

Public Open Space Strategy

2016-2026

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Foreword

Public open space and in particular parks and green spaces make an important contribution to quality of life by providing free, accessible provision at a local level making a significant contribution to health and wellbeing, social inclusion and physical regeneration. They also contribute to vibrant neighbourhoods which attract people to want to live, work, visit and invest.

This Public Open Space Strategy provides a vision for Ashfield's public open spaces over the next ten years from 2016 to 2026 and a focus for three key areas:

- Sustainable long term management of public open spaces
- Continued improvement of public spaces
- Provision of new public open space and associated facilities through the development process.

The strategy focuses on publicly accessible open spaces, including parks and green spaces, town centre spaces such as squares and plazas, allotments, cemeteries and green links. The strategy builds on the implementation of the Green Space (2008) and Play (2008) strategies which have seen over £6 million invested into Ashfield's public open space. Much has been achieved during this timeframe, in particular providing good quality play and young people's areas which residents told us were the highest priorities.

Preparation of the strategy has included the following:

- Review of Green Space Strategy
- Review of national and local policy regarding public open space
- Assessment of public open space management and investment
- Quality surveys of civic/ public open spaces, green spaces and play and young people's areas
- Consultation with residents
- Review of standards and catchment areas for green spaces, play and young people's areas.

From analysis of the information gathered during the preparation of the strategy the following key priorities have been identified:

Priority 1. Appropriate distribution and linkages of green space and associated facilities across the District

Priority 2. Improving the quality of public spaces

Priority 3. Increasing public satisfaction and use of public space

Priority 4. Ensure sustainable and effective management of public spaces.

These priorities will be achieved through implementation of the strategy Action Plan (page 24) with site specific projects incorporated into the Locality plans for the four main areas of the District (Hucknall, Kirkby, Sutton and the Rural area). The Locality Plans are part of the Council's commitment to meeting the needs of local communities, through delivering plans which have been developed for a specific area through consultation with residents and councillors.

1. Introduction

Ashfield is an attractive place to live, visit and work, and our public spaces are a key factor in achieving this. Everyone needs places for relaxation, exercise and recreation which public spaces provide whilst helping to build a sense of community.

The views of residents about Ashfield as a place to live are generally positive. More than four in five (86%) were satisfied with Ashfield as a place to live, consistent across the district (2016 Resident Survey). The availability of parks, open spaces and green areas was rated as the best thing about living in Ashfield by 20% of respondents which was the highest response.

A comprehensive investment programme has seen over £6 million invested into public space in Ashfield from 2008 to 2016. Much has been achieved during this timeframe, in particular providing good quality play and young people's areas which residents told us were the highest priorities. During this time the number of Green Flag Awards has increased from 3 to 6, 49 green spaces and 20 play areas have been upgraded (since 2007) and now meet the 'good' standard. 19 new young people's facilities have been provided across 10 sites, with the 3 main skate parks also replaced. 71% residents thought that the quality of their local green space had improved over the past 5-7 years (Green Space Survey 2015).

44 out of 89 spaces were rated as good in the 2015 quality assessment which illustrates the need for continued targeted investment to ensure public spaces meet the needs and expectations of users and this strategy sets out how this will be achieved through the key priorities and action plan.

1.1 National Policy Context

Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides a framework for the development of local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities. The NPPF states that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs and that 'access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision. The assessments should identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessment should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required' (Paragraph 73).

The NPPF states that existing open space, sports and recreation sites, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:

- an assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or
- the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.' (Paragraph 74).

The State of UK Public Parks 2014 (Heritage Lottery Fund), reported decreasing funding to parks with council departments facing

unprecedented cuts to staffing and budgets but increasing levels of park use and growth in numbers and membership of Friends groups. In response to the report a national programme run by the charity Nesta, called *Rethinking Parks* ran for two years until early 2016 which developed business models and approaches to managing and resourcing parks, through a number of innovation projects across the UK.

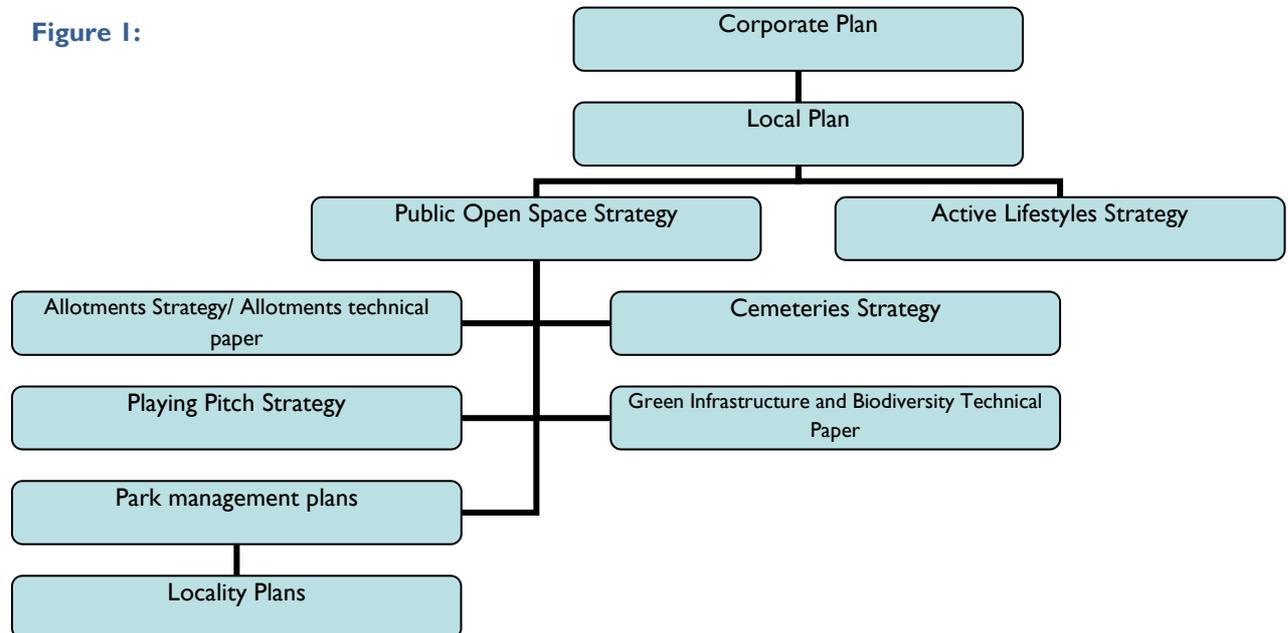
Other recent reports have focused on the ways parks can be managed and resourced in the future. *Places to Be* suggests that rather than being exclusively responsible for delivering services, councils may increasingly play a different role as custodians of place and the facilitators or convenors of local action. *Green Society* describes a number of alternative funding strategies including the development of park improvement districts,

endowment funds and living legacies. It also recommends greater incentives for public participation and volunteering through council tax rebates and community cash-back schemes for communities making a more direct contribution to the management of their local green spaces. Through the strategy action plan alternative funding and management models will be explored and developed where appropriate.

1.2 Local Context

A number of the council’s strategies and plans underpin the Public Open Space Strategy which include; the Playing Pitch Strategy Allotments Strategy, Active Lifestyles Strategy for Ashfield, Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Technical Paper and Town Centre Masterplans. Figure 1 below shows how the strategy fits within the corporate framework.

Figure 1:



Public spaces make a major contribution to the Council’s priorities and provide a host of benefits including economic, environmental, health, recreational, social, learning, biodiversity, heritage and climate change mitigation. The strategy will contribute to the

Council’s Corporate Plan priorities in a variety of ways and in particular through:

- Health and Wellbeing - through the programme of investment in parks

and green spaces, Development and delivery of Active Ashfield Partnership

- Place and Communities - Improved public perception that Ashfield is a cleaner and more attractive place, Improved resident satisfaction with the area; People enjoy living and working here.

Ashfield Local Plan

The Council is preparing a 15 year Local Plan, which will guide development across Ashfield up to 2032. By this time the district population is projected to increase by around 13,000 with 480 new homes a year required to meet housing needs. This strategy forms part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.

Policies EV5 and EV8 of the Local Plan seek to protect green spaces and recreational facilities, including allotments and cemeteries by restricting development to appropriate recreational uses or recreational facilities.

Large housing sites (10 dwellings or more) have been identified as part of the preparation for the Local Plan. The strategy provides standards for the provision and quality of green spaces, which will inform whether new green spaces are required or off site contributions are needed to improve existing provision.

Health in Ashfield

Ashfield has some of the poorest health profiles within Nottinghamshire including life expectancy, mortality caused by cancer and cardiovascular diseases, child poverty and smoking related deaths. The health of people in Ashfield is generally worse than the England average. Deprivation is higher than average and about 23.9% (5,300) children live in poverty. Nearly 20% of Year 6 children are classified as obese, equal to the national average. Life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average. Much as the comparative picture of the health of Ashfield is not positive, trends for life expectancy, adult obesity, and smoking prevalence have improved over recent years. Green spaces provide a great opportunity for local people to get active through walking, running and other sports.

2. Where we are and where we want to be

2.1 Provision of public open space in Ashfield

The strategy covers the provision of parks and green spaces, cemeteries, allotments, town centre/ civic spaces, green links and play and young people's areas within green spaces. Formal sports areas such as football pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts were reviewed as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy (due for adoption 2016) which is cross referenced in this document.

Parks and green spaces

There are nearly a hundred parks and green spaces within Ashfield, providing a range of facilities for residents to enjoy. To assist in setting the strategic direction across the range of spaces, Ashfield's parks and green spaces are grouped in 2 categories:

- Neighbourhood parks and green spaces- these smaller parks provide a focal point for the immediate community and may include one or a combination of some of the following; a play area, sports facilities, grassed areas. Examples include: Nabbs Lane Park, Morven Park, Green Well Park and Huthwaite Welfare Park
- Destination parks- sites that provide a wider range of facilities and visitor attractions including events, examples include Titchfield Park, Hucknall, Sutton Lawn, Brierley Forest Park and Kingsway Park.

Ashfield District Council's public space network is managed by the Waste and Environment team which is responsible for managing council owned parks and recreation grounds, country parks, play and young

people's areas, cemeteries, closed churchyards and allotments.

Nottinghamshire County Council owns and manages a number of sites within the District, for example Dobb Park, Hucknall and Rookery Park, Sutton which tend to be larger often restored sites, managed as country parks.

There are two Parish Councils within the district; Annesley & Felley and Selston, which own the majority of green spaces within their areas. The District's Waste and Environment team currently holds the contract for Selston.

The District Council works in partnership with the Parish Councils to deliver improvements to the green spaces within the parishes, utilising Section 106 contributions and grant funding.

There are a small number of publicly accessible privately owned green spaces, often held in trust (originating from the local coal industry) and managed independently.

Play and young people's areas

There are currently 49 play areas and 14 young people's areas across the district. 13 of the play areas are within sites owned by Selston Parish Council, one within a site owned by Annesley Parish Council.

Sports facilities on green spaces

There are a number of sports facilities within green spaces, with 36 sites across the district (not including school grounds). The majority of these sites provide adult and/or junior football pitches and changing rooms. There are also eight cricket pitches, 13 bowling greens and 13 tennis courts, some of which are marked out for netball.

Allotments

Allotments are an important part of the green space network, promoting healthy living, exercise and community interaction. Although not always publicly accessible, they are available for use by residents and are therefore included as part of this strategy. The Council has an Allotments Strategy and an Allotments Technical Paper.

Historically there have been issues with underuse of Council allotment sites, with many being used for grazing or derelict. Improved management and increased demand has helped to address this. The number of plots (surveyed August 2015-March 2016) was 1,448, of these 1,232 plots (85%) were used for allotment purposes, an increase of 22% from the previous figure in 2007 of 63%.

Ashfield District Council and the parish councils provide 23 allotment sites with approximately 904 plots, 87% are used as allotments. There are 12 private allotments sites, providing approximately 544 plots, 83% are used as allotments.

Cemeteries

There are 6 cemeteries and 7 closed churchyards in Ashfield, equating to 23.7 hectares of land under maintenance. The district council maintains the sites and all buildings and infrastructure (except churches). An extension to Sutton cemetery is planned for 2016/17 which will provide capacity for 14 years of burials. In the longer term additional sites will be need to be identified and secured.

Green links

Green links are referred to in this strategy but are covered fully in the Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Technical Paper. The technical paper identifies strategic green

corridors across the district which link into surrounding areas with local routes connecting to the strategic corridors, providing a network of accessible, traffic free walking, cycling and horse-riding routes. The paper provides an overview of missing links and improvements required for existing routes which are identified as projects within the relevant Locality Plan.

Civic space

This category covers public spaces within town centres such as Portland Square in Sutton, Kirkby Plaza and Hucknall Market Place.

2.2 Progress since 2008

A Green Space Strategy (GSS) was developed by Ashfield District Council from 2005 onwards, with the strategy adopted in 2009. A Play Strategy was adopted in 2008. This Public Open Space Strategy replaces both strategies and also encompasses spaces within town centres such as town squares and plazas to provide a comprehensive overview of all types of publicly accessible space within the District. The strategy focuses on the quality and accessibility of spaces owned and managed by the District council and also takes into account spaces in neighbouring districts, close to the Ashfield boundary, which are known to be used or are likely to be used by Ashfield residents.

This strategy builds on and updates the work completed for the GSS and Play Strategy. The GSS has been reviewed as part of the preparation for the Public Open Space Strategy with several elements brought over from the previous strategy:

- Quality assessments carried out for parks and green spaces and play and young people's areas (completed in

2006) were repeated over the summer of 2015. Assessments of town centre spaces were also completed for the first time. Assessments carried out on smaller green spaces (ie not classified as parks or recreation grounds) were not repeated from 2006.

- The quantity assessments (mapping of the number of spaces and facilities) first completed in 2006 are updated on an ongoing basis
- Catchment areas were developed for each type of green space and play/ young people’s area in the original strategies. An example of the original catchment areas is that all residents should live within 300m of a play area and 500m of a natural green space.

The mapping was used to identify gaps in provision. The process for this strategy has included reviewing the size of catchment areas for green space and play and young people’s areas

- Children’s play areas and young people’s activity areas were classified into Type 1, 2 and 3 according to the amount of facilities provided- the categories have been reviewed as part of preparation work for the strategy.

The main findings from the work undertaken to prepare the GSS and Play Strategy and the main achievements since the strategies were adopted are shown below.

Finding/recommendation/ objective from Green Space Strategy 2008	Achievements through implementation of the Green Space and Play strategies
Quality and quantity audits of facilities	
Quality of green spaces Number of Green Flag Awards	Number of Green Flag Awards increased from 3 to 6. 49 green spaces have been improved since 2007
Play areas Only 5 play areas were rated as ‘good’ or above in the quality audit	20 play areas have been upgraded since 2007 and now meet the ‘good’ standard
2 new play areas were required: 1 in Hucknall and 1 in Kirkby	Both play areas installed, 2 additional play areas secured through planning agreements in Hucknall to meet increased demand from new development
4 play/ young people’s areas were recommended for removal to achieve an even distribution across the district.	3 surplus areas at Huthwaite and Kirkby removed and facilities in the vicinity improved
Young people’s areas 9 new or upgraded young people’s areas required	A range of new and upgraded facilities have been provided, including Multi Use Games Areas (3), BMX/ MTB dirt tracks (4), skate parks (3 upgraded, 2 new), Parkour (Free-running) areas (2), adiZones (2) and outdoor gym areas (2)
Quality standard set through GSS: All District Council managed green spaces should be rated as good or excellent- Ratings from site assessment, based on Green Flag criteria	44 out of 89 spaces were rated as good in the 2015 quality assessment

Issues identified through public consultation	
Facilities:	
Quantity and quality of youth facilities across the District	18 new young people's facilities provided across 10 sites. The 3 main skate parks have also been replaced
Quantity of children's play space in urban areas, particularly Hucknall	Two new play areas provided and two additional play areas secured through planning agreements in Hucknall
Quantity of Neighbourhood Green Space in Hucknall	One new park provided at Broomhill, 3 new green spaces to be provided at Papplewick
Quality of Town Parks in Hucknall (Titchfield Park)	Over £1.7 million of investment into Titchfield Park since 2002, the park has held the Green Flag Award since 2009
Quantity and quality of sports facilities in rural areas	Not addressed due to lack of Section 106 funding/ match funding/ sites available within the Rural area
Management:	
Maintenance – the public value clean and well-maintained green spaces and are sensitive to signs that maintenance is lacking such as litter and vandalism	The 2015 public survey found that 75% of respondents were quite satisfied/ satisfied/ very satisfied with their local green space. 84% thought that the green space they used was in good condition. 58% of respondents to the survey said that they would be more satisfied with their local green space if it was cleaner / less litter / dog fouling/ less graffiti/ less vandalism 23% said Better maintained/ looked after
Access – restrictions to access (particularly in relation to disabled users) are a common complaint, but conflict with a concurrent demand for spaces which are secure from motorcycles	A number of 'A' frame barriers have been removed and more works are planned. These are being replaced where necessary with chicane style barriers which are accessible. 12% of respondents to the survey said that they would be more satisfied with their local green space if there was easier access with a pushchair / wheelchair/ mobility scooter
Security and safety – anti-social behaviour and a lack of lighting both act to prevent some residents from using green spaces and create negative perceptions of spaces	58% of respondents to the survey said that they would be more satisfied with their local green space if it was Cleaner / less litter / dog fouling/ less graffiti/ less vandalism
Facilities – many people fail to make use of the green spaces in their area due to a lack of facilities that might otherwise attract them. This can include features as simple as somewhere to sit as well as more extensive facilities for children and young people, sports facilities and toilets	19 new young people's facilities provided across 10 sites. The 3 main skate parks have also been replaced 20 play areas have been upgraded and 3 new play areas provided Walking and running routes designated on several sites

Anti social behaviour is a significant problem in green space management: drug taking/ dealing, dog fouling, illegal use of motorbikes, vandalism and graffiti have all been highlighted through the consultation and audit processes	58% of respondents to the survey said that they would be more satisfied with their local green space if it was Cleaner / less litter / dog fouling/ less graffiti/ less vandalism
Public satisfaction Satisfaction levels amongst residents will be at least 75% - Measured through Green Space Survey	The 2015 public survey found that 71% of respondents in Kirkby and the Rural area were quite satisfied/ satisfied/ very satisfied with their local green space, 77% in Sutton and 81% in Hucknall, giving a district average of 75%
Sports pitches	
The quality of the majority of pitches and other sports surfaces was acceptable with improvements required in some areas. The main issue was the quality of facilities, particularly changing rooms and pavilions of which there were many which were in poor condition.	Based on the responses from the public consultation in 2005, the main priorities identified were improvements to play areas and creation / upgrading of young people's areas. Consequently sports facilities were not prioritised. An updated Playing Pitch Strategy will be adopted in 2016 which will identify sports facility priorities, providing a framework for future investment.

Investment

Since 2008/09 over £6 million has been invested in public open space in Ashfield, from Section 106 developer contributions (monies paid by developers to the council to offset the effects of a development) and match funding secured from various sources, mainly Waste Recycling Environmental (WREN - Landfill Tax Credits), Building Better Communities Fund/ Supporting Local Communities (Nottinghamshire County Council) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

2.3 Community consultation

During the preparation of the strategy a questionnaire was made available to the public to gauge people's views on public open space and to inform the vision and priorities of the strategy. The questionnaire was made available through All About Ashfield (a newsletter delivered to all households in the District), Ashfield's Citizen's Panel (with 286

members), Ashfield Youth Forum, the council website and Facebook. The consultation took place from September – December 2015 with 396 responses received from the public. 84% of respondents were 35 or older and of these 30% were over 65. The headline findings across the district were as follows:

Usage

- 40% of respondents visited a park or green space at least once or twice per week, with 17% visiting every day, 4% never visited
- Taking children to play and personal exercise were the two most popular reasons for visiting (45% and 44% respectively), dog walking was next most popular at 39%, followed by relaxing at 30%, enjoying wildlife at 29%, meeting friends at 17% and events at 16%.

Satisfaction

- 75% were quite satisfied, satisfied or very satisfied with their local green space
- 84% thought that the green space they used was in good condition
- 71% thought that the quality of their local green space had improved over the past 5-7 years
- 98% thought it was important or very important (93%) to have parks and green spaces in their local area

In response to the question 'What would make you more satisfied with your local park/ green space?' the following responses were received:

- Cleaner / less litter / dog fouling/ less graffiti/ less vandalism – 58%
- Seats- 37%
- Children's play area / more/better play equipment/ teenage facilities – 25%
- More information about events and activities on the green space- 26%
- More plants / flowers / trees – 23%
- Better maintained/ looked after- 23%
- More / better paths – 16%
- Easier access with a pushchair / wheelchair/ mobility scooter – 12%

At a local level specific findings were as follows:

Hucknall

103 responses were received about Hucknall green spaces. 81% of respondents were satisfied with their local green space (quite satisfied, satisfied or very satisfied).

When asked what would make them more satisfied with their local park, 50% said if it was Cleaner / less litter / dog fouling/ less graffiti/ less vandalism; 23% - Children's play

area / more/better play equipment/ teenage facilities, 21% - More plants / flowers / trees, 18% - More information about events and activities on the green space and 14% - Better maintained/ looked after.

Kirkby

85 responses were received about Kirkby green spaces. 71% of respondents were satisfied with their local green space (quite satisfied, satisfied or very satisfied), with 9% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

When asked what would make them more satisfied with their local park, 40% said if it was Cleaner / less litter / dog fouling/ less graffiti/ less vandalism; 32% - More information about events and activities on the green space, 21% - Children's play area / more/better play equipment/ teenage facilities, and 19% - Better maintained/ looked after.

Rural area

24 responses were received about Rural area green spaces. 71% of respondents were satisfied with their local green space (quite satisfied, satisfied or very satisfied), with 17% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

When asked what would make them more satisfied with their local park, 71% said if it was Cleaner / less litter / dog fouling/ less graffiti/ less vandalism; 32% - More information about events and activities on the green space, 29% - Children's play area / more/better play equipment/ teenage facilities, 25%- more seats, 25%- More / better paths, 25%- More plants / flowers / trees and 21% - Better maintained/ looked after.

Sutton

162 responses were received about Sutton green spaces. 77% of respondents were satisfied with their local green space (quite

satisfied, satisfied or very satisfied), with 9% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

When asked what would make them more satisfied with their local park, 57% said if it was Cleaner / less litter / dog fouling/ less graffiti/ less vandalism; 31% - More information about events and activities on the green space, 28% - Children’s play area / more/better play equipment/ teenage facilities, 25% - Better maintained/ looked after and 20%- More plants / flowers / trees.

2.4 Quality assessments

The overall quality of green spaces and facilities has improved significantly since 2007 with 49 green spaces improved and the number of Green Flag Awards doubled from 3 to 6. There are 20 improved or new play areas as well as 18 improved or new facilities for young people such as skate parks, BMX tracks and multi-use games areas.

All green spaces and civic spaces, as well as play and young people’s areas were assessed in 2015 using an adapted version of the Green Flag Award field assessment. The audit identified the three main priorities for improving each site. The priorities have been incorporated into the relevant Locality Plan within the action plan or reserve list of projects. For green spaces the most common priorities identified were as follows (most common to least): Entrance and boundary improvements (including better access), better signage, works to existing trees and shrubs/ hedgerows, footpath improvements, more seating, more tree and bulb planting, increased habitat for wildlife and more bins. For play and young people’s areas the most common priority was repair to equipment/ surfacing followed by better signage. Findings specific to each area are detailed below.

Hucknall

Key findings and issues	Recommendations/ actions
Green Space	
Of the 18 green space sites in Hucknall, 50% were found to be in a good/acceptable state or better. Nine spaces were found to be in need of improvement. These tended to be the smaller spaces which have not received the level of investment of the larger sites such as Titchfield Park, Nabbs Lane Park and Washdyke Recreation Ground. Lime Tree Recreation Ground which serves the Welbeck Estate also rated as in need of improvement.	Target investment to bring the 9 sites up to a good standard. Continue to invest in destination sites due to high usage.
Play areas	
Of the seven existing play areas in Hucknall, only Butler’s Hill and Milton Rise were rated as in need of improvement.	Butler’s Hill and Milton Rise play areas are due for refurbishment by summer 2016, with funding secured. A contribution has been secured for a play area at Lime Tree Recreation Ground and a new play and young people’s area negotiated at the Rolls Royce development site. Once all of these play areas

	are completed there will only be small areas which aren't within a catchment for play or young people's areas within Hucknall and all provision will be at a good standard. We will continue to improve existing provision where required.
Young people's areas	
Of the three young people's areas at Titchfield Park, Washdyke Recreation Ground and Nabbs Lane Park, all were rated as good, reflecting the investment since 2008 in Hucknall.	We will continue to improve existing provision where required.
Civic space	
Of the four sites, two sites: adjacent the Byron Cinema and adjacent the Half Moon pub were rated as in need of improvement.	Both sites are identified in the Locality Plan for improvement, subject to funding becoming available.

Kirkby

Key findings and issues	Recommendations/ actions
Green Space	
Of the 25 green space sites in Kirkby, 12 were rated as good or excellent, with 13 sites rated as in need of improvement.	Target investment to bring the 13 sites up to a good standard. Continue to invest in destination sites due to high usage.
Play areas	
Of the 12 play areas, only 2 were rated as in need of improvement, reflecting the investment made in play facilities in Kirkby since 2008.	Rated poor: Acacia Recreation ground- funding is allocated for this play area to be upgraded in 2016/17 Orchid Close- review play provision on Wentworth Estate We will continue to improve existing provision where required to ensure that a good standard is maintained.
Young people's areas	
Of the 8 young people's areas, only 1 was rated as poor/ in need of improvement, reflecting the investment since 2008.	Rated poor: Acacia Recreation ground- funding is allocated for this young people's area to be upgraded in 2016/17, with a new skate/ scooter park and improvements to the MUGA. We will continue to improve existing provision where required to ensure that a good standard is maintained.
Civic space	
The two civic spaces Kirkby Plaza and the square outside Boyes were both rated as very good, following improvement works in 2014/15	None.

Rural area

Key findings and issues	Recommendations/ actions
Green Space	
Of the 17 green spaces in the Rural area, 13 were rated as in need of improvement.	Prioritise sites and support Selston Parish Council to bring them up to a good standard. Continue to invest in destination sites due to high usage.
Play areas	
Of the 13 play areas only 3 were rated as good, with 10 in need of improvement. One of the issues in the Selston area is the lack of adequately sized green space. There are a relatively large number of small sites which cannot accommodate adequate play and in particular young people's areas.	Support the Parish Council to bring sites up to a good standard.
Young people's areas	
There are currently two areas within the Rural area, Main Road, Jacksdale was rated as in need of improvement, Woodnook was rated as good. A facility for Underwood is planned on Friezeland Recreation Ground.	Upgrade Main Road Recreation Ground when funding becomes available. Support the Parish Council to upgrade Friezeland Recreation Ground.
Civic space	
Not applicable	

Sutton

Key findings and issues	Recommendations/ actions
Green Space	
Of the 29 sites in Sutton, 19 were rated as good/very good, with 10 rated as in need of improvement.	Target investment to bring the 10 sites up to a good standard Continue to invest in destination sites due to high usage.
Play areas	
Of the 16 play areas, 13 were rated good/ very good reflecting the investment made in play facilities in Sutton since 2008.	Target investment to bring retained sites up to a good standard.
Young people's areas	
Of the four young people's areas (Lawn, Cowpasture, Huthwaite Welfare and Healdswood Rec.) all were rated as good/ very good.	Continue to invest in destination sites due to high usage.
Civic space	
Portland Square was rated as good, although investment is still needed. The Old Market Place was rated as in need of improvement.	Target investment to Portland Square and the Old Market Place.

2.5 Review of existing standards

Standards help to ensure an even distribution of sites and facilities through the following:

- identify under and over provision of public spaces and associated facilities
- provide a baseline to measure how well the standards are being met
- protect public space from loss where this would mean local provision falls below the standards
- inform negotiations for new development to ensure that appropriate green spaces and facilities such as sports pitches and play areas are included where they are needed and Section 106 payments are secured for off-site provision to improve existing public space and facilities.

The standards for the 2008 Green Space Strategy were developed as per the planning guidance of the time within PPG17 (Planning Policy Guidance Note 17) which focused on locally developed standards. Following the withdrawal of this advice, the standards for Ashfield have been reviewed and are now based on the nationally recognised standards developed by Fields in Trust (Outdoor Sport and Play- Beyond the Six Acre Standard,

2015). Fields in Trust is a national charity which safeguards recreational spaces and campaigns for better statutory protection for outdoor sites.

Quantity

When the Green Space Strategy (2008) was developed it was decided not to have a quantity standard (often based on the Fields in Trust '6 Acre' standard, which equates to 2.4 hectares of open space per 1000 population) and to focus on quality and accessibility. Research in 2014 (Turning the Tide of Inactivity- UK Active) found that there is no significant connection between levels of physical inactivity and the amount of green space in a local authority area. Levels of inactivity were found to be linked to the safety and accessibility of outdoor areas and could be influenced by the way green space is utilised.

The standards are designed to ensure that facilities are provided within reasonable walking distance of people's homes.

The definitions for play and young people's areas developed for the Green Space Strategy have also been reviewed as part of the preparation of this strategy. Changes to the standards and definitions are detailed below:

Green Space Standards (2008)	Review
Catchment areas and quantity	Catchment areas and quantity
No person should live more than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200m from their nearest accessible space • 300m from their nearest park or recreation ground • 500m from their nearest area of natural green space • The catchment area around the 3 main town parks, referred to as 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This standard was deemed to be unnecessary, given the standard of 300m for a park or recreation ground • This catchment has been increased to 480m • This catchment has been decreased to 480m • This catchment has been decreased to

<p>Destination sites: (Titchfield Park, Hucknall, Kingsway Park, Kirkby and the Lawn, Sutton) is set at 1500m- residents will travel further to access these larger sites with more facilities, evidenced in the Green Space Survey 2008</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development sites: 10% of the developable area to be designated for open space on sites of 2 hectares and above (if the site is not within the catchment area of an existing appropriate open space) 	<p>1000m and the definition of destination site revised to include other large sites (Ashfield Standards 2016, page 19)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standard unchanged, with new standard for size of green space-to be a minimum of 2000m²
Play and young people's areas	Play and young people's areas
Catchment areas	Catchment areas
<p>No child should live more than:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 300m from their nearest Type 1 play area 500m from their nearest Type 2 play area 1500m from their nearest Type 3 (Destination site in urban areas) play area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type 1 play areas are being phased out, recognising that they do not provide sufficient play value Type 2 play area renamed as neighbourhood play area- catchment area reduced to 480m Type 3 play area renamed as destination play area –catchment area reduced to 1000m
<p>No young person should live more than:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 300m from their nearest Type 1 activity area 500m from their nearest Type 2 activity area 1500m from their nearest Type 3 (Destination site in urban areas) activity area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Type 1 young people's areas are being phased out, recognising that they do not provide sufficient activity Type 2 young people's area renamed as neighbourhood young people's area- catchment area increased to 700m Type 3 young people's area renamed as destination young people's area- catchment area reduced to 1000m
Quality	Quality
All play areas and young people's areas to be rated good or above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This standard remains unchanged
Satisfaction levels amongst residents with play areas and young people's areas will be at least 75%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This standard remains unchanged
Sports facilities within green space	Sports facilities within green space
All facilities owned by the district council to be rated as good or excellent*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This standard remains unchanged
Satisfaction levels amongst users will be at least 75% **	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This standard remains unchanged

2.6 Ashfield standards

Quantity

The quantity of sites is closely linked to accessibility - if all residents are within the catchment area for each type of space it can be concluded that there is sufficient quantity of space. The size of spaces is a factor, if spaces are too small they can be difficult to maintain and difficult to provide sufficient facilities, a new standard has therefore been developed for the size of new open spaces but a standard for quantity of open space per population has not been developed.

Quality

Ashfield District Council uses the recognised national standard for quality green space, the Green Flag Award. The assessment criteria for the award were used as the basis for the quality audits which were carried out in summer 2015. Ashfield has been part of a pilot Group Award for the past few years which is less time intensive than the main scheme.

Accessibility

Access is an important issue, affecting many residents in Ashfield, particularly those without the use of private transport, those with young children and those with a disability.

The catchment areas are based on walking distances and are a guide which the Council will aim to meet through improvements to existing facilities and the provision of new facilities where a need has been identified. It may not be possible to meet the standards everywhere in Ashfield as in some areas it will not be possible to create new green space. Mapping of the catchment areas identifies where there may be a lack of provision or an

oversupply and helps plan for the future, identifying where new facilities are required or where there are surplus facilities which can be removed. The mapping in 2008 revealed that there was uneven provision of play and young people's areas within the District, with particularly high provision of play areas in the rural areas and particularly low provision of both play and young people's areas in Hucknall. The issues in Hucknall have been able to be addressed through developments and the provision of new open space/ play/ young people's areas.

Sports facilities on green spaces

A standard catchment area is not provided for sports facilities. User surveys found that participants generally travelled to facilities using vehicular transport and catchment areas were therefore less important. The policy within the Local Plan due for adoption in 2017 will be to concentrate sports facilities on a smaller number of sites in order to provide better quality facilities. This approach is advocated by Sport England which favours multi use site funding applications. There are a considerable number of single pitch football sites in the district which are difficult and inefficient to manage. Concentrating facilities reduces the number of buildings which need to be maintained, many of the existing facilities are in average or poor condition and it would be prohibitively expensive to bring them all up to a decent standard. This model has been introduced in Hucknall at the Papplewick site which will provide five pitches and a large changing facility when it is transferred from the developer. Subject to demand this will allow for single pitch sites to be taken out of use, thereby reducing maintenance costs, with the overall aim to provide quality facilities.

Ashfield Standards 2016

GREEN SPACE	
Catchment areas	
No person should live more than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 480 metres (6 minute walk) from their nearest neighbourhood park/ green space • 1000m (12- 13 minute walk) from their nearest destination park/ green space • 480m from their nearest area of natural green space 	
Quantity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development sites: 10% of the developable area to be designated for open space on sites of 2 hectares and above (if the site is not within the catchment area of an existing appropriate park or green space) • New green space needs to be a minimum of 2000m² and contain the following features: surfaced paths, trees, bulbs, litter bins, seating, cycle racks and entrance signage. If drainage features are incorporated into the green space these will be additional to the 2000m² 	
Destination green space definition	
Provides a destination standard play area and young people's area, as well as the requirements stated above in 'quantity'	
Neighbourhood green space definition	
Provides a neighbourhood standard play area and young people's area and contains the following features: surfaced paths, trees, litter bins, seating and entrance signage.	
PLAY AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S AREAS	
Catchment areas	
No child should live more than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 480m from their nearest neighbourhood play area • 1000m from their nearest destination play area 	No young person should live more than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 700m from their nearest neighbourhood young people's area • 1000m from their nearest destination young people's area
Quantity	
Neighbourhood play area	Neighbourhood Young People's area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6-11 different pieces of equipment • 2 seats and a litter bin • Under 5's area with fencing and 2no. self-closing gates, to be a minimum of 320m² • Equipment for over 5's provided in safer surfacing adjacent to the fenced area, including at least 4 dynamic/ challenging pieces of equipment for over 12 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass kick about area with five a side goalposts, minimum area 42 x 33m • plus one of the following with a minimum dimension equivalent to 40 x 20 m: • Concrete ramp skate/BMX/scooter park- with a minimum of 3 ramps • Multi-use games area • Bike dirt track • Outdoor gym equipment
Destination play area	Destination Young People's area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 12 different pieces of equipment • 3 Seats, picnic benches and 2 litter bins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass kick about area with nine a side goalposts, minimum area 79m x 51.2m

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 5's area with fencing and 2no. self-closing gates, to be a minimum of 320m² • Equipment for over 5's provided in safer surfacing adjacent to the fenced area, including at least 6 dynamic/ challenging pieces of equipment for over 12 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plus two of the following with a minimum overall dimension equivalent to 40 x 40 m: • Concrete ramp skate/BMX/scooter park- with a minimum of 6 ramps • Multi-use games area • Bike dirt track • Outdoor gym equipment
Quality	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play equipment needs to provide a variety of play experiences, such as rocking, sliding, swinging, spinning, climbing etc. • Equipment must provide elements of inclusive play which provide opportunities for disabled and non-disabled children to play together. 	
All play areas and young people's areas to be rated good or above	
Satisfaction levels amongst residents with play areas and young people's areas to be at least 75%	
SPORTS FACILITIES WITHIN GREEN SPACE	
All facilities owned by the district council to be rated as good or excellent*	
Satisfaction levels amongst users to be at least 75% **	

*Measured through quality assessments carried out every 5 years based on Green Flag criteria/ Sport England guidance

** Measured through user surveys carried out every 5 years

Any sites provided within new developments will need to meet the standards within the Ashfield Design Guides for public open space, play areas, young people's areas and sports facilities.

An assessment of the catchment areas for green space was undertaken to assess where there are any gaps in provision and any overprovision. No oversupply of green space was identified in the District. A number of

areas were identified where there was a deficiency in green space provision. Due to existing land uses, in many areas it would not be possible to provide additional green space- particularly near town centres. A number of the areas are on the edge of settlements and therefore the provision of green space is not as important, particularly where residents have access to the wider countryside.

The main findings are detailed below.

HUCKNALL	Green Space under provision	Opportunities to address gap in provision
	Watnall Road, south west edge of Hucknall	Within catchment area of new green space to be provided at Rolls Royce development site
	West Hucknall- Hazelwood Drive area –park/ recreation ground	Edge of settlement, houses in area have fairly large gardens and are in the vicinity of Common Farm (natural green space)
KIRKBY		
	No under provision identified	

RURAL		
	East Selston	Edge of settlement
SUTTON		
	Fackley Village –park/ recreation ground	Close to Silverhill Country Park
	Beck Lane/ Penniment Lane area-north east of Sutton (approx. 30 houses)	New park/ recreation ground to be provided as part of housing site SKA3h to the south west
	Fulwood- Cuttings Avenue, Rookery Lane and Alfreton Road	Would be within the catchment area for Ashfield Park if the site was upgraded to a destination site. Potential for green space provision to the north through housing sites SKA3g, SKA3ac and SKA3I

An assessment of the catchment areas for play and young people’s areas needs to be undertaken to establish whether there are any gaps in provision and any overprovision. This will be undertaken as part of the implementation of the strategy action plan.

Allotment standards

The National Allotment Society suggests a national standard of 20 standard plots per 1,000 households (**1 plot per 50 households**, equivalent to 20 plots per 2,200 people (based on 2.2 people per house) or **1 plot per 110 people**). In 2016 provision in Hucknall, Kirkby and the Rural area was within the standard, however in Sutton the standard was not being met where the households per plot ratio was 1:62. The population of the district is due to increase by approximately 13,000 people (approximately 5,909 households) by 2032 with a significant proportion in Sutton. Based on the current usage of allotment plots, the District will have a total undersupply of 50 plots by 2032, and a district wide household to plot ratio of 1 plot per 52 households. The District undersupply and standard can be met if the 128 plots in public ownership are brought back into use, reducing the household to plot ratio to 1 plot per 47 households. Whilst the overall district wide undersupply could be met there will remain a deficit of 136 plots within the Sutton area. As

of January 2016, the waiting list for Sutton was 38, for Hucknall 34, Kirkby 23 and Rurals 8.

This undersupply could be addressed through housing developments in Sutton where additional plots could be provided, where appropriate.

3. Where we want to be and how we get there

3.1 Vision and Priorities

Vision

A network of high quality green and open spaces, to improve health and wellbeing and provide focal points for vibrant communities. Bringing people together and providing opportunities for sport, exercise and events.

Priority 1. Appropriate distribution and linkages of green space and facilities across the District

Ensuring that all residents can access a range of green spaces and facilities within a reasonable distance (as per the catchment areas). There are some areas where there is insufficient provision and there may be opportunities to address this through new development. Opportunities for improving links between green spaces as identified in the Green Infrastructure network can also be delivered through development. Allotment provision will need to be increased in Sutton to meet the standard, as the population of the district increases.

Priority 2. Improving the quality of public spaces

The quality of public spaces and facilities varies across the district and priorities for improvement have been identified through quality audits. Projects for improvements to green spaces and facilities such as play and young people's areas and civic spaces have been included within the relevant Locality Plan for delivery. Cemeteries and allotments also require investment and improvements will be identified through quality audits. Management plans will be developed for allotments, cemeteries and smaller green spaces, as well as design codes to ensure that

potential maintenance issues can be minimised.

Priority 3. Increasing public satisfaction and use of public space

58% of respondents to the public survey said they would be more satisfied with their local green space if it was cleaner and / or with less litter / dog fouling/ graffiti/ vandalism. This was more than double the amount for any other category. We will continue to address these issues through rationalising maintenance, encouraging active volunteering and reducing demand through education and enforcement.

Many of our green and civic spaces are already well used but usage can be increased, particularly on green spaces with the benefits of health and wellbeing, social interaction etc. We will achieve this through developing a more comprehensive events calendar with a focus on health, for example developing more park runs, providing good walking routes and by improving the promotion of sites and activities through increased marketing.

Volunteers can play an important role in the upkeep of green spaces and organising events. We will continue to support and empower groups which want to take an active role in their local green space. We have relaunched the Environmental Volunteer and Green Buddy initiatives and will also develop a programme of corporate volunteering on green spaces.

We need to do more to improve access to some sites, for example removing motorcycle deterrents which are preventing disabled scooter access, improving path surfacing and providing seating.

Priority 4. Ensure sustainable management of public spaces

With the decreasing resources available for green space development and maintenance we need to consider alternative funding and management models. This includes increasing income generation, sponsorship etc and could include management of facilities by user groups and management of new green spaces within developments by management companies rather than the Council.

We also need to ensure that sites of wildlife value are protected and enhanced through appropriate management.

We will deliver the priorities through the action plan overleaf and through implementation of the Locality Plans.

3.2 Action Plan

Objective	Action	Lead Team	Outcome/ measure, if required	Timescale
Priority 1. Appropriate distribution and linkages of green space and facilities across the District				
Ensure all residents can access a range of green spaces and facilities within a reasonable distance	Identify opportunities for upgrading sites/ providing additional facilities to meet standards	LCE	Gaps in provision reduced	2016-25
	Identify and develop new sites to meet the standards	LCE	Gaps in provision addressed	2016-25
	Undertake assessment of catchment areas for play and young people's areas to establish whether there are any gaps in provision and any overprovision	LCE	Gaps in provision/ overprovision addressed	2016-25
	Develop and improve green routes/ links (footpaths, cycleways and bridleways) within the Green Infrastructure network	LCE	Linear metres of routes created/ improved	2016-25
	Bring disused allotment plots back into use	WE	Number of plots brought into use	2016-18
Priority 2. Improving the quality of public spaces				
Improve quality of green spaces and civic spaces	Implement projects identified in the Locality Plans	LCE	No. Green Flag Awards No. spaces achieving good standard	2016-25
Improve quality of play and young people's facilities on green spaces	Implement projects identified in the Locality Plans	LCE	No. of areas achieving good standard	2016-25
Improve quality of sports provision on green spaces	Implement projects identified in Playing Pitch Strategy and Locality Plans	LCE	No. of facilities achieving good standard	2016-25
Improve quality of allotment sites	Provide community empowerment support for allotment societies	LCE	Number of sites self-managing	2016-25
	Undertake site quality audits for all sites	WE/LCE	Improvements for all sites identified	2016-17
	Develop management plan for allotment sites	WE/LCE	Plan developed	2017-18
	Implement projects identified in the Locality Plans, including accessible allotment areas with raised beds	LCE/WE		2016-25

Improve quality of cemetery sites	Undertake site quality audits for all sites	WE/LCE	Improvements for all sites identified	2016-17
	Implement projects identified in the Locality Plans	LCE	Number of cemeteries improved	2016-25
Promote good design and management	Develop management plans for main sites and sites for nature conservation. Develop generic management plans for cemeteries, allotments and smaller green spaces	LCE/WE	Site specific management plans updated bi-annually	2016-25
	Undertake quality audit every 5 years	LCE	All public spaces to be rated as good	2020-25
Priority 3. Increasing public satisfaction and use of public space				
Continue to address anti-social behaviour in public spaces; vandalism, dog fouling and littering	Undertake regular patrols	CP		2016-25
	Enforce Public Space Protection Orders	CP		2016-25
	Increase awareness and undertake initiatives, for example litter picks	CP		2016-25
Monitor and increase public satisfaction with green space	Undertake public survey every 5 years	LCE	Percentage increase in satisfaction	2020-25
Support and develop volunteering and engagement	Review and relaunch Environment Volunteers initiative	LCE	No. of active volunteers	2016-25
	Launch Green Buddy scheme with local schools	LCE	No. of schools actively involved	2016-25
	Support Friends groups to take active role in management tasks and events	LCE/WE	No. active volunteers working on green spaces	2016-25
	Develop Corporate volunteering programme on parks and green spaces	LCE/WE	No. volunteers days working on green spaces	2016-25
Raise the profile of public space and facilities through improved marketing	Develop events programme for public spaces	LCE/WE	Calendar of events developed	2016-25
	Encourage and support groups to hold events/ festivals etc.	LCE	Use of public space increased	2016-25
	Promote sites for commercial uses	WE/LCE	Income increased	2016-25
	Provide signage at all sites	LCE		2017- 18
Develop educational opportunities	Support Forest Schools initiative at main sites	LCE	No. of Forest Schools established	2016-25

Develop sport and health activities and initiatives	Provide Active Ashfield events, e.g. Active Ashfield Games and Tri 123, Xplorer orienteering sessions, Push 4 Fitness group for parents with push chairs etc	LCE	No. activities per year	2016-25
	Develop running and walking routes on parks, focusing on health inequality areas	LCE	Number of routes developed	2016-25
Improve accessibility to public spaces and green links/ ensure new spaces are fully accessible	Develop design codes for green space, civic space, play and young people's areas	LCE	Codes developed and in use	2016-17
	Undertake access audits to public spaces and prioritise site improvements	LCE		2016-18
	Remove remaining 'A' frames from sites	LCE	All 'A' frame barriers removed	2016-19
	Develop access standards for public space	LCE		2016-18
Priority 4. Ensuring sustainable and effective management of public spaces				
Increase income generation/ reduce costs	Review Section 106 maintenance contributions	LCE	Increased income for maintenance	2016-17
	Analyse areas of high cost and identify potential savings	LCE	Reduced costs	2016-17
	Explore alternative funding models, for example sponsorship, endowment funds, living legacies and community cash-back schemes	WE	Reduced costs/ increased sustainability	2017-18
	Explore potential for sports clubs to self-manage/ lease facilities	WE	Reduced costs/ potential grant funding	2017
Identify, manage and enhance key sites of ecological value	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves, sites identified through Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping (BOM)	LCE		2016-25

3.3 Monitoring, review, references

An annual review of the action plan will be undertaken, with a strategy review undertaken in 2026.

References

1. The National Planning Policy Framework, Department for Communities and local Government, March 2012
2. Public Health and Landscape- Landscape Institute, 2013
3. Turning the Tide of Inactivity- UK Active, 2014
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5. Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play- Beyond the Six Acre Standard, Fields in Trust, October 2015
6. The State of UK Public Parks 2014, Heritage Lottery Fund
7. Rethinking Parks Highlights, Nesta, January 2016
8. Green Society: Policies to improve the UK's green spaces, Policy Exchange, August 2014

