

MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT COUNCIL OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION STUDY: ASSESSMENT REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) is currently undertaking a review of its Local Plan. The Council has produced a Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out the stages for production of a Local Development Framework. The scheme includes the preparation of Open Space Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPD) and Developer Contributions and Planning Obligations SPD. As part of this process, this PPG17 compliant Audit and Needs Assessment provides the necessary evidence base and to provide recommendations for implementation in the Open Space SPD.

This report is a 'living document' and the recommendations contained within it are to be reviewed on a regular basis as outlined in PPG17 and to take account of adopted local plan housing sites as and when required. It provides an audit based assessment of both quantitative and qualitative open space, sport and recreation facilities in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 and the Companion Guide entitled "Assessing Needs and Opportunities" published in September 2002.

Methodology

The methodology adopted incorporates:

- ❑ An extensive range of desk background information and the national, regional and local policy context.
- ❑ Extensive consultation with key individuals, interest and community groups, sports clubs, Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) officers and agencies working in and around Malvern Hills District.
- ❑ Development of a database that contains all information relating to open spaces in Malvern Hills District.
- ❑ 207 open space assessments to evaluate the quality and value of sites.
- ❑ Mapping of all sites in the open spaces database using MapInfo. Catchment areas have been applied to each site depending on its typology, size and classification.
- ❑ The use of a settlement hierarchy for some typologies of open space to inform the identification of deficiencies in provision.
- ❑ Adoption of analysis areas to create a more localised assessment of provision and for examination of open space/facility surplus and deficiencies at a local level.
- ❑ A household postal survey to identify the attitudes and needs of the broader local community. KKP received 824 responses from across the District:



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Open spaces

Parks and gardens

- ❑ There are six sites classified as parks and gardens totalling 10ha¹ across Malvern Hills. Of those, five sites are identified as low quality and low value with only one site, Priory Park, identified as high quality and high value.
- ❑ Additional provision is required in the Malvern Town area to meet catchment gaps (against the hierarchy) in Dyson Perrins, West Malvern Town and Malvern Wells.
- ❑ Additional provision is required in the towns of Upton and Tenbury as there is no formal park or garden site in these areas.
- ❑ Increase the quality and value of all sites where below agreed threshold.
- ❑ There is a recognised requirement to submit one site for Green Flag submission in the near future. KKP site visit scores reinforce that Priory Park could be eligible for the site assessment part of Green Flag. However, prior to entry, some infrastructure improvements and a written management plan are required.
- ❑ There is a recognised need to continue increasing community involvement and ownership in parks through the establishment of 'friends' groups in order to help combat anti social behaviour and to improve the quality of sites.

Natural and semi-natural greenspace

- ❑ There are only 28 open spaces classified as natural and semi-natural greenspaces in the District, totalling 616 hectares. Of those, 19 sites are identified as low quality and two sites identified as high quality. In terms of value, ten sites are identified as high value, reinforcing the importance of these sites, and 11 are identified as low value.
- ❑ Additional provision is required in Clifton on Teme, Great Witley, Hallow and Lower Broadheath (in the Rural Areas analysis area) and Tenbury Wells as these areas do not have access to the agreed level of provision (as measured by the settlement hierarchy)
- ❑ Of the low value sites, four require their value and/or quality to be increased; two require further investigation to determine ways of improving quality and value and one – Craig Lea Estate – investigation to determine ways of improving quality and value or whether an alternative typology may be more appropriate
- ❑ There is demand to raise the profile of semi-natural sites for the potential recreational benefits. Some sites will benefit from additional facilities such as interpretation boards.
- ❑ There is demand to address the quality issue of dog foul through greater enforcement and awareness of the problem.
- ❑ There are opportunities for the development of environmental education and schools involvement.



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Green corridors

- ❑ In total there is 403¹ hectares (the total length is multiplied by an average 2m width and converted into hectares) of green corridor provision across Malvern Hills. Public rights of way (PROW) - footpaths and bridleways - make up 376 hectares. The remaining 27 hectares consists of Malvern Common (Guarlford Road), Newland green corridor and Upton-upon-Severn waterfront path.
- ❑ There is a shortfall of bridleway and off-road cycling provision across Malvern Hills and there is demand for increased provision for carriage driving. Footpath provision is generally good in terms of quantity and the need to investigate the feasibility of upgrading PROW to cater for more uses was identified.
- ❑ The key quality issues, identified through user consultation, regarding PROW relate to overgrown or blocked footpaths, poor way marking/signage, dog fouling and difficult stiles/gates.
- ❑ Potential new routes including the disused railway line linking Great Malvern and Upton-upon-Severn were identified.

Amenity greenspace

- ❑ There are 113 amenity greenspace sites totalling 143¹ hectares of amenity greenspace in Malvern Hills District. Of those, 100 sites are identified as low quality and 13 sites identified as high quality. In terms of value, 52 sites are identified as low value and 61 sites are identified as high value.
- ❑ Additional provision is required to address a small gap against the settlement hierarchy in West Malvern Town
- ❑ Additional provision is required in the settlements of Abberley Village, Abberley Common, Bayton, Broadwas, Bushley, Clows Top, Corse Lawn, Eardiston, Grimley, Holt Heath, Little Witley, Pendock and Pensax (all in the Rural areas analysis area).
- ❑ Of the 52 low value sites, there is a need to increase quality and value at 15 sites; 17 sites require investigation to determine ways of improving quality and value; and 11 sites require investigation to determine ways of increasing quality and value or whether an alternative typology may be more appropriate.
- ❑ There is limited community involvement from residents associations or community groups on amenity greenspace sites/projects. Community involvement helps to create a sense of ownership and can often lead to funding opportunities to make improvements.

Provision for children and young people

- ❑ In total, there are 43 play areas in the District, totalling 4 hectares. There are three sites recorded as having no equipment and four sites are unclassified. Of these, 15 are identified as high quality and 28 are identified as low quality. In terms of value, all sites are identified as high value. This reinforces the importance of play areas across Malvern Hills.
- ❑ In the Malvern Town Analysis Area, the additional provision of LEAPs is required in Dyson Perrins, Malvern Wells, Priory and West Malvern Town.



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- ❑ In the Rural Areas Analysis Area, LEAPs are needed to meet the settlement hierarchy in Clifton on Teme, Hallow, Kempsey, Lower Broadheath, Martley and Rushwick.
- ❑ In addition, gaps as identified against the settlement hierarchy require informal play provision in Abberley Village, Abberley Common, Bayton, Broadwas, Bushley, Clows Top, Colletts Green, Corse Lawn, Dunley, Eardiston, Earls Croome, Grimley, Holt Heath, Little Witley, Longdon, Longley Green, Pendock, Pensax, Ryall and Shrawley.
- ❑ Additional LEAP provision is required in Hanley Swan and Upton upon Severn.
- ❑ A key factor in the significant gaps in provision for children and young people is that half of the provision in Malvern Hills District (51%) comprises LAPS (31% of total), unclassified sites and sites that currently have no equipment.
- ❑ There is a lack of provision for young people in rural parishes in Malvern Hills District. Consultation has identified that this is an issue, which needs to be addressed. Encouraging parish councils to communicate/share when hiring mobile activities would be beneficial.
- ❑ Consultation has identified a shortfall in provision for toddlers and young people and also of informal play opportunities.

Allotments

- ❑ There are ten sites classified as an allotment in Malvern Hills District equating to eight hectares. All sites are identified as low quality. In terms of value, all ten sites are identified as high value. This reinforces the importance of allotment provision with the District.
- ❑ A demand based equation is identified in the calculation of standards to determine the future requirements for allotments. This needs to take into account that some areas of the District, notably South Malvern (Malvern Wells, Little Malvern), Hallow, Callow End, Kempsey, Ryall, Welland, Tenbury Wells, Hanley Swan and a small area in north Upton-upon-Severn, have no access to allotment provision.
- ❑ The majority of vacant plots are too overgrown or not in suitable condition to let. Condition of vacant plots and the unmanageable size of plots results in poor take-up.
- ❑ There is a lack of strategic allotment management.
- ❑ There is demand to raise the profile of allotments across the District. MTC need to be more proactive.
- ❑ General maintenance of sites is considered to have declined. Grass cutting, improving fencing and the laying hardcore are priorities for improving the quality of sites.
- ❑ Security is a key concern for plot holders. There is demand to upgrade gates and improve fencing.



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Cemeteries

- ❑ There are nine sites classified under this typology equating to ten hectares of provision in Malvern Hills. Of these, seven sites are identified as low quality and two as high quality. In terms of value, five sites are identified as low value and four as high value.
- ❑ Of the low value sites, the quality and value should be increased at two.
- ❑ Burial space is reaching capacity at Malvern Cemetery and the next 15 years will create pressure on burial space in Upton Cemetery leading to the need for cemetery space expansion or the identification of new provision.
- ❑ There are no formal community groups working in cemeteries.

Civic spaces

- ❑ There are two sites classified under this typology equating to 0.2 hectares of provision in Malvern Hills District. Of these, one site is identified as low quality and one as high quality. In terms of value, both sites are identified as low value.
- ❑ Additional sites are required in Malvern Town, Upton upon Severn and Tenbury to meet catchment gaps (against the hierarchy).

Outdoor sports facilities

Football

- ❑ There are 33 senior, 10 junior and one mini football pitches in Malvern Hills District. There are 23 senior men's, 1 senior women's, 24 junior boys', three junior girls' and 25 mini soccer teams.
- ❑ There is a surplus of 21.9 senior football pitches and a deficiency of 26.4 junior and 29.1 mini soccer pitches. Rather than release senior football pitches, it is recommended that they be converted to use for junior and mini play.
- ❑ The addition of two quality pitches at North Site will reduce overplay at other sites.
- ❑ The feasibility of enhancing facilities at Sling Lane Playing Fields should be assessed.
- ❑ Work should be undertaken with WFA to increase development at Malvern Town FC and put into place the necessary infrastructure, in terms of volunteers and coaches, to create sufficient demand for development of a new facility. This should include pursuit of the Charter Standard accreditation mark.
- ❑ A programme for upgrading changing provision at existing sites is required.
- ❑ Clubs should be supported so that they are not restricted from progressing to compete higher in the football pyramid because of facility issues.
- ❑ Rather than have blanket postponement of matches match officials should be entrusted to make necessary ground suitability judgements based on location,
- ❑ Work with Tenbury Town Council, Tenbury United FC and Tenbury Rugby Club, in association with the newly established community sports network (CSN) to get security of tenure on the Palmers Meadow site to apply for external funding for a new changing room facility to accommodate both football and rugby



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Cricket

- ❑ There are 14 senior cricket pitches in Malvern Hills District. There are 26 senior men's and 22 junior boys' teams.
- ❑ There is a shortfall of 7.2 cricket pitches. However, the majority of additional demand could be accommodated on the current supply of pitches.
- ❑ Worcester Nomads CC requires access to additional facilities to accommodate increased development
- ❑ Clubs require a minimum of 25 years remaining on any lease agreements in order to access external sources of funding for ground improvements
- ❑ There is strong demand from cricket clubs for access to school facilities for indoor, winter training.
- ❑ More effective use of school sites could support club development.

Rugby union

- ❑ There are eight senior and one junior rugby union pitches in Malvern Hills District. There are five senior men's, one senior women's and 11 junior boys' teams.
- ❑ There is a deficiency of 19.7 rugby union pitches. Whilst there will be a surplus of senior pitches in 2017, it will not accommodate all the demand for junior play and more junior pitches need to be provided.

Hockey

- ❑ There are two STPs and one hockey club in Malvern Hills District.
- ❑ Although there is limited demand for an additional STP in Malvern Hills District, Tenbury Hockey Club requires access to a STP facility within the District to enable it to progress

Bowls

- ❑ There are five bowling greens in Malvern Hills District.
- ❑ There is no need for additional provision in the District.
- ❑ There is a need to focus on junior development.
- ❑ The quality of some greens needs to be improved and fencing at some sites has been a successful way of reducing vandalism.

Tennis

- ❑ There are 42 outdoor tennis courts in Malvern Hills District.
- ❑ There is no need for additional outdoor tennis courts provision in the District.

Golf

- ❑ There are two 18-hole golf courses in Malvern Hills District.
- ❑ There is no need for additional golf course provision in the District.



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Athletics

- ❑ There are no formal athletics facilities in Malvern Hills District. The sport is adequately catered for by provision in neighbouring authorities. There is, however, potential to develop a 150m 'J' bend track.

Education (outdoor sports facilities)

- ❑ There is significant outdoor provision available through schools in Malvern Hills District. However, community use of these is patchy.
- ❑ There is a need to enhance community access to sports facilities on school sites. Ways of achieving this include improving changing provision and co-ordinated management of community use.

Indoor sports facilities

Sports halls

- ❑ There are seven indoor sports halls in Malvern Hills District.
- ❑ There is no need for additional provision of sports halls in the District. Better use of the available space is required, e.g., making the sports halls at secondary schools available at weekends, improving changing provision (e.g., The Chase High School).
- ❑ There is a need to ensure that Malvern Gymnastics Club has suitable access to the sports hall facility at Malvern St James College (both in terms of number and length of sessions) and suitable storage.

Swimming

- ❑ There are currently no full-size, 25m swimming pools available for public swimming in Malvern Hills District.
- ❑ However, Malvern St James College has recently applied for planning permission to construct one as part of a wider upgrade of its sports facilities, which will include a new sports hall. This will be developed in two stages, with the swimming pool part of the second phase, due to commence in 2009/10. This will provide a 25 metre pool available for community and club use, meeting identified demand.
- ❑ MHDC should ensure that community use of the proposed 25m swimming pool at Malvern St James College is assured via a formal community use agreement.

Fitness

- ❑ There are five facilities provided 154 fitness stations in Malvern Hills District.
- ❑ The new facility at Dyson Perrins will meet any additional need in the District.



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Squash

- ❑ There are two sites with squash courts in Malvern Hills District.
- ❑ There is no need for additional provision in the District.
- ❑ Junior development could be improved at both clubs, but seems participation seems to be indicative of the national picture.

Indoor tennis

- ❑ There are two indoor tennis courts at Manor Park Sports Club.
- ❑ The indoor courts at Manor Park are used to capacity; the addition of two more indoor courts will meet demand. This will be supplemented by the construction of a bubble at Hallow Tennis Club.
- ❑ W&H LTA has highlighted the provision of additional indoor courts as a priority for Worcestershire County as it has the lowest number of indoor courts per head of population in the country.

Indoor bowls

- ❑ There is a six rink indoor bowls green at Manor Park Sports Club.
- ❑ There is no need for additional provision in the District.

Village, church and community halls

- ❑ There are 45 village, church and community halls in Malvern Hills District.
- ❑ Although there is no shortfall in provision, a new facility is being developed at North Site to serve the needs of the proposed housing development on the site.

Education (indoor sports facilities)

- ❑ All secondary schools in Malvern Hills District have access to a sports hall, and facilitate significant levels of community use.
- ❑ WCC has no medium/long term plans for any significant capital upgrade of sports facilities at secondary schools in Malvern Hills District.
- ❑ Three primary schools in the District do not have access to a generic hall for sport.
- ❑ There is no regular community use of any of the primary school facilities with a generic sports hall.



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Provision standards

Target quantity standards provide a guideline as to how much open space, sport and recreation provision per 1,000 people is needed to strategically serve the District over the next ten years. Standards for each type of provision have been created in relation to demand, access and future population growth.

Quality and accessibility standards are also provided per type of provision. A quality standard is provided based on the audit and assessment of sites and provides a minimum level of quality (percentage score), which sites should achieve. An accessibility standard is also provided based on catchment areas and how far people should be expected to travel to visit each type of provision.

Summary of standards

The table below summaries the provision standards for open spaces and outdoor sports facilities across Malvern Hills. The standards set are locally derived standards and are therefore reflective of local circumstance including current provision and demand. Although some standards may seem particularly high, this is because the starting point (i.e. the current provision) is higher than other areas. For example, the standard for parks and gardens in Malvern Town (0.3 hectares per 1,000 population) seems particularly high. However, this is because large sites such as Victoria Park (4 hectares in size) and Priory Park (3 hectares in size) both fall within this analysis area. It is also recognised that analysis area boundaries do not inhibit residents' usage of open spaces. Analysis areas that appear to have particularly low standards are such because large sites probably fall just outside the analysis area but still service people from within that area. Therefore, it is not always useful to compare one area with another area, but accept and work towards the standards as locally derived standards.

The standards have been developed in conjunction with the key findings of the consultation in order to provide locally endorsed picture of provision in the future. For example, a significant proportion of consultation across different types of open space highlights where residents perceive deficiencies in provision to exist. In the majority of cases the mapping and applied settlement hierarchy also reflects this. For example, residents in Kempsey highlight a perceived deficiency in provision for children and young people. Both the catchment mapping and applied hierarchy supports this showing that the one play area, Napleton Lane, serves little of the settlement area. Consultation also identifies a perceived lack of amenity open space in Little Witley. This is supported by catchment mapping with no amenity greenspace identified in the area and is also identified as a gap when the hierarchy is applied.

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Local provision standards summary

Typology	Standard	Malvern Town analysis area	Rural analysis area	Tenbury Town analysis area	Upton and Hanley analysis area	Malvern Hills District
Parks and gardens	Quantity (ha/1,000 people)	0.29	-	0.10	0.08	0.14
	Quality	Score of 60% or higher on qualitative site assessment				
	Accessibility	All settlement areas within 400m of a local park and/or 1,200m of district park and/or 3,200m of a borough park				
Natural/semi-natural greenspace	Quantity (ha/1,000 people)	2.98	14.72	0.10	0.27	7.72
	Accessibility	All settlement areas within 120m of a site up to 0.66ha and/or 1200m of a site between 0.66ha and 1ha and/or 900m of a site between 1ha and 10ha and/or a site of more than 10ha				
Amenity greenspace	Quantity (ha/1,000 people)	2.13	1.42	1.98	2.83	1.86
	Accessibility	All settlement areas within 120m of a site up to 0.66ha and/or 1200m of a site between 0.66ha and 1ha and/or 900m of a site between 1ha and 10ha and/or a site of more than 10ha				
Green corridors	Quantity (ha/1,000 people)	N/A				
	Quality	Score of 60% or higher on qualitative site assessment				
	Accessibility	N/A				



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Typology	Standard	Malvern Town analysis area	Rural analysis area	Tenbury Town analysis area	Upton and Hanley analysis area	Malvern Hills District
Allotments	Quantity (ha/1,000 people)	0.20	0.04	0.29	0.25	0.14
	Quality	Score of 60% or higher on qualitative site assessment				
	Accessibility	All settlement areas within 120m of a site up to 0.66ha and/or 1200m of a site between 0.66ha and 1ha and/or 900m of a site between 1ha and 10ha and/or a site of more than 10ha				
Cemeteries	Quantity (ha/1,000 people)	0.04	0.72	1.02	0.59	0.41
	Quality	Score of 60% or higher on qualitative site assessment				
	Accessibility	N/A				
Civic spaces	Quantity (ha/1,000 people)	0.04	-	0.13	0.11	0.03
	Quality	Score of 60% or higher on qualitative site assessment				
	Accessibility	N/A				
Provision for children and young people	Quantity (ha/1,000 people)	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.07	0.04
	Quality	Score of 60% or higher on qualitative site assessment				
	Accessibility	All settlement areas within 400m of a LEAP (pedestrian route) and/or 1,000m of a NEAP (pedestrian route) and/or 1,000 or a site greater than a SEAP (Straight line distance)				



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Typology	Standard	Malvern Town analysis area	Rural analysis area	Tenbury Town analysis area	Upton and Hanley analysis area	Malvern Hills District
Outdoor sports facilities	Quantity (ha/1,000 people)	2.01	1.20	1.36	3.66	1.83
	Quality	Site quality rating of good (as defined by Sport England Electronic Toolkit)				
	Accessibility	Teams to have access to appropriate site at relevant time				



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