

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

## PART 7: AMENITY GREENSPACE

### Introduction

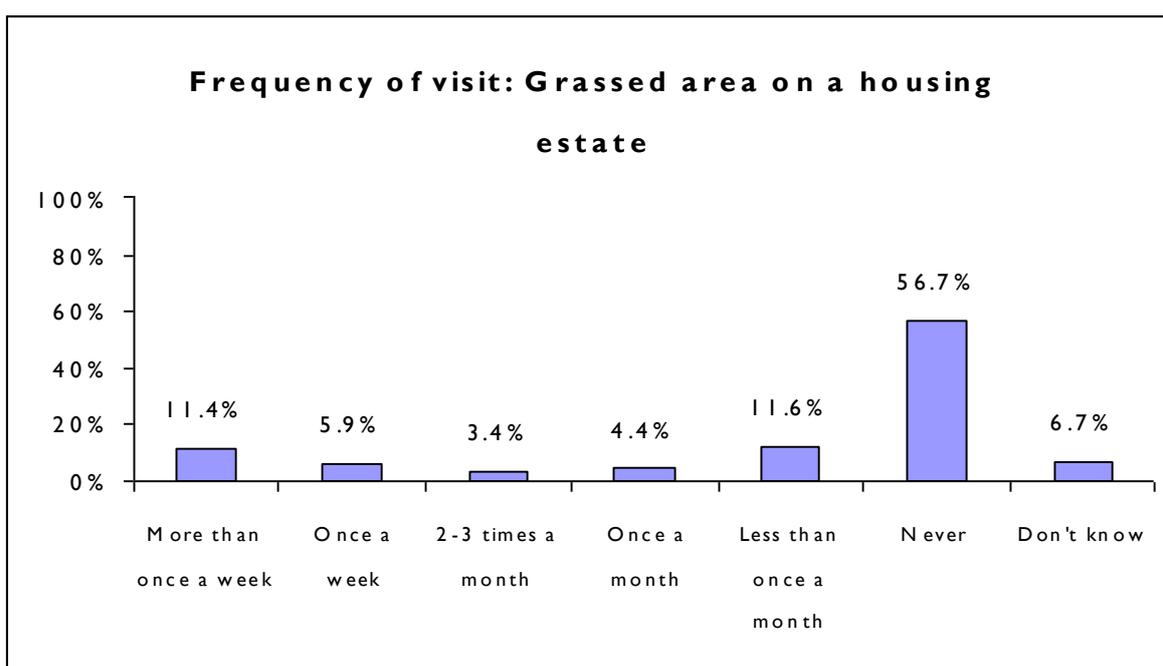
- 7.1 The typology of amenity greenspace, as set out in PPG17: A Companion Guide includes sites that offer 'opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas' are classed as amenity greenspace. These include informal recreation spaces, housing green spaces, village greens and other incidental space.'
- 7.2 Many of these areas, as with Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces and Parks and Gardens, are largely a feature of the environment in which they are located. They are supply or opportunity-led and not necessarily derived from the use of standards.

### Context

- 7.3 This section outlines findings from the survey of residents in relation to their use of and attitudes towards the provision of grassed areas on housing estates in Malvern Hills District. It provides a context for the subsequent sections, which address the quantity, quality and accessibility of provision. Results are provided for the descriptions used in the survey itself.

### Usage

Figure 7.1: Frequency of usage of grassed area on housing estate in the previous 12 months

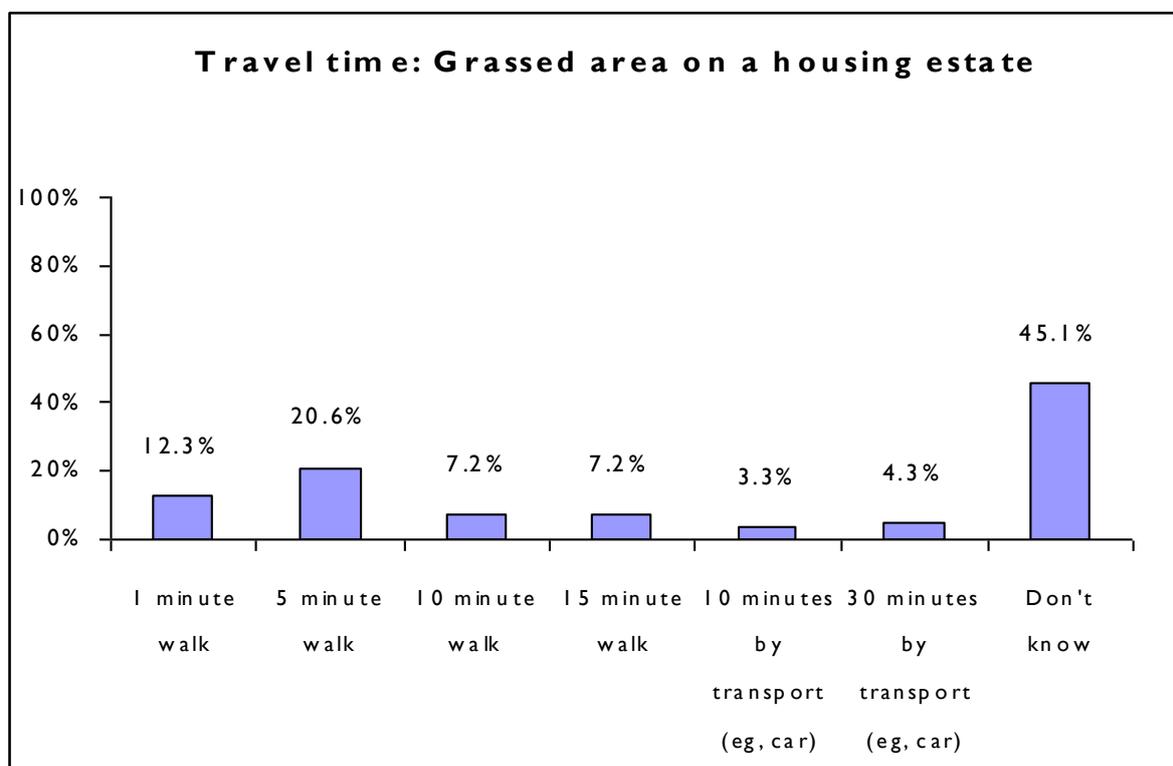


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- 7.4 Less than two-fifths of residents (36.6%) have visited/used a grassed area on a housing estate in the previous 12 months. There is a split in frequency of usage, with 17.3% visiting once a week or more and 11.6% less than once a month.
- 7.5 Overall, levels of usage are slightly higher in Malvern Town areas (42%) and Upton Town areas (40.2%) than Tenbury Town area (32.4%) and the rural areas (34.6%). However, Tenbury has the highest frequency of use, with 23% using grassed areas on housing estates at least once a week. As with other typologies, usage decreases with age, from 46.4% of 25 – 34 year olds to 32.9% in the 65+ age group. Frequency also decreases with age.

### Travel time

Figure 7.2: Time prepared to travel to reach a grassed area on housing estate



- 7.6 Reflecting the localised nature of provision, nearly half (47.3%) the residents would be willing to walk no further than for 15 minutes to access grassed areas on a housing estate. A much smaller proportion (7.6%) would be willing to travel up to 30 minutes via the use of transport. However, nearly half are unable to comment highlighting low levels of use. There is no significant variation by gender or age from the 35 – 44 age group onwards (where it is consistently around the 15 – 16% mark for good or very good, compared to 24.4% amongst 25 – 34 year olds). Men are more likely to rate provision as poor or very poor (15.9%) than women (8%).

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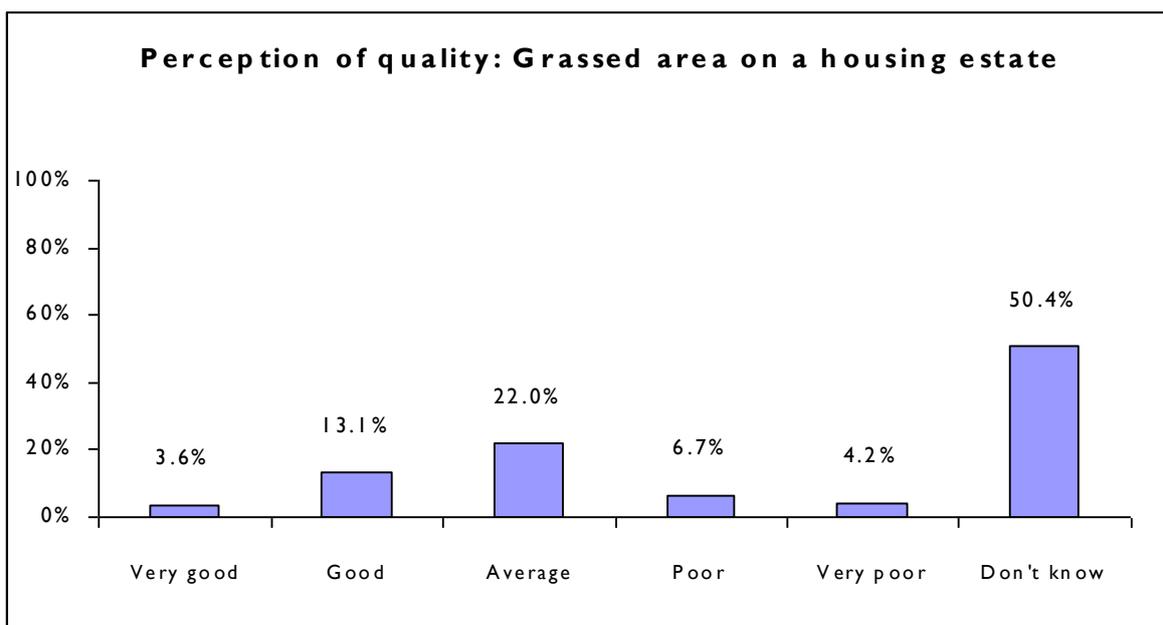
## Quality of provision

7.7 Over half (50.4%) of the respondents are unable to comment on the quality of this typology again reflecting low usage. Of those able to rate provision, slightly more rate it as good or very good (16.7%) than poor or very poor (10.9%). There is no significant variation by area. The patterns for age and gender reflect those for quality.

## Availability

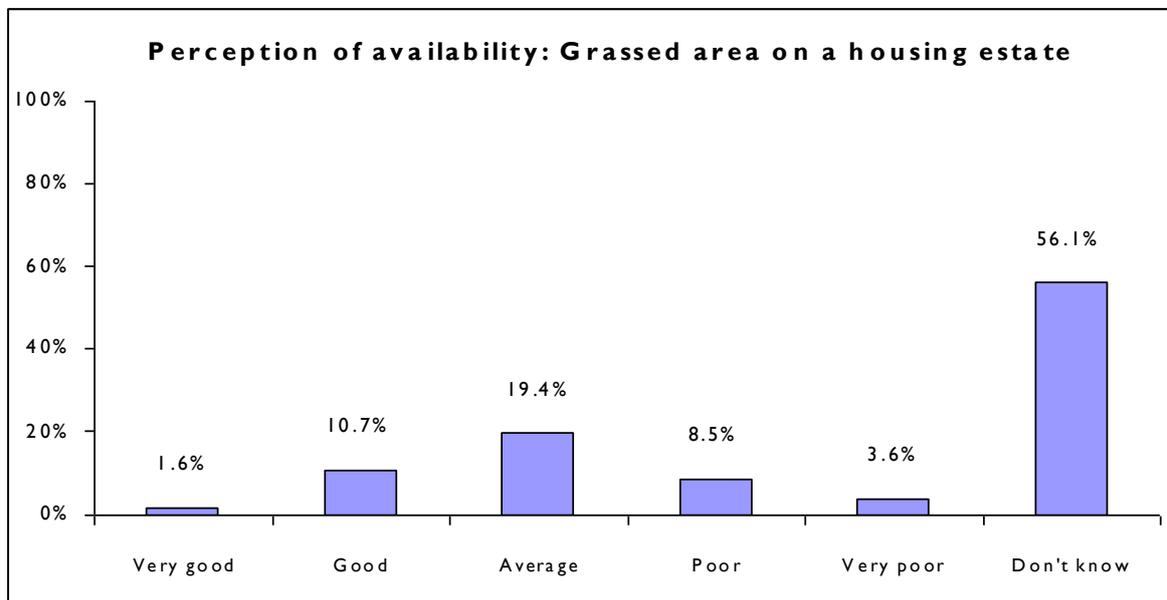
7.8 A large proportion of residents (56.1%) are unable to comment on the availability reflecting low levels of use. Around one in eight (12.3%) of the respondents rate the availability as good or very good with a similar proportion (12.1%) rating it as poor or very poor.

Figure 7.3: Quality of grassed area on housing estate



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Figure 7.4: Availability of grassed area on housing estate



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## Key issues

### Current provision

7.9 There are 113 amenity greenspace sites totalling 143<sup>1</sup> hectares of amenity greenspace in Malvern Hills District.

Table 7.1: Distribution of amenity greenspace sites by analysis area

Analysis area	Amenity greenspaces	
	Number	Size(ha)
Malvern Town area	50	77.91
Rural areas	49	43.82
Tenbury Town area	3	7.90
Upton and Hanley areas	11	13.60
<b>MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>143.25</b>

### Accessibility

7.10 The effective catchments of amenity greenspaces has been identified using the approach shown in Table 2.2. The following catchments are used to identify the coverage of current provision:

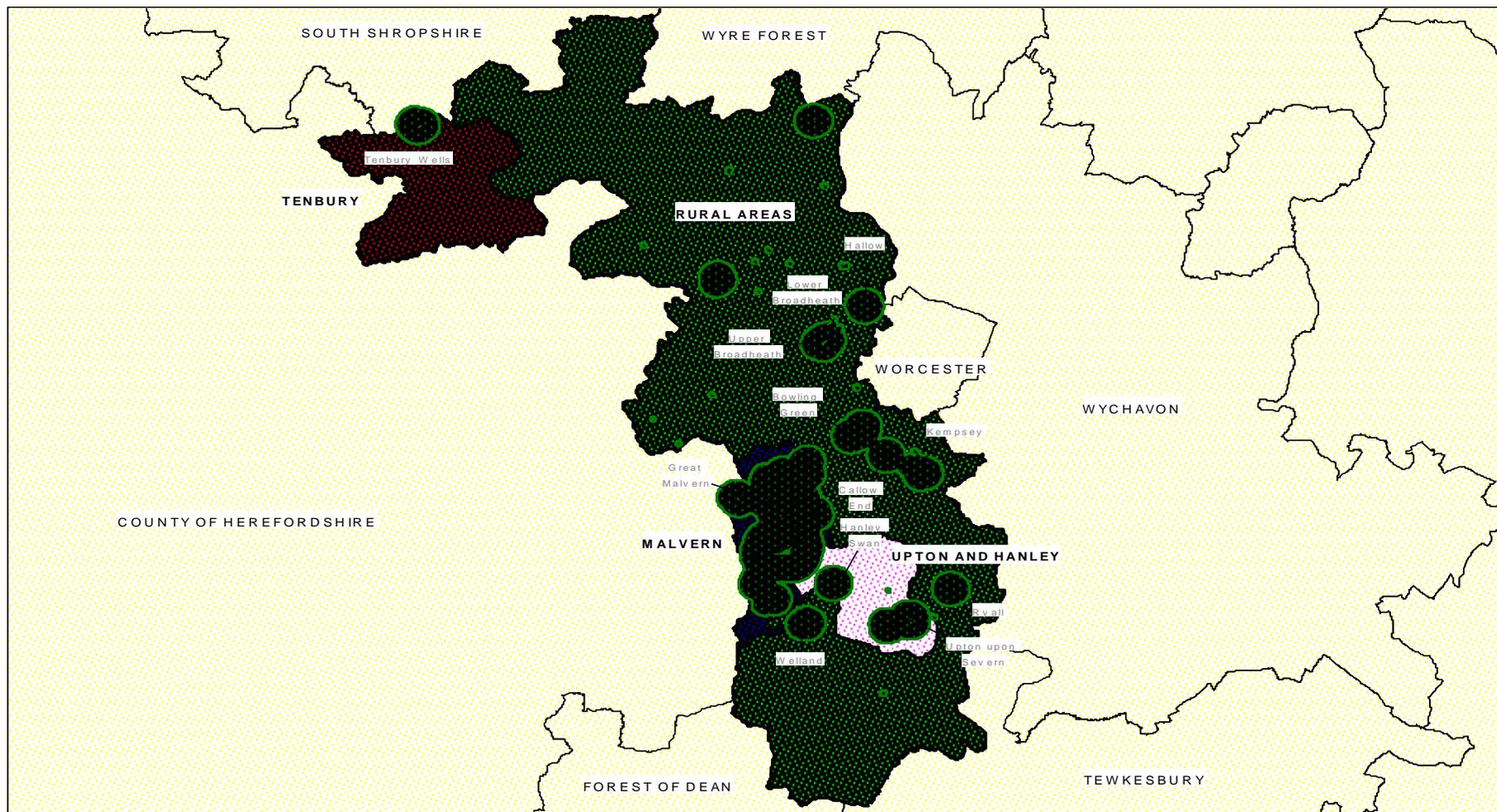
- District-wide significance (site more than 10ha) – 1,600 metres.
- Settlement significance (site between 1ha and 10ha) – 900 metres.
- Neighbourhood significance (site between 0.66ha and 1ha) – 600 metres.
- Local significance (site up to 0.66ha ) – 120 metres.

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<sup>1</sup> Figures rounded up

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Figure 7.5: Amenity greenspace sites mapped against settlement areas with catchment applied



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## Settlement hierarchy

7.11 The settlement hierarchy for amenity greenspace is set out below. The categorisation of settlements in Malvern Hills District is set out in the appendices document.

Table 7.2: Settlement hierarchy – amenity greenspace

Category	Minimum provision
Category 0	All residents to be within 900 metres of amenity greenspace
Category 1	All residents to be within 900 metres of amenity greenspace
Category 2	One amenity greenspace in settlement
Category 3/4	One amenity greenspace in settlement

Table 7.3: Gaps in provision of amenity greenspace across Malvern Hills District (as assessed against settlement hierarchy)

Analysis area	Catchment gaps		
Malvern Town area	<input type="checkbox"/> Malvern Wells <input type="checkbox"/> North Malvern (Dyson Perrins and Link wards)		
Rural areas	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="border: none; width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Abberley Village  <input type="checkbox"/> Abberley Common  <input type="checkbox"/> Bayton  <input type="checkbox"/> Broadwas  <input type="checkbox"/> Bushley  <input type="checkbox"/> Clows Top  <input type="checkbox"/> Corse Lawn               </td> <td style="border: none; width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Eardiston  <input type="checkbox"/> Grimley  <input type="checkbox"/> Holt Heath  <input type="checkbox"/> Little Witley  <input type="checkbox"/> Pendock  <input type="checkbox"/> Pensax               </td> </tr> </table>	<input type="checkbox"/> Abberley Village <input type="checkbox"/> Abberley Common <input type="checkbox"/> Bayton <input type="checkbox"/> Broadwas <input type="checkbox"/> Bushley <input type="checkbox"/> Clows Top <input type="checkbox"/> Corse Lawn	<input type="checkbox"/> Eardiston <input type="checkbox"/> Grimley <input type="checkbox"/> Holt Heath <input type="checkbox"/> Little Witley <input type="checkbox"/> Pendock <input type="checkbox"/> Pensax
<input type="checkbox"/> Abberley Village <input type="checkbox"/> Abberley Common <input type="checkbox"/> Bayton <input type="checkbox"/> Broadwas <input type="checkbox"/> Bushley <input type="checkbox"/> Clows Top <input type="checkbox"/> Corse Lawn	<input type="checkbox"/> Eardiston <input type="checkbox"/> Grimley <input type="checkbox"/> Holt Heath <input type="checkbox"/> Little Witley <input type="checkbox"/> Pendock <input type="checkbox"/> Pensax		
Tenbury Town area	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap identified		
Upton and Hanley areas	<input type="checkbox"/> No catchment gap identified		

7.12 Although Malvern Hills District has good coverage of amenity greenspace (with no gaps identified in Tenbury Town area and Upton and Hanley area), assessment against the settlement hierarchy shows 13 small gaps in the rural areas and gaps in Malvern Wells and North Malvern that need to be addressed.

7.13 Consultation identifies a perceived lack of amenity open space in Little Witley. The settlement hierarchy supports this, with no amenity greenspace identified in the area. There is resident demand for the provision of a village green to act as a community focal point for the Parish.

7.14 Consultation identifies that a small amenity greenspace, on Kiln Lane (Leigh Sinton) is currently used as an informal play space by local children. Local residents consider the site, which is sandwiched between housing, to be poor quality and inadequate, in terms of size, for children to play on. However, there is a lack of other suitable space in the area.

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7.15 A common concern highlighted throughout the District is the lack of amenity greenspace offering informal play opportunities e.g. for the playing of informal ball games. In particular, there is demand for open space in Abberley where children can play informally.

## Quality

Table 7.4: Quality scores for amenity greenspace sites by analysis area

Analysis area	QUALITY Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 60%	above 60%
Malvern Town area	113	24%	40%	73%	48%	48	2
Rural areas	113	22%	46%	70%	48%	42	7
Tenbury Town area	113	49%	56%	66%	18%	2	1
Upton and Hanley areas	113	28%	48%	65%	37%	8	3
<b>MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>13</b>

7.16 Over two thirds (88%) of amenity greenspace has been assessed as poor quality. Site assessments note that seating provision will be of benefit/appropriate to 32 of the 83 amenity greenspaces currently without any. A third (32%) of the amenity greenspaces visited are either highway verges or roundabouts. All but two of these sites have received a low quality score. This may be an artificially low score because the criteria against which amenity greenspaces were assessed covers elements such as seating, litterbins and paths that are not always appropriate to sites such as highway verges and roundabouts.

7.17 Consultation suggests that there are inadequacies in the maintenance of amenity greenspace, for example the standard of cutting of grass verges within Rushwick Parish is considered by residents to be generally poor. A resident survey undertaken by the Parish Council, findings of which fed into the Rushwick parish plan, identifies the need to enhance the visual appearance of the village through the tidying and improved maintenance of grass verges. The Parish Council has aspirations to establish an environmental working party; including young people through a proposed youth council.

7.18 Amenity greenspaces, particularly commons, are popular sites for recreational dog walking. The associated issue of dog foul is a common concern amongst residents and other users of amenity greenspace. Site assessments note that the provision of dog foul bins will be of benefit at 38% of the amenity greenspaces visited. However, the resource implications are significant, as they require regular emptying, particularly in summer. As dog waste is no longer considered hazardous

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waste it can now be disposed off in ordinary litterbins. Awareness of this can to be raised to encourage responsible behaviour by dog owners.

- 7.19 A disused burial ground, located on Bear Lane and belonging to St Marys, is being transferred to Longdon Parish Council ownership. It plans to change use of the site to provide a village green. Mapping demonstrates that amenity greenspace is lacking in the area and the Parish Council hopes that the site will provide an informal play space for local children and act as a focal point for the parish.
- 7.20 To feed into the Abberley Parish Plan, which sets out a vision for the community and identifies actions to improve the parish, a resident questionnaire survey was conducted by Abberley Parish Council. Almost half (42%) of respondents consider there to be inadequate maintenance of the village green, which is managed and maintained by the Village Green Committee. This site has not been included in the database and therefore has not received a site assessment to support or dispute this resident perception.
- 7.21 Due to a perceived lack of maintenance consultation highlights that local children cannot use the area for informal play. A number of respondents also indicate a perceived lack of maintenance of the roadside verges in the Parish. An agreement is in place for MHDC to maintain the roadside verges. The Parish Council, in partnership with WCC has contracted a parish lengthsman for an average of 10 hours per week. Should funding become available, the Parish Council would consider a full time lengthsman, who could regularly maintain the roadside verges with minimal support from MHDC.

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## Value

7.22 The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for amenity greenspaces in Malvern Hills District. A list of low value sites and an indication of their position relative to the threshold can be found in Part 33.

Table 7.5: Value scores for amenity greenspaces by analysis area

Analysis area	VALUE Scores					Number at:	
	maximum score	lowest score	MEAN score	highest score	spread	below 20%	above 20%
Malvern Town area	100	1%	22%	51%	50%	23	27
Rural areas	100	7%	25%	57%	50%	24	25
Tenbury Town area	100	13%	15%	18%	5%	3	-
Upton and Hanley areas	100	8%	30%	52%	44%	2	9
<b>MALVERN HILLS DISTRICT</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>61</b>

7.23 Although 88% of the sites are identified as low quality over 50% are assessed as high value with the mean score for the District sitting above the value threshold. Amenity greenspaces across Malvern Hills District are largely a visual feature of the environment in which they are located and the site assessments recognise the landscape and ecological/biodiversity value, amenity benefits and the sense of place that amenity greenspaces offer. The majority of low value sites are grass verges in comparison to the large recreation grounds that scored high value. In order to reflect their important amenity value, sites should be protected and where possible increased to high quality and value.

7.24 Consultation shows residents would like to see increased value given to roadside grass verges. It is felt that the WCC policy of cutting the verges in May decreases the visual quality and wildlife value of the verges. Residents would like WCC to consider delaying the cutting of the verges so that wild flowers are encouraged.

## Community involvement

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

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## *Summary of site consultation*

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

Site	Quality score	Value score	Comments
Dukes Meadow	50%	27%	<p>Consultation identifies that the site is popular as a dog walking area and, as such, suffers with dog foul issues. This is a particular problem as the site incorporates a rugby pitch and, as identified through consultation, is informally used as a kick-a-about area. The site assessment indicates that there are no dog foul bins at the site but that provision of them would be of benefit to tackle the problem. An alternative, as dog foul is no longer classified as hazardous waste, is to raise awareness regarding the disposal of dog foul in general waste litterbins.</p> <p>Consultation also finds there is a perception, amongst residents, of high levels of anti-social behaviour associated with the site.</p>
Mansfield Road, Malvern	37%	23%	<p>Highway buffer/roadside verge site - large area of mown grass bordered by footpath/cycleway (good tarmac paths). Attractively maintained site with young native trees. Acts as a buffer between houses and busy main road. No footpaths cross the site. Could be potential for attractive seating area.</p>
Michael Crescent	35%	18%	<p>This site has been highlighted, by a number of consultees, as a particular 'hot spot' for anti-social behaviour in the form of vandalism, drug taking and fires. This has resulted in local residents having a negative perception of the site.</p> <p>MHDC community safety team and street scene officers have identified the continuous anti-social behaviour issues here and intend to tackle the problems through the site action plan.</p>
Village Green, Clifton-upon-Teme	46%	18%	<p>MHDC currently maintains the site. Due to a perceived lack of maintenance, i.e. grass cutting, Clifton Upton Teme Parish Council has aspirations to take over maintenance of the site.</p>

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

Site	Comments
Oak Crescent, Great Malvern	<p>As identified through consultation the site is currently neglected with poor visual quality.</p> <p>The area is also a popular congregation spot for young people who do not feel safe at Dukes Meadow.</p> <p>Oak Residents Association is involved in improving the amenity greenspace on Oak Crescent Road. It is in the process of consultation with the residents of Oak Crescent, with support from Elgar Housing Association, to identify how the area can be enhanced to encourage greater usage. Once the area has been improved there are plans to use this area to host small community events.</p>

### **Amenity greenspace summary**

#### **Current provision**

- ❑ There are 113 amenity greenspace sites totalling 143 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.

#### **Future provision**

- ❑ Additional provision is required to address a small gap against the settlement hierarchy in West Malvern Town
- ❑ Additional provision is required in the Category 1 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.

#### **Other issues**

- ❑ 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.