7. Provision for children and young people

Introduction and definition

7.1 PPG17 states that the broad objective of provision for children and young people is to ensure that they have opportunities to interact with their peers and learn social and movement skills within their home environment. At the same time, they must not create nuisance for other residents or appear threatening to passers by.

7.2 This typology encompasses a vast range of provision, from small areas of green space with a single piece of equipment (similar to the typology of amenity greenspace) to large, multi purpose play areas. It considers equipped provision only.

7.3 PPG17 notes that categorising facilities under one umbrella often ignores the needs of older children. Each site and range of equipment has a different purpose and often serves a different age group and target audience. Provision of facilities for children does not necessarily negate the need for provision for young people and vice versa.

7.4 In light of the differences between provision for children and young people, this typology has been subdivided and facilities for children and young people have been analysed separately.

7.5 Provision for children is taken to include equipped children's play areas and adventure playgrounds that are perceived to cater for children under 12. Toddlers play areas are also included within this category. These facilities are referred to as facilities for children throughout this report. Where a site contains equipment for both toddlers and children, this has been classified by the predominant age group.

7.6 Guidance on the provision and design of children’s play areas includes the following national and international law and regulations.

- Disability Discrimination Act (equipment must by law comply both in terms of accessibility and play value for disabled children).
- European Safety Standards EN 1176 and EN 1177. Equipment, playground surfacing and design.

7.7 Facilities for young people includes the following types of provision:

- Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs)
- skateparks
- basketball courts
- youth shelters
- informal kickabout areas
- BMX tracks
- Play areas / adventure playgrounds targeting teenagers.
7.8 It is anticipated that these facilities would serve young people over the age of 12. These facilities are referred to as facilities for young people throughout this report.

7.9 In addition to considering the specific role that equipped provision for children and young people fulfils, the interrelationship with other types of open spaces, including parks and amenity areas will also be considered.

7.10 This section of the report sets out the strategic context, key findings emerging from consultation and assessment of current provision for children and young people. Local standards have been derived from the consultation undertaken as part of this study and are therefore directly representative of local needs. The application of these standards provides the Council with a number of policy options for the delivery of facilities for young people and children.

7.11 The majority of schools are currently inaccessible to the community outside of school hours and play areas at these sites have not been considered as part of this assessment. Amongst other things, the Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF) looks to place schools at the heart of the community. In future years, school sites may therefore be central to community life and offer opportunities outside of curricular hours for children and young people.

Context

7.12 The importance of appropriate provision for children and young people is rising up national, regional and local agendas and innovative design of facilities for children and young people, and their involvement within the design, is becoming increasingly important.

7.13 Play England, a national agency, looks to ensure that:

“All children and young people in England have regular access and opportunity for free, inclusive, local play provision and play space”.

7.14 Play England provides guidance for the creation of appropriate play opportunities, the key principles of which is summarised overleaf. It will be essential that new play provision in Charnwood, as well as improvements to existing facilities are designed with these principles in mind.
SECTION 7 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guidance</th>
<th>Key principles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play England Design For Play</strong></td>
<td>The strategy sets outs the principles for creating imaginative, innovative and stimulating play spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The strategy outlines the ten principles for designing successful play spaces. Successful play spaces:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• are bespoke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• are well located</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• make use of the natural elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• provide a wide range of play experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• are accessible to both disabled and non-disabled children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• meet community needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• allow children of different ages to play together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• build in opportunities to experience, risk and challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• are sustainable and appropriately managed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• allow for change and evolution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play England Managing Risk In Play Provision</strong></td>
<td>The document outlines practical ways on how risk can be managed in play provision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The document promotes the challenge of risk in play provision, whilst protecting against harm and encourages the provision of more challenging facilities rather than traditional play provision.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.15  The importance of play is also emphasised within the Local Plan, with policy RT 3 stating that for new developments, there should be 75m\(^2\) equipped play areas per 10 dwellings as well as 125m\(^2\) amenity areas per 10 dwellings.

7.16  Policy RT 6 of the Local plan sets out guidance in relation to the design of play areas including the need for areas that can be easily accessed (ie all properties should be within 400m of equipped play areas and within 200m of smaller incidental play areas), are well related to existing provision, form a focal point of the development and can be easily maintained and are able to successfully accommodate existing ecological interests and encourage the establishment of new habitats.

7.17  The Council has also developed a Play Strategy, covering the period 2006 – 2011 setting out a vision that ‘every child in Charnwood has an equal right to play in a safe and stimulating environment and enjoy their health and childhood experiences through a range of quality formal and informal play opportunities.’

7.18  Research and consultation conducted for the Play Strategy identified a number of key issues that should be addressed to ensure better quality and more play areas and opportunities throughout the borough. These include the need to:

• ensure equal levels of provision of quality play areas throughout the Borough

• ensure that play areas provided cater for a wider age range – younger and older children and separate out provision

• provide additional informal facilities required for older children / youth alongside play areas e.g. skate parks, multi use games areas etc
• provide improved / increased opportunities for youths
• provide regular supervised play / activity / outreach sessions throughout the Borough all year round aimed at different age ranges
• provide different types of play provision e.g. natural play, rope swings etc
• design play areas to discourage anti social behaviour
• for local play opportunities to encourage and enable access
• provide indoor play opportunities
• provide improved play areas in Queen’s Park.

7.19 Charnwood Borough Council has recently invested in large scale, imaginative and exciting play areas at Queen’s Park (in line with the Play Strategy Action Plan). The play area has equipment that is more wide ranging, innovative and challenging than others in the Borough and is therefore termed a “Destination Play Area”. It is anticipated that this site (and other similar facilities) will serve a Borough wide catchment.

7.20 While this section of this report considers only equipped play areas for children and young people, there are many other types of facility which also have an important role to play in providing opportunities for children and young people. These include children's centres (which provide a range of services for families with children up to five) and extended schools (which may provide a range of activities including sports, arts and cultural activities outside of school hours, as well as other services such as nurseries, adult learning and support). It is important that equipped provision for children and young people is considered in the context of these other services.

Consultation – Assessing Local Needs

7.21 Consultation undertaken across Charnwood demonstrates that residents feel strongly about the quality of play opportunities across the borough. Provision for children and young people were the overriding themes of all consultations. In particular, the lack of facilities for young people was frequently raised. This was perceived to have a negative impact on the quality of other open spaces and the use of other public areas.

7.22 While there was an emphasis on increasing the quantity of provision, in many instances the quality of facilities was deemed to be as significant an issue, with residents highlighting the lack of range and unimaginative facilities.

Quantity

Current position

7.23 The quantity of provision for children and young people across Charnwood is summarised in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 respectively. There are 82 play areas for children and 42 sites for young people. Of the 82 facilities for children, 25 are aimed predominantly at toddlers while 57 are primarily for juniors.
7.24 It must be noted that this assessment considers only equipped facilities and does not take into account other activities offered. The interrelationship between equipped play and play spaces (ie amenity spaces and parks) will be considered later in this section. All equipped facilities in the Borough are included within this analysis, whether or not provision for children / young people is their primary purpose.

Table 7.1 - Provision for children across Charnwood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement hierarchy</th>
<th>Total Number of sites</th>
<th>Total Number of Sites for Toddlers</th>
<th>Total Number of Sites for Juniors</th>
<th>LDF population (2021)</th>
<th>Provision per 1000 population (2021) – number of sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger settlements</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>101,368</td>
<td>0.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service centres</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>61,779</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller settlements</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12,253</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>175,400</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.25 The key issues emerging from Table 7.1 and consultations relating to the quantity of provision are as follows:

- responses to the household survey indicate that there is no clear opinion of the adequacy of provision for children across the borough. While 44% of respondents indicate that provision is insufficient, 39% of residents state that the quantity of children’s play areas is sufficient

- provision is distributed unevenly across the settlements, with the quantity of sites per 1000 far higher in the smaller settlements. This is however perhaps not surprising, as more facilities are required to provide local access for residents in smaller settlements. In addition to the facilities above, a facility at Delville Park, Syston is currently under construction

- all settlements contain both facilities predominantly aimed at toddlers and facilities for juniors. While in the larger and smaller settlements 20 – 25% of provision is aimed at toddlers, a much higher proportion of provision in the service centres serves the needs of toddlers.

- Issues arising in the different geographical areas include:
  - **larger settlements** - 40% of residents indicate that provision is adequate (about right or more than enough) compared to 44% who feel that more is required. While many residents indicate that their opinions are based on a lack of provision in their locality, it is clear that in some instances, the quality of facilities impacts on the perceived quantity
  - **service centres** – a relatively large proportion of respondents indicated that the provision of children’s play areas is insufficient (42%). 39% of residents consider provision to be sufficient
- **Smaller settlements** - half the respondents to the household survey (50%) regard the provision of children’s play areas to be insufficient. 32% of residents indicate that provision is sufficient.

- the majority of residents who indicate that provision is sufficient live near to a play area or indicate that they think that there are plenty in the Borough. The main reasons given by those who feel that provision is insufficient include: no play areas near to them (or not enough) not enough facilities on the site (number of pieces of equipment) and not enough good quality facilities.

- 62% of residents who responded to the on-line survey and 51% of respondents in the officer survey consider the provision of children’s play areas to be insufficient.

- 43% of children feel that there are ‘some play areas near their home but that they would like more’ whilst 38% of children state that there are ‘enough play areas’.

- attendees at the Parish Council workshop said that they feel that there is a good amount of children’s play provision – in particular Barrow Parish Council highlighted that they had good provision for children.

- at the stakeholder’s workshop, there were few references to the quantity of provision for children, although an improvement in both the quality and quantity of provision was perceived to be needed over the strategy period. At the stakeholder’s workshop, improvements to the quantity of facilities were perceived to be more important than the quality. A need for improved “family provision” was also highlighted at this session.

7.26 Table 7.2 summarises the quantity of facilities for young people across Charnwood.

**Table 7.2 - Provision for young people across Charnwood**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement hierarchy</th>
<th>Number of sites</th>
<th>LDF population (2021)</th>
<th>Provision per 1000 population (2021)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger settlements</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>101,368</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service centres</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>61,779</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller settlements</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12,253</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>175,400</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.27 The key issues emerging from Table 7.2 above and consultations relating to the quantity of provision for young people are as follows:

- the household survey results shows that levels of dissatisfaction with the quantity of facilities for young people are the most conclusive of all typologies in Charnwood, with 61% of respondents indicating that provision is insufficient. Only 19% of residents feel that there are enough facilities for young people

- analysis of provision per 1000 population demonstrates that facilities for young people are distributed unevenly across the borough. Provision is lowest in the larger settlements and highest in the smaller settlements. The key issues arising in each of the settlement hierarchies are:
  - **larger settlements** - only 25% of residents suggest that there are enough facilities (about right or more than enough) while 58% indicate that there are not enough
  - **service centres** - only a minority of respondents regard the provision of facilities for young people to be sufficient (11%). 63% of residents indicate that provision is insufficient
  - **smaller settlements** - the significant majority of respondents to the household survey regard the provision of facilities for young people to be insufficient (61%). Only 18% of residents consider provision to be sufficient

- almost all residents commenting on the provision for young people indicated that there were insufficient opportunities for young people. Many commented that this results in vandalism to other sites and / or young people using children’s play areas and hanging around on street corners

- the majority of people (80%+) responding to either the officer survey or online survey also consider provision for young people to be insufficient

- just 13% of respondents in the young people survey indicated that there are enough facilities for young people whilst 20% said there are some, but ‘could do with more’, 18% said there ‘are some, but they are poor quality’ and 15% said that there are ‘none’ near to their home

- reinforcing the findings of other consultations, provision for young people was one of the most frequently discussed issues at the Parish Council workshop. In particular, the need for increased provision was discussed. Many Parishes highlighted the role that youth groups play in providing alternatives to equipped play facilities for young people. Birstall Parish Council indicated that there was demand in their area for a skate park

- increasing the amount of provision for teenagers as well as improving the quality of existing sites was perceived to be one of the top priorities for Parish Council representatives. Memorial Park in Sileby was highlighted as an example of a good quality site which meets the needs of a wide range of users

- as well as the need for increased provision, solutions highlighted by Parish Councils relating to the quantity of facilities for young people include:
- the need to provide mobile youth workers
- opportunities to improve cycle routes to permit travel between settlements
- the provision of a youth centre in Syston to serve surrounding villages

• at the stakeholders workshop, the challenge of tailoring facilities to meet the needs of young people was highlighted. The need to manage perceptions and actively engage this sector of the population was perceived to be particularly important.

Setting provision standards

7.28 The recommended local quantity standards have been derived from the local needs consultation and audit of provision and are summarised overleaf. Full justification for each of the standards is provided within Appendix E.

7.29 Instead of a standard outlining the expected hectarage per 1000 population, a standard requiring all residents to be within a certain distance of a play area has been set. This is due to the differences in the area taken up by different types of equipment and the need to tailor both the range of equipment to meet the needs of local children and young people (for different ages groups) and the size of the facility (with a view to the number of children / young people that the facility is likely to serve. In order to deliver on the aspiration to have all residents within the appropriate distance thresholds, an increase on existing provision will be required. Additional facilities will also be required as part of new development. This is reflective of the overwhelming findings of consultation, which reveal a concern that provision is insufficient.
Quantity standard – Children’s play areas (see Appendices D and E – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard to be accessibility led. 1 play area within a 10 minute walk time of the home</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local consultation findings highlight no strong opinions relating to play areas for children. The majority of people who suggest that there is sufficient provision live near a facility. For those that feel that there is a need for more provision, reasons related to a lack of provision, the quality of existing facilities and the range of facilities provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In light of the perceptions that there is a need to increase the quantity of provision as well as the associated quality of provision for children in some areas of Charnwood, it is recommended that the local standard represents an increase on existing provision. This will allow deficiencies to be addressed but promote a focus on the enhancement of play areas across the Borough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The recommended standard is accessibility led. This stems from the importance of location for facilities for children and also provides flexibility with regards the provision of different and innovative facilities. Play areas for children will be required in addition to amenity green spaces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NPFA standards are a useful starting point when designing new residential or mixed use developments. Three different categories of play space have been identified by the NPFA, these are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local Area of Play (LAP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a minimum, facilities should meet with NPFA (now Fields in Trust) LEAP and NEAP size criteria. This should be used to determine requirements for facilities as part of new development. The standard is also in line with that set out in the Charnwood Borough Council Local Plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quantity standard – Provision for young people (see Appendices D and E – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard to be accessibility led. 1 facility for young people within a 10 minute walk time of the home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Local consultation findings reveal strong opinions relating to the provision of facilities for young people, with 61% of residents feeling that provision is insufficient. Reinforcing the findings of other consultations, provision for young people was one of the most frequently discussed issues at the Parish Council workshop. In particular, the need for increased provision was discussed. At the stakeholder’s workshop, the challenge of tailoring facilities to meet the needs of young people was highlighted. The need to manage perceptions and actively engage this sector of the population was perceived to be particularly important. 

The recommended standard is accessibility led. This stems from the importance of location for facilities for children and also provides flexibility with regards the provision of different and innovative facilities. Facilities for young people will be required in addition to amenity green spaces.

The NPFA standards are a useful starting point when designing new residential or mixed use developments. Three different categories of play space have been identified by the NPFA, these are:

- Local Area of Play (LAP)
- Local Equipped Area of Play (LEAP)
- Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)

As a minimum, NEAP criteria is a useful guide and recommends play areas for 8 – 14 year olds which should include a grassed kick about area, a hard surfaced area for ball games (e.g. MUGA) or wheeled activities (e.g. BMX track, Skatepark), eight types of play equipment appropriate to this age group and seating, including a youth shelter.

Quality

Current position

7.30 The quality of existing facilities for children and young people were assessed through site visits undertaken by the Borough Council. Each site was measured against the factors defined in the quality standard (summarised later in this section) and received a total percentage score.

7.31 In addition to the factors used to measure all types of open space, audits of children and young people sites were carried out using RoSPA play value judging criteria. ROSPA sets out scoring thresholds to allow children and young people’s sites to be classified into one of the following: poor, below average, average, good or excellent. Junior, toddlers and teenagers have separate scoring thresholds which are appropriate to each age group. The RoSPA play value score was then converted into the scoring system used in the rest of the PPG17 audit ranging from very good to very poor.
7.32 The overall percentage score incorporates the play value assessments carried out. The play value score (measured against the key ROSPA criteria) is summarised in Appendix J.

7.33 RoSPA states: “The assessments ‘Excellent’, ‘Good’, ‘Average’ etc, are based on what RoSPA considers acceptable. In practice ‘Average’ will be in excess of the national average for existing play areas.” RoSPA therefore recognises that their standards are particularly stringent and the standards are therefore difficult to achieve.

7.34 The quality of provision for children is summarised in Table 7.3. This table summarises the total percentage achieved at each site (in accordance with the methodology set out in Section 2). The overall quality rating in line with the local standard is discussed later in this section. The key issues at each site are recorded in Appendix D, site quality scores database.

Table 7.3 - Quality of children’s play areas in Charnwood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement hierarchy</th>
<th>Range of quality scores – facilities for juniors (%)</th>
<th>Average quality scores facilities for juniors (%)</th>
<th>Range of quality scores – facilities for toddlers (%)</th>
<th>Average quality scores facilities for toddlers (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger settlements</td>
<td>25% - 93%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>37.5% - 91%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Centres</td>
<td>48% - 90%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>40% - 87%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller Settlements</td>
<td>44% - 89%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>64% - 65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>25% - 93%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>37.5% - 91%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.35 The site visit scorings indicate that higher scores were achieved for aspects such as site boundaries, security, seating and cleanliness. Like other types of open space, the quality of provision varies significantly from 25% - 93%. The average score is however consistent over all sizes of settlement, ranging from only 70% - 72%.

7.36 With regards the quality of facilities for toddlers, there is a similar range in the quality of provision, with scores achieved varying from 37.5% - 91%. This range in quality is particularly apparent in the larger settlements.

7.37 The key issues arising from consultation with regards to the quality of children’s play areas are as follows:

- 35% of respondents to the household survey regard the quality of children’s play areas to be average. 23% of residents consider the quality of this typology to be good whilst 16% consider it poor; indicating that although the majority of respondents consider provision to be average/good there are some improvements required
site assessments reveal that the quality of children’s play areas is extremely varied and, whilst there is some very good quality provision within all three settlement hierarchies, there are also some poor quality facilities

users of children’s play areas identified the following as problems; dog fouling (34%) and vandalism and graffiti (32%)

the results are broadly similar in all three sizes of settlement with the majority of respondents considering play areas for children to be average/good:

- **in the larger settlements**, 21% of residents indicate that the quality of facilities is good, 33% consider them average and 17% poor

- **in the service centres**, 25% of residents suggested that play provision is good, 40% consider them average and 15% poor

- **in the smaller settlements**, 24% of respondents indicated that the quality of facilities for children is good, 21% consider them average and 14% felt them to be poor

21% of children responding to the survey suggested that the quality of play areas is good, while 43% indicated that they were sometimes unclean and facilities could be improved. A further 15% suggested that sites were always unclean and untidy

workshop sessions with key stakeholders and Parish Council representatives highlighted that children’s play provision is generally of a good standard – good quality sites were highlighted at Queen’s Park and Barrow. However, there are concerns that a lack of resources will mean that the quality of provision is likely to decline and that some facilities are too small to function well.

7.38 The quality of facilities for young people areas is summarised in Table 7.4 below. This table summarises the total percentage achieved at each site (in accordance with the methodology set out in Section 2). The overall quality rating in line with the local standard is discussed later in this section. The key issues at each site are recorded in Appendix D, site quality scores database

Table 7.4 - Quality of facilities for young people in Charnwood

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement hierarchy</th>
<th>Range of quality scores (%)</th>
<th>Average quality scores (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger settlements</td>
<td>29% – 98%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service centres</td>
<td>49 – 90%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller settlements</td>
<td>40% - 87%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>29% - 98%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.39 The site visit scorings indicate that lower scores (ie lower quality) were generally found for aspects such as a lack of lighting whilst higher scores were achieved for aspects such as site boundaries, seating, litter and security. The quality of facilities in the larger settlements is higher overall than in other areas of the Borough.

7.40 The key issues arising from consultation with regards to the quality of facilities for young people are as follows:

- respondents to the household survey state that the quality of facilities for young people is poor (35%). Only 8% of residents feel that facilities for young people are good quality, whilst 21% consider them to be average

- site assessments indicate that the quality of facilities for young people is also extremely varied, especially within the large settlement areas, where quality percentages range from 29% to 98%. The average score is however consistent across all of the settlement hierarchies

- the low perceptions of quality given by residents may be influenced by the lack of provision in the borough

- responses differ across the three sizes of settlement:
  - in the larger settlements 33% of respondents consider the quality of facilities to be poor, 21% consider them average and 9% good
  - in the service centres 40% of respondents consider the quality of facilities to be poor, 20% consider them average and 5% good
  - in the smaller settlements 18% of respondents consider the quality of facilities to be poor, 14% consider them average and 18% good

- 28% of young people indicated that the quality of facilities was average but in need of some improvement. 24% suggested that facilities for young people are poor and need extensive improvements. 9% perceive the quality of provision for young people to be high quality and well maintained.

**Setting quality standards**

7.41 The recommended local quality standards for provision for children and young people are summarised below and overleaf. They set out essential and desirable characteristics for facilities for children and young people. These key criteria will then be incorporated with the quality scores during the application of local standards. Full justifications and consultation relating to the quality of provision for the local standard is provided within Appendix E.

7.42 The standards summarise the key aspirations of residents of Charnwood with regards provision for children and young people. The importance of tailoring the facility to the needs and aspiration of the children within the catchment area cannot be underestimated.
7.43 Guidance provided by Play England in the recent publications *Managing Risk in Play Provision and Design for Play* focuses on improving the play value of facilities for children and young people. The guidance moves away from the provision of traditional swings and slides and encourages the development of more innovative opportunities, including natural play environments. Adherence to this guidance is therefore likely to see a greater overlap and interrelationship between natural open spaces, informal open spaces and provision for children and young people in future years. The principles set out in this guidance should be considered when new facilities are provided and existing facilities are upgraded. Furthermore, any new facilities should be designed through consultation with young people. This will ensure that facilities are tailored to the needs and aspirations of local communities.

7.44 Looking forward, new facilities for Children and Young People should be created to a quality standard that is not less than “Good” as defined by RoSPA Play Value Standards: i.e. Toddlers Score ranging from 19-24; Juniors Score ranging from 32-40; Young People Score ranging from 25-34.

**Quality standard – Children's play areas (see Appendix E)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard – Children’s play areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean and litter free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate facilities for the young (meeting LEAP criteria as a minimum). RoSPA Play Standards should also be met</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well kept grass and well maintained equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate design and location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of children in the design of facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter / Dog Bins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quality standard – Facilities for young people (see Appendix E)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard – Facilities for young people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Essential</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilities for young (meeting NEAP criteria as a minimum). RoSPA Play Standards should also be met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean and litter free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litter bins</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Accessible Design and Location

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appropriate design and location</th>
<th>Seating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of young people in the design</td>
<td>Perception of safety and security</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Accessibility

#### 7.45
The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage as well as providing opportunities for people to use the site. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultations.

#### 7.46
Local access to provision for children and young people is particularly important in order to promote use of the site.

#### 7.47
Consultation and analysis highlights that the key issues with regards accessibility of provision for children and young people include:

- unsurprisingly, current travel methods highlight a clear preference for walking to children’s play areas, reinforcing the expectation that facilities are provided locally
- the majority of respondents to the household survey indicate that they would expect to walk to a children’s play area (89%) and a facility for young people (73%)
- 37% of young people indicated that they usually meet friends at the local park. Only 5% meet at the skateboard park, 3% a ball court and 4% at a youth shelter. 5% meet at the BMX track. The highest proportion of young people play at friend’s houses / at their own home
- 18% of young people suggested that a lack of transport is a barrier to usage of open spaces and sports facilities. 27% indicated that proximity to their home prevented them from using facilities more. This was the highest of all barriers
- stakeholders referenced the need to ensure that there were accessible sites (and / or activities) for young people and that there is a need to promote access to existing facilities and raise awareness of the opportunities provided
- Parish Councils suggested that improved access to facilities on school sites would provide greater opportunities for the community, particularly facilities for children, amenity spaces and outdoor sports facilities. Access issues were not considered to be a priority for children and young people at the Parish workshop although the importance of encouraging people to access sites on foot was highlighted.

#### 7.48
The recently provided ‘Destination Play Areas’ challenge these expectations. Facilities are of significantly higher quality and provide families with a day out. As a consequence, evidence on usage to date suggests that these facilities attract users from much further afield.

### Setting accessibility standards

#### 7.49
The recommended local accessibility standards for children’s play areas and facilities for young people are summarised below and overleaf. In the absence of strict
guidelines on the quantity of provision, the application of these standards will dictate priorities for new facilities. Provision of both types of facility is expected to be in close proximity to the home. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix E.

7.50 It is recognised that some facilities may attract users from a wider catchment and this will be discussed in the analysis that follows. While these facilities do not negate the need for local provision, they provide an additional and frequently used borough wide resource.

Accessibility Standard (see Appendix E)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard – Children’s play areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 minute walk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

89% of respondents would expect to walk to a play area, providing strong evidence that these sites should be provided locally and that a walk time standard should be set. This was also supported by consultations with children and young people and with Parish Councils, which demonstrated the value of localised provision.

The recommended standard of 10 minutes is in line with the modal response across the borough and will enable a balance between quality and quantity of provision. The standard links with that set for young people and for formal parks hence facilitating the delivery of sites containing multiple types of provision. Amenity spaces will provide localised opportunities for informal play.

The recommended standard is applicable to all tiers of the settlement hierarchy in line with public expectation. The quantity standard will help to determine the size of settlements in which play areas should be provided. The standard is also in line with the standard for play provision outlined in the Charnwood Borough Council Local Plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended standard – Facilities for young people</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 minute walk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

73% of respondents would like facilities for young people to be in walking distance of the home providing strong evidence that these sites should be provided locally and that a walk time standard should be set. This was also supported by consultations with children and young people which demonstrated the value of localised provision.

The recommended standard of 10 minutes is in line with the modal response and will promote a balance between quality and quantity of provision. The standard links with that set for children and for formal parks hence facilitating the delivery of sites containing multiple types of provision. Amenity spaces will provide localised opportunities for informal play.

Applying provision standards

7.51 The application of the recommended quality, quantity and accessibility standards is essential in understanding the existing distribution of open space, sport and recreation facilities and identifying areas where provision is insufficient to meet local need.
SECTION 7 – PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Quantity

7.52 As highlighted in the quantity standards analysis earlier in this section, the requirement for play facilities and provision for young people in new development is to be evaluated using an accessibility led approach based on the application of the accessibility standard.

7.53 Shortfalls in existing provision will also be evaluated using this approach.

Accessibility

7.54 Application of the accessibility standards is a key component of the evaluation of the adequacy of existing provision as well as the need for additional provision.

7.55 While this section focuses primarily on equipped areas for children and young people, it is also essential to consider the role that amenity green spaces play in providing informal play opportunities. Areas deficient in both amenity space and formal facilities should be a particular priority for new provision, as this indicates that there is a distinct lack of opportunities for play. At each settlement hierarchy, the interrelationship between facilities for children, young people and amenity green spaces will be considered.

7.56 Map 7.1 illustrates the application of the accessibility standard for facilities for children across Charnwood. It indicates that facilities are evenly distributed. The largest area of deficiency is to the south of Loughborough. This represents the current situation and does not take into account any play areas which are planned as part of new development.

7.57 Map 7.2 outlines the interrelationship between facilities for children and amenity greenspace. In areas where provision for children is lacking, amenity greenspace offers informal play opportunities. The comprehensive distribution of amenity areas, even in the smaller settlements, means that most residents have a minimum of one informal play opportunity.

7.58 Map 7.3 illustrates the application of the accessibility standard for facilities for young people. It demonstrates that facilities for young people are more sparsely distributed across the Borough than those for children. While all residents are within the appropriate catchment of facilities in Shepshed, there are gaps in the other larger settlements as well as in most service centres and smaller settlements.

7.59 Map 7.4 summarises the provision of facilities for young people and the provision of amenity spaces. Most areas devoid of equipped provision for young people have access to amenity space within the suggested 10 minute catchment area.

Quality

7.60 The overall quality rating for each site is based on the total quality score achieved (outlined in Table 7.3 and 7.4) and the essential and desirable criteria listed in the quality standard. The methodology for calculating the overall quality rating is summarised below.
Table 7.5 – Measuring sites against the recommended quality standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Quality Rating</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>All essential criteria 3 or above</td>
<td>80% or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All desirable criteria 3 or above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>All essential criteria 3 or above</td>
<td>70 – 79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>All essential criteria 3 or above</td>
<td>60 – 69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>All essential criteria 3 or above</td>
<td>50 – 59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>All essential criteria 3 or above</td>
<td>Below 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.61 Table 7.6 therefore summarises the application of the quality standard based on the essential and desirable quality criteria set out within the Local Standard.

Table 7.6 – Application of Quality Standard – Facilities for Children (includes both junior and toddlers provision)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement hierarchy</th>
<th>% of sites excellent</th>
<th>% of sites very good</th>
<th>% of sites good</th>
<th>% of sites average</th>
<th>% of sites poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger settlements</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service centres</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller settlements</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding
7.62 Table 7.6 illustrates that the majority of facilities for children were awarded average ratings. A higher proportion of sites were considered to be good or above (16%) than are poor (10%).

7.63 Table 7.7 summarises the quality ratings awarded to sites for young people.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlement hierarchy</th>
<th>% of sites excellent</th>
<th>% of sites very good</th>
<th>% of sites good</th>
<th>% of sites average</th>
<th>% of sites poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Larger settlements</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service centres</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller settlements</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding

7.64 As can be seen above, a higher proportion of facilities for young people achieve ratings of excellent, very good or good than facilities for children. Despite this, 55% of sites are considered average. Again, only 10% of sites are rated poorly.

7.65 Map 7.5 considers the quality of provision for children, based on the findings of the site visits. As highlighted earlier in this section, the quality of provision and range of facilities provided varies significantly. There are no distinct patterns in the quality of provision relating to the size of settlement although provision is clearly of higher quality in Loughborough and to the east of the Borough towards East Goscote and Queniborough than in other areas. Map 7.6 outlines the quality of facilities for young people. Again, high and low quality facilities are distributed sporadically across the Borough. Like provision for children, there is a concentration of higher quality facilities in Loughborough. In general, facilities in the west of the Borough are of lower quality overall than those in the East.
Map 7.1 – Facilities for children in Charnwood

Provision of Children's Play Areas in Charnwood

Legend:
- Charnwood Borough Boundary
- Analytical Areas
- Leisure Centres
- Major Centrality
- Children's Play Area Outside Charnwood

Children's Play Areas:
- Toddlers
- Under
- 10 minute walk time
Map 7.2 – Facilities for children and amenity green space in Charnwood
Map 7.3 – Facilities for young people in Charnwood

Provision of Young Peoples Facilities in Charnwood

Legend:
- Charnwood Borough Boundary
- Analytical Areas
  - Service Centres
  - Major Settlements
  - Young peoples facilities whole Charnwood
  - Young Peoples Facilty
  - Transport via rail

Source: UK © 2003. Datafile R.V. This product includes mapping data sourced from Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright. Licence number 100020509
Map 7.4 – Facilities for young people and amenity green space in Charnwood

Provision of Amenity Green Space and Young Peoples Facilities in Charnwood

Legend
- Charnwood Borough Boundary

Amenity Green Space
- Primary Purpose
- Secondary Purpose
- 10 minute walk time
- 20 minute walk time

Young Peoples Facilities
- Primary Purpose
- Secondary Purpose
- 10 minute walk time
- 20 minute walk time
- Young Peoples Facilities outside Charnwood
- Amenity Green Space outside Charnwood
Map 7.5 – Quality of facilities for children in Charnwood

Quality Scores for Childrens Play Areas in Charnwood

Legend
- Charnwood Borough Boundary
- Analytical Areas
  - Service Centers
  - Major Settlements
- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Average
- Poor

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Map 7.6 – Quality of facilities for young people in Charnwood
Priorities for Future Delivery

Borough wide issues

7.66 This section considers the borough wide issues that need to be addressed. Consideration is then given to issues within specific settlements.

Meeting demand

7.67 In order to effectively meet the needs of residents it is essential to ensure that residents have access to facilities of the appropriate quality within the required distance threshold. The Charnwood Borough Council Play Strategy aims to increase the provision of children's and young peoples facilities and increase the opportunities available to this age group.

7.68 As well as addressing existing deficiencies, it is essential to ensure that residents of new development do not exacerbate pressures on existing play areas. An accessibility led approach should be taken to prioritise need in new development. Policy should require all new residents to be within 10 minutes of a children's play area and facility for young people and the facilities provided should be in line with the quality standard.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CYP1</th>
<th>Ensure that policy requires contributions towards facilities for both children and young people as part of new development. Promote an accessibility led approach to the determination of levels of provision required as part of new development.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

7.69 In addition to providing local play facilities, as highlighted earlier in this section, the ‘destination play area’ at Queen’s Park (Loughborough) has proved very popular and the potential for such a facility in the south of the Borough should be explored to ensure that all residents in the Borough have access to one of these sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CYP2</th>
<th>Seek to supplement the existing destination play area with a facility located strategically in the south of the Borough (potentially Syston / Thurmaston).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Involving children and young people in the design of facilities

7.70 Consultation highlighted the importance of involving children and young people in the design of facilities. One of the main issues to emerge from the Stakeholder workshop is the challenge of tailoring the provision of facilities to meet the needs of young people.

7.71 The surveys for both children and young people highlight a variety of preferences and different needs and aspirations. For example, the survey for young people demonstrates that priorities between new indoor youth centres, MUGAs and BMX tracks are evenly split. This is further highlighted by the priorities expressed in Parish Plans, with different facilities preferred in different areas. It will therefore be essential to tailor any new facilities to the children local to that site.
7.72 The Play Strategy highlights the need to design play areas to discourage anti social behaviour. Involving children and young people in the design of facilities can generate pride in the facilities and in turn reduce incidents of anti social behaviour, such as graffiti and vandalism.

| CYP3 | Promote the involvement of children and young people in the design of facilities intended for their local area. |

7.73 The remainder of this section outlines the key priorities in each of the settlement hierarchies of the Borough.

**Larger Settlements**

**Children's play areas**

7.74 There are currently 43 play areas in total across the larger settlements. The highest quantity of provision is located in Shepshed (0.77 facilities per 1000) and the lowest levels of provision are found in Birstall (0.26 per 1000 population). These levels of provision do not take into account facilities that are currently planned as part of new developments. The impact of these facilities will be returned to later in this section.

7.75 Application of the accessibility standard indicates that play areas are well distributed, with most residents within a 10 minute walk of at least one facility.

7.76 When considering the location of children’s play areas and amenity green space nearly all residents have access to at least one of these types of open space within a 10 minute walk time. Only a small area of deficiency remains in the north of Loughborough. Although there is no play area located in this area, this land is industrial and therefore there is no need to provide a new facility.

7.77 In areas where residents are outside of the catchment area of existing provision, new facilities should be prioritised.

7.78 Application of the accessibility standards suggests that circa four additional facilities will be required to meet gaps in existing provision. The main areas of deficiency are west and south of Loughborough, North west of Birstall and south west of Thurcaston.

7.79 It is anticipated that the deficiency in South Loughborough will be rectified in the short term, as two new Local Equipped Areas for Play are anticipated to be provided as part of new development (illustrated on Map 7.8). Four Neighbourhood areas for play are also anticipated to be provided as part of the new Hallamfields development to the north of Birstall.

7.80 Maps 7.7 – 7.11 illustrate the existing areas of deficiency and also highlight planned provision in these areas. The location of amenity green spaces in these areas is also considered as these sites provide opportunities for informal play and new play facilities can also be situated on these sites.
Map 7.7 – Lack of access to facilities for children in West Loughborough
Map 7.8 – Lack of access to facilities for children in South Loughborough
Map 7.9 – Lack of access to facilities for children in North West Birstall
Map 7.10 – Lack of access to facilities for children in South West Thurmaston
CYP4

Seek to increase the provision of children’s play areas in areas of identified deficiency, specifically West Loughborough and South West Thurmaston.

Ensure that new developments in South Loughborough and Birstall provide the planned additional facilities for children and young people.

7.81 Outside of the areas of deficiency, consideration should be given to the improvement of the quality of existing facilities. While there are some very high quality facilities (for example Queen’s Park, the highest quality site in the Borough) there are also examples of poorer quality facilities. 81% of facilities achieved an average score and 12% were considered poor. Overall sites are of varying quality, with scores ranging from 23% - 88%. The quality of facilities in the area should be maintained and enhanced. The key issues and areas for improvement for each site are provided in Appendix J.

CYP5

Seek to maintain and enhance the quality of children’s play areas in the larger settlements in line with the quality vision focusing on the facilities which do not meet the recommended quality standards.

7.82 Many play areas are located in close proximity to one another which creates overlapping catchments. Overlapping catchments may be due to:

- A mixture of LEAPs and NEAPs that cater for different age groups
- High density residential population
- Toddler facilities being located close together.

7.83 In particular these overlapping catchments are evident in North Loughborough. The value of poor quality sites serving overlapping catchments and the target audiences that these sites serve should be assessed and if they are of limited value consideration should be given to the disposal of these sites in favour of increasing provision or enhancing the quality of remaining sites. Map 7.11 illustrates the sites containing overlapping catchments.
Map 7.11 – Sites in North Loughborough containing overlapping catchments
Consider the value of poor quality sites serving overlapping catchments particularly in North Loughborough.

7.84 As the population of the larger settlements grows, it will be important to ensure that facilities for children are provided to meet the needs of new residents (in line with recommendation CYP 1).

Facilities for young people

7.85 19 facilities for young people are located within the larger settlements. Consistent with children’s provision, the highest amount of facilities per 1000 population is located in Birstall (0.26). The lowest levels of provision per 1000 are found in Shepshed (0.15).

7.86 Accessibility mapping indicates many residents are within the recommended distance of a facility (10 minutes), however in order to meet the standard of a facility within 400m of the home at least eight new facilities will be required.

7.87 New provision in areas of existing deficiency should be prioritised. In particular there are deficiencies in the west and south of Loughborough, and in south Shepshed. There is also a small area where residents are outside of the catchment for a facility in south Thurmaston despite significant recent increases in provision for young people. There are also some gaps in provision in North West Birstall. The gaps in these areas are illustrated on Maps 7.12 and 7.13. There are amenity green spaces in both of these areas that should be assessed for suitability for new provision.
Map 7.12 – Lack of provision for young people in West Loughborough
Map 7.13 – Lack of provision for young people in South Thurmaston
Provide new facilities for young people in order to meet identified deficiencies across Loughborough, south Shepshed and in south Thurmaston.

7.88 As the population of larger settlements is projected to grow, shortfalls of facilities for young people will increase. It will therefore be essential to ensure that the need to provide facilities for young people is considered as part of new developments (in line with recommendation CYP 1).

7.89 In addition to increasing the provision of facilities for young people it is also important to ensure that the quality of sites is in line with the quality vision. While 42% of sites are rated as excellent, very good or good, 47% of sites in the larger settlements achieved a rating of average and 11% of sites are rated poor. This highlights the need for qualitative improvements. The key issues and areas for improvement for each site not achieving the quality score are provided in Appendix J.

Service Centres

Children's play areas

7.90 40 children’s play areas are located within the service centres. The number of facilities per 1000 population in the service centres ranges significantly from 0.34 in Anstey to 1.39 in East Goscote. In East Goscote however, facilities are all aimed at toddlers.

7.91 Application of the accessibility standard indicates that the majority of residents have access to a play area within the recommended 10 minute walk time. The main gaps in provision are to the south of Mountsorrel and east of Syston. The Parish Plan for Mountsorrel does not reference the need for an additional facility, although the Parish Plan in Anstey indicates that there is demand for a facility for the under 5’s. Consideration should also be given to the need to tailor some provision in East Goscote for juniors.

7.92 When amalgamating the provision of children’s play areas and amenity green space it can be seen that there are only a small number of residents in the east of Syston to not have access to either of these typologies (Map 7.14). Furthermore, provision in Syston is all aimed at toddlers.
Map 7.14 – Deficiencies of children’s play areas and amenity green space in the east of Syston
7.93 It is anticipated that new facilities may be provided in this area as part of new development. New provision is also likely as a result of new development in Rothley, Anstey and in Barrow upon Soar.

**CYP8**
Provide new facilities for children in areas of identified deficiency in particular in Syston.

7.94 Outside of the identified areas of deficiency, the initial focus should be on qualitative improvements to existing sites. Although the quality of sites in the service centres is higher than in other settlement hierarchies, with 28% of sites achieving ratings of good or above, 69% of sites were rated as only average and 3% of sites were rated poor. Improvements should take on board the priorities raised through the quality vision and should focus on more poorly rated facilities first. The key issues and areas for improvement for each site are provided in Appendix J.

**CYP9**
Focus on qualitative improvements in other service centres in line with the quality vision focusing particularly on the facilities falling below the recommended quality standard.

**Facilities for young people**

7.95 16 facilities for young people are located in the service centres. The highest amount of provision per 1000 population is found in Rearsby. Queniborough does not contain any facilities for teenagers.

7.96 The application of the accessibility standard supports this as it can be seen that facilities for young people sparsely distributed across the settlements. Areas of deficiency are evident in all of the service centres, in particular in north Sileby, east and west Syston and in the south of Mountsorrel, Barrow upon Soar and West Quorn. There are also some residents outside the catchment of facilities in North East Anstey.
Map 7.15 – Deficiencies of young people facilities in the north east Anstey
7.97 Consistent with the findings for children’s provision, nearly all residents have access to a facility for young people or amenity green space within a 10 minute walk time.

7.98 In consideration of the high level of dissatisfaction with current provision and widespread accessibility deficiencies, there is a need to increase the provision of facilities for young people in the service centres. This is an identified need in Parish Plans for facilities for young people in Mountsorrel, Barrow and East Goscote. Application of the accessibility standard indicates that in order to alleviate deficiencies at least 10 new facilities will be required.

| CYP10 | Increase the provision of facilities for young people within the service centres in particular in Queniborough, East Goscote, Mountsorrel, Sileby, West and East Syston, Barrow upon Soar, North East Anstey and west Quorn. |

7.99 The quality of facilities for young people in the Service Centres is the lowest of all settlements hierarchies in the borough. 63% of sites score average and 6% are rated as poor. Only 31% of sites achieved a rating of good or above, which compares poorly with the other settlement hierarchies. The key issues and areas for improvement for each site are provided in Appendix J.

| CYP11 | Seek to enhance the quality of existing facilities for young people in the service centres in line with the quality vision focusing in particular on those that do not achieve the recommended quality standards. |

Smaller Settlements

Children’s play areas

7.100 A total of ten children’s play areas are located within the smaller settlements. The greatest number of facilities per 1000 is found in South Croxton (4.15) and no facilities are located within 11 settlements.

7.101 Despite limited provision, application of the accessibility standard indicates that sites are well distributed, with the majority of larger settlements containing at least one play area. Those larger settlements where no play areas are located are:

- Swithland
- Thrussington
- Walton on the Wolds.

7.102 When considering the location of amenity green space in the smaller settlements, nearly all residents in the larger settlements have access to at least an amenity green space or children’s play area. Only residents in Swithland are outside the catchment of these typologies.
7.103 In consideration of the lack of provision in Swithland, Thussington and Walton on the Wolds consideration should be given to demand for facilities in this area. Demand for provision in the smaller settlements outside the catchment of a play area should be monitored and new facilities provided if demand is sufficient. Parish Plans suggests that a play facility is required in Thussington and reference is also made to the need for an upgraded facility in Wymeswold. It is anticipated that a new facility will also be provided as part of new development in this area.

| CYP12 | Seek to increase the provision of children’s play areas in those larger settlements devoid of provision in particularly Swithland, Thussington and Walton on the Wolds. Assess demand for provision within the smaller settlements. |

7.104 In settlements where provision is not required, effective transport links to nearby provision will be essential to maximise the opportunities for all residents. Provision in smaller settlements should be considered strategically to maximise the number of residents who are within a short drivetime of facilities.

| CYP13 | Maximise the transport links between smaller settlements and facilities for both young people and children. This will include public transport links as well as green corridors promoting walking and cycling. |

Facilities for young people

7.105 Seven facilities for young people are located within the smaller settlements. The greatest number of facilities per 1000 is found in Hoton (2.84) and no facilities are located within 14 settlements.

7.106 As with the findings for children’s play areas, accessibility mapping indicates that the majority of residents within the larger settlements have access to a facility for young people. The larger settlements where no facilities are located are as follows:

- Seagrave
- Barkby
- Swithland
- Thrussington
- Thurcaston
- Walton on the Wolds.

7.107 When amalgamating the provision of facilities for young people and amenity green space nearly all residents in the larger settlements have access to a site within a 10 minute walk time. Only residents in Swithland do not have access to either type of open space.
7.108 The provision of facilities for young people may not be possible in the smaller settlements in light of the specialist nature of provision and the consequential investment required. Demand for provision in the smaller settlements outside the catchment of a facility should be monitored and new provision provided if demand is sufficient.

| CYP14 | Evaluate demand for provision for young people in the smaller settlements, particularly in Barkby, Seagrave, Swithland, Thrussington, Thurcaston and Walton on the Wolds and provide a facility where deemed appropriate and necessary. |

7.109 In settlements where provision is not required, effective transport links to nearby provision will be essential to maximise the opportunities for all residents. Provision in smaller settlements should be considered strategically to maximise the number of residents who are within a short drivetime / cycle of these facilities.

| CYP15 | Maximise the transport links between smaller settlements and facilities for both young people and children. This will include public transport links as well as green corridors promoting walking and cycling. |

Summary and recommendations

7.110 Equipped provision for children and young people was a key theme of consultations undertaken. Residents expressed concerns over the quantity of provision, as well as highlighting that the quality of many facilities is insufficient and that facilities are perceived to be boring and not challenging. Tailoring facilities to meet the needs of young people was highlighted as one of the main challenges faced by the Borough.

7.111 Analysis of existing facilities highlights that there is significant variation in the quality of sites. While there are some new and different facilities there are also many sites which are old and offer little in terms of play value.

7.112 In addition, there are quantitative and accessibility issues in all settlement hierarchies for both children and young people. In order to adequately provide for residents within the appropriate distance threshold new provision will be required in all areas. Provision in the service centres for young people is particularly poor and new provision will be required in most of these towns. The distribution of play facilities is more comprehensive, with the main priorities for new provision being in Loughborough, Birstall, Thurcaston and Syston. Some of these issues will be resolved when planned developments go ahead.

7.113 Quality is as important as quantity however and any new facilities developed should meet the suggested quality criteria and should provide exciting play opportunities for children and young people. Site assessments carried out at existing facilities should also be used to inform decisions on those facilities in need of enhancement.
Local Development Framework Implications

7.114 The key issues arising from the analysis of the provision of facilities for children and young people for the LDF are therefore as follows:

- facilitate the delivery of facilities for children and young people through the planning system and ensure a strategic approach to the future delivery of facilities
- ensure that policies are in place to secure contributions from new developments towards provision for children and young people
- identify opportunities for new provision in areas currently devoid of provision
- address the quality issues highlighted at existing sites and ensure that existing and new facilities provide exciting play opportunities
- facilitate the delivery of improved public transport and green corridors between smaller settlements and larger settlements containing facilities.