

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Milton Keynes Council (MKC) is preparing a new local plan for the Borough called Plan:MK. In order to ensure that there is an adequate amount of high quality open space to meet current and future needs for residents MKC will produce an Open Space Assessment (OSA). This will consider the quantity, quality and accessibility of open space in the Borough and will help us to properly analyse the suitability of any development that may be proposed through the Plan:MK process.
- 1.2 The OSA will be an integral part of the evidence base for Plan:MK, and will include locally-derived standards for the provision of open space in the Borough. These standards will form the basis for redressing quantitative and qualitative deficiencies through the planning process.
- 1.3 This short note explains what MKC is planning to do over the next months to assess open space in the Borough and what criteria we are proposing to use throughout this process. It also outlines a broad timescale for the preparation of the OSA. The note includes a number of Appendices that provide further information and a questionnaire, which will help us gather more information about open space in the Borough.
 - **Appendix A** includes maps of the Borough and individual Parish or Town Councils showing types of the open spaces and sites that are not proposed for the Assessment.
 - **Appendix B** includes a site audit form that was developed based on the Green Flag Award and Greenspace quality: a guide to assessment planning and strategic development (Greenspace Scotland, GCV Green Network) criteria.
 - **Appendix C** includes the current Local Plan open space policies and provision standards.
 - **Appendix D** includes a questionnaire that will help us gather more information about open space in the Borough and capture views of the local communities on the quality and value of the open space.
- 1.4 Due to the extent of existing open space provision in Milton Keynes, and time available for the audit work, MKC is proposing to assess mainly areas that are formally allocated as recreation and open space on the 2005 Local Plan Proposals Map. This approach means that the Audit will not include some sites that may be used for recreation and open space purposes, but are either too small, or are not identified on the Local Plan Proposals Map. These are generally defined as “amenity open space”.
- 1.5 The OSA will not include outdoor sports facilities (unless formally identified as recreation or open space on the 2005 Local Plan Proposals Map) since they were assessed previously through the 2014 Sport and Active Communities Strategy and the 2015 Milton Keynes Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 1.6 MKC has also a number of recent studies and analyses of the provision and quality of children’s play facilities and due to on-going work on this topic play provision will not be (unless falling within recreation or open space) included in the Audit.

1.7 Also, it is not proposed to assess the quality of wildlife corridors and natural and semi-natural green space. It is recognised that these types of open space often enhance local character or provide biodiversity benefits to the area, but their character and functions, size or physical form makes them more appropriate for inclusion in other studies, or for individual planning assessments.

1.8 It is worth noting that the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre is in the process of preparing a study on Milton Keynes Local Wildlife Sites. This study looks at the environmental qualities of the existing wildlife sites and will be used as part of the evidence base for Plan:MK. If possible the initial results of this study will inform the final OSA.

2 Local Planning Policy Context

2.1 The 2005 Local Plan includes policies that aim to protect, enhance and extend the city's strategic green infrastructure such as linear and district parks (Policies S12 and L1).

2.2 Policy L2 of the Local Plan aims to protect existing areas of open space from development and also to ensure that development proposals address any unmet need for community facilities. This policy distinguishes between and defines recreational open space, amenity open space and leisure and recreational facilities.

2.3 The Council's open space provision standards are set out in Policy L3 and Appendix L3 of the Local Plan. These standards are used to determine the type and size of open space that new developments are meant to provide or contribute to. The emphasis of Policy L3 and its appendix is on meeting specific local recreational needs in a flexible manner providing a wide range of quality facilities. There are specific questions on open space standards within the questionnaire (Appendix D), also the current Local Plan open space policies and provision standards are included as Appendix C.

2.4 Currently there are seven made (adopted) neighbourhood plans in the Borough

- CMK Business Neighbourhood Plan
- Great Linford North Neighbourhood Plan
- Great Linford South Neighbourhood Plan
- The Lakes Estate Neighbourhood Plan
- Newport Pagnell Neighbourhood Plan
- Woburn Sands Neighbourhood Plan
- Wolverton Neighbourhood Plan

2.5 All of these plans include policies that aim to protect or improve existing open space within neighbourhood areas. The OSA will take into consideration any guidance relevant to open space included in the adopted neighbourhood plans.

3 Open Space Assessment

3.1 The OSA report will

- review the current national and local policies and strategies related to open space and identify local need through public consultation
- audit the distribution, accessibility, quality and quantity of Milton Keynes' open spaces as per categories included in section 4 of this note
- use the audit findings and the feedback from our communities to set locally derived open space and recreation provision standards, addressing accessibility, quality and quantity
- identify, based on the agreed standards, any deficiencies or surpluses in provision and options for dealing with them now and in the future
- provide a robust and comprehensive evidence base to enable the Council to develop planning policies as part of Plan:MK, sufficient to withstand scrutiny at an Examination in Public
- provide information to enable the Council to justify collecting developer contributions towards public open space

3.2 The overarching approach to the OSA should accord with the National Planning Policy Framework. The NPPF requires that

- planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision
- existing open space 'should not be built on unless an assessment clearly shows the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements'. The OSA will help to define whether there is any surplus open space in the Borough
- development should be delivered on 'land of less environmental value'. The Assessment will identify which land delivers environmental, social and economic benefits to Milton Keynes.

3.3 Table 1 outlines the approach to the Assessment

Table 1 Approach and scope to Open Space Assessment

Task	Scope
<p>Stage A – data collection and policy review, contextual information and consultation</p> <p>When: August – October 2016</p>	<p>A review of the relevant national and local planning policy context will be undertaken to identify the land use implications of policies and strategies for recreation and open space.</p> <p>All sites identified for audit are given a unique ID and recorded and mapped on a suite of GIS maps.</p> <p>To provide an understanding of the specific needs for open space, information will be collated on the geographic, demographic and socio-economic context of Milton Keynes Borough.</p> <p>In order to understand the needs, attitudes and expectations of local people towards the existing provision of open spaces a detailed questionnaire will be sent to stakeholder groups and Town and Parish Councils. It is also proposed to organise one or more workshops with Council Officers and local stakeholders.</p>

<p>Stage B – the Audit</p> <p>When: summer 2016</p>	<p>In order to assess the current provision, a comprehensive audit of existing open space will be undertaken.</p> <p>The open space audit will comprise a comprehensive survey of all identified sites to enable understanding of the sites’ qualitative characteristics. At this stage we will also verify the quantitative data and gather more information on accessibility aspects of the surveyed sites.</p> <p>The site audit form was developed based on the Green Flag Award and Greenspace quality: a guide to assessment planning and strategic development (Greenspace Scotland, GCV Green Network) criteria (please see Appendix B).</p>
<p>Stage C – Analysing Quality, Quality and Accessibility. Assessing Current Provision Standards</p> <p>When: autumn 2016</p>	<p>All audit findings will be compiled in a GIS database, categorised into parish council areas or other appropriate neighbourhood areas, and will be supported by a map of the site location and images of site. Combined analysis will be completed for quantity, quality and value findings, and implications for future provision in the Borough.</p> <p>In order to undertake the accessibility analysis, it is currently proposed to use the 2005 Local Plan minimum accessibility thresholds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Local Parks – 600 metres – Allotments – 600 metres – District Parks – 1.2 kilometres – Linear Parks – 3.2 kilometres
<p>Stage D – Defining policy implications</p> <p>When: summer 2017</p>	<p>The findings of Stages A-C will inform policy recommendations regarding sites for protection/enhancement or removal in Plan:MK. The policy recommendations also respond to the application of the open space standards, and provide suggestions on areas of Milton Keynes where there is adequate open space, deficient open space, or a surplus of poor quality open space. This part of the Assessment should help identifying important sites in need of quality improvements and set the context for the council to work with local communities on locally important sites.</p>

4 Current Stage

4.1 We are currently at the first stage of the Assessment and in the process of reviewing the relevant national and local planning policies and strategies related to open space. Also, at this stage we will ask stakeholders to suggest any additional sites that should be audited as part of the OSA.

4.2 Table 2 includes types of open space that are proposed to be covered by the Audit

Type of Open Space	Characteristics
Linear Parks	Key structural component of MK, following the water bodies across the city they have an important green infrastructure role: mitigating flood events, preserving archaeology, as pedestrian and cycle corridors, for wildlife and recreation. The feel of the corridors change across the city, more formal in urban areas and more agricultural on the periphery. Linear Parks form a continuous system linking all parts of the city to the open countryside beyond.
District Parks	Intended primarily to perform the function of a conventional town park for an immediate catchment of up to 15,000 people. Such parks provide a green setting for all other facilities as well as allowing for a wide variety of active and passive uses in a relatively concentrated space.
Local Parks and Open Space	Local Parks provide valuable open space within predominantly residential areas and are important in creating a functional and visual focus within a community. This category also includes all other open land which is in a leisure or recreation use; this may include amenity open space which is defined as smaller open areas, including woods, copses and ponds, where recreational use is incidental to their primary function as attractive features in otherwise built-up areas, or as wildlife habitats. Also, this category may include civic spaces i.e. civic and market squares and other hard surfaced community areas that provide a setting for civic buildings, public gatherings and community events.
Proposed Open Space	New areas of open space allocated through the 2005 Local Plan. This category includes areas that are still to be developed and adopted for specific open space use. In some cases sites may have already been developed and the Audit will confirm their actual use and function.
Allotments	Includes all forms of allotments including urban farms and gardens that provide opportunities for people to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainable health and social inclusion.
Playing Fields	Is a wide ranging category of open space, which includes both natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation that are either publicly or privately owned, they may include playing pitches, cricket pitches, athletics tracks, bowling greens with the primary purpose of participation in outdoor sports.

Golf Courses	Outdoor sports facilities that take up large areas of land; an 18-hole course typically requires between 50-60 hectares.
Cemeteries and churchyards	These include private burial grounds, local authority burial grounds and disused churchyards. The primary purpose of this type of open space is for burial and quiet contemplation but allows for the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.

4.3 Currently, we are proposing to audit (please refer to Appendix A) areas of existing or proposed recreation and open space, linear and district parks as shown on the 2005 Local Plan Proposals Map and sites used as churchyards or cemeteries. The Local Plan recreation and open space, linear and district parks allocations include a number of types of open space e.g. it is common that a linear park within the urban area would include playing fields or allotments. The audit work will enable us to update the information on these individual types of open spaces that fall within district and linear parks.

4.4 As mentioned earlier some open space land, mainly amenity open space is not proposed to be fully covered by the Audit. This is due to the extent of the amenity open space provision in Milton Keynes and because, in most cases, it is covered by a housing allocation and not shown as recreation and open space on the Local Plan Proposals Map. It should be noted that although not identified on the Proposals Map, the Local Plan's approach to development on the amenity open space is deliberately restrictive (for the Local Plan policies see Appendix C).

4.5 It is recognised that some of the amenity open spaces may be particularly important to the wider open space network e.g. when they connect other recreation or open space sites or act as 'stepping stones' between sites of environmental or biodiversity importance. The questionnaire included at the end of this note (Appendix D) seeks the community views on whether in certain circumstances amenity open spaces should be included in the Audit.

4.6 In order to understand the needs, attitudes and expectations of local people towards existing provision of open spaces a detailed questionnaire (Appendix D) is included as part of this document. This questionnaire and all documents supporting this stage of the assessment will be included on the MKC website as part of the consultation process. Also, during this stage we will organise one or more focus group workshops with Council Officers and local stakeholders in order to capture the community's perception of open spaces within the Borough.

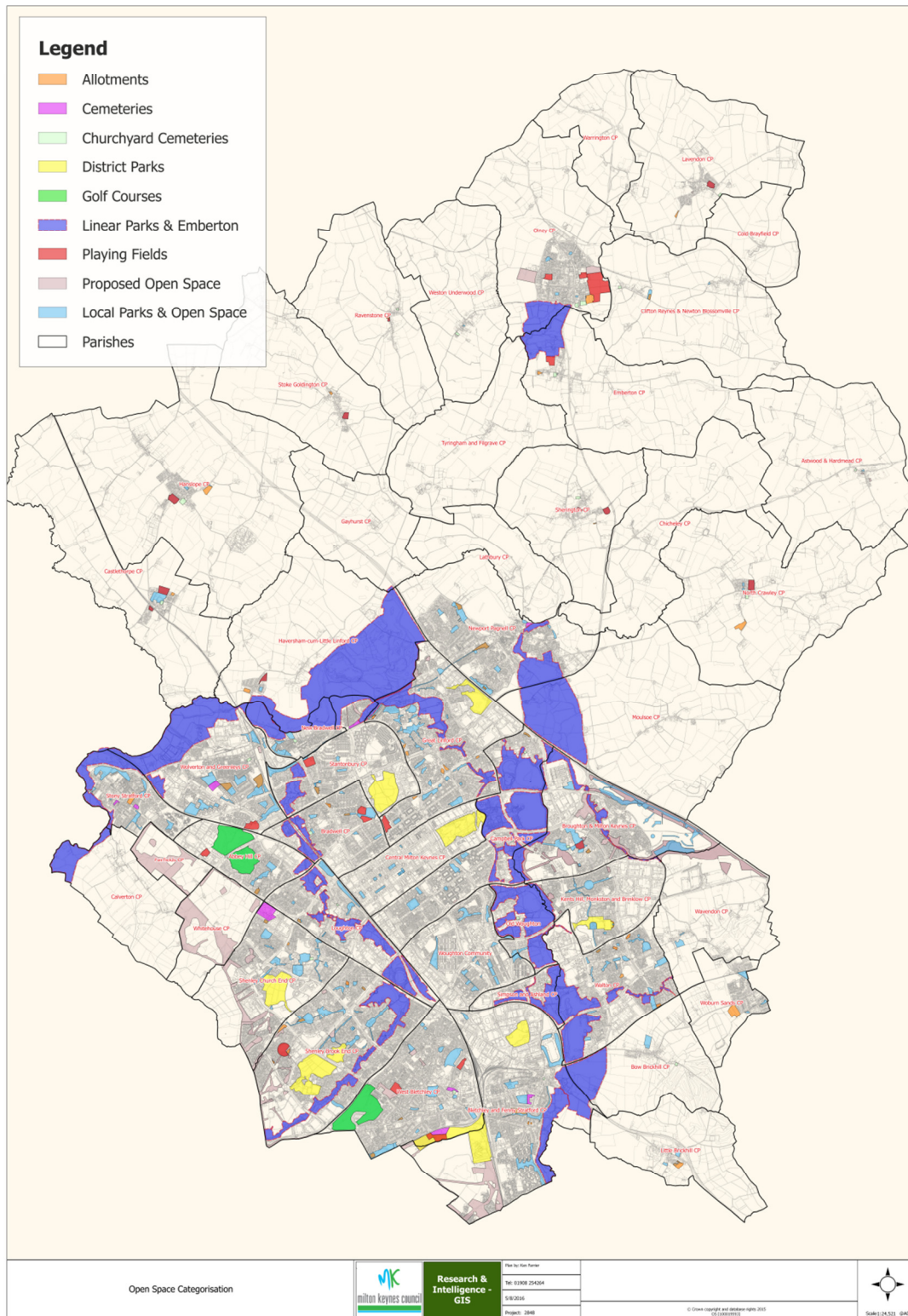
5 Next Stages

5.1 Over the summer MKC officers will start a formal audit work of the open spaces in the Borough. We are planning to complete this stage of the Assessment by autumn 2016. Also, within the next three months we should receive more information and feedback on open space from Parish and Town Councils, the Milton Keynes Parks Trust and other stakeholders.

5.2 After we analyse the consultation responses and the audit findings MKC will publish a draft Assessment for consultation with the local communities and stakeholders. This consultation should take place in early 2017.

5.3 The final Open Space assessment should be published by summer 2017.

Appendix A – Maps (for a better quality borough wide map and individual Parish Council maps please visit)



Appendix B
Site Audit Form

Site ID		Date of Survey	
Parish		Surveyor	
Site Name			

Typology	Linear Parks	Local Parks and Open Space	Golf Courses	Allotments
	District Parks	Proposed Open Space	Playing Fields	Cemeteries and churchyards
	Other:			
Functions	Strategic GI Functions	Town/Village Quality	Promoting health	Promoting Connectivity
	Community Resource	Visual Amenity	Supporting Biodiversity	Structural Landscape/Townscape
Other Functions				
Comments				

Accessibility & Connectivity (A Welcoming Place)	Score*	Site Observations / Comments
well located close to a community		
meets requirements of users with mobility difficulties or visual impairment		
provides surfaced high quality paths		
connects with other transport modes		
allows easy movement in and between places		
accessible entrances in the right places		
Attractive & Appealing Places (Clean and Well Maintained)		
attractive with a positive image		
quality materials, equipment and furniture		
attractive plants and landscape elements		
well-defined boundaries and welcoming entrance areas		
spaces and facilities in clean, safe and usable condition		
low levels of litter and adequate provision of bins		
low levels of dog fouling		
Sustainability (Biodiversity, Heritage and Conservation)		
contributes positively to biodiversity		
habitats large enough to sustain wildlife populations		
offers a diversity of habitats		
connects with wider green networks		
contributes to coherent and resilient ecological network able to provide a range of ecosystem services e.g.		

storing carbon or flood mitigation		
part of the wider landscape structure/ setting		
contributes positively to townscape role		
heritage assets		
Activity, health & well being (Healthy, Safe and Secure; Marketing – cultural role)		
provides places for a range of outdoor activities		
diverse play, sport and recreational opportunities		
providing places for social interaction		
adaptable to changing needs and uses		
Community Benefits (Healthy, Safe and Secure)		
safe and welcoming with no evidence of antisocial behaviour		
community involvement in management		
good level of natural surveillance		
appropriate lighting levels		
good routes to wider community facilities		
distinctive and memorable places		

*Score 5 is high and 1 is low

Quality Scoring Criteria	5	3	1	n/a
	High	Fit for Purpose	Low	
Accessibility and Connectivity				
Well located close to a community	Integral with community infrastructure and local path and greenspace networks	Direct, safe and legible connections to local communities	Poorly sited with clear severance between greenspace and other community infrastructure	Connections to community not relevant
Meets requirements of users with mobility difficulties or visual impairment	Accessible for users with mobility difficulties or visual impairment e.g. path surfaces suitable for wheelchairs in all weather conditions, provision of ramps, handrails, use of different textures to provide good communication for those with visual impairment etc.	Generally accessible for users with mobility difficulties or visual impairment, however some design features prevent full accessibility.	Physical barriers or poor design contribute to inaccessible environment	Meeting requirements of users with mobility difficulties or visual impairment is not achievable or appropriate on a site of this character/ location/type
Provides surfaced, high quality paths	Appropriate path surface, well maintained with no management or drainage issues	Appropriate path surface with some minor maintenance/ drainage issues	Poor quality or inappropriate path surface for location or levels of use. Significant maintenance or drainage issues	No paths expected on a site of this type or size (e.g. waterbody, dense woodland or scrub, small scale amenity space.)
Connects with wider green networks	Offers strong connections and plays an important role within the wider Green Network	Offers limited connections and contribution to the Green Network	Poorly connected and represents a fragmented and discrete site with very limited role within the Green Network	Not relevant

Connects with other transport modes	Good connectivity with fixed transport links, quality bus routes, cycle and path networks	Connects to other path and cycleway networks provided by footways and footpaths	Poorly connected with no obvious path networks or transport modes	Connectivity not available or appropriate on a site of this character/location/type
Allows easy movement in and between places	Provides for highly permeable boundaries and multiple points of entry/access as part of a path or greenspace network with high quality, legible way marking and signage	Provides routes that allow some good connections between places but signage incomplete and/or no way marking	Poorly connected with paths and natural desire lines unprovided for or restricted with no signage or way marking to indicate wider connectivity	Movement between places not relevant to the site and signage inappropriate to the location/site
Accessible entrances in the right places	Entry points well placed and accessible to encourage safe access and use. There are no barriers to accessing the open space or mitigation measures in place e.g. if there is a busy trafficked road immediately adjacent to the open space there is pedestrian crossing	Entrances satisfactory	Entrances poor by reason of siting; safe accessibility and connection to communities	Entrance locations determined by other factors and non-relevant to the site
Attractive & Appealing Places				
Attractive, with a positive image	Overall quality image, feel and appeal created through character and quality of the elements. The attractiveness of the site is not affected by any threats/disturbances/issues e.g. road, rail noise,	Attractive with many positive elements but includes issues that need addressing	Poor image and low level of appeal/ attractiveness likely to generate a negative image	Attractiveness not an issue by reason of site/character or use

	pollution, invading plants, intrusive buildings etc.			
Quality materials, equipment and furniture	Provides quality suite of external/public realm furniture and equipment with good materials	Mixed quality with some elements in need of renewal or upgrading to remain fit for purpose	Poor quality finishes, materials and equipment that limit appeal and use	Not relevant
Attractive plants and landscape elements	Offers attractive plant assemblages (native or exotic) that support place character and quality	Offers a variable quality of plants and landscape elements that supports quality but could be better	Generally poor quality or inappropriate planting and landscape management	Plant and landscape elements not relevant to function and/or type of space
Defined boundaries and welcoming entrance areas	Visually attractive boundaries and entries offer clear sense of welcome and signal community value and use	Functional boundaries and entrances define site with neutral impact on character or functionality	Poor quality boundaries impact negatively on perceptions of place	Entrances and boundary treatments not relevant to site and/or location
Spaces and facilities in clean, safe and usable condition	Spaces and facilities clean, tidy and clearly valued, well used and well maintained. Evidence of recreational use at time of audit	Spaces in usable condition but issues evident with cleanliness, and condition	Spaces either in poor condition or issues with cleanliness and condition likely to restrict use	Condition of space not relevant to the site
Low levels of litter and adequate provision of bins	No evidence of litter and litter bins (where provided) in good condition and maintained	Low levels of litter with bins evident and litter generally localised and/or short term	Litter clearly an issue with established litter problem and bins absent or not adequately maintained	Litter not relevant
Low levels of dog fouling	No evidence of dog fouling	Low levels of dog fouling	Dog fouling a clear issue	Dog fouling not relevant
Sustainability (Biodiversity, Heritage and Conservation)				
Contribute positively to	Biodiversity issues are clearly	Biodiversity contributes	Opportunity to support	Biodiversity not relevant by

biodiversity	evidenced within the site and contribute to site quality. There may be evidence that the natural features are being managed for nature conservation	through semi-natural elements but no other evidence of active management	biodiversity not taken and site offers little positive value	nature of the space and function
Habitats large enough to sustain wildlife populations	Site strongly supports native populations by green networks and quality of landscape elements	Site supports some native populations but fragmented and value limited to site	Site fragmented and unconnected to wider networks with little habitat value	Habitat opportunity and value not relevant
Offers a diversity of habitats	Offers a diversity of habitats that offer good connections with extended edges and linkages	Offers a range of habitat types but connections and the range of habitat types could be stronger	Poor quality and attention to habitat development	Habitat diversity not relevant
Connects with wider green networks	Offers strong connections and plays an important role within the wider Green Network	Offers limited connections and contribution to the Green Network	Poorly connected and represents a fragmented and discrete site with very limited role within the Green Network	Not relevant
Able to provide a range of ecosystem services e.g. storing carbon or flood mitigation	Space forms part of a coherent and resilient ecological network that will help both mitigate and adapt to climate change e.g. storing carbon or flood management	Space not an integral part of wider green networks, but able to offer some ecosystem services	Space due to its size, location or other characteristics able to provide limited levels of ecosystem services	Not relevant
Part of the wider landscape structure/ setting	A key part of a wider network and landscape setting	Contributes to wider networks and landscape setting	Poorly connected and very limited contribution to the wider landscape setting	Landscape setting not relevant
Contributes positively to	Space is integral to a wider	Overall space contributes	Space detracts from the	Not relevant

townscape role	townscape and forms its key structural element, contributes significantly to the quality, character and setting of the urban area/settlement/place	positively to structural/townscape role but the profile and level of visibility limit the capacity to significantly impact on the quality, character and setting of the urban area/settlement/place	character of a wider area.	
Heritage assets	Heritage assets as far as practicable are being conserved and the function of open space contributes positively to their settings. Presence of these assets is acknowledged by means of well-maintained boards, plaques etc.	Heritage assets as far as practicable are being conserved, but the function of open space is not fully compatible with the assets.	Heritage assets are not being conserved and the function of open space has a detrimental impact on the assets.	Not relevant
Promotes activity, health & wellbeing				
Provides places for a range of outdoor activities promoting social interaction	Good diverse range of activity reflecting user needs, setting location and character of the site	Range of activity reflecting user needs, setting, location and character of the site	Poor, very limited range of activity that does not reflect anticipated user needs and site context	Not relevant
Diverse play, sport and recreational opportunities	A range of challenging play and sport activity provided for a breadth of age and user groups	Play and sports facilities provided but limited range	Play and sports facilities not provided in locations were such facilities would be appropriate	Play and sports facilities not relevant to this type of space /location.
Providing places for social interaction	Offers good spaces/ places for social activity that are	Offers spaces for social activity	Offers none or very limited areas considered safe,	Not relevant

	used by communities and include supporting furniture		usable for social activity	
Appropriate, high quality facilities meeting needs	Provides a well-used site that clearly reflects needs providing high quality facilities	Provides for a range of activity that address need and offers good quality facilities	Provides a range of activity that appears unconnected to local need and is of indifferent quality	Appropriateness of facilities and need is not relevant.
Adaptable to changing needs and uses	Greenspace offers good flexibility and adaptability for use, capable of accommodating changing needs	Greenspace is flexible but any significant change of use would require major change	Greenspace is very inflexible unlikely to be able to address changing needs	Adaptability of use is not relevant
Community Benefits				
Safe and welcoming with no evidence of antisocial behaviour	Site offers safe welcoming image through a range of positive measures such as signage, lighting and sightlines, no evidence of anti-social behaviour	Site is welcoming but issues of safety or limited evidence of antisocial behaviour or misuse have potential to impact on more vulnerable user groups.	Site is clearly neither safe nor welcoming to a majority of users; shows evidence of persistent antisocial behaviour	Issue of safety, antisocial behaviour or sense of welcome not relevant
Good level of natural surveillance	Site offers good natural surveillance from surrounding areas and complies with Safe by Design principles	Site generally overlooked with main areas offering good natural surveillance	Site offers very limited natural surveillance and issues of perceived safety therefore arise	Natural surveillance not applicable to this site
Appropriate lighting levels	Appropriate lighting throughout the site with no obvious management or user issues	Appropriate lighting at entrances and where appropriate main routes with only minor lighting issues	Lighting poor, restricting use	Lighting not relevant to this site

Good routes to wider community facilities	Provides connecting routes to schools, library, community facilities and transport nodes	Provides limited connections to community infrastructure	Provides very restricted connections to community infrastructure	Issues of community connectivity not relevant to this site
Distinctive and memorable places	Creates a distinctive and memorable quality of place that supports local culture identity. Space includes landmark features of local or wider importance e.g. public art	Contributes in some areas or parts to distinctiveness	Offers no qualities that could be regarded as distinctive or memorable	Not relevant

Appendix C

Milton Keynes Local Plan (2005)

Policy S12 Linear Parks

Objective of policy:

- to protect and enhance the main river valleys running through the City

The following areas are defined as Linear Parks on the Proposals Map:

- 1 The Ouse Valley, from the Borough boundary at Passenham to the M1 motorway
- 2 The Ouzel / Lovat valley, from Water Eaton to the River Ouse, including the valleys of the Broughton and Caldecotte Brooks within the city.
- 3 The Loughton Brook valley
- 4 Emberton Country Park

Development proposals in the Linear Parks should contribute to achieving the following objectives:

- (i) Protecting and improving the landscape
- (ii) Protecting and enhancing features of nature conservation value
- (iii) Retaining and improving public access to land and water areas for countryside recreation
- (iv) Flood control
- (v) Minimising any adverse impact on local residents and agriculture
- (vi) Protecting and interpreting areas of archaeological interest

Policy L1 Facilities Acceptable In the Parks System

Objectives of policy:

- To indicate the type of development and uses that are acceptable in the Linear and District Parks
- To minimise the environmental impact of development on the Parks

Planning permission will be granted for outdoor leisure and recreation uses within the Linear and District Parks unless the proposal would result in:

- (i) An unacceptable visual impact
- (ii) Excessive traffic
- (iii) An unacceptable impact on wildlife
- (iv) Excessive noise
- (v) An adverse impact on the flood plain

Development proposals should also show how visitors can reach the site easily and conveniently using non-car modes of transport.

Policy L2 Protection of Public Open Space and Existing Facilities

Objectives of policy:

- To protect existing areas of open space from development
- To ensure that development proposals address any unmet need for community facilities

Planning permission will be refused for proposals involving the loss of open space used for leisure and recreation unless alternative provision of at least equivalent size, quality, suitability and convenience is made.

If there is no longer a continuing need for recreation use, and there is an unmet need for community facilities in the surrounding area, development proposals for the site should make provision for such facilities.

In considering proposals involving the loss of amenity open space, the council will take into account the criteria set out in Appendix L2.

Proposals involving the loss of a leisure and recreation facility will be assessed according to:

- (i) Whether there is a continuing need for the facility
- (ii) The prospects for a replacement facility in an alternative location
- (iii) The potential for accommodating an alternative leisure and recreation facility on the site

Policy L3 Standards of Provision

Objective of policy:

- To set out standards for the provision of leisure and recreation facilities

New housing development will be required to provide new or improved recreational facilities in accordance with the Council's adopted standards in Appendix L3.

Appendix L2: PROPOSALS FOR THE CHANGE OF USE OF AMENITY OPEN SPACE

Planning permission will only be granted for the change of use of amenity open space, including the incorporation of such areas into private garden land, if:

1. The land does not now or is unlikely in the future to fulfil a useful purpose in terms of its appearance, landscaping, recreational use or wildlife value.
2. The loss of amenity open space would not set a precedent for other similar proposals which cumulatively would have an adverse effect on the locality.
3. The continued maintenance of the land for public amenity purposes would be impractical or unduly onerous.

In certain cases, the loss of amenity open space may be acceptable if it is adequately compensated by proposals for improvements to the quality of landscaping and appearance of amenity space elsewhere in the locality.

Appendix L3: STANDARDS FOR LEISURE AND RECREATION FACILITIES (part)

Facility	Minimum Size	Catchment Area or Standard	Characteristics
Local Play Areas	0.2 hectares ¹ or 0.35 if surrounded by housing	300 metres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly for children up to age 8 For unsupervised play close to home Located at 500 metre intervals Active Zone² should be at least 20 metres from residential property boundaries and 30 metres from roads Approximately 5¹ items of play equipment and small games area
Neighbourhood Play Areas	0.6 hectares ¹	600 metres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For all children, but emphasis on 8+ For unsupervised play Located at 1,000 metre intervals Active Zone² should be at least 40 metres from residential property boundaries and 30 metres from roads Approximately 8¹ items of play equipment and ball games area, goal wall, cycle area; larger more adventurous equipment The inclusion of youth shelters, wheeled sports facilities and multi-games walls for teenagers is essential
Local Parks	1-2 hectares	600 metres 0.6 hectares per 1,000 population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For visitors on foot, including nearby workers Providing children's play, sitting out areas, landscaped environment, community events area, kickabout area and playing fields if the park is large enough At least 0.4 hectares per 1,000 population for casual, informal playspace if not provided elsewhere
District Parks	20 hectares	1.2 kilometres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For weekend and occasional visits on foot Containing playing fields, but at least 12 hectares for other pursuits (as in Local Parks) and some car parking
Linear Parks	60 hectares	3.2 kilometres or more where the Park is appreciably larger than 60 hectares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For weekend and occasional visits by car or public transport Either semi-natural environment, commons, woodland etc, or formal parks providing for both active and possible recreation – e.g. boating, entertainment, etc Containing playing fields but at least 40 hectares for other pursuits Adequate car parking essential
Playing Fields		1 hectares (net) per 1,000 population, 1.5 hectares (gross) per 1,000 population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gross size includes ancillary facilities such as pavilions, car parking and spectator areas
Allotments		0.25 hectares per 1,000 population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should have water supply and car parking Preferably within 600 metres walking distance
Areas of Wildlife Interest	0.5 hectares	0.5 hectares at 1 kilometre intervals Optimum 10 hectares at 1 kilometre intervals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible semi-natural greenspace Normally within or adjoining built-up areas

Notes:

1 These quantities will need to be greater in areas of high density family housing

2 Active Zone: area for play equipment and other items

Footnote to Appendix L3

The emphasis of Policy L3 and the above standards is on meeting specific local recreation needs in a flexible manner, providing a wide range of quality facilities. It is not simply a matter of providing a fixed proportion of a proposed development site as open space. Open space may be required for reasons other than recreation – e.g. on aesthetic or nature conservation grounds; such areas generally have little recreation value and will not normally be counted towards recreation space provision.

It may sometimes be appropriate to require a financial contribution to improving facilities in the locality rather than requiring direct provision on site – e.g. where the latter is impractical

or if the locality is well provided with recreation space but it is of low quality. If the locality has an existing deficiency in recreation space, a contribution will also be required towards overcoming this deficiency (see Policy PO1). Recreation space must be suitably landscaped, equipped and provided with funds towards future maintenance in accordance with Council specifications.

Appendix D

Open Space Assessment Questionnaire

1. Thinking about parks and open spaces included on the map of your Parish Area in Appendix A which ones do you believe are of particularly good quality? What are the contributing factors of your judgement e.g.
 - Cleanliness
 - The ease of getting to it
 - Amount of information
 - General appearance/good design
 - How safe it feels
 - Facilities
 - Wildlife value
 - Toilets
 - Playing pitches (Football, Rugby etc.)
 - Catering
 - Car parking
 - Play facilities/equipment (including climbing frames and skate parks)
 - Disabled facilities
 - Seats and bins
 - Grass cutting
 - Flowers and shrubs

Please provide examples

2. Thinking about parks and open spaces included on the map of your Parish Area in Appendix A do you believe there are any of particularly poor quality? If yes, which ones and what are the contributing factors?
- Cleanliness
 - The ease of getting to it
 - Amount of information
 - General appearance/good design
 - How safe it feels
 - Facilities
 - Wildlife value
 - Toilets
 - Playing pitches (Football, Rugby etc.)
 - Catering
 - Car parking
 - Play facilities/equipment (including climbing frames and skate parks)
 - Disabled facilities
 - Seats and bins
 - Grass cutting
 - Flowers and shrubs

Please provide examples

3. What in your opinion makes a successful open space? How important are the following features?

Features	Score
Convenience/close to home	
Feel safe e.g. houses look onto them, or there is passing pedestrian / and or vehicular traffic	
Play equipment	
Café, community hall, sports pavilion etc.	
Toilet facilities	
Well maintained, e.g. free of litter	
Easy to get to and around / good access	
Benches & seats	
Quiet & peaceful	
Visual Appeal, lawn & flower beds	
Sports facilities (Football, Rugby etc.)	
Play facilities/equipment (including climbing frames and skate parks)	

Very important – score 5

Fairly important – score 4

Fairly unimportant –score 3

Not at all important –score 2

No opinion – score 1

4. Please tick below whether you feel there is SUFFICIENT or INSUFFICIENT provision for each type of recreation and open space within your Parish and within the Borough

More than sufficient – score 5

About right – score 4

Nearly sufficient – score 3

Not sufficient – score 2

No opinion – score 1

Parish Area

Type of open space	Score
Local parks	
Natural areas e.g. local wildlife sites, woodlands, ponds etc.	
Playing fields and sport grounds	
Amenity areas	
Allotments	
Orchards & urban farms	
Churchyards and cemeteries	
Civic spaces	

Borough Area

Type of open space	Score
Linear Parks	
District Parks	
Local parks	
Natural areas e.g. local wildlife sites, woodlands, ponds etc.	
Playing fields and sport grounds	
Amenity areas	
Allotments	
Orchards & urban farms	
Churchyards and cemeteries	
Civic spaces	

5. How would you rate the demand for different types of open space in your Parish and within the Borough?

High demand – score 5

Medium demand – score 4

Low demand – score 3

No demand – score 2

No opinion – score 1

Parish area

Type of open space	Score
Local parks	
Natural areas e.g. local wildlife sites, woodlands, ponds etc.	
Playing fields and sport grounds	
Amenity areas	
Allotments	
Orchards & urban farms	
Churchyards and cemeteries	
Civic spaces	

Borough Area

Type of open space	Score
Linear Parks	
District Parks	
Local parks	
Natural areas e.g. local wildlife sites, woodlands, ponds etc.	
Playing fields and sport grounds	
Amenity areas	
Allotments	
Orchards & urban farms	

Churchyards and cemeteries	
Civic spaces	

6. How would you rate overall accessibility to parks and open spaces in your Parish and within the Borough?

Very easy to access – score 5

Easy to access – score 4

Difficult to access – score 3

Very difficult to access – score 2

Neither easy nor difficult to access – score 1

Parish Area

Type of open space	Score
Local parks	
Natural areas e.g. local wildlife sites, woodlands, ponds etc.	
Playing fields and sport grounds	
Amenity areas	
Allotments	
Orchards & urban farms	
Churchyards and cemeteries	
Civic spaces	

Borough Area

Type of open space	Score
Linear Parks	
District Parks	
Local parks	
Natural areas e.g. local wildlife sites, woodlands, ponds etc.	
Playing fields and sport grounds	
Amenity areas	
Allotments	
Orchards & urban farms	
Churchyards and cemeteries	
Civic spaces	

Are there any barriers to accessing the open space? Please provide examples.

7. Overall, how satisfied are you with the amount, quality and accessibility of parks and open spaces in your Parish and within the Borough.

Very satisfied – score 5

Fairly satisfied – score 4

Fairly dissatisfied – score 3

Very dissatisfied – score 2

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied – score 1

	Parish	Borough	Score
The amount of parks and open spaces			
The quality of parks and open spaces			
The accessibility of parks and open spaces			

Please provide examples

8. Are there any amenity open spaces within your Parish that you believe are of a high quality and/or value to your community and should be included within the 'Local Parks and Open Space' category and covered by the Audit?

Please name the site and provide its location

9. Can you identify any areas of open space that should be added to the maps in Appendix A?

Please name the site and provide its location