



# GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, BIODIVERSITY AND OPEN SPACE STUDY

## LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON

### OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT TECHNICAL REPORT

TEP  
Genesis Centre  
Birchwood Science Park  
Warrington  
WA3 7BH

Tel: 01925 844004  
Email: [tep@tep.uk.com](mailto:tep@tep.uk.com)  
[www.tep.uk.com](http://www.tep.uk.com)

Offices in Warrington, Market Harborough, Gateshead, London and Cornwall



Document Title	Open Space Assessment Technical Report
Prepared for	London Borough of Merton
Prepared by	TEP - Warrington
Document Ref	7118.026

Author	Joe O'Reilly
Date	June 2019
Checked	Laura Schofield
Approved	Laura Schofield

Amendment History					
Version	Date	Modified by	Check / Approved by	Reason(s) issue	Status
1.0	29/01/19	JO	LS	Original	Draft
2.0	22/03/19	JO	LS	Revised following open space site changes	Draft
3.0	18/06/19	JO	LS	Updated to include recommendations	Draft
4.0	30/06/19	LS	LS	Updated following client comments	Final

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
1.0 Context.....	6
2.0 Methodology.....	11
3.0 Results.....	22
4.0 Benchmark Standards.....	34
5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations .....	41

<b>TABLES</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Table 1: Merton Population Projections.....	10
Table 2: Description of Site Categories.....	12
Table 3: Criteria to Exclude Sites from Quality Survey .....	14
Table 4: Open Space Quality Assessment Audit Criteria.....	14
Table 5: Open Space Quality Scores Thresholds.....	16
Table 6: Types of Play Areas .....	17
Table 7: Play Area Quality Audit Criteria .....	17
Table 8: Play Area Quality Scores Thresholds .....	18
Table 9: Public Open Space Hierarchy .....	19
Table 10: Accessibility distances to Play Areas.....	21
Table 11: Open Space Quantity Summary .....	22
Table 12: Open Space Quantity by Ward.....	24
Table 13: Open Space Provision by Population .....	25
Table 14: Open Space Provision by Ward Population .....	26
Table 15: Open Space Provision by Typology.....	27
Table 16: Open Space Quality Audit Results .....	28
Table 17: Play Area Quality Audit Results.....	31
Table 18: Play Area Type Summary.....	31
Table 19: Open Space & Public Open Space Land Cover London Benchmark .....	34
Table 20: Open Space Land Cover London Boroughs Benchmark .....	34
Table 21: Land Cover Benchmark by Category.....	35
Table 22: Hectare per 1000 Population Benchmark by Category .....	37
Table 23: Hectare per 1000 Population Benchmark for Allotments.....	38
Table 24: Quality Benchmark by Category .....	39
Table 25: Standards Comparison with Neighbouring Boroughs .....	45
Table 26: Recommended Standards for Merton.....	51

<b>FIGURES</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Figure 1: Structure for Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Open Space Study .....	7
Figure 2: Merton Ward Map .....	9
Figure 3: Merton Sub-Area Map .....	9

## **APPENDICES**

- APPENDIX A: Quantity Provision by Ward and Category Table  
APPENDIX B: GIS Open Space Maps

## **INDEX OF MAPS**

- 1 – Open Space Comparison (Ref.G7118.008)
- 2 – Open Space Typology (Ref.G7118.016)
- 3 – Open Space Quality Assessment - Sites Audited (Ref. G7118.014)
- 4 – Play Area Quality Audit Survey - Sites Audited (Ref. G7118.015)
- 5 – Open Space Quantity Provision by Ward (Ref. G7118.019)
- 6 - Open Space Quality Assessment - Survey Results (Ref. G7118.017)
- 7 - Play Area Quality Audit Survey - Survey Results (Ref. G7118.018)
- 8 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature (Ref. G7118.053)
- 9 - G7118.054 Areas of Deficiency in Access to Regional Parks (Ref. G7118.054)
- 10 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to Metropolitan Parks (Ref. G7118.055)
- 11 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to District Parks (Ref. G7118.056)
- 12 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to Local Parks, Small Open Spaces and Pocket Parks (Ref. G7118.057)
- 13 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to Play Areas for Children Over 12 Years Old (Ref. G7118.058)
- 14 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to Play Areas for Children between 5 and 12 Years Old (Ref. G7118.059)
- 15 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to Play Areas for Children under 5 Years Old (Ref. G7118.060)

## 1.0 Context

- 1.1 Open space is important due to its valuable contribution to quality of life, health and the local economy. Furthermore, open spaces provide green infrastructure benefits such as mitigating climate change, flood alleviation, and ecosystem services.
- 1.2 The provision of these facilities in our cities, towns and villages is of high importance to a sustainable future and is embedded in national planning policy.
- 1.3 The revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated in February 2019, recognises the opportunities that appropriately located and well-designed open spaces can provide. Paragraph 96 states:

*Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Planning policies should be based on robust and up to date assessments of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities (including quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses) and opportunities for new provision. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sport and recreational provision is needed, which plans should then seek to accommodate.*

- 1.4 Open space provision crosses many aspects of the NPPF including:
  - Promoting Healthy Communities
  - Delivering Sustainable Development
  - Supporting a Prosperous Rural Economy
  - Promoting Sustainable Transport
  - Requiring Good Design
  - Conserving and Enhancing the Natural and Historic Environment
  - Meeting the Challenges of Climate Change

- 1.5 The London Plan (2016), Policy 7.18 states that:

*Boroughs should undertake audits of all forms of open space and assessments of need. These should be both qualitative and quantitative, and have regard to the cross-borough nature and use of many of these open spaces.*

- 1.6 A full planning policy review can be found in the 'Policy and Context Review Technical Report' for Merton's Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Open Space Study.

### **Purpose and Scope**

- 1.7 The purpose of the Open Space Assessment is to assess the Quantity, Quality and Accessibility of the existing provision of open space in Merton. It builds on and updates existing studies; assesses future needs and deficiencies; and makes recommendations for locally derived standards.
- 1.8 The Open Space Assessment forms part of a set of Technical Reports which will provide an evidence base for the Merton Local Plan, and inform the overall Merton Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Open Space Study as shown in Figure 1.

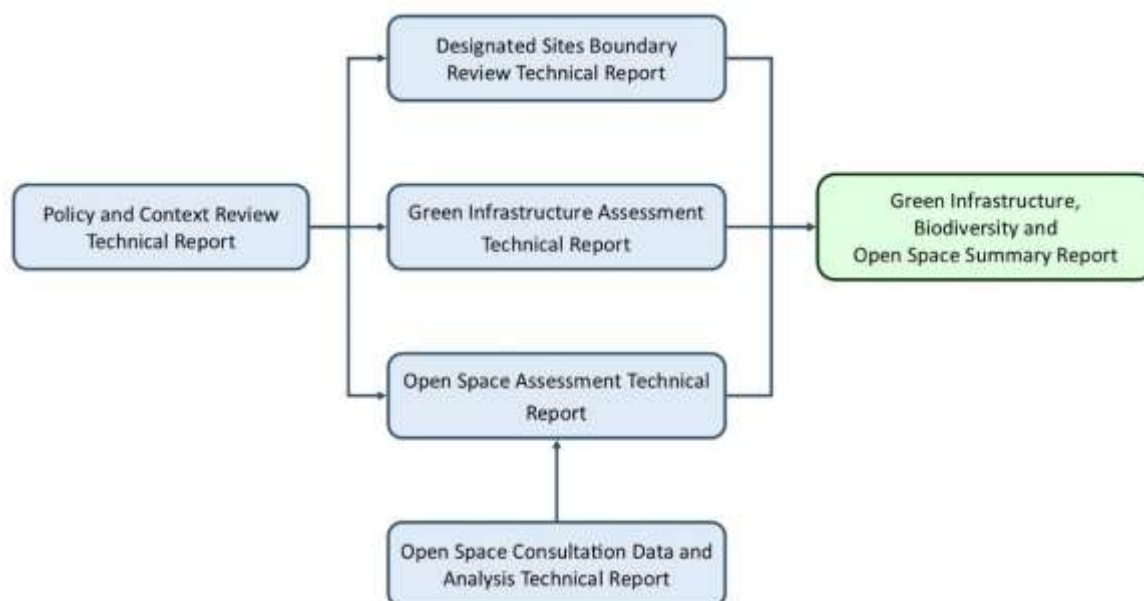


Figure 1: Structure for Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Open Space Study

1.9 The following types of open space form part of this assessment:

- Parks and Gardens;
- Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspaces;
- Green Corridors;
- Recreation and Outdoor Sports Facilities;
- Amenity Greenspace and Education;
- Play Space for Children and Teenagers;
- Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms;
- Cemeteries and Churchyards;
- Other Urban Fringe;
- Civic Spaces<sup>1</sup>; and
- Other<sup>2</sup> (e.g. vacant land).

1.10 Outdoor Sports Facilities sites are included in this Open Space Assessment as a type of open space. However the full assessment for Outdoor Sports can be found in Merton's Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) (2019), which has been produced in accordance with Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy Guidance (October 2013).

### **Open Space vs Public Open Space**

1.11 The Open Space Assessment covers both Open Space and Public Open Space.

1.12 Definitions used by Greenspace Information for Greater London (GiGL) explain the difference.

<sup>1</sup> Note: There are no Civic Spaces in the Merton open space data (GiGL data or Merton Council data)

<sup>2</sup> Note: Excluding Highways Land

**Open Space** is defined as undeveloped land which has an amenity value, or has potential for an amenity value. The value could be visual, derive from a site's historical or cultural interest or from the enjoyment of facilities which it provides. It includes both public and private spaces, but excludes private gardens.

**Public Open Space** is a designation applied to sites that are publicly accessible and perform a role in the local community. GiGL manage a dataset of sites designated as Public open Space.

- 1.13 All Open Space is included in the Quantity Assessment. Regardless of whether a site is accessible to the public, it provides an open space function and therefore contributes to open space provision.
- 1.14 Public Open Space is included in the Quality and Accessibility Assessment, by virtue of the fact that it is accessible.

### **Analysis Areas**

- 1.15 The Open Space Assessment evaluates open space provision in Merton at borough, sub-area, and ward level. Ward level is useful for the quantity assessment as it allows existing and future population data to be applied to show open space provision spatially across the borough. Merton's wards are shown in Figure 2.
- 1.16 However, as wards are administrative boundaries they often don't represent what is 'on the ground' and therefore sub-areas are a better way to represent an area geographically. Merton's new draft Local Plan identifies 5 sub-areas as shown in Figure 3. The sub-areas will be used in the Open Space Assessment when describing provision for quantity, quality and accessibility spatially.



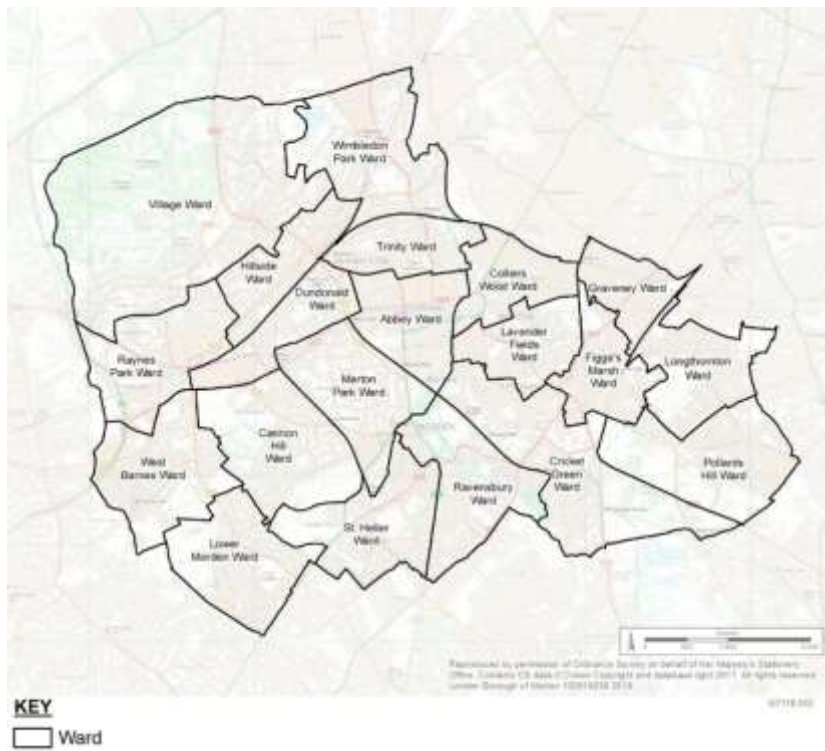


Figure 2: Merton Ward Map



Figure 3: Merton Sub-Area Map

## Population and Housing

- 1.17 The Open Space Assessment uses current (baseline) and future population data to assess existing and future needs for open space provision. 2018 is used as the baseline year, and 2035 is used for the future, in line with Merton’s Local Plan.
- 1.18 For the current and future population figures, the Open Space Assessment uses the Population and Household Projections by the Greater London Authority (GLA<sup>3</sup>). This provides figures at borough and ward level.
- 1.19 Population projections from the Merton Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (Draft Report October 2018<sup>4</sup>) were also used to assess future provision at the borough level (not available at ward level), to demonstrate future need for open space based on differing population projections. There are two population projections taken from the SHMA report based on ‘low’ (823 dwellings per annum) and ‘high’ (1328 dwellings per annum) growth scenarios. The SHMA uses 2017 as the baseline year.
- 1.20 Table 1 compares the GLA projection with the Merton SHMA projections.

*Table 1: Merton Population Projections*

Population Projection	Current Population (2017)	Current Population (2018)	Future Population (2035)	% Increase
GLA Population Projection	-	209,419	236,671	13%
Merton SHMA - 823-dpa	206,052	-	226,629	10%
Merton SHMA - 1,328-dpa	206,052	-	249,689	21%

<sup>3</sup> <https://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/projections>

<sup>4</sup> Demographic projections (Merton Strategic Housing Need Assessment Draft Report October 2018)

## 2.0 Methodology

### Best Practice

- 2.1 This Open Space Assessment is in line with the NPPF (2019) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) for Open Space, which have replaced Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Planning for Open Space Sport and Recreation (2002) and its Companion Guide, Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A companion guide to Planning Policy Guidance 17 (2002).
- 2.2 Whilst the Companion Guide to Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) has been superseded, it is acknowledged that the principles and approach within the guidance have not been replaced and it is still relevant to apply the methodology to assess needs for open space provision.

### Site Identification

- 2.3 Open spaces and their boundaries need to be mapped spatially in a Geographic Information System (GIS) in order to assess the quantity, quality and accessibility, and to record data about the sites.
- 2.4 The primary data source used for the Open Space Assessment is from GiGL<sup>5</sup>. Merton Council has a Service Level Agreement with GiGL to share data. Open space data was also provided by Merton Council from Merton's Local Plan Policies Map (2014), and both datasets have been compared to ensure all open space sites are captured in the Open Space Assessment. A map has been produced comparing the two sets of data (Drawing 1 - Open Space Comparison Ref.G7118.008).
- 2.5 A dataset of play areas was also provided by Merton Council. This detailed the locations and type of play areas, and included play facilities located within other open space sites (such as within parks).
- 2.6 Data generated as part of this Open Space Assessment is provided back to GiGL as part of the Service Level Agreement.
- 2.7 GiGL Open Space Categories<sup>6</sup> are used to define different types/typologies of open space sites (Drawing 2 - Open Space Typology Ref.G7118.016). They are classified using the previous PPG17 categories and sub-categories (Table 2).

---

<sup>5</sup> Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC (GiGL) is the capital's environmental records centre. They mobilise, curate and share data that underpins our knowledge of London's natural environment.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gigl.org.uk/open-spaces/open-space-categories/>

Table 2: Description of Site Categories

Category	Description
Parks and Gardens	Includes parks and formal gardens that provide accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community use. Often more multi-functional than other open spaces, these areas can be laid out formally for leisure and recreation, have well-defined boundaries with high quality horticulture and usually include a mixture of hard and soft landscaping and facilities.
Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspace	Includes Commons, public and private woodlands and nature reserves, including areas of wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education awareness.
Green Corridors	Includes rivers, railway cuttings and embankments, road verges, pedestrian and cycling routes, providing opportunities for wildlife migration in addition to walking, cycling and horse riding, whether for leisure or travel.
Recreation and Outdoor Sports Facilities	Includes recreation grounds, playing fields, golf courses and sites that provide other sports such as bowls or tennis. Playing field sites usually have playing pitches with pavilions and changing room facilities. Recreation grounds include areas of mown grass used for informal activities such as dog walking.
Amenity Greenspace and Education	Includes amenity greenspace, land for health and education (such as hospitals, schools and colleges), communal landscaping around premises and housing estates and reservoirs not located within a park. These areas provide for informal recreation with few facilities.
Play Space for Children and Teenagers	Includes defined areas set aside for children and young people in supervised or unsupervised environments. These areas usually provide play equipment such as swings and slides or skateboard parks, outdoor basketball areas and other informal space for social interaction.
Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms	Areas that are managed by the local population for gardening or to grow their own produce, usually restricted by access.
Cemeteries and Churchyards	Areas associated with places of worship and burial grounds.
Other Urban Fringe	Includes agricultural and horticultural land and equestrian centres, but does not include commercial retail nurseries.

Category	Description
Other	Includes vacant land with no formal use, sewage and water works and land that has recently been decontaminated but not developed.

### Quantity Assessment

- 2.8 The quantity assessment is a desk based assessment and is carried out using open space data mapped in a GIS. This allows the total area of open space, and the percentage land cover in a defined area (e.g. borough), to be calculated.
- 2.9 The area of open space is assessed against population data to give provision in 'hectares per 1000 population'. The population data at borough and ward level is used to calculate provision of open space, and show distribution of provision across the borough. Future population projections are also applied.
- 2.10 The total area for each category/type of site is also calculated, and compared against the population. For example, total area and hectare per 1000 population of Parks and Gardens, or Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspaces.
- 2.11 This is useful to compare against national or other benchmark standards for different types of provision, for example Fields in Trust (formerly National Playing Fields Associate – NPFA) in their guidance 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard (2015)'<sup>7</sup>.

### Quality Assessment

- 2.12 The quality assessment is a site based assessment.
- 2.13 The open space quality assessment method is aligned to the Green Flag Award assessment. The Green Flag Award is widely recognised as a quality benchmark for parks and green spaces, and is advocated by Fields in Trust and used by many other local authorities as part of their Open Space Assessments. A separate play area quality assessment was also undertaken following a Play England assessment method.
- 2.14 Some of the larger or more complex open space sites (such as Mitcham or Wimbledon Common) are often classified and split across multiple open space categories/types (such as Amenity, Outdoor Sports, Natural and Semi-Natural). To avoid multiple quality assessments for the same site, a single audit was undertaken incorporating all components of the site.
- 2.15 Not all open space sites were audited, and the following criteria were applied to exclude sites from the quality assessment (Table 3).
- 2.16 A map showing all open spaces selected for a quality audit can be found as Drawing 3 - Open Space Quality Assessment - Sites Audited Ref. G7118.014.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/guidance>

Table 3: Criteria to Exclude Sites from Quality Survey

Criteria	Justification
Sites smaller than 0.1 hectare.	Site has limited functionality.
Site category was Outdoor Sports Facilities, unless it was sub-category Recreation Ground (typically informal recreation).	Sites assessed as part of the Playing Pitch Strategy.
Site category was Green Corridor, unless sub-category Walking or Cycling Route.	Sites not typically 'public open space' and therefore not accessible.
Site category was Other, or Other Urban Fringe.	
Site category was Amenity, sub category Landscaping around Premises.	

## Open Space Audit

- 2.17 The open space audit method is described in Table 4, and uses some of the Green Flag Award<sup>8</sup> 'Raising the Standard' criteria that can be applied to all types of open space.
- 2.18 It should be noted that the quality assessment does not attempt to 'judge' all sites as to whether they would pass or fail the Green Flag Award. This would not be appropriate to do as part of an Open Space Assessment due to the types and nature of the sites; the proportionate amount of time needed to spend assessing each site in full; and the information available to undertake the assessment. The full Green Flag Award process involves reviewing a management plan for each site, and undertaking a site visit with the site managers, key stakeholders and the local community.

Table 4: Open Space Quality Assessment Audit Criteria

Audit Criteria	Description
Welcoming Place	Signage - Is signage at the entrances appropriate to the scale of the site and is it in good condition? Is there a notice board with info, events, contact information, out-of-hours problem reporting?
	Entrances - Are entrances well presented?

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.greenflagaward.org.uk/>

Audit Criteria	Description
	Safe Access - Is access to the site safe e.g. road crossings where appropriate. Is vehicle movement within the site appropriate and managed?
	Access for All Abilities - Are pedestrian routes logical and suitable for the wide range of visitors (such as cyclists, pedestrians, prams, wheelchairs etc) to use together? Are surfaces even?
	Boundaries - Are boundaries well defined and maintained?
	Car parking/Cycling Provision - Is there appropriate car parking on or near to the site, including disabled provision. Is there any provision for cycle parking?
Healthy, Safe and Secure	Facilities and Activities - Are facilities incl. sports and play equipment fit for purpose, safe and appropriate to the site?
	Clear Sightlines - Are sightlines clear? Is vegetation managed to reduce seclusion and to enable views in and out of the site? Is there natural surveillance from surroundings?
	Shelter - Does the site have opportunities to shelter from the weather (e.g. shade cover and rain cover)? Could be structures or vegetation e.g. tree canopy.
	Lighting - Is there an appropriate level of lighting within the site? Or adjacent to site/entrances from road lighting.
Well Maintained and Clean	Bins, Dog Bins and Recycling - Are there an appropriate number of bins and dog bins on site? Are they overflowing?
	Overall Site Cleanliness - Is there evidence of litter and dog fouling?

Audit Criteria	Description
	Hard Landscape Features - Do hard landscape features appear to be well maintained? Does it look tired?
	Buildings - Do buildings appear well cared for and clear of graffiti, flyposting?
	Soft Landscape Features - Do soft landscape features appear to be well maintained? Does it look tired?
	Site Furniture - Does site furniture, equipment, structures, appear to be well maintained? Does it look tired?

2.19 Each of the criteria was scored on a scale from 0-10, and a total percentage score derived. The scores were banded according to the Green Flag grade for open spaces (Table 5).

*Table 5: Open Space Quality Scores Thresholds*

Open Space Quality Score (%)	Open Space Quality Grade
90 – 100	Excellent
80 – 89	Very Good
70 – 79	Good
50 – 69	Fair
0 – 49	Poor

### Play Area Audit

2.20 The play audit is based on Play England’s ‘Playable Space Quality Assessment Tool’<sup>9</sup>. The quality assessment method for the play area audits for three scales or types of play area (Table 6) uses Play England criteria (described in Table 7). Play area types were assigned from the source datasets and verified during the surveys.

2.21 A map showing all play areas audited can be found as Drawing 4 - Play Area Quality Audit Survey - Sites Audited Ref. G7118.015.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.playengland.org.uk/media/211694/quality-assessment-tool.pdf>



Table 6: Types of Play Areas

Type	Description
Type A - Door-step space or facility	A small space, within sight of home, where children, especially young children can play within view of known adults.
Type B - Local spaces and facilities	A larger space which can be reached safely by children beginning to travel independently and with friends, without accompanying adults and for adults with young children to walk with ease.
Type C - Neighbourhood spaces and facilities	A larger space or facility for informal recreation which children and young people, used to travelling longer distances independently, can get to safely and spend time in play and informal recreation with their peers and have a wider range of play experiences.

Table 7: Play Area Quality Audit Criteria

Play England Criteria	Description
Location	Informal oversight
	Well used by children
	Getting there
	Personal safety, lighting and security
	Accessibility in getting there
	Meeting other children
	Designed for the site
Play Value	Enticing children to play
	Inclusion of disabled children
	Play needs of different ages (B and C only)
	Movement

Play England Criteria	Description
	Imaginative play ages (B and C only)
	Ball games
	Loose parts
	Access to the natural environment
	Places for children to sit
	Play opportunities for disabled children
	Added play value
Care and Maintenance	Well maintained
	Health and safety
	Seating for adults
	Litter bins
	Dog free zones
	Presence of supervisory adults (B and C only)
	Toilets/changing facilities (B and C only)

2.22 Each of the criteria was scored on a scale from 0-5, and a total percentage score derived. The scores were banded according to the Play England's grades for Play Spaces (Table 8).

*Table 8: Play Area Quality Scores Thresholds*

Play Area Quality Score (%)	Play Area Quality Description
80 - 100	Excellent
60 - 79	Good
40 - 59	Average, Needs Some Improvement
20 - 39	Weaknesses, Improvements Needed
0 - 19	Serious Weaknesses, Improvements Needed

## Accessibility Assessment

- 2.23 The Accessibility Assessment is a desk based assessment using GIS to run analysis on access to Nature, Public Open Space and Play Areas. The assessment identifies Areas of Deficiency (AoD) in access to open spaces.
- 2.24 AoDs for Public Open Space and Nature are calculated by GiGL using their AoD data model. It involves the integration of access points to an open space (which were provided by GiGL and verified during the site surveys by TEP) with Ordnance Survey's Integrated Transport Network dataset to better predict the accessibility of open spaces in comparison to linear 'as the crow flies' measurements.
- 2.25 The AoDs were generated by GiGL using data which was considered accurate at the time, however it may not account for local knowledge about site access.

### Access to Nature

- 2.26 The AoD for access to nature is defined in the Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy and cited by GiGL<sup>10</sup> as 'Areas where people have to walk more than one kilometre to reach an accessible wildlife site of metropolitan or borough importance', the 'accessible wildlife sites' being Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).

### Access to Public Open Space

- 2.27 Public Open Space categories (Table 9), as defined in The London Plan (2016<sup>11</sup>, and draft 2018<sup>12</sup>), provide a benchmark for the provision of publicly accessible open space across the capital, categorising spaces according to their size, facilities and local importance.

*Table 9: Public Open Space Hierarchy*

Open Space Hierarchy	Typical Size (Ha)	Distance from Home (km)	Description
Regional Parks	400	3.2 – 8	Large areas, corridors or networks of open space, the majority of which will be publically accessible and provide a range of facilities and features offering recreational, ecological, landscape, cultural or green infrastructure benefits. Offer a combination of facilities and features that are unique within London, are readily accessible by public transport and are managed to meet best practice quality standards.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gigl.org.uk/designated-sites/areas-of-deficiency-in-access-to-nature/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/current-london-plan>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/new-london-plan>

Open Space Hierarchy	Typical Size (Ha)	Distance from Home (km)	Description
Metropolitan Parks	60	3.2	Large area of open space that provide a similar range of benefits to Regional Parks and offer a combination of facilities at a sub-regional level, are readily accessible by public transport and are managed to meet best practice quality standards.
District Parks	20	1.2	Large areas of open space that provide a landscape setting with a variety of natural features providing a wide range of activities, including outdoor sports facilities and playing fields, children's play for different age groups and informal recreation pursuits.
Local Parks and Open Spaces	2	0.4	Providing for court games, children's play, sitting out areas and nature conservation areas.
Small Open Spaces	<2	<0.4	Gardens, sitting out areas, children's play spaces or other areas of a specialist nature, including nature conservation areas.
Pocket Parks	<0.4	<0.4	Small areas of open space that provide natural surfaces and shaded areas for informal play and passive recreation that sometimes have seating and play equipment.
Linear Open Spaces	Variable	Wherever feasible	Open spaces and towpaths alongside canals and other waterways; paths; disused railways; nature conservation areas; and other routes that provide opportunities for informal recreation. Often characterised by features or attractive areas which are not fully accessible to the public but contribute to the enjoyment of the space.

### Access to Play Areas

- 2.28 Accessibility standards, as defined by the Mayor's SPG on Children's Play and Informal Recreation (2012<sup>13</sup>), provide a benchmark for the provision of play areas across the capital, categorising spaces according to the age range of the play area (Table 10). These distance buffers were applied to formal play areas locations in the open space accessibility assessment.
- 2.29 The buffers were also applied to parks and gardens or outdoor sports facilities which had no restrictions to access, as these can provide a source of informal play for children of all ages.

*Table 10: Accessibility distances to Play Areas*

<b>Child Age</b>	<b>Actual Walking Distance</b>
Under 5s	100m
5-11 year olds	400m
12+ year olds	800m

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/planning-guidance-and-practice-notes/play-and-informal>

## 3.0 Results

### Quantity Assessment

#### Open Space Land Cover Borough Wide

- 3.1 The total area of open space within Merton is approximately 1,329 hectares (13.2 km<sup>2</sup>), which accounts for 35% of the borough. 793 hectares, 21% of the borough is publically accessible open space (Table 11).
- 3.2 Outdoor Sports Facilities and Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspaces account for the highest amounts. Provision for Children and Teenagers is among the lowest, however this does not include play areas within other category sites (as this would 'double count' in land use terms), and play areas do not typically cover large open areas.

*Table 11: Open Space Quantity Summary*

Category	No. of Sites	Area (ha)	Proportion of Total Open Space (%)	Proportion of Borough: Open Space (%)	Proportion of Borough: Publically Accessible Open Space (%)
Parks and Gardens	27	190.8	14.4	5.1	5.0
Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspace	31	380.8	28.7	10.1	9.6
Green Corridors	51	99.7	7.5	2.7	0.7
Recreation & Outdoor Sports Facilities	74	405.1	30.5	10.8	5.2
Amenity Greenspace & Education	126	125.0	9.4	3.3	0.4
Play Space for Children and Teenagers	7	5.1	0.4	0.1	0.1

Category	No. of Sites	Area (ha)	Proportion of Total Open Space (%)	Proportion of Borough: Open Space (%)	Proportion of Borough: Publically Accessible Open Space (%)
Allotments Community Gardens and City Farms	21	31.8	2.4	0.8	0.0
Cemeteries and Churchyards	14	82.5	6.2	2.2	<0.01
Other Urban Fringe	3	7.8	0.6	0.2	0.1
Other Open Space	5	<0.01	<0.01	<0.01	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>1328.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>35.3</b>	<b>21.1</b>

#### Open Space Land Cover by Ward

- 3.3 The total area of open space in each ward can be found below (Table 12). In the table, the wards are grouped by sub-area (for details of sub-areas see Analysis Areas in Chapter 1.0), although it should be noted that the ward and sub-area boundaries do not directly align, so the groupings are by 'best fit'.
- 3.4 Village ward in the Wimbledon sub-area has the highest amount of open space (384.5 ha, just under a third of all open space in Merton, and covering 10% of the borough's total open space) owing to Wimbledon Common, whilst neighbouring Hillside contained the least amount of open space (5.8 ha). Cricket Green and Pollards Hill wards in the Mitcham sub-area have the second and third highest amounts of open space, owing to Mitcham Common.
- 3.5 Further breakdown of the types/categories of open spaces in each ward can be found in Appendix A.

Table 12: Open Space Quantity by Ward

Ward	Area (ha)	Proportion of Total Open Space (%)	Proportion of borough: Open Space (%)
<b>Colliers Wood Sub Area</b>			
Abbey	18.7	1.4	0.5
Colliers Wood	15.4	1.2	0.4
Trinity	17.1	1.3	0.5
<b>Mitcham Sub Area</b>			
Cricket Green	145.6	11.0	3.9
Figge's Marsh	25.1	1.9	0.7
Graveney	11.0	0.8	0.3
Lavender Fields	21.0	1.6	0.6
Longthornton	50.7	3.8	1.3
Pollards Hill	110.9	8.4	3.0
<b>Morden Sub Area</b>			
Cannon Hill	94.8	7.1	2.5
Lower Morden	61.2	4.6	1.6
Merton Park	34.2	2.6	0.9
Ravensbury	67.2	5.1	1.8
St Helier	73.3	5.5	1.9
<b>Raynes Park Sub Area</b>			
Raynes Park	45.7	3.4	1.2
West Barnes	62.6	4.7	1.7
<b>Wimbledon Sub Area</b>			
Dundonald	18.2	1.4	0.5
Hillside	5.8	0.4	0.2
Village	384.5	28.9	10.2



Ward	Area (ha)	Proportion of Total Open Space (%)	Proportion of borough: Open Space (%)
Wimbledon Park	65.6	4.9	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1328.6</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>35.3</b>

#### Open Space Provision by Population (Hectare per 1000) Borough Wide

- 3.6 The population projections for the borough have been applied to show the current (2018) and future (2035) provision in Hectares per 1000 Population (Table 13). The future provision calculation assumes no change to the total area of open space in the borough, therefore only demonstrates the change in provision due to population growth, and not due to changes in the amount of open space.
- 3.7 Current provision is 6.3 Hectares per 1000 Population, and future provision is 5.6 Hectares per 1000, based on GLA population projections.
- 3.8 Future provision ranges from 5.3 to 5.9 Hectares per 1000 Population when applying the Merton Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) population projections.

*Table 13: Open Space Provision by Population*

Population Projection	Current Population (2018)	Current Population Provision (Ha/1000)	Future Population (2035)	Future Population Provision (Ha/1000)
GLA Population Projection	209,419	6.3	236,671	5.6
Merton SHMA - 823-dpa	-	-	226,629	5.9
Merton SHMA - 1,328-dpa	-	-	249,689	5.3

#### Open Space Provision by Population (Hectare per 1000) by Ward

- 3.9 The GLA population projections are available at ward level, therefore they have been applied for current (2018) and future (2035) population projections (Table 14). In the table, the wards are grouped by sub-area (for details of sub-areas see Analysis Areas in Chapter 1.0), although it should be noted that the ward and sub-area boundaries do not directly align, so the groupings are by 'best fit'.

- 3.10 When viewed on a map of the borough (Drawing 5 - Open Space Quantity Provision by Ward Ref. G7118.019) the wards with the lowest provision are concentrated in the Colliers Wood and Mitcham sub-areas. The wards with the highest provision are in the Wimbledon sub-area, including Village ward; and in the Mitcham sub-area including Pollards Hill ward and Cricket Green ward; and Cannon Hill ward which crosses Morden and Raynes Park sub-areas.
- 3.11 The figures in the table also show the percentage change (increase or decrease) in open space provision by ward, indicating the pattern of population change across the borough. In some wards this indicates a decrease in population, and therefore an increase in hectare per 1000 population of open space provision.
- 3.12 The wards which already have the lowest provision *and* are showing the biggest percentage of decrease in open space provision are:
- Abbey and Colliers Wood wards in the Colliers Wood sub-area
  - Figge's Marsh and Lavender Fields wards in the Mitcham sub-area
  - Merton Park in the Merton sub-area
  - Dundonald ward in the Wimbledon sub-area
- 3.13 Bold text in the table show those wards with:
- Current provision above the borough wide 6.3 hectare per 1000
  - Future provision above the borough wide 5.6 hectare per 1000
  - Future change in provision which goes up rather than down, or stays the same.

Table 14: Open Space Provision by Ward Population

Ward	Current Population Provision 2018 (Ha/1000)	Future Population Provision 2035 (Ha/1000)	% Change in Open Space Provision (Up or Down)
<b>Colliers Wood Sub Area</b>			
Abbey	1.7	1.4	-20
Colliers Wood	1.4	1.2	-10
Trinity	1.7	1.6	-5
<b>Mitcham Sub Area</b>			
Cricket Green	<b>12.1</b>	<b>9.7</b>	-20
Figge's Marsh	2.1	1.8	-14
Graveney	1.1	1.0	-8
Lavender Fields	1.9	1.6	-16

Ward	Current Population Provision 2018 (Ha/1000)	Future Population Provision 2035 (Ha/1000)	% Change in Open Space Provision (Up or Down)
Longthornton	4.7	4.7	0
Pollards Hill	10.3	10.6	3
<b>Morden Sub Area</b>			
Cannon Hill	9.9	9.2	-7
Lower Morden	6.8	7.0	3
Merton Park	3.6	2.5	-31
Ravensbury	6.7	4.8	-28
St Helier	6.6	5.8	-12
<b>Raynes Park Sub Area</b>			
Raynes Park	4.5	4.3	-4
West Barnes	5.8	5.4	-6
<b>Wimbledon Sub Area</b>			
Dundonald	1.9	1.7	-10
Hillside	0.6	0.6	-4
Village	44.9	45.7	2
Wimbledon Park	5.5	4.5	-19

#### Open Space Provision by Population (Hectare per 1000) by Typology

- 3.14 The GLA population projections for current (2018) and future (2035) populations were also applied to the open space categories (Table 15).

*Table 15: Open Space Provision by Typology*

Category	Current Population Provision (Ha/1000)	Future Population Provision (Ha/1000)
Parks and Gardens	0.91	0.81
Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspace	1.82	1.61

Category	Current Population Provision (Ha/1000)	Future Population Provision (Ha/1000)
Green Corridors	0.48	0.42
Recreation & Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.93	1.71
Amenity Greenspace & Education	0.60	0.53
Play Space for Children and Teenagers	0.02	0.02
Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms	0.15	0.13
Cemeteries and Churchyards	0.39	0.35
Other Urban Fringe	0.04	0.03
Other Open Space	<0.01	<0.01
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.34</b>	<b>5.61</b>

### Quality Assessment

- 3.15 A total of 153 sites were selected for an open space quality assessment based on the criteria identified in the open space audit method. 106 sites were audited in the survey, the 47 sites which were not audited were not accessible at the time of survey. Many of the sites which were not accessible were open spaces associated with educational grounds. Table 16 shows a comparison of typologies which were surveyed and the quality score.

*Table 16: Open Space Quality Audit Results*

	Very Good (80-89%)	Good (70 – 79%)	Fair (50 – 69%)	Poor (0 – 49%)	Total
Parks and Gardens	4	2	7	6	19
Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspace		1	7	10	18
Green Corridors		1		3	4

	<b>Very Good (80-89%)</b>	<b>Good (70 – 79%)</b>	<b>Fair (50 – 69%)</b>	<b>Poor (0 – 49%)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Recreation & Outdoor Sports Facilities		4	8	7	19
Amenity Greenspace & Education	1	1	8	13	23
Play Space for Children and Teenagers	1		3	1	5
Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms	2		4	2	8
Cemeteries and Churchyards	3	3	3	1	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>106</b>
<b>Proportion of Open Space Audits %</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>37.7</b>	<b>40.6</b>	<b>100</b>

3.16 The quality score ranges between 10.6% (Poor) (Open Space Attached to Gypsy and Traveller Site, TEP12) and 86.9% (Very Good) (Wimbledon Park, M067) with an average score of 54.8% (Fair). Further detail on each open space typology is detailed below (also see Drawing 6 - Open Space Quality Assessment - Survey Results Ref. G7118.017).

#### Parks and Gardens

3.17 19 sites were surveyed across the borough, with an average score of 60.6% (Fair). They were found to be clustered around the River Wandle in the centre of the borough, but few sites were identified in East Mitcham. Land Adjacent to the River Wandle (M064) was found to be the lowest scoring site with 38.8% (Poor), and Wimbledon Park was found to be the highest scoring with 86.9% (Very Good).

### Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspace

- 3.18 18 sites were surveyed across the borough, with an average score of 48.8% (Poor). They were distributed across the borough, but Wimbledon Common and Mitcham Common are notable sites in this typology in the Wimbledon and Mitcham sub-areas respectively. Cherrywood Open Space (M015) and Joseph Hood Memorial Woodland and Meadow (M005) were the lowest scoring sites with 28.1% (Poor), and Wimbledon Common (M072) received the highest quality score with 75.6% (Good).

### Green Corridors

- 3.19 4 sites were surveyed across the borough, with an average score of 45.5% (Poor). Pyl Brook Nature Reserve (R061) was the lowest scoring site, with 13.8% (Poor) and Northern End of Green Lane and Footpath to South (C004) scored the highest, with 79.3% (Good).

### Recreation and Outdoor Sports Facilities

- 3.20 19 sites were surveyed across the borough, with an average score of 56.4% (Fair). They are primarily clustered in the Colliers Wood and Mitcham sub-areas, with few sites audited in Wimbledon. The lowest scoring site was Lyndhurst Recreation Ground (R019) with a score of 37.5% (Poor), but Colliers Wood Recreation Ground (R049) was found to be the highest scoring with 78.1% (Good).

### Amenity Greenspace and Education

- 3.21 23 sites were surveyed across the borough, with an average score of 45.4% (Poor). The sites are primarily clustered in South Mitcham and Morden. Open space attached to Gypsy and Traveller site (TEP12) was the lowest scoring site with 10.6% (Poor), and Beecholme Primary School (R025) was the highest scoring site with 80.6% (Very Good).

### Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms

- 3.22 8 sites were surveyed across the borough, with an average score of 60.8% (Fair). They are primarily clustered in Colliers Wood and North Mitcham, but there are additional sites located in South Mitcham. No sites were identified to the Wimbledon sub-area. Eastfield Road Allotments (A001) was the lowest scoring site with a score of 35% (Poor), and Arthur Road Allotments (C006) was the highest scoring site with a score of 86.2% (Very Good).

### Cemeteries and Churchyards

- 3.23 10 sites were surveyed across the borough, with an average score of 70.1% (Good). The sites were located across the borough apart from in Wimbledon and Raynes Park. St Mary the Virgin Churchyard (M059) scored the lowest in the borough, with 32.5% (Poor). Morden Cemetery (C006) and South London Crematorium and Streatham Park Cemetery (C003) both scored the highest with 86.2% (Very Good).

### Play Space for Children and Teenagers

#### *Open Space/Green Flag Audit*

- 3.24 5 open space sites were surveyed across the borough, with an average score of 60.1% (Fair). The sites were clustered in Mitcham and Colliers Wood. Lewis Road Recreation Ground (R010) was found to be the lowest scoring site with 43.8% (Poor), but Tamworth Farm Recreation Ground (M006) was found to have the highest score of 86.3% (Very Good).

#### *Play Area/Play England Audit*

- 3.25 83 play areas were selected for survey, however Lonesome Road Intergenerational Centre Adventure Playground (37) was not accessible at the time of survey. 61% of play areas received a score of 'Average, Needs Some Improvement' (Table 17).
- 3.26 An evaluation of the scores by type of play area found that neighbourhood spaces and facilities scored the highest (Table 18). The play areas are primarily located in Mitcham, many of which received a 'Weaknesses, Needs Improvement' quality score (Drawing 7 - Play Area Quality Audit Survey - Survey Results Ref. G7118.018). Fewer play areas are located in the Wimbledon, but they received a 'Good' quality score.

*Table 17: Play Area Quality Audit Results*

Play Area Quality	Number of Play Areas Surveyed	Proportion of Play Areas (%)
Excellent (80 – 100%)	1	1.2
Good (60 – 79%)	14	17.1
Average, Needs Some Improvement (40 – 59%)	50	61.0
Weaknesses, Improvements Needed (20 – 39%)	17	20.7
Serious Weaknesses, Improvements Needed (0 – 19%)	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 18: Play Area Type Summary*

Type of Play Area	Number of Play Areas Surveyed	Proportion of Play Areas (%)	Average Score (%)
A - Door-step space or facility	21	25.6	43.7 (Average)

Type of Play Area	Number of Play Areas Surveyed	Proportion of Play Areas (%)	Average Score (%)
B - Local spaces and facility	56	68.3	48.6 (Average)
C - Neighbourhood spaces and facility	5	6.1	77.5 (Good)
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>49.1 (Average)</b>

## Accessibility Assessment

### Access to Nature

- 3.27 The accessibility analysis found that over 84% of the borough is within an accessible distance (1km) of a publicly accessible SINC. Accessibility is highest around Wimbledon and Mitcham Commons, and along the Wandle Valley (Drawing 8 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to Nature Ref. G7118.053).
- 3.28 Areas of deficiency are identified along the railway line running through Wimbledon and Raynes Park, and in the north east of the borough.

### Regional Parks

- 3.29 The accessibility analysis found that over 98% of the borough is within an accessible distance (8km) of a publicly accessible Regional Park. Wimbledon Common is the only Regional Park in Merton. Areas of deficiency are identified in the very east of the borough (Drawing 9 - G7118.054 Areas of Deficiency in Access to Regional Parks Ref. G7118.054).

### Metropolitan Parks

- 3.30 The accessibility analysis found that over 99% of the borough is within an accessible distance (3.2km) of a publicly accessible Metropolitan Park. Open spaces included within this analysis are Wimbledon Common, Mitcham Common and Morden Park. The only small area of deficiency is identified in the north of the borough, east of Wimbledon Park station and the A218 Durnsford Road (Drawing 10 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to Metropolitan Parks Ref. G7118.055).

### District Parks

- 3.31 The accessibility analysis found that over 77% of the borough is within an accessible distance (1.2km) of a publicly accessible District Park. Open spaces within the analysis include Morden Hall Park, Wimbledon Park and Cannon Hill Common. The area of deficiency runs from the west of the borough around Raynes Park, up to the north and east through Wimbledon, Colliers Wood and Mitcham (Drawing 11 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to District Parks Ref. G7118.056).



### Local Parks, Small Open Spaces and Pocket Parks

- 3.32 The accessibility analysis found that over 72% of the borough is within an accessible distance (400m) of a publicly accessible Local Park or Small Open Space. 108 open spaces in Merton are included within this analysis. Areas of deficiency are identified in several parts of the borough, the largest of which is in the west, in the Raynes Park and Wimbledon areas (Drawing 12 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to Local Parks, Small Open Spaces and Pocket Parks Ref. G7118.057).

### Play Areas for Children Over 12 Years Old

- 3.33 The accessibility analysis found that over 95% of the borough is within an accessible distance (800m) of a Play Area or an open space which could be used for informal recreation. Play areas are identified in the centre and east of the borough, primarily in Morden, Colliers Wood and Mitcham. There is a lack of formal play areas in the west of the borough where most of the play provision is delivered by open spaces for informal recreation. Areas of deficiency identified in the south east and north west of the borough fall within Mitcham and Wimbledon Commons (Drawing 13 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to Play Areas for Children Over 12 Years Old Ref. G7118.058).

### Play Areas for Children between 5 and 11 Years Old

- 3.34 The accessibility analysis found that over 76% of the borough is within an accessible distance (400m) of a Play Area or an open space which could be used for informal recreation. Play areas are identified in the south west and east of the borough, in Mitcham, Colliers Wood and Raynes Park. Much of the provision of play in Morden and Wimbledon is delivered by open spaces for informal recreation. Areas of deficiency identified are around Wimbledon Common; Mitcham Common; and Raynes Park (Drawing 14 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to Play Areas for Children between 5 and 12 Years Old Ref. G7118.059).

### Play Areas for Children under 5 Years Old

- 3.35 The accessibility analysis found that over 27% of the borough is within an accessible distance (100m) of a Play Area or an open space which could be used for informal recreation. Play areas are primarily clustered in the centre and north east of the borough, with additional provision in the south in the areas surrounding Morden Park. Areas of deficiency are identified in several parts of the borough (Drawing 15 - Areas of Deficiency in Access to Play Areas for Children under 5 Years Old Ref. G7118.060).

## 4.0 Benchmark Standards

### London Benchmarks for Quantity: Land Cover

- 4.1 At 35%, Merton's Open Space land cover is below the London wide figure of 42%<sup>14</sup>, although Merton has 21% Public Open Space<sup>15</sup> compared with 18% London wide (Table 19).

*Table 19: Open Space & Public Open Space Land Cover London Benchmark*

Definition	Merton Land Cover	London Wide
Open Space	35%	42%
Public Open Space	21%	18%

- 4.2 As a comparison with other London Boroughs, a selection of inner and outer neighbouring or nearby boroughs are shown in Table 20<sup>16</sup>. Merton's Open Space land cover is similar to neighbouring outer boroughs Kingston and Sutton.

*Table 20: Open Space Land Cover London Boroughs Benchmark*

Borough	Inner Borough	Outer Borough
Lambeth	21%	
Lewisham	22%	
Southwark	24%	
Wandsworth	32%	
Croydon		32%
Sutton		34%
<b>Merton</b>		<b>35%</b>
Kingston		37%
Bromley		57%
Richmond upon Thames		57%

<sup>14</sup> "Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC, 2019" from <https://www.gigl.org.uk/keyfigures/>

<sup>15</sup> Proportion of Open Space which is Public Open Space therefore publicly accessible

<sup>16</sup> "Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC, 2019" from <https://www.gigl.org.uk/planning-for-nature/boroughstats/>

- 4.3 In terms of the main types of Open Space, Merton has less Parks and Gardens, Green Corridors and Amenity Space than London wide; but more Natural and Semi-Natural, Outdoor Sports Facilities, and Cemeteries and Churchyards (Table 21).
- 4.4 Merton has a similar level of provision as London for Provision for Children and Teenagers, and Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms.

*Table 21: Land Cover Benchmark by Category*

Category	Merton Area (ha)	Proportion of Merton (%)	Proportion of London %
Parks and Gardens	190.8	5.1	5.83
Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspace	380.8	10.1	5.62
Green Corridors	99.7	2.7	3.58
Recreation & Outdoor Sports Facilities	405.1	10.8	6.76
Amenity Greenspace & Education	125.0	3.3	4.07
Play Space for Children and Teenagers	5.1	0.1	0.05
Allotments Community Gardens and City Farms	31.8	0.8	0.64
Cemeteries and Churchyards	82.5	2.2	0.86
Other Urban Fringe	7.8	0.2	8.05
Civic Spaces	0.0	0.0	0.06
Other Open Space	<0.01	<0.01	1.93

Category	Merton Area (ha)	Proportion of Merton (%)	Proportion of London %
Unclassified by GiGL	-	-	4.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>1328.6</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>42%</b>

### London Benchmarks for Quantity: Hectare per 1000 Population

- 4.5 Based on the total amount of Open Space London wide (67541 hectares<sup>17</sup>), and the population projection for London of 8.95 million<sup>18</sup>, the overall Quantity is 7.5 Hectares per 1000 Population.

### National Benchmarks for Quantity: Hectare per 1000 Population

- 4.6 National Benchmark Standards are from Fields in Trust's (FiT) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard (2015) which replaces FiT's 2008 guidance Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play. This latest guidance has been informed by a survey commissioned by FiT in 2014<sup>19</sup> resulting in a response from 119 local authorities in England and Wales, representing a total response rate of 33%.
- 4.7 Beyond the Six Acre Standard guidance reflects the NPPF, The Localism Act and the phased introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The guidance introduces quantity benchmarking for informal open space (e.g. Parks and Gardens, Amenity Greenspace, and Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace) alongside formal open space such as sports pitches and play areas,.
- 4.8 When quantity provision of open space in Merton is compared with the FIT national benchmark standards (Table 22), the provision in Merton is very similar across all categories. Not all categories have a national benchmark standard due to the type of provision; for example Green Corridors are often associated with natural water courses or linear transport infrastructure and their function is to connect other open spaces; and Churchyards and Cemeteries are associated with provision of burial ground, therefore not primarily for recreation (although their contribution to this open space functions is valuable).
- 4.9 The one exception in the comparison is for Play Space for Children and Teenagers, which shows that Merton's provision is below the national benchmark. In this instance it is important to note that the figure for Merton's Play Space provision excludes provision in other categories (such as Parks and Gardens, and Recreation and Outdoor Sports Facilities), therefore should be considered alongside the Accessibility Assessment (which does include other categories) for a truer picture of provision and subsequent deficiencies.

<sup>17</sup> "Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC, 2019" from <https://www.gigl.org.uk/keyfigures/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.ukpopulation.org/london-population/>

<sup>19</sup> Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play 2015 Review, Phase 2 Survey Findings for England and Wales <http://www.fieldsintrust.org/Upload/file/Survey%20findings.pdf>

Table 22: Hectare per 1000 Population Benchmark by Category

Category	Merton Current Population Provision (Ha/1000)	Merton Future Population Provision (Ha/1000)	Fields in Trust National Benchmark
Parks and Gardens	0.91	0.81	0.8
Natural and Semi-Natural Urban Greenspace	1.82	1.61	1.8
Green Corridors	0.48	0.42	-
Recreation and Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.93	1.71	1.6
Amenity Greenspace and Education	0.60	0.53	0.6
Play Space for Children and Teenagers	0.02	0.02	0.25
Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms	0.15	0.13	0.3 <sup>20</sup>
Cemeteries and Churchyards	0.39	0.35	-
Other Urban Fringe	0.04	0.03	-
Civic Spaces	0.0	0.0	-
Other Open Space	<0.01	<0.01	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>6.34</b>	<b>5.61</b>	<b>5.05</b>

<sup>20</sup> This figure is from the FIT survey findings - see Additional Information on Allotment Standards

### Additional Information on Allotment Standards

- 4.10 There is no legal national minimum quantity provision standard for allotments<sup>21</sup>.
- 4.11 The 1969 Thorpe Report recommended a minimum provision equivalent to 15 plots per 1,000 households<sup>22</sup>, which equates to 6.5 plots<sup>23</sup> per 1,000 population or 0.16 ha per 1,000 population.
- 4.12 The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) recommends a minimum level of provision of 20 allotment plots per 1,000 households, which equates to 8.7 plots per 1,000 population or 0.21 ha per 1,000 population. NSALG advises that the standard plot size is 250 sq. metres.
- 4.13 A Review of Allotment Provision for Cambridge City Council<sup>24</sup>, stated that there is difficulty in considering a standard of provision based on household given the trend of falling household size since the 1950s. The report referenced the Survey of Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms, carried out by the University of Derby on behalf of Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in 2006, which showed that the national average provision was 7 plots per 1,000 population, which equates to 0.175 ha per 1,000 population.
- 4.14 In the FiT Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play Review, Phase 2 Survey Findings for England and Wales (2014), the median level of provision for allotments, community gardens and urban farms was 0.3 ha per 1,000 population.
- 4.15 A summary of national benchmark standard for allotments is provided in the Table 23. Merton's provision of Allotments and Community Gardens falls below the range of benchmark standards, most notably the most recent FiT survey findings of 0.3 hectares per 1000.

*Table 23: Hectare per 1000 Population Benchmark for Allotments*

	No. of households	No. of plots per household	Population (based on household size of 2.3)	Hectare (based on plot size of 250m <sup>2</sup> )
Thorpe Report 1969	1,000	15	2,300	0.375
		6.5	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0.16</b>
NSALG	1,000	20	2,300	0.5
	-	8.7	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0.21</b>
University of Derby 2006	-	7	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0.175</b>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.allotmoreallotments.org.uk/legislation.htm>

<sup>22</sup> Average Household size in England & Wales is 2.4 (2017 Census)

<sup>23</sup> Based on a standard plot of 250m<sup>2</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Review of Allotment Provision for Cambridge City Council (Ashley Godfrey Associates, January 2010)

	No. of households	No. of plots per household	Population (based on household size of 2.3)	Hectare (based on plot size of 250m <sup>2</sup> )
FiT Survey 2014	-	-	1,000	0.3

### National Benchmarks for Quality

- 4.16 The National Benchmark standard for open space quality is the Green Flag Award criteria, which was used to complete the quality audits in Merton.
- 4.17 National Benchmark Standards from the FiT Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard (2015) and the Playable Space Quality Assessment Tool (Play England, 2009) were also applied during the Merton quality audits as shown in Table 24.

Table 24: Quality Benchmark by Category

Category	National Benchmark Standard
Parks and Gardens	Parks to be of Green Flag status.
Natural and Semi-Natural	Appropriately landscaped. Positive management.
Amenity Greenspace and Education	Provision of footpaths. Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime.
Green Corridor	No standard in the guidance, but it can be assumed the same standards as above apply to other types of green space.
Play Space for Children and Teenagers	Quality appropriate to the intended level of performance, designed to appropriate technical standards. Located where they are of most value to the community to be served.  Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards for play areas using the Children's Play Council's Quality Assessment Tool.

Category	National Benchmark Standard
<p>Recreation and Outdoor Sports Facilities</p>	<p>Sufficiently diverse recreational use for the whole community.</p> <p>Appropriately landscaped.</p> <p>Maintained safely and to the highest possible condition with available finance.</p> <p>Positively managed taking account of the need for repair and replacement over time as necessary.</p> <p>Provision of appropriate ancillary facilities and equipment.</p> <p>Provision of footpaths.</p> <p>Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime.</p> <p>Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards for playing pitches, taking into account the level of play, topography, necessary safety margins and optimal orientation.</p>



## 5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

### Key Findings from Quantity, Quality and Accessibility Assessment

#### *Quantity*

- 5.1 Merton's population is set to increase by up to 21% in the next 15 years<sup>25</sup>, and based on providing no additional open space, this will result in the overall quantity provision of open space falling from 6.3 hectares per 1000 in 2018 to 5.3 hectares per 1000 population by 2035. If the lower level population projections (an increase of 10%) prove to be more accurate, this still results in a fall in quantity provision to 5.9 hectares per 1000 by 2035.
- 5.2 When looked at in land cover terms, 35% of Merton is Open Space compared to 42% London wide<sup>26</sup>. Merton's Open Space land cover is similar to neighbouring outer boroughs Kingston (37%) and Sutton (34%).
- 5.3 Whilst the quantity of provision is not the only factor, and the benefits of accessibility to good quality open spaces are widely known, quantity should remain a consideration, and could include the following:
- Retaining existing open space in situ (e.g. no loss of existing open space);
  - Retaining the existing amount of open space overall (e.g. no net loss of open space);
  - New open spaces in areas of deficiency;
  - New types of open space to replace existing open spaces in areas of deficiency; and
  - Greater diversity of types of open spaces using existing open spaces (e.g. increasing the multi-functionality of open space).
- 5.4 Retaining all existing open space can be restrictive. In some cases restrictions on loss of open space are entirely appropriate (for example protecting a designated landscape); but in other cases there may be justification for loss of open space where improvements to the provision of open space can be made in other ways (for example through the regeneration of housing estates). Therefore retaining the amount of open space through a 'no net loss' approach' is a more pragmatic approach.
- 5.5 In areas of deficiency, there may be opportunities for new open spaces associated with new development (e.g. through the Urban Greening Factor); but where this is not possible, looking to diversify existing open spaces provides an opportunity to increase provision without increasing the overall amount of open space. This could include adding play facilities to existing open spaces, or increasing the biodiversity value of open spaces. The Merton Green Infrastructure Technical Report assesses the multi-functionality of open spaces, and the areas where enhancement would be most beneficial.

<sup>25</sup> Demographic projections (Merton Strategic Housing Need Assessment Draft Report October 2018)

<sup>26</sup> "Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC, 2019" from <https://www.gigl.org.uk/keyfigures/>

### *Quality*

- 5.6 The open space audits (based on Green Flag criteria) show opportunities for improvements across all types of open spaces. Overall, 60% of open spaces fall into the Fair/Good/Very Good bandings; whilst 40% fall into the Poor banding. The average scores for Parks and Gardens, Recreation and Outdoor Sports Facilities; Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms; and Cemeteries and Churchyards all fall into the Fair/Good banding; whilst the average score for Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace; Green Corridors; and Amenity Greenspace and Education fall into the Poor banding. This shows a general trend for the less formal types of open space to be lower quality.
- 5.7 Each type of open space is audited on its own merits, and not on whether it does or doesn't provide certain facilities, so the lower scores for informal/natural open spaces does not mean they should all be 'upgraded' to more formal provision. However improvements should be focused on ensuring the sites are 'Welcoming'; 'Healthy, Safe & Secure'; and 'Well Maintained and Clean' in line with the Green Flag Award benchmarking criteria, which can include improvements such as:
- Better signage at entrances (this can be as simple as the name of the site and contact details, and for more formal sites, information on facilities and events);
  - Improvements to access into and around the site (including gates, barriers, footpath improvements);
  - Improvements to access to the site from surrounding roads/footpaths such as road crossings;
  - Appropriate levels of vegetation management (not all sites should be 'pristine', but a balance of amenity and nature conservation should be sought);
  - High levels of maintenance of site furniture (e.g. signs, seats, bins, lighting), equipment (e.g. play equipment), and infrastructure (e.g. paths, car parking).
- 5.8 The play area audits (based on Play England criteria) also shows opportunities for improvements across all types of play area, with 61% of play areas falling into the Average; Needs Some Improvement banding. The Neighbourhood play areas (with an average score in the Good banding) tended to score better than the Local and Door-Step play areas (both with average scores in the Average banding).
- 5.9 Improvements should be focused on 'Location'; 'Play Value'; and 'Care and Maintenance' in line with the Play England benchmarking criteria. It is acknowledged that not all criteria are applicable to the Door-Step play areas (such as play for different ages, and toilets/changing facilities).

### *Accessibility*

- 5.10 Merton has high accessibility to Regional Parks (98%) and Metropolitan Parks (99%). There is also a good level of accessibility to District (77%) and Local (72%) Parks. There is a notable gap in access to District Parks a continuous band of deficiency from west to north east through Raynes Park, Wimbledon, Colliers Wood and Mitcham. Open spaces are evident within the area of deficiency to District Parks, but these spaces either do not meet the criteria for a District Park, or are not publically accessible.
- 5.11 The best reflection of deficiency in access to open space is to the Local Parks, Small Open Spaces and Pocket Parks. In these areas of deficiency (which appear as pockets of deficiency, fairly evenly spread across the borough) the lack of open spaces is more evident, although there is some evidence of existing open space which is not publically accessible. There are some areas (particularly noticeable around Raynes Park) where there are gaps in access to both District and Local Parks, therefore these areas should be targeted for improvements in accessibility.
- 5.12 There is good accessibility (84%) to Nature (publically accessible Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation - SINCs). As for District and Local Open Spaces, the most notable gap is running through the borough from west to north through Raynes Park and Wimbledon. There are some existing open spaces in the areas of deficiency, so there may be opportunities for enhancement depending on their current use. This is also linked to The Merton Green Infrastructure Assessment, and the multi-functionality of open spaces.
- 5.13 Access to Play varies greatly depending on the age range, with over 12 years having 95% accessibility; between 5 and 11 years having 76% accessibility; and under 5's just 27% accessibility. Whilst access to play provision includes both formal equipped play areas and informal play in open spaces, there is a notable lack of equipped play areas in the north west of the borough.

### **Feedback from Open Space Consultation**

- 5.14 A separate Open Space Consultation Technical Report provides details of the informal consultation with community groups that was undertaken for the Merton Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Open Space Study.
- 5.15 The consultation provided an opportunity for Friends of the Parks and other community groups to communicate their aspirations and concerns regarding open space in Merton and provide research for to feed into the Study. A summary from the conclusions section of the report is provided below.
- 5.16 The most popular type of open space was outdoor sports facilities, followed by natural and semi-natural urban greenspace and parks and gardens.
- 5.17 There were very few open spaces used beyond the borough boundary. Tooting Common, Streatham Common and King Georges Park in Wandsworth were mentioned but it was felt that there were sufficient open spaces within Merton that residents didn't need to travel to neighbouring boroughs.

- 5.18 Consultees used open spaces mostly for accessing nature, formal and informal recreation, improving health and wellbeing, socialising and for getting around the borough away from roads.
- 5.19 Consultees considered open spaces in Merton to have a high environmental and social value. Consultees valued accessibility to open spaces in the urban environment, opportunities for recreation, a sense of space and the contribution that open spaces make to air quality.
- 5.20 The gaps in provisions of facilities in open spaces were identified mainly as provisions such as litter bins and adult exercise equipment. Also open spaces such as allotments need to be protected from development as they provide opportunities for recreation, socialising and wildlife. Consultees also wanted to see additional opportunities in open spaces for biodiversity.
- 5.21 Consultees suggested that improvements could be made in the accessibility of privately owned open spaces and footpaths and PRowWs. They also suggested that working relationships and communication between community groups, contractors and the Council will make management and maintenance of open spaces easier and of a higher standard. Improvements to nature conservation, biodiversity and "wild" areas was also highlighted.
- 5.22 Funding and support for community groups also a key concern of consultees. It was suggested that additional funding could be made available or additional charges through planning be considered to ensure the management of open spaces. Consultees also stated that Management Plans would assist in the management, maintenance and improvement of open spaces, especially larger open spaces such as Mitcham Common.

### **Standards and Policy Comparison with Neighbouring Boroughs**

- 5.23 The following table provides information from the Local Plan and the Open Space Study/Strategy for the neighbouring boroughs as follows:
- Lambeth;
  - Wandsworth;
  - Croyden;
  - Sutton; and
  - Kingston.

Table 25: Standards Comparison with Neighbouring Boroughs

	Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
Lambeth <sup>27</sup>	<p><u>Local Plan:</u></p> <p><i>Strategic Objective</i></p> <p>There is a need for more open space in the borough to serve the growing population, but there is no land available to deliver a major new park. This need will therefore be met principally by safeguarding existing open space and improving its quality and access, as well as linkages between open spaces. Limited additional increases in quantity will be pursued on major development sites as opportunities arise.</p> <p><i>Housing</i></p> <p>Various housing estates in the borough are set in areas of open land, which are not well arranged and are no longer attractive, safe or pleasant to use. In such cases, where the land is of poor quality and has no value as open space, there is benefit in supporting the reorganisation of open space as part of housing regeneration proposals.</p> <p>Also see <i>Policy EN1 Open Space and Biodiversity &amp; H5 Housing Standards</i>.</p>		

<sup>27</sup> Lambeth Local Plan 2015 <https://lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/pl-lambeth-local-plan-2015-web.pdf>

	Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
Lambeth <sup>28</sup>	<p><u>Local Plan:</u>  <i>Local Plan Policy EN1 Open Space and Biodiversity</i></p> <p>(c) Development proposals should wherever possible protect, enhance, create or manage nature conservation and biodiversity interest in accordance with the borough’s Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and the Mayor’s Biodiversity Strategy.</p> <p>(d) Increasing the quantity of open space in the borough through proposals such as the Vauxhall Square initiative, the extension of Jubilee Gardens and by linking existing spaces through green chains, the Greenway and Thames Path National Walking trail initiatives, but also through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The provision of open space in new developments appropriate to their scale, the uses involved and the location of the development.</li> <li>(ii) Requiring major development in areas of open space deficiency or access to nature deficiency to provide appropriate on-site provision of open space or, where this is not feasible and where this would address needs more effectively, make financial contributions to enable the provision of new open space or improvements to the accessibility and quality of existing public open space, including their nature conservation and biodiversity value.</li> </ul> <p>(e) Improving the quality of, and access to, existing open space, including the range of facilities available and its biodiversity and nature conservation value and heritage value, through various means including the implementation of the Lambeth Open Spaces Strategy.</p>		

<sup>28</sup> Lambeth Local Plan 2015 <https://lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/pl-lambeth-local-plan-2015-web.pdf>

	Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
Lambeth <sup>29</sup>	<p><u>Local Plan:</u>  <i>Local Plan Policy H5 Housing Standards</i>                      (b) <i>The council will require at least the following level of external amenity space for all residential units.</i></p> <p>(i) <i>For new houses, 30m2 private amenity space per house should be provided.</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>For new flatted developments, communal amenity space of at least 50m2 per scheme should be provided, plus a further 10m2 per flat provided either as a balcony/ terrace/private garden or consolidated with the communal amenity space.</i></p> <p>(iii) <i>Houses, ground-floor flats, and family sized units should preferably have direct access to a private garden.</i></p> <p>c) <i>Communal amenity space should:</i>                      (v) <i>incorporate sustainable landscape principles and practices, including effective water management, efficient energy use, use of sustainable materials, and promotion of biodiversity and, where appropriate, food growing;</i></p>		
Lambeth <sup>30</sup>	<p><u>Open Space Strategy:</u>                      Council's target of 'No Net Loss of Open Space'. Hectare per 1000 has reduced due to population increase, but overall amount of open space has remained constant.</p>	<p><u>Open Space Strategy:</u>                      Section 12 Conclusions and Recommendations provides a description of quality improvement requirements. There is also a table showing required features and desirable features with regards to open space categories.</p>	<p><u>Open Space Strategy:</u>                      There are no accessibility standards, however the Council may choose to use the London Plan standards.</p>

<sup>29</sup> Lambeth Local Plan 2015 <https://lambeth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/pl-lambeth-local-plan-2015-web.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Lambeth Open Space Strategy 2013 <https://lambeth.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy-evidence-base>

	Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
Wandsworth <sup>31</sup>	<p><u>Local Plan:</u>  <i>Core Strategy, Policy LP 4: Open Space and the natural environment</i></p> <p>(c) The Council will require the provision of open space and/or secure public access to private facilities, in appropriate developments, and as a priority in areas identified as deficient in open space, play space or sport and recreation facilities and/or to meet priorities.</p>	<p><u>Local Plan:</u>  <i>Core Strategy, Policy LP 4: Open Space and the natural environment</i></p> <p>(a) The Council will protect and improve public and private open space and Green Infrastructure in the borough as identified in the Open Space Study and Play Strategy.</p>	<p><u>Local Plan:</u>                      Development Management Policies Document, <i>Policy DMO 2: Playing fields and pitches, sport, play and informal recreation</i></p> <p>(e) Public access to open space and sports and recreation facilities on private land is encouraged, particularly in open space deficiency areas.</p>
Wandsworth <sup>32</sup>	<p><u>Open Space Study:</u>                      Hectares per 1,000 standards for public parks (2.15ha), children's play (0.021ha), natural green space (1ha of SINC), allotments (0.077ha),</p>	<p><u>Open Space Study:</u>                      Public parks should meet Green Flag 'good' quality standards, children's play to meet PFA 6 acre Standard (2001), natural greenspace should be adequate for to support local biodiversity, and allotments should be adequate to support the needs of the local community.</p>	<p><u>Open Space Study:</u>                      London Plan accessibility standards for metropolitan and regional parks, district parks and pocket parks, formal and informal play for children and teenagers.</p> <p>SINC or SBI (within 500m from home) and allotments (within 800m from home)</p>

<sup>31</sup> Wandsworth Local Plan <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan/>

<sup>32</sup> Wandsworth open Space Study 2007 <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-plan/local-plan-evidence/local-plan-environment-and-social/open-space-study/>



	Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
Croydon <sup>33</sup>	<u>Local Plan:</u> <i>Policy SP7 Green Grid</i> (a) Seek the provision and creation of new green spaces. With particular focus for areas deficient in access to nature, play areas, and publicly accessible recreational open space.	<u>Local Plan:</u> <i>Policy SP7 Green Grid</i> (c) Maintain and improve the quality, function and offer of open spaces.	<u>Local Plan:</u> <i>Policy SP7 Green Grid</i> (b) Improve access and links to and through green spaces.
Croydon <sup>34</sup>	<u>Open Space Needs Assessment Standards:</u> Standards are by Ward and by Open Space Typology, based on need to address areas of deficiency in each ward.	<u>Open Space Needs Assessment Standards:</u> Pass rates based on Green Flag National Benchmark standard.	<u>Open Space Needs Assessment Standards:</u> London Plan accessibility standards for Public Open Space hierarchy.
Sutton <sup>35</sup>	<u>Local Plan:</u> <i>Policy 25 Open Spaces</i> (A) The Council will seek to retain the existing level of open space in the borough.	<u>Local Plan:</u> <i>Policy 25 Open Spaces</i> (iii) Supporting improvements, enhancements and management that improves both quality and access to existing green spaces.	

<sup>33</sup> Croydon Local Plan 2018 [https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/Croydon%20Local%20Plan%202018\\_0.pdf](https://www.croydon.gov.uk/sites/default/files/articles/downloads/Croydon%20Local%20Plan%202018_0.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> Croydon Open Space Assessment & Standards Assessment 2009 <https://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration/framework/lpevidence/nature>

<sup>35</sup> Sutton Local Plan 2018 [https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200464/planning\\_policy/1521/local\\_plan\\_adopted\\_2018](https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200464/planning_policy/1521/local_plan_adopted_2018)

	Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
Sutton <sup>36</sup>	<p><u>Open Space Study:</u>                      Amount of open space per 1,000 is 2.88ha</p>	<p><u>Open Space Study:</u>                      N/A - Ongoing review and enhancement of the quality of open spaces.</p>	<p><u>Open Space Study:</u>                      Address any deficiencies identified in the Open Space Study update (Feb 2016)</p>
Kingston <sup>37 38</sup>	<p><u>Core Strategy &amp; Open Space Assessment:</u>                      Hectare per 1000 standards for Public Parks (1.11ha), Play (0.8ha), Natural and Semi-Natural (1ha), Allotments (0.35ha).                      Additional open space is required to meet these standards.</p>	<p><u>Core Strategy:</u>  <i>Vision for Kingston in 2027 (extract)</i>                      Open spaces and parks will have been improved and their biodiversity protected.                      Opportunities for sport and recreation will be enhanced, and increased local food grown with more allotments provided.                      The health of the Borough will be improved as health deprivation and inequalities are tackled.</p>	<p><u>Core Strategy &amp; Open Space Assessment:</u>                      London Plan accessibility standards for Public Open Space hierarchy.</p>

<sup>36</sup> Sutton Open Space Evidence Base including Open Space Study Update 2016 [https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200464/planning\\_policy/1660/evidence\\_base\\_by\\_topic/9](https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200464/planning_policy/1660/evidence_base_by_topic/9)

<sup>37</sup> Kingston Core Strategy 2012 [https://www.kingston.gov.uk/downloads/download/37/core\\_strategy](https://www.kingston.gov.uk/downloads/download/37/core_strategy)

<sup>38</sup> Kingston Open Space Assessment 2006 [https://www.kingston.gov.uk/downloads/file/758/kingston\\_open\\_space\\_assessment\\_report](https://www.kingston.gov.uk/downloads/file/758/kingston_open_space_assessment_report)

## Setting Merton's Open Space Policies and Standards

5.24 The following policy and standards approached are recommended for Merton.

*Table 26: Recommended Standards for Merton*

Quantity	Quality	Accessibility
<p>No net loss of open space, retain land cover of 35%.</p> <p>Acceptance that the borough wide 'hectare per 1000' provision will reduce as the population increases.</p> <p>Provision of additional and/or increase functionality of existing open space through major developments with a particular focus on areas deficient in access to nature, play areas, and publicly accessible open space.</p> <p>Protect and enhance existing open spaces and the natural environment, providing habitats for biodiversity to flourish and expand.</p>	<p>Supporting improvements, enhancements and management that improves both quality and access to existing green spaces.</p> <p>National Benchmark standards such as Green Flag, Play England, Sport England.</p>	<p>London Plan accessibility standards for Public Open Space hierarchy (Regional, Metropolitan, District, Local Parks and Open Spaces, Small Open Spaces).</p> <p>Mayor's SPG on Children's Play and Informal Recreation accessibility standards by age range (Under 5's, 5-11, 12+).</p> <p>Mayor's Biodiversity Strategy Access to Nature standards (accessible SINC of metropolitan or borough importance).</p> <p>Improve access and links to and through open spaces.</p>

## **APPENDIX A: Quantity Provision by Ward and Category Table**

Ward	Parks and Gardens	Natural and Semi-natural Urban Greenspace	Green Corridors	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Amenity	Children and Teenagers	Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms	Cemeteries and Churchyards	Other Urban Fringe	Other	Total
Abbey	0.4	4.9	1.6	7.9	1.8		1.7	0.4			18.7
Cannon Hill	32.0	20.6	1.7	31.2	2.2		7.1				94.8
Colliers Wood	4.5	2.1	5.6	2.9	0.3			<0.01			15.4
Cricket Green	10.9	59.7	10.7	47.3	11.7	0.7	2.0	2.7		<0.01	145.6
Dundonald			8.6	5.8	3.8						18.2
Figge's Marsh	10.2		1.8		12.0	<0.01	1.0	<0.01			25.1
Graveney	<0.01		6.4		1.1	0.6	2.8				11.0
Hillside			2.1	1.6	2.0			0.1			5.8
Lavender Fields	0.4	0.5	0.4	3.7	3.6	1.3	5.2	5.9			21.0

Ward	Parks and Gardens	Natural and Semi-natural Urban Greenspace	Green Corridors	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Amenity	Children and Teenagers	Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms	Cemeteries and Churchyards	Other Urban Fringe	Other	Total
Longthornton	2.5	<0.01	1.6	19.1	4.6	2.3		20.5			50.7
Lower Morden	6.2		2.4	8.6	5.2			38.8	<0.01		61.2
Merton Park	18.0	0.3	4.7	5.4	4.3			1.6			34.2
Pollards Hill	<0.01	96.0	0.5	4.2	9.2	<0.01	0.9	<0.01			110.9
Ravensbury	36.6	4.5	7.9	10.1	8.2						67.2
Raynes Park	1.5	0.6	10.7	23.0	7.0		2.9				45.7
St. Helier	31.7	0.3	7.9	12.0	18.3		2.4	0.7			73.3
Trinity	2.4	4.2	3.5	5.0	1.7	0.2	0.1	<0.01			17.1
Village	12.8	182.5	2.9	165.5	10.9		2.1	2.8	5.1		384.5

Ward	Parks and Gardens	Natural and Semi-natural Urban Greenspace	Green Corridors	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Amenity	Children and Teenagers	Allotments, Community Gardens and City Farms	Cemeteries and Churchyards	Other Urban Fringe	Other	Total
West Barnes		4.7	4.7	33.6	15.7		0.6	0.5	2.8	<0.01	62.6
Wimbledon Park	20.9		13.9	18.2	1.4		2.9	8.4			65.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>190.8</b>	<b>380.8</b>	<b>99.7</b>	<b>405.1</b>	<b>125.0</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>82.5</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>&lt;0.01</b>	<b>1328.6</b>

## **APPENDIX B: GIS Open Space Maps**





---

**HEAD OFFICE**

Genesis Centre,  
Birchwood Science Park,  
Warrington  
WA3 7BH

Tel: 01925 844004  
E-mail: [tep@tep.uk.com](mailto:tep@tep.uk.com)

**MARKET  
HARBOROUGH**

No. 1 The Chambers,  
Bowden Business Village,  
Market Harborough,  
Leicestershire,  
LE16 7SA

Tel: 01858 383120  
E-mail: [mh@tep.uk.com](mailto:mh@tep.uk.com)

**GATESHEAD**

Office 26, Gateshead  
International Business  
Centre,  
Mulgrave Terrace,  
Gateshead  
NE8 1AN

Tel: 0191 605 3340  
E-mail: [gateshead@tep.uk.com](mailto:gateshead@tep.uk.com)

**LONDON**

8 Trinity Street,  
London,  
SE1 1DB

Tel: 020 3096 6050  
E-mail: [london@tep.uk.com](mailto:london@tep.uk.com)

**CORNWALL**

4 Park Noweth,  
Churchtown,  
Cury,  
Helston  
Cornwall  
TR12 7BW

Tel: 01326 240081  
E-mail: [cornwall@tep.uk.com](mailto:cornwall@tep.uk.com)

---