

**Sefton Council**  
**Green space and recreation study 2009**



**November 2009**

*Good quality green spaces are an essential element of urban neighbourhoods and make a profound contribution to the quality of life of communities. They offer many economic, social and environmental benefits. Approaching their planning and management strategically will maximise the value of capital investment and revenue expenditure.*

Extract from a Good Practice Guide prepared by the Government's agency for improving Green Space – CABE Space.

## Contents

	<u>Page</u>
<b><u>List of figures</u></b>	5
<b>Executive Summary</b>	7
<b><u>Part A – INTRODUCTION</u></b>	9
<b>1. Purpose of the green space and recreation study</b>	11
<b>2. Overview of the green space and recreation study</b>	12
<b>3. What is green space?</b>	15
Green Space	15
The value and benefits of greenspace	15
Types of green space	18
Accessible Nature space	20
<b>4. Public access to green space</b>	22
<b><u>Part B – IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS</u></b>	23
<b>5. National, regional and local policy framework</b>	25
National framework	25
Regional and sub-regional framework	26
Local framework	26
Planning policy	26
Sefton's strategic Partnership and the Sustainable Community Strategy	27
Other local strategies and initiatives	28
<b>6. The character of Sefton</b>	30
Sefton's green space resource	34
<b>7. Public consultation.</b>	37
Overview of public consultation	37
Parish Councillors, Area Committees and Sefton Borough Partnership	37
Community groups	37
The general public	38
Special interest groups	40
Consultation on the draft Green Space Strategy Issues Report	40
<b><u>Part C - AUDITING LOCAL PROVISION</u></b>	43
<b>8. The urban greenspace audit 2007</b>	45
<b>9. The Playing Pitch Strategy 2009</b>	50
<b>10. Additional work on quantity of public green space in Sefton</b>	52
Green Space	52

	<u>Page</u>
Accessible nature space	59
<b>11. The Play Strategy 2008</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>12. The Parks and Green Space Asset Management Strategy 2008</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>13. Additional work on quality of public green space in Sefton</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>14. Accessibility to public green space in Sefton</b>	<b>66</b>
<b><u>Part D – SETTING AND APPLYING THE DRAFT LOCAL TARGETS</u></b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Overview</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>15. Review of existing policies and provision targets</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>16. The quantity target for Sefton</b>	<b>73</b>
The quantity target for Sefton	73
Applying the quantity target for Sefton	73
<b>17. The quality target for Sefton</b>	<b>76</b>
Overview	76
The quality target for Sefton	76
Applying the quality target for Sefton	76
<b>18. The accessibility target for Sefton</b>	<b>79</b>
Overview	79
The accessibility target for Sefton	79
Applying the accessibility target for Sefton	80
<b>19. Applying the Sefton targets to Area Committee areas</b>	<b>92</b>
Introduction	92
Overview of the Borough	93
Crosby Area Committee area	94
Formby Area Committee area	94
Linacre and Derby Area Committee area	95
Litherland and Ford Area Committee area	95
Sefton East Parishes Area Committee area	96
Southport Area Committee area	97
St Oswald, Netherton and Orrell Area Committee area	97
Further information	97
<b>20. Green space funding and resources - issues and opportunities</b>	<b>99</b>
Corporate commitment and working	99
Strong partnerships	100
Funding	100
Strategic priorities	100
<b>21. Future directions</b>	<b>102</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>103</b>

### List of figures

<u>Figure</u>		<u>Page</u>
2.1	Sefton's Area Committee Areas	14
3.1	The Benefits of Urban Greenspace (Figure 13.1 of the Unitary Development Plan (2006))	16
3.2	Key benefits and functions of green space and trees	17
3.3	PPG17 Typology of open space	18
3.4	Sefton types of green space	19
3.5	Sefton definition of accessible nature space	21
5.1	How the green space strategy helps meet Sustainable Community Strategy priorities	27
5.2	Links between Sefton and partner strategies and green space work	29
6.1	Sefton's projected future population structure	30
6.2	Multiple deprivation across Sefton's urban areas	31
6.3	Housing density across Sefton's urban areas	32
6.4	Tree cover across Sefton's urban areas	33
6.5	Key green space resource in Sefton (1)	35
6.6	Key green space resource in Sefton (2)	36
8.1	Urban Greenspace audit – quantity information	46
8.2	Urban greenspaces which are parks: Analysis of quality and value of the urban greenspace – by quality	48
8.3	Urban greenspaces which are amenity greenspaces: Analysis of quality and value of the urban greenspace – by value	49
10.1	All playing pitch provision in Sefton (quantity)	53
10.2	All Non-pitch sports provision in Sefton (quantity)	54
10.3	All outdoor sports provision in Sefton (quantity)	55
10.4	All allotments provision in Sefton (quantity)	56
10.5	All cemeteries and crematoria provision in Sefton (quantity)	57
10.6	Countryside and coastal parks (quantity)	57
10.7	All green space in Sefton (quantity)	58
10.8	Accessible nature in Sefton (quantity)	59
12.1	List of priority 1* sites in Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy	61
12.2	Indicative map of Sefton's hierarchy of parks	64
14.1	Means of travel to most visited green space (from 2007 telephone survey)	66
14.2	Time taken to travel to most visited green space (from 2007 telephone survey)	66
14.3	Catchment (accessibility) distances for different types of parks and play spaces	67
14.4	Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards Model (Natural England) -	68

<b><u>Figure</u></b>		<b><u>Page</u></b>
	Accessibility distances	
15.1	Unitary Development Plan recreation provision standards	71
15.2	Comparison of existing standards and existing provision	72
16.1	Quantity target for green space in Sefton	73
16.2	Quantity of green space in Sefton - actual Sefton provision compared to quantity targets	74
17.1	Quality target for green space in Sefton	76
17.2	Quality aims for different types of green space in Sefton	77
18.1	Accessibility target for green space in Sefton	79
18.2	Accessibility: walking time and catchment distances	80
18.3	Accessibility maps for parks	82
18.4	Accessibility maps for accessible nature spaces (nature areas)	87
19.1	Performance of Area Committee areas against the green space targets	93
20.1	Green Space Strategy Action Plan – examples of one action plan point for each Green Space Strategy aim	100

### Executive Summary

ES1. The purpose of this green space and recreation study is to provide information:

- To prepare and implement the Green Space Strategy for Sefton (2008), the Core Strategy and other planning documents which form part of Sefton's Local Development Framework – including the Unitary Development Plan (2006) - and other Council and partner strategy documents;
- To help assess pre-application inquiries, planning applications and appeals; *and*
- To guide the Sefton Borough Partnership's Sustainable Communities Strategy and Sefton Council's asset management, regeneration and investment decisions and funding bids.

ES2. The study's methodology is based on Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' (2002) and its companion guide, adapted in the light of local issues and the need to make effective use of available resources in carrying out the study. Accordingly, the focus of the study is on:

- i. Identifying local needs;
- ii. Auditing local provision;
- iii. Setting local provision targets (which were set, based on this research, in the Green Space Strategy for Sefton, and are repeated in this Study);
- iv. Applying the provision targets.

ES3. In line with PPG17 this study focuses on quantity, quality and accessibility of green space. It also looks at accessible nature space in Sefton, in recognition of Natural England's recommendations for public access to nature space. Much of the analysis in the study is based on Sefton's seven Area Committee areas.

ES4. This study also forms an overview of a range of green space and recreation work which took place between 2005 and 2009 (for more information about some of the individual elements see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/greenspacestudy>. These linked pieces of work relate mainly to steps i) and ii) and to a lesser extent iii) referred to in paragraph ES2 above and include:

- An overview of national, regional corporate and partner documents which have implications for green space in Sefton and a review of existing standards;
- A overview assessment of the character of Sefton;
- An audit of all sites designated as urban greenspaces in the adopted Unitary Development Plan (2006) – the urban greenspace audit;
- Further work on quantity of different types of green space across Sefton.
- An assessment of the accessibility of nature space in Sefton;
- Preparation of other linked studies carried out by Sefton Council:
  - Play Strategy 2008 (Children's Services)
  - Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy 2008 (Leisure)
  - Playing Pitch Strategy 2009 (Planning);

- Public consultation on issues relating to green space and need for green space in 2005-06, including;
  - Consultation with Parish Councils, Area Committees, children, and local voluntary groups;
  - A telephone survey of residents across Sefton;
  - Focus groups of residents in south Sefton;
  - Other wider public consultation.

ES5. The study provides the evidence for the setting of local provision targets and applies these to Sefton and each of the seven Area Committee areas within it.

ES6. The local provision targets, which were set, based on this research, in the Green Space Strategy for Sefton which was approved by the Council in October 2008, are:

- **Quantity:** Based on existing provision, e.g. 1.2 hectares of parks per 1000 people
- **Quality:** Based on Green Flag criteria – which are national quality standards
- **Accessibility:** Everyone to live within 15 to 20 minutes walk of a larger park or accessible nature space (nature area).

ES7. In applying the quantity target to Sefton, the amount of different types of green space (hectares per thousand population) is shown and analysed for each of the Area Committee areas, as is the amount of accessible nature space. This shows that if coast and countryside parks are excluded, Crosby has the most green space per thousand population, and Linacre and Derby area the least. If coast and countryside parks are also included, Formby has the most green space, due to the large coastal area which is accessible. This is reflected by the figures for the amount of accessible nature space (again including the coast and countryside areas), which show that Formby has the most accessible nature space per thousand population, and Linacre and Derby area the least.

ES8. It has not yet been possible to apply the quality target fully to Sefton. However, the urban greenspace audit provides some quality information. This indicates variable quality, with parks and amenity urban greenspace in Formby and to a lesser extent Southport being generally of higher urban greenspace quality. Also, in 2009 Sefton gained 4 Green Flag awards; Hesketh Park and Botanic Gardens (both in Southport), Coronation Park in Crosby, and Thornton Crematorium. St Luke's churchyard and community garden, in Crosby, won the Green Pennant award (the equivalent award for voluntary groups) in 2009. In 2010 it is hoped that other parks will also achieve the award – Derby Park in Bootle, Victoria Park in Crosby and Ainsdale & Birkdale Sandhills (a coastal site).

ES9. In applying the accessibility target to Sefton, maps have been produced showing the areas within 15 to 20 minutes walk of larger parks and nature areas (1 kilometre distance). While the majority of the urban population live within 15 to 20 minutes walk of a larger park or nature area, there are quite a few areas of deficiency, which include parts of Blundellsands, Thornton (for parks and nature areas); areas in Formby, notably north-central Formby (parks); parts of northern Lydiate and western Maghull (parks), plus small parts of Aintree and Melling (nature areas); large parts of central and north Southport (parks and nature areas), plus part of Birkdale (nature areas).

ES10. This study also applies the targets to Area Committee areas, providing more detailed information which also relates to the overview assessment of how each Area Committee area performs against the targets set out in the Green Space Strategy for Sefton (2008), and to policies in the Unitary Development Plan (2006). This is particularly relevant to the assessment of pre-application inquiries, planning applications and appeals.



**PART A – INTRODUCTION**

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### 1. Purpose of the green space and recreation study

1.1 The **purpose** of the green space and recreation study is to provide the background information needed:

- **To prepare and implement the Green Space Strategy for Sefton (adopted October 2008).** The Green Space Strategy is a corporate document which sets out the vision, aims, objectives and an Action Plan for public green space in Sefton. Its Framework Plans bring together the key opportunities and challenges for green space in Sefton. It also sets out targets relating to the quantity, quality and accessibility of green space in Sefton.
- **To prepare and implement the local development documents which form part of Sefton's Local Development Framework.** These include:
  - The **Core Strategy**. This is a strategic document setting out the vision and spatial strategy for meeting Sefton's known and anticipated development requirements to 2026 (see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/corestrategy>).

The Core Strategy, together with subsequent Development Plan Documents (DPDs) will recognise the importance of green space and other green infrastructure. The Core Strategy may include local standards for the provision of public green space in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. These standards will replace those in the Sefton Unitary Development Plan (2006).

The Core Strategy will also stress the importance of green infrastructure to Sefton. This study will help to inform the decisions to be made about green infrastructure, which is critical for its recreation, health, food production and amenity functions. This ties in especially to policy EM3 of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (see <http://www.gos.gov.uk/gonw/Planning/RegionalPlanning/?a=42496> and <http://www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk>).

- The **Green Space, Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), adopted July 2008**, which set outs detailed guidance for developers to provide or enhance green spaces and plant trees in association with their development proposals (see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/greenspacespd>).
- **To prepare and implement other Council and partner strategy documents**, such as the Play Strategy, Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy, and related funding bids.
- **For members, officers, developers and the public to help the assessment of pre-application enquiries, planning applications and appeals; and**
- **To guide the Sefton Borough Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy and Sefton Council's asset management, regeneration and investment decisions and funding bids.**

1.2 Prior to this final document, the Study has been publicly available and in 'living draft' form since July 2008. It has been updated on a regular basis in the light of progress on other plans and strategies. It has informed the preparation of the Green Space Strategy for Sefton and the Green Space, Trees and Development SPD, and continues to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy and other Council plans and strategies.

### 2. Overview of the green space and recreation study

2.1 The study looks at and defines both green space which is accessible to the public; and accessible nature space, in recognition of Natural England's recommendations for accessible nature space.

2.2 The study methodology is based on that outlined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' (2002) and its companion guide, adapted in the light of local issues and the need to make effective use of available resources in carrying out the study.

2.3 PPG17 calls for Councils to carry out robust assessments of the open space, sports and recreation needs of their local community, carry out audits of existing facilities, and set local standards for the provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities in their areas. PPG17 stresses that local standards should include:

- **Quantity** – is there enough public green space in each area?
- **Quality** – is it of a high standard?
- **Accessibility** – is it easy to get to?

2.4 The PPG17 companion guide stresses that as many open spaces are multi-functional (for example, people may also use playing pitches for jogging, parks usually include children's play areas) audits should focus on their primary purpose. This green space and recreation study follows this approach.

2.5 The PPG17 companion guide sets out 5 steps for Councils in carrying out local assessments:

- Step 1: identifying local needs
- Step 2: auditing local provision
- Step 3: setting local provision standards
- Step 4: applying the provision standards
- Step 5: drafting strategic and other policies for open space.

2.6 This study concentrates on Steps 1 to 4 above (in Parts A to D). In terms of steps 3 and 4 the study sets *targets* based on the current evidence, rather than *standards*. It provides the evidence to justify these targets. The targets have already been approved as the quantity, quality and accessibility targets for public green space in Sefton in the Green Space Strategy for Sefton (October 2008).

2.7 These targets will be taken forward - Step 5 – in Sefton's Core Strategy, other Local Development Framework documents or other Council strategies and documents such Allotments Strategy or a Play Facilities Strategy. Where appropriate, local provision standards will be set; based on this future work, or on research referred to in this study.

2.8 Most of the information gathering for Sefton's green space and recreation study took place between 2005 and 2009. This comprised several key, linked, pieces of work which relate especially to Steps 1 and 2, but also Step 3 above. For more information about some of the individual elements see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/greenspacestudy>. These linked pieces of work relate include:

- An overview of all national, regional corporate and partner documents which have implications for green space in Sefton and a review of existing standards;
- A overview assessment of the character of Sefton;
- An audit of all sites designated as urban greenspaces in the adopted Unitary Development Plan (2006) – the urban greenspace audit;

- Further work on quantity of different types of green space across Sefton.
- Preparatory work for other linked studies carried out by Sefton Council:
  - Play strategy 2008 (Children's Services)
  - Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy 2008 (Leisure)
  - Playing pitch study 2009 (Planning);
- Public consultation on issues relating to green space in 2005-06, including;
  - Consultation with Parish Councils, Area Committees, children, and local voluntary groups;
  - A telephone survey of residents across Sefton;
  - Focus groups of residents in south Sefton;
  - Other wider public consultation.

2.9. The study also provides the evidence for the setting of local provision targets (these were set in the Green Space Strategy for Sefton (October 2008). It also applies these targets to Sefton and each of the seven Area Committee areas within it (Steps 3 and 4 referred to in paragraph 2.5 above).

2.10 In applying these targets, the study provides more detailed information which also relates to the overview assessment of how each Area Committee area performs against the targets set out in the Green Space Strategy for Sefton (2008), and to policies in the Unitary Development Plan (2006). This is particularly relevant to the assessment of pre-application inquiries, planning applications and appeals.

2.11 The Area Committee areas are shown in figure 2.1 below. The Committees are responsible for making some decisions on local transport and environmental matters and acting as a focus of consultation and discussion about matters in their area. They are also consulted on the spending priorities in their area for monies received for provision or enhancement of green space and trees linked to new development ('Commuted sums' or 'section 106 monies').

2.12 A Steering Group was set up in autumn 2006 to oversee the preparation of the Green Space Strategy, Green space, Trees and development Supplementary Planning Document and this Green Space and Recreation study.

2.13 The Steering Group comprised representatives from across Sefton Council departments and from other organisations such as Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, NHS Sefton (formerly Sefton Primary Care Trust), Sefton Council for Voluntary Services, including 'Transform' (network of environmental organisations in Sefton), One Vision Housing, and the Sefton Area Partnership of Parish Councils (the '10 Parishes') and The Mersey Forest.

2.14 The group was assisted by a representative from CABI Space, a government agency set up to champion green spaces and their potential contribution to our communities. This group provided a useful forum for drawing together different perspectives about green space in Sefton.

Figure 2.1 Sefton's Area Committee areas



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### 3. What is green space?

#### Green space

3.1 The definition of green space used in this Green Space and Recreation Study is set out below.

**Green space is the network of publicly accessible green spaces in Sefton. It includes parks, play facilities, country parks, natural and semi-natural green spaces; outdoor sports facilities; amenity spaces; allotments; cemeteries and churchyards; waterways; trees; community woodlands and coastal habitats.**

3.2 Private gardens have not been included within this definition of green space, mainly because they are essentially private green spaces. The Council and other public bodies have very little control over the use, character, management and maintenance of private gardens, or indeed over any private green spaces.

3.3 Green space as defined here is an important part of Sefton's green infrastructure (and that of the north west region). Green infrastructure is defined as the network of natural environmental components, green spaces and water (e.g. lakes, rivers), that lies within and between the North West's cities, towns and villages, which provides multiple social, economic and environmental benefits. In the same way that the transport infrastructure is made up of a network of roads, railways, airports etc. green infrastructure has its own physical components, including parks, rivers, street trees and moorland. For more information see <http://www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk>.

3.4 This study also refers in places to urban greenspace. Urban greenspace is designated in the Unitary Development Plan (2006). It comprises public and private greenspaces of 0.05 hectares or more, which provide one or more of the benefits set out in Figure 13.1 of the Unitary Development Plan (reproduced in Figure 3.1 below) and which lies within the urban area. No sites within the Green Belt are urban greenspaces. These sites are always referred to as urban greenspace in this study, rather than the generic term of green space.

#### The value and benefits of green space

3.5 Green space (including trees) has many **benefits and functions**. The Sefton Unitary Development Plan (2006, Figure 13.1) sets out some benefits of urban greenspace, which are mostly related to land use. There is national and regional recognition of wider benefits and functions of green space and trees. These benefits include active recreation and quiet enjoyment, improved mental health, the ability to reduce run-off after heavy rain and reduce air temperatures, a more positive image for the area and opportunities for community events and involvement. A more complete list of the key benefits and functions of green space is set out in Figure 3.2 below.

**Figure 3.1: The Benefits of Urban Greenspace (Figure 13.1 of the Unitary Development Plan (2006))**

**Trees**

- The contribution made by both individual trees and the level of tree cover is an important aspect of greenspace. They enhance visual amenity, offer wildlife value and act as a buffer. Their role may be relevant within each of the following criteria.

**Visual Amenity**

- The views into and from the site, and the relationship of the site to adjacent or linked spaces, regardless of whether the site has public access.
- What the site offers in terms of outlook, variety in the urban scene or as a positive element in the landscape.

**Quality**

- The way a greenspace contributes to the appearance of the surrounding area or townscape in terms of landscape and design.
- The contribution that plentiful and visually attractive greenspaces make to regeneration.

**Recreation and Wellbeing**

- The informal and formal recreational facilities that a site provides, or the potential of the site to provide these in the future to people of all ages.
- The health benefits provided by greenspaces, including allotments.
- The ability of urban greenspaces to act as green corridors that allow people to move through the urban area into the surrounding countryside.

**Wildlife and Habitat Value**

- The habitats and wildlife provided on the site, including sites identified in habitat surveys of the North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan, as well as sites supporting protected species.
- The value of sites containing natural areas which people have easy access to, and provide opportunities for public enjoyment and environmental education.
- The potential to enhance or create habitat and to meet targets laid down in the North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan.
- The 'green corridor' function provided by greenspaces that provides an opportunity for wildlife to move through the urban area.

**Cultural and Community Resource**

- Where the site reflects a particular period of development, contains historic or archaeological remains or is identified as an area of search for remains.
- Where the site has social importance within its neighbourhood e.g. site for community events or historical association.

**Strategic functions**

- Openness – The open character provided by greenspace within the urban area and how it affects people's perception of how built up an area is.
- Buffer - This includes any feature within the site which provides a visual screen or shelter or helps to reduce noise e.g. belts of trees and boundary walls. It also refers to any buffer provided by a site to separate different land uses, including transport corridors.

Individual urban greenspace sites are designated whether they provide one, several or many of these benefits, rather than only when they provide all of them.



**Figure 3.2 -Key benefits and functions of green space and trees**

***Recreation, health and well-being***

- Better physical health and fitness through outdoor activity and sports;
- Better mental health and well-being from relaxing, quiet enjoyment and getting closer to nature
- Quicker recuperation times after illness or operations;
- Less stress and greater personal effectiveness.

***Wildlife, natural processes and climate changes***

- Slower storm water runoff rates (reduced likelihood of flooding);
- Water storage areas – important in storms or floods;
- Lower temperatures and humidity compared to the urban surroundings,
- Shade from sun and shelter from winds;
- Absorption of some air and water pollutants and noise (better air and water quality);
- A range of habitats for wildlife, promoting biodiversity;
- Buffers between built-up areas and different land-uses.

***Community, culture and education***

- Opportunities for community events, group and voluntary activities;
- Opportunities for community-based training or skills in food production, horticulture and outdoor crafts;
- Opportunities for children to develop skills and confidence through outdoor play;
- Areas for everyone of all ages to meet informally, talk and play and gain confidence;
- Cultural links with the past, a sense of place, community and identity;
- Environmental education – an outdoor classroom.

***Regeneration, Built Environment and Economy***

- A more positive the image for the area – more new investment, jobs, tourists, a better quality of life
- Higher property values - surrounding homes, commercial and other properties;
- Better footpath and cycle links across green spaces to encourage these activities;
- Less crime / fear of crime and antisocial behaviour due to increased community use of green space, diversionary activities and engagement of young people at risk of offending;
- A pleasant place to live and work/

(Adapted from 'Green Future', GreenSpace Forum Ltd, 2005  
see <http://www.green-space.org.uk/whatwedo/policyandresearch.php>)

### Types of green space

3.6 PPG17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation' (2002) refers to 10 different types (typologies) of open space, as set out below in figure 3.3. The 'parks and gardens' type does not include private gardens – 'gardens' means formal civic or other publicly accessible gardens.

#### Figure 3.3 - PPG17 Typology of open space

- i. **parks and gardens** - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens;
- ii. **natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces** - including woodlands, wetlands, water areas, derelict open land;
- iii. **green corridors** - including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way;
- iv. **outdoor sports facilities** (with natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned); bowling greens & tennis courts
- v. **amenity greenspace** - including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens;
- vi. **provision for children and teenagers** - including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (e.g. 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters);
- vii. **allotments, community gardens, and city (urban) farms;**
- viii. **cemeteries and churchyards;**
- ix. **accessible countryside in urban fringe areas; and**
- x. **civic spaces** - including civic squares and hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians.

3.7 However, both PPG17 and its companion guide recognise that many open spaces are multi-functional and may have more than one use. For example, in Sefton almost all parks include children's play areas and often include bowling greens or tennis courts, and many parks also have a high nature value and interest and significant numbers of trees.

3.8 PPG17 and its companion guide note that this multi-functionality can create problems when analysing local provision and local needs. Paragraph 2.4 of PPG17 states that "The best way to avoid this problem is to adopt the concept of 'primary purpose' [or 'type'] so that each open space, or sport or recreation facility, is counted only once in an audit of provision".

3.9 In this Green Space and Recreation Study this approach has been taken both in assessing provision and in preparing draft targets. The types of green space used in this study are set out in figure 3.4.

3.10 Parks and provision for children and teenagers have been counted together as one type because almost all parks include provision for children and teenagers. There was so little other additional provision for children and teenagers that any quantity figures for this type alone would have been very misleading. This type of provision has not been called 'parks and gardens' as this could lead to confusion about the status of private gardens. Large open water areas –

Crosby Marina and Southport Marine Lake – are also included as parks rather than natural and semi-natural green space as they lie within parks.

### Figure 3.4 - Sefton types of green space

- **Parks** include urban parks and country or coastal parks such as Crosby Marine Park and Town Lane (Newlands) Country Park which are designated as urban greenspace in the Unitary Development Plan. Often parks will contain other facilities such as **provision for children and teenagers**, water areas such as Crosby Marina and Southport Marine Lake, nature areas and tennis courts or bowling greens. We define our parks as either borough park, district parks, neighbourhood parks or local parks based on their characteristics, including their size, range of facilities and how far people are willing to travel to them. **Provision for children and teenagers** includes equipped play areas, areas with less traditional equipment such as fitness trails or adventure areas, kickabout areas, skateboard parks, 'hanging out' areas and teenage shelters;
- **natural and semi-natural green spaces** - including woodlands, wetlands, natural grassland or wildflower meadows and **green corridors** (such as the canal) which have nature value;
- **outdoor sports facilities** include football, rugby, hockey and cricket pitches, athletics tracks; bowling greens & tennis courts (all with natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned);
- **amenity green space** - including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, village greens and **green corridors** which have no recognised nature value;
- **allotments** includes community gardens, and city farms;
- **cemeteries and churchyards** – some of these are accessible to the public;
- **schools and colleges** – which *may* have permissive access (that is, a formal agreement for community use, e.g. with football leagues or teams, or scout and guides organisations);
- **Institutions** – includes hospitals and larger residential care home sites which may be accessible to the public.

**Accessible nature space** is also important. Accessible nature spaces are public green spaces of any of these types listed above which have an identified nature value, for example any green spaces which have a 'high' wildlife nature value, parks with more than 10% tree cover, community woodland and country parks.

3.11 This Study does not include a category for accessible countryside in urban fringe areas. This is difficult to quantify due in part to difficulties about the classification of private land which is crossed by the public rights of way network and differing local understanding of the term urban fringe. Sefton has an extensive coastal area, and its remaining countryside is mostly the best and most versatile agricultural land (measured on a nationally agricultural land classification). The urban fringe and rural areas form a diverse resource under so many ownerships and management regimes.

3.12 However, 'countryside parks' have been identified in this Study as a sub-set of parks. 'Countryside parks' include the parts of the nature sites on the Sefton Coast which are publicly

accessible, to the high-water mark except north of Southport Pier where public access is discouraged on safety grounds. This includes land managed by Sefton Council but also bodies such as the National Trust. The Sefton Coast is a tremendous resource – principally for wildlife and biodiversity, and as coastal defences but also for informal recreation and as an economic resource. Birkdale Common has been included within this area, as this is a park which lies in the Green Belt.

3.13 Countryside parks also include those parts of the Countryside Recreation Areas, as designated in the Sefton Unitary Development Plan (2006), which are publicly accessible. Also they include countryside recreation areas managed by the Forestry Commission in the Sefton Meadows area between Netherton, Thornton and Maghull, and land managed by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust north of Formby.

3.14 As set out in paragraph 13.4 above, this Study also distinguishes between types of green space and urban greenspace. The types of urban greenspaces are the same as the types of green space.

3.15 Although the urban greenspace audit records the urban greenspaces which are green corridors, they have been reclassified in this Study as either amenity green space or natural and semi-natural green space. This is because the green corridor type is based heavily on site shape, location and character and location of existing public paths and cycle routes, e.g. the canal. Sefton Council's aim is to improve the access network across all types of publicly available green space, and to make sure that as many green spaces of other types as possible also have a green corridor function.

3.16 The Sefton Green Space and Recreation Study does not include civic spaces, because of both difficulties in setting out a clear definition and because of the emphasis on green space and recreation.

3.17 Likewise, golf courses are not included within the scope of this Study (even Bootle Golf course, although it is included in some analysis as urban greenspace as designated in the Unitary Development Plan (2006)). There are no recognised national standards or targets for golf provision, and Sefton's golf facilities serve a regional and even national catchment as well as meeting the needs of the local community. Sefton has 7 championship courses including Royal Birkdale Golf Club, which hosted the Open Golf Championship for the 9<sup>th</sup> time in 2008, and Southport is actively promoted as the capital of England's 'Golf Coast'.

### Accessible nature space

3.18 The Green Space and Recreation Study also recognises the importance of **accessible nature space**, a concept promoted by Natural England. Within this Study, accessible nature spaces are defined as publicly accessible green spaces which have an identified nature value; for example any green spaces (including cemeteries and churchyards and countryside parks) which have a 'high' wildlife nature value and parks with more than 10% tree cover. Figure 3.4 below sets out the formal definition.

3.19 In the Green Space Strategy, these accessible nature spaces are referred to more simply as nature areas. In this Study the terms are used interchangeably.

**Figure 3.5 Sefton definition of accessible nature space**

**(In the Green Space Strategy these are referred to simply as nature areas)**

**Accessible nature space includes accessible greenspaces with natural areas and is defined as sites which are:**

- **Community Woodlands** – woodlands which are publicly accessible, including Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust, and Mersey Forest sites with public access and sites which meet the Woodland Trust's 'Woods for People' criteria;
- **Sites of international, national and local (Sites of Local Biological Interest) nature conservation importance** which have public access, such as Rimrose Valley and some of the coast;
- **Countryside parks** – those parts of Countryside Recreation Areas as defined in the Unitary Development Plan (2006) to which the public have access *plus* other recreation areas identified by Area Committees and Parish Councils including some managed by the Forestry Commission and Lancashire Wildlife Trust;
- **Access points to the canal towpath;**
- **Urban greenspaces** as designated in the Unitary Development Plan (2006) which have public access (\*) and which the urban greenspace audit shows to have:
  - **Natural and semi-natural greenspace** as their 'primary typology';
  - **Natural and semi-natural greenspace** as their 'secondary typology' and where the tree cover of the site is more than 10%;
  - **'High' Wildlife Quality; or**
  - **Tree cover of 10% or more**, as identified from aerial photos taken in 2005.

(\*) For this purpose public access means sites where the public can turn up and have access to the site for free or for a reasonable charge. This includes parks and country parks managed by Sefton Council or a Parish Council, National Trust and Woodland Trust sites. It excludes sports clubs, 'pay and play' sports sites, allotments and school sites which can only be accessed by club members and allotment holders (both paying annual charges) and teams.

**There are some areas which have nature value but are not accessible and these include:**

- Sites of international, national and local (Sites of Local Biological Interest) nature conservation importance where there is no public access (private sites);
- Urban greenspaces as designated in the Unitary Development Plan (2006) which have no public access and which the urban greenspace audit shows to have:
  - Natural and semi-natural greenspace as their 'primary typology';
  - Natural and semi-natural greenspace as their 'secondary typology' and where the tree cover of the site is more than 10%;
  - 'High' Wildlife Quality; or
  - Tree cover of 10% or more, as identified from aerial photos taken in 2005.

Please note that some sites fall into more than 1 category.

### 4. Public access to green space

4.1 Public accessibility is a continuum. In many cases the level of public access to a site will be clear. For example unfenced green spaces and parks managed by Sefton Council are fully and freely accessible while private land with no public access is enclosed and any gates locked. Other sites may be privately owned but be crossed by public rights or way, or may be owned by sports clubs which have a variety of membership fees, qualifying criteria and waiting lists. Many school playing fields are owned by Sefton Council but formally should be used only by pupils, teachers, out of school club members and any visiting school sports teams, during school hours. Informal access to some private sites may be longstanding, permitted by agreements, or merely tolerated.

4.2 In this Study publicly accessible means sites where members of the public have full and free public access on foot and sites where they have permitted access, on foot.

4.3 Sites with full public access include parks, play areas, playing pitches, bowling greens and tennis courts, coastal areas and country parks owned and managed by Sefton Council, Town or Parish Councils, One Vision Housing, Lancashire Wildlife Trust and national organisations such as the Woodland Trust, the Forestry Commission, the National Trust and Primary Care Trusts and NHS Trusts. They also include cemeteries managed by Sefton Council.

4.4 Sites with permitted access include sites owned or managed by sports clubs – for example tennis, cricket and general sports clubs, bowling greens next to public houses which are let to teams, clubs or leagues - with wide public membership, 'pay and play' sports sites including sports centres managed by Sefton Council, allotment sites managed by Sefton Council or allotments associations, privately owned sites (including some cemeteries and churchyards) where public access is allowed though formal agreements or clear longstanding practice.

4.5 School and college sites have been included within the permitted public access category only where the school has a formal agreement for use of part of the premises by sports teams, leagues, clubs or other organisations such as Scouts and Guides. Institutional sites have been included where there is permitted public access to many open parts of each site or to specific recreational facilities such parts of the Parkhaven Trust land in Maghull, and Southport District Hospital.

4.6 All other sites are assumed to be private sites with no public access. This includes some cemeteries and churchyards which are locked for most of the time, most school sites, and smaller private sites. It also includes high-level sports clubs (such as Southport FC) where only one local team uses the site. Blundellsands Key Park has been classed as a private site because it is understood that no new keys are currently being distributed.

4.7 The main focus of the Green Space and Recreation Study is on public accessible green space. This is because it has the greatest range of benefits for the public as it can be used for quiet enjoyment, informal and formal recreation (see figures 3.1 and 3.2). Also, most of this green space is owned and managed by a Parish or Town Council, Sefton Council or one of its many partners and this means that the Council has a considerable degree of influence over its management, maintenance and use.

4.8 Likewise, Sefton's targets relate to publicly accessible green space and nature space.

**Part B - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS**

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### 5. National, regional and local policy framework

5.1 This section includes a summary of the key documents only. There are many other national, regional and local policy documents which have a more limited relationship to green space or recreation or their benefits.

#### National framework

5.2 Nationally, a raft of legislation, government planning policy guidance and good practice advice from national bodies such as Natural England and Sport England recognises the importance of green space to a variety of issues e.g. biodiversity, regeneration, health, recreation, crime and community safety and reducing the effects of climate change.

5.3 The **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004** requires development plans to contribute to achieving sustainable development - development which meets the needs of today but does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This requires a balancing of social, environmental and economic considerations. The **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006** requires local councils and other public bodies to conserve biodiversity (the biodiversity duty). The **Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006)** requires local councils to do all they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and crime that adversely affects the environment in their area. The government has set a performance target to provide 'cleaner safer greener public spaces ... in deprived areas and across the country with measurable improvements by 2008'.

5.4 The most relevant planning policy guidance is **Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) 'Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation'** (2002). PPG17 says that planning policies for green space should be based on local open space standards, reflecting local needs and opportunities in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility.

**5.5 Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1) 'Delivering Sustainable Development'** (2005) says that planning policies should promote socially inclusive communities (e.g. attractive places to live; and provide for physical activity, to promote health and well-being). Planning policies should also protect and enhance the most valued townscapes and landscapes, wildlife habitats and natural resources and maintain and improve the local environment, (e.g. through policies to provide good quality public space). The **PPS1 Supplement 'Planning and Climate Change'** (2007) stresses the contribution of existing and new open space and trees to urban cooling.

5.6 Other Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) reinforce the advice in PPS1. For example PPS 3 'Housing' (2006), PPS 9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' (2005), PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (1994) and **PPS 25 'Development and Flood Risk'** (2006) which stresses the importance of green space for reducing and managing flood risk by providing flood storage areas and as part of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

**5.7 CABE Space**, the government agency formed to champion improvement and use of parks and green spaces, has produced a range of helpful advice which reinforces the importance of green space. **Sport England**, the national agency for sport, recognises the importance of pitch, playspace and other recreation open space provision. **Natural England**, the national agency for biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife and linked access, recreation and public well-being, promotes the achievement of publicly accessible natural greenspace - 'accessible green space - close to every urban home.

### Regional and sub-regional framework

5.8 The **Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS)** (2008) recognises the importance of conserving and enhancing the North West's valued environmental and cultural assets both for their own sake and in seeking to achieve social and economic objectives and addressing the issue of climate change.

5.9 The RSS notes that the environmental economy makes a significant contribution towards the North West's GDP, and policies such as 'EM1: Integrated Land Management', 'EM3: Green Infrastructure' and EM4 'Regional Parks' take an integrated approach to regional environmental issues (see policy EM3 of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (see <http://www.gos.gov.uk/gonw/Planning/RegionalPlanning/?a=42496>).

5.10 The **North West Green Infrastructure Guide** has been produced to complement the Regional Spatial Strategy with a view to protecting, promoting and enhancing green areas (see <http://www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk>). This will require the active involvement of many partners, and further work on green infrastructure is on-going at the local, sub-regional and regional level. Two other current plans are particularly relevant; the **North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan** which comprises action plans for 44 habitats and species; and the **Mersey Forest Plan** which sets the framework for the creation and enhancement of a community forest, including trees in urban areas

5.11 There are other regional and sub-regional strategies which recognise the contribution of green space to other issues such as health and access for all.

### Local framework

#### *Planning policy*

5.12 Locally, the **Unitary Development Plan (UDP)** (2006) which is a 'saved' plan within Sefton's Local Development Framework is currently the main planning policy document for Sefton. It recognises that urban greenspace, landscape character and important nature sites and species are environmental assets of strategic importance to be protected, conserved and enhanced (Policy CS2 'Restraint on development and protection of environmental assets').

5.13 A number of more detailed UDP policies set out how this protection, conservation and enhancement will be achieved, including:

- Policy **G1 'Protection of Urban Greenspace'** is the key policy for protecting urban greenspace from development except in specified special circumstances;
- Policy **G5 'Protection of recreational open space'** sets performs the same function for land used for recreational purposes or which could meet a recreational need (much of which is also urban greenspace);
- Policies **G2 'Improving public access to urban greenspace'**, **G3 'Urban greenspace systems'** and **G4 'Development to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal'** deal with specified urban greenspace issues;
- Policies **GBC9 'Landscape Renewal Areas'**, **G7 'Strategic Paths for Countryside Recreation'**, **G8 'Countryside Recreational Areas'** and **CPZ4 'Coastal Park'** aim to protect and enhance these resources.
- Policy **DQ4 'Public greenspace and development'** requires the provision of new publicly accessible urban greenspace in connection with development of 5 or more homes and for major commercial, industrial and leisure development.
- Policy **DQ3 'Trees and development'** seeks to protect trees on and next to development sites and requires all development to include new tree planting.
- Policy **NC1 'Site protection'** aims to protect sites of international, national, or local nature conservation importance, while Policy **NC2 'Protection of species'** aims to protect protected, rare or vulnerable species and their habitats. Policy **NC3 'Habitat**

**protection, creation and management'** deals mainly with sites other than internationally and nationally important sites. **Policy CPZ3 'Coastal landscape conservation and management'** includes a section which says that development in the coastal area should protect and support the integrated management of the coastal landscape as a corridor which allows wild species to migrate, disperse and breed successfully.

- The strategic Policy **CS3 'Development Principles'** and **Policy DQ1 'Design'** requires development to be as sustainable as possible and policy **DQ5 'Sustainable drainage systems'** deals with one part of the flood-risk related aspect of sustainability

5.14 The **Green Space, Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**, which was approved in July 2008, sets out detailed guidance for developers to provide or enhance green spaces and plant trees in association with their development proposals. It relates especially to policies DQ3 'Trees and Development' and DQ4 'Public Greenspace and Development' of the adopted Unitary Development Plan (2006).

5.15 The SPD includes information on the situations where the Council wants green space and/or trees to be provided within the development site and the situations where instead developers should provide commuted sums so that green space or trees can be provided or enhanced elsewhere.

5.16 Also the SPD sets out how commuted sums will be applied to development schemes, and how they are usually calculated. The SPD notes that priorities for spending these commuted sums are set out in the Green Space Strategy for Sefton, and in more specific, linked strategies such as the Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy and Playing Pitch strategy.

**Sefton's Strategic Partnership and the Sustainable Community Strategy**

5.17 The Sefton Borough Partnership and the **Sustainable Community Strategy** are now organised around four thematic groups, which reflect the blocks of the **Local Area Agreement (LAA)** for service delivery:

- Children and Young People;
- Safer, Stronger Communities;
- Healthier Communities and Older people;
- Economic Development and Sustainability.

5.18 Key priorities under each heading which relate directly or indirectly to green space issues, are shown in figure 5.1 below.

<b>Figure 5.1</b> <b>How the green space strategy helps meet Sustainable Community Strategy priorities</b>	
<b>Thematic Group</b>	<b>Priorities</b>
Children and Young People	Increase % of children either walking or cycling to school
Safer and Stronger Communities	Increase % of people who feel safe after dark in parks/open space Reduce % of people who think that teenagers hanging around is a big problem Increase number of people engaging in formal volunteering Increase people's perception of cleanliness Increase in number of green flag award parks % of people satisfied with parks/ open spaces

Figure 5.1 How the green space strategy helps meet Sustainable Community Strategy priorities	
Thematic Group	Priorities
Healthier Communities and Older People	% of children exercising 3 times a week or more Increase % of children either walking or cycling to school Decrease % of adults classified as overweight or obese
Economic Development and Sustainability	Improve access to the coast by developing or improving linear access and visitor gateways

5.19 Linked to this, a key objective of the neighbourhood regeneration team is 'to lead the delivery of cleaner, safer and greener public spaces and improvement of the quality of the built environment in deprived areas and across the borough, with measurable improvement by 2008'.

### **Other local strategies and initiatives**

5.20 The **Green Space Strategy for Sefton** is a corporate document which sets out the vision, aims, objectives and an Action Plan for public green space in Sefton (see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/greenspacestrategy> ). The aims relate to quality, community and health, climate change, wildlife and partnership. Its Framework Plans bring together the key opportunities and challenges for green space in Sefton. It also sets out targets relating to the quantity, quality and accessibility of green space in Sefton.

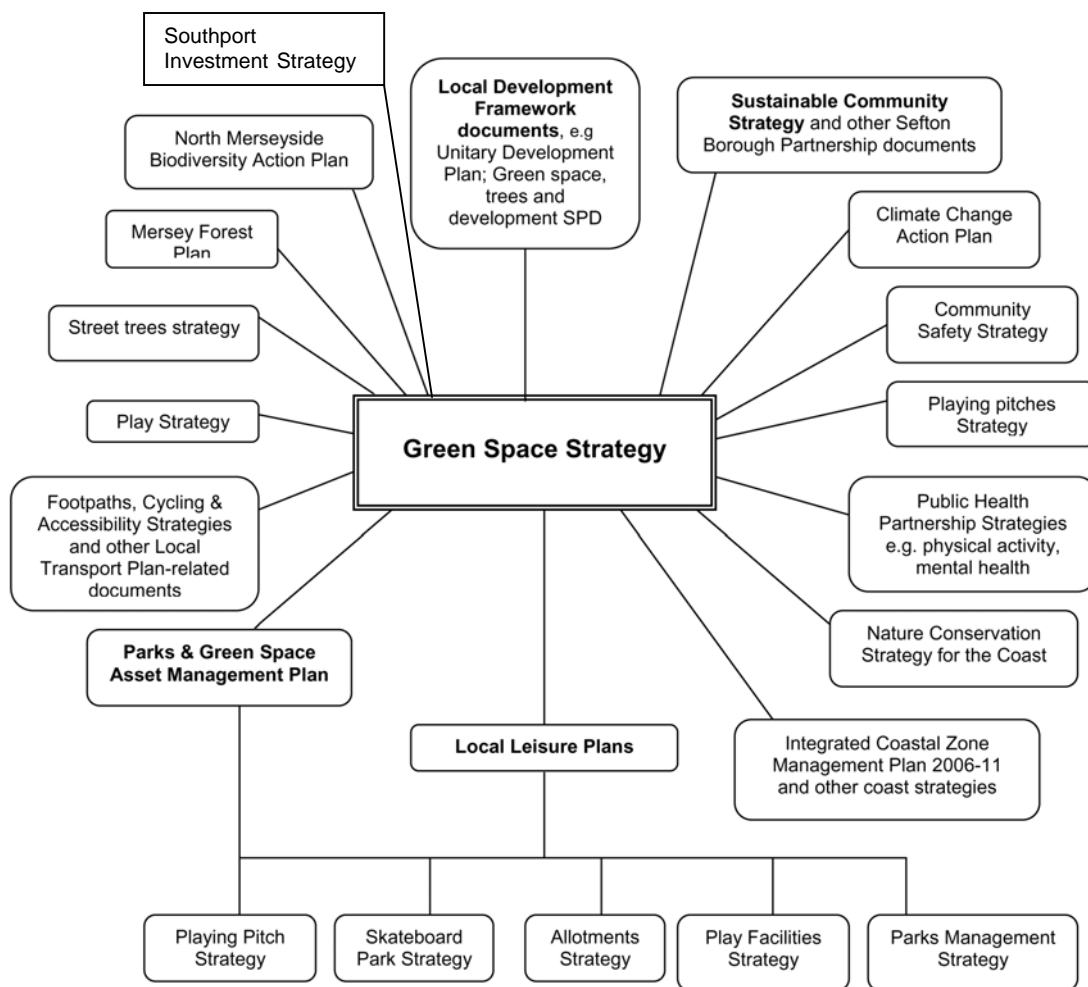
5.21 The drafts of this Green Space and Recreation Study provided important information and had an important role in the Green Space Strategy preparation process (notably the aims, and the quantity, quality and accessibility targets in the Strategy). Following public consultation, the Green Space Strategy was approved by the Council on 23 October 2008, and was printed in April 2009. A Steering Group drawn from the Council and its partners will co-ordinate its implementation.

5.22 The Green Space Strategy, together with other more detailed strategies, helps to determine Sefton's priorities for spending committed sums obtained as a result of development, as set out in the Green Space, Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

5.23 There are a number of strategies being prepared by the Council or its partners such as Housing Market Renewal, the Sefton Coast Partnership, and local health strategies whose objectives relate to green space.

5.24 Figure 5.2 below sets out some of the more important strategies which relate to green space issues and a green space strategy or planning policy or Supplementary Planning Documents for green space and related issues.

Figure 5.2 Links between Sefton and partner strategies and green space work.



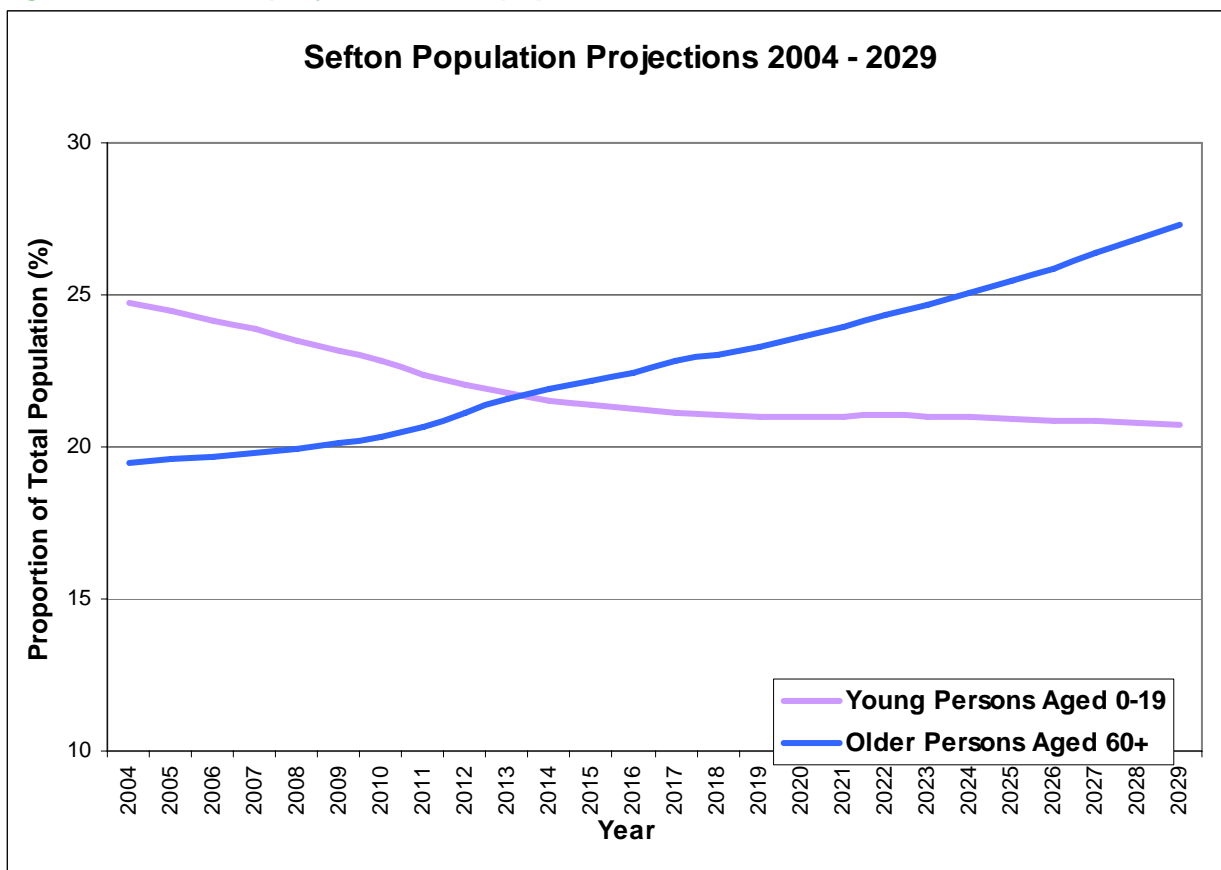
## 6. The character of Sefton

6.1 Sefton is a long, narrow coastal borough which covers an area of just over 15,000 hectares. About half of the Borough is urban and this comprises a number of distinct areas: inner urban areas in the south (Bootle, Litherland, Netherton) merge with suburban Crosby; Maghull/Lydiat and Hightown in the centre of the Borough, and Formby and Southport in the north.

6.2 The other half of Sefton lies in the Green Belt. Sefton's undeveloped coast is one its principal assets – almost all is designated as having national or international nature conservation value. Counting the foreshore area, this amounts to about one third of the total area of the Borough. The eastern fringes of the built-up area comprise high-grade agricultural land and a number of small villages. Much of the coast and some of the countryside are accessible to the public with good links from the built-up area.

6.3 Sefton's population is 281,800 people (2005), living in approximately 118,000 households. In 2004 long-term population decline was halted, with the first population increase for 16 years. There is a high proportion of retired and widowed people, and the proportion of elderly people (age 60+) is likely to increase up to 2029 while the proportion of young people is likely to fall. This is shown in the figure below.

Figure 6.1 Sefton's projected future population structure



6.4 Nine Sefton wards are in the top 10% most deprived in the country (there are 7969 wards in England, 797 in the most deprived 10%), and 1% of England's most deprived neighbourhoods are in Sefton. Deprivation is measured in a number of ways including health, life expectancy, income levels and receipt of benefits, unemployment, long-term and youth unemployment and car ownership.



Figure 6.2 - Multiple deprivation across Sefton's urban areas

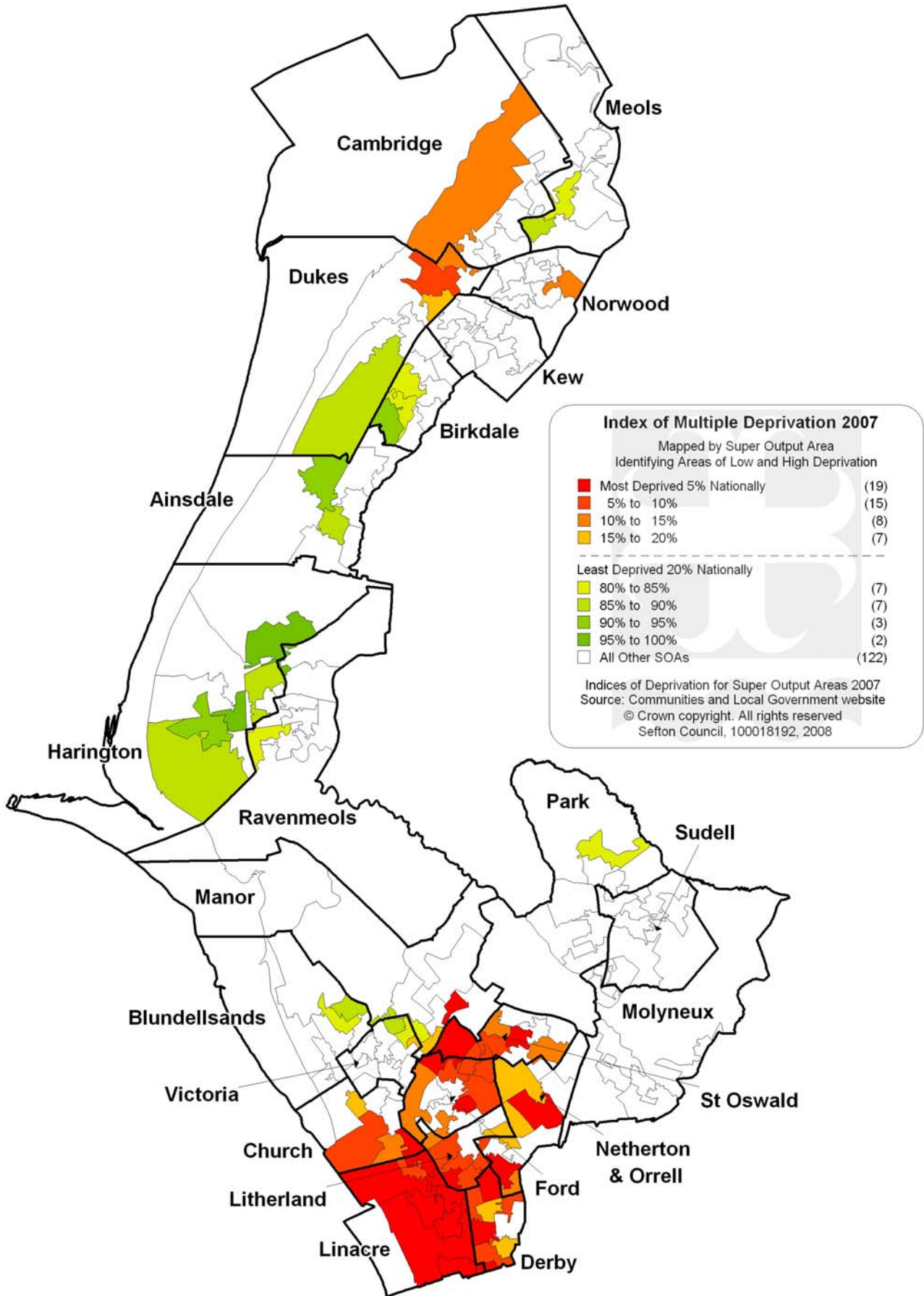
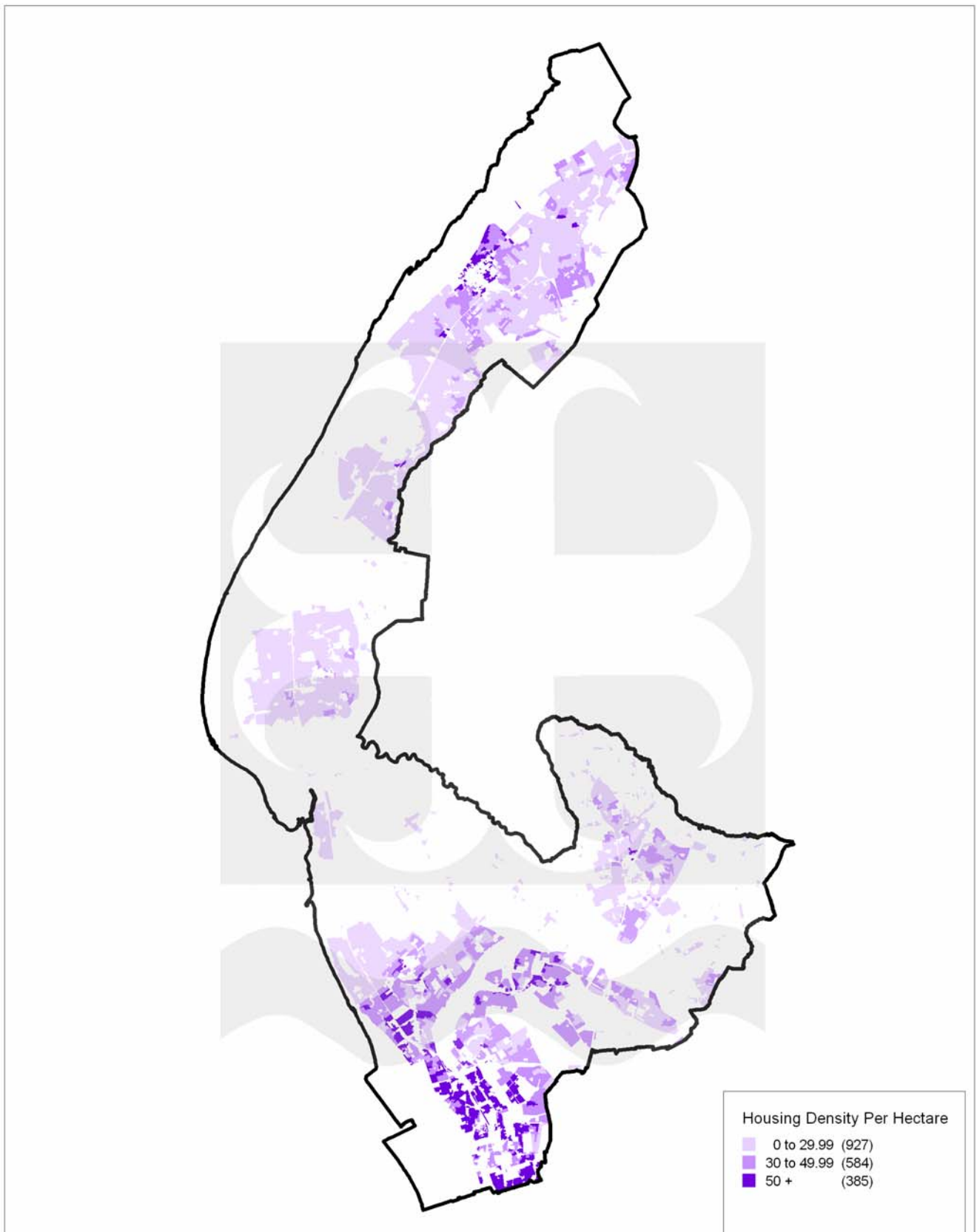


Figure 6.3 - Housing density across Sefton's urban areas



**Sefton Council**

**Planning & Economic  
Regeneration Department**  
Andy Wallis - Director  
Planning & Economic Regeneration is part of the  
Regeneration & Environmental Services Directorate

Housing density across Sefton urban area

Standard Site Plan

Scale: 1:125000  
Date: 12/2/2008  
Drawn By: WARDSU/  
Suzanne Ward



OSGR: 334058, 408440 Sheet(s): Area: 740181301 sqm

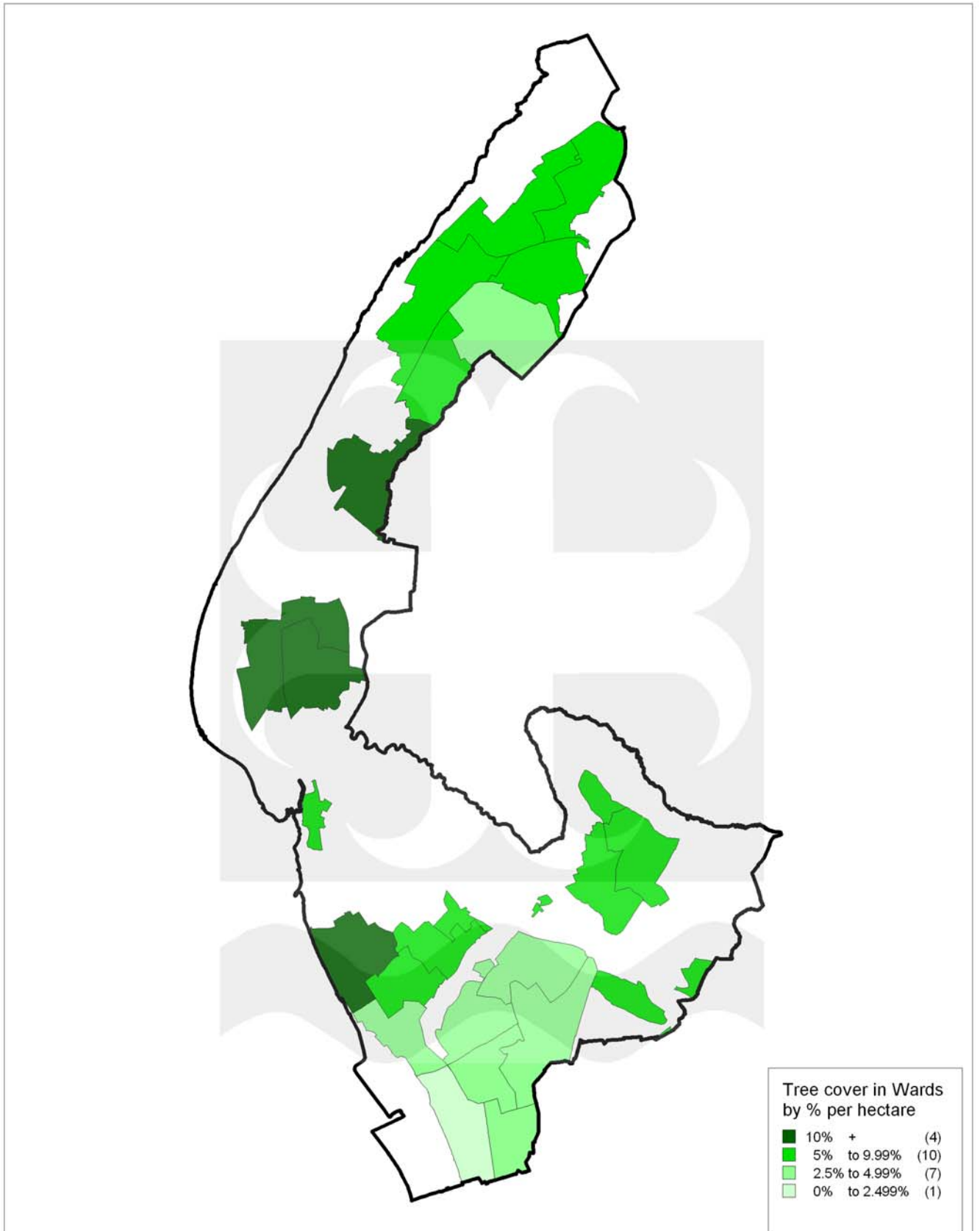
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Figure 6.4 - Tree cover across Sefton's urban areas



**Sefton Council**

**Planning & Economic  
Regeneration Department**

Andy Wallis - Director  
Planning & Economic Regeneration is part of the  
Regeneration & Environmental Services Directorate

Tree cover across Sefton urban areas

Standard Site Plan

Scale: 1:125000

Date: 12/2/2008

Drawn By: WARD/SU

Suzanne Ward



SEW/1\_22\_11/

TreeCoverAcrossUrbanArea.wor

OSGR: 334553, 408276

Sheet(s):

Area: 683450069 sqm

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Created by Sefton Council Planning & Economic Regeneration Department using MapInfo

6.5 Figure 6.2 shows the distribution of deprivation across Sefton in relation to the national situation. Areas coloured shades of red and orange are amongst the most deprived in the country – e.g. areas coloured darker red are amongst the worst 5% of areas nationally. Areas coloured shades of green are amongst the least deprived in the country - e.g. areas coloured the darkest green are amongst the least deprived 5% of areas nationally. Areas which are unshaded are broadly average.

6.6 The most deprived wards coincide with the areas of highest housing density, which is shown in figure 6.3. Housing density in large parts of Bootle, Litherland and inner Southport is over 50 dwellings per hectare, 2½ times the density for most of Formby, southern Southport and Blundellsands and twice the density in Maghull.

6.7 These areas of highest housing density (and hence the smallest private gardens) and greatest multiple deprivation coincide with the areas of lowest tree cover (see figure 6.4), but also with greatest amount of publicly accessible greenspace. Bootle, Litherland, Seaforth and much of Netherton have less than 5% tree cover while Blundellsands, Formby, Ainsdale and much of Birkdale and Maghull/Lydiat have at least 10% tree cover or greater.

6.8 Green space is particularly important in Sefton due to the high density of people and their homes in many of the urban areas, the continuing legacy of a poor environment in some areas and the high levels of deprivation in parts of the urban area.

### **Sefton's green space resource**

6.9 Chapter 3 (Part A – Introduction) said that green space is the network of green areas within the built up area, and accessible coast and countryside. This includes parks, green verges and open grassed areas, school playing fields, sports pitches, allotments, cemeteries and churchyards, woods, street trees, open water, coastal habitats & countryside recreation areas.

6.10 Sefton Council's Leisure Services department manage most public green spaces in Sefton – it manages the largest area of the Sefton Coast land managers; trees in parks and on streets plus 255 open spaces (620 hectares of land) including parks, play areas, playing fields, allotments, Crosby Coastal Park and Rimrose Valley Country Park. 25 sites covering 167 hectares are managed to green flag standard and 4 of these gained the Green Flag award in 2007, including the Borough's first Green Flag Local Nature Reserve (Ainsdale and Birkdale Sandhills).

6.11 Other green spaces accessible to the public are managed by Parish Councils and Town Councils, One Vision Housing and Sefton's Technical Services department (highway verges), and there are also outdoor sports pitches and facilities owned by private clubs which the public can join for a reasonable cost and within a reasonable timescale. There are also around one hundred green space school sites in Sefton and a number of other privately-owned green spaces (such as land owned by the Parkhaven Trust, Maghull).

6.12 The Sefton Unitary Development Plan (2006) defines urban greenspace as green spaces of more than 0.05 hectares within the urban area (that is, not within the Green Belt) which have at least one benefit set out in Figure 13.1 of the Unitary Development Plan (see Figure 3.1 above). The definition takes no account of ownership, and so urban greenspaces may have public access, permitted access or be private with no public access. There are around 400 urban greenspaces sites in Sefton, as shown on the Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map.

6.13 Figures 6.5 and 6.6 below show Sefton's key green space resources. Both plans show the urban parks and playing fields managed by Sefton Council, Parish and Town Councils, One Vision Housing and the Woodland Trust (one site). Figure 6.5 also shows urban greenspaces as defined by the Unitary Development Plan, and countryside parks, and Figure 6.6 also shows accessible nature spaces.

Figure 6.5 Sefton's key green space resources (1)

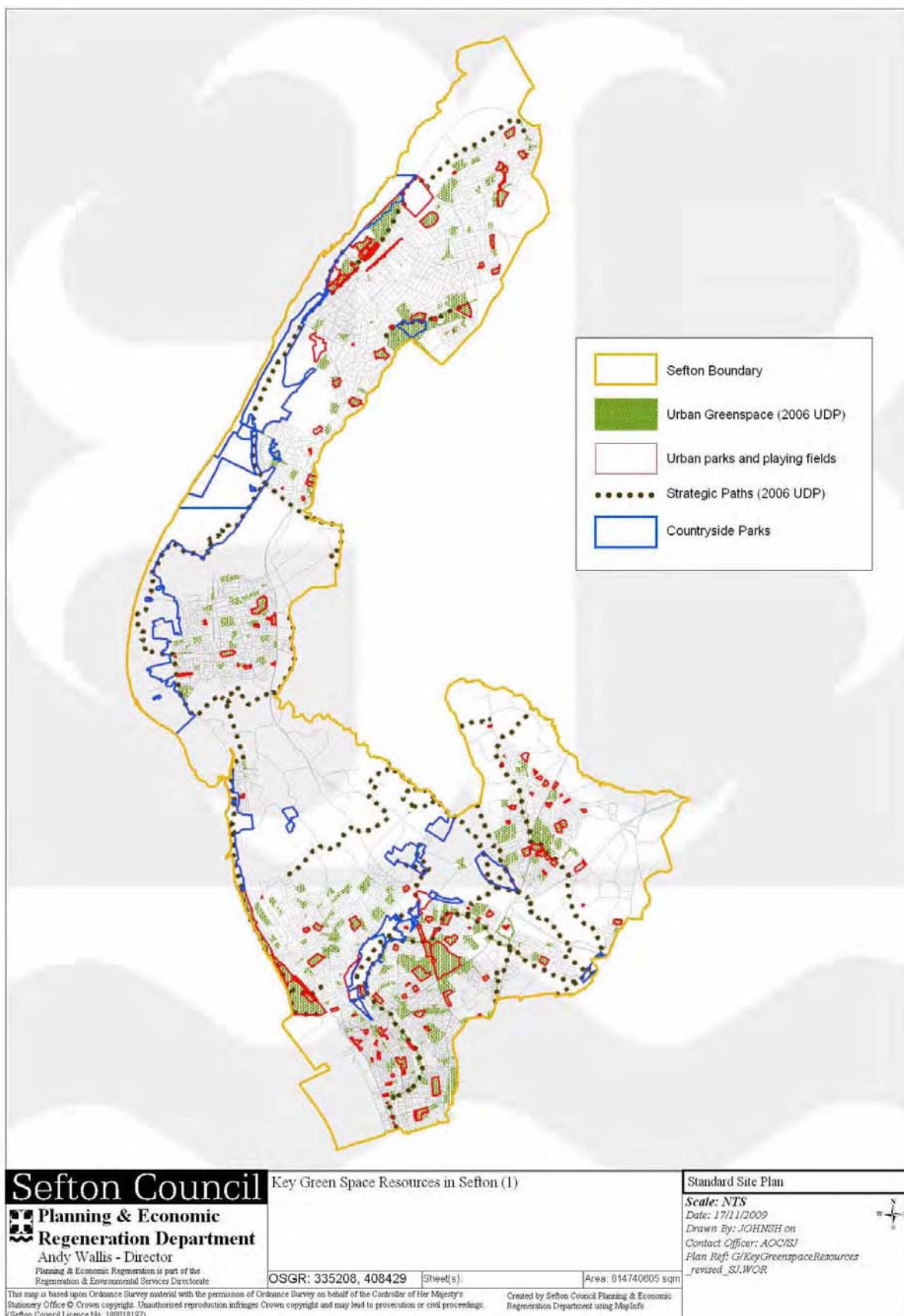
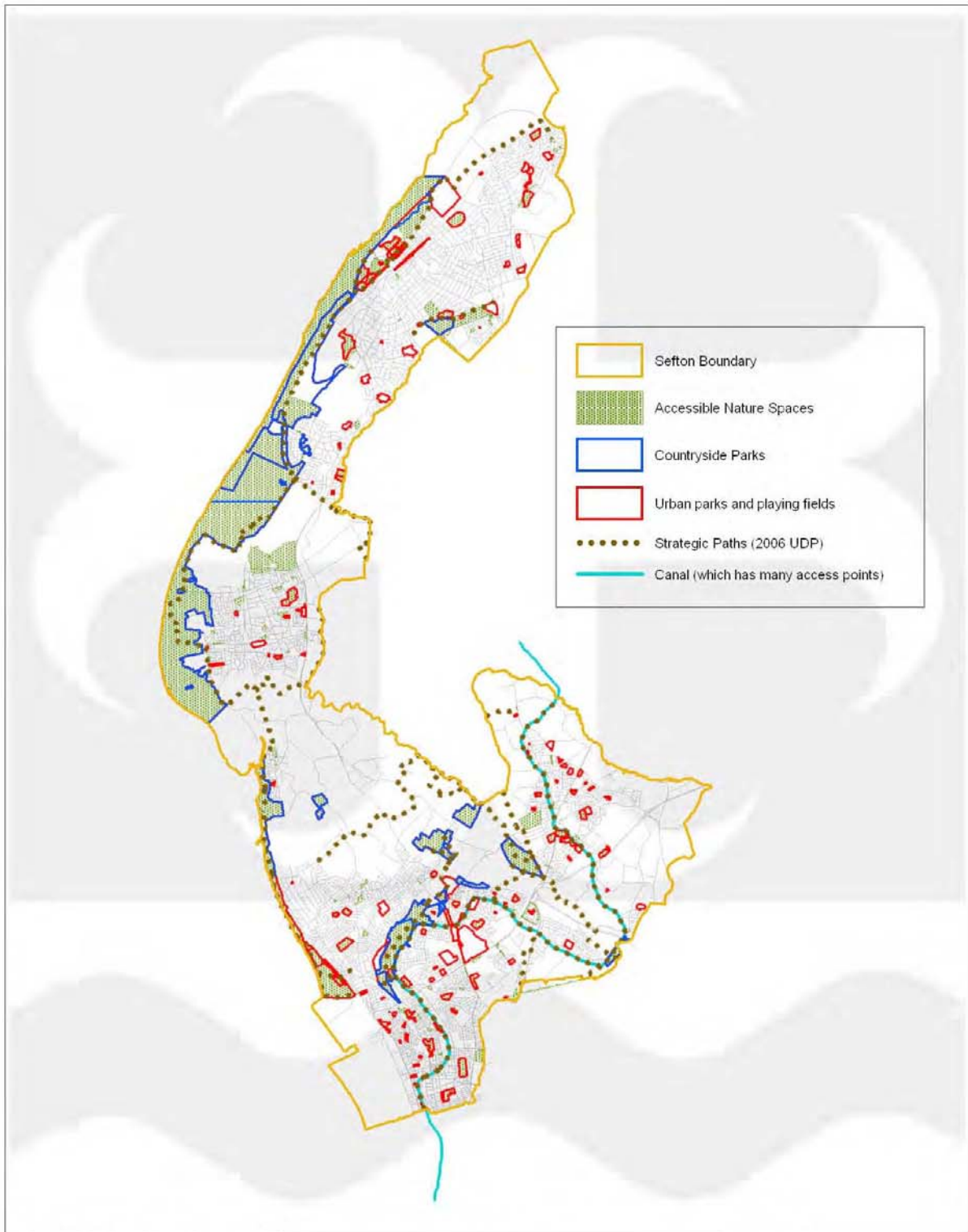


Figure 6.6 Sefton's key green space resources (2)



<b>Sefton Council</b> <b>Planning &amp; Economic</b> <b>Regeneration Department</b> Andy Wallis - Director <small>Planning &amp; Economic Regeneration is part of the          Regeneration &amp; Environmental Services Directorate</small>	<b>Key Green Space Resources in Sefton (2)</b>		<b>Standard Site Plan</b>
	<small>OSGR: 336274, 407714</small>	<small>Sheet(s):</small>	<small>Area: 746430909 sqm</small>
<small>This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. (Sefton Council Licence No. 100018192)</small>			<small>Scale: NTS          Date: 17/11/2009          Drawn By: JOHNSH on          Contact Officer: AOC/SI          Plan Ref: G/KeyNatureSpace          Resources_revised_SJ.WOR</small>



### 7. Public consultation

#### Overview of public consultation

7.1 The main focus of consultation has been community and stakeholder views on the quantity, quality and accessibility of green space in their areas. This consultation included consultation with Parish Councils, Area Committees, children, local voluntary groups, residents via a telephone survey and focus groups and other wider public consultation. This consultation also included consultation on the Green Space Strategy Issues Report (September 2007), draft Green Space Strategy (July 08) and draft Green Space, Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document (January 2008).

7.2 In general most people felt that the quantity, quality and accessibility of green space in Sefton is about right, although overall levels of satisfaction with quality were lower than those for quantity and accessibility.

7.3 A **Steering Group** was set up to prepare both the draft Green Space Strategy and the draft Supplementary Planning Document 'Green space, trees and development', and met on a number of occasions from late 2006 to early 2008. The Steering Group commented on emerging research and drafts of the Supplementary Planning Document and Strategy, and this in itself provided valuable stakeholder feedback at all stages.

7.4 The Steering Group comprised representatives from Sefton Council's Planning, Leisure, Children's Services and Technical Services Departments and Community Safety team, Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service, NHS Sefton (formerly the Sefton Primary Care Trust), One Vision Housing, the Sefton Area Partnership of Parish Councils (the '10 Parishes), the Mersey Forest and Sefton Council for Voluntary Services, including 'Transform' (the network of environmental organisations in Sefton). The group was assisted by a representative from CABI Space, a government agency set up to champion green spaces and their potential contribution to our communities.

#### Parish Councillors, Area Committees and Sefton Borough Partnership

7.5 The preparation of the draft Green space strategy was reported to each of the **Sefton Borough Partnership's** four Thematic Groups in spring 2007. The main concerns were that the Green space strategy should help meet the Sustainable Community Strategy's objectives.

7.6 In summer 2007 meetings about local green space issues were held with Sefton's planning and leisure officers and representatives from Aintree, Formby, Hightown, Maghull, Melling and Sefton **Parish Councils**. (Other Parish Councils did not wish to meet Council officers). In general the Parish Councils were satisfied with the amount, quality and accessibility of green space within their area.

7.7 We consulted each of Sefton's seven **Area Committees** in autumn 2007 about quality, quantity and accessibility issues for green spaces, about the draft Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy, and gained some information about priorities for improvement, including spending of section 106 sums, for each Area Committee area.

#### Community groups

7.8 The **Community Empowerment Network** (CEN) represents all voluntary and community groups under the umbrella of Sefton CVS, and there was a display about the draft strategy at the CEN annual event at Aintree Racecourse on 6 June 07.

7.9 **Network South** is the collection of all voluntary and community groups in south Sefton, and they were consulted via an article in their 'Due South' newsletter in June 2007, a questionnaire

survey in August 2007 and a presentation to their September 07 meeting. The vast majority of respondents to the questionnaire survey felt that the amount of and accessibility to green space in their area was about right, with just over half being satisfied with the variety of green space.

7.10 However, while a third of respondents felt that the quality of green space in their area was about right, half felt that it was too low.

7.11 The members of the **Sefton Coastal Forum** were consulted using questionnaires available from the annual Forum meeting in July 07. Two thirds of the small number of respondents felt that green space amount, variety and accessibility is about right whereas all were concerned about its quality.

### The general public

7.12 A **telephone survey of Sefton residents** in June/July 07 showed that over four fifths of respondents felt parks and other open spaces to be important to their quality of life and three quarters used parks or other open spaces throughout the year. 62% of respondents used parks or green spaces at least once a week. Half of these (31% of all respondents) used them most days.

7.13 Just less than four fifths (79.0%) of respondents stated that they think the number of parks and other green spaces in their area was about right. Seven tenths (70.3%) stated that the number of parks and other green spaces where children can play in their area is about right. Over two thirds (67.9%) stated that the variety of (types of) different parks and other green spaces in their area is about right.

7.14 Three quarters (74.7%) of respondents stated that they strongly agree (8.2%) or agree (66.5%) that the range of facilities in parks and open spaces in their area suits their needs. Over half (53.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that parks and open spaces in their area are maintained to a high standard, and a similar percentage (53.1%) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the facilities in parks and open spaces in their area are of a high quality.

7.15 Over four fifths (81.5%) of respondents stated that they walked to the green space sites, whilst over one in ten (12.7% of) respondents traveled by car. Almost four fifths (78.3%) of respondents stated that it takes them less than 10 minutes to get to the green space site that they want to use, and only 4.5% traveled for half an hour or more.

7.16 Just under one half (48.2%) of respondents said that they most often used parks, followed by three tenths (29.9%) who said children's play areas and one tenth (9.7%) who said coast / countryside. Just less than half (48.5%) of respondents stated that they or someone in their household use the coast or countryside and over a third of respondents stated that they or someone in their household use children's play areas (37.7%) or nature areas (35.6%).

7.17 More in-depth information about these issues was obtained from **residents' focus groups** held in September 07 in Crosby, Linacre and Derby, Litherland and Ford and St Oswald's, Netherton and Orrell Area Committee areas in south Sefton.

7.18 In terms of the amount of green space, most participants felt that there was sufficient in their area, although in St Oswald, Netherton and Orrell and Litherland and Ford Area Committee areas a number of participants were very frustrated that they had sufficient parks and green spaces on their doorstep, but felt that these were unusable due to the poor maintenance and condition of facilities, and anti-social behaviour and misuse of facilities. This highlights the interaction between quality, quantity and indeed accessibility.

7.19 The residents' focus groups also looked at specific types of green space. In general the need for providing different types of green spaces was agreed, for example, formal municipal gardens, parks, play areas, nature space, pitches.

7.20 It was clear that in many areas such a range is available, although there were calls for improvements to quality, for example to formal gardens, to the Rimrose Valley and to the canal, which was seen as an important but generally an underdeveloped and neglected facility, with areas where rubbish, graffiti and misuse by particular groups is evident.

7.21 There were opposing opinions about whether there is enough space for outdoor sports, but general agreement that it is an important type of green space. Similarly, allotments provision was felt to be important, especially for people living in flats. The general perception that there were waiting lists for allotments may indicate some under-provision.

7.22 Only participants in Linacre and Derby Area Committee area felt that the amount of green space for children and young people to play in was enough. Generally participants felt that play areas for younger children were misused by groups of older children and are therefore unsafe for younger children to use, and that there is a big gap in the provision of play facilities for older children. Participants thought that adventurous play facilities such as obstacle courses would be a good idea for older children, along with more sports-centred play facilities such as football pitches, skateboard parks, mini golf and bike tracks. Supervised play or events for children were strongly supported.

7.23 In St Oswald, Netherton and Orrell especially, Litherland and Ford, and to a lesser extent in Crosby, anti-social behaviour and mis-use - for example dog fouling, broken glass, drinking, drug users - was a significant factor hindering people's ability to use the parks and green spaces. In Crosby poor lighting in parks and green spaces was also seen as a problem. Linked to these quality issues, participants also recognised that over-use and mis-use of facilities could cause particular maintenance problems. Nevertheless, except in St Oswald, Netherton and Orrell Area Committee area the general feeling was that the standard of maintenance in parks and green spaces was reasonable and has improved.

7.24 Management and maintenance is only one factor contributing to quality. In terms of the range of facilities on offer, the greatest needs identified were for play facilities geared towards different age groups of children (including adventure play facilities), toilets, and a range of security measures including re-introducing park wardens, better lighting and CCTV.

7.25 In terms of accessibility, most participants felt that they have parks and green spaces within a reasonable walking distance, although there were some smaller areas where there is a lack of parks and green spaces. When asked how far that they were prepared to walk to reach a local park or green space participants answers ranged from a minimum of ten minutes, through fifteen to twenty minutes, up to a maximum of half an hour if the facilities were worth it.

7.26 Other issues arising included the need to improve disabled access and improve facilities for those with disabilities and the benefits of organised events to encourage positive use of green space.

7.27 Face to face **interviews with members of the public** about safety in parks and open space as part of a Community Safety survey in 2006/07 gave us information about how safe people feel using park and other open spaces in the daytime and the evening.

7.28 A questionnaire survey **of those attending fun days and events in parks** during summer 2007, about their use of green space showed that many of those attending had only started using parks after attending fun days or events the previous year.

7.29 **Merseyside Rights of Way User Survey** (2006) surveyed Merseyside's general population in the street and target groups such as walkers, horse riders, and cyclists, users with accessibility problems and landowners and farmers via postal questionnaires.

7.30 The survey indicated that over half of respondents used public rights of way to get somewhere because these were the most direct route. Over nine tenths of respondents used public rights of way for leisure purposes (e.g. walking, cycling), four tenths use them to relax, unwind and enjoy the peace and quiet; and about four tenths of respondents used them as part of a family group. Over a third of respondents travelled (usually on foot) less than a mile to get to the public right of way they wanted to use. A key reason for non-use was not knowing where routes are.

### Special Interest groups

7.31 **Young people** were consulted through after-school and holiday clubs in October 07 about their use of parks and other green spaces. Just fewer than 50 children aged 4 to 12 responded to our questionnaire. Of these respondents who had an opinion, about a third felt that there were enough parks and green spaces in their area and about a quarter felt that there were too few, whereas most felt that there were not enough parks and other green spaces for children to play. Most children traveled for less than 10 minutes, and most on foot or cycling but a lot in cars, to get to these spaces. Questions relating to quality issues indicated suggestions for improvements to facilities and management regimes as well as considerable satisfaction.

7.32 **Football, cricket, rugby and hockey teams and leagues** were consulted about sports pitch provision, using questionnaires, as part of the consultation about the draft Playing Pitch Strategy in 2006. We carried out follow-up work in autumn 2007 once the draft playing pitch strategy was published. All of this indicated that quality and quantity issues, together with leagues' facilities standards, are key issues for Sefton.

### Consultation on the draft Green Space Strategy Issues Report

7.33 There was wide consultation with stakeholders on the draft Green Space Strategy Issues Report in October and November 2007. 15 responses were received. Many of the comments received relate to the specifics of the Issues Report, but key comments with wider relevance include:

- The need for future long-term investment to all allotment sites in Sefton (Queensway Allotment Association);
- It is important to recognise the historic dimension to the area's green spaces (English Heritage);
- The Leeds and Liverpool canal should be recognised as a green corridor with significant potential to provide safe pedestrian and cycle access (British Waterways);
- The Green infrastructure concept and its emphasis on multi-functions and connectivity of the network can make a useful contribution to Sefton's green space work. The role of green space in helping to adapt to climate change in urban environments is important (Mersey Forest, and Woodland Trust);
- The role of green space for biodiversity and in tackling the effects of climate change is important (Environment Agency);
- Support for the emphasis given to accessible natural space, the North West Green Infrastructure Guide, dealing with climate change and the multifunctional nature of green space, and the need to recognise the importance of the undeveloped coast (Natural England).

7.34 There was also wide consultation with stakeholders on the draft Green Space Strategy in June, July and August 2008. 14 responses were received. Key issues arising in these comments were:

- Support for the Strategy:



- Welcome the emphasis on green infrastructure, wildlife, helping to adapt to climate change and the multi-functionality of green space;
- Welcome the case studies;
- Concern that much of Sefton's green space is not publicly accessible, but that it has a major impact and is an important resources (e.g. wildlife): how can this resource best be used);
- Concern that private green spaces will be made accessible to the public against the owner's wishes;
- Concern whether the quality, accessibility and green space targets for Sefton are the most appropriate or whether they place too much emphasis on parks;
- Site-specific issues and individual objections.

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**Part C - AUDITING LOCAL PROVISION**

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### 8. The urban greenspace audit 2007

8.1 From 2005 to 2007 an audit was carried out of all of the urban greenspaces as defined in the Unitary Development Plan (2006) - green spaces of more than 0.05 hectares within the urban area (that is, not within the Green Belt) which have at least one benefit set out in Figure 13.1 of the Unitary Development Plan (see figure 3.2 above).

8.2 The audit form included questions about the access levels to the site, what type of green space it was (the types were based on the Sefton types of green space set out in figure 3.4 above), general description and comments and a range of questions to allow the quality and value of the site to be assessed against the benefits and functions of urban greenspaces set out in Figure 13.1 of the Unitary Development Plan (see figure 3.2 above). These questions were filled in on site by a member of the audit team of landscape and planning officers

8.3 These site-based questions were supplemented by questions recording formal nature conservation, heritage and other designations for the site, site area (hectares) and other information which was filled in following an office-based desktop survey.

8.4 The audit forms were completed (site visits and desktop work) from summer 2006 to summer 2007. This was followed by a period of checking of results, collating of results and analysis, from August to December 2007. Further analysis took place in 2009, in order to separate out the parts of sites which were tennis courts and bowling greens (non-pitch sports) from other categories, and to divide the outdoor sports category in pitch and non-pitch sports.

8.5 The main focus of the collating and analysis of results was:

- Whether there was public access to the site (full public access or permitted access), or whether the sites were in private ownership with no public access. More information about public access levels is given in section 4 above;
- The main use of the site – what type of green space it was (e.g. parks, amenity space), in terms of the Sefton types of green space set out in section 3 above;
- The overall quality of the site;
- The overall value of the site.

8.6 A summary of the key results is set out below, presented on an Area Committee basis. It has been an important factor in determining quantity targets for public green space in Sefton. Also it provides a useful overview of urban greenspace quality and value.

8.7 Note that the information measured relates to the site as a whole, so the greenspace type (see figure 3.4 above), access level and area in hectares refers to the whole site (e.g. including car parking, incidental areas) rather than to any key features. For example, the schools and college figures relate to the whole of the urban greenspace including the school building, hard-surface playground, car parking and ancillary areas as well as pitches and playing fields. This means that the figures are over-estimates rather than under-estimates of provision and this should be borne in mind in any quantity assessment.

8.8 The exceptions to this are firstly the areas in hectares of tennis courts and bowling greens (which together comprise 'non-pitch sports' facilities as defined in this Green Space and Recreation Study). Here, unless the whole site is a tennis and/or bowls outdoor sports site, the area in hectares figures relate only to the courts and bowling greens. Secondly, where these facilities are within larger greenspaces, their area has been deducted from that of the original urban greenspace. For example, the area in hectares of a bowling green has been deducted from the total area of the park, and the parks data shown in figure 8.1 is therefore net of this tennis and bowls information.

8.9 The urban greenspace audit has informed other work, for example helping to decide which green spaces are accessible nature spaces (see section 3 above).

8.10 The urban greenspace audit continues to inform decisions about planning applications on urban greenspaces. Also it will continue to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy, and future local development documents in the Local Development Framework.

Figure 8.1: Urban Greenspace audit – quantity information

Urban greenspace sites						
	Parks		Amenity Space		Natural & Semi-natural greenspace (incl canal)	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	75.54	1.50	45.39	0.90	1.44	0.03
Formby	4.58	0.18	8.32	0.33	1.50	0.06
Linacre& Derby	29.93	1.18	7.34	0.29	5.95	0.23
Litherland & Ford	17.54	0.71	10.04	0.41	4.79	0.19
Sefton East Parishes	19.27	0.49	6.27	0.16	8.81	0.22
Southport	113.52	1.26	15.94	0.18	58.34	0.65
St Oswald & Netherton & Orrell	17.52	0.69	21.71	0.86	11.64	0.46
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>277.90</b>	<b>0.99</b>	<b>115.35</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>92.47</b>	<b>0.33</b>

Urban greenspace sites						
	Allotments		Institutions		Cemeteries & churchyards	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	2.31	0.05	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.04
Formby	0.86	0.03	2.89	0.11	3.32	0.13
Linacre& Derby	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Litherland & Ford	3.16	0.13	0.00	0.00	16.71	0.68
Sefton East Parishes	0.00	0.00	18.09	0.46	4.90	0.12
Southport	1.23	0.01	13.25	0.15	17.23	0.19
St Oswald & Netherton & Orrell	10.59	0.42	0.00	0.00	9.84	0.39
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>18.15</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>34.23</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>54.00</b>	<b>0.19</b>

Urban greenspace sites						
Outdoor sports sites						
	Pitch sports		Non-pitch sports		All outdoor sports sites available to public	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	4.95	0.10	5.34	0.11	10.29	0.20
Formby	21.99	0.87	1.69	0.07	23.68	0.94
Linacre& Derby	5.60	0.22	0.74	0.03	6.34	0.25
Litherland & Ford	10.28	0.42	0.81	0.03	11.09	0.45
Sefton East Parishes	14.72	0.37	1.59	0.04	16.31	0.41
Southport	46.52	0.52	6.56	0.07	53.08	0.59
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	6.56	0.26	0.62	0.02	7.18	0.28
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>110.62</b>	<b>0.39</b>	<b>17.35</b>	<b>0.06</b>	<b>127.97</b>	<b>0.46</b>
			<b>*(46.66)</b>	<b>*(1.84)</b>	<b>*(53.22)</b>	<b>*(2.10)</b>
			<b>*(63.39)</b>	<b>*(0.23)</b>	<b>*(174.01)</b>	<b>*(0.62)</b>

\*(Figures INCLUDING urban greenspace G067 Bootle Golf Course)

Figure 8.1: Urban Greenspace audit – quantity information (continued)

Urban greenspace sites						
Schools and colleges sites						
	Schools & colleges outdoor sports pitches		Schools & colleges non-pitch sports sites		All schools & colleges sites available to public	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	30.53	0.60	0.88	0.02	31.41	0.62
Formby	10.97	0.43	0.33	0.01	11.30	0.45
Linacre& Derby	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Litherland & Ford	6.71	0.27	0.00	0.00	6.71	0.27
Sefton East Parishes	26.11	0.66	0.36	0.01	26.47	0.67
Southport	23.66	0.26	0.00	0.00	23.66	0.26
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	16.21	0.64	0.25	0.01	16.46	0.65
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>114.19</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>1.82</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>116.01</b>	<b>0.41</b>

Urban greenspace sites						
Outdoor sports sites and school sites						
	All Outdoor sports pitches and schools pitches		All Outdoor sports non-pitch sites and schools non-pitch sites		All Outdoor sports and schools non-pitch sites	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	35.48	0.70	6.22	0.12	41.70	0.83
Formby	32.96	1.30	2.02	0.08	34.98	1.38
Linacre& Derby	5.60	0.22	0.74	0.03	6.34	0.25
Litherland & Ford	16.99	0.69	0.81	0.03	17.80	0.72
Sefton East Parishes	40.83	1.03	1.95	0.05	42.78	1.08
Southport	70.18	0.78	6.56	0.07	76.74	0.85
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	22.77	0.90	0.87	0.03	23.64	0.93
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>224.81</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>19.17</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>243.98</b>	<b>0.87</b>
			*(46.91)	*(1.85)	*(69.68)	*(2.75)
			*(65.21)	*(0.23)	*(290.02)	*(1.03)

\*(Figures INCLUDING urban greenspace G067 Bootle Golf Course)

Total - All publicly available urban greenspace sites			Population
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	
Crosby	168.38	3.34	50,483
Formby	56.45	2.23	25,283
Linacre& Derby	49.56	1.95	25,431
Litherland & Ford	70.04	2.84	24,637
Sefton East Parishes	100.12	2.53	39,533
Southport	296.25	3.28	90,226
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	94.94	3.74	25,353
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>835.74</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>280,946</b>
	*(881.78)	*(3.14)	

\*(Figures INCLUDING urban greenspace G067 Bootle Golf Course)

**Figure 8.2: Urban greenspaces which are parks**  
**Analysis of quality and value of the urban greenspace – by quality**

Parks	HI quality HI value		HI quality AV value		HI quality LO value	
	no. of sites	Area (ha)	no. of sites	area (ha)	no. of sites	area (ha)
Crosby	3	63.66	0	0	0	0
Formby	1	4.79	0	0	0	0
Linacre & Derby	2	16.17	0	0	0	0
Litherland & Ford	2	5.00	0	0	0	0
Sefton East & Parishes	1	0.2	0	0	0	0
Southport	3	24.84	0	0	0	0
St Oswald, Netherton & Orrell	2	6.38	0	0	0	0
<i>All Sefton</i>	14	121.04	0	0	0	0

Parks	AV quality HI value		AV quality AV value		AV quality LO value	
	no. of sites	Area (ha)	no. of sites	area (ha)	no. of sites	area (ha)
Crosby	3	10.26	3	5.56	0	0
Formby	1	0.28	0	0	0	0
Linacre & Derby	2	10.05	4	2.13	0	0
Litherland & Ford	0	0	6	12.45	0	0
Sefton East & Parishes	2	2.48	8	17.12	0	0
Southport	5	46.68	4	7.74	0	0
St Oswald, Netherton & Orrell	2	1.7	3	8.71	1	0.75
<i>All Sefton</i>	15	71.45	28	53.71	1	0.75

Parks	LO quality HI value		LO quality AV value		LO quality LO value	
	no. of sites	area (ha)	no. of sites	area (ha)	no. of sites	area (ha)
Crosby	4	5.92	0	0	0	0
Formby	0	0	0	0	0	0
Linacre & Derby	2	1.45	0	0	1	0.34
Litherland & Ford	1	0.45	0	0	1	0.47
Sefton East & Parishes	0	0	0	0	1	0.33
Southport	1	8.41	4	28.14	0	0
St Oswald, Netherton & Orrell	0	0	1	0.75	0	0
<i>All Sefton</i>	8	16.23	5	28.89	3	1.14

HI= high

AV=average

LO=low

[Note that quality and value refer to overall urban greenspace quality and value, not to recreation quality and value].



**Figure 8.3: Urban greenspaces which are amenity greenspaces**  
**Analysis of quality and value of the urban greenspace – by quality**

	HI quality HI value		HI quality AV value		HI quality LO value	
	no. of sites	area (ha)	no. of sites	area (ha)	no. of sites	area (ha)
Crosby	1	6.59	0	0	0	0
Formby	6	6.79	0	0	0	0
Linacre & Derby	0	0	0	0	0	0
Litherland & Ford	1	6.38	0	0	0	0
Sefton East & Parishes	0	0	1	1.36	0	0
Southport	1	0.39	0	0	0	0
St Oswald, Netherton & Orrell	5	7.41	0	0	0	0
<i>All Sefton</i>	14	27.56	1	1.36	0	0

	AV quality HI value		AV quality AV value		AV quality LO value	
	no. of sites	area (ha)	no. of sites	area (ha)	no. of sites	area (ha)
Crosby	0	0	2	10.98	0	0
Formby	2	0.84	2	0.69	0	0
Linacre & Derby	0	0	1	0.24	0	0
Litherland & Ford	4	2.56	1	0.5	0	0
Sefton East & Parishes	1	0.81	4	1.59	0	0
Southport	5	8.01	8	3.48	1	0.64
St Oswald, Netherton & Orrell	3	6.56	1	0.54	0	0
<i>All Sefton</i>	15	18.78	19	18.02	1	0.64

	LO quality HI value		LO quality AV value		LO quality LO value	
	no. of sites	area (ha)	no. of sites	area (ha)	no. of sites	area (ha)
Crosby	2	27.75	0	0	1	0.26
Formby	0	0	0	0	0	0
Linacre & Derby	2	0.49	4	4.79	2	1.82
Litherland & Ford	1	0.6	0	0	0	0
Sefton East & Parishes	0	0	4	2.27	1	0.24
Southport	1	0.31	2	3.11	0	0
St Oswald, Netherton & Orrell	0	0	2	7.02	1	0.18
<i>All Sefton</i>	6	29.15	12	17.19	5	2.5

HI= high

AV=average

LO=low

[Note that quality and value refer to overall urban greenspace quality and value, not to recreation quality and value].

### 9. The Playing Pitch Strategy 2009

9.1 Playing pitches are sites which have pitches marked out for one or more of the following sports; football, mini-football, cricket, rugby Union and hockey Together with provision for outdoor non-pitch sports (mainly tennis and bowls) they comprise outdoor sports provision.

9.2 Within Sefton there are a number of clubs across a variety of sports that compete in national, regional, or highly regarded local football, cricket, rugby and hockey leagues, as well as being closely integrated within the community.

9.3 For example, Waterloo Rugby Union Football Club's first XV compete in National League 2 North, and, the club has a number of junior teams and junior coaching events that benefit the community. However, Southport Rugby League Club (now known as Southport & Ormskirk Storm) no longer plays in the Borough in part due to a lack of appropriate facilities.

9.4 Southport Football Club currently competes in the Conference North division. Its home ground is used by Liverpool and Everton reserve teams, and they now incorporate the Southport YMCA youth football club. Marine FC, Bootle FC and Formby FC compete in regional leagues.

9.5 While these clubs have their own facilities, many of the other football clubs in particular rely on public pitches. Clubs such as Forefield Rangers (football club) in the south of the borough started as a single football team that drew on pupils from the Forefield Primary School in Crosby and has grown to a club with 23 representative teams from the Under-7 to Under-16 age groups.

9.6 The Northern Club, Bootle Cricket Club, Southport & Ainsdale Cricket Club, Hightown Cricket Club and Fleetwood Hesketh Cricket Club all play in the Premier Division; which is an English Cricket Board Premier League (some in the first division of that league). The majority of cricket clubs have junior divisions which compete formally and informally, and a number also hold open coaching events during the week that cater for large numbers of local children.

9.7 The three hockey clubs within Sefton have representative teams competing in a number of regional and national competitions.

9.8 Some of these cricket and hockey teams are part of wider sports or social clubs that provide both structured and casual recreational opportunities for the community including football, cricket and hockey, tennis and squash.

9.9 Through a combination of these organisations, clubs and teams, the needs of thousands of residents within and outside Sefton are catered for. In the 2006/07 season for example; 511 teams played on 288 pitches in Sefton - 369 football teams, 83 cricket teams, 29 rugby union teams and 31 hockey teams. 233 of the 288 pitches were for junior, senior or mini football. Buckley Hill (Netherton) hosts over 900 senior and junior football matches per year, while Litherland Sports Park hosts over 700 football matches alone.

9.10 The **Playing Pitch Strategy** (2009) for Sefton (consultation on the draft Playing Pitch Study in March and April 2009) identifies current levels of provision in the area for the five main pitch sports; football, mini-football, cricket, rugby Union and hockey and compares this with current, and likely future levels of demand. It covers the public, education, voluntary and commercial sectors. It is based on Sport England methodology (in "*Towards a Level Playing Field*" (Sport England, 2003).

9.11 While the Sport England methodology showed that in general there is a surplus of pitches across the borough, due to increase up to 2013; this approach has a number of constraints. Most matches are played on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, i.e. intense use of the pitches

over a short period of time. Factors such as inadequate changing facilities, poor drainage, lack of car parking and wear and tear from unofficial use of the pitches are also constraints not taken into account by the Sport England methodology. Pitch capacity is also constrained by NSPCC guidelines which prevent junior teams sharing changing rooms with adult teams. Consultation with leagues and clubs which fed into the draft Playing Pitch Strategy has helped to provide a more detailed picture of the strengths and weaknesses of pitch provision.

9.12 The Playing Pitch Strategy has identified a shortfall in football pitch provision, particularly for senior football. Several pitches are currently exceeding their capacity while inadequate changing, parking etc facilities mean that some sites do not meet the requirements of particular leagues. For the other sports – which unlike football are played mostly on privately or club-owned sites – supply broadly matches demand. The pitch quality assessment shows a variable level of quality across the borough and between the average standard of public and private playing pitches.

9.13 The Playing Pitch Strategy concludes that the Council should seek to improve the quality of existing pitches by providing better parking and changing facilities and by increasing the quality of playing surfaces. Also it concludes that the Council should seek to increase capacity by working with schools to allow more schools pitches to be used by junior football, rugby and cricket teams out of school hours. The Strategy also includes action plans, which identify specific proposals, costs, an indicative timetable and possible sources of funding.

9.14 Further information about the Playing Pitch Strategy is available on-line (see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/pitchstrategy>).

### 10. Additional work on quantity of public green space provision in Sefton

#### Green Space

10.1 Following the urban greenspace audit and playing pitch strategy, further work was carried out to help establish the quantity of playing pitches and tennis and bowls (non-pitch sports) sites across Sefton – rather than just those within the urban area which are designated in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2006) as urban greenspaces. The distinction between pitch and non-pitch sports has been accepted nationally for many years, forming the basis for NPFA standards which were accepted by many local authorities. The National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) is now known as Fields in Trust or FIT, see <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/>.

10.2 Further work was also carried out to give a more complete picture of the amount of other types of public green space across the whole of Sefton, notably allotments, cemetery and crematoria, coast and countryside parks and accessible nature space. That is, this further work looked at all sites across Sefton - rather than just those within the urban area which are designated in the UDP as urban greenspaces.

10.3 This work was largely desk-based analysis; drawing on best-practice, existing known sites, local expertise (such as the Coast and Countryside Ranger Service's knowledge of the parts of the Sefton Coastal which are publicly accessible, and the views of Parish Councils), aerial photographs and GIS analysis (use of Geographical Information Systems, or electronic mapping).

10.4 Bowling green and tennis court sites were identified from:

- The urban greenspace audit (2007) where the site name or other information indicated that the site was wholly used for bowls/and tennis. Here the area in hectares relates to the total urban greenspace site area.
- Computer-mapping (GIS) based search of all sites including the words tennis or bowls on Ordnance Survey maps. Here the area in hectares relates to the area of the courts / pitches and their immediate surroundings;
- Other local knowledge. Here the area in hectares relates to the area of the courts / pitches and their immediate surroundings.
- This information was checked against computer mapping and aerial photographs taken in 2005 (the most recent year they were available).

10.5 The results of this further work on quantity of publicly accessible green space are shown in figures 10.1 to 10.7. These tables show 'All' green space – all sites across Sefton, but the figures which relate only to urban greenspaces, as designated in the UDP are also shown, for comparison. The types of green space are those set out in figure 3.4.above (with outdoor sports split into its pitch and non-pitch sports).

10.6 In general, the information shows the area in hectares of the whole site (e.g. including car parking, incidental areas). For example, the schools and college figures relate to the whole of the urban greenspace including the school building, hard-surface playground, car parking and ancillary areas as well as pitches and playing fields. This means that the figures are over-estimates rather than under-estimates of provision and this should be borne in mind in any quantity assessment.

10.7 However, non-pitch sports provision is an exception, owing to the way the data was collected and to the fact that these facilities are often found within larger green space sites with a different overall green space use/type such as a park, or playing field (as set out in figure 3.4 above). Here, site areas relate closely to the courts and greens boundaries, not necessarily to the whole site.

Figure 10.1 All playing pitch provision in Sefton (quantity)

Outdoor sports sites – pitches				
	All outdoor sports sites pitches		Urban greenspace outdoor sports sites pitches	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	58.15	1.15	4.95	0.10
Formby	26.58	1.05	21.99	0.87
Linacre& Derby	7.99	0.31	5.60	0.22
Litherland & Ford	17.11	0.69	10.28	0.42
Sefton East Parishes	20.04	0.51	14.72	0.37
Southport	65.97	0.73	46.52	0.52
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	13.6	0.54	6.56	0.26
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>209.44</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>110.62</b>	<b>0.39</b>

Schools and colleges – pitches				
	All schools & colleges outdoor sports pitches		Urban green space schools & colleges outdoor sports pitches	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	37.53	0.74	30.53	0.60
Formby	10.97	0.43	10.97	0.43
Linacre& Derby	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Litherland & Ford	6.71	0.27	6.71	0.27
Sefton East Parishes	26.11	0.66	26.11	0.66
Southport	37.96	0.42	23.66	0.26
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	16.21	0.64	16.21	0.64
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>135.49</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>114.19</b>	<b>0.41</b>

All pitches (Outdoor sports pitches and schools pitches)				
	All Pitches (All Outdoor sports pitches and schools pitches)		All urban greenspace pitches (All urban greenspace outdoor sports pitches and schools pitches)	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	95.68	1.90	95.68	1.90
Formby	37.55	1.49	37.55	1.49
Linacre& Derby	7.99	0.31	7.99	0.31
Litherland & Ford	23.82	0.97	23.82	0.97
Sefton East Parishes	46.15	1.17	46.15	1.17
Southport	103.93	1.15	103.93	1.15
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	29.81	1.18	13.60	0.54
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>344.93</b>	<b>1.23</b>	<b>344.93</b>	<b>1.23</b>

Figure 10.2 All Non-pitch sports provision in Sefton (quantity)

Outdoor sports sites – non-pitch sports				
	All outdoor sports non-pitch sports sites		Urban greenspace outdoor sports non-pitch sports sites	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	6.36	0.13	5.34	0.11
Formby	2.19	0.09	1.69	0.07
Linacre& Derby	0.74	0.03	0.74	0.03
Litherland & Ford	0.92	0.04	0.81	0.03
Sefton East Parishes	2.18	0.06	1.59	0.04
Southport	8.16	0.09	6.56	0.07
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	0.92	0.04	0.62	0.02
	*(46.96)	*(1.85)	*(46.66)	*(1.84)
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>21.47</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>17.35</b>	<b>0.06</b>
	*(67.51)	*(0.24)	*(63.39)	*(0.23)

\*(Figures INCLUDING urban greenspace G067 Bootle Golf Course)

Schools and colleges – non-pitch sports				
	All schools & colleges non-pitch sports sites ♦		Urban green space schools & colleges non-pitch sports sites	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	0.88	0.02	0.88	0.02
Formby	0.33	0.01	0.33	0.01
Linacre& Derby	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Litherland & Ford	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sefton East Parishes	0.36	0.01	0.36	0.01
Southport	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	0.25	0.01	0.25	0.01
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>1.82</b>	<b>0.01</b>	<b>1.82</b>	<b>0.01</b>

♦ There are no schools and colleges sites in the Green Belt; i.e. the only schools and colleges non-pitch sports sites are urban greenspaces.

All non-pitch sports sites (Outdoor sports non-pitch sites and schools non-pitch sites)				
	All non-pitches sports sites (All outdoor sports non-pitch sports sites and schools non-pitch sports sites)		All urban greenspace non-pitch sports sites (All urban greenspace outdoor sports non-pitch sports sites and schools non-pitch sports sites)	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	7.24	0.14	6.22	0.12
Formby	2.52	0.10	2.02	0.08
Linacre& Derby	0.74	0.03	0.74	0.03
Litherland & Ford	0.92	0.04	0.81	0.03
Sefton East Parishes	2.54	0.06	1.95	0.05
Southport	8.16	0.09	6.56	0.07
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	1.17	0.05	0.87	0.03
	*(47.21)	*(1.86)	*(46.91)	*(1.85)
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>23.29</b>	<b>0.08</b>	<b>19.17</b>	<b>0.07</b>
	*(69.33)	*(0.25)	*(65.21)	*(0.23)

\*(Figures INCLUDING urban greenspace G067 Bootle Golf Course)

Figure 10.3: All outdoor sports provision in Sefton (quantity)

Outdoor sports sites – all outdoor sports				
	All outdoor sports sites (pitches and non-pitch sports)		Urban greenspace outdoor sports sites (pitches and non-pitch sports)	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	64.51	1.28	10.29	0.20
Formby	28.77	1.14	23.68	0.94
Linacre& Derby	8.73	0.34	6.34	0.25
Litherland & Ford	18.03	0.73	11.09	0.45
Sefton East Parishes	22.22	0.56	16.31	0.41
Southport	74.13	0.82	53.08	0.59
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	14.52	0.57	7.18	0.28
	*(60.56)	*(2.39)	*(53.22)	*(2.10)
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>230.91</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>127.97</b>	<b>0.46</b>
	*(276.95)	*(0.99)	*(174.01)	*(0.62)

\*(Figures INCLUDING urban greenspace G067 Bootle Golf Course)

Schools and colleges – all outdoor sports				
	All schools & colleges outdoor spots sites (pitches and non-pitch sports)		All urban green space schools & colleges outdoor sports sites (pitches and non-pitch sports)	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	38.41	0.76	31.41	0.62
Formby	11.30	0.45	11.30	0.45
Linacre& Derby	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Litherland & Ford	6.71	0.27	6.71	0.27
Sefton East Parishes	26.47	0.67	26.47	0.67
Southport	37.96	0.42	23.66	0.26
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	16.46	0.65	16.46	0.65
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>137.31</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>116.01</b>	<b>0.41</b>

All outdoor sports provision (outdoor sports sites and schools sites)				
	All outdoor sports provision (pitches and non-pitch sports) ( outdoor sports sites and schools sites)		All urban greenspace outdoor sports provision (pitches and non-pitch sports) ( outdoor sports sites and schools sites)	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
Crosby	102.92	2.04	41.70	0.83
Formby	40.07	1.58	34.98	1.38
Linacre& Derby	8.73	0.34	6.34	0.25
Litherland & Ford	24.74	1.00	17.80	0.72
Sefton East Parishes	48.69	1.23	42.78	1.08
Southport	112.09	1.24	76.74	0.85
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	30.98	1.22	23.64	0.93
	*(77.02)	*(3.04)	*(69.68)	*(2.75)
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>368.22</b>	<b>1.31</b>	<b>243.98</b>	<b>0.87</b>
	*(368.22)	*(1.31)	*(290.02)	*(1.03)

\*(Figures INCLUDING urban greenspace G067 Bootle Golf Course)



10.8 A significant number of publicly accessible **playing pitches** are also within the Green Belt, rather than designated as urban greenspaces in the UDP. These have been included within the count of pitches in the playing pitch strategy, but further work was carried out here to make sure that the choice of pitch site boundaries for the quantity target work used the same criteria as for the urban greenspace pitch site boundaries. Further work was also necessary because the playing pitch strategy focused on the number of pitches rather than site area (hectares). The results of this work on quantity of pitches are set out in figure 10.1 above. Figure 10.3 above shows the quantity of all outdoor sports sites across Sefton, but the figures relating only to urban greenspaces, as designated in the UDP are also shown, for comparison.

10.9 For both pitch sports and all outdoor sports (figures 10.1 and 10.3), the total quantity in hectares of all publicly accessible pitches is shown. However, this total is first broken down by type of site (see figure 3.4 above) into outdoor sports sites (that is, those managed by Sefton Council, Parish or Town Councils or sports clubs) and schools and college sites where there is a formal agreement for the use of the site by the public, sports leagues or teams.

10.10 Further work has also been carried out to identify quantity of publicly accessible **bowling greens and tennis courts** provision on sites which are not urban greenspaces as designated in the UDP. Typically, these are bowling greens in the grounds of public houses (pubs) within both urban and rural areas, or bowling greens or tennis courts within sports club sites or playing fields in the Green Belt. The results of this are set out in Figure 10.2 above. As well as showing all non-pitch sports sites, the figures relating only to urban greenspaces, as designated in the UDP are also shown, for comparison. Figure 10.3 above shows the quantity of all outdoor sports sites.

10.11 Bowling greens and tennis courts are the main component of '**non-pitch sports**' provision, which together with playing pitch provision comprise outdoor sports provision in Sefton. For the purposes of this Green Space and Recreation Study tennis and bowls are assumed to represent all outdoor non-pitch sports provision in Sefton (see figure 10.2 above).

10.12 Again, for non-pitch sports (figure 10.2) the total quantity in hectares of all publicly accessible non-pitch sports sites is shown. However, this total is first broken down by type of site (see figure 3.4 above) into outdoor sports sites (that is, those managed by Sefton Council, Parish or Town Councils or sports clubs) and schools and college sites where there is a formal agreement for the use of the site by the public, leagues or teams.

10.13 Only 8 of Sefton's 13 **allotment sites** are urban greenspaces as designated in the UDP, and were covered by the urban greenspace audit. Four of the remaining allotment sites are in the Green Belt, and another one is just over the border in West Lancashire, but is owned and managed by Sefton Council. All 13 sites were included in further quantity analysis, set out in figure 10.4 below. Again, as well as showing all allotments provision across Sefton, the figures relating only to urban greenspaces, as designated in the UDP are also shown, for comparison.

**Figure 10.4: All allotments provision in Sefton (quantity)**

	All allotments		Urban greenspace allotments – for comparison	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
<b>Crosby</b>	5.17	<b>0.10</b>	2.31	<b>0.05</b>
<b>Formby</b>	0.86	<b>0.03</b>	0.86	<b>0.03</b>
<b>Linacre&amp; Derby</b>	0.00	<b>0.00</b>	0.00	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Litherland &amp; Ford</b>	8.15	<b>0.33</b>	3.16	<b>0.13</b>
<b>Sefton East Parishes</b>	0.00	<b>0.00</b>	0.00	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Southport</b>	9.83	<b>0.11</b>	1.23	<b>0.01</b>
<b>St Oswald &amp; Netherton &amp; Orrell</b>	10.59	<b>0.42</b>	10.59	<b>0.42</b>
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>34.60</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>18.15</b>	<b>0.06</b>



10.14 Further work was also carried out to include **cemetery and crematoria** sites within the Green Belt – which comprised only one, extensive site, Thornton Crematorium. All of the other cemeteries and crematoria are urban greenspaces. The results of this work are set out in figure 10.5 below. Again, Figure 10.5 shows the figures for all of Sefton, as well as for urban greenspaces only, for comparison.

**Figure 10.5: All cemeteries and crematoria provision in Sefton (quantity)**

All cemeteries and crematoria				
	All cemeteries and crematoria		All urban greenspace cemeteries and crematoria - for comparison	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
<b>Crosby</b>	12.26	<b>0.24</b>	2.00	<b>0.04</b>
<b>Formby</b>	3.32	<b>0.13</b>	3.32	<b>0.13</b>
<b>Linacre&amp; Derby</b>	0.00	<b>0.00</b>	0.00	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Litherland &amp; Ford</b>	16.71	<b>0.68</b>	16.71	<b>0.68</b>
<b>Sefton East Parishes</b>	4.90	<b>0.12</b>	4.90	<b>0.12</b>
<b>Southport</b>	17.23	<b>0.19</b>	17.23	<b>0.19</b>
<b>St Oswald's, Netherton &amp; Orrell</b>	9.84	<b>0.39</b>	9.84	<b>0.39</b>
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>64.26</b>	<b>0.23</b>	<b>54.00</b>	<b>0.19</b>

10.15 Further work has also been carried out to identify **coast and countryside parks**, and this is set out in figure 10 .6 below. The countryside and coastal parks exclude sites which are urban greenspaces (such as Crosby Marine Park, and Town Lane (Newlands) countryside recreation area, as they have already been included within the analysis of urban greenspaces, as designated in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). The countryside and coastal parks include the publicly accessible parts of:

- The countryside recreation areas identified in UDP policy G8 'Countryside Recreation Areas' - Rimrose Valley, Wango Lane, Sefton Meadows;
- The coastal park identified in UDP policy CPZ4 'Coastal Park', to the high-water mark except north of Southport Pier where public access is discouraged on safety grounds. This includes land managed by Sefton Council but also bodies such as the National Trust;
- areas managed by the Forestry Commission in the Sefton Meadows area between Netherton, Thornton and Maghull, and land managed by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust north of Formby;
- Birkdale Common (Southport);
- St Catherine's Chapel (Lydiate).

**Figure 10 .6: Countryside and coastal parks (quantity)**

	All countryside (including coastal) 'parks' - (not including sites which have already been counted as urban greenspaces)	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000
<b>Crosby</b>	129.95	<b>2.57</b>
<b>Formby</b>	585.17	<b>23.14</b>
<b>Linacre&amp; Derby</b>	0	<b>0.00</b>
<b>Litherland &amp; Ford</b>	72.95	<b>2.96</b>
<b>Sefton East Parishes</b>	100.50	<b>2.54</b>
<b>Southport</b>	748.82	<b>8.30</b>
<b>St Oswald's, Netherton &amp; Orrell</b>	38.08	<b>1.50</b>
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>1675.47</b>	<b>5.96</b>

10.16 Together all of this additional quantity analysis allows the total amount of publicly accessible green space throughout Sefton to be measured – in rural or Green Belt as well as urban areas. These results are shown in figure 10.7 below. The corresponding figures for urban greenspaces, as designated in the UDP, have again been shown for comparison.

**Figure 10.7: All green space in Sefton (quantity)**

	All publicly available green space – <b>INCLUDING</b> countryside and coastal parks		All publicly available green space – <b>EXCLUDING</b> countryside and coastal parks		All publicly available urban greenspace (for comparison)	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
<b>Crosby</b>	373.67	<b>7.38</b>	242.72	<b>4.81</b>	168.38	<b>3.34</b>
<b>Formby</b>	646.71	<b>25.58</b>	61.54	<b>2.43</b>	56.45	<b>2.23</b>
<b>Linacre &amp; Derby</b>	51.95	<b>2.04</b>	51.95	<b>2.04</b>	49.56	<b>1.95</b>
<b>Litherland &amp; Ford</b>	154.92	<b>6.29</b>	81.97	<b>3.33</b>	70.04	<b>2.84</b>
<b>Sefton East Parishes</b>	206.53	<b>5.22</b>	106.03	<b>2.68</b>	100.12	<b>2.53</b>
<b>Southport</b>	1089.02	<b>12.08</b>	340.20	<b>3.77</b>	296.25	<b>3.28</b>
<b>St Oswald's, Netherton &amp; Orrell</b>	124.15	<b>4.90</b>	86.07	<b>3.39</b>	94.94	<b>3.74</b>
	*(170.19)	*(6.71)	*(132.11)	*(5.21)	*(140.98)	*(5.56)
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	2662.16	<b>9.48</b>	986.69	<b>3.51</b>	835.74	<b>2.97</b>
	*(2708.20)	*(9.64)	*(1032.73)	*(3.68)	*(881.78)	*(3.14)

\*(Figures INCLUDING urban greenspace G067 Bootle Golf Course)

	All publicly available green space – <b>EXCLUDING</b> countryside and coastal parks and institutions		All publicly available green space – <b>EXCLUDING</b> countryside and coastal parks, institutions and cemeteries & churchyards		All publicly available urban greenspace <b>EXCLUDING</b> institutions and cemeteries & churchyards (for comparison)	
	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000	Area (ha)	ha per '000
<b>Crosby</b>	242.72	<b>4.81</b>	230.46	<b>4.57</b>	166.38	<b>3.30</b>
<b>Formby</b>	58.65	<b>2.32</b>	55.33	<b>2.19</b>	50.24	<b>1.99</b>
<b>Linacre &amp; Derby</b>	51.95	<b>2.04</b>	51.95	<b>2.04</b>	49.56	<b>1.95</b>
<b>Litherland &amp; Ford</b>	81.97	<b>3.33</b>	65.26	<b>2.65</b>	53.33	<b>2.16</b>
<b>Sefton East Parishes</b>	87.94	<b>2.22</b>	83.04	<b>2.10</b>	77.13	<b>1.95</b>
<b>Southport</b>	326.95	<b>3.62</b>	309.72	<b>3.43</b>	265.77	<b>2.95</b>
<b>St Oswald's, Netherton &amp; Orrell</b>	86.07	<b>3.39</b>	76.23	<b>3.01</b>	85.10	<b>3.36</b>
	*(132.11)	*(5.21)	*(122.27)	*(4.82)	*(131.14)	*(5.17)
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	952.46	<b>3.39</b>	864.91	<b>3.08</b>	747.51	<b>2.66</b>
	*(998.50)	*(3.55)	*(934.24)	*(3.33)	*(793.55)	*(2.82)

\*(Figures INCLUDING urban greenspace G067 Bootle Golf Course)

10.17 The first columns in the first part of the table in figure 10.7 above includes all parks, amenity urban greenspaces, natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces, all allotments, all outdoor sports sites, all schools sites with public (permissive) access, all cemeteries and crematoria and all institutions, and all countryside and coastal parks. The second columns include all but countryside parks. These are excluded for comparison to give a better idea of urban sites and because the coastal parks in particular (for example, Formby) tend to inflate the figures tremendously.

10.18 The second part of the table in figure 10.7 excludes other categories as well as countryside and coastal parks – firstly institutions, and secondly, institutions and cemeteries. This is because the recreational role of institutional grounds, and cemeteries and crematoria may be more limited than those of parks, amenity urban greenspaces, natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces, all allotments, all outdoor sports sites and all schools sites with public (permissive) access for outdoor sports.

### Accessible nature space

10.19 Following on from the urban greenspace audit and this further work on quantity of green space set out above in this section, an assessment of the quantity of **accessible nature space** has been made. These are termed **nature areas** in the Green Space Strategy.

10.20 Accessible nature space is defined as publicly accessible green space which has an identified nature value, as set out in figure 3.5 above. The distribution of this accessible nature space is shown in figure 6.6 above. In summary accessible nature space includes;

- Community woodlands;
- Sites of international, national and local (Sites of Local Biological Interest) nature conservation importance;
- Countryside recreation areas and other countryside and coastal parks;
- Access points to the canal towpath;
- Urban greenspaces of particular, noted, nature or wildlife value

The Green Space Strategy refers to accessible nature space simply as 'nature areas.'

10.21 The amounts of accessible nature space in each area Committee area are set out in figure 10.8 below. The influence of the coastal area is considerable. This in the main reason for the very high rates of accessible nature space per thousand population for Formby in particular, and to a lesser extent Southport and Crosby.

**Figure 10.8: Accessible nature in Sefton (quantity)**

Area Committee	Accessible nature space (nature areas)			
	area (hectares)	ha per '000	No. of canal access points	Population
Crosby	247.95	<b>4.91</b>	0	50,483
Formby	683.75	<b>27.04</b>	0	25,283
Linacre & Derby	33.39	<b>1.31</b>	6	25,431
Litherland & Ford	101.28	<b>4.11</b>	5	24,637
Sefton East Parishes	149.15	<b>3.77</b>	20	39,533
Southport	909.98	<b>10.09</b>	0	90,226
St Oswald & Netherton & Orrell	70.43	<b>2.78</b>	6	25,353
<b>Sefton-wide</b>	<b>2195.93</b>	<b>7.82</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>280,946</b>

### 11. The Play Strategy

11.1 The **Play Strategy for Sefton** (2008) included an **audit of play space** managed by Sefton's Leisure Services department. The audit mapped:

- doorstep facilities (small equipped play areas primarily for young children, unequipped neighbourhood amenity green spaces and Home zone or equivalent spaces; ideally within 100 metres walk of people's homes);
- Neighbourhood Spaces and Facilities (Large equipped play areas primarily for children aged 5-11, satellite parks, junior bike, skate and skateboard facilities, kick-about areas; ideally within 400 metres walk of people's homes);
- Local spaces and facilities (adventure playgrounds, open access play areas and play schemes, play ranger and outreach programmes, school playgrounds open out of school hours, neighbourhood equipped play areas (8+ items), teenage wheeled sports area, ball courts, multi-use games areas, hangouts/youth shelters, community parks and local parks, playing fields and recreation grounds freely available for children to use and beaches, woodlands and natural areas. Ideally these should be within 1 kilometre walk of people's homes).

11.2 These categories are based on The National Playing Fields Association's distances for particular play facilities, and have been accepted by Play England and the Children's Play Council as a performance indicator and in assessing funding bids.

11.3 The audit found that the majority of the borough has a good coverage of play spaces, as well as the extensive coastal areas which are available for play. However there are only a limited number of sites in Formby and Ainsdale. It also found that while Southport's residential areas have play spaces, there are none in the central shopping areas. However, there is an extensive beach area in Southport. Altcar, Crosby and Bootle have a large number of play spaces and in Waterloo and Bootle many of these are neighbourhood play spaces. The audit set out three priorities for play in Sefton:

- To enhance and develop the natural play opportunities for children using the magnificent coastal areas and countryside of Sefton.
- To provide safe and stimulating environments for children with disabilities and additional needs to experience natural play opportunities alongside their friends.
- To ensure the children from the most deprived areas of Sefton have access to a range of natural and outdoor play opportunities.

11.4 The Play Strategy sets out 8 play objectives for Sefton. Objective 1 is to ensure that children and young people have easy, safe access to the widest possible range of play experiences and play environments, both indoors and outside, recognising that they play in a variety of public spaces as well as dedicated provision and within a practical journey from their home. Other objectives relate to the role that play has in children's development, the need for equal access and opportunities for all, dealing with risk, consulting children and taking account of their views and working with play providers, other groups and the wider community

11.5 The Play Strategy also sets out 7 priorities for play which include enhancing and developing the free natural play opportunities for children using the magnificent coastal areas and countryside of Sefton; and meeting the needs of children and young people identified through a range of consultation processes including addressing children's concerns about safety when using public parks and spaces, providing lots of fun activities and outdoor and physical play opportunities.

11.6 The Play Strategy goes on to say that robust local standards will be developed using national standards and recognised performance indicators of quality.

**12. Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy**

12.1 During 2007 and 2008 Sefton’s Council’s Leisure Services Department prepared a Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy (approved April 2008) for all of the 250 or so sites they manage.

12.2 The purposes of this document are to set strategic priorities to guide the Leisure Services Department in their management and development of their land stock in the future, and to inform the allocation of external monies including those generated from commuted sums in relation to housing and other development proposals.

The priorities set out in the Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy are to increase the:

- quality of spaces more evenly and to avoid sharp contrasts between sites and areas, i.e. to not provide one excellent space and many poor ones;
- provision of better quality formal pitch sports;
- provision of better quality children’s play spaces and opportunities;
- provision for older children and young adults;
- provision of Skate Parks/ wheeled sports facilities.

12.3 The Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy recognises that to have the biggest impact, rationalisation and consolidation of sites or facilities may be necessary, in order to avoid spreading resources too thinly. This may mean difficult decisions to close several poor sites or facilities, but the result would be one better quality site which can serve a wider area and more people or groups within the community.

12.4 The Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy also sets out the priority sites for improvement within each Area Committee area – based on Priorities 1\*, 1, 2 and 3 – and what improvements each park needs. The main basis for prioritisation is the need to address health and safety issues, to maintain standards and prevent/ stop deterioration and to increase standards/ plug gaps in distribution of spaces. Also taken into account is the condition of the site and its facilities, the number and condition of other facilities in the area, local population characteristics and local demand for improvements – influenced notably by consultation with Area Committees in autumn 2007 and January 2008.

12.5 The sites prioritised as 1\* for improvement are shown in the figure 12.1 below.

<b>Figure 12.1 - List of priority 1* sites in Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy, until 2010/11</b>	
<b>Area Committee area</b>	<b>Park or Green space name</b>
Crosby	Chaffers Playing Fields, Crosby
Crosby	Crescent Gardens, Crosby
Crosby	Crosby Marine Park, Crosby
Crosby	Marine Gardens, Waterloo
Crosby	Runnells Lane Park, Thornton
Crosby	Victoria Park, Crosby
Formby	Deansgate Lane Playing Fields, Formby
Formby	Duke Street Park, Formby
Formby	Formby Discovery Centre and Beach (the Lifeboat Road site as referred to in the Play Strategy)
Linacre & Derby	Bowersdale Park, Seaforth
Linacre & Derby	North Park, Bootle
Linacre & Derby	South Park, Bootle
Litherland & Ford	Hatton Hill Park, Litherland
Litherland & Ford	Mellanear Park, Bootle
Sefton East Parishes	Rainbow Park, Melling

Figure 12.1 - List of priority 1* sites in Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy, until 2010/11	
Area Committee area	Park or Green space name
Southport	Bedford Park, Birkdale
Southport	Hesketh Park, Southport
Southport	Liverpool Road Recreation Ground, Ainsdale
Southport	Meols Park, Southport
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	Abbeyfield Park, Netherton
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	Marian Park, Netherton
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	Menai Park, Netherton
St Oswald's, Netherton & Orrell	Ollery Green play area / Deerbarn Park, Old Roan

12.6 These priorities for improvement assigned to each park are important in the context of the Supplementary Planning Document 'Green space, trees and development', notably when assessing the quality of parks or other open spaces in the vicinity of a development site and in determining priorities for spending commuted sums for off-site improvements. The priorities in the Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy will be reviewed periodically, to take account of improvement schemes that have taken place, and other changes in circumstances.

12.7 The Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy also sets out a hierarchy of parks and open spaces managed by the Leisure Services Department. There are 4 layers within this hierarchy:

- **Borough scale parks and open spaces** – includes the largest and highest profile parks, which users would be expected to travel some distance to. These parks would be few and far between and would include the biggest and most diverse facilities and attractions within our parks. Examples include Hesketh Park and Botanic Gardens, (Southport) and Crosby Marine Park.
- **District scale parks and open spaces** – includes parks of a good size and diversity, but smaller than Borough scale parks. There would be more of them, with most areas having access to such a site within 3km. Examples include Duke Street Park (Formby), Victoria Park (Crosby), Derby Park (Bootle) and Marina Park (Netherton).
- **Neighbourhood scale parks and open spaces** – includes smaller sites, with a less diverse range of provision. Sites may be themed in a given settlement area, for example one providing for pitch sports and another for children's play. There will be considerable numbers of these sites with a catchment of about 1km. Examples include Old Hall Park, (Maghull), Russell Road Recreation Ground (Southport), St Christopher's Woodland Park (Netherton) and Orrell Mount Park, Litherland.
- **Local scale parks and open spaces** - these are the smallest sites, which serve only the nearby community. They are unlikely to have a diverse range of facilities but within one settlement area different sites may serve different needs. Examples include Barkfield Lane Play area (Formby), Seaforth Triangle, Copy Lane Open Space (Netherton) and Pinfold Play Area (Ainsdale).

12.8 The classification of an individual park or open space affects its management regime and factors such as range and type of facilities, how the Council markets and promotes them, levels of access for all and community involvement, how far people are willing to travel to them and how many people visit each year. So the hierarchy of parks is important to quality and accessibility issues as well as quantity issues. Notably, the class assigned to each park are important in the context of the draft Supplementary Planning Document 'Green space, trees and development', especially when assessing the quality of parks or other open spaces in the



vicinity of a development site and in determining priorities for spending commuted sums for off-site improvements.

12.9 The Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy classes each of Sefton's parks as either borough park, district parks, neighbourhood parks or local parks based on these characteristics. As part of this study, some parks managed by Parish and Town Councils have also been given notional classes within this hierarchy.

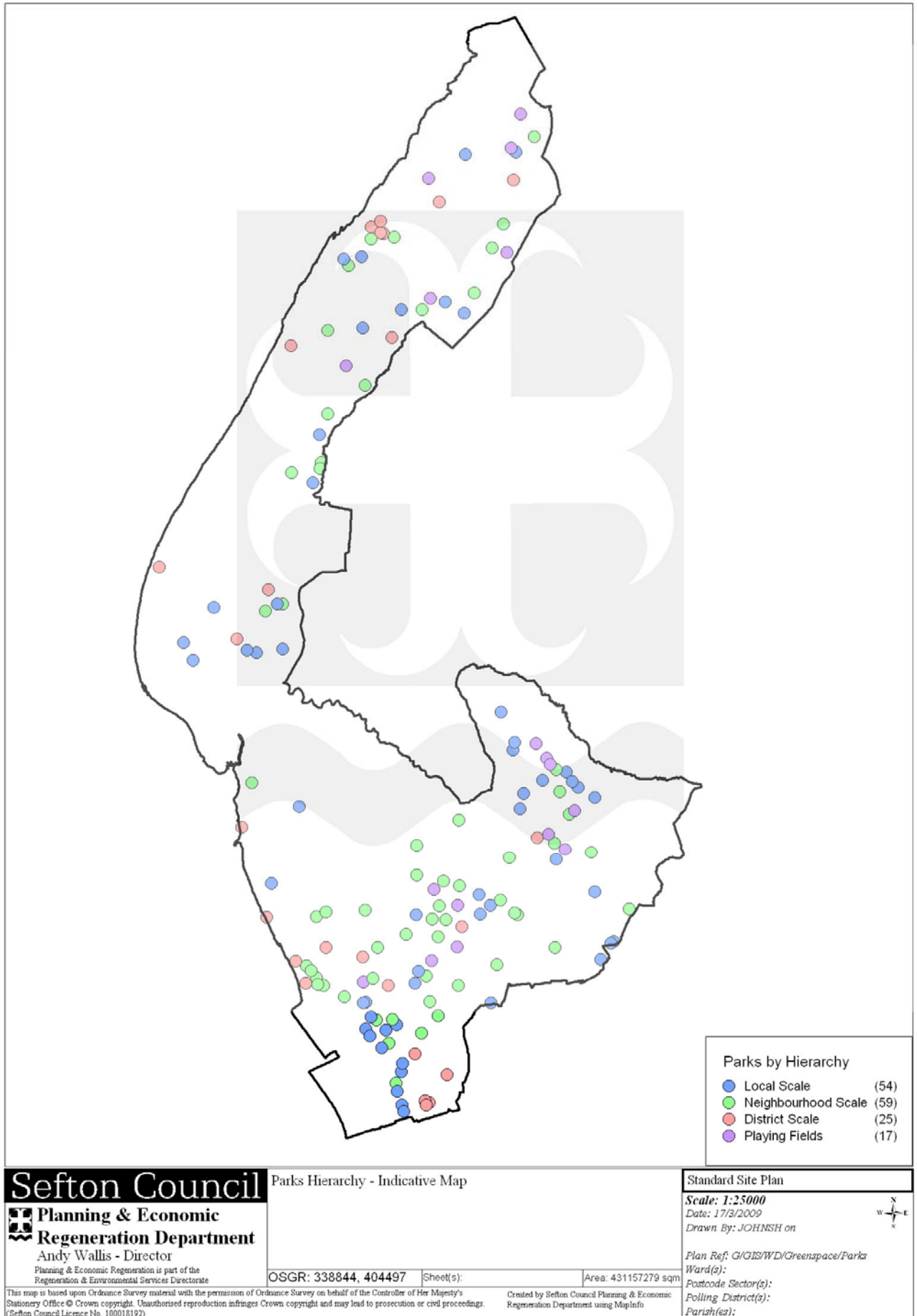
12.10 The issue of how far people are willing to travel to each level of park within the hierarchy is important in terms of accessibility to green spaces.

12.11 The plan in figure 12.2 shows the distribution of parks of different classes within the hierarchy.

12.12 The Leisure Services department proposes to prepare individual management plans for parks and green spaces, to help implement the Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management strategy. Individual management plans have been, or will be, prepared for borough and district parks and those where Green Flag status have been achieved or is being sought. Generic management plans will be produced for neighbourhood and local parks. These deal with maintenance and wider management issues linked to Green Flag criteria, as set out in 13 below.



Figure 12.2: Indicative map of Sefton’s hierarchy of parks



### 13. Additional work on quality of public green space provision in Sefton

13.1 The urban greenspace audit is the main source for data about green space quality issues, as a detailed assessment of the quality of parks and other green spaces managed by the Council's Leisure Services department is yet to be completed. The Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy contains only a basic overview of quality, which indicates that condition of sites varies considerably and that many of these parks and other green spaces are of poor or average quality.

13.2 Public consultation (as summarised in section 7 above) indicated that while more people were happy with quality of green space than were unhappy, there were some significant concerns about the maintenance of and facilities in green spaces and the facilities. Some of the concerns – including from younger children - relate to the lack of park rangers on sites at all times, and perceived problems with mis-use and anti-social behaviour.

13.3 The national standard for quality of parks and green spaces which are accessible to the public is the Green Flag award. (The Green Pennant award is for sites managed by community or voluntary groups, and is very similar, and so Green Flag below also refers to the Green Pennant). Green Flag award status is awarded annually by independent assessors, and to achieve the award year-on-year achievements are required. More information about this is set out in Part D, section 18, below.

13.4 Three Sefton parks won the Green Flag award in 2009; Hesketh Park and Botanic Gardens, both in Southport, and Coronation Park in Crosby. Thornton Garden of Rest also achieved the award in 2009. St Luke's churchyard and community garden won the Green Pennant award in 2009. In 2010 it is hoped that other parks will also achieve the award – Derby Park and North Park in Bootle, Victoria Park in Crosby, and Ainsdale & Birkdale Sandhills (a coastal site). Over time it is hoped to increase the number of Green Flag parks and green spaces, and this is reflected in the Green Space Strategy Action Plan.

13.5 Sefton's Leisure Services department already uses the Green Flag criteria to help it manage its sites. Each level in the parks 'hierarchy' set out in section 12 has a corresponding points total which it is expected to achieve (with borough parks which attract most people are expected to achieve the highest number of points).

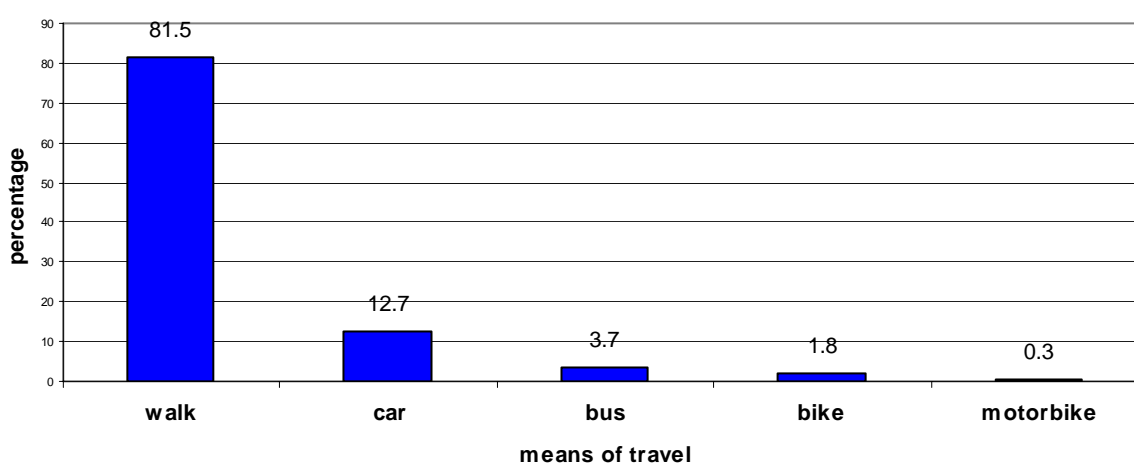
13.6 These Green Flag criteria are also the basis for the **management plans** being prepared for parks and greenspaces managed by Sefton's Leisure Services department, as set out in section 12 above. Also, it is generally accepted that land on the Sefton Coast, which is managed by the Council's Leisure Services department, provides a quality recreation experience. Some sites owned and managed by other organisations – for example the Woodland Trust and some voluntary groups - also have management plans which cover these wider issues as well as maintenance and other specific issues relevant to the site. Generally the presence and implementation of such management plans helps to improve the quality of the sites they refer to.

## 14. Accessibility to public green space in Sefton

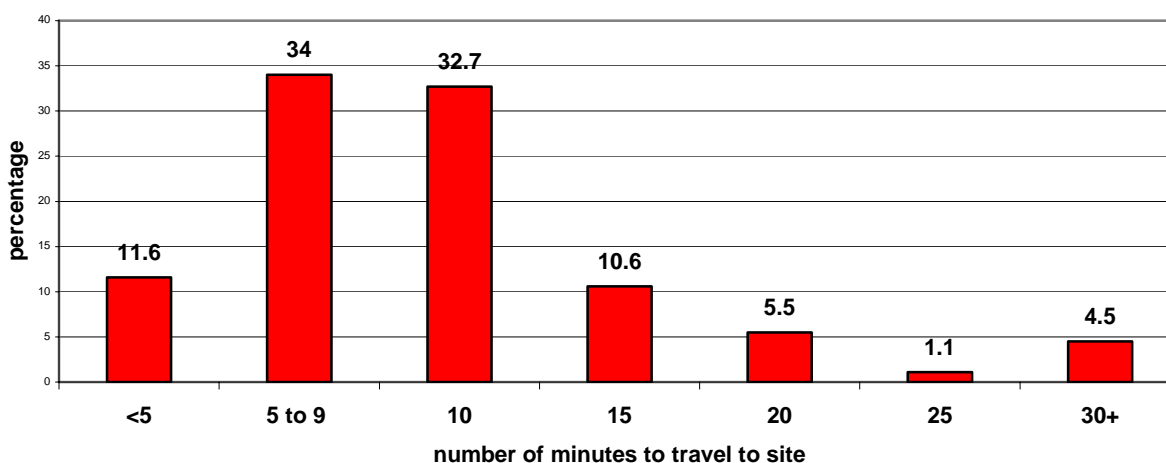
14.1 The main local sources for information about accessibility to green space in Sefton are from public consultation, and in relation to the catchment distances used by the Council's Leisure Services and Children's Services departments for parks and play facilities, discussed in sections 11 and 12 above.

14.2 The **telephone survey** showed that more than four fifths respondents walk to the site they visit most frequently, and that just less than four fifths respondents travel for 10 minutes or less (see figures 14.1 and 14.2). For most children surveyed via out of school clubs, travel time was less than 10 minutes, mostly on foot or by bike but with a significant number also travelling by car on some occasions.

**Figure 14.1: Means of travel to most visited green space (from 2007 telephone survey)**



**Figure 14.2: Time taken to travel to most visited green space (from 2007 telephone survey)**



14.3 The **focus groups** also considered barriers to green space as well as accessibility. Participants were asked what potential barriers, if any, make it difficult for them to make the best use of parks and green spaces in the area. For most participants (except those in Linacre and Derby Area Committee area), the biggest barrier was safety – poor lighting, dog fouling, broken glass, litter, and especially anti-social behaviour were all factors that prevent them using local

parcs and green spaces. The consultation with young people reinforced this, as the ‘worst thing’ about green spaces for most children was perceived anti-social behaviour.

14.4 Physical barriers such as lack of dropped kerbs, pedestrian crossings or parked cars were not seen as major problems by focus group participants, although access within parks for those with mobility problems (including use of wheelchairs, pushchairs/prams and poor mobility) varied. In some focus group areas, better provision for the less mobile (e.g. ramps and gentle slopes rather than steps, handrails, specific play or recreational facilities) was a priority for improvement. Generally publicity about parks and green spaces, and signage, was felt to be good, and cost of getting to facilities was an issue only for some National Trust and other coastal sites which apply charges for car parking.

14.5 The catchment distances used by the Council’s Leisure Services and Children’s Services departments for parks, green spaces and play facilities are also measures of accessibility. Each park, green space or play space has been placed within one level within a set hierarchy (discussed in sections 11 and 12 above). The catchment – or accessibility – distances for different levels within the hierarchies are different.

14.6 These catchment distances are based on the distances which people are generally willing to travel to get to different types of facilities. The distances are set out in figure 14.3 below.

**Figure 14.3: Catchment (accessibility) distances for different types of parks and play spaces**

<b>Play spaces (Play audit and Play Strategy (2008))</b>	<b>Catchment distance</b>	<b>Straight line distance equivalent (for mapping purposes)</b>
Doorstep facilities	100 metres	60 metres
Neighbourhood facilities	400 metres	240 metres
Local spaces and facilities	1 kilometre	600 metres

<b>Parks (Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy (2008))</b>	<b>Catchment distance</b>	<b>Straight line distance equivalent (for mapping purposes)</b>
Local parks	400 metres	-
Neighbourhood parks	1 kilometre	-
District Parks	3 kilometres	
Borough parks	Over 3 kilometres	

14.7 These distances for play spaces, and their straight-line equivalents shown in figure 14.3 are used by Play England and the Children’s Play Council as the basis for a performance indicator intended for Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). Play England use the same distances in assessing funding bids. There are no nationally accepted catchment or straight-line equivalent distances for parks.

14.8 For accessible nature space Natural England recommends accessibility distances based largely on size of nature space. This is known as the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards (ANGSt) model. These accessibility distances are set out in figure 14.4 below.

### **Figure 14.4 - Accessible Natural Greenspace Standards Model (Natural England) - Accessibility distances**

There should be at least 2 hectares of accessible natural greenspace per '000 population, and everyone should live:

- within 300 metres of their nearest area of accessible natural greenspace;
- within 2 km of at least one accessible natural site of 20 hectares;
- within 5 km of an accessible natural site of 100 hectares;
- within 10 km of at least one accessible nature site of 500 hectares.

14.9 There are no generally accepted national accessibility distances for other types of green space.

## PART D SETTING AND APPLYING THE LOCAL TARGETS

### Overview

As set out in section 2 above, this study sets *targets* based on the current evidence, rather than *standards*. It provides the evidence to justify these targets. The targets have been approved as the quantity, quality and accessibility targets for public green space in Sefton in the Green Space Strategy (October 2008).

Where appropriate local provision *standards* will be set in the future based on any future work carried out in relation to Sefton's Core Strategy, other Local Development Framework documents or other Council strategies and documents such as the Playing Pitch Strategy, Allotments Strategy or a Play Facilities Strategy; as well as the research referred to in this study.

In line with the advice in PPG17 'Planning for Open space, Sport and Recreation', the targets are based on the three key aspects of publicly accessible green space (defined in Section 3 above):

- **Quantity** – is there enough public green space in each area?
- **Quality** – is it of a high standard?
- **Accessibility** – is it easy to get to?

The targets apply to the whole of Sefton. In assessing deficiencies and needs against the Sefton local targets, it is important to look at all three aspects, as well as how they relate to each other. For example, although one Area Committee area may have enough green space it may not be distributed evenly throughout the area and its quality may vary.



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**15. Review of existing provision standards**

15.1 The Companion Guide to PPG17 ‘Planning for open space, sports and recreation’ (2002) makes clear that that green space and recreation studies should review existing provision standards before discarding them. However, even at the time of their publication, in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2006), the Council accepted that these existing standards need review. The targets set out in this document inform this review.

15.2 The introduction to Chapter 13 ‘Urban Greenspace and Recreation’ (para 13.8, UDP, 2006) makes clear that the Council is in the process of carrying out ‘an open space and recreation study’ which will:

- assess the need for a range of open space and recreational facilities;
- calculate the existing amount and quality of open space and recreational facilities;
- identify deficiencies in the amount and quality of open space and recreational facilities;
- outline opportunities for new (and improved) open spaces, green corridors and recreational facilities, and
- set local standards for the amount, type and quality of open space and how accessible it should be.

15.3 This study referred to in the UDP, i.e this Green Space and Recreation Study, has taken longer to complete than originally intended. However, the intention to set local targets (rather than using national standards) based on an assessment of local needs and provision is in line with PPG17 and its companion guide.

15.4 The UDP sets out recreational provision standards in its Figure 13.3. The requirement for new provision in association with development in Policy DQ4 ‘Public greenspace and development’ is based on this, and also it has been important in connection with Policy G1 ‘Protection of urban greenspace’, other greenspace policies (G2 to G4) and Policy G5 ‘Protection of Recreational Open Space’. These standards contained in Figure 13.3 of the UDP are set out in Figure 15.1 below:

**Figure 15.1: Unitary Development Plan recreation provision standards**

Pitch sports	1.2 hectares per ‘000 population
Non-pitch sports	0.4 hectares per ‘000 population
General open provision (including children’s play space)	0.9 hectares per ‘000 population

15.5 However, the UDP makes clear that these are based on the National Playing Field Association’s recommended 2.4 hectares standard per thousand population [the ‘six acre standard’, first introduced in the 1920s] for the provision of formal recreation space and children’s play space provision, with an additional 0.1 hectares added to the recommended standard for general open space provision (para 13.48). The UDP also indicates that these are interim standards pending the completion of the open space / green space and recreation study (para 13.46, para 16.53).

15.6 The urban greenspace audit work and further work, set out in section C above, allow a comparison of the existing standards, and existing provision. This comparison is shown in Figure 15.2 below.

15.7 The majority of local people think that existing provision is ‘about right’ (see section 7 on ‘Public consultation’ above), but figure 15.2 shows that this existing provision differs

considerably from the UDP standard. It is clear that the existing UDP standards are in need of revision; and figure 15.2 demonstrates this.

**Figure 15.2: Comparison of existing standards and existing provision**

Unitary Development Plan (Fig 13.3)		This Green space and recreation study			
Based on:	Standard (ha per '000 popn)		Existing provision (ha per '000 popn)		Based on:
Pitch sports	1.2	<b>1.6</b>	1.23	<b>1.31</b>	All outdoor sports sites (not including any golf courses) (figures 10.1,10.2, 10.3 above)
Non-pitch sports	0.4		0.08		
General open space provision (including children's play space)		<b>0.9</b>		<b>1.85</b>	Urban greenspaces which are parks (including provision for children and teenagers), amenity green spaces, natural or semi-natural greenspaces; and all allotments.
<b>Total</b>		<b>2.5</b>		<b>3.16</b>	

15.8 Also, the existing standards in the UDP deal only with quantity – standards for quality and accessibility are not included. This does not meet the requirements of PPG17 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation'. This in itself means that new standards are required. The targets set out below are the first step in this process.

### 16. The quantity target for Sefton

#### The quantity target for Sefton

16.1 The urban greenspace audit and further work on the quantity of publicly accessible green space in Sefton (see sections 9 and 10) show existing provision of most types of green space. Extensive public consultation, as set out in section 7 above, has shown that most people think that the amount of public green space in Sefton is about right.

16.2 It is clear that the quantity targets should be based on this existing provision (set out in figure 16.2 below). The adopted quantity target for Sefton, set out in the Green Space Strategy (2008), is reproduced in figure 16.1 below.

#### Figure 16.1 - Quantity target for green space in Sefton

**Based on existing provision, and specifically 1.2 hectares per 1000 population for parks.**

16.3 The quantity target for green space is based on existing provision. A specific target has been set for parks – 1.2 hectares per 1000 population – mainly because of the amount of information available about parks (e.g. urban greenspace audit, Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy) and because they are seen as one of the most important types of recreational greenspace (the other being accessible nature space).

16.4 The setting of specific quantity targets for other types of green space needs further consideration:

- **amenity green space** - further consideration needs to be given to the wider functions and benefits of amenity green space;
- **play facilities** or **children's play** - further work is needed;
- **outdoor sports sites** - although the Playing Pitch Strategy has been approved, further work is needed on non-pitch sports provision (including hard-surfaced multi-use games areas (MUGAs));
- **accessible natural greenspace or accessible nature space** - Sefton Council's current focus is on improving the nature value of all public green spaces, to increase the amount (and quality) of accessible nature space;
- **allotments** – further work is needed, and preparation of an Allotments Strategy is at an early stage;
- **accessible coast and countryside** - Sefton's coast is a tremendous and varied resource with varying degrees of access. It is not considered practicable to set a quantity target for such a diverse resource under so many ownerships and management regimes.
- **cemeteries and churchyards** and **schools, colleges and institutions** - these green spaces are ancillary to other specific land uses. However, they do play an important green space role, particularly where they are accessible to the public.

#### Applying the quantity target for Sefton

16.5 Figure 16.2 below shows current levels of provision within each Area Committee Area and the provision rates for the whole of Sefton – all expressed as the rate of provision per thousand population rather than as the total area in hectares. This shows provision in different parts of Sefton relative to other areas and makes it easier to compare provision between different parts of Sefton.

16.6 Figure 16.2 also shows the quantity target of 1.2 hectares per thousand population for parks. It also shows differences across each of Sefton's seven Area Committees from the Sefton-wide figure. Colour coding (a 'traffic lights' system) is used to indicate which Area Committees are below the Sefton-wide rates, and Sefton target where one is proposed.

Figure 16.2: Quantity of public green space in Sefton - actual Sefton provision compared to quantity targets

Area Committee area	Hectares per thousand population								Other comments (additional green space resources)
	Urban greenspace			All sites (including urban greenspaces)		Total	Coast & countryside parks	Accessible nature space	
	Parks (incl. children & teens)	Amenity sites	Natural & Semi-natural sites (incl. Canal)	Allotments	Outdoor sports sites (incl. schools)				
Crosby	1.50	0.90	0.03	0.10	2.04	4.57	2.57	4.91	Reasonably good paths network to coast and countryside, and to canal. Tree cover 2.5% - over 10%.
Formby	0.18	0.33	0.06	0.03	1.58	2.19	23.14	27.04	Also benefits from children's play facilities on non-parks sites. Tree cover over 10%.
Linacre & Derby	1.18	0.29	0.23	0.00	0.34	2.04	0.00	1.31	No direct coastal or countryside access except via canal. Tree cover under 5% (mostly under 2.5%).
Litherland & Ford	0.71	0.41	0.19	0.33	1.00	2.65	2.96	4.11	Reasonably good paths network to countryside and canal. Tree cover under 5%.
Sefton East Parishes	0.49	0.16	0.22	0.00	1.23	2.10	2.54	3.77	Canal in rural area, good countryside paths network. Tree cover 5 - 10%.
Southport	1.26	0.18	0.65	0.11	1.24	3.43	8.30	10.09	Relatively poor paths network to countryside (for coast, good). Tree cover 2.5% - over 10%.
St Oswald & Netherton & Orrell	0.69	0.86	0.46	0.42	1.22 *(3.04)	3.01 *(4.82)	1.50	2.78	Also canal in rural area and a reasonably good countryside paths network. Tree cover under 5%.
<b>Sefton-wide (target):</b>	<b>0.99</b> <b>1.2</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>1.31</b> *(1.47)	<b>3.08</b> *(3.33)	<b>5.96</b>	<b>7.82</b>	

\*(Figures INCLUDING urban greenspace G067 Bootle Golf Course)

16.7 Figure 16.2 focuses on *recreational* green space, and accessible nature space. Here, recreational green space includes parks and children's play areas, amenity urban greenspaces, natural & semi-natural urban greenspaces (including the canal), all allotments and all outdoor sports sites. It does not include publicly accessible institutional grounds or cemeteries and crematoria, although more information about this provision is shown in section 10 above.

16.8 Also, while the relevant figures are shown in the table, the quantity totals and rates do not take into account publicly accessible coast and countryside recreation areas such as the Sefton coast, Rimrose Valley, Jubilee Woods. This is firstly because the boundary the coastal areas is to the high water mark, and has the effect of skewing the figures in favours of Area Committees with a long coastline (notably Formby and Southport), and secondly because the accessible nature space figures also give a great deal of weight to the coast and countryside sites.

16.9 Figure 16.2 shows that relative provision of public green space varies considerably across the Borough. Crosby has relatively high provision of parks, amenity urban greenspaces and outdoor sports site, in part due to Crosby Marine Park, and relatively low amounts of natural and semi-natural urban greenspace. Formby has relatively low provision overall, and notably for parks, but benefits from its large coastal area used for recreation. Due mainly to this coastal area it has by far the best accessible nature space resources in Sefton. Its outdoor sports site provision is higher than the Sefton-wide figure.

16.10 Linacre and Derby area has higher parks provision than Sefton as a whole but falls just short of the approved target figure of 1.2 hectares per thousand population. It has relatively little other green space, for example for outdoor sports, no allotments, no coast and countryside sites and extremely limited accessible nature space provision. The Leeds and Liverpool Canal is the area's main natural and semi-natural urban greenspace resource.

16.11 Litherland and Ford area has relatively less parks, natural and semi natural urban greenspaces and outdoor sports sites than Sefton as a whole, but the same levels of amenity urban greenspace provision and relatively high allotments provision. Relative amounts of accessible nature space are the highest of the non-coastal areas in Sefton.

16.12 Sefton East Parishes area has relatively less of all types of green space provision than Sefton as a whole, and there are no allotments in this area. Amounts of countryside parks and accessible nature space are relatively low.

16.13 Southport also has relatively high provision of parks, although this includes Newlands Country Park at Town Lane, and the Marine Lake. There is a substantial amount of natural and semi-natural urban greenspace, most of it within the urban area rather than on the coast or in rural fringes. Relative provision of coast and countryside parks, and accessible nature space is high.

16.14 St Oswald and Netherton and Orrell area has relatively high provision of amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural urban greenspace, including the canal, compared to Sefton as a whole. Relatively, it has the highest allotment provision in Sefton. However, the area has relatively few parks, and provision of coast and countryside parks and accessible nature space is relatively low compared to Sefton as a whole.

16.15 The quantity assessment for accessible nature space is also set out in Figure 16.2 above. This shows the variability of provision of accessible nature space across Sefton, and the tremendous influence of the coast on these figures. This illustrates why the countryside parks (including the coast) have not been included in the main quantity assessment of public green space.

### 17. The quality target for Sefton

#### Overview

17.1 As there are no purely local criteria of quality in Sefton, it is considered most appropriate to base Sefton's quality target on national criteria – the **Green Flag award** which is the nationally recognised standard for parks and urban green spaces, and is used as a way of monitoring quality across England and Wales. It looks at facilities provided and how the site is managed.

17.2 The **Green Flag** award covers all the key components of in public green space quality, including:

- Welcoming;
- Healthy, safe and secure;
- Clean and well maintained;
- Sustainability;
- Conservation and Heritage;
- Community involvement;
- Marketing; and
- Management.

17.3 Green Flag criteria are already the basis for the management plans being prepared for parks and greenspaces managed by Sefton's Leisure Services department, as set out in section 12 above. Some sites owned and managed by other organisations – for example the Woodland Trust and some voluntary groups - also have management plans which cover these wider issues as well as maintenance and other specific issues relevant to the site. Generally the presence and implementation of such management plans helps to improve the quality of the sites they refer to.

17.4 Therefore it is considered that Green Flag criteria, and management plans agreed in writing by the Council as a means of ensuring that they are sufficiently robust, are the most appropriate basis for assessing quality issues for green space in Sefton.

#### The quality target for Sefton

17.5 The adopted quality target for Sefton, set out in the Green Space Strategy (2008), is reproduced in figure 17.1 below. Site quality and management should achieve high levels based on the **Green Flag** award or has a **management plan** which is agreed in writing by the Council.

<b>Figure 17.1 - Quality target for green space in Sefton</b>
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<b>Based on Green Flag criteria – which are national quality standards.</b>
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#### Applying the quality target

17.6 Green space in Sefton has not yet been assessed against this quality target. However, the urban greenspace audit provides some quality information, and this indicates variable quality, with parks and amenity green space in Formby and to a lesser extent Southport being generally of higher urban greenspace quality.

17.7 However, in 2009 Sefton green spaces gained 4 Green Flag awards; Hesketh Park and Botanic Gardens both in Southport, Coronation Park in Crosby and Thornton Crematorium. St Luke's churchyard and community garden, in Crosby, won the Green Pennant award (the



equivalent award for voluntary groups) in 2009. In 2010 it is hoped that other parks will also achieve the award – Derby Park in Bootle, Victoria Park in Crosby, and Ainsdale & Birkdale Sandhills (a coastal site).

**Figure 17.2: Quality aims for different types of green space in Sefton**

Type (Sefton Typology)	Quality target
Parks and gardens and areas for children's play and / or teenagers	<p>A welcoming, clean and litter-free facility providing, as appropriate to its size, class (that is, whether it is a Borough, district, neighbourhood or local park or green space) and other local conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a wider range of leisure, recreational and enriched play opportunities for all ages;</li> <li>• varied and well kept vegetation;</li> <li>• appropriate lighting and ancillary furniture, infrastructure and accommodation (including benches, litter bins, 'dog-mess' bins and in some cases toilets or cafes);</li> <li>• clear and effective signs to and within the facility (including interpretation boards if appropriate).</li> <li>• Areas for designed specifically for children and teenagers should provide a mix of well-maintained formal equipment or an enriched play environment which is clean, litter free and dog-mess free (and often dog free) for formal and informal play and includes suitable placed seating (including shaded seating) for accompanying adults or siblings. These areas should be in a safe and secure location which is overlooked by other green space users but does not cause nuisance to neighbouring residents.</li> </ul> <p>The facility should have appropriate staff undertaking management, maintenance and community liaison. In addition to our internal quality targets, the best sites will also be submitted for external accreditation through the Green Flag Award standard.</p>
Amenity green space	<p>A clean and well-maintained green space with well kept grass and other vegetation, on a site which is easily accessible and big enough to encourage informal play without causing nuisance to neighbouring residents. Sites should have benches, litter bins and 'dog-mess' bins, (and perhaps paths and lighting), trees or other vegetation to provide a landscape structure; in the right places for users and without causing nuisance to neighbouring residents and which provide a spacious, green outlook and enhance the appearance of the local area.</p>
Outdoor sports sites	<p>A well-planned, clean, litter and dog-mess free sports facility site with level and well-drained good quality surfaces, appropriate good quality ancillary accommodation including changing accommodation, toilets and car parking facilities which meets the minimum standards of the leagues that use them currently or would like to use them, or have used them historically. For example this includes separation of changing accommodation so that junior and senior football leagues can play at the same time.</p> <p>The facility should have appropriate staff undertaking both maintenance and community liaison activity.</p>

Figure 17.2: Quality aims for different types of green space in Sefton	
Type (Sefton Typology)	Quality target
Allotments	To be determined once an allotments strategy has been adopted.
Accessible natural green space	<p>A welcoming, clean, litter-free and dog-mess free facility, which is well managed for nature and well as other types of use. Where appropriate, sites should have benches, litter bins and 'dog-mess' bins, paths and lighting, and signboards or interpretation boards.</p> <p>The facility should have appropriate staff undertaking both maintenance and community liaison activity.</p> <p>High quality facilities will meet the Green Flag Award standard.</p>
Trees	Trees species should be appropriate to the site location, microclimate, soil, topography and character. Tree planting and site design shall meet the standards set out in any relevant British Standards (e.g. BS 5837) or our Information Notes. In general indigenous species (e.g. oak, birch and ash) should be planted in preference to ornamental species. Provision should be made for on-going retention and maintenance, and there should be a site management plan which is agreed in writing by the Council if the site has substantial areas of tree planting.

17.8 There is no specific quality target for accessible nature space. However, Aim 4 of the Green Space Strategy (2008) sets out the Council's aim of increasing the wildlife value of greenspace, and the linked objectives which are:

- To make people more aware of the extent, importance and health benefits of wildlife and biodiversity to Sefton;
- To make it easier for the community to get to wildlife sites and other green spaces with high wildlife value;
- To make the most of opportunities to create new wildlife sites and corridors and to increase the wildlife value of existing green spaces and corridors, especially those with low wildlife value;
- To encourage 'best practice' management of wildlife sites and resources, taking into account wildlife, site and network integrity, public access and other considerations.

### 18. The accessibility target for Sefton

#### Overview

18.1 Section 14 above sets out the accessibility distances used by the Council's Leisure department in relation to parks and play spaces. For parks these are for catchments of within 400 metres of a local park, 1 kilometre of a neighbourhood park, 3 kilometres of a district park and more than 3 kilometres from a borough park. Section 14 also sets out Natural England's recommendation that everyone should live within 300 metres of an accessible natural green space, and within set distances of larger accessible nature spaces

18.2 Public consultation has shown that most people travel for less than 10 minutes to a park or other green space and that the majority think that the amount of parks and green space is about right. This includes walking, travelling by car, and other means of transport. However, there are also indications that most people are happy to travel further to larger, better quality spaces.

#### The accessibility target for Sefton

18.3 The approved accessibility target for green space in Sefton, set out in the Green Space Strategy (2008), is reproduced in figure 18.1 below.

#### **Figure 18.1 - Accessibility target for green space in Sefton**

**Everyone to live within 15 to 20 minutes walk of a larger park or nature area.**

18.4 It takes about 15 to 20 minutes to walk 1 kilometre; so 1 kilometre is the distance relating to this accessibility standard. A larger park is a neighbourhood, district or borough park in terms of the parks hierarchy set out in the Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy and discussed in section 12 above. Accessible nature spaces are referred to as nature areas in the Green Space Strategy for Sefton, and the target refers to all accessible nature spaces.

18.5 This is a pragmatic - rather than aspirational - target which reflects the actual situation and constraints facing Sefton.

18.6 The accessibility target for parks focuses on a maximum 15 to 20 minute walk to a larger park, rather than a maximum of a 5 to 10 minutes walk (400metres distance) to a smaller (local) park. This is because people have indicated their willingness to travel further to use better, larger green spaces. There are resource implications in providing and maintaining new green space; and, given the built-up character of much of Sefton's urban area, it may not be possible to provide it in some local areas. Setting an accessibility target for a longer distance increases the opportunities for the Council to focus on improving accessibility to, and quality of, existing green spaces rather than creating new space.

18.7 Sefton's target is for *larger* parks but *all* nature areas and canal access points. Natural England's Access to Nature Space targets (ANGSt) model uses different distances for different sizes of nature site, as set out in figure 14.4 above. However, in the Sefton context the scope to increase site size is almost non-existent, so very little would be achieved by showing large areas of deficiency.

18.8 Figure 18.2 below shows how these walking times relate to distances - actual distances and straight-line distances used for mapping purposes and for analysis. To allow for the difference between 1 kilometre 'as the crow flies' and actual walking distance through streets, pavements and footpaths, a mapping adjustment has been made.

18.9 The most important buffer is the 600 metres straight-line distance used to represent a 1 kilometre walking distance on the ground. This adjustment factor of 0.6 (60%) is nationally accepted, by both Play England and the Children's Play Council. Where barriers to movement such as rivers, the canal, rail lines and even dual carriageways go through these buffers, the buffers have been adjusted again so that they only cross these barriers where there is a bridge.

**Figure 18.2 Accessibility: walking time and catchment distances**

Type of park, green space or accessible nature space(nature area)	Walking time	Actual distance	Straight line distance (for mapping purposes)
Local (smaller )	5 to 10 minutes	400 metres	240 metres
Neighbourhood (larger)	15 to 20 minutes	1 kilometre	600metres
District (large)	45 minutes	3 kilometres	1950 metres
Borough (largest)	Over 45 minutes	Over 3 kilometres	1950 metres

18.10 The setting of specific accessibility targets for other types of green space needs further consideration:

- **amenity green space** - further consideration needs to be given to the wider functions and benefits of amenity green space;
- **play facilities** or **children's play** - further work is needed;
- **outdoor sports sites** - although the Playing Pitch Strategy has been approved, further work is needed on non-pitch sports provision (including hard-surfaced multi-use games areas (MUGAs));
- **accessible natural greenspace or accessible nature space** -Sefton Council's current focus in on improving the nature value of all public green spaces, to increase the amount (and quality) of accessible nature space;
- **allotments** – further work on existing and preferred travel time to allotments is needed, and preparation of an Allotments Strategy is at an early stage;

18.11 No specific accessibility target has been set at the moment for **cemeteries and churchyards** and **schools, colleges and institutions** as these green spaces are ancillary to other specific land uses. However, they do play an important green space role, particularly where they are accessible to the public.

### Applying the accessibility target

18.12 Maps have been produced which accessibility to parks and accessible nature spaces, based on the timings, distances and straight-line distances set out in Figure 18.2. The accessibility maps for parks are shown in Figure 18.3 and for accessible nature spaces in Figure 18.4. For each map within figure 18.3 and 18.4, the key green buffers and lines are the critical ones, as they are the lines showing 15 to 20 minutes walking distance (1 kilometre). Any areas outside the green buffers are deficient in terms of accessibility of parks or accessible nature areas.

18.13 As above, larger parks are those defined as neighbourhood, district or borough parks in the Council's Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy (2008). This Strategy also defines smaller, local, parks. Where parks are managed by others (e.g. Parish Councils, One Vision Housing), they have been given one of these designations based on their facilities and size. The same process has taken place for coast and countryside parks. Coast and countryside parks have been included for this accessibility assessment (but not for the quantity assessment) because the key issue is access distance to facility not the size of the site (which skews the data in favour of the coastal areas).

18.14 The parks accessibility maps show that accessibility varies considerably between and within Area Committee areas, and that parks the deficiency areas tend to be quite substantial. While the majority of the urban population live within 15 to 20 minutes walk of a larger park – almost all of the population of Bootle, Litherland and most of Netherton - there are quite a few areas of deficiency, notably:

- quite substantial areas of Blundellsands especially, Thornton;
- areas in Formby, notably north-central Formby, plus the south-east corner and southern fringe of Formby;
- a fairly substantial part of northern Lydiate and western Maghull; plus the fringes of eastern Aintree and southern Melling;
- large areas within the housing areas of central and north Southport.

18.15 The accessibility maps for accessible nature space (referred to as nature areas in the Green Space Strategy) show that the deficiency areas are quite small. These deficiency areas have some relation to the deficiency areas for parks, in part because many of the urban accessible nature spaces *are* parks. The main deficiency areas for accessible nature spaces are:

- some of Blundellsands, and a small part of Crosby/Thornton;
- some of central Litherland (north of Dunnings Bridge Road);
- small parts of northern Aintree and northern Melling (Waddicar);
- large areas within the housing areas of central and north Southport, plus southern Birkdale.



Figure 18.3.1: Accessibility maps for parks – Bootle area

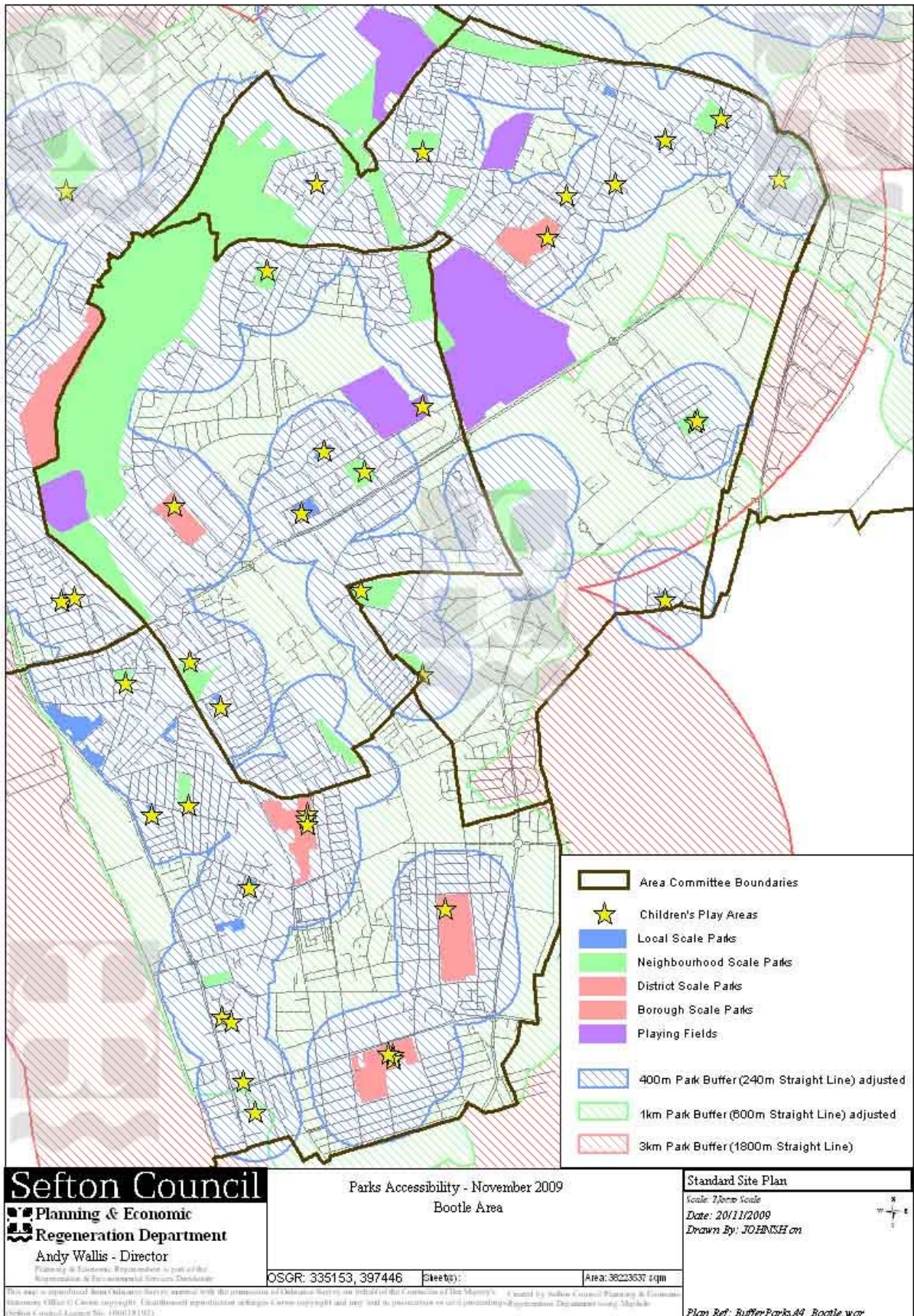




Figure 18.3.2: Accessibility maps for parks – Crosby area

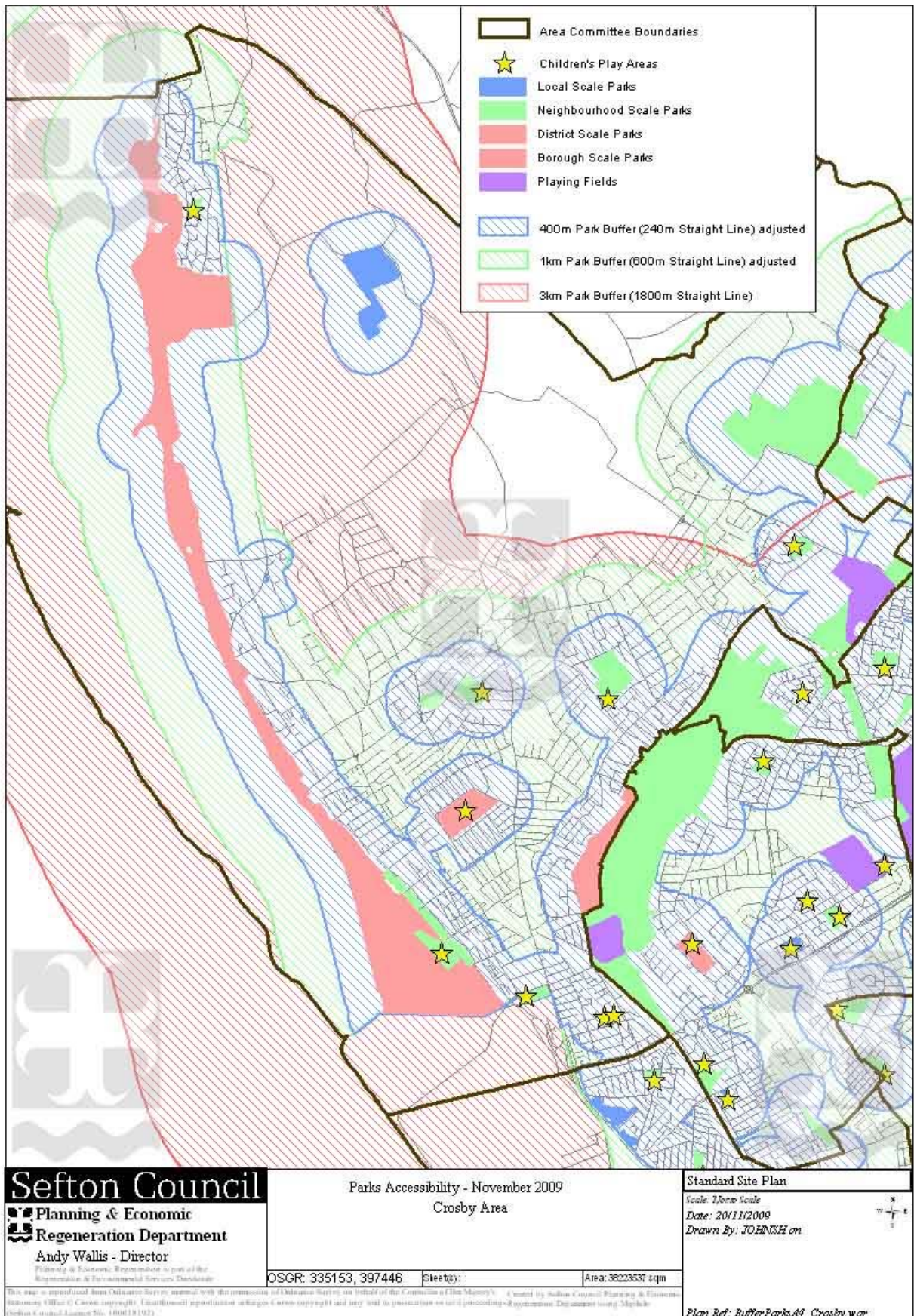




Figure 18.3.3: Accessibility maps for parks – Formby area

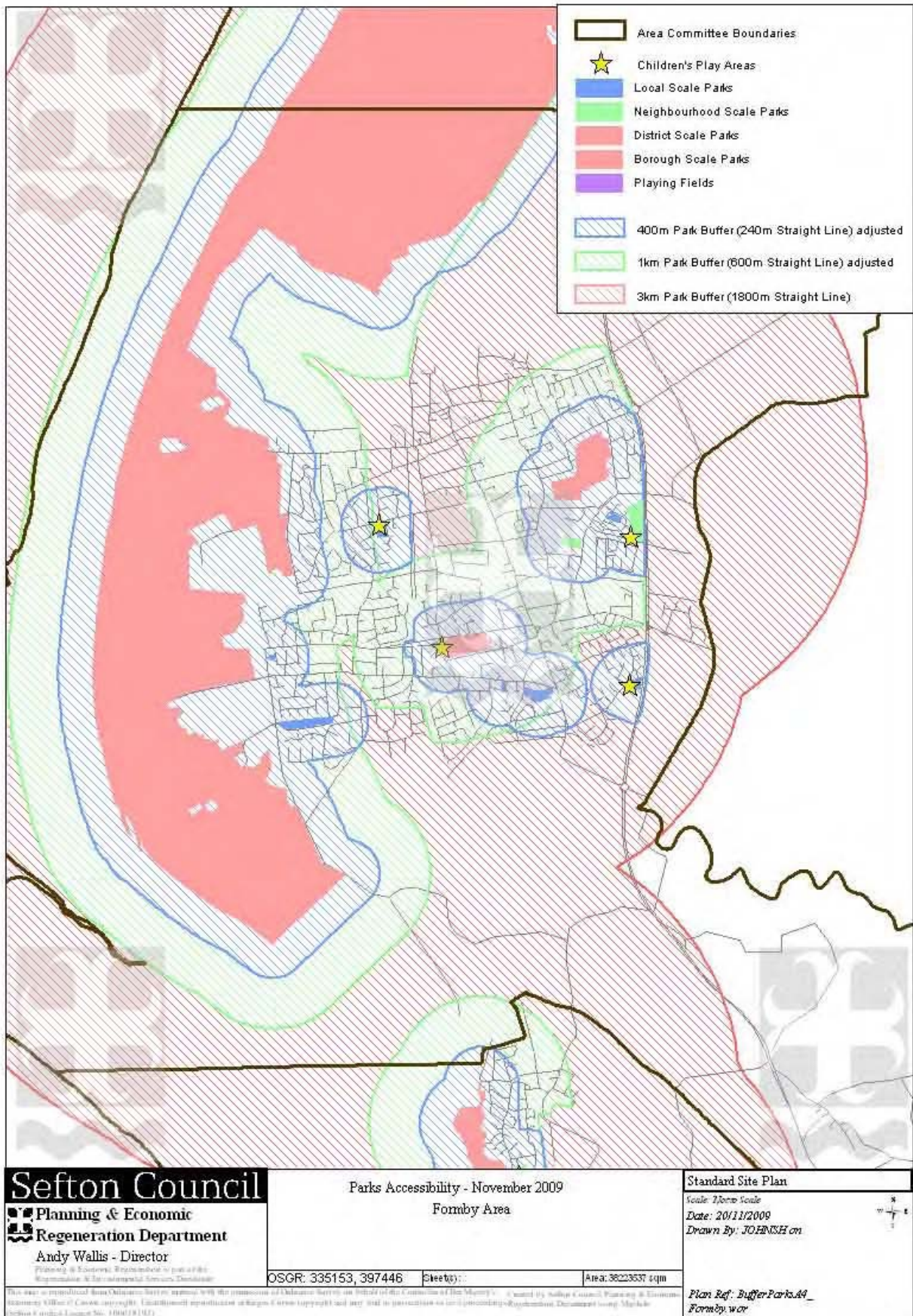




Figure 18.3.4: Accessibility maps for parks – Sefton East Parishes area

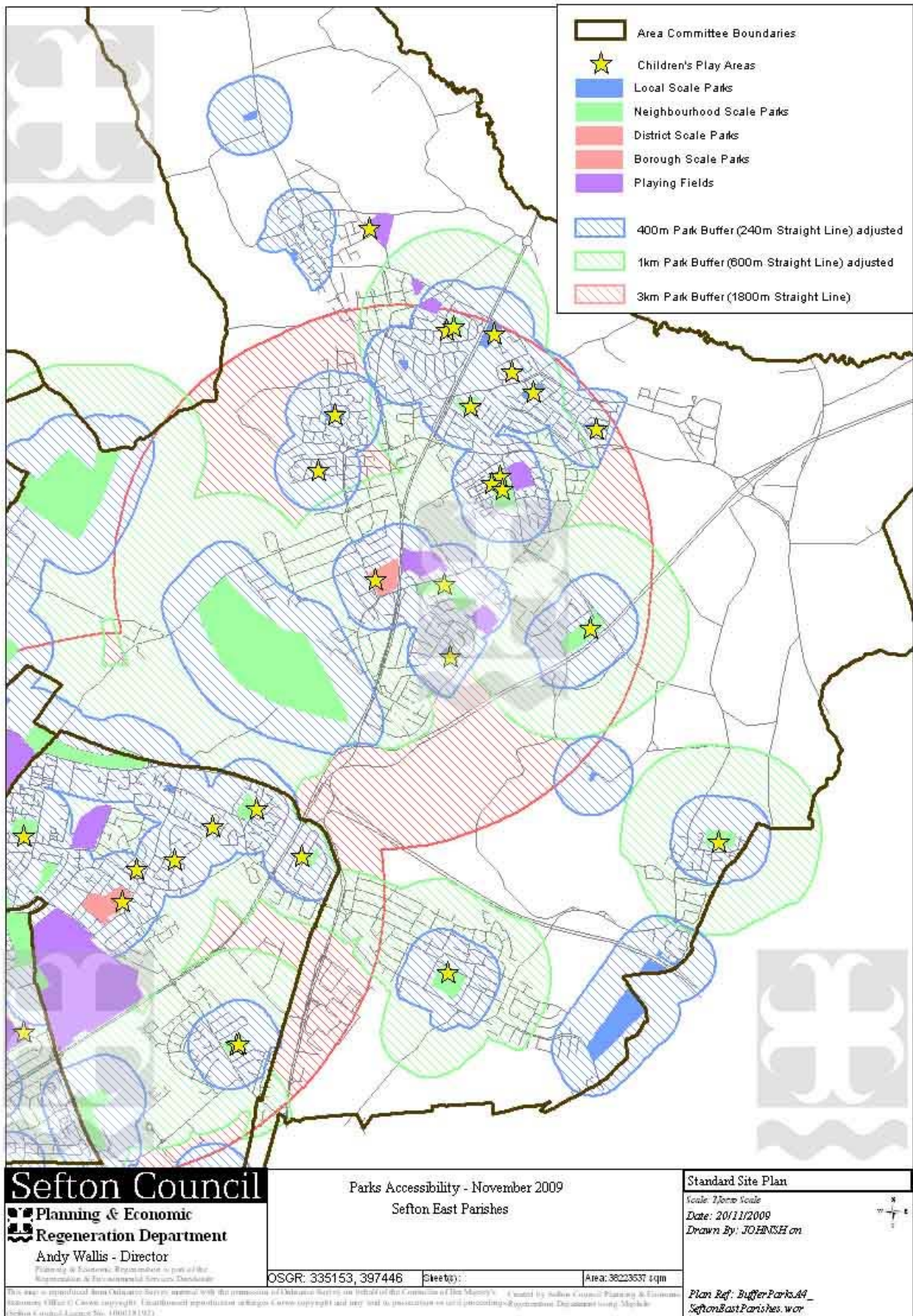




Figure 18.3.5: Accessibility maps for parks – Southport area

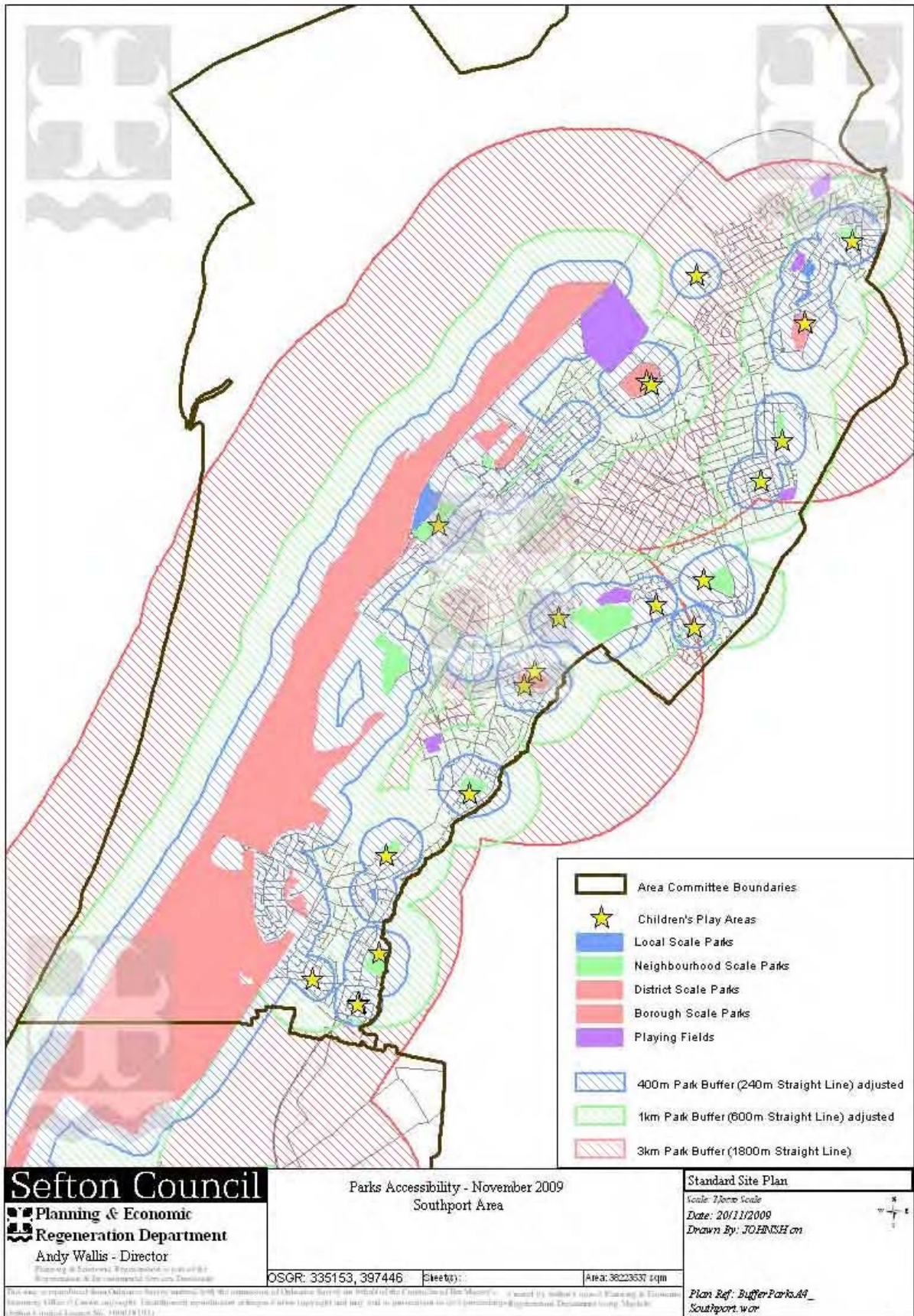




Figure 18.4.1: Accessibility maps for accessible nature space – Bootle area

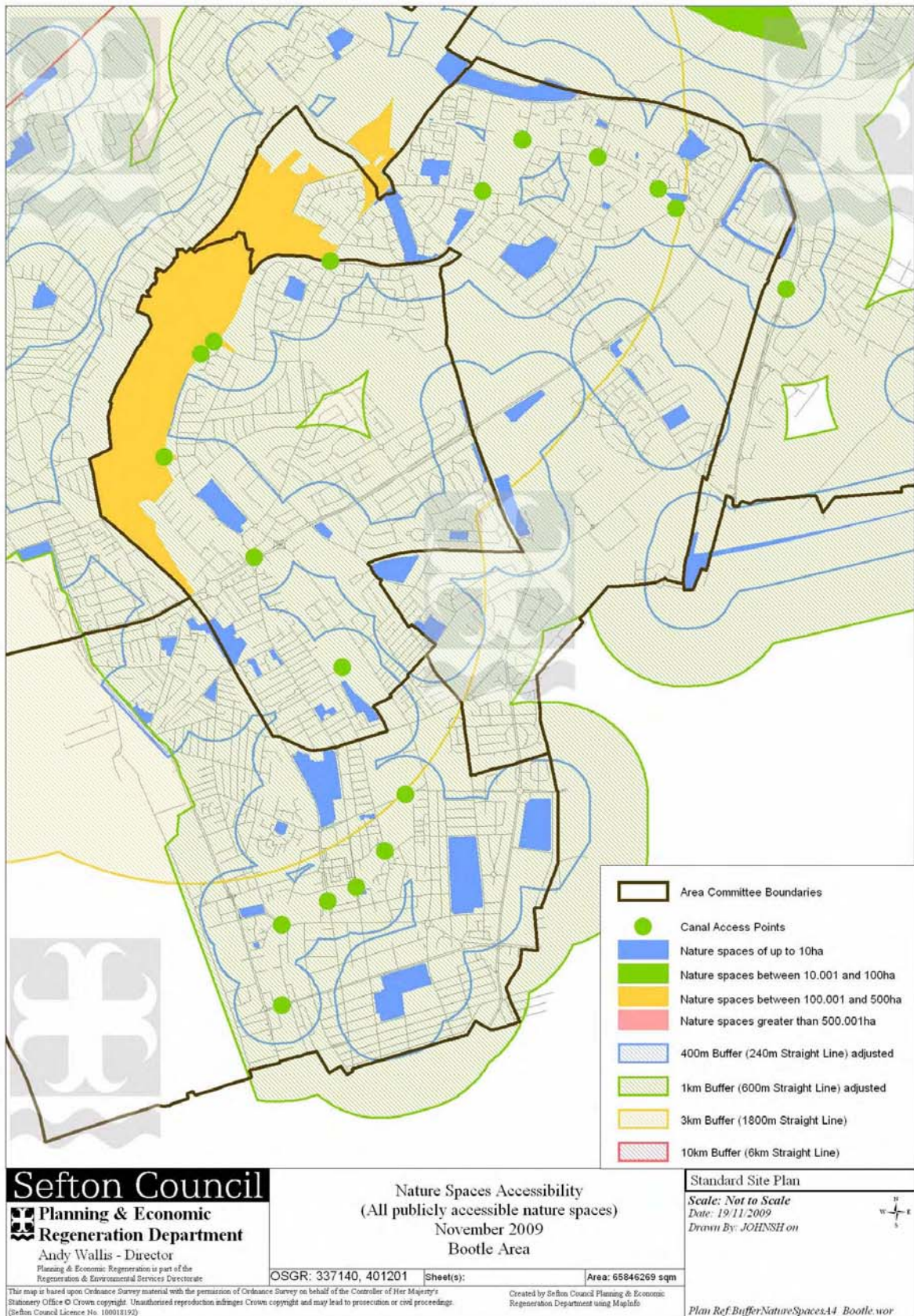




Figure 18.4.2: Accessibility maps for accessible nature space – Crosby area

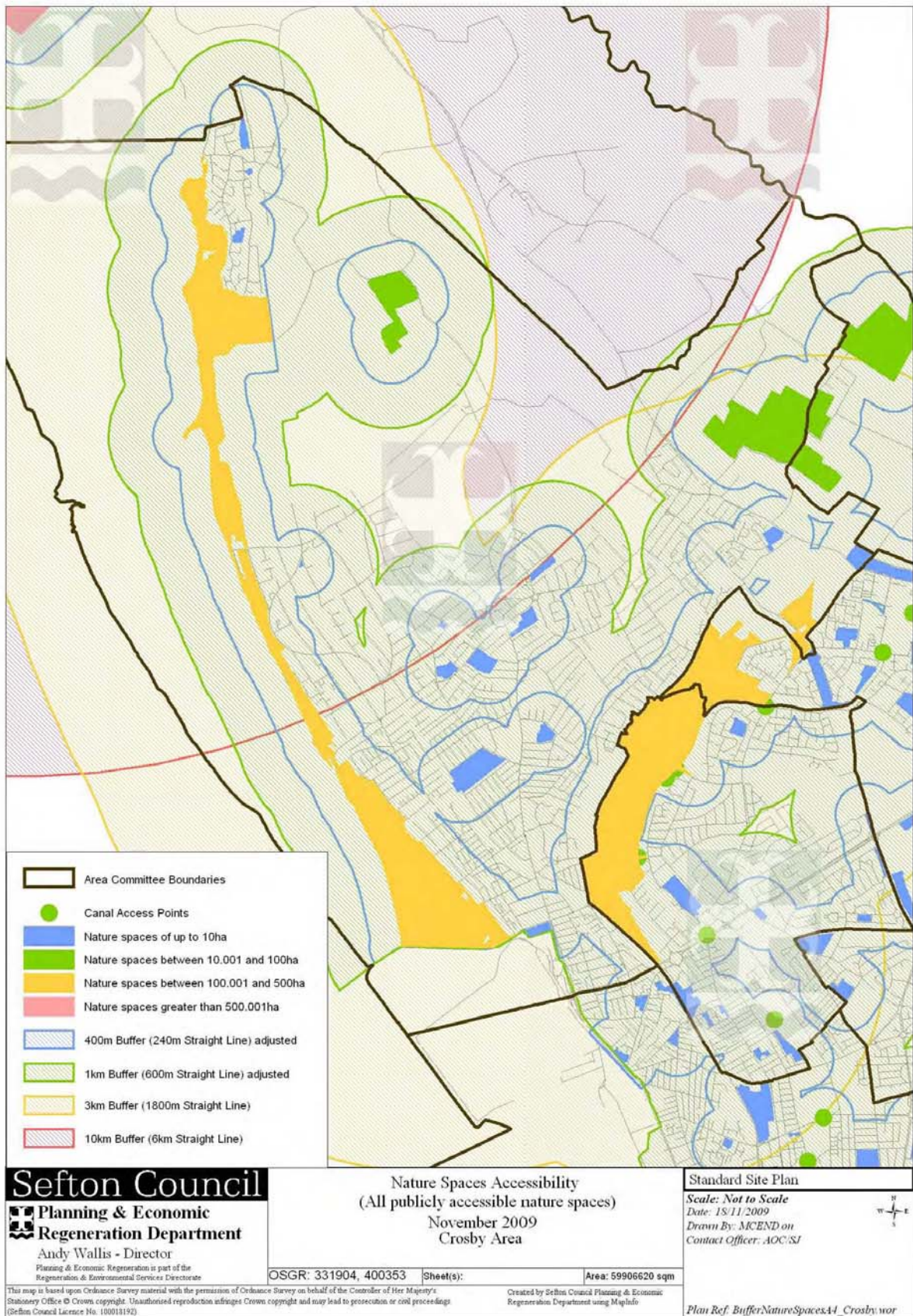




Figure 18.4.3: Accessibility maps for accessible nature space – Formby area

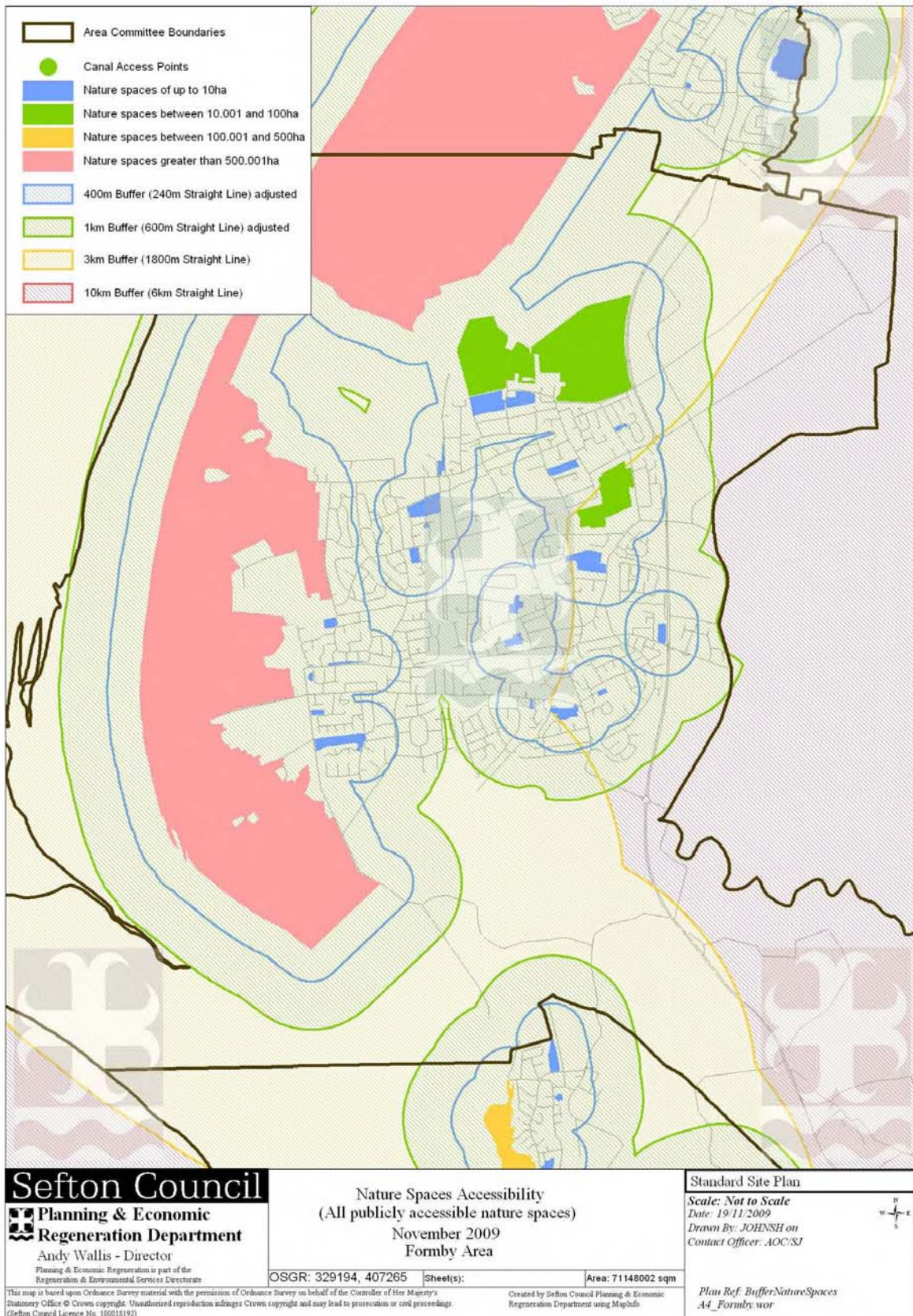




Figure 18.4.4: Accessibility maps for accessible nature space – Sefton East Parishes area

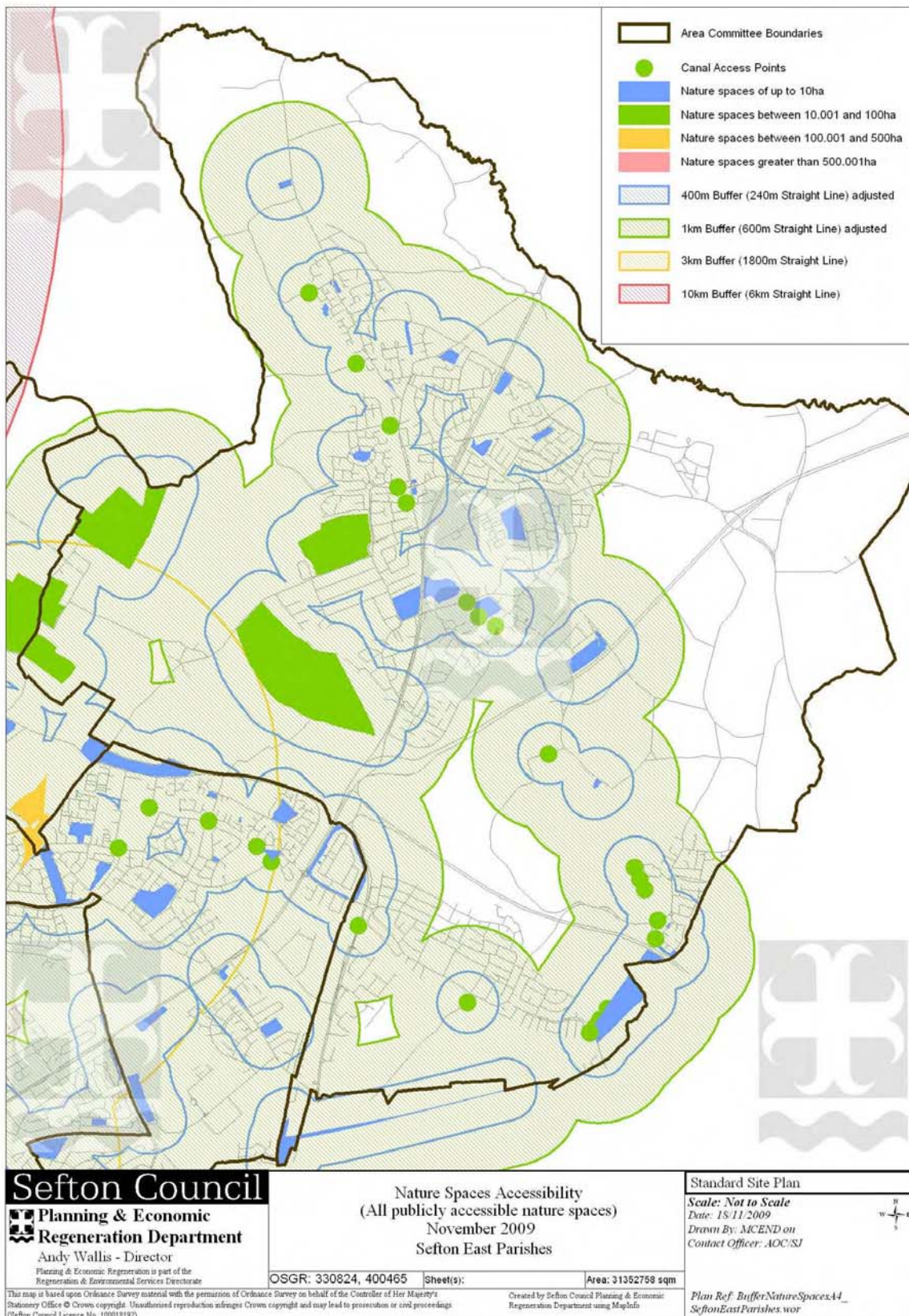
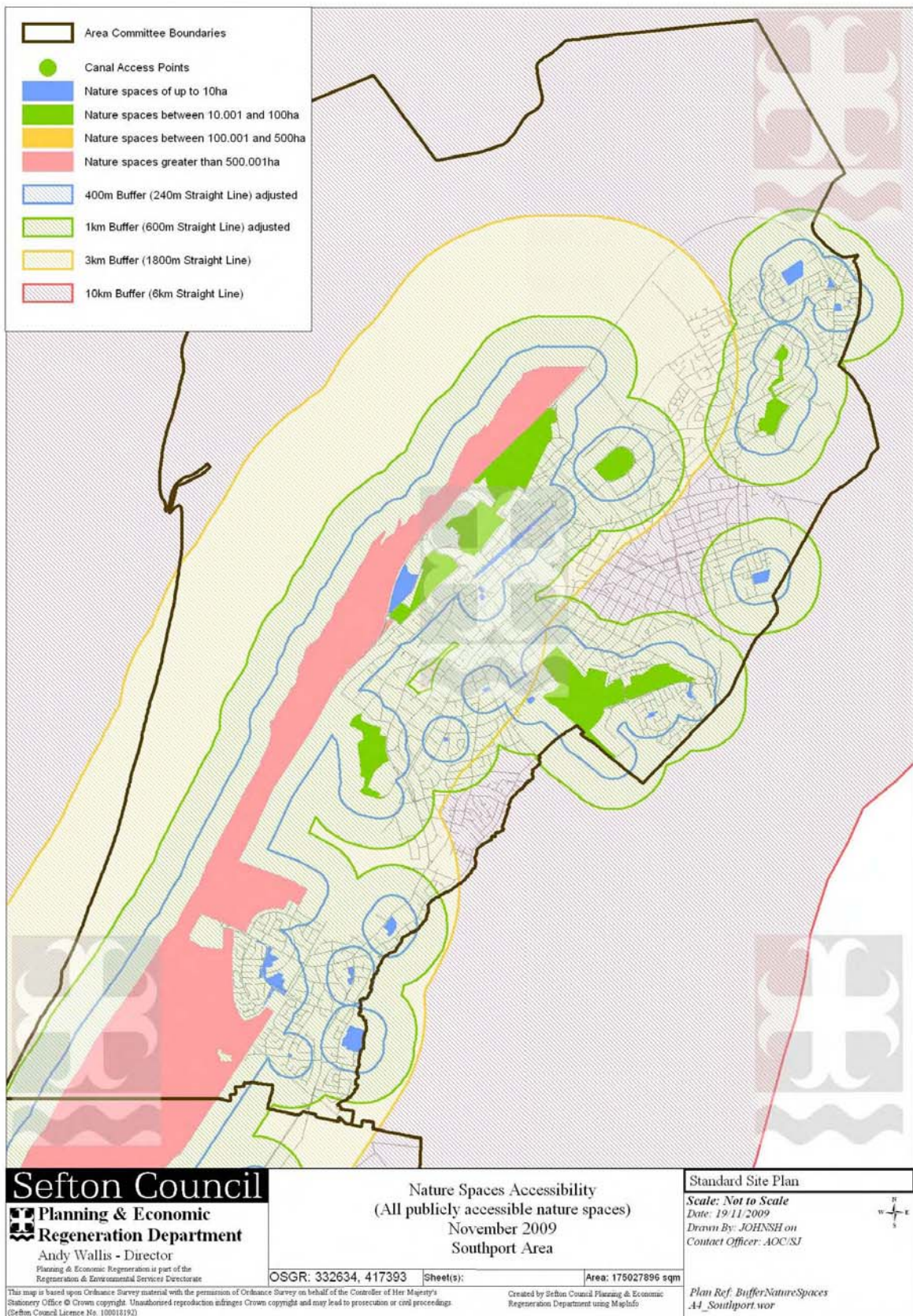




Figure 18.4.5: Accessibility maps for accessible nature space – Southport area



### 19. Applying the Sefton targets to Area Committee areas

#### Introduction

19.1 This section applies the quantity, quality and accessibility targets to Sefton, in line with the advice in the PPG17 companion guide. The variety of green space is also important. The section firstly sets out the general situation in each Area Committee (see especially figure 19.1), and secondly describes what this means for each Area Committee area. Thirdly, it sets out how this information has been derived.

19.2 Applying the targets will inform the preparation of Sefton's Core Strategy, other future Local Development Framework documents and other Council strategies and documents such as the Allotments Strategy or a Play Facilities Strategy.

19.3 In addition, applying the targets is important in helping to assess pre-application enquiries, planning applications or appeals; for example development proposals for sites which are designated as urban greenspaces in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) or are recreational open spaces, or when deciding whether on-site or enhanced green space provision is best in relation to new development.

19.4 Use of these targets can also help determine whether proposed industrial, commercial or leisure development schemes should provide green space - the UDP states that it should be provided where a clear shortage of greenspace in the locality of the development has been identified within a Council-approved Greenspace Strategy (para 16.53, UDP, 2006). The Green Space Strategy, backed up by the information in this Green Space and Recreation Study, and other strategies such as the Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy (2008), forms this "Council-approved Greenspace Strategy".

19.5 While the quantity, quality and accessibility targets have been approved for the whole of Sefton; they should be applied at the more local level of Area Committee areas or smaller areas within them. This is particularly important in the assessment of pre-application enquiries, planning applications or appeals.

19.6 In applying the Sefton quantity, quality and accessibility targets and assessing whether there is a shortage of green space, it is important to look at each of the three aspects, as well as how they relate to each other. For example, although one Area Committee area may have enough green space it may not be distributed evenly throughout the area and its quality may vary. Alternatively, for example, a proposed development site may be in an Area Committee with a general shortfall in parks or other types of green space, but may itself be less than 15 to 20 minutes walk from a park and nature area.

19.7 Public consultation (see section 7 above) indicated that generally people are happy to travel further to reach the coast or a park perceived as being of higher quality or with a wider range of facilities, and so improvements to green space quality are important. Better signposting and installation of dropped kerbs or ramps may improve access for example.

19.8 Linked to this, Sefton's current focus is less on increasing the quantity of green space than on improving quality and accessibility, and this should also be borne in mind. There are resource implications in providing and maintaining new green space; and, given the built-up character of much of Sefton's urban area, it may not be possible to provide it in some local areas.

19.9 This focus is reflected by Aim 1 (of 5 aims) of the Green Space Strategy for Sefton (2008); to improve the quality, variety and accessibility of all types of green space. More detailed objectives reinforce this. For quantity, the linked objective 1.4 seeks to "increase the amount of green space in areas of greatest deficiency, when opportunities arise".



19.10 If the proposed development site is an urban greenspace, as designated in the UDP, then the application of these targets will also need to be balanced against the quality of the urban greenspace, and its wider benefits, as well as with other relevant factors.

19.11 The need for an information note, to help in assessing the green space and recreation aspects of pre-application enquiries, planning applications or appeals, will be considered.

**Overview of the Borough**

19.12 This study (and especially this section) provides the more detailed evidence and justification for the application of the Sefton quantity, quality and accessibility targets.

19.13 Figure 19.1 below shows the application of the quantity, quality and accessibility targets to each of Sefton's seven Area Committee areas. In figure 19.1 'traffic lights' colours, and symbols, are used to indicate the general situation – including shortfalls - in each of the Area Committee areas. Figure 19.1 is taken from the Green Space Strategy for Sefton (2008). The Green Space Strategy comments that:

“However, everyone must recognise that this is a generalized level and masks wide variations between individual green spaces and parts of each Area Committee area. More detailed information in the Green Space and Recreation strategy [referring to this Study] and other strategies such as the Parks and Green spaces Asset Management Strategy is also relevant”.

**Figure 19.1 Performance of Area Committee areas against the targets**

<u>Area Committee area</u>	Quantity	Accessibility	Quality	Variety
Crosby	●	■	■	▲
Formby	▲	■	●	▲
Linacre & Derby	■	▲	▲	■
Litherland & Ford	■	▲	▲	▲
Sefton East Parishes	■	■	▲	■
Southport	●	■	▲	▲
St Oswald, Netherton & Orrell	●	■	■	▲

**Symbols:**  
 ● = above the target      ▲ = around the target      ■ = below the target

Variety of green space is important - people should have access to a range of types of green space. As there is no specific target for variety, 'above the target' indicates good variety, 'around the target' reasonable variety, and 'below the target' low variety.

19.14 The following paragraphs provide an overview of what this means for each Area Committee area.

### Crosby Area Committee area

19.15 Crosby Area Committee includes the coast from the Port of Liverpool boundary to the River Alt area, Hightown, Little Crosby and rural areas as well as the urban areas including Great Crosby, Blundellsands, Brighton-le-sands, Waterloo, Thornton and parts of Seaforth. The latter three in particular include small areas which are among the most deprived areas in Sefton and nationally – these areas also tend to be higher density housing areas, with low tree cover. Elsewhere, the inverse relationship between housing density and tree cover is also apparent, for example in Blundellsands where housing density is generally low and tree cover is amongst the highest in Sefton.

19.16 Crosby has the highest relative **quantity** of green spaces in Sefton. Parks (including Crosby Marine Park), amenity greenspace and outdoor sports sites provision is well above the figures for Sefton as a whole, also there are 3 allotments sites. Countryside parks such as the Rimrose Valley are close by, and there are coastal links from Hightown. Crosby has the third highest relative provision of accessible nature space in Sefton, although notably less than Formby and Southport.

19.17 **Accessibility** to green space varies considerably but is generally relatively low. Substantial areas of Blundellsands especially, and Thornton, are more than 15 to 20 minutes walk from a larger park; that is, they are in a deficiency area for accessibility. Some of Blundellsands especially, and a small part of Crosby/Thornton, are in deficiency areas for accessible nature space.

19.18 **Quality** of parks and green spaces is varied, but generally low, although the quality of the Victorian & Edwardian parks is generally good. 3 parks are high quality, 6 are average quality and 4 are low quality. Coronation Park was awarded a Green Flag in 2007, 2008 and 2009, Thornton Crematorium won a Green Flag in 2008 and 2009, Victoria Park is likely to be a candidate for Green Flag in 2010; St Luke's church grounds won the Green Pennant award in 2008 and 2009. Community satisfaction with maintenance is notably low, and extremely low relative to other Area Committees. Satisfaction with the range of facilities is relatively low too.

19.19 Crosby has a reasonable **variety** of green spaces, including coast and countryside parks (which helps to make up for the relatively low amounts of natural and semi-natural green spaces). Also it has access, at some distance the canal. Also, the community satisfaction rate is the third lowest in Sefton. The relative amount of accessible nature space is the third highest in Sefton.

### Formby Area Committee area

19.20 As well as substantial areas of coast and countryside and the main, generally affluent, settlement of Formby, the area also includes Little Altcar and Ince Blundell villages. While central Formby dates from the Victorian and Edwardian era, most of its extensive suburban housing areas date from the 1960s and 1970s. Formby as a whole has more than 10% tree cover (the highest in Sefton), and low housing density.

19.21 **Quantity** of green space is on the low side, below the figures for Sefton as a whole, except for outdoor sports provision which is good. This is offset by the quantity of coast and countryside parks and accessible nature space which is far in excess of the rest of Sefton. This view about quantity is good is endorsed by local interest groups. The character of Formby's built-up area also needs to be taken into account, for example the number of play area in green spaces other than parks, mostly low housing density (large gardens), mostly 10% tree cover,

relative lack of deprivation, and good access to the Sefton coast and countryside via two 'gateway' sites.

19.22 **Accessibility** is generally relatively poor. Accessibility to nature spaces is much better than that for parks, with the whole of Formby being within 15 to 20 minutes walk from an accessible nature space. The rural areas, a substantial area of north-central Formby, plus the south-east corner and some southern fringe areas, are more than 15 to 20 minutes walk from a larger park.

19.23 **Quality** of parks and green spaces is generally good – many are of high quality, some of average quality and no low quality parks or indeed other urban greenspaces. Also, the coast is generally accepted as providing a quality experience, focussed on the Council's site at Lifeboat Rd, and the National Trust's site at Victoria Road. However, there are no Green Flag awards or candidate sites. Community satisfaction with maintenance is the second highest. Satisfaction with the range of facilities is high/ very high, the third highest of all the Area Committee areas.

19.24 While the **variety** of green space and range of facilities, including for children's play, is reasonable, the amount of each type (apart from coastal, nature sites) is low. Community satisfaction with the variety of green space is at the Borough's mid point.

### Linacre and Derby Area Committee area

19.25 Most of this wholly urban area dates from Victorian and Edwardian times; mainly small to medium terraced houses with very small yards, in grid-iron street patterns. Housing density is high, tree cover is very low (mostly less than 2.5%) and much of the area is one of the most deprived nationally and within Sefton. As well as housing, the area includes Bootle Town Centre and office area, and industrial areas adjacent to the port and canal.

19.26 The **quantity** of green space is relatively low. There are no allotments and provision of other types of green space is poor. However, parks provision is very good - higher than the Sefton-wide figure (although just below the approved target of 1.2 hectares per thousand population in the Sefton Green Space Strategy). The relative amount of accessible nature space is the lowest in Sefton.

19.27 **Accessibility** to parks and accessible nature space is reasonable. Only a few houses are more than 15 to 20 minutes walk from a larger park, and all areas are within 15 to 20 minutes walk from an accessible nature space.

19.28 The **quality** of urban greenspace is mixed but generally reasonable. Parks and the canal are mainly average quality, while amenity greenspaces are mainly low quality. However, Derby Park came close to Green Flag status in 2007, 2008, and 2009, and it is likely that Derby Park and North Park will be put forward for a Green Flag award in 2010. Derby Park is also on the national Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. However, community satisfaction with the range of facilities is quite high, and third highest relative to other Area Committees. Satisfaction with maintenance is at the mid point of all the Area Committee areas.

19.29 The **variety** of green space is poor. The area has a lot of parks, with facilities for children, but no allotments and few pitches or outdoor sports sites, and its only natural and semi-natural greenspace is the canal. There are no countryside sites. The amount of accessible nature space is very low.

### Litherland and Ford Area Committee area

19.30 The area is varied. The southern part of the area (Litherland) shares most of the characteristics of the Linacre and Derby area above. The remainder of the area is a mix of interwar housing and post-1945 homes, with variable housing density, garden size and

generally low tree cover (typically less than 5 %). All of Litherland and Ford Area Committee area is one of the more deprived areas both in Sefton and nationally.

19.31 The **quantity** of green space is relatively low compared to the Sefton-wide provision rates, especially for parks, natural greenspace and outdoor sports. Although overall outdoor sports provision is slightly lower than the Sefton-wide figure, the presence of the 'flagship' Litherland Sports Park is a major asset, which serves a much wider area. The area benefits from the Rimrose Valley and access to the canal, and relative provision of coast and countryside parks is the third best in Sefton. Relative provision of accessible nature space is the highest of the non –coastal areas of Sefton.

19.32 **Accessibility** to parks is reasonable as all of the Area Committee area is within 15 to 20 minutes walk from a larger park. However, although most of the area has good accessibility to nature areas, some of central Litherland (north of Dunnings Bridge Road) is more than 15 to 20 minutes walk from an accessible nature space.

19.33 The **quality** of urban greenspaces is mixed, but most commonly seems to be average, or reasonable. For example, 6 parks are of average quality, while 2 parks are high quality and 2 are low quality. 5 amenity greenspaces are of average quality, 1 is low and 1 high quality. There are no Green Flag awards or likely 2010 candidates. Community satisfaction with the range of facilities is not high, and just under half of respondents are satisfied with maintenance. Both are at the lower end relative to other Area Committees.

19.34 The **variety** of green spaces is reasonable (although mostly lower than the Sefton-wide figures), with a fair amount of each of the different types of green space. The area includes Litherland Sports Park, which is one of Sefton's Council's flagship sports facilities. The area includes part of the Rimrose Valley countryside park and the canal, and the provision of accessible nature space is the highest of the non –coastal areas of Sefton.

### Sefton East Parishes Area Committee area

19.35 Sefton East Parishes area includes the settlements of Maghull and Lydiate, Aintree (including the Grand National racecourse) and the villages of Melling, Lunt and Sefton. In general the density of the mainly interwar and post-war housing is low or average, with medium to large private gardens. Urban tree cover is average, between 5 and 10%.

19.36 The rural, Green Belt, area is mostly agricultural land crossed by public paths, the canal and the River Alt, and there are some community woodland and countryside recreation areas. Sefton Council manages many of the green spaces within the built up area by Parish and Town Councils rather than.

19.37 The **quantity** of green space provision is relatively low - the amount of parks and amenity greenspace is less than half the Sefton-wide figure and there are no allotments – although outdoor sports provision is good. There is also good access to the coast and countryside parks from a good public path network, and the canal, although the amount of accessible nature space is relatively low compared to Sefton as a whole.

19.38 **Accessibility** to green space is varied, but generally low. Fairly substantial parts of northern Lydiate and western Maghull, the fringes of eastern Aintree and southern Melling, are more than 15 to 20 minutes walk from a larger park. Small parts of northern Aintree and northern Melling (Waddicar), are also more than 15 to 20 minutes walk from an accessible nature space.

19.39 **Quality** of greenspace is generally reasonable. Quality of parks is mainly average, and of amenity greenspaces is mainly low. Quality of other urban greenspaces also varies. There

are no Green Flag award sites. However, community satisfaction with the range of facilities is notably high, the highest in the borough. Satisfaction with maintenance is joint highest.

19.40 The **variety** of green space is low, as the area has relatively low provision of parks and there are no allotments. However, the range of other types of green space is reasonable and there are more than average outdoor sports sites; as well as the canal, country parks and a good public path network.

### Southport Area Committee area

19.41 The Southport Area Committee area is the most populous and varied area within Sefton. It has varying levels of deprivation and relative wealth, with part of the central area and extreme eastern fringe of Southport and Marshside being amongst the most deprived in Sefton and nationally. By contrast, parts of Churchtown, southern Birkdale and Ainsdale are some of the least deprived areas in Sefton and nationally.

19.42 Generally the most and least deprived areas coincide with the highest housing and lowest densities respectively. Tree cover inversely reflects housing density, and varies from around 5% to around 10%. Southport includes the Marine Lake and seafront parks and gardens, as well as other green spaces, the dune coast and beach at Ainsdale. The scope for other countryside recreation is limited mainly to Newlands country park at Town Lane.

19.43 The **quantity** of provision is relatively good, notably for parks and natural green space. There is also good access to coast and countryside parks and a good path network especially near the Seafront, Birkdale and Ainsdale although the path network east of Southport is limited. The relative amount of accessible nature space is high, compared to Sefton as a whole, mainly due to the coastal areas.

19.44 **Accessibility** to green space and accessible nature space is generally poor, due to the fact that most parks or accessible nature spaces are found towards the edge of the built-up area. Around a quarter of Southport's residential areas - large housing areas within central and north Southport are more than 15 to 20 minutes walk from a larger park or accessible nature space, while southern Birkdale is also more than 15 to 20 minutes walk from an accessible nature space.

19.45 The **quality** of urban greenspaces is reasonable – mixed, but most commonly green spaces seem to be of average quality. Two parks, achieved Green Flag awards in 2009, and Ainsdale and Birkdale Sandhills coastal site is likely to be put forward as well in 2010. This achievement of 2 Green Flag awards needs to be balanced against the fact that more parks and amenity greenspaces are of low rather than high quality. Community satisfaction with maintenance is the joint highest in Sefton, while satisfaction with the range of facilities is reasonably high, at the mid point of all Area Committees in Sefton.

19.46 Southport has a reasonable **variety** of types of green space, and there is good access to coast and a country park (although overall countryside access is not good). The relative amount of accessible nature space is the second highest in Sefton.

### St Oswald, Netherton and Orrell Area Committee area

19.47 Much of the northern part of this area is post-1945 overspill housing areas, with substantial areas of private housing dating from the 1990s. The south of the area mostly comprises interwar housing. There are also substantial employment areas around Dunning's Bridge Road, Heysham Road and Bridle Road. Housing density is medium to high, while tree cover is relatively low at 2.5 to 5%. The area is relatively deprived and includes some of the most deprived parts of Sefton and in national terms.



19.48 The area includes part of the Rimrose Valley and other countryside areas, the canal and low-grade farmland.

19.49 The **quantity** of green space is reasonably good, being just below the Sefton-wide rate. The amount of amenity urban greenspace is more than twice the Sefton-wide figure and levels of natural and semi-natural greenspace (which include the canal) are also high. Provision of allotments is almost 4 times the Sefton-wide figure, with the Brown's Lane allotments site being improved recently. However, coast and countryside park provision is relatively low. The relative amount of accessible nature space is also low – the second lowest in Sefton.

19.50 **Accessibility** is generally low. A relatively small area in the south-east part of the area is more than 15 to 20 minutes walk from a larger park or accessible nature space.

19.51 **Quality** of green space varies but is generally low. Most parks are of average greenspace quality, while most amenity greenspaces are high or average quality. For other urban greenspace the picture is also mixed. There are no Green Flag awards or likely 2010 candidate sites. Community satisfaction with maintenance is notably low – second lowest - and low relative to other Area Committees. Satisfaction with the range of facilities is the lowest in Sefton as well.

19.52 There is a reasonable **variety** and amount of green space, including the canal and part of the Rimrose Valley countryside park, although the relative amount of accessible nature space is the second lowest in Sefton.

### Further information

19.53 In both figure 19.1 and the paragraphs above relating to each Area Committee area, the **quantity** assessments focus on accessible nature space (figure 10.8 above) and recreational green space (figure 16.2 above), with limited weight given to residents' views on quantity of parks and green space (from the 2007 telephone survey, see section 7 above). The recreational green space figures do not include recreational coast and countryside areas; firstly because the seaward boundary of the coastal areas has the effect of skewing the figures in favours of Area Committees with a long coastline (notably Formby and Southport), and secondly because the accessible nature space figures give a great deal of weight to the coast and countryside sites.

19.54 The **quality** assessments give some weight to the number of formal Green Flag awards made or sought. They give considerable weight to urban greenspace quality, especially for parks (see section 8 above) and to residents' views on maintenance and range of facilities (from the 2007 telephone survey). There is considerable overlap between Green Flag criteria, some urban greenspace quality criteria and the most important quality issues for local people.

19.55 The **accessibility** assessments focus on accessibility to larger parks and nature spaces (see sections 14 and 18 above), with some weight given to Residents' views on access (from the 2007 telephone survey). Here, coast and countryside areas (or 'parks') are included as they are important recreational areas for people who live close to them. Where levels of accessibility to larger parks and nature spaces differ markedly, less weight is given to access to nature spaces because accessibility to these is generally higher throughout Sefton than access to parks.

19.56 Variety is also important, as people should have access to a range of types of green space. The **variety** assessments give the greatest weight to the range of types of recreational space and amount of each type (see figure 16.2), some weight to the amount of nature spaces (see figure 16.2) and some weight to residents' views on the variety of parks and green spaces (from the 2007 telephone survey).

### **20. Green space funding and resources - issues and opportunities**

20.1 While green space is seen as an important issue nationally, regionally and locally, its provision is not a statutory duty and funding at all levels is constantly under pressure. Council funding for green space – provision, enhancement and maintenance - has to compete against increasing demands from many other public service areas – e.g. social services, education, refuse collection – and locally the priorities for the enhancement, management and maintenance of green space in Sefton are under constant review.

20.2 National advice and best practice suggests that the most effective funding for improving the provision or quality of public green space is capital funding from sources outside the Council, to complement existing Council spending; delivered through successful partnership working; targeting the areas most in need. To be most effective, also there must be:

- Political commitment to the importance of green space and recognition of its many benefits;
- Council-wide commitment to the importance of green space; cross-departmental working to make the most of opportunities to enhance green space through existing budgets;
- Strong partnerships and good working relationships with other organisations who recognise the importance of green space;
- A commitment to making the most of external funding including grants; *and*
- A strategic vision and priorities for green space in the area.

#### **Corporate commitment and working**

20.3 The Council's approval of the Green Space Strategy for Sefton in October 2008, together with this Green Space and Recreation Study, is considered to demonstrate their commitment to green space. (See <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/greenspacestrategy> ). The 5 aims of the Green Space Strategy are:

1. Improving the quality, variety, and accessibility of all types of green space.
2. Increasing community use of all green spaces and improving community health.
3. Making the most of the ways in which green space can help reduce the impacts of climate change.
4. Increasing the wildlife value of green spaces.
5. Working in partnership, especially to make the most of funding opportunities.

20.4 The Green Space Strategy Action Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to cross-departmental working to make the most of opportunities to implement the Green Space Strategy (see figure 20 .1).

## Sefton Green Space and Recreation Study November 2009

**Figure 20 .1: Green Space Strategy Action Plan – examples of one action plan point for each Green Space Strategy aim**

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Funding</b>
1.	Achieve at least one Green Flag or Green Pennant award in each Area Committee area.	Sefton Council Leisure Town and Parish Councils 'Friends of Parks' groups	Two new awards per year across Sefton	Sefton Council Town and Parish Councils Other – various
2.	Support existing initiatives to increase use of green space across the community, e.g.: • Guided walks and other promotions, e.g. 'Walking for Health', 'doorstep' footpath walks, Merseyrail 'Walking by train' booklets, Ranger service events; • 'People in Parks' initiative, e.g. increased role for 'Friends of Parks' groups, new 'Friends of' groups.	Sefton Council Leisure NHS Sefton Merseytravel 'Friends of' groups Youth groups Other voluntary and community groups	On-going, <i>plus</i> 1 new doorstep footpath walk per year	Sefton Council NHS Sefton Merseyrail Other – various
3.	Support green space schemes which yield local produce – reducing carbon emissions and the need for travel e.g.: • Schools and community based food production; • Allotments and Green Gym initiatives: • Use of local timber for products, e.g. seats and signs on the Sefton Coast, wood chips as mulch.	Sefton Council Leisure NHS Sefton Schools The Mersey Forest	On-going	Sefton Council Schools Other – various
4.	Increase corporate awareness within the Council and for partners of the legal duty to consider biodiversity, e.g. leaflet showing how different parts of Council can affect this.	North Merseyside Biodiversity Manager Sefton Council Planning Sefton Council Leisure All other Sefton Council departments	On-going	Sefton Council
5.	Identify priority projects in each year and focus on identifying and drawing in all potential partners and funding.	Green Space Strategy Steering Group Parish and Town Councils OneVision Housing Play Sefton YKids Other voluntary and community groups	On-going	Sefton Council Partners Developers Other - various

### Strong partnerships

20.5 Aim 5 of the Green Space Strategy for Sefton and its linked objectives are particularly important in demonstrating the commitment of Sefton Council and its partners to strong partnerships. The objectives are:

5.1 To strengthen and extend the partnership for green space in Sefton Council – especially with other organisations, voluntary groups and the wider community.

5.2 To actively seek partners and promote a joint approach to proposals and funding, especially for priority projects.

5.3 To make the most of available resources, e.g. sponsorship and encouraging volunteers.

20.6 The Green Space Strategy Action Plan demonstrates the commitment to strong partnerships to make the most of opportunities to implement the Green Space Strategy (see figure 20.1).

### Funding

20.7 The Green Space Strategy and Action Plan also demonstrate the range of internal funding, partners' funding and external funding that can be accessed to enhance green space and recreation provision (see figure 20.1)

20.8 As well as their own resources, some partners can gain access to funding not available to Sefton Council. Both can be used to 'match-fund' Sefton's resources when applying for external grants. The case studies in the Green Space Strategy provide good examples of green space and recreation projects, which draw on Council funding, partner funding, and several sources of external funding.

20.9 Funding from developers for green space and tree provision is an important capital funding element. This is in relation to the grant of planning permission in accordance with approved planning policies. Developers may make direct new provision within development sites. Where this is not possible they can provide 'commuted sums' linked to legal agreements relating to section 106 of planning legislation, to allow the Council to enhance existing provision. These commuted sums are often referred to as 'section 106' or 's106' monies. The 'Green Space, Trees and Development' Supplementary Planning Document (2008) sets out in more detail the Council's approach to this (see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/greenspacespd>).

20.10 A potential source of Council funding may be the sale of Council land, for example surplus school sites or other older Council buildings and sites. Sefton Council regularly reviews the management of its assets. However, there are usually many calls on the money thus generated. In some case there may be the opportunity to create new or improved areas of open space through the selective development of part of a larger green space. Here, the proceeds from the sale would be more likely to be invested in providing high quality open space. Such a development proposal would need careful justification, e.g. if there was no realistic prospect of a large area of green space being able to be improved. Sensitive use of redundant buildings within green spaces for leisure and recreational purposes is also a possibility.

### Strategic priorities

20.11 The strategic vision and priorities for green space in Sefton are set by the Green Space Strategy and other more specific strategies, such as the Playing Pitch Strategy, Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy, set out in Figure 5.2 'Links between Sefton and partner strategies and green space work' above.

### 21. Future directions

21.1 This document draws together the assessment of local needs and provision of green space in Sefton and has set out and applied local green space targets for quantity, quality and accessibility of public green space. The preparation and application of these targets, especially in relation to each Area Committee area, has highlighted some key directions for future green space work, as follows:

- The need to determine the best way to reduce the most noticeable deficiencies in public green space provision in Sefton, including:
  - Accessibility to green space, especially in Southport;
  - Quality issues, especially throughout south Sefton;
  - Quantity issues, especially in Formby and for parks, play facilities and allotments.
- The need to improve the quality of accessible nature space and to enhance biodiversity of all green space.
- The need for Council-wide and partner working to raise the profile of and recognise the importance of green space and its many benefits.
- The continuing need to identify and secure funding for green space provision and enhancement.

21.2 It is intended that these key directions should be followed up in future green space work undertaken by the Council of its partners.

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## **References**

### **National**

**Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) 'Planning for open space, sport and recreation'**, 2002, ODPM.

**'Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17'**, unknown, ODPM

For further information about both of these see

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/planningpolicyguidance/>

**Accessible natural greenspace in towns and cities** (1995), English Nature

**Six acre standard** (2001) Fields in Trust (formerly National Playing Fields Association). For further information see <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/>.

**Green Future** (2005), GreenSpace Forum Ltd. For further information see <http://www.green-space.org.uk/whatwedo/policyandresearch.php>.

**Green Space Strategies: A good practice guide** (2006), CABE Space. For further information see <http://www.cabe.org.uk/about/cabe-space>.

### **Regional**

**Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West** (2008) GONW / NWRA. For further information see <http://www.gos.gov.uk/gonw/Planning/RegionalPlanning/?a=42496>.

For more information about green infrastructure in the North West, see

<http://www.greeninfrastructurenw.co.uk>.

### **Local**

**Sefton Local Development Scheme**, published annually, Sefton MBC. For further information see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/lids>.

**Sefton Unitary Development Plan** (2006), Sefton MBC. For further information see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/udp>.

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**Sefton Parks and Green Spaces Asset Management Strategy** (2008), Sefton MBC

**Playing Pitch strategy** (2009), Sefton MBC. For further information see <http://www.sefton.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=7937>.

**Sefton Play Strategy** (2008), Sefton MBC.

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