uptake of self-management. However, leagues consider that there is still potential for leasing out further sites, in the hope that this may also increase quality of sites.

## ***Key issues for football***

### *Temporal demand*

Since, 2002 there has been a significant shift in the pattern of senior men's football. Peak demand for pitches used to be on a Sunday with 62% of matches being played, but this has now changed to Saturday with 52% of matches on this day. There are not more teams playing on a Saturday but the number of teams playing on a Sunday has decreased. The current temporal supply and demand analysis shows that there is now spare pitch capacity on both days.

Having reported either a decline in membership or operating below capacity in 2002, two leagues Horwich and District Sunday Football League and Bolton Pioneer Sunday Football League have now folded. The number of teams competing each year reduced to an extent that it was considered to make the nature of competition unviable. In the main, teams folded and, it remains a perception (by league administrators) that, this is as a result of poor quality local authority pitches. Leagues acknowledge that associated facilities, such as changing accommodation, have generally improved in quality.

Remaining teams either transferred into the Bolton and District Sunday Football League whilst some teams have fallen out of the league structure completely and folded. Since 2002, the total number of senior football teams has reduced by 37% (from 110 to 69).

There has been no change to peak time demand for mini and junior pitches and the majority of matches are played on Saturday morning.

### *Pitch quality*

Remaining Sunday leagues report that they feel the provision of facilities is still hindering the development of football with particular reference to poor quality local authority pitch sites and the decreasing availability of school pitches. Leagues comment that some clubs are now forced to locate to pitches outside the Borough. Horwich Victoria FC, which played on Green Lane Playing Fields in 2002, now plays in Eccles due to poor quality pitches and changing rooms.

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Consultation suggests that the quantity and quality of senior football pitches has decreased since 2002. The number of senior football pitches has reduced from 91 (in 2002) to 83 (2006) and site visit scores show that the majority of pitches are rated as below average. Leagues operating in Bolton feel that local authority owned pitches are poorly maintained particularly in relation to a lack of grass cutting and line marking. Site visit scores suggest that the length of grass is generally good. However, the lack of line marking impinges upon the overall quality of the pitches. In some instances pitches may not be marked if there has been a period of bad weather during the week prior to matches. BC acknowledges that this is the most commonly received complaint from league representatives.

Since 2002, drainage work has been carried out at New House Farm and Harper Green which has improved the quality of these pitches. However, poor drainage still impacts upon the quality of other local authority owned pitches. For example, at Nugent Road and Church Road, site visits and consultation highlight drainage as a problem.

Drainage problems cause match cancellations across Bolton. Matches were cancelled on all local authority pitches across five weekends during season 2005/06 following a period of particularly adverse weather. BC operates a blanket policy, postponing all matches after a week of persistent rain, even in instances where referees would consider the pitch playable. The frustration caused by the blanket cancellations has led to some teams playing illegally in spite of postponements, further compounding pitch quality issues. Empowering referees to take decisions on a pitch by pitch basis may ease some of the issues associated with blanket postponements.

### *Changing accommodation*

Some local authority changing accommodation has been upgraded since 2002 and subsequently quality has improved (see scores below).

*Table 10.3: Upgraded changing facilities*

Site	Facilities upgraded	KKP analysis comments	Changing accommodation scores
New House Farm	Changing rooms partitioned off, doors put on with locks and redecorated throughout.	Consultation highlights that security during games is an issue.	<b>78%</b>
Barlow Park	All showers replaced, redecorated throughout.	Site capacity has increased as a result of improvements.	<b>71%</b>
Leverhulme Park (Longlane)	Redecorated throughout.	Site capacity has increased as a result of improvements.	<b>66%</b>
Church Road	Redecorated throughout.	Overall site quality has improved.	<b>71%</b>
Longsight	Redecorated throughout.	Overall site quality has improved.	<b>68%</b>

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Site	Facilities upgraded	KKP analysis comments	Changing accommodation scores
Walkers	Redecorated throughout.	Overall site quality has improved.	<b>59%</b>
Fern Street	New pavilion.	Consultation identifies a lack of electricity at the site.	<b>51%</b>
Hulton Lane	Two new additional pavilions.	Still under development.	<b>No score</b>
Scholes Bank	One new additional pavilion.	Site capacity has increased as a result of improvements.	<b>59%</b>

Portacabins and temporary changing accommodation are still provided at a number of local authority sites, including Moss Bank Park (scored good, 71%) Farnworth (scored average 51%) and Tonge Fold (scored average, 54%). However, it is the opinion of many leagues that some of the facilities remain substandard, particularly with regard to security. Portacabins are prone to vandalism and sites serviced by portacabins are of the lowest overall quality.

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## *Provision of football pitch sites assessed by quality and capacity*

Table 10.4: Capacity ratings based on pitch quality

KKP ref	Site name	Analysis area (area forum)	Site owner	Community use	Senior			Junior			Mini			Matches per week		
					G	A	P	G	A	P	G	A	P	play	cap	Capacity rating
29	Moss Bank Park	Astley Bridge and Smithills	LA	Yes	1									2.5	2.0	
30	Captains Clough	Astley Bridge and Smithills	LA	Yes		2								2.5	2.0	
31	Church Road Playing Fields	Astley Bridge and Smithills	LA	Yes	1						2			1.0	6.0	
42	Astley Bridge Park	Astley Bridge and Smithills	LA	Yes							1			-	1.0	
43	Barlow Park	Astley Bridge and Smithills	LA	Yes	2			1			1			6.0	8.0	
214	Lancashire Pipe and Tube Company Sports Ground	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Private	Yes	1									0.5	2.0	
221	High View	Astley Bridge and Smithills	LA	Yes							2			-	4.0	
266	Sharples Secondary School (Community Use)	Astley Bridge and Smithills	LA	Yes		3								-	6.0	
50	Queens Park Playing Fields	Crompton and Halliwell	LA	Yes	2									1.5	4.0	
95	Brownlow Fold Primary School	Crompton and Halliwell	LA	Yes						1				-	1.0	
238	Shepherd Cross St Playing Fields	Crompton and Halliwell	LA	Yes		1								1.0	1.0	
9	Fern Street Playing Fields / Old Farnworth Grammar School	Farnworth and Kearsley	LA	Yes	2									2.0	4.0	
11	Darley Park	Farnworth and Kearsley	LA	Yes	1									1.0	2.0	
14	South Avenue Playing Field	Farnworth and Kearsley	LA	Yes			1							-	0.5	



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KKP ref	Site name	Analysis area (area forum)	Site owner	Community use	Senior			Junior			Mini			Matches per week		
					G	A	P	G	A	P	G	A	P	play	cap	Capacity rating
15	Bradford Street Park	Farnworth and Kearsley	LA	Yes	1									2.0	2.0	
18	Doe Hey Recreation Ground	Farnworth and Kearsley	LA	Yes	1									0.5	2.0	
45	Brook Street Park	Farnworth and Kearsley	LA	Yes	1									1.0	2.0	
146	All Saints Primary School	Farnworth and Kearsley	LA	Yes					1					0.5	1.0	
157	St John Kearsley Primary School	Farnworth and Kearsley	LA	Yes					1					0.5	1.0	
178	Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School	Farnworth and Kearsley	LA	Yes					1					-	1.0	
237	St James St Playing Fields / Blindshill Playing Fields	Farnworth and Kearsley	LA	Yes							1		1.0	0.5		
39	Hulton Lane Playing Fields	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	LA	Yes		4		1						-	6.0	
90	Beaumont Primary School	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	LA	Yes					1			1		-	2.0	
1	Leverhulme Park (Long Lane)	Leverhulme	LA	Yes	4						4			11.5	16.0	
3	Newhouse Farm	Leverhulme	LA	Yes	4			2			4			15.5	20.0	
4	Bolton County AFC	Leverhulme	Private	Yes	2									1.5	4.0	
5	Little Lever Sports Club	Leverhulme	LA	Yes	2									3.0	4.0	
6	Meadow Playing Fields	Leverhulme	LA	Yes	1									1.5	2.0	
53	Leverhulme Park (Tonge Fold)	Leverhulme	LA	Yes	1									2.5	2.0	
63	Withins High School (Community Use)	Leverhulme	LA	Yes			2							-	2.0	



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KKP ref	Site name	Analysis area (area forum)	Site owner	Community use	Senior			Junior			Mini			Matches per week		
					G	A	P	G	A	P	G	A	P	play	cap	Capacity rating
77	Crompton Fold Primary School	Leverhulme	LA	Yes						1				2.0	1.0	
93	Bowness Primary School	Leverhulme	LA	Yes						1				1.5	1.0	
125	Masefield Primary School	Leverhulme	LA	Yes								2	-	2.0		
127	Mytham Primary School	Leverhulme	LA	Yes						1				-	1.0	
195	Bolton Wyresdale AFC	Leverhulme	Private	Yes	2									1.5	4.0	
16	Harper Green School	South	LA	Yes		2		1				1		-	10.0	
17	Harper Green Playing Fields	South	LA	Yes	6									7.0	12.0	
19	Walkers Playing Field	South	LA	Yes	1									1.0	2.0	
21	Sunnyside Park	South	LA	Yes						1				0.5	0.5	
40	Haslam Park	South	LA	Yes			2							-	1.0	
147	Bishop Bridgeman Primary School	South	LA	Yes						1				-	1.0	
264	Mount St. Joesphs Secondary School (Community Use)	South	LA	Yes		2				1				1.0	6.0	
7	Longsight Park	South Turton	LA	Yes	3			1						3.0	8.0	
105	Eagley Juniors Primary School	South Turton	LA	Yes						2				-	3.0	
107	Egerton Primary School	South Turton	LA	Yes						1				-	1.0	
112	Harwood Meadows Primary School	South Turton	LA	Yes								1		-	2.0	
213	John Street	South Turton	LA	Yes	1									1.5	2.0	
263	Canon Slade Secondary School (Community Use)	South Turton	LA	Yes	3									-	12.0	



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KKP ref	Site name	Analysis area (area forum)	Site owner	Community use	Senior			Junior			Mini			Matches per week		
					G	A	P	G	A	P	G	A	P	play	cap	Capacity rating
23	Vicarage Road	Two Towns	LA	Yes	2									1.5	4.0	
24	Scott Lane	Two Towns	LA	Yes						1				-	0.5	
26	Scholes Bank	Two Towns	LA	Yes	2			2			1			11.0	10.0	
27	Green Lane Playing Field	Two Towns	LA	Yes	2									1.0	4.0	
28	Ridgmont Park	Two Towns	LA	Yes						3				2.5	1.5	
48	Hilton Estate Playing Fields	Two Towns	LA	Yes		2								0.5	2.0	
91	Blackrod Primary School	Two Towns	LA	Yes						1		1		-	3.0	
102	Claypool	Two Towns	LA	Yes			1							-	1.0	
194	Lostock - BAe Sports Club	Two Towns	Private	Yes	1									-	2.0	
269	Rivington & Blackrod High School (Community Use)	Two Towns	LA	Yes	1		1			1				-	6.0	
34	Tempest Utd	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Private	Yes	1									1.5	2.0	
36	Mill Street Playing Field	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	LA	Yes	1									0.5	2.0	
54	Westhoughton Park / Central Park	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	LA	Yes					1					1.0	1.0	
143	Westhoughton Primary School	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	LA	Yes			1							-	1.0	
156	St James Daisy Hill Primary School	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	LA	Yes								2		-	2.0	



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KKP ref	Site name	Analysis area (area forum)	Site owner	Community use	Senior			Junior			Mini			Matches per week			
					G	A	P	G	A	P	G	A	P	play	cap	Capacity rating	
175	Westhoughton Parochial Primary School	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	LA	Yes						1					-	1.0	
320	Stapleton Avenue	Outside	LA	Yes		1									3.5	1.0	
321	Thomasson Fold	Outside	LA	Yes		1									1.0	1.0	
322	Hart Common	Outside	LA	Yes		1									1.5	1.0	
323	Amblecote	Outside	LA	Yes		1									2.0	1.0	
324	Loch Lane	Outside	LA	Yes		1									-	1.0	

As consultation suggests, it is clear to see that there is a significant amount of spare football pitch capacity across Bolton due to the reduction in the amount of teams now playing in comparison to 2002. There is no particular pattern forming that causes sites to be played over capacity. However, red sites are more likely to be good or average quality sites and due to their popularity are over played e.g. Scholes Bank and Moss Bank Park.

Consultation suggests that due to the popularity of sites such as Harper Green and Newhouse Farm, which have both undergone significant drainage work and score as good quality pitches, demand cannot always be accommodated. However, the capacity analysis above suggests that both these sites have spare capacity based on the fact that a good quality pitch should be able to accommodate two matches per week. BC acknowledges that there is significant spare capacity at Hulton Lane, which could absorb some of the demand for Harper Green pitches (if required).





# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## **Shortfall, adequacy and requirement**

### *Summary of current demand*

The table below provides a summary of sites in each area that are currently being played beyond their capacity (taken from Table 3.4).

*Table 10.5: Summary of pitch overplay by analysis area*

<i>Site</i>	<i>Analysis area</i>	<b>Weekly overplay of matches</b>
Moss Bank Park	Astley Bridge and Smithills	0.5
Captains Clough	Astley Bridge and Smithills	0.5
St James St Playing Fields / Blindhill Playing Fields	Farnworth and Kearsley	0.5
Leverhulme Park (Tonge Fold)	Leverhulme	0.5
Crompton Fold Primary School	Leverhulme	1.0
Bowness Primary School	Leverhulme	0.5
Scholes Bank	Two Towns	1.0
Ridgmont Park	Two Towns	1.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>5.5 matches</b>

### *Summary of latent demand*

The table below summarises specific demand expressed by clubs/groups for additional pitches. This may steer/prioritise facility improvement projects as and when they arise.

*Table 10.6: Summary of latent demand expressed by clubs*

<b>Club</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Level of latent demand</b>	<b>Pitch Requirement</b>
Eagley FC	Eagley Sports Complex	South Turton	Two junior teams	1 junior pitch
Bolton Wyresdale AFC	Inverberg Drive	Leverhulme	Two senior teams	1 senior pitch
Tonge United FC	Castle Hill School	Crompton and Halliwell	Junior teams	1 junior pitch
<b>Total</b>				<b>1 senior pitch 2 junior pitches</b>



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The majority of latent demand remains from 2002. There is little expressed latent demand across Bolton, particularly amongst adult clubs. This is not surprising given that it is evident that consolidation of existing playing commitments is an overriding objective, with many clubs expressing a need to have regular access to facilities that meet current demand, rather than any future increase in participation.

#### **Team generation rates (TGRs)**

The following future TGRs (based on estimated population projects to 2017) have been calculated for each area of Bolton. Where no TGR is shown this indicates that no teams operate at that age group, for football, in that area.

*Table 10.7: Football TGRs*

<b>Analysis areas (area forums)</b>	<b>Senior men (16-45)</b>	<b>Senior women (16-45)</b>	<b>Junior boys (10-15)</b>	<b>Junior girls (10-15)</b>	<b>Mini soccer (6-9) mixed</b>
Astley Bridge and Smithills	1:484	-	1:69	-	1:174
Crompton and Halliwell	1:1,909	-	1:259	-	1:145
Farnworth and Kearsley	1:1,436	-	1:166	-	1:194
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	-	-	-	1:108
Leverhulme	1:317	1:2,074	1:41	1:222	1:76
South	1:1,110	-	1:475	-	1:372
South Turton	1:759	-	1:197	-	1:1,212
Two Towns	1:607	-	1:89	-	1:75
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	1:1,068	1:4,352	1:174	-	1:172
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>1:766</b>	<b>1:10,894</b>	<b>1:117</b>	<b>1:1,553</b>	<b>1:147</b>

As demonstrated above, the future TGRs vary significantly from area to area. Leverhulme provides teams across each category of play in comparison with Heaton, Lostock and Hulton, which only provides mini soccer. Leverhulme also provides the highest future TGR for junior boys football. This is largely due to many clubs and teams in the Borough gravitating towards the multi-pitch sites at Leverhulme Park and Newhouse Farm.



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The low or non-existent future TGRs for junior girls and senior women's football are indicative of the fact that play is still at a developmental level rather than formally competitive in the majority of areas in Bolton. The main concentration of junior girls play is in Leverhulme because play is focused on a central venue site

Mini soccer is played throughout the Borough, with teams in every analysis area. Mini soccer is played most in Two Towns and less in South Turton reflecting the pattern of provision in those areas.

Where TGRs are relatively high in comparison to the whole Borough, it is recommended that these should be maintained. Where TGRs are lower than the Borough, target TGRs should be set as aspiration. The target TGRs (figures in blue) are applied below to give an indication as to how many additional football teams (figures in bold) will be generated in 2017 if these targets are met.

*Table 10.8: Football TGRs*

Analysis areas (area forums)	Senior men (16-45)	Senior women (16-45)	Junior boys (10-15)	Junior girls (10-15)	Mini soccer (6-9) mixed
Astley Bridge and Smithills	1:484	1:10,894	1:69	1:1,553	1:147
	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>
Crompton and Halliwell	1:766	1:10,894	1:117	1:1,553	1:145
	<b>5.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.7</b>
Farnworth and Kearsley	1:766	1:10,894	1:117	1:1,553	1:147
	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>3.7</b>
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	1:766	1:10,894	1:117	1:1,553	1:108
	<b>6.8</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.9</b>
Leverhulme	1:317	1:2,074	1:41	1:222	1:76
	<b>1.7</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>1.9</b>
South	1:766	1:10,894	1:117	1:1,553	1:147
	<b>4.4</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>13.4</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>12.0</b>
South Turton	1:759	1:10,894	1:117	1:1,553	1:147
	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>7.8</b>
Two Towns	1:607	1:10,894	1:89	1:1,553	1:75
	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	1:766	1:4,352	1:117	1:1,553	1:147
	<b>2.5</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>2.0</b>



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## Future PPM summary

Sport England's PPM (playing pitch model) is used to assess whether supply of pitches will be sufficient at peak times in the future (up to 2017). A summary of surpluses and deficiencies is shown below and takes account of the additional teams estimated to require pitches if TGR targets are achieved.

Table 10.9: Future PPM summary

Analysis area (area forums)	Football		
	Sf	Jf	Mf
Astley Bridge and Smithills	9.7	-3.6	1.6
Crompton and Halliwell	1.2	-4.1	-5.4
Farnworth and Kearsley	7.9	-1.9	-4.6
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	4.0	2.0	-4.9
Leverhulme	8.4	-8.9	-1.8
South	7.4	-0.7	-7.1
South Turton	-0.5	-0.9	-23.5
Two Towns	-0.5	-0.1	-0.2
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	-1.7	-0.7	-0.8
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>35.9</b>	<b>-19.0</b>	<b>-46.7</b>

Although there is likely to be significant deficiencies of both junior and mini football pitches across Bolton in 2017, there is a significant surplus of senior pitches. It is therefore recommended that rather than release pitches, that senior pitches are used to accommodate junior and mini pitches.

## Football summary

- ❑ Current games per week: 135 in total (senior, junior and mini).
- ❑ Additional match slots to accommodate latent and future demand: 4 junior, 1 senior.
- ❑ Total additional games to be accommodated (over capacity): 5.5
- ❑ There is a perception that the quantity and quality of pitches in Bolton has decreased since 2002, particularly the cutting and marking of pitches which is regarded as insufficient. The majority of pitches are rated as below average.
- ❑ Drainage work is required at several sites to bring them up to standard. Some clubs have been forced to find pitches outside the area as they have not been able to access pitches in Bolton.
- ❑ Ancillary facilities across the Borough are poor and subject to vandalism.
- ❑ The increasing popularity of 9-a-side will impact upon demand for the provision of such facilities.
- ❑ There is likely to be an over supply of senior football pitches in the future.



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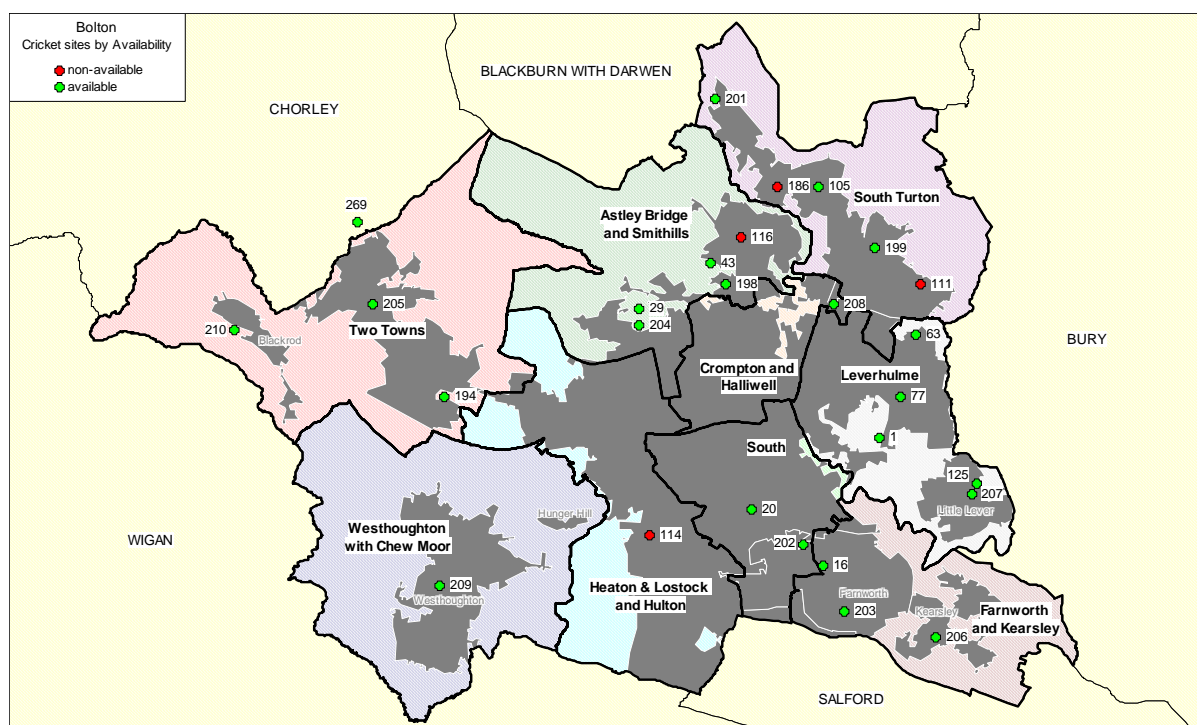
## 10.11 Cricket

### Current provision

Table 10.10: Summary of pitches available for community use and teams by analysis area

Analysis area (area forums)	No. of available pitches	No. of teams			
		Senior mens	Senior womens	Junior boys	Junior girls
Astley Bridge and Smithills	4	17	-	8	-
Crompton and Halliwell	1	2	-	4	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	3	5	-	8	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	-	-	-	-
Leverhulme	5	12	-	10	-
South	4	10	-	8	-
South Turton	3	8	-	12	-
Two Towns	5	6	1	11	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	1	5	-	4	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>-</b>

Figure 10.2: Provision of cricket pitch sites mapped by quality/capacity



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Table 10.11: Key to cricket map

Site name	KKP reference	Analysis area (area forums)	Community use	No. of pitches	Quality rating
Astley Bridge CC / Sharples Park	198	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	1	Good
Barlow Park	43	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	1	Good
Blackrod CC	210	Two Towns	Yes	1	Good
Bolton CC	249	South	Yes	1	Good
Bolton Indians CC	218	Leverhulme Park	Yes	1	Good
Bradshaw CC / The Rigbys	199	South Turton	Yes	1	Good
Darcy Lever CC	212	Leverhulme Park	Yes	1	Good
Eagley Sports Club	244	South Turton	Yes	1	Poor
Egerton CC	201	South Turton	Yes	1	Good
Farnworth CC / Bridgeman Park	202	South	Yes	1	Good
Farnworth Social Circle CC / Piggot Park	203	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1	Good
Harper Green School	16	South	Yes	1	Below Average
Heathfield Primary School	114	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	No	1	Below Average
Heaton CC	204	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	1	Good
Horwich CC	205	Two Towns	Yes	1	Good
Horwich RMI CC	232	Two Towns	Yes	1	Good
Kearsley CC	206	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1	Good
Leverhulme Park (Long Lane)	1	Leverhulme	Yes	2	Good
Little Lever CC	207	Leverhulme	Yes	1	Good
Lostock - BAe Sports Club	194	Two Towns	Yes	1	Good
Moss Bank Park	29	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	1	Average
Nugent Road	20	South	Yes	1	Below Average
Rivington & Blackrod High School (Community Use)	269	Two Towns	Yes	1	Below Average
St James Secondary School	68	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1	Average
Tonge CC	208	Crompton and Halliwell	Yes	1	Good
Westhoughton CC	209	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Yes	1	Good



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## ***Issues from 2002 Bolton Playing Pitch Strategy***

- ❑ Pitches associated with park sites were considered to be unable to sustain a high standard of cricket. Consequently, leagues reported suppressed demand as a direct result of poor quality facilities.
- ❑ Leagues playing on privately managed facilities identified demand for additional facilities to accommodate practice and play for third teams and junior teams.
- ❑ Facilities at Barlow Park, Leverhulme Park and Moss Bank Park were considered to be inadequate. Leagues commented that improving the pitches and facilities would increase the number of teams.
- ❑ A number of cricket pitches in the Borough were lost to football prior to 2002. For example High View CC and pitches at Hulton Lane and Scholes Bank.

## ***Administration***

The Lancashire Cricket Board (LCB) administers the development and governance of the sport. Cricket in Bolton remains strong, with the Bolton Cricket League and the Bolton Association League being the main league providers. There is now an established cricket development group, which was set up in 2003. This has in the region of 17 clubs that regularly attend development group meetings. The Group is regarded as one of the most active in Greater Manchester, with all clubs in attendance developing junior cricket.

## ***Development***

Cricket is a BC sports development focus sport. Five clubs in Bolton are classified by LCB as focus clubs - Bolton Indians CC, Bradshaw CC, Farnworth Social Circle CC, Heaton CC and Little Lever CC. The main thrust of LCB work is that focus clubs receive priority access to funding and are also given access to the coach education programmes. Through the Community Club Development Fund, rolled out three years ago, strategically important community cricket clubs were allocated funds for the improvement of facilities. Consequently a number of the focus clubs in Bolton have been able to upgrade their facilities.

*Table 10.12: Summary of focus clubs and development of facilities*

<b>Club</b>	<b>Facility development</b>
Bolton Indians CC	New indoor, two lane, community sports facility.
Farnworth Social Circle CC	Floodlit ATP practice facility.
Little Lever CC	Work is being carried out to upgrade the changing facilities.



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## *Junior development*

A number of cricket clubs are active in the development of juniors. Several clubs are hoping to introduce U9s teams, where pitch capacity allows. Bradshaw Cricket Club and Farnworth Social Circle Cricket Club are participating in the 'Chance to Shine' initiative, with the aim of increasing competitive schools cricket. If this kind of development is to be successful, school cricket pitches need to be maintained to a higher quality. All schools pitches scored as either average or below average according to the site assessments.

## **Key issues for cricket**

Since 2002, the biggest area of development of private cricket facilities has been in relation to reducing the wear and tear on cricket wickets and therefore, increasing pitch quality. This is reflected in the fact that all private cricket clubs have scored over 70% (good) quality score. Developments have tended to focus on the provision of both indoor and outdoor nets. For example, the development of the new indoor community sports facilities at Bolton Indians Cricket Club has alleviated some of its pitch quality issues and increased the capacity of the pitch for junior matches. A number of other cricket clubs in Bolton also now use the facility for training to achieve a similar result.

Although there has not been a significant change in the number of teams currently playing competitive cricket in Bolton compared with 2002, there has been a significant reduction in the number of available pitches (from 30 to 20). This mainly results from a reduction in local authority pitches and school pitches. As is the trend throughout the Country, local authorities and schools struggle to maintain parks cricket pitches to an acceptable standard for leagues.

Some teams playing within the Bolton Cosmopolitan League hire private cricket pitches in order to guarantee a higher standard of pitch rather than hire local authority parks pitches. Leagues, primarily using parks pitches/facilities such as Horwich Church and Welfare Cricket Association, have seen a reduction in membership since 2002. In fact, there are now only seven clubs remaining in the League. This decrease is perceived to be due to a lack of promotion of the sport locally and poor quality facilities. Clubs express concerns regarding parks cricket wickets, which, because of high maintenance costs, have deteriorated in quality. However, in contrast, leagues primarily using private cricket grounds have seen a slight increase in membership. The Bolton Cricket League, for example, now operates a waiting list for new clubs to join the League.

Bolton Metropolitan Cricket League is based solely on parks facilities at Leverhulme Park, Moss Bank Park, Church Road and Barlow Park. The League representative comments that playing facilities remain poor due to the lack of grass cutting and insufficient marking. According to the site assessments, Leverhulme Park and Barlow Park both provide good quality cricket pitches, although, in percentage terms, score lower than the private clubs. However, it is the lack of availability of changing facilities that is of most concern. The League believes that demand for junior development is being suppressed by poor quality facilities.





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Table 10.13: Cricket provision and level of community use

KKP ref	Site name	Analysis Area	Site Owner	Community Use	Pitches		Matches				
					SCr	JCr	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm	Other
29	Moss Bank Park	Astley Bridge and Smithills Area Forum	LA	Yes	1		-	-	1.5	-	-
43	Barlow Park	Astley Bridge and Smithills Area Forum	LA	Yes	1		-	-	1.5	-	-
198	Astley Bridge CC / Sharples Park	Astley Bridge and Smithills Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	2.0
204	Heaton CC	Astley Bridge and Smithills Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	3.0
208	Tonge CC	Crompton and Halliwell Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	2.0
68	St James Secondary School	Farnworth and Kearsley Area Forum	LA	Yes	1		-	-	-	-	-
203	Farnworth Social Circle CC / Piggot Park	Farnworth and Kearsley Area Forum	LA	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	2.0
206	Kearsley CC	Farnworth and Kearsley Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	2.5
1	Leverhulme Park (Long Lane)	Leverhulme Area Forum	LA	Yes	2		-	-	1.5	-	-
63	Withins High School (Community Use)	Leverhulme Area Forum	LA	Yes		1	-	-	-	-	-
77	Crompton Fold Primary School	Leverhulme Area Forum	LA	Yes		1	-	-	-	-	-
125	Masefield Primary School	Leverhulme Area Forum	LA	Yes		1	-	-	-	-	-
207	Little Lever CC	Leverhulme Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	2.0
212	Darcy Lever CC	Leverhulme Area Forum	LA	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	1.5
218	Bolton Indians CC	Leverhulme Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	-	-	-	4.0
16	Harper Green School	South Area Forum	LA	Yes	1		-	-	-	-	-



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KKP ref	Site name	Analysis Area	Site Owner	Community Use	Pitches		Matches				
					SCr	JCr	Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm	Other
20	Nugent Road	South Area Forum	LA	Yes	1		-	-	-	-	-
202	Farnworth CC / Bridgeman Park	South Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	2.5
249	Bolton CC	South Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	-	-	-	3.5
105	Eagley Juniors Primary School	South Turton Area Forum	LA	Yes		1	-	-	-	-	-
199	Bradshaw CC / The Rigbys	South Turton Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	2.0
201	Egerton CC	South Turton Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	2.0
244	Eagley Sports Club	South Turton Area Forum	Trust	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	3.0
194	Lostock - BAe Sports Club	Two Towns Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	2.5
205	Horwich CC	Two Towns Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	2.0
210	Blackrod CC	Two Towns Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	1.5
232	Horwich RMI Club	Two Towns Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	-	-	-	-
269	Rivington & Blackrod High School (Community Use)	Two Towns Area Forum	LA	Yes	1		-	-	-	-	-
209	Westhoughton CC	Westhoughton with Chew Moor Area Forum	Private	Yes	1		-	1.0	-	-	-

All senior cricket matches in the Borough are played on a Saturday, with juniors either playing on a Saturday or mid week. Temporal demand can therefore be a problem, given that pitches need to be allocated to accommodate two senior teams and three junior teams each week to meet fixtures. Pitches are not currently being overplayed but the majority of private pitches are operating at capacity. Development work through school club links and other initiatives should create more junior teams. Sites currently showing spare capacity are all school sites, so although these sites are available for community use, they are currently not being utilised.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## **Shortfall, adequacy and requirement**

### *Summary of current demand*

No sites are currently being overplayed, although the majority of sites are operating at capacity.

### *Summary of future/latent demand*

The table below summarises specific demand expressed by clubs/groups for additional pitches. This may steer/prioritise facility improvement projects as and when they arise.

*Table 10.14: Summary of latent demand expressed by clubs*

<b>Club</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Level of latent demand</b>	<b>Pitch requirement</b>
Westhoughton Cricket Club	The Tyldesley's	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Under nine's and a senior men's third team and ladies team	1 pitch
Bradshaw Cricket Club	The Rigbys	South Turton	One senior team (3 <sup>rd</sup> team) and two junior teams	1 pitch
<b>Total</b>				<b>2 cricket pitches</b>

There is little latent or future demand across Bolton, particularly amongst adult clubs. It is evident that consolidation of existing playing commitments is an overriding objective, with many clubs expressing a need to have regular access to facilities that meet current demand, rather than any future increase in participation.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## **Team generation rates (TGRs)**

The following future TGRs (based on estimated population projections to 2017) have been calculated for each area of Bolton. Where no TGR is shown this indicates that no teams operate at that age group, for cricket, in that area.

*Table 10.15: Cricket TGRs*

<b>Analysis areas (area forums)</b>	<b>Senior men (18-55)</b>	<b>Senior women (18-55)</b>	<b>Juniors (11-17)</b>
Astley Bridge and Smithills	1:391	-	1:149
Crompton and Halliwell	1:3,413	-	1:317
Farnworth and Kearsley	1:1,425	-	1:184
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	-	-
Leverhulme	1:815	-	1:188
South	1:1,047	-	1:277
South Turton	1:762	-	1:93
Two Towns	1:1,048	1:5,373	1:101
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	1:1,377	-	1:301
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>1:1,023</b>	<b>1:57,420</b>	<b>1:194</b>

As demonstrated above, the future TGRs vary significantly from area to area. Cricket is currently not being played in Heaton, Lostock and Hulton area. However, Two Towns provides teams across each category of play. There are no specific junior girls teams. Where junior girls do play, these play within generic junior teams. Astley Bridge and Smithills area provides the highest future TGR for senior men's cricket and South Turton provides the highest future TGR for junior cricket.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Where TGRs are relatively high in comparison to the whole Borough, it is recommended that these should be maintained. Where TGRs are lower than the Borough, target TGRs should be set as aspiration. It is also recommended that, in analysis areas where cricket appears to be relatively strong, women's TGRs are set based on that produced in the Two Towns area, which is the only analysis area with a women's team. The target TGRs (figures in blue) are applied below to give an indication as to how many additional cricket teams (figures in bold) will be generated in 2017 if these targets are met.

Table 10.16: Cricket TGRs

Analysis areas (area forums)	Senior men (18-55)	Senior women (18-55)	Juniors (11-17)
Astley Bridge and Smithills	1:391	1:5,373	1:149
	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.5</b>
Crompton and Halliwell	1:1,023	-	1:194
	<b>5.1</b>	-	<b>3.0</b>
Farnworth and Kearsley	1:1,023	-	1:184
	<b>2.5</b>	-	<b>0.6</b>
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	1:1,023	-	1:194
	<b>6.7</b>	-	<b>6.2</b>
Leverhulme	1:815	1:5,373	1:188
	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>0.7</b>
South	1:1,023	-	1:194
	<b>0.9</b>	-	<b>4.2</b>
South Turton	1:762	1:5,373	1:93
	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.8</b>
Two Towns	1:1,023	1:5,373	1:101
	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.8</b>
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	1:1,023	-	1:301
	<b>2.2</b>	-	<b>0.3</b>



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## Future PPM summary

Sport England's PPM (playing pitch model) is used to assess whether supply of pitches will be sufficient at peak times in the future (up to 2017). A summary of surpluses and deficiencies is shown below and takes account of the additional teams estimated to require pitches if TGR targets are achieved.

Table 10.17: Future PPM summary

Analysis area (area forums)	Cricket pitches
Astley Bridge and Smithills	-7.0
Crompton and Halliwell	-5.3
Farnworth and Kearsley	-5.2
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-
Leverhulme	-5.4
South	-11.1
South Turton	-1.6
Two Towns	-0.9
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	-3.0
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>-39.7</b>

Although the figures above show there to be a significant undersupply of cricket pitches in total across Bolton, to some extent these figures are exaggerated. The calculation does not fully take into account the number of matches which can be accommodated per day, as it is difficult to provide an average match length and it often differs between senior and junior matches.

Therefore the majority of additional demand could be accommodated on the current supply of pitches. The majority of future demand equates to the need to accommodate additional junior matches, which can be played before senior matches.

## Cricket summary

- There has been a significant reduction in the number of available pitches (from 30 to 20 since 2002). This mainly results from a reduction in local authority pitches and school pitches.
- In general, park pitches remain unable to sustain a high standard of cricket. Consequently, leagues report suppressed demand as a direct result of poor quality facilities. Private clubs have seen an increase in pitch quality, with all private sites scoring high quality.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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- ❑ Pitches are not currently being overplayed but the majority of private pitches are operating at capacity.
- ❑ Development work through school club links and other initiatives should create more junior teams.
- ❑ The biggest target will be to provide teams in Heaton and Lostock and Hulton as there is currently no teams playing in this area.
- ❑ Although it appears that there will be a significant shortfall of pitches at peak time (Saturday for seniors and mid week for juniors), the majority of additional demand can be accommodated on the current supply of pitches.
- ❑ Increasing the quality and community use of school cricket pitches will also go some way to meeting future demand.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

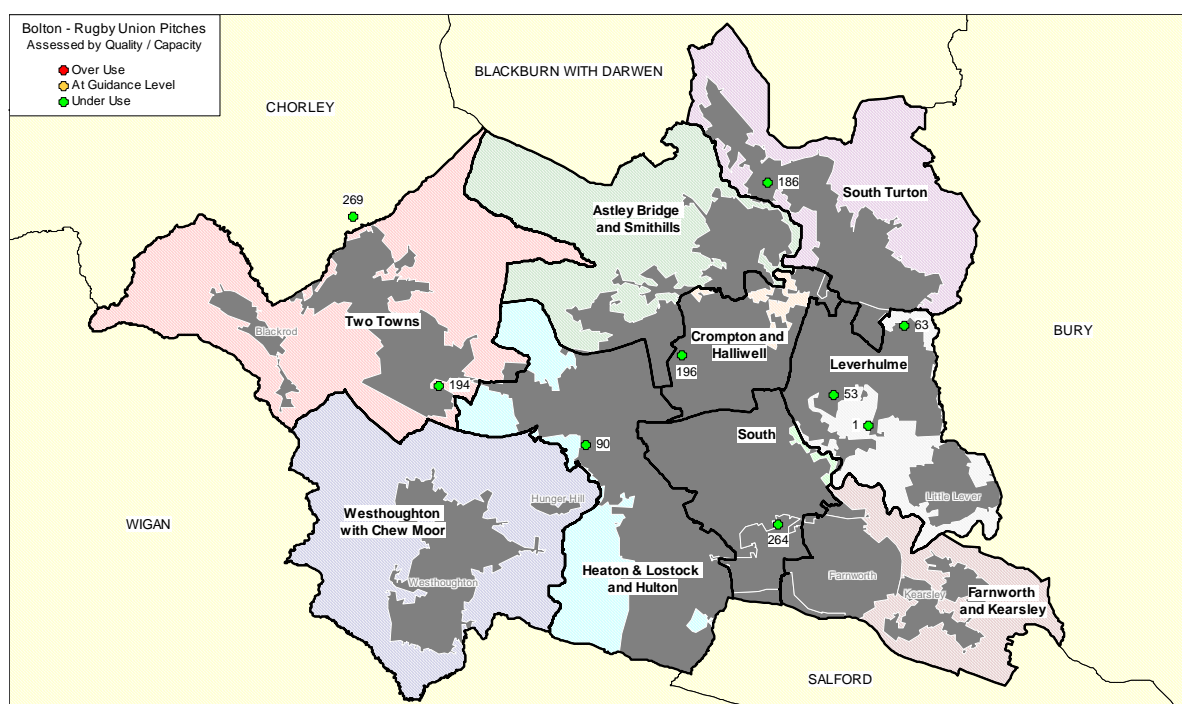
## 10.12 Rugby union

### Current provision

Table 10.18: Summary of pitches available for community use and teams by analysis area

Analysis area (area forums)	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior mens	Senior womens	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini-soccer
Astley Bridge and Smithills	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	2	1	-	5	1	5	-	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Leverhulme	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Turton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Two Towns	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Figure 10.3: Provision of rugby union pitch sites mapped by quality/capacity





# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 10.19: Key to rugby map

Site name	KKP reference	Analysis area (area forums)	Community use	Senior pitches	Junior pitches	Capacity rating
Bolton RUFC	196	Crompton and Halliwell	Yes	2	1	
Beaumont Primary School	90	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	Yes		1	
Withins High School	63	Leverhulme	Yes	1		
Mount St. Joesphs Secondary School	264	South	Yes	1		
St John Bromley Cross Primary School	186	South Turton	No		1	
St James Secondary School	68	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1		
Lostock - BAe Sports Club	194	Two Towns	Yes	1		
Rivington & Blackrod High School	269	Two Towns	Yes		1	

### **Issues from 2002 Bolton Playing Pitch Strategy**

Bolton RUFC, the strongest club in the Borough, was identified to be meeting current demand but operating at capacity. Latent demand was identified for junior teams.

### **Administration**

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) administers the development and governance of rugby union in Bolton with the support of Greater Sport. Regionally, the priorities for rugby union are:

- Club development – High targets on Seal of Approval and sustainable clubs.
- Addressing the drop off in participation of people aged 16-24.
- Professionalisation of coaching through community sports coaches.

### **Development**

There are four rugby union clubs playing within Bolton. Bolton RUFC provides the highest standard of rugby and offers opportunities for senior men and women and juniors to play rugby. The Club is the focus for development work in Bolton.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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Since 2002, Bolton RUFC junior section has developed through the work carried out by the development officer, employed by the Club. It has strong links with ten secondary schools and feeder primary schools. The Club plans to continue to develop its junior section through increasing the number of coaches (through coach education) and development of an inter school league. It is also to target local universities and colleges to provide a youth team that could feed into the senior teams.

## ***Key issues for rugby union***

Bolton RUFC is the main provider of pitches and rugby facilities in Bolton. Its pitches are currently over played and latent demand for junior teams identified in 2002 still remains. The Club reports on-going pitch maintenance issues due to the over play. It is in the process of applying for Grand Match funding from the Rugby Football Foundation to improve pitch drainage and replace the posts. The third pitch, in particular, suffers from poor drainage. If these improvements are made, this will increase the capacity of the pitches to a certain extent. However, more pitch space is required, particularly on Saturdays when the site is at capacity. Additional training lighting is to be installed along the second pitch and improvements are due to be made to this pitch to facilitate training use.

Lostock RUFC currently plays at BAe Sports Club, fielding one senior team. The Club is still fighting the closure of the grounds owned now by First (1st) Industrial by trying to obtain tenure of the land, which would allow not only the continuation of the Club, but also its expansion, by accommodating mini and youth teams. It believes there is significant latent demand to create additional teams if it had a secure site to develop more pitches on.



## BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

### *Provision of rugby union pitch sites assessed by quality and capacity*

Table 10.20: Rugby union provision and level of community use

KKP ref	Site name	Analysis area (area forums)	Site Owner	Comm Use	Senior			Junior			Mini			Matches per week		
					G	A	P	G	A	P	G	A	P	play	cap	rating
196	Bolton RUFC	Crompton and Halliwell	Private	Yes	2			1						5.5	6.0	
68	St James Secondary School	Farnworth and Kearsley	LA	Yes	1									-	4.0	
90	Beaumont Primary School	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	LA	Yes						1				-	1.0	
63	Withins High School	Leverhulme	LA	Yes			1							-	1.0	
264	Mount St. Joesphs Secondary School	South	LA	Yes		1								-	2.0	
194	Lostock - BAe Sports Club	Two Towns	Private	Yes	1									0.5	2.0	
269	Rivington & Blackrod High School	Two Towns	LA	Yes						1				-	1.0	

Although the majority of pitches are available for community use, there is currently no formal use. There is significant capacity across Bolton to accommodate any latent or future demand identified. Bolton RUFC is the main provider of pitches in Bolton and although there appears to be some spare capacity, the Club still reports significant latent demand at its home ground. Pitch space is hired to Old Boltonians RFC and University of Bolton RFC (therefore there is some option to transfer this play to other sites to accommodate the Club's own latent demand). Although two secondary schools have senior sized pitches available for community use, the site assessment shows that these pitches are of an average or poor quality and this is likely to be the reason that these pitches are not utilised currently.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## **Shortfall, adequacy and requirement**

### *Summary of current demand*

No sites are currently being overplayed.

### *Summary of future/latent demand*

The table below summarises specific demand expressed by clubs/groups for additional pitches. This may steer/prioritise facility improvement projects as and when they arise.

*Table 10.21: Summary of latent demand expressed by clubs*

<b>Club</b>	<b>Site</b>	<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Level of latent demand</b>	<b>Pitch Requirement</b>
Bolton RUFC	Bolton RUFC	Crompton and Halliwell	Four junior boys teams and one junior girls team.	2 junior pitches
Lostock RUFC	BAe Sports Club	Two Towns	Two juniors and one youth team.	1 senior pitch
<b>Total</b>				<b>2 junior pitches</b> <b>1 senior pitches</b>

Although there is spare capacity at sites, there is an issue with pitch quality. Therefore, latent demand identified above could be accommodated on current pitch stock if pitch quality was improved.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## **Team generation rates (TGRs)**

The following future TGRs (based on estimated population projections to 2017) have been calculated for each area of Bolton. Where no TGR is shown this indicates that no teams operate at that age group, for rugby, in that area.

*Table 10.22: Rugby TGRs*

<b>Analysis areas (area forums)</b>	<b>Senior men (18-45)</b>	<b>Senior women (18-45)</b>	<b>Junior boys (13-17)</b>	<b>Junior girls (16-17)</b>	<b>Mini-rugby (8-12)</b>
Astley Bridge and Smithills	-	-	-	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	1:1,067	1:4,516	1:186	-	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	-	-	-	-	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	-	-	-	-
Leverhulme	-	-	-	-	-
South	-	-	-	-	-
South Turton	-	-	-	-	-
Two Towns	1:4,552	-	-	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	-	-	-	-	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>1:8,228</b>	<b>1:40,365</b>	<b>1:1,785</b>	-	-

The TGRs reflect the fact that there are only two clubs and two sites currently being used across Bolton. There are no junior girls or mini rugby teams playing competitively in Bolton.



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TGRs should be maintained, as they are higher in all cases when compared to the Borough. It is also recommended that as a target, the TGRs from Crompton and Halliwell area are applied to Two Towns area. The TGRs (figures in blue) are applied below to give an indication as to how many additional rugby teams (figures in bold) will be generated in 2017 if these TGRs are maintained.

Table 10.23: Rugby TGRs

Analysis areas (area forums)	Senior men (16-45)	Senior women (16-45)	Junior boys (10-15)	Junior girls (10-15)	Mini soccer (6-9) mixed
Astley Bridge and Smithills	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	1:1,067	1:4,516	1:186	-	-
	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>	-	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Leverhulme	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
South	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
South Turton	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Two Towns	1:1,067	1:4,516	1:186	-	-
	<b>3.6</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>4.5</b>	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Future PPM summary

Sport England's PPM (playing pitch model) is used to assess whether supply of pitches will be sufficient at peak times in the future (up to 2017). A summary of surpluses and deficiencies is shown below and takes account of the additional teams estimated to require pitches if TGR targets are achieved.

Table 10.24: Future PPM summary

Analysis area (area forums)	Rugby		
	Senior pitches	Junior pitches	Mini pitches
Astley Bridge and Smithills	0	0	0
Crompton and Halliwell	-0.7	-1.7	0
Farnworth and Kearsley	1.0	0	0
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	0	1.0	0
Leverhulme	3.0	0	0
South	1.0	0	0
South Turton	0	0	0
Two Towns	0	0	0
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	0	0	0
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>-0.7</b>	<b>0</b>

Although there is likely to be a slight deficiency of junior rugby pitches across Bolton in 2017, there will be a surplus of senior pitches. This is due to a number of sites that are available for community use but are not used competitively.

## Rugby union summary

- ❑ Both rugby union clubs report latent demand for additional pitch space.
- ❑ There is spare capacity at secondary school sites to accommodate this demand. However, these sites are of poor quality in comparison to the private rugby club standards.
- ❑ Bolton Rugby RUFC is the main provider of pitches and rugby facilities in Bolton. Its pitches are almost at capacity and latent demand for junior teams identified in 2002 still remains.
- ❑ Lostock RUFC remains to have security of tenure issues and the future of the Club at this time is uncertain. However, the Club still reports latent demand.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

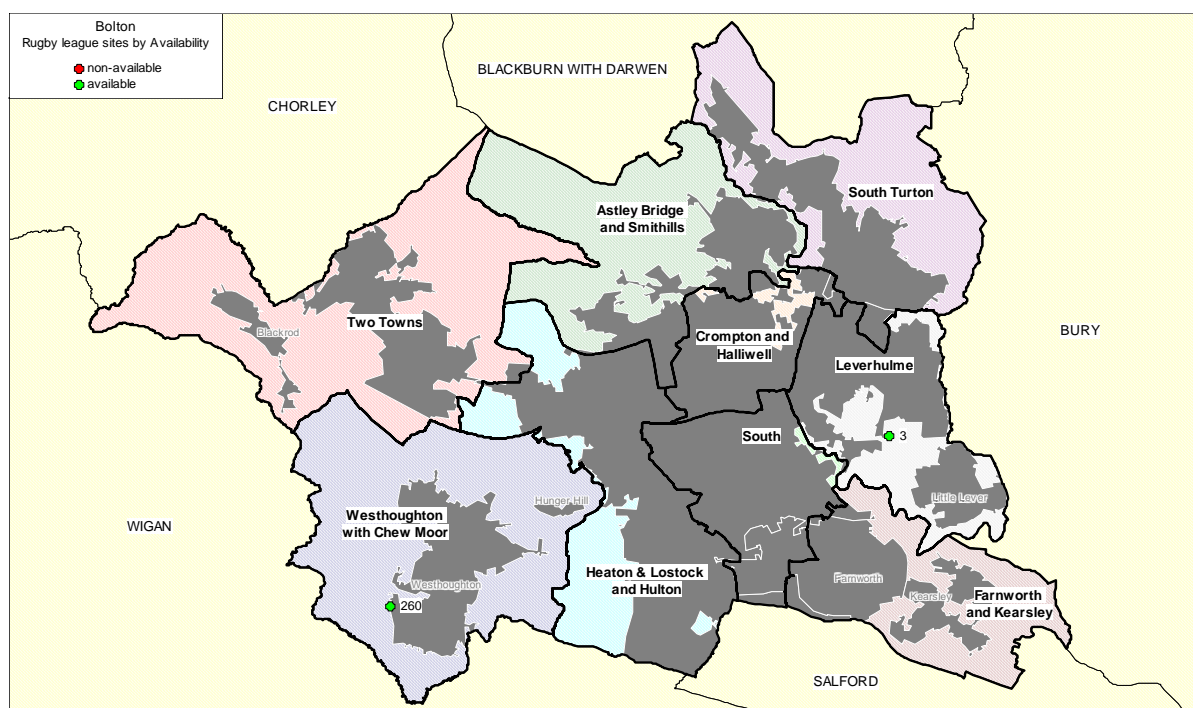
## 10.13 Rugby league

### Current provision

Table 10.25: Summary of rugby league available for community use and teams by analysis area

Analysis area (area forums)	No. of available pitches			No. of teams				
	Senior	Junior	Mini	Senior mens	Senior womens	Junior boys	Junior girls	Mini-soccer
Astley Bridge and Smithills	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Leverhulme	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-
South	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Turton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Two Towns	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	2	-	-	2	-	10	-	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

Figure 10.4: Provision of rugby league pitch sites mapped by quality/capacity





# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Table 10.26: Key to rugby map

Site name	KKP reference	Analysis area (area forums)	Community Use	Senior pitch	Junior pitch	Capacity rating
Newhouse Farm	3	Leverhulme	Yes	I		
Westhoughton RLFC, Wearish Lane	260	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Yes	I		
Southfield Drive	37	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Yes	I		
Leverhulme Park (Tonge Fold)	53	Leverhulme	Yes		I	

### **Issues from 2002 Bolton Playing Pitch Strategy**

- Bolton's two rugby league clubs, Westhoughton Lions and Bolton Mets, identified a need to secure the use of their pitches. Westhoughton Lions cited a requirement to secure a long term lease at 'The Den' whilst Bolton Mets were keen to secure their playing slot at Newhouse Farm.

### **Administration**

There are two rugby league clubs within the Bolton area. Both clubs are affiliated to the British Rugby League Association (BARLA) and play in the North West Counties League. The community game comes under the guidance of the Community Board, which is made up of representatives of the RFL, BARLA, Combined Services, English Schools Rugby League and Student Rugby League.

### **Development**

Rugby League in Bolton is showing good signs of good junior development, with six junior teams between the two clubs. Bolton Mets RLFC runs one open age team and an under 14s team. Westhoughton Lions has teams from U8s up to U17s and also a girls' team. The Club has recently achieved 'Clubmark' status that it is hoping will enable it to secure funding for facilities improvements in the future.

The Rugby Football League in conjunction with Bury Metropolitan Council and BC is due to appoint a development officer who will be tasked specifically with developing the sport in primary and secondary schools whilst strengthening links between the schools and local clubs. Tag tournaments are commonplace in the Borough at both primary and secondary school age.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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## ***Key Issues for rugby league***

Although junior development has increased since 2002, poor quality facilities are now inhibiting any further development of women's and girls' teams. The changing facilities at Wearish Lane (Westhoughton Lions) are poor quality and limit the Club's development in terms of introducing women's and girls' rugby i.e. no segregation. Bolton Mets RLFC is also concerned that junior development has stagnated due to poor pitch quality. Although improvements have been made to the football pitches at Newhouse Farm, the rugby pitch has not improved (assessed as a poor quality pitch). The Club has had to play a number of fixtures away from home due to the poor pitch quality.

Westhoughton Lions currently rents 'The Den' at The Hoskers on Wearish Lane and also rents a full size pitch on Southfield Drive to accommodate all its matches. The Club is still pursuing a long-term lease of the 'The Den' from BC and investigate ways of developing and improving it. The ancillary facilities are also unlikely to meet the North West Counties League requirements in the future. However, due to the time delays, the Club is also in discussions regarding the leasing of Southfield Drive, which it regards as being more suitable to develop (site is in of some need of drainage work). Identified spare football pitch capacity at Hulton Lane could also provide potential for rugby pitches.



## BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

### *Provision of rugby league pitch sites assessed by quality and capacity*

Table 10.27: Rugby league provision and level of community use

KKP ref	Site name	Analysis area (area forums)	Site owner	Community use	Senior			Junior			Matches per week		
					G	A	P	G	A	P	play	cap	Capacity rating
3	Newhouse Farm	Leverhulme Area Forum	LA	Yes			I				1.0	0.5	
37	Southfield Drive	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	LA	Yes		I					3.0	1.0	
260	Westhoughton RLFC, Wearish Lane	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	LA	Yes	I						3.0	2.0	
53	Leverhulme Park (Tonge Fold)	Leverhulme	LA	Yes		I					-	2.0	

As reflected in the consultation, the majority of sites accommodating rugby league pitches are operating at over capacity. The only pitch assessed as good quality, Wearish Lane, is operating over capacity due to a significant amount of play of the pitch. In this instance additional pitch space is required. In terms of the other two pitches, increasing pitch quality would improve pitch capacity.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## **Shortfall, adequacy and requirement**

### *Summary of current demand*

The table below summaries the sites in each area which are currently being played beyond their capacity.

*Table 10.28: Summary of pitch overplay by analysis area*

<b>Site</b>	<b>Analysis area</b>	<b>Weekly overplay of matches</b>
Newhouse Farm	Leverhulme Area Forum	0.5
Southfield Drive	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	2.0
Westhoughton RLFC, Wearish Lane	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	1.0
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.5 matches</b>

### *Summary of future/latent demand*

No rugby league latent demand is identified. Latent demand may be being suppressed by poor quality pitches.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## *Team generation rates (TGRs)*

The following future TGRs (based on estimated population projections to 2017) have been calculated for each area of Bolton. Where no TGR is shown this indicates that no teams operate at that age group, for rugby league, in that area.

*Table 10.29: Rugby TGRs*

<b>Analysis areas (area forums)</b>	<b>Senior men (18-45)</b>	<b>Senior women (18-45)</b>	<b>Junior boys (13-17)</b>	<b>Junior girls (16-17)</b>	<b>Mini-rugby (8-12)</b>
Astley Bridge and Smithills	-	-	-	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	1:5,335	-	-	-	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	-	-	-	-	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	-	-	-	-
Leverhulme	1:7,074	-	1:1,334	-	-
South	-	-	-	-	-
South Turton	-	-	-	-	-
Two Towns	-	-	-	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	1:2,503	-	1:85	-	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>1:12,343</b>	-	<b>1:812</b>	-	-

The TGRs reflect the fact that there are only a small number of clubs and two sites currently being used across Bolton. There are no senior women's, junior girls, or mini rugby teams playing competitively in Bolton.



## BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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TGRs for senior men should be maintained, as they are higher in all cases when compared to the Borough. It is also recommended that, as a target, the Borough TGRs for junior boys are applied where teams exist and also Crompton and Haliwell area where a senior team exists but no junior team. The TGRs (figures in blue) are applied below to give an indication as to how many additional rugby teams (figures in bold) will be generated in 2017 if these TGRs are maintained.

*Table 10.30: Rugby TGRs*

Analysis areas (area forums)	Senior men (16-45)	Senior women (16-45)	Junior boys (10-15)	Junior girls (10-15)	Mini soccer (6-9) mixed
Astley Bridge and Smithills	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	<b>1:5,335</b>	-	<b>1:812</b>	-	-
	0.1	-	1.2	-	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Leverhulme	<b>1:7,074</b>	-	<b>1:812</b>	-	-
	0.1	-	0.8	-	-
South	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
South Turton	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Two Towns	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	<b>1:2,503</b>	-	<b>1:85</b>	-	-
	0.1	-	0.7	-	-



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## Future PPM summary

Sport England's PPM (playing pitch model) is used to assess whether supply of pitches will be sufficient at peak times in the future (up to 2017). A summary of surpluses and deficiencies is shown below and takes account of the additional teams estimated to require pitches if TGR targets are achieved.

Table 10.31: Future PPM summary

Analysis area (area forums)	Rugby	
	Senior pitches	Junior pitches
Astley Bridge and Smithills	0	0
Crompton and Halliwell	-0.5	0
Farnworth and Kearsley	0	0
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	0	0
Leverhulme	0.5	-0.9
South	0	0
South Turton	0	0
Two Towns	0	0
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	-0.1	-0.4
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>-1.3</b>

There is likely to be a deficiency of rugby league pitches to meet future demand, in particular this relates to the fact that all current pitches are overplayed and even with only a slight increase in the number of teams predicted for 2017, this shows a deficiency. Increasing current pitch capacity will go some way towards meeting this deficiency in the future.

### Summary for rugby league

- ❑ Junior development has increased since 2002. However, poor quality facilities are now inhibiting any further development of women and girls teams.
- ❑ All three pitches are currently being overplayed. Wearish Lane is being overplayed and additional pitch space is required. In terms of the other two pitches, pitch quality is affecting pitch capacity.
- ❑ Coupled with identified overplay, Westhoughton Lions RLFC also reports latent demand for one senior team and one junior girls team.
- ❑ It is not surprising then that when future demand is applied, there is a deficiency of pitches. Increasing current pitch capacity will go some way towards meeting this deficiency in the future.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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- Security of tenure remains to inhibit development of rugby league facilities. A number of sites are outlined as potential sites to develop if leases can be secured.





# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

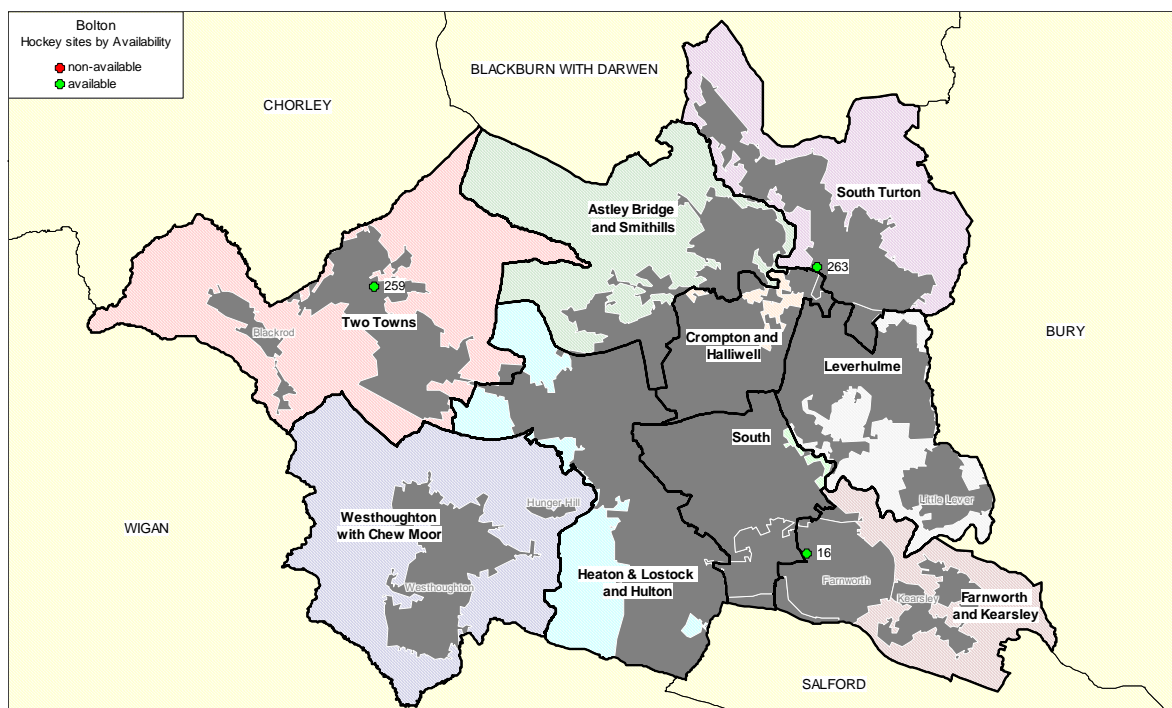
## 10.14 Hockey

### Current provision

Table 10.32: Summary of pitches available for community use and teams by analysis area

Analysis area (area forums)	STPs (full sized synthetic hockey pitches)	No. of teams			
		Senior mens	Senior womens	Junior boys	Junior girls
Astley Bridge and Smithills	1	-	-	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	-	-	-	-	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	-	-	1	-	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	-	-	-	-
Leverhulme	-	-	-	-	-
South	1	6	3	2	-
South Turton	1	-	6	-	-
Two Towns	1	-	8	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	-	-	-	-	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>-</b>

Figure 10.5: Provision of hockey sites mapped by quality/capacity



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Table 10.33: Key to hockey map

Site name	KKP reference	Analysis area (area forums)	STPs (full sized synthetic hockey pitches)	Quality rating
Harper Green Leisure Centre	16	South	1	Below Average
Canon Slade School	263	South Turton	1	Good
Horwich Leisure Centre	259	Two Towns	1	Below Average
Thornleigh Salesian Sports College	325	Astley Bridge and Smithills	1	Good

### **Issues from 2002 Bolton Playing Pitch Strategy**

- ❑ BC owned site at Horwich Leisure Centre was identified to be of poor quality and in need of carpet refurbishment.
- ❑ Identified need for additional STP facilities in the Sharples and Thornleigh areas.

### **Administration**

Hockey is delivered through England Hockey, regionally. Greater Sport works with borough hockey development officers to ensure that hockey is accessible to everyone. Lancashire County Hockey Association and the North Hockey Association administer competitive hockey in Bolton.

Specific to Bolton, the Bolton Sports Federation came into being in 1970 when the Bolton Sunday Schools Social League changed its name to be more in keeping with the membership at that time. The Federation currently operates five leagues across different sports, including a ladies hockey league.

### **Development**

In 2002, it was the aim of BC to further develop junior hockey. It remains that the only junior section is operated through Bolton Hockey Club. The 2002 Playing Pitch Strategy outlined a need for additional STP facilities in the Sharples and Thornleigh areas. Thornleigh School was awarded Sports College status in 2004 and has now opened its facilities to community use, including a relatively new full sized hockey STP (opened in 2004). Bolton Sports Federation Ladies Hockey League currently uses the STP. However, there is capacity, linking to the Sports College to develop juniors.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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Smaller sized STPs, suitable for developing junior hockey and training are due to become available at St James Sports College and Sharples School. Both facilities will increase the availability of facilities for junior development.



# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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## ***Key issues for hockey***

BC operated STPs based at Horwich Leisure Centre (assessed as below average quality scoring 47%) and Harper Green Leisure Centre (also assessed as below average quality scoring 50%) are both considered to be of poor quality by users and in need of carpet refurbishment. This is further compounded as both facilities suffer from vandalism and overuse. Both facilities are over ten years old. Quality issues at both sites are forcing Bolton Hockey Club to use facilities outside the Borough in neighbouring Bury.

Bolton Hockey Club has recently joined up with Bolton Indians Cricket Club with the intention of developing its home ground at Hacken Lane, to eventually incorporate an STP, if sufficient funds can be sought. This would allow its junior section to increase, as all the development work required could be focused around one home ground.



## BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

### *Provision of hockey pitch sites assessed by quality and capacity*

*Table 10.34: Hockey provision and level of community use*

The table below does not take into account any other use apart from for hockey. Horwich Leisure Centre and Harper Green Leisure Centre are both also heavily used for football training.

KKP ref	Site name	Analysis area (area forums)	Site owner	Community use	STPs	Matches					Peak use
						Sat am	Sat pm	Sun am	Sun pm	Other	
325	Thornleigh Salesian Sports College	Astley Bridge and Smithills	LA	Yes	1	-	3.0	-	-	-	300%
16	Harper Green Leisure Centre	South	LA	Yes	1	2.0	3.0	-	-	-	300%
263	Canon Slade School	South Turton	LA	Yes	1	-	4.0	-	-	-	400%
259	Horwich Leisure Centre	Two Towns	LA	Yes	1	1.0	-	-	-	-	100%

The STP at Canon Slade School (scoring 64%) is the most used facility in Bolton. This is due to accommodating the majority of teams within the Bolton Sports Federation League. Although there is some spare capacity at Horwich Leisure Centre, its poor quality deters users from this site.



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

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## **Shortfall, adequacy and requirement**

### *Summary of future/latent demand*

No hockey pitch latent demand is identified. Latent demand is being suppressed by poor quality pitches.

### **Team generation rates (TGRs)**

The following future TGRs (based on estimated population projections to 2017) have been calculated for each area of Bolton. Where no TGR is shown this indicates that no teams operate at that age group, for hockey, in that area.

*Table 10.35: Hockey TGRs*

<b>Analysis areas (area forums)</b>	<b>Senior (16-45) Mens</b>	<b>Senior (16-45) Womens</b>	<b>Junior (11-15) Boys</b>	<b>Junior (11-15) Girls</b>
Astley Bridge and Smithills	-	1:733	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	-	-	-	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	-	-	-	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	-	-	-
Leverhulme	-	-	-	-
South	1:1,480	1:3,670	1:788	-
South Turton	-	1:448	-	-
Two Towns	-	1:1,940	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	-	-	-	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>1:8,813</b>	<b>1:2,421</b>	<b>1:4,536</b>	-

The TGRs reflect the fact play gravitates to those areas which have a full sized hockey STP. Senior women's hockey is strong in Bolton due to the establishment of the Bolton Federation League.

## BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

The majority of TGRs for hockey should be maintained, as they are higher than when compared to the Borough. The TGRs (figures in blue) are applied below to give an indication as to how many additional rugby teams (figures in bold) will be generated in 2017 if these TGRs are maintained.

Table 10.36: Hockey TGRs

Analysis areas (area forums)	Senior (16-45) Mens	Senior (16-45) Womens	Junior (11-15) Boys	Junior (11-15) Girls
Astley Bridge and Smithills	-	<b>1:773</b>	-	-
	-	0.1	-	-
Crompton and Halliwell	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
Leverhulme	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-
South	<b>1:1,480</b>	<b>1:2,421</b>	<b>1:788</b>	-
	0.4	1.2	0.1	-
South Turton	-	<b>1:448</b>	-	-
	-	0.6	-	-
Two Towns	-	<b>1:1,940</b>	-	-
	-	0.1	-	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-

### Summary for hockey

- ❑ There is further capacity and identified demand at Thornleigh School STP to develop junior teams.
- ❑ Harper Green Leisure Centre and Horwich Leisure Centre are both assessed as below average quality. Carpets on both facilities are in need of replacement.
- ❑ Bolton Hockey Club currently uses facilities outside the Borough in neighbouring Bury due to quality issues of STP sites in Bolton.

# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## 10.15 Rounders

### *Current provision*

*Table 10.37: Summary of pitches available for community use and teams by analysis area*

Site name	KKP ref	Analysis area (area forums)	No of pitches
Astley Bridge CC / Sharples Park (Overmarked)	350	Astley Bridge and Smithills	1
Astley Bridge Park (Overmarked)	337	Astley Bridge and Smithills	1
Barlow Park (Overmarked)	328	Astley Bridge and Smithills	1
Church Road Playing Fields (Overmarked)	348	Astley Bridge and Smithills	1
Heaton CC (Overmarked)	342	Astley Bridge and Smithills	1
Sharples High School (Overmarked)	330	Astley Bridge and Smithills	1
Bolton RUFC (Overmarked)	353	Crompton and Halliwell	1
Brownlow Fold Primary School (Overmarked)	355	Crompton and Halliwell	1
Hatfield Road	197	Crompton and Halliwell	1
Queens Park Playing Fields (Overmarked)	368	Crompton and Halliwell	1
St Matthew Bolton Primary School	160	Crompton and Halliwell	1
St Paul Primary School	164	Crompton and Halliwell	1
Tonge CC (Overmarked)	369	Crompton and Halliwell	1
All Saints Primary School (Overmarked)	351	Farnworth and Kearsley	1
Bradford Street Park (Overmarked)	367	Farnworth and Kearsley	1
Harper Green School (Overmarked)	341	Farnworth and Kearsley	1
Kearsley CC (Overmarked)	357	Farnworth and Kearsley	1
Kearsley Park	224	Farnworth and Kearsley	1
Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School (Overmarked)	364	Farnworth and Kearsley	1
St Gregory Primary School	185	Farnworth and Kearsley	1
St James High School (Overmarked)	332	Farnworth and Kearsley	1
St James Primary School (Overmarked)	349	Farnworth and Kearsley	1
St James St Playing Fields (Overmarked)	338	Farnworth and Kearsley	1
Beaumont Primary School (overmarked)	359	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	1
Hulton Lane Playing Fields (Overmarked)	354	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	1
Ladybridge High School (Overmarked)	362	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	1
Ladybridge Primary School	119	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	1
St Bernard Primary School	181	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	1





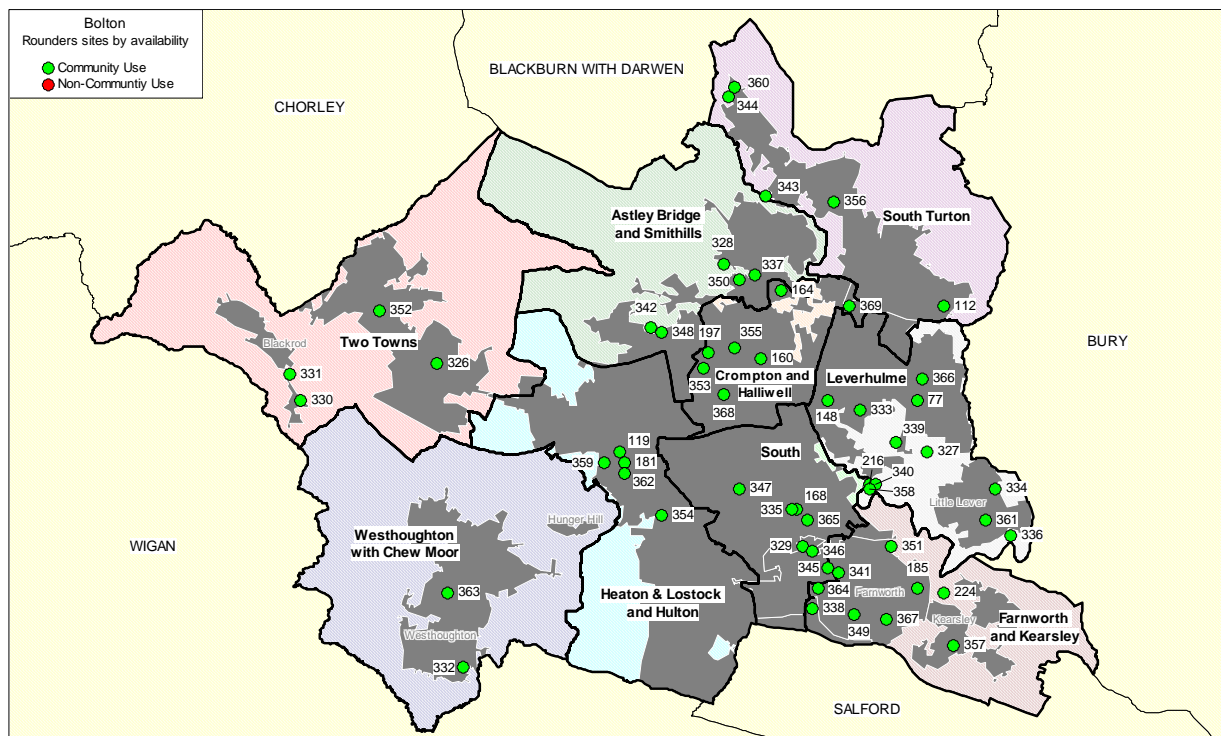
# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site name	KKP ref	Analysis area (area forums)	No of pitches
Bolton Indians CC (Overmarked)	358	Leverhulme	1
Bolton Parish Primary School	148	Leverhulme	1
Crompton Fold Primary School	77	Leverhulme	1
Darcy Lever CC (Overmarked)	340	Leverhulme	1
Leverhulme Park (Long Lane) (Overmarked)	333	Leverhulme	1
Leverhulme Park (Overmarked)	339	Leverhulme	1
Masefield Primary School (Overmarked)	334	Leverhulme	1
Meadow Playing Fields (Overmarked)	336	Leverhulme	1
Mytham Primary School (Overmarked)	361	Leverhulme	1
Ron Tucker Sports Ground / Bolton Lads & Girls Club	216	Leverhulme	1
St Andrews Primary School (Overmarked)	366	Leverhulme	1
Bishop Bridgeman Primary School (Overmarked)	347	South	1
Bolton Cricket Club (Overmarked)	327	South	1
Bridgeman Park (Overmarked)	346	South	1
Egerton Primary School (Overmarked)	360	South	1
Great Lever Park (Overmarked)	365	South	1
Harper Green Playing Fields (Overmarked)	345	South	1
Mount St. Josephs Secondary School (Overmarked)	329	South	1
SS Simon & Jude Primary School	168	South	1
Turton High School (Overmarked)	356	South	1
Walkers Playing Field (Overmarked)	335	South	1
Eagley Sports Club (Overmarked)	343	South Turton	1
Egerton CC (Overmarked)	344	South Turton	1
Harwood Meadows Primary School	112	South Turton	1
Blackrod Primary School (Overmarked)	331	Two Towns	1
Horwich RMI Club (Overmarked)	352	Two Towns	1
St Josephs Secondary School (Community Use)	326	Two Towns	1
Westhoughton CC (Overmarked)	363	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	1



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Figure 10.6: Rounders facilities in Bolton



### **Issues raised in original playing pitch strategy**

- The supply of pitches available was considered to be of inadequate quality.
- The League had no spare capacity and therefore struggled to develop.
- Excessive usage of parks' pitches had led to a reduction in pitch quality.

### **Administration**

The National Rounders Association is a small governing body with overall responsibility for ensuring the effective governance of the sport. Ladies rounders has a strong reputation in Bolton and is administered through a number of winter and summer leagues. All leagues play flat bat rounders. The Bolton Sports Federation League, consisting of some 150 teams, is the major league.

# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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## ***Key issues for rounders***

### *Pitch quality*

There is a perception amongst users that local authority facilities on parks, whilst offering the most cost effective facilities, tend to be of inadequate quality and provide the fewest amenities. Unofficial use of parks, particularly by motorbikes causes regular damage to pitches. For example, at Leverhulme Park, motorbikes frequently impinge upon rounders matches. Education sites tend to be better maintained but also lack access to ancillary facilities. Private facilities such as cricket sites tend to offer the best facilities.

### *Demand*

Consultation suggests that the growth of rounders is restricted by insufficient pitch capacity to meet the current levels of demand. The Bolton Sports Federation League has approximately a dozen teams on its waiting list, which cannot currently be accommodated. If more pitches were available, the League believes it has the management capacity to accommodate the teams.

The League has identified potential to develop an area known as 'Snow Hill' into a multi sports site, which could accommodate several football and rounders pitches. It acknowledges that although there is current demand for pitches, the quality needs to be ensured. The League could not provide sufficient funding for this venture alone and would require significant funding from BC and external sources. There is not sufficient current demand for football pitches for this to be a football led project. In fact spare capacity at football sites such as Hulton Lane could be explored for rounders use.

### *Management*

All but one rounders pitch is over marked on either a cricket outfield or across a football pitch. Although, this can sometimes affect the quality of the pitches, the partnerships created with cricket clubs in particular can be of benefit to the development of the sport. Darcy Lever Cricket Club is regarded as a good model for co-operation between cricket and rounders clubs.

Conflicts can sometimes occur when other sports have a backlog of fixtures to play at the end of the cricket season or football pitches are required for pre-season training. Better management, more communication and enforcement of pitch hire contracts would ensure that such pitch space is not double booked.

# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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## ***Summary for rounders***

- ❑ Bolton Sports Federation League identifies significant latent demand for rounders in Bolton. Spare capacity at football pitch sites may go some way towards meeting this current demand.
- ❑ Poor quality pitches and a lack of ancillary facilities at local authority parks sites are inhibiting the growth of rounders.
- ❑ Further partnerships with cricket and football clubs will help to develop rounders in Bolton by providing access to good quality facilities and appropriate club development support.



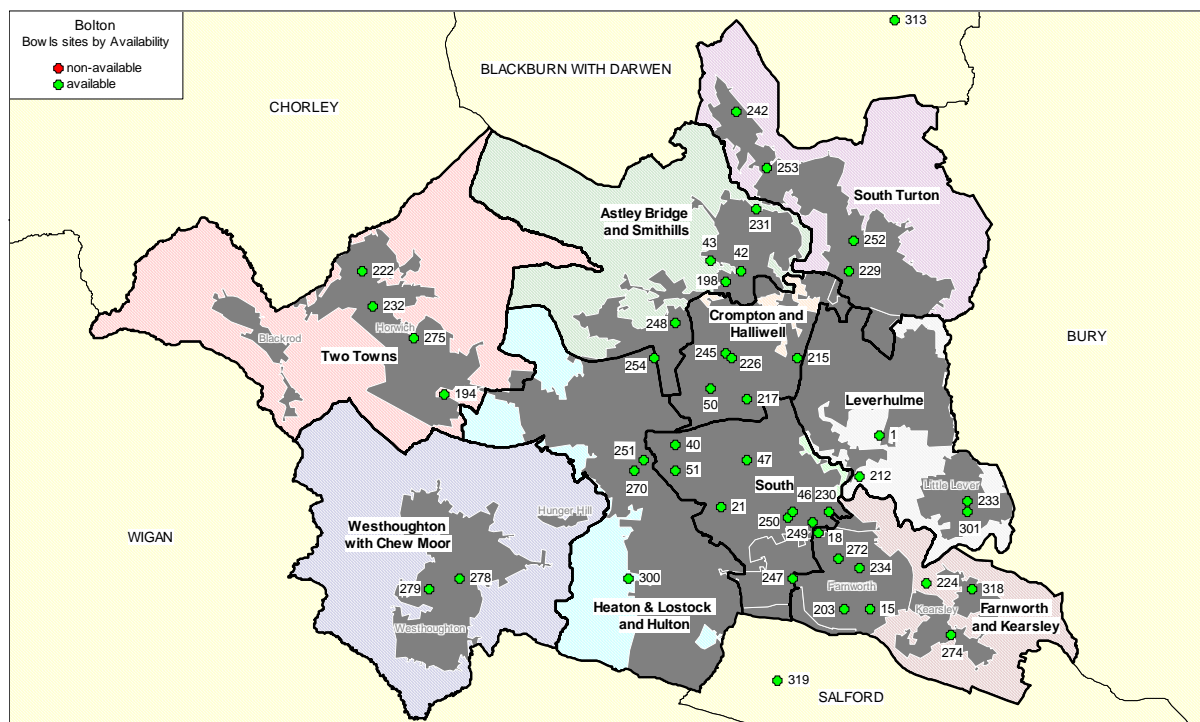
# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

## 10.16 Bowls

Table 10.38: Bowling greens in Bolton

Analysis area (area forums)	No. of available non-pitches		No. of teams			
	Crown bowling	Lawn bowling	Senior bowling	Ladies bowling	Vets bowling	Junior bowling
Astley Bridge and Smithills	7	-	31	-	3	-
Crompton and Halliwell	6	-	13	1	3	-
Farnworth and Kearsley	8	-	2	-	5	-
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	4	-	14	1	2	-
Leverhulme	4	1	13	2	4	-
South	13	-	22	2	5	-
South Turton	4	-	17	1	2	-
Two Towns	8	-	5	1	1	-
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	2	-	3	-	1	-
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>-</b>

Figure 10.7: Bowling green locations in Bolton



# BOLTON COUNCIL

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Table 10.39: Key to bowls map

Site name	KKP reference	Analysis area (area forums)	Community use	No of greens	Quality rating
Astley Bridge CC / Sharples Park	198	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	1	Excellent
Astley Bridge Park	42	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	1	Good
Barlow Park	43	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	1	Average
Eagley Park	231	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	3	Good
Hollywood Road SSC	248	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	1	Good
Bolton Lads & Girls Club, Spar Road	217	Crompton and Halliwell	Yes	1	Good
Darbishire Park	215	Crompton and Halliwell	Yes	2	Good
Mortfield Bowling Club	245	Crompton and Halliwell	Yes	1	Poor
Queens Park Playing Fields	50	Crompton and Halliwell	Yes	1	Excellent
Thommason Park aka Merehall	226	Crompton and Halliwell	Yes	1	Excellent
Bradford Street Park	15	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1	Excellent
Doe Hey Recreation Ground	18	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1	Excellent
Ellesmere Park / Dixon Green	272	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1	Good
Farnworth Park	234	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1	Good
Farnworth Social Circle CC / Piggot Park	203	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1	Below Average
Kearsley Park	224	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	2	Average
Kearsley Sports and Social Club	274	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	1	Good
Deane Conservative Club	270	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	Yes	1	Good
Kings Head Hotel	251	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	Yes	1	Good
Nuffield Bowling Club	254	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	Yes	1	Good
Over Hulton Conservative Club	300	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	Yes	1	Excellent
Darcy Lever CC	212	Leverhulme	Yes	2	Good
Leverhulme Park (Long Lane)	1	Leverhulme	Yes	1	Excellent
Little Lever Conservative Club	233	Leverhulme	Yes	1	Good
Mytham Park	301	Leverhulme	Yes	1	Good



# BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Site name	KKP reference	Analysis area (area forums)	Community use	No of greens	Quality rating
Bolton CC	249	South	Yes	1	Good
Brooklyn Hotel	250	South	Yes	1	Good
Great Lever Park	46	South	Yes	2	Excellent
Haslam Park	40	South	Yes	2	Excellent
Heywood Rec Zone / Heywood Park / Bridgeman Park	47	South	Yes	2	Good
LMRCA, Green Lane	230	South	Yes	2	Excellent
Plodder Lane Conservative Club	247	South	Yes	1	Good
Rumworth Park	51	South	Yes	1	Below Average
Sunnyside Park	21	South	Yes	1	Good
Bradshaw Bowling Club	252	South Turton	Yes	1	Excellent
Dunscar Conservative Club	253	South Turton	Yes	1	Excellent
Egerton Park	242	South Turton	Yes	1	Good
Royal Oak Hotel	229	South Turton	Yes	1	Below Average
Greenwood Pub	275	Two Towns	Yes	1	Good
Horwich Public Hall	222	Two Towns	Yes	2	Good
Horwich RMI Club	232	Two Towns	Yes	2+1	Excellent, Good
Lostock - BAe Sports Club	194	Two Towns	Yes	1	Good
The Bridge Inn / Horwich Conservative Club	261	Two Towns	Yes	1	Good
The Red Lion	279	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Yes	1	Excellent
Westhoughton Sports & Social Club	278	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Yes	1	Good
Barlow Memorial Institute	313	Outside	Yes	1	Average
Little Hulton CC	319	Outside	Yes	1	Average
Vale House	318	Outside	Yes	1	Average



# **BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT**

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## ***Issues raised in original playing pitch strategy***

- The lack of junior development was considered to be having a detrimental effect on the current structure of the sport. Only three leagues were working to promote junior development.
- Vandalism of greens was an on-going issue, which had resulted in the loss of a number of greens due to the expense of maintenance. However, a programme of fencing was underway on BC owned greens.

## ***Administration***

The British Crown Green Bowls Association is the governing body with overall responsibility for ensuring the effective governance of the sport. Locally, it is administered by a large number of leagues (12 local leagues).

Bowls in Bolton is predominantly played on crown greens. However, there is one flat green at Leverhulme Park. Bolton has a large number of bowling clubs, playing from a variety of sites including parks, recreation grounds and private sports grounds. There are a number of leagues servicing clubs in Bolton.

## ***Development***

Although raised as an issue in 2002, there has been little increase in junior participation in Bolton. An absence of initiatives to encourage juniors to participate in the sport is beginning to may have a detrimental effect on the current structure. The majority of leagues have experienced a decline in membership levels over the last three years. There are now 16 fewer senior teams than in 2002. This is due to the increasing age of both players and volunteers coupled with a lack of junior involvement. Should this trend continue then it is likely to result in an over supply of bowling greens.

Consultation highlights the difficulties faced by the leagues and clubs in attracting and retaining junior players. Some clubs have offered training to juniors on an ad hoc basis to encourage junior development but currently there is no governance of this.

## ***Key issues for bowls***

### ***Green quality***

Even though there is a decrease in the number of teams participating in bowls, there has been an increase in the number of bowling greens. Consultation suggests that the quality of greens within the Borough has also increased slightly. Site assessments also reflect this, showing that 68% of greens are assessed as good quality. Only four sites are assessed as being poor quality, Rumworth Park, Royal Oak Hotel, Mortfield Bowling Club and Piggot Park.





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Where clubs identified facility issues in 2002, all report that the quality of the facilities has improved significantly, particularly where fencing has been installed. Local authority greens have increased in quality due to improvements in maintenance and investment in security measures to prevent damage to the greens. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the erection of perimeter fencing has resolved, to a certain extent, vandalism to the greens. Haslam Park Bowling Club was unable to play last season due regular vandalism. Since railings have been installed play has resumed and the quality of the green has increased.

Installation of fencing at a number of sites has also enabled installation of toilets, improving the availability and quality of ancillary facilities, for example at Darbyshire Park, where the bowling club is able to monitor usage of the toilets. This practice should be duplicated at sites such as Moss Bank Park where toilet facilities are available but have been neglected and are subject to inappropriate use. The lack of provision of a safe environment is considered to have restricted the development of a junior coaching programme. There is demand to fence the area to incorporate the toilet facilities, enabling the club to monitor use of these facilities.

## ***Summary for bowls***

- ❑ There is no identified current or latent demand for new bowling greens in Bolton.
- ❑ The majority of leagues have experienced a decrease in membership levels due to the aging of participants. Reflecting this, there has been a significant decrease in the number of senior teams participating since 2002. There is no significant junior development in place to help rectify this situation.
- ❑ The quality of greens has improved and 68% of greens are assessed as good quality. Anecdotal evidence suggests that where greens have been upgraded and perimeter fencing installed there has been a reduction in vandalism at the site.



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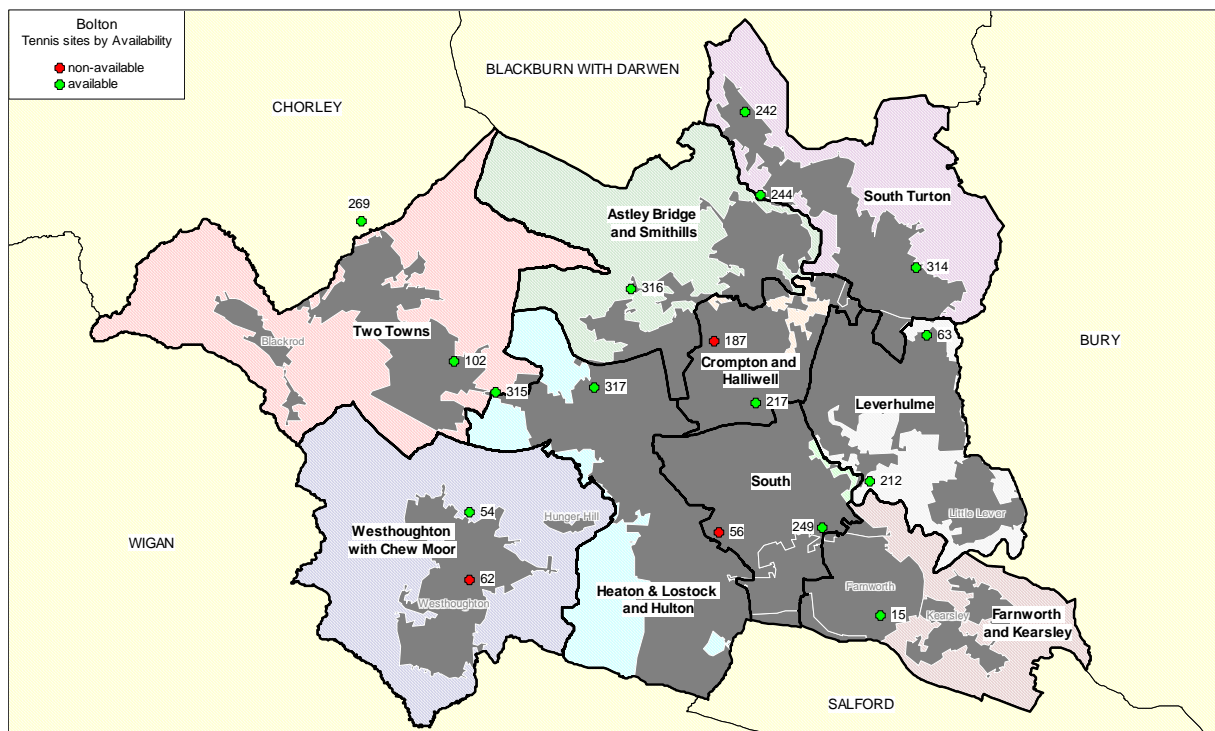
## 10.17 Tennis

### *Current provision*

Table 10.40: Summary of courts available for community use by analysis area

Analysis area (area forums)	No. of available non-pitches
Astley Bridge and Smithills	19
Crompton and Halliwell	1
Farnworth and Kearsley	4
Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	6
Leverhulme	8
South	3
South Turton	7
Two Towns	21
Westhoughton with Chew Moor	4
<b>BOLTON</b>	<b>73</b>

Figure 10.8: Provision of tennis sites in Bolton



## BOLTON COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

Table 10.41: Key to tennis map

Site name	KKP reference	Analysis area (area forums)	Community Use	No of courts	Quality rating
Barrow Bridge Tennis Club	316	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	2	Excellent
Bolton School	84	Astley Bridge and Smithills	Yes	17	Excellent
Bolton Lads & Girls Club, Spar Road	217	Crompton and Halliwell	Yes	1	Good
St Joseph Primary School	187	Crompton and Halliwell	No	5	Average
Bradford Street Park	15	Farnworth and Kearsley	Yes	4	Average
Markland Hill Tennis Club	317	Heaton & Lostock and Hulton	Yes	6	Excellent
Darcy Lever Cricket Club	212	Leverhulme	Yes	4	Below average
Withins High School	63	Leverhulme	Yes	4	Below average
Bolton Cricket Club	249	South	Yes	3	Good
Hayward Secondary School	56	South	No	4	Below average
Eagley Sports Club	244	South Turton	Yes	4	Good
Egerton Park	242	South Turton	Yes	1	Good
Longsight Methodist Tennis Club	314	South Turton	Yes	2	Good
Claypool	102	Two Towns	Yes	1	Good
MeadowHill Lawn Tennis Club	315	Two Towns	Yes	2	Good
Rivington & Blackrod High School	269	Two Towns	Yes	18	Excellent
Westhoughton High School	62	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	No	1	Below average
Westhoughton Park / Central Park	54	Westhoughton with Chew Moor	Yes	4	Average

Several clubs in Bolton have floodlight outdoor courts. These include Markland Hill, Eagley and Lostock. Rivington and Blackrod School also offers floodlit tennis facilities. The provision of floodlighting facilities extends play all year round, and provides extended play for league matches.



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## ***Administration***

The Lancashire Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) administers tennis in Bolton. This body is responsible for the delivery of the LTA's national plan at a local level. The LTA is working with the Bolton Sports Federation Tennis League to put forward a development strategy for tennis in the Borough. Regional priorities for LTA funding include, providing indoor courts, floodlighting and to some extent resurfacing existing courts. Tennis is also a focus sport for the BC Sports Development Unit.

## ***Development***

The Lancashire LTA highlights RAW tennis as being an important development tool in helping to retain teenagers within the sport. The programme is currently being delivered in the Borough at Bolton Arena, Rivington and Blackrod High School and Lostock Lawn Tennis Club. Tennis activities are being developed through the school sports partnerships which will steer the tennis development structure in the future.

## ***School-club links***

Bolton School and Rivington and Blackrod School are affiliated to the Bolton Schools Tennis Association. Between them, they provide a wealth of tennis facilities. Bolton School hosts the annual tournament for the BSF Tennis League. The following clubs have developed links with schools: Barrow Bridge Tennis Club, Bolton Arena Tennis Club, Eagley Tennis Club, Longsight Methodist Tennis Club and Markland Hill Tennis Club. In some cases, these links have tended to be limited, in so much as coaching is advertised to pupils and hosted at the clubs. Bolton Arena has developed good school links through its schools outreach programme and is going to focus on talent identification in the future.

## ***Junior development***

Clubs are increasingly aware of the need to promote junior coaching in order to sustain junior membership. The BSF Tennis League encourages the development of its junior league by part funding junior coaching at clubs. Clubs involved with the scheme have seen an increase in membership. The League is keen to develop more coaches following the success of the scheme so far.



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## ***Key issues for tennis***

### *Court quality*

BC tennis courts are a major facility provider in Bolton, the majority of which are provided in parks. Although available for competitive use, the majority is used on a casual basis only. The Lancashire LTA believes that court quality could be improved to better service users. Good practice should be sought from neighbouring authority Bury Metropolitan Borough Council, which is regarded as a regional model of good practice for the management of its park tennis courts.

Consultation suggests that the quality of public courts is generally poor. However, the majority of courts scoring below average are school sites, which are not necessarily available for community use. The lowest scoring public courts, (suggesting the lowest quality) include Westhoughton Park, Bradford Street Park, Sunnyside Park and Brook Street Park, all scoring around 60%. In particular, the playing surface and associated changing facilities are considered to be unacceptable. With improved quality, parks courts could satisfy some of the demand generated in the BSF Tennis League. For example, there is demand in Westhoughton for courts, but a lack of available provision. Westhoughton Park could satisfy this demand for courts. The BSF league reports that some of its larger clubs would provide more teams if their current facilities would allow.

Associated tennis facilities such as clubhouses and changing accommodation are becoming increasingly dated. Maintenance of the courts tends to take precedence. Barrow Bridge Tennis Club, Eagley Tennis Club and Markland Hill have aspirations to modernise their existing facilities in order to attract new players.

### *Demand*

Membership levels at some clubs have stagnated. Many clubs believe that the increased popularity of 'pay and play' indoor commercial facilities at venues such as Bolton Arena has had a significant effect on the participation rates at outdoor clubs. Only Meadow Hill Tennis Club and Barrow Bridge Tennis Club report high membership when compared to the levels of membership at other clubs.

Access to three courts of an adequate standard, changing facilities and toilets is the minimum requirement for entry into the BSF Tennis League. Some clubs do not have access to three courts. These include: Barrow Bridge Tennis Club, Longsight Methodist Tennis Club and Meadow Hill Lawn Tennis Club. This is currently preventing coaching and social play from taking place concurrently with match play. With access to another court, these clubs could provide additional teams.



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## ***Summary for tennis***

- ❑ Consultation and to some extent site assessments suggest that local authority park courts are of an unacceptable standard to be used for competitive play.
- ❑ Significant latent demand is identified and can be met with current provision. Upgrading park tennis courts will provide additional facilities to accommodate latent demand, particularly in Westhoughton.
- ❑ Clubhouses and changing accommodation have become increasingly dated at private tennis clubs, as maintenance of the courts often takes precedence.



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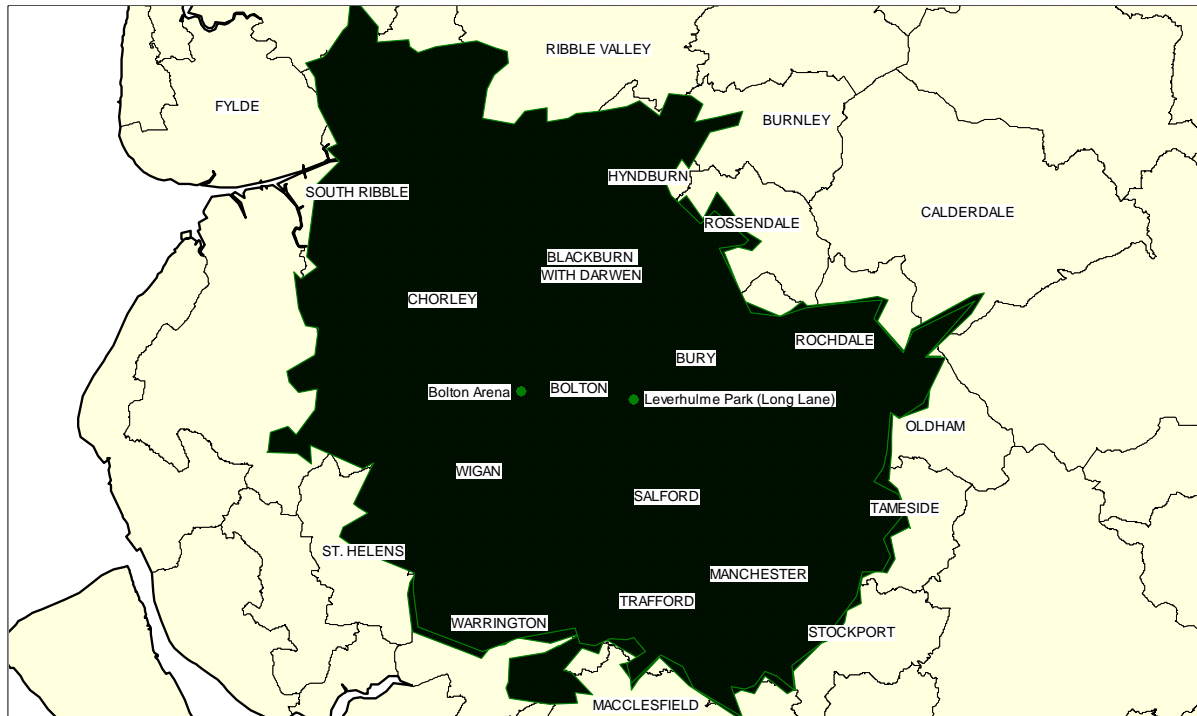
## 10.18 Athletics

### *Current provision*

Table 10.42: Summary of athletics facilities

Site	Facilities
Bolton Arena	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 400m running track, outdoor and floodlit</li> <li>• 6/8 lane straights, outdoor and floodlit</li> <li>• Associated field events</li> <li>• Terraced seating</li> </ul>
Leverhulme Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 400m running track, outdoor and floodlit</li> <li>• 8 lane straights, outdoor and floodlit</li> <li>• Full field events</li> <li>• Indoor straight</li> </ul>

Figure 10.9: Athletics facilities in Bolton with 30-min drive-time catchment



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## ***Administration***

UK Athletics is the governing body with overall responsibility for ensuring the effective governance of the sport. Both clubs in Bolton are also affiliated to the North of England Athletic Association. Athletics is also a focus sport for the BC Sports Development Unit.

## ***Development***

Sport specific development officers at Greater Sport support development of the sport in the Borough. In particular, support is provided in setting up a Bolton academy linked to Bolton United Harriers and supporting talent development in Bolton secondary schools. Additionally Bolton has a full time athletics community coach.

## ***Summary for athletics***

Bolton is well served by facilities, reflected in the drive time catchment mapping. Athletics has a strong reputation in the Borough with two well-established clubs incorporating large junior sections, Bolton United Harriers based at Leverhulme Park and Horwich RMI based predominately at Bolton Arena Both clubs are successful at both regional and national level.





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## 10.19 Golf

### *Current provision*

Table 10.43: Golf courses facilities in Bolton

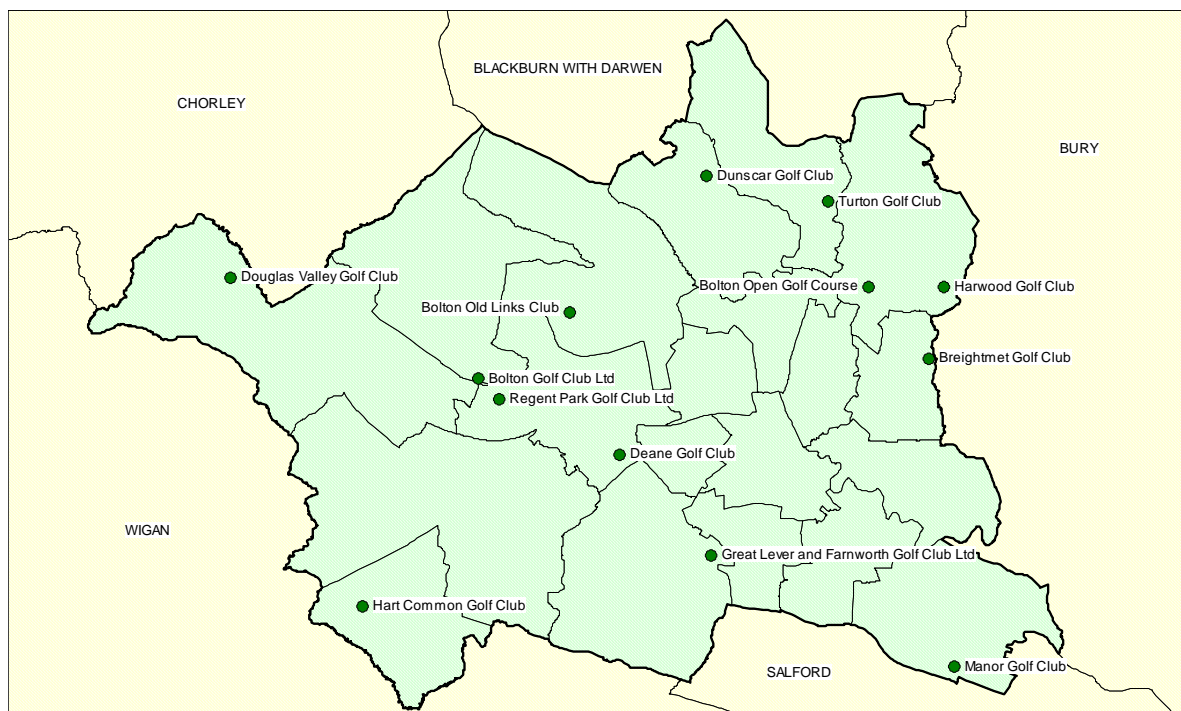
Site	Ownership	Green fee	9 hole course	18 hole course	Driving range/ area	Practice areas		
						Bunk	Putt	Net
Bolton Golf Club	Private			✓		✓	✓	
Bolton Old Links Club	Private	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Bolton Open Golf Course	BC	✓		✓	✓			
Brightmet Golf Club	Private	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Deane Golf Club	Private	✓		✓		✓	✓	
Douglas Valley Golf Club	Private							
Dunscar Golf Club	Private	✓		✓			✓	
Great Lever and Farnworth Golf Club	Private	✓		✓			✓	
Hart Common Golf Club	Private		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Harwood Golf Club	Private	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
Manor Golf Club	Private	✓		✓			✓	
Regent Park Golf Club	BC			✓	✓		✓	
Turton Golf Club	Private			✓			✓	
Westhoughton Golf Club	Private		✓				✓	

There are 14 golf courses in Bolton. BC owns and leases out Bolton Open Golf Course and Regent Park Golf Club as municipal golf courses. The remaining eleven golf courses are private membership clubs.



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Figure 10.10: Golf clubs in Bolton



Bolton is well serviced by golf clubs. The majority of golf courses are located in the northeast of the District. Golf in Bolton is now more available than ever and on offer to a wider spectrum of the population. Many young people (often influenced by their parents' perceptions) may never consider taking up golf due to the general views of the sport being expensive to participate in (club membership and equipment) and exclusive, having to be nominated/sponsored by an existing member(s) in order to join a club.

Over the last ten years, however, the nature of golf facilities has changed significantly. New commercially run centres in Bolton and across the Country now offer 'pay and play' facilities as well as club membership. Individuals can pay a green fee for the day or even just pay for a round of golf, allowing access to the facilities in the same way as those at municipal golf courses but with the quality and range of facilities one would expect to find at a private club.

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## ***Development***

### *Golf Foundation*

The Golf Foundation is a registered charity established to develop and promote junior golf. The aims of the organisation are:

- To provide support for golf sessions at schools and golf facilities so that young people are given their first introduction to golf.
- To encourage young people to take up the game, develop their playing skills; improve their understanding of the game and work towards the achievement of a playing handicap.
- To provide competitive opportunities for performance motivated youngsters.

The Golf Foundation's 'mini' version of golf, specifically for use by young children in primary and junior schools, has developed youngster-friendly equipment affordable for schools, and easy for teachers to use. Participation in golf activity taking place in primary and junior schools across the Country has now increased and Bolton is no exception.

Golf clubs in Bolton have seen a recent decline in full male membership, and a number of clubs are now becoming aware of the potential market for ladies and junior members to increase overall levels of membership. Several clubs have links with local primary and secondary schools to support their development work. Turton Golf Club has established strong links with local schools that now use the course for lessons as part of the curriculum. Regent Park Golf Course is the only 'Junior Starter Centre' in the area. Furthermore, it offers reduced rates for junior membership.

### ***Key issues for golf***

Golf clubs in Bolton are not currently operating at capacity. There is significant competition in the area, with 13 golf clubs operating within a 10-mile radius. Smaller private clubs with fewer facilities are struggling to fill their membership.

Several clubs including Bolton Open Golf Course, Brightmet Golf Club and Hart Common Golf Club have expanded their facilities in recent years, some to accommodate 18 hole courses in order to remain competitive with other clubs. Where re-development has taken place, membership levels have not significantly increased.

However, in contrast where clubs are actively promoting junior membership, for example, Regent Park Golf Club, predicted membership growth, suggests that another driving range may be required.



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## *Security*

Golf courses are prone to regular vandalism due to their isolated nature, often with public rights of way running through the courses. In some instances, the quality of the public rights of way has deteriorated to the extent that users are forced to encroach upon the golf course. Motorbikes and horses have caused damage to courses, sometimes also posing a threat to users. Clubs consider that this has had a noteworthy impact on participation and membership levels, particularly for ladies and junior members who feel intimidated following a number of assaults.

## ***Summary for golf***

- ❑ Courses across the Borough are not being played to capacity.
- ❑ Minor spates of vandalism are an on-going issue at most clubs. Where incidents have been more serious, clubs noted that there has been an impact on their levels of membership, which have subsequently decreased.
- ❑ Junior participation is limited to a small number of clubs.
- ❑ Regent Park Golf Club, predicted membership growth, suggests that another driving range may be required.

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## **10.20 Netball**

### ***Administration and development***

England Netball is the governing body with overall responsibility for ensuring the effective governance of the sport. There is a strong league structure in Bolton with Bolton Summer Netball League and Bolton Winter Netball League hosting over 100 teams between them. There are 58 teams playing across five sections in the Bolton Summer Netball League which uses outdoor facilities. Whilst the Bolton Winter Netball League, using mainly indoor facilities also has 50 teams playing across five sections. The teams tend to come from around a 20 mile radius of Bolton.

### ***Key Issues***

The Bolton Summer Netball League reports that outdoor court surfaces have caused significant problems for play when wet. In some instances this is due to the poor quality of the court surface but also when the courts are not clean i.e. there is a build up of dust, the surface becomes unplayable. General issues with the facilities identified by the League include a lack of adequate safety margins around outdoor courts, particularly important when equipment is stored nearby i.e. five-a-side nets. Bolton Winter Netball League reports that local authority venues are no longer used as the facilities and courts are not up to standard. However, play has moved to new facilities within the Borough, particularly at Smithills Sport Centre.

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## PART II: EDUCATION PROVISION

### II.1 Introduction

The provision of pitches at schools and colleges can make an important contribution to the overall stock of playing pitches within a particular catchment area. It is therefore important to accrue accurate information concerning the number, type, quality and availability of pitches within the education sector in Bolton.

Legislation within the Schools Standards and Framework Act (SSFA) 1998 was introduced by the Government requiring all schools to seek approval from the Secretary of State for Education and Employment (Education and Skills since July 2001) for the sale of their playing fields. Section 77 of the SSFA seeks to protect school playing fields against disposal or change of use by requiring the prior consent of the Secretary of State before disposal or change of use may take place. The Department for Education and Skills produced guidance on section 77 of the SSFA within Circular 3/99 'The Protection of School Playing Fields' in June 1999.

Circular 3/99 has recently been replaced by guidance from the Department for Education and Skills entitled 'The Protection of School Playing Fields and Land for City Academies'. The guidance aims to strengthen the existing measures for protecting school playing fields. In particular, the guidance intends to support the development and improvement of sporting and play provision for the benefit of schools and their local communities, and to provide wider access to these facilities. Applications for disposal or change of use of playing fields will not only have to take account of existing community use but the potential use of the facilities for the local community.

The following section details playing pitch and associated facility provision on school sites. The structure is as follows:

- An area-by-area analysis of the secondary schools within each analysis area adopted throughout this report. This includes the details of both indoor and predominantly outdoor sports facilities, as well as issues relevant to each school. It is considered necessary to include a summary of the quantitative indoor sporting provision in order to provide a better equilibrium to the overall sporting provision available in Bolton.
- Details of the provision and quality of pitches and facilities at secondary schools that allow community use. This section also details those clubs that either use, or have shown an interest in using, these pitches.
- A summary of the main issues relevant to each analysis area.



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## ***School sports partnerships (SSP)***

The SSP programme is part of the national Physical Education (PE), School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) Strategy, led by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to widen participation, raises standards and improve the quality of PE and school sport.

The objective of the Strategy - a joint DfES/DCMS public service agreement target - is to ensure that by 2006, 75% of 5-16 year olds in England are spending a minimum of two hours each week doing high-quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum.

Bolton hosts two partnership clusters. The Thornleigh cluster based at Thornleigh Salesian Sports College contains nine families of schools split as follows.

- ❑ Thornleigh Salesian College - seven primary schools.
- ❑ Little Lever Specialist Language College - six primary schools.
- ❑ Firwood School - five primary schools.
- ❑ Sharples High School - five primary schools.
- ❑ Canon Slade CE Secondary School - six primary schools.
- ❑ Withins High School - six primary schools.
- ❑ Smithills High School - eight primary schools.
- ❑ Ladybridge High School Media Arts College - seven primary schools.
- ❑ Turton High School - six primary schools.

The second cluster based at St Josephs RC High School and Sports College, contains eight families of schools split as follows.

- ❑ St Josephs RC High School and Sports College - seven primary schools.
- ❑ Hayward High School - seven primary schools.
- ❑ Harper Green High School - five primary schools.
- ❑ Rivington & Blackrod High School - five primary schools.
- ❑ St James CE School and Sports College High School - six primary schools.
- ❑ Westhoughton High School - eight primary schools.
- ❑ George Tomlinson High School - six primary schools.
- ❑ Mount St Joseph's High School - five primary schools.

## ***Capital upgrade programme***

Bolton is not due to become part of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Programme until 2011. At present, there are no plans to improve the sports facilities at schools in Bolton. BC is to put together a targeted capital bid for £15 million for the refurbishment of Hayward School that is a dual use site. Improvements have not been proposed for the sports facilities as part of this refurbishment. However, there is likely to be some impact on the quantity of sports facilities as the new development may spill over onto hard court areas and playing pitches.



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#### 11.2 Key issues

##### ***Dual use agreements***

Dual-use centres (that is, sited within the grounds of an institution such as a school but also open to the public) form an important part of schools facilities within the Borough. A number of schools hold dual use agreements with Serco a private leisure operator for use of the leisure centres, whereby the schools have access to the facilities during the school day (usually 8am-5pm), with the facilities opening up to community use under Serco's management from 5pm onwards and at weekends.

##### ***Inappropriate use***

Many schools have an open aspect to their playing fields. There is often some low fencing which does not provide a sufficient barrier to access and a lack of control to prevent illegal use. As a consequence these facilities are subject to abuse by other users. Motorcyclists are a major issue and cause significant damage to playing surfaces. School playing fields are also used by dog walkers, which causes health and safety issues when dog foul is left at the site. As a consequence of these issues, a number of schools employ security guards to patrol their premises at intervals during the evening to help prevent such use. This is working to some extent, although the patrols are not based statically at one site throughout the evening.

##### ***Issues raised in original playing pitch strategy***

- ❑ The quality of education sports provision varied considerably. Recommended actions acknowledged the need for investment on pitches, with the proposed outcome of the improved pitches hosting potential mini soccer provision to meet latent demand.
- ❑ Generally, schools were open for community use. However, some schools did not wish to extend community use, concerned about for any detrimental effect on the quality of pitches for curriculum use, for example Bolton School and Thornleigh Salesian College.



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## **11.3 Secondary schools summaries**

All secondary schools and private colleges were visited and facilities assessed. KKP met with either the head of PE or, in some cases, with either the head and or deputy head of the school.

### ***Bolton School***

Bolton school is very well endowed with sports facilities, both indoor and outdoor. Community use of the facilities is limited as the School is keen to ensure the facilities remain of a high quality.

### ***Canon Slade CE Secondary School (1,700 pupils)***

The School is well endowed with outdoor facilities. The pitches are located away from the main school building and are accessed across a bridge. Although the pitches are generally in a good condition, they do suffer from illegal use by motorcycles and golfers as a result of their seclusion and lack of secure fencing. This subsequently has a detrimental effect on the quality of the pitches. Furthermore, the School regards this as an inhibiting factor in letting out the pitches for additional community use, as well as the heavy curricular demand. The pitches are in curricular use for around three to four hours per day and there is some extra-curricular use of the pitches for around two hours, two to three days per week. Whilst the STP is in constant use for around five hours per day for curricular use, it is also used each evening by the community for football and hockey. The STP has hosted two county hockey tournaments for U15s and U16s. Generally changing facilities are not made available for teams using pitches and demand for outdoor facilities for changing has been identified to facilitate community use.

The School has hardcourt provision comprising of five tennis courts and four netball courts. However, the School would like to relocate these to an area, which is currently used as a kickabout area given that in their current location, they are frequently used for car parking.

Canon Slade has a strong background in athletics and the extensive land has created a facility, which is to host the English Schools Athletics Association National Cross Country Final. The School has links with Bolton Harriers at Leverhulme Park.

The School has concerns about its indoor facilities. The sports hall, built around fifteen years ago, is regarded as being inadequate in terms of size. As part of 'Building Schools for the Future' the School would like to extend this facility.



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## ***George Tomlinson School (580 pupils)***

The School has two senior football grass pitches and one junior football pitch. However, the pitches are of a poor quality and have poor drainage. Maintenance at the site is a problem, particularly for the indoor facilities, largely due to the uncertainties of facility ownership (i.e lack of clearly defined responsibilities for maintenance).

There are major quality issues with the indoor sports facilities. The gymnasium requires re-flooring due to problems with damp.

## ***Harper Green School (1484 students)***

Harper Green School has a good quality playing field marked with football pitches, with some community use. The School has extensive extra curricular use. This limits the availability of some facilities for community use, but generally weekends are available.

## ***Hayward School (1200 pupils)***

Although the School is currently well endowed with outdoor pitches it is due to be re-developed. Its new footprint is likely to have an impact upon the availability of outdoor sport facilities. The School is therefore hesitant about improving the quality of its current pitches.

The School reports drainage to be an issue across the playing fields and on the hard court areas. The playing fields are situated in two areas, one area directly to the rear of the school and a second, larger area that is adjacent to the School and is backed by housing. This second area has limited use by the school given the problems with drainage and there have been difficulties in policing use of the playing fields given their distant location from the school and lack of secure fencing. This has further impinged upon the quality of the pitches.



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## ***Ladybridge High School (764 pupils)***

The quality of the pitches at the site has improved significantly; £140,000 has been spent on improving the playing pitches through drainage and fencing of all the pitches. There is regular community use of the Schools facilities. Its main asset will be the new STP, which is due to be completed for the academic year 2006/2007. Furthermore £140,000 has been spent on improving the playing pitches through drainage and fencing of all the pitches.

## ***Little Lever Specialist Language College (approx 1,000 pupils)***

The pitches are regarded as being of a poor quality since they have been recently drained. The sports facilities are dual use and due to large amount of community use, the School reports concerns about the maintenance of facilities.

The School has two squash courts that are currently out of use due to asbestos being found. There are aspirations to develop the courts into a weights room and two teaching classrooms. The three-lane cricket centre in the sports hall is regarded as a much underused facility.

## ***Mount St Joseph (921 pupils)***

The School's pitches are considered to be in poor condition and require significant drainage work to bring them up to standard. The School has put in a bid to the Football Foundation for £330,000 to make improvements to the shale pitch, which is currently out of use.

## ***Rivington and Blackrod High School (2350 pupils, across 3 sites)***

The School has identified demand to develop its shale pitch to create more pitch space. It uses the STP at Horwich Leisure Centre as its facilities are currently inadequate to meet the need. The two pitches located within the school site experience drainage problems as a result of the rising water table.

## ***Sharples School (1,100 pupils)***

The School has three football pitches that suffer from drainage problems. There are also two shale pitches, one of which one is being developed as an STP. This is being developed through funding from the Big Lottery Fund is due to be completed by summer 2007.

The School has use of the pitches and indoor sports facilities until 5pm, after which the facilities come under the community use agreement. However, there are a number of issues with this agreement that causes frustrations. There have also been instances of vandalism to the pitches, which causes wear in terms of quality.



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## ***Smithills School (1500 pupils)***

The School has a strong commitment to providing sports facilities, which are available for community use. This is inhibited to some extent due to poor drainage of the football pitches and, as a result, these are not let out for community use. Smithills School is recognised as the Borough's netball centre due to its high quality eight-court sports hall that can seat up to eighty spectators.

The six playing pitches suffer from acute drainage problems due to the collapse of the drains and the topography of the pitches. There is a need for extensive drainage work to resolve this issue. Furthermore the poor quality of the pitches has been compounded, in the school's opinion, by substandard grounds maintenance. A number of matches have had to be cancelled. Issues have also been identified with other users trespassing on the pitches, particularly dog walkers, horse riders, golfers and motorcyclists. Such types of illegal use further impacts upon the quality of the pitches. Some drainage work has been carried out by Lancashire Cricket Club on a limited area of the site through funding attained by Smithills Cricket Club in 2000 which has holds a 10 year tenure of use.

The School is keen to promote the leisure centre as a community based site for sports development. However, the indoor facilities are operating at capacity. Bolton Netball League, Smithills Football Club, Bolton Handball Club, Eagley Football Club and Moorside Badminton Club use the School's indoor facilities.

## ***St James CE School and Sports College (1083 pupils)***

The School has regular, extensive community use of its playing fields, particularly by cricket and rounders clubs, including Farnworth Cricket Club, Farnworth Social Circle, Clifton Cricket Club, Farnworth VETTS, HCCF rounders and Blades Barbers. The pitches are located opposite the main school site and students' access is via a tunnel from the School. Access is difficult in winter when the tunnel becomes waterlogged. Furthermore, disabled students also find access difficult. The drainage on the playing fields has improved through work carried out on the pitches, which has had a significant impact upon the quality of the pitches. The shale pitch within the school grounds is no longer in use due to health and safety reasons.

NOF funding has been secured for a multisports area that is comprised of a MUGA that was completed in November as an integral part of the School's playing fields.

There is now a community development officer based at the School as part of its sports college status, which was achieved in September 2005. The School is keen to develop links with the community now that it has the facilities and staffing in place to support community use.

The generic sports hall, dance studio and changing facilities, which have been in place for 18 months form the indoor sports facilities.



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## ***St Josephs RC High School and Sports College***

The School has specialist sports college status and has a strong commitment to extra-curricular use of its indoor facilities by both pupils and clubs. An indoor domed facility (12 badminton court) has been erected on the site. This is an important community facility that is used until 10pm throughout the week and between 10am and 8pm at weekends.

Bolton Wanderers Football Academy frequently uses the dome for training. The Academy was instrumental in helping to secure funding for the dome and has discounted use of the facility. The School prefers to take block bookings of at least ten sessions from community groups wishing to use the facilities. A security guard has been employed to patrol the school grounds and also manages bookings between 6pm-10pm. The School is hoping to employ a commercial manager to manage its sports facilities.

## ***Thornleigh Salesian College (1,580 pupils)***

Thornleigh Salesian College is the hub of the Thornleigh School Sport Partnership. The School's main facility is the floodlit STP, which was built through NOF funding. The pitch is in constant use and is oversubscribed in the winter months. At present the main drawback of the pitch is the lack of toilet and changing facilities. A toilet block is due to be built adjacent to the pitch and there are plans for a changing rooms in due course. Vandalism has been an issue on the STP and security guards are employed from 6-12pm, which has reduced the problem.

## ***Turton High School Media Arts College (1700 pupils)***

The School is due to develop an STP (53x37 metres) and MUGA (35x37 metres), through Lottery funding, which will take some of the existing hardcourt areas used for netball out of use. Additionally, it also hopes to develop changing facilities located adjacent to service these new facilities. Service level agreements are held with Turton Tigers FC and the School is looking to work in partnership with Turton Tigers FC to get FA Charter Standard for the Club.

There are a number of issues with the playing pitches that are shared with Eagley Primary School which contributes to the upkeep and maintenance of the pitches. The pitches are spread across a significant area of land located some distance from the School where PROW run adjacent. The pitches are, therefore, difficult to police and there are significant issues with dog walkers and dog foul.



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#### ***Westhoughton High School (1300 pupils)***

The School reports a lack of outdoor sports facilities, which is further compounded by the high numbers of pupils and absence of other pitches in the area. The playing pitches are owned by the School but are located off-site at Central Drive, one third of a mile away across busy roads. The site has only one portacabin changing area without heating, running water or toilets (a pavilion on the site was burnt down) and the pitch often suffers from waterlogging. Furthermore the shale pitch is also of a poor quality and use of this facility is limited due to health and safety issues

The School has a more substantial provision of indoor facilities, although it is felt that these are not conducive to providing curricular sport. The two squash courts cannot be used by the school and are used infrequently during the evening. Providing a gymnasium would be more beneficial for both curricular and extra-curricular use.

#### ***Withins School (950 pupils)***

The School's outdoor sports facilities have been neglected and are now therefore in poor condition. It is bidding for academy status and is hoping to have a new building within the next 2-3 years. Open access to the pitches due to the lack of fencing causes severe problems with dog fouling and raises health and safety issues. The second pitch, located across the road and marked for rugby, suffers from waterlogging.

The poor condition of the indoor sports facilities is also a major concern for the School, particularly in relation to maintenance and cleaning. The girls changing rooms are considered to be of a particularly poor quality.

#### ***Firwood School (90 pupils)***

Due to the School's restricted site there are limited outdoor sports facilities on site other than a generic grass pitch, which is marked for cricket, athletics and football. There are plans to relocate the School to Withins High School. However, this has been delayed as Withins High School is working towards achieving academy status, which may impact upon the facilities available to accommodate additional pupils. Once the amalgamation of the schools has taken place, there are plans to dispose of the site with the assets transferring to corporate resources and pupils moving to Withins High School.

#### ***Lever Park School (42 pupils)***

The School does not have suitable indoor sports facilities and fosters a relationship with Horwich Leisure Centre for use of their facilities. This reduces lesson times and the variety of sports offered. The School has a generic grass field that is used for football occasionally. It experiences problems with anti-social behaviour but cannot meet the expense of fencing the site.



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## ***Rumworth School (140 pupils)***

The School uses facilities at neighbouring Ladybridge High School. The timetabling is generally considered to work well.

### **11.4 Primary school summary**

Three-quarters of the schools questioned have playing fields on site. A further one tenth of schools are able to access playing fields off site. Just 2% of schools have access to both playing fields on-site and off-site. Over 10% of schools questioned do not have access to any playing fields.

Of those 78 schools, which have playing fields available, nearly two-thirds highlight that their playing fields are available for community use whilst the remaining one third of schools do not allow community use.

Dog fouling and trespassers are an issue for many primary schools. A number of schools report unofficial use of their grounds, which causes additional problems with broken glass, litter and graffiti.

### ***Summary for schools***

- Schools across the Borough express concerns about the unofficial use of their pitches. In particular, schools were experiencing problems with dog walkers and motorbikes causing damage to pitches.
- Drainage has been improved on playing pitches since the previous playing pitch study. This is reflected in the quality scores.
- Where schools form part of a dual use agreement, schools frequently expressed concerns about the perceived lack of maintenance of the facilities.
- There is significant variation in the levels of community use of school facilities. However, the majority of schools that state pitches are available for community use do not currently have any formal agreement with clubs.



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## **PART 12: SUMMARY**

This Assessment Report considers the supply and demand issues for open spaces and outdoor sports facilities in Bolton. It identifies the predominant issues for open spaces and outdoor sports facility typologies as defined in 'Assessing Needs & Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG 17'.

Appendix I outlines all low value sites as scored in the site assessments for their future use and consideration in the context of the issues identified within this report. This will form the basis of discussions to inform the development of standards and strategies and actions to address key issues. The Strategy will include strategic recommendations and policy objectives and follows on from this report.

