



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL
DRAFT OPEN SPACE UPDATE REPORT
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Glossary

DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DPD	Development Plan Document
FIT	Fields in Trust
FOG	Friends of Group
GIS	Geographical Information Systems
KKP	Knight, Kavanagh and Page
LDF	Local Development Framework
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
MUGA	Multi-Use Games Area (an enclosed area with a hard surface for variety of informal play)
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NSALG	National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners
NSN	Natural/Semi-Natural
ONS	Office of National Statistics
PPG	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS	Playing Pitch Strategy
SOA	Super Output Areas
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
UDC	Uttlesford District Council

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OPEN SPACE UPDATE

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This is the Open Space Update Report prepared by Knight Kavanagh & Page (KKP) for Uttlesford District Council (UDC). It provides detail with regard to what open space provision exists in the area, its condition, distribution and overall quality. It uses the 2019 Open Space Assessment, updated to reflect any known changes in provision and population, to set out the quantity, quality, and accessibility to open space.

The table below details the open space typologies included within the study:

Table 1.1: Open space typology definitions

Typology	Primary purpose
Parks and gardens	Accessible, high-quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
Natural and semi-natural greenspaces	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.
Amenity greenspace	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Provision for children and young people	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, MUGAs, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.
Allotments / community food growing	Opportunities for those people who wish to do so to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion.

For planning policies to be 'sound', local authorities are required to carry out a robust assessment of the need for open space, sport and recreation facilities. We advocate that the methodology to undertake such assessments should still be informed by best practice including the Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) Companion Guidance; *Assessing Needs and Opportunities* published in September 2002.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced PPG17. However, assessment of open space facilities is still normally carried out in accordance with the Companion Guidance to PPG17 as it remains the only national best practice guidance on the conduct of an open space assessment.

Under paragraph 98 of the NPPF, it is set out 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. Specific needs and quantitative and qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform UDC what provision is required in an area.

In accordance with best practice recommendations, a size threshold of 0.2 hectares has been applied to the inclusion of some typologies within the study. This means that, in general, sites that fall below this threshold are not included unless identified as being significant.

1.1 Report structure

Open spaces

This report considers the supply and demand issues for open space provision across Uttlesford. Each part contains relevant typology specific data. Further description of the methodology used can be found in Part 2. The report covers the predominant issues for all open spaces as defined in best practice guidance:

Part 2: Methodology

Part 3: Summary of survey and audit scores

Part 4: Parks and gardens

Part 5: Natural/semi-natural greenspace

Part 6: Amenity greenspace

Part 7: Provision for children/young people

Part 8: Allotments

Associated strategies

The study sits alongside the indoor and built facilities interim report and Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS); also undertaken by KKP (provided in separate reports). The Companion Guidance to PPG17 included the open space typology of formal outdoor sports. This is predominantly covered within the associated PPS. The PPS is undertaken in accordance with the methodology provided in Sport England's Guidance 'Developing a Playing Pitch Strategy' for assessing demand and supply for outdoor sports facilities (2013).

Any site categorised as outdoor sports provision but with a clear multifunctional role (i.e., available for wider community use) is included in this study as a type of open space. Pitch or sport sites purely for sporting use are solely included within the PPS. For sites with a multifunctional role, double counting between the two studies does not occur, as the PPS looks at the number of pitch/sports facilities at a site and not hectares of land (as prescribed in Sport England Guidance).

1.2 National context

National Planning Policy Framework (2021), (MHCLG)

The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (NPPF) sets out the planning policies for England. It details how these are expected to be applied to the planning system and provides a framework to produce distinct local and neighbourhood plans, reflecting the needs and priorities of local communities.

The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development (paragraphs 7-9). It establishes that the planning system needs to focus on three themes of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. A presumption in favour of sustainable development is a key aspect for any plan-making and decision-taking processes. In relation to plan-making the NPPF sets out that Local Plans should meet objectively assessed needs.

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Paragraph 98 of the NPPF establishes that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for health and well-being. It states 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. Specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficiencies and surpluses in local areas should also be identified. This information should be used to inform UDC what provision is required in an area.

As a prerequisite paragraph 99 of the NPPF states that existing open space, sports and recreation sites, including playing fields, should not be built on, unless:

- ◀ An assessment has been undertaken, which has clearly shown the site to be surplus to requirements; or
- ◀ The loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or
- ◀ The development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.

1.3 Local context

Local Plan

The new Uttlesford Local Plan will be part of the statutory planning framework for the district guiding decisions on all aspects of development. It will set out how and where new homes, jobs, services and infrastructure will be delivered and the type of places and environment that will be created.

Submission of the draft Local Plan is expected in summer 2024. This will be followed by a period of examination with the adopted Local Plan envisaged in early 2026.

This open space study will therefore act as an important evidence base to help inform future priorities and requirements.

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PART 2: METHODOLOGY

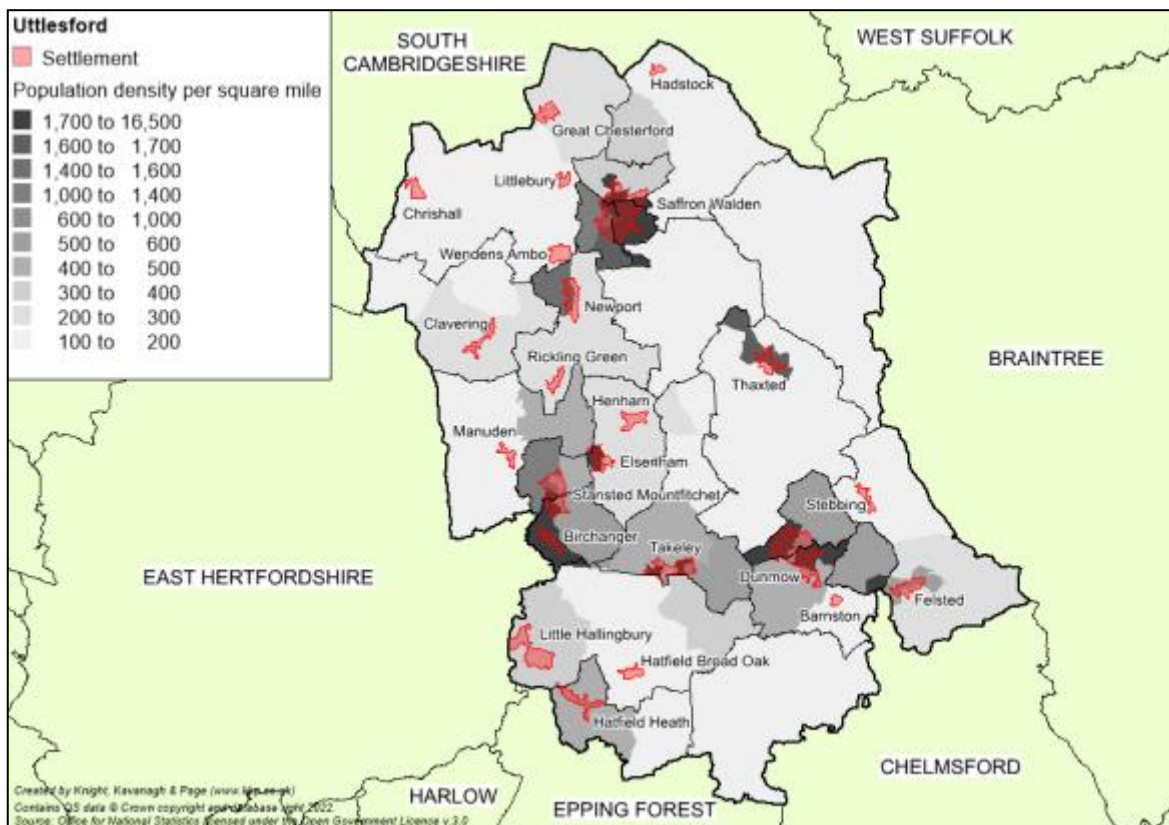
This section details the methodology undertaken as part of the study. The key stages are:

- ◀ 2.1: Population
- ◀ 2.2: Auditing local provision
- ◀ 2.3: Quality and value
- ◀ 2.4: Quality and value thresholds
- ◀ 2.5: Identifying local need

2.1 Population

Figure 2.1 shows the district broken down into these analysis areas in tandem with population density. Population is considered in more detail below.

Figure 2.1: Map of Uttlesford District



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Table 2.1: Analysis areas and populations

Analysis area	Population ¹
Saffron Walden	14,970
Great Dunmow	10,642
Rural Area	57,460
Stansted Mountfitchet	8,234
Uttlesford	91,306

The population figures are used to help determine the current provision levels for different types of open space with each analysis area.

2.2 Auditing local provision (supply)

Open space sites (including provision for children and young people) are identified, mapped, and assessed to evaluate site value and quality. Only publicly accessible sites are included (i.e., private sites or land, which people cannot access, are not included). The KKP Field Research Team originally undertook the site audit for the previous study in 2018/19. This has been reviewed via a desk-based exercise to reflect any obvious changes in provision including adding any new sites (identified via checking against OS Greenspace data). Any newly added site has been visited and assessed in order to be allocated a score. Each site is classified based on its primary open space purpose, so that each type of space is counted only once. The audit, and the report, utilise the following typologies:

- ◀ Parks & gardens
- ◀ Natural & semi-natural greenspace
- ◀ Amenity greenspace
- ◀ Provision for children & young people
- ◀ Allotments

In accordance with best practice recommendations, a size threshold of 0.2 hectares is applied to the inclusion of some typologies within the study. Sites of a smaller size, particularly for the typologies of amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural greenspace tend to have a different role. Often this is for visual purposes (e.g. small incremental grassed areas such as highway verges) and is therefore considered as offering less recreational use in comparison to other forms of open space. Subsequently sites below 0.2 hectares for these typologies are not audited. However, any sites below the threshold (i.e., those that are identified through consultation as being of significance) are included.

Database development

All information relating to open spaces is collated in the project open space database (to be supplied as an Excel electronic file). All sites identified and assessed as part of the audit are recorded within the database.

Source: ONS 2021 Mid-Year population estimates for England

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The database details for each site are as follows:

Data held on open spaces database (summary)

- ◀ KKP reference number (used for mapping)
- ◀ Site name
- ◀ Ownership (if known)
- ◀ Management (if known)
- ◀ Typology
- ◀ Size (hectares)
- ◀ Site audit data

Sites are primarily identified by KKP in the audit using official site names, where possible, and/or secondly using road names and locations. Please note that there are numerous protected sites in villages and the countryside that are not mapped or included in the study. This study focuses more on sites within reach of settlements, therefore, there is not 100% coverage across the district. A 1000m buffer distance has been used on the analysis areas to help attribute any sites located outside of Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet.

2.3 Quality and value

Each type of open space receives separate quality and value scores. This also allows for application of a high and low quality/value matrix to further help determine prioritisation of investment and to identify sites that may be surplus within and to a particular open space typology.

Quality and value are fundamentally different and can be unrelated. For example, a site of high quality may be inaccessible and, thus, be of little value; whereas a poor quality space may be the only one in an area and thus be immensely valuable. As a result, quality and value are also treated separately in terms of scoring.

Analysis of quality

Data collated is initially based upon those derived from the Green Flag Award scheme (a national standard for parks and green spaces in England and Wales, operated by Keep Britain Tidy). This is utilised to calculate a quality score for each site visited. Scores in the database are presented as percentage figures. The quality criteria used for the open space assessments carried out for all open space typologies are summarised in the following table.

Quality criteria for open space site visit (score)

- ◀ Physical access, e.g., public transport links, directional signposts,
- ◀ Personal security, e.g., site is overlooked, natural surveillance
- ◀ Access-social, e.g., appropriate minimum entrance widths
- ◀ Parking, e.g., availability, specific, disabled parking
- ◀ Information signage, e.g., presence of site information, notice boards
- ◀ Equipment and facilities, e.g., adequacy and maintenance of provision such as seating, bins, toilets, etc.
- ◀ Site problems, e.g., presence of vandalism, graffiti
- ◀ Healthy, safe and secure, e.g., fencing, gates, staff on site
- ◀ Maintenance and cleanliness, e.g., condition of general landscape & features
- ◀ Groups that the site meets the needs of, e.g., elderly, young people

For the provision for children and young people, criteria are also built around the Green Flag Award. It is a non-technical visual assessment, including general equipment and surface

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quality/appearance as well as of, for example, bench and bin provision. This differs, for example, from an independent Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RosPA) review, which is a more technical assessment in terms of play and risk assessment grade.

Analysis of value

Site visit data plus desk-based research is calculated to provide value scores for each site identified. Value is defined in best practice guidance in relation to the following three issues:

- ◀ Context of the site i.e., its accessibility, scarcity value and historic value.
- ◀ Level and type of use.
- ◀ The wider benefits it generates for people, biodiversity and the wider environment.

In addition, the NPPF refers to attributes to value such as beauty and attractiveness of a site, its recreational value, historic and cultural value and its tranquillity and richness of wildlife.

The value criteria set for audit assessment is derived as:

Value criteria for open space site visits (score)

- ◀ Level of use (observations only), e.g., evidence of different user types (e.g., dog walkers, joggers, children) throughout day, located near school and/or community facility
- ◀ Context of site in relation to other open spaces
- ◀ Structural and landscape benefits, e.g., well located, high quality defining the identity/ area
- ◀ Ecological benefits, e.g., supports/promotes biodiversity and wildlife habitats
- ◀ Educational benefits, e.g., provides learning opportunities on nature/historic landscapes
- ◀ Social inclusion and health benefits, e.g., promotes civic pride, community ownership and a sense of belonging; helping to promote physical and mental well-being
- ◀ Cultural and heritage benefits, e.g., historic elements/links (e.g., listed building, statues) and high profile symbols of local area
- ◀ Amenity benefits and a sense of place, e.g., attractive places that are safe and well maintained; helping to create specific neighbourhoods and landmarks
- ◀ Economic benefits, e.g., enhances property values, promotes economic activity, and attracts people from near and far

Children's and young people's play provision is scored for value as part of the audit assessment. Value in particular is recognised in terms of the size of sites and the range of equipment it offers. For instance, a small site with only one or two items is likely to be of a lower value than a site with a variety of equipment catering for wider age ranges.

2.4 Quality and value thresholds

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by guidance); the results of the site assessments are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The primary aim of applying a threshold is to identify sites where investment and/or improvements may be required. It can also be used to set an aspirational quality standard to be achieved in the future and to inform decisions around the need to further protect sites from future development (particularly when applied with its respective value score in a matrix format).

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A site rating low for quality should not automatically be viewed as being fit for development. It is also necessary to understand its value, access and role within the community it serves. It may for example be the only site serving an area and should therefore be considered a priority for improvement.

The most recognised national benchmark for measuring the quality of parks and open spaces is the 66% pass rate for the Green Flag Award. This scheme recognises and rewards well-managed parks and open spaces. Although this study uses a similar assessment criteria to that of the Green Flag Award scheme it is inappropriate to use the Green Flag benchmark pass for every open space as they are not all designed or expected to perform to the same exceptionally high standard. For example, a park would be expected to feature a greater variety of ancillary facilities (seating, bins, play equipment) and manicured landscaping and planting, etc. in contrast to an amenity greenspace serving a smaller catchment and fewer people.

Furthermore, a different scoring mechanism is used in this study to that of the Green Flag scheme (albeit criteria for this study is derived from the Green Flag scheme). For each open space typology, a different set and / or weighting for each criterion of quality is used. This is to better reflect the different roles, uses and functions of each open space type. Consequently, a different quality threshold level is set for each open space typology.

Quality thresholds in this study are individual to each open space typology. They are based on the average quality score arising from the site assessments and set using KKP's professional judgment and experience from delivering similar studies. The score is to help distinguish between higher and lower quality sites; it is a minimum expectation as opposed to an absolute goal. This works as an effective method to reflect the variability in quality at a local level for different types of provision. It allows the Council more flexibility in directing funds towards sites for enhancements, which is useful if funds are geographically constrained with respect to individual developments.

Reason and flexibility are needed when evaluating sites close to the average score / threshold. The review of a quality threshold is just one step for this process, a site should also be evaluated against the value assessment and local knowledge.

There is no national guidance on the setting of value thresholds, and instead a 20% threshold is derived from KKP's experience and knowledge in assessing the perceived value of sites.

A high value site is one deemed to be well used and offering visual, social, physical and mental health benefits. Value is also a more subjective measure than assessing the physical quality of provision. Therefore, a conservative threshold of 20% is set across all typologies. Whilst 20% may initially seem low - it is a relative score. One designed to reflect those sites that meet more than one aspect of the criteria used for assessing value (as detailed earlier). If a site meets more than one criterion for value it will score greater than 20%. Consequently, it is deemed to be of higher value.

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Table 2.2: Quality and value thresholds by typology

Typology	Quality threshold	Value threshold
Parks and gardens	60%	20%
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	35%	20%
Amenity greenspace	45%	20%
Provision for children and young people	45%	20%
Allotments	40%	20%

2.5 Accessibility catchments

Accessibility catchments can be used as a tool to identify deficiencies of open space in a local area. This is achieved by applying them to create a distance catchment. The study displays the results of the catchments to highlight any potential gaps in access to provision.

There is an element of subjectivity resulting in time / distance variations. This is to be expected given that people walk at different speeds depending on a number of factors including height, age, levels of fitness and physical barriers on route. Therefore, there will be an element of 'best fit'.

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PART 3: SUMMARY OF SITES

3.1 Audit overview

Within Uttlesford there is a total of 310 sites, an increase of 26 sites since 2019, equating to over 694 hectares of open space, an increase of 8 hectares since 2019. The largest contributor to provision is natural and semi-natural greenspace (509 hectares); accounting for 73% of open space.

Table 3.1: Overview of open space provision

Open space typology	Number of sites	Total amount (hectares) ²
Park and gardens	7	9
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	67	509
Amenity greenspace	119	147
Provision for children & young people	88	10
Allotments	29	19
TOTAL	310	694

3.2 Quality

The methodology for assessing quality is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for open spaces across Uttlesford.

Table 3.2: Quality scores for all open space typologies

Typology	Scores			No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low	High
Park and gardens	55%	61%	68%	3	4
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	18%	41%	61%	19	46
Amenity greenspace	24%	56%	84%	26	93
Provision for children & young people	30%	54%	75%	11	76
Allotments	32%	48%	66%	2	26
TOTAL				61	245

There is generally a good level of quality across most open space sites. This is reflected in over three quarters (80%) of sites scoring above their set threshold for quality.

However, there are proportionally more parks and gardens (43%) scoring below the threshold. This is followed by natural and semi-natural provision (29%).

² Rounded to the nearest whole number

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3.3 Value

The methodology for assessing value is set out in Part 2 (Methodology). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for open spaces across Uttlesford

Table 3.3: Value scores for all open space typologies

Typology	Scores			No. of sites	
	Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	<20%	>20%
Park and gardens	37%	45%	54%	0	7
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	7%	26%	45%	9	56
Amenity greenspace	16%	32%	60%	1	118
Provision for children & young people	20%	40%	55%	0	87
Allotments	22%	24%	32%	0	28
TOTAL				10	296

The majority of sites (96%) are assessed as being above the threshold for value, reflecting the role and importance of open space provision to local communities and environments.

Allotments and natural and amenity greenspace have a higher proportion of low value provision than the other typologies.

For natural greenspace, this reflects a lack of ancillary features at some sites leading to a lack of recreational use in comparison to other sites. However, the value these provide in offering a visual amenity can still be important.

A high value site is one that is well used by the local community, well maintained (potentially with a balance for conservation), provides a safe environment and has features of interest; for example, good quality play equipment and landscaping. Sites that provide for a cross section of users and have a multi-functional use are considered a higher value than those offering limited functions and viewed as unattractive.

3.4 Summary

- ◀ 310 sites are identified as open space provision. This is equivalent to over 694 hectares.
- ◀ This is an increase of 26 sites (approximately eight hectares) since the 2019 study.
- ◀ Of assessed sites, over three quarters (80%) rate above the quality threshold.
- ◀ All but 10 sites are assessed as above the value threshold; reflecting the importance of provision and its role offering social, environmental and health benefits.

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PART 4: PARKS AND GARDENS

4.1 Introduction

This typology often covers urban parks and formal gardens (including designed landscapes), which provide accessible high-quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events. Country Park sites may also provide opportunities and functions often associated with parks (if present).

4.2 Current provision

There are seven sites classified as parks and gardens in Uttlesford, the equivalent of over nine hectares. There has been no change in this since 2019. No site size threshold has been applied and, as such, all known sites are included within the typology.

Table 4.1: Distribution of parks

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Saffron Walden	5	8.87	0.59
Great Dunmow	-	-	-
Rural Area	2	0.15	0.002
Stansted Mountfitchet	-	-	-
Uttlesford	7	9.02	0.10

Uttlesford has a current provision level of 0.10 hectares per 1,000 head of population. The largest site and the biggest contributor to provision is The Common (5.53 ha). This is followed by Bridge End Gardens (3.00 ha). Both are located in Saffron Walden.

Three of the sites; Bridge Street, Dorset House and Station Road Memorial Garden are particularly small at 0.08, 0.06 and 0.03 hectares respectively.

Fields In Trust (FIT) suggests 0.80 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard. Table 4.1 shows that overall, Uttlesford is below this suggested standard.

Audley End Estate is a Registered Historic Park and Garden but is not included within the audit. Whilst the land has some Public Rights of Way across it, the site is not accessible to the public in the same way as other park sites. There is also an entrance fee to some parts of the site. Consequently, it is not considered a publicly accessible space.

4.3 Accessibility

Figure 4.1 overleaf shows the location of parks provision across Uttlesford with a 15-minute walk time catchment applied. This is based on the catchments used in the 2019 study.

As can be seen in Figure 4.1, the majority of parks provision (five sites) is located in the settlement of Saffron Walden. This is the settlement with the highest population density. The other two settlements with parks provision are Elsenham and Thaxted.

Whilst several settlements are without parks provision, they are generally in areas of lower population density. This is with the exception of settlements such as Dunmow, Birchanger

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and Stansted Mountfitchet. However, these settlements are served by other forms of open space such as amenity greenspace which may offer similar opportunities.

Figure 4.1: Parks and gardens mapped

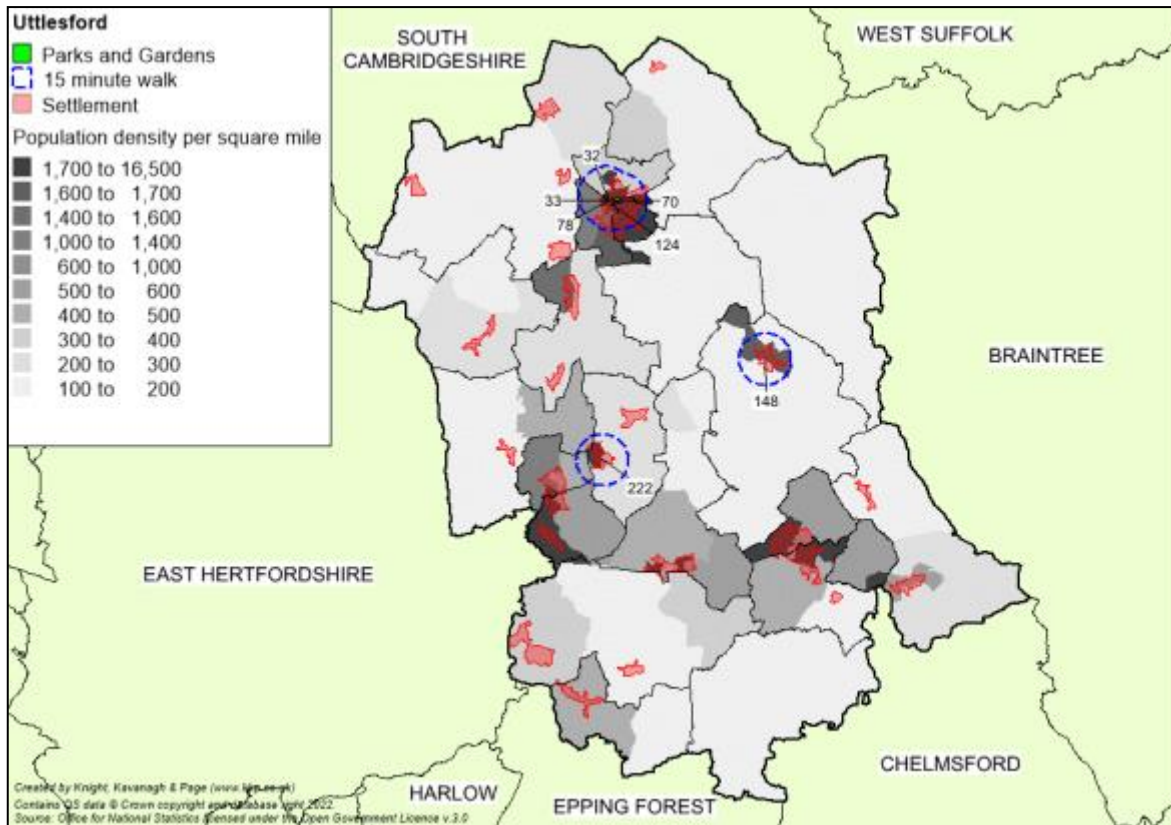


Table 4.2: Key to sites mapped

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish area	Quality score	Value score
32	Bridge End Gardens	Saffron Walden	67.8%	54.5%
33	Close Gardens	Saffron Walden	59.7%	37.3%
70	The Common	Saffron Walden	63.1%	40.9%
78	Dorset House	Saffron Walden	63.1%	37.7%
124	Jubilee Garden	Saffron Walden	60.4%	48.2%
148	Margaret Gardens	Thaxted	59.4%	45.5%
222	Station Road Memorial Garden	Elsenham	54.7%	52.7%

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4.4 Quality

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance); scores from site assessments are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table summarises the results of the quality assessment for parks. A threshold of 60% is applied to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 4.3: Quality ratings for parks in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low (<60%)	High (>60%)
55%	61%	68%	3	4

Of the seven parks in Uttlesford, four (57%), rate above the threshold. Whilst three sites fall below the quality threshold, it is worth noting that two; Close Gardens and Margaret Gardens only do so marginally, scoring 59.7% and 59.4% respectively.

The highest scoring park in Uttlesford is Bridge End Gardens, with a score of 67.8%. The site is an attractive ornamental garden including a hedge maze. It is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden, highlighting its historical importance. This site is also identified in the residents' survey as a popular location to visit and is recognised as a local tourist attraction.

The Common is the second highest scoring site (alongside Dorset House). It is highlighted by Saffron Walden Town Council as a key site for the town. It also provides an important role for hosting community events. Consequently, it is a popular and well used site.

Sites scoring below the threshold for quality are generally smaller in size with fewer features when compared to higher scoring sites. They are, however, well maintained with attractive features/landscaping. None are reported to have significant quality issues.

4.5 Value

To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance); the scores from the site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for parks. A threshold of 20% is applied to identify high and low value. Further explanation of how the value scores are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 4.4: Value scores for parks in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low (<20%)	High (>20%)
37%	45%	54%	0	7

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All parks score above the threshold for value. The two highest scoring sites are Bridge End Gardens and Station Road Memorial Garden. These sites score 54.5% and 52.7% respectively.

Bridge End Gardens scores higher for cultural and heritage value. It also benefits from additional economic value due to its role as a tourist attraction. Consultation with Saffron Walden Town Council highlights that the site is a popular attraction which is very well used, and which has a number of volunteers.

All parks provide opportunities for a wide range of users and demonstrate the high social inclusion, health benefits and sense of place that parks can offer.

One of the key aspects of the value placed on parks provision is their ability to function as a multipurpose form of open space provision. Parks provide opportunities for local communities and individuals to socialise and undertake a range of different activities, such as exercise, dog walking and taking children to the play area. Taking all this into account, parks and gardens are recognised as being heavily integrated into people's everyday lives.

4.6 Summary

Parks and gardens

- ◀ There are seven sites classified as parks and gardens in Uttlesford, the equivalent of over nine hectares.
- ◀ Fields In Trust (FIT) suggests 0.80 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard. Table 4.1 shows that overall, Uttlesford is below this suggested standard.
- ◀ Most of the park provision in Uttlesford (five sites) are located in the settlement of Saffron Walden, the area of highest population density.
- ◀ Whilst several settlements are without parks provision, they are generally in areas of lower population density. This is with the exception of Dunmow, Birchanger and Stansted Mountfitchet. However, such settlements are served by other forms of open space.
- ◀ Of the seven parks in Uttlesford, four (57%), rate above the threshold.
- ◀ Those sites that score below the threshold for quality are smaller with fewer features when compared to higher scoring sites. They are, however, well maintained with attractive landscaping. None are reported to have significant quality issues.
- ◀ All sites are assessed as being of high value, with the important social interaction, health benefits, historic value and sense of place sites offer being recognised.

PART 5: NATURAL AND SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACE

5.1 Introduction

The natural and semi-natural greenspace typology can include woodland (coniferous, deciduous, mixed) and scrub, grassland (e.g., down-land, meadow), heath or moor, wetlands (e.g., marsh, fen), wastelands (including disturbed ground), and bare rock habitats (e.g., cliffs, quarries, pits) and commons. For the purpose of this study, the focus is on sites providing wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness.

5.2 Current provision

In total, 67 sites are identified as natural and semi-natural greenspace, totaling over 509 hectares of provision. There has been no change in this since 2019. These totals do not include all provision in the area as a site size threshold of 0.2 hectares has been applied. Sites smaller than this are likely to be of less or only limited recreational value to residents. However, they may still make a wider contribution to local areas, in relation to community viability, quality of life and health and wellbeing.

Table 5.1: Distribution of natural and semi-natural greenspace

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Saffron Walden	3	1.23	0.08
Great Dunmow	9	21.52	2.02
Rural Area	54	465.93	8.11
Stansted Mountfitchet	1	20.45	2.48
Uttlesford	67	509.15	5.58

The largest of the natural and semi-natural greenspace sites is Hatfield Forest at 382 hectares. The site accounts for 75% of the total provision of natural and semi-natural greenspace. The site is managed and maintained by The National Trust.

Other large forms of provision include High Easter Road/Bishop’s Green (26 hectares) and Birchanger Wood (20 hectares).

Fields In Trust (FIT) suggests 1.80 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard. Table 5.1 illustrates that Uttlesford is above this suggested standard.

5.3 Accessibility

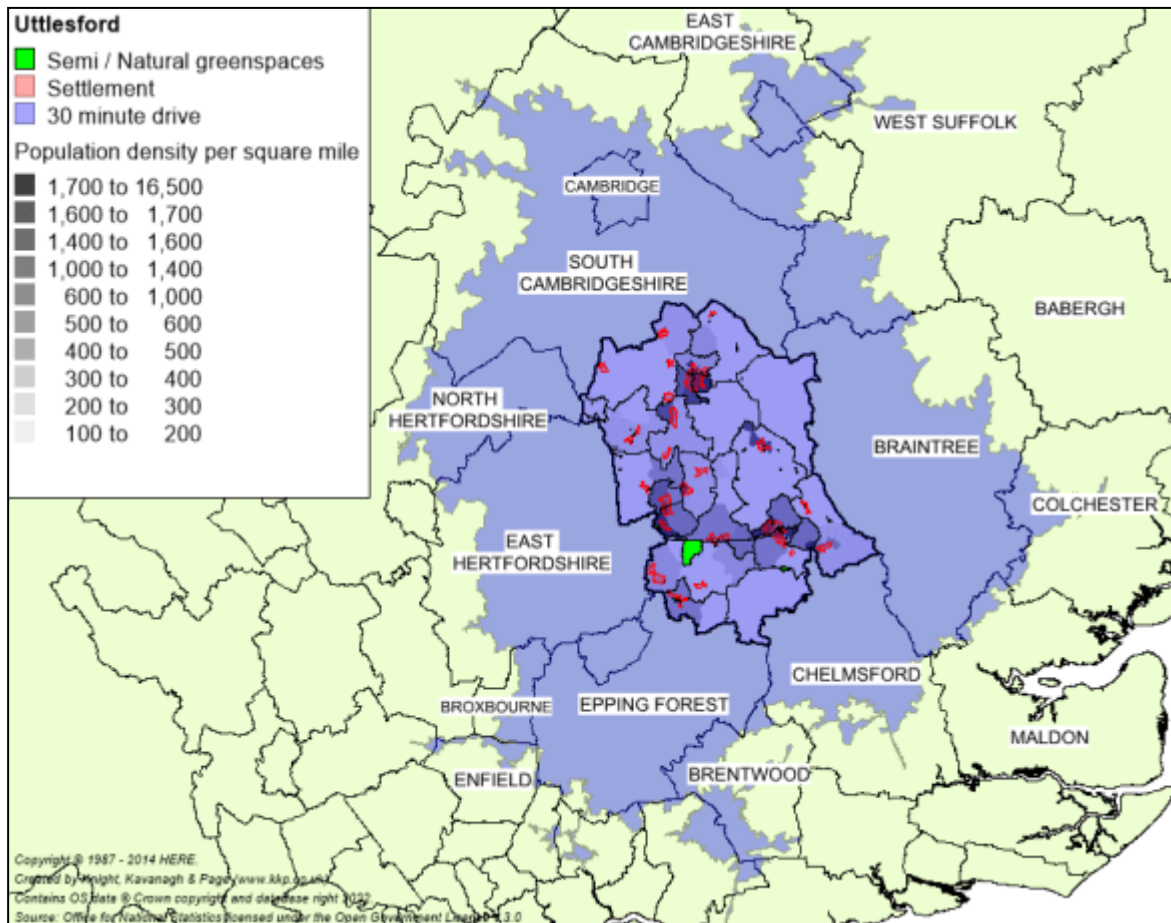
Figures 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3 show natural and semi-natural greenspace mapped against two different catchments; a 30-minute drive time and a 15-minute walk time. This is based on the catchments used in the 2019 study.

Mapping shows a good distribution of natural and semi-natural greenspace provision with most areas of higher population appearing to have access to provision of some kind. However, gaps against the walk time catchment are observed. Most noticeably to settlements with greater population densities such as Newport, Stansted Mountfitchet and Felsted.

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The rural nature of the district, with easier access to the countryside, impacts upon resident expectations in terms of natural greenspace availability. Consultation with parish/town councils and via the community survey in 2019 highlights the presence and use of the network of footpaths leading to the surrounding countryside.

Figure 5.1: Natural and semi-natural greenspace mapped



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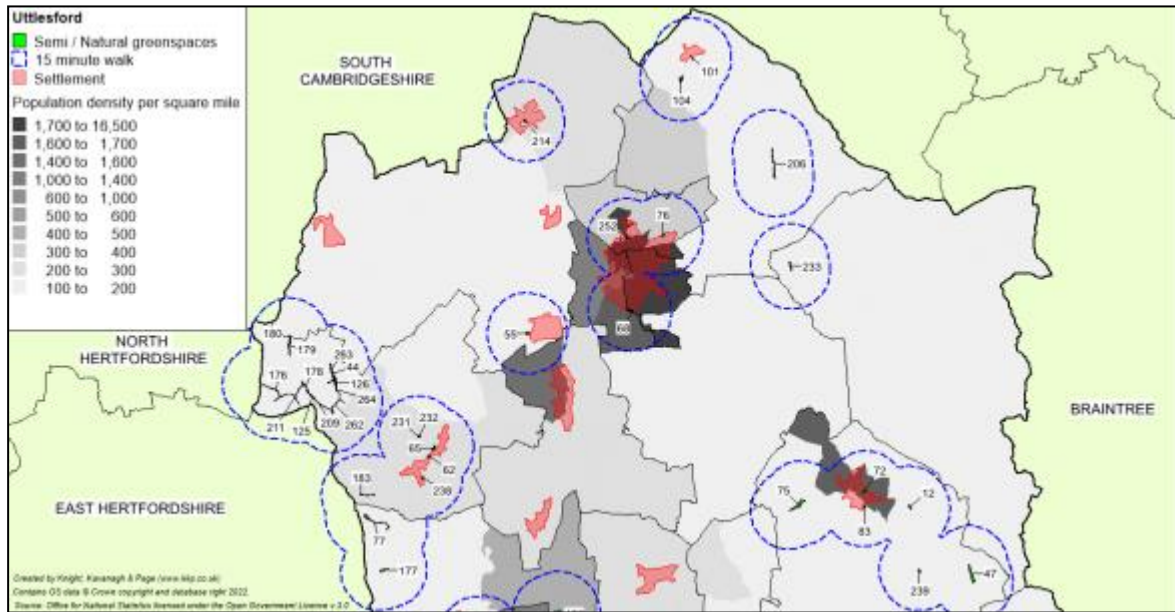


Figure 5.2: Natural and semi-natural greenspace mapped - North

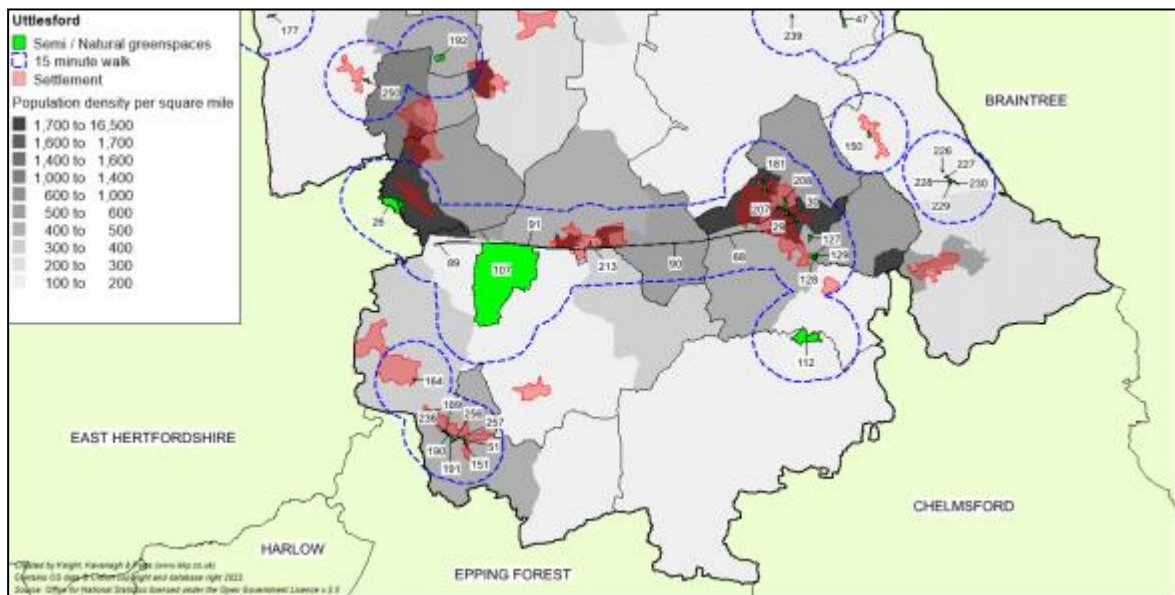


Figure 5.3: Natural and semi-natural greenspace mapped - South

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Table 5.2: Key to sites mapped (sites with blank scores are inaccessible)

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish	Quality score	Value score
12	Bardfield Road	Thaxted	40.2%	24.5%
26	Birchanger Wood	Birchanger	56.7%	36.4%
29	Braintree Road	Great Dunmow	41.9%	25.5%
30	Braintree Road/River Chelmer	Great Dunmow	58.3%	26.4%
44	Bull Lane, Langley Upper Green	Langley	39.7%	25.5%
47	Bustard Green	Lindsell	43.5%	34.5%
51	Chelmsford Road	Hatfield Heath	43.1%	30.0%
55	Chinnel Meadow	Wendens Ambo	31.5%	16.4%
62	Clatterbury Lane 1	Clavering	37.0%	20.0%
65	Clatterbury Lane woodland	Clavering	42.9%	30.9%
68	Claypits Plantation	Saffron Walden	44.6%	25.5%
72	Coptal Lane	Thaxted	40.2%	25.5%
76	De Vigier Avenue	Saffron Walden	34.2%	20.0%
77	Dewes Green Road	Berden	24.5%	24.5%
83	Dunmow Road, Thaxted	Thaxted	38.6%	25.5%
88	Flitch Way, Dunmow	Great Dunmow	45.7%	30.9%
89	Flitch Way, Great Hallingbury	Great Hallingbury	53.3%	30.9%
90	Flitch Way, Little Canfield	Little Canfield	52.2%	30.9%
91	Flitch Way, Takeley	Takeley	48.4%	25.5%
101	Hadstock village pond	Hadstock	32.6%	25.5%
104	Harrison Sayer (wildlife trust)	Hadstock	33.7%	34.5%
107	Hatfield Forest	Hatfield Broad Oak	57.1%	45.5%
112	High Easter Road/Bishop's Green	High Easter	31.0%	24.5%
125	Langley Lower Green	Langley	21.7%	20.0%
126	Langley off Valance Road	Langley	46.7%	30.0%
127	Langleys Community woodland 1	Great Dunmow	36.4%	25.5%
128	Langleys Community woodland 2	Great Dunmow	37.0%	19.1%
129	Langleys Stand of Willows	Great Dunmow	41.9%	25.5%
150	Marshall Piece	Stebbing	22.3%	15.5%
151	Matching Road	Hatfield Heath	48.9%	20.0%
164	Motts Green	Little Hallingbury	21.2%	10.0%
176	Off Roper's Lane, Langley Lower Green	Langley	38.0%	24.5%
177	Park Green Nature Reserve	Berden	21.2%	20.0%
178	Park Lane	Langley	32.6%	20.0%
179	Park Lane 1, Chishall Common	Langley	33.2%	29.1%
180	Park Lane 2, Chishall Common	Langley	26.1%	23.6%
181	Parsonage Downs	Great Dunmow	60.9%	35.5%
183	Pelham Road	Clavering	22.3%	10.0%
189	Pond Lane 1	Hatfield Heath	46.7%	29.1%

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ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish	Quality score	Value score
190	Pond Lane 2	Hatfield Heath	49.5%	24.5%
191	Pond Lane 3	Hatfield Heath	51.1%	30.0%
192	Pound Lane	Ugley	41.9%	30.0%
206	River Bourne Wilderness nature trail	Ashdon	40.8%	20.9%
207	River Chelmer	Great Dunmow	40.2%	45.5%
208	River Chelmer, Harp Mead	Great Dunmow	45.7%	25.5%
209	River Stort, Langley Lower Green	Langley		
211	Roper's Lane, Langley Lower Green	Langley	38.6%	24.5%
213	Smiths Green	Takeley	42.9%	16.4%
214	South Street	Great Chesterford	52.9%	40.0%
226	Stebbing Green 1	Stebbing		
227	Stebbing Green 2	Stebbing	44.0%	25.5%
228	Stebbing Green 3	Stebbing	43.5%	25.5%
229	Stebbing Green 4	Stebbing	34.1%	30.0%
230	Stebbing Green 5	Stebbing	33.2%	20.0%
231	Stickling Green 1	Clavering	52.7%	25.5%
232	Stickling Green 2	Clavering	46.2%	24.5%
233	Stocking Green woodland	Radwinter	17.9%	14.5%
236	Stortford Road 2, Hatfield Heath	Hatfield Heath	54.4%	25.5%
238	Stortford Road, Clavering	Clavering	28.3%	16.4%
239	Sweetings Meadow	Lindsell	47.3%	34.5%
250	The Downs, Manuden	Manuden	33.7%	7.3%
252	The Green Little Walden Road	Saffron Walden	51.6%	25.5%
256	The Street pond	Hatfield Heath	57.6%	26.4%
257	The Street, Hatfield Heath	Hatfield Heath	60.9%	26.4%
262	Upper Green/Roast Green	Langley	37.0%	24.5%
263	Valance Road 1, Langley	Langley	45.7%	24.5%
264	Valance Road 2, Langley	Langley	44.6%	29.1%

5.4 Quality

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) scores from the site assessments are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for natural and semi-natural greenspace. A threshold of 35% is applied to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

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Table 5.3: Quality ratings for natural and semi-natural greenspace in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low (<35%)	High (>35%)
18%	41%	61%	19	46

Two sites do not receive a quality or value score; River Stort, Langley Lower Green and Stebbing Green 1 as both appear inaccessible.

Natural and semi-natural greenspace has a lower quality threshold than some other open space typologies such as parks. This reflects the wide-ranging characteristics of provision. For instance, natural and semi-natural sites can be intentionally without ancillary facilities in order to reduce misuse/inappropriate behaviour whilst encouraging greater conservation.

Of assessed natural and semi-natural provision, a total of 19 sites (29%) in Uttlesford rate below the threshold set for quality. There are 46 rating above the quality threshold applied.

All sites scoring below the threshold for quality tend to be devoid of basic ancillary features such as benches and bins. However, as previously mentioned, this can be due to their purpose as a habitat and even some higher scoring sites lack such features. However, some sites are also noted as appearing poorly maintained with no pathways or evidence of use.

The lowest scoring sites are:

- ◀ Stocking Green woodland (18%)
- ◀ Park Green Nature Reserve (21%)
- ◀ Motts Green (21%)

The sites are all observed as isolated wooded areas with no ancillary facilities. Consequently, they rate lower for personal security, levels of use and general quality. Access to and within the sites is also uncertain.

Most sites scoring above the threshold are observed as being attractive due to the perceived higher levels of maintenance and cleanliness; often a reflection of their apparent regular use by people. Some of the highest scoring sites are:

- ◀ The Street, Hatfield Heath (61%)
- ◀ Parsonage Downs, Great Dunmow (61%)
- ◀ The Street Pond, Hatfield Heath (58%)
- ◀ Braintree Road/River Chelmer, Great Dunmow (58%)

The sites are viewed as well maintained, with good pathways, seating and often with a dedicated/obvious walking trail. In addition, they are all located within a settlement which further strengthens their role and use to the local community.

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5.5 Value

To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) scores from site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the value assessment for natural and semi-natural greenspace. A threshold of 20% is applied to identify high and low value. Further explanation of how the value scores are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 5.4: Value scores for natural and semi-natural greenspace in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low (<20%)	High (>20%)
7%	26%	45%	9	56

Of the natural and semi-natural greenspace sites assessed, 56 sites (86%) rate above the threshold for value.

The highest scoring sites for value are:

- ◀ River Chelmer (46%)
- ◀ Hatfield Forest (46%)
- ◀ South Street (40%)

Each site scores highly for ecological value as they provide a variety of habitats. All are observed as generally attractive forms of provision. Hatfield Forest, owned by The National Trust also has a café on site which adds to its economic value. The National Trust site is widely recognised as a popular attraction. Consultation with town/parish councils and through the community survey highlights it to be overused, under pressure and at capacity.

The River Chelmer, Great Dunmow is recognised as a site offering a wide range of uses and opportunities. It provides some ecological value (i.e., Mead Harp Jubilee Woodland) as well as amenity benefits via the extensive and good quality pathways.

There is understood to be plans for a country park within the district as part of future housing plans. This could help alleviate some of the pressures at significant sites such as those highlighted at Hatfield Forest. The creation of a country park could also contribute in a multifunctional role to the levels of park provision.

The Street Pond and The Street Hatfield Heath (26%) have dedicated wildlife areas maintained by Hatfield Heath Parish Council. The sites are identified by the Parish Council as popular for informal walking.

The high proportion of sites to rate above the threshold for value demonstrates the added benefit natural and semi-natural greenspaces can provide especially in terms of contributing to flora and fauna promotion. Sites are recognised as providing habitat opportunities whilst also offering opportunities for informal recreational activities. Prominent sites of this type can even act as destination sites, attracting users from other areas of Uttlesford.

5.6 Summary

Natural and semi-natural greenspace summary

- ◀ In total, there are 67 natural and semi-natural greenspace sites covering 509 hectares.
- ◀ Of natural and semi-natural sites assessed, a total of 46 sites (71%) rate above the threshold set for quality. There are 19 sites that rate below the quality threshold applied.
- ◀ The majority of sites rate above the threshold for value. This demonstrates the added benefit natural and semi-natural greenspaces can provide, especially in terms of contributing to flora and fauna whilst also providing recreational opportunities.

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PART 6: AMENITY GREENSPACE

6.1 Introduction

This is defined as sites offering opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. It includes informal recreation spaces, housing green spaces, village greens and other incidental spaces.

6.2 Current provision

There are 119 amenity greenspace sites in Uttlesford, an increase of 9 sites since 2019, equivalent to 147 hectares of provision, an increase of 7ha. Sites are most often found within areas of housing and function as informal recreation space or open space along highways providing visual amenity. A number of recreational grounds and playing fields are also classified as amenity greenspace.

Table 6.1: Distribution of amenity greenspace

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Saffron Walden	13	14.38	0.96
Great Dunmow	11	13.67	1.28
Rural Area	84	111.99	1.95
Stansted Mountfitchet	11	6.65	0.81
Uttlesford	119	146.69	1.60

It is important to note that whilst a large proportion of provision may be considered as being smaller grassed areas or roadside verges, there is some variation of sites within this typology. For example, small sites such as Chapel Fields 0.09 hectares, to the largest, Woodside Green at over 26 hectares. Larger recreation grounds and playing fields serve a different purpose to smaller grassed areas and verges. These often provide an extended range of opportunities for recreational and sporting activities due to their size.

Fields In Trust (FIT) suggests a guideline quantity standard of 0.60 hectares per 1,000 population. Table 6.1 shows that overall, Uttlesford is above this suggested standard.

6.3 Accessibility

Figures 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3 show amenity greenspace mapped against a 15-minute walk time. This is based on the catchments used in the 2019 study.

Mapping shows that generally most settlements contain amenity greenspace. However, there are some smaller rural settlements which do not have access to provision; most noticeably Chrishall.

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Figure 6.1: Amenity greenspace mapped

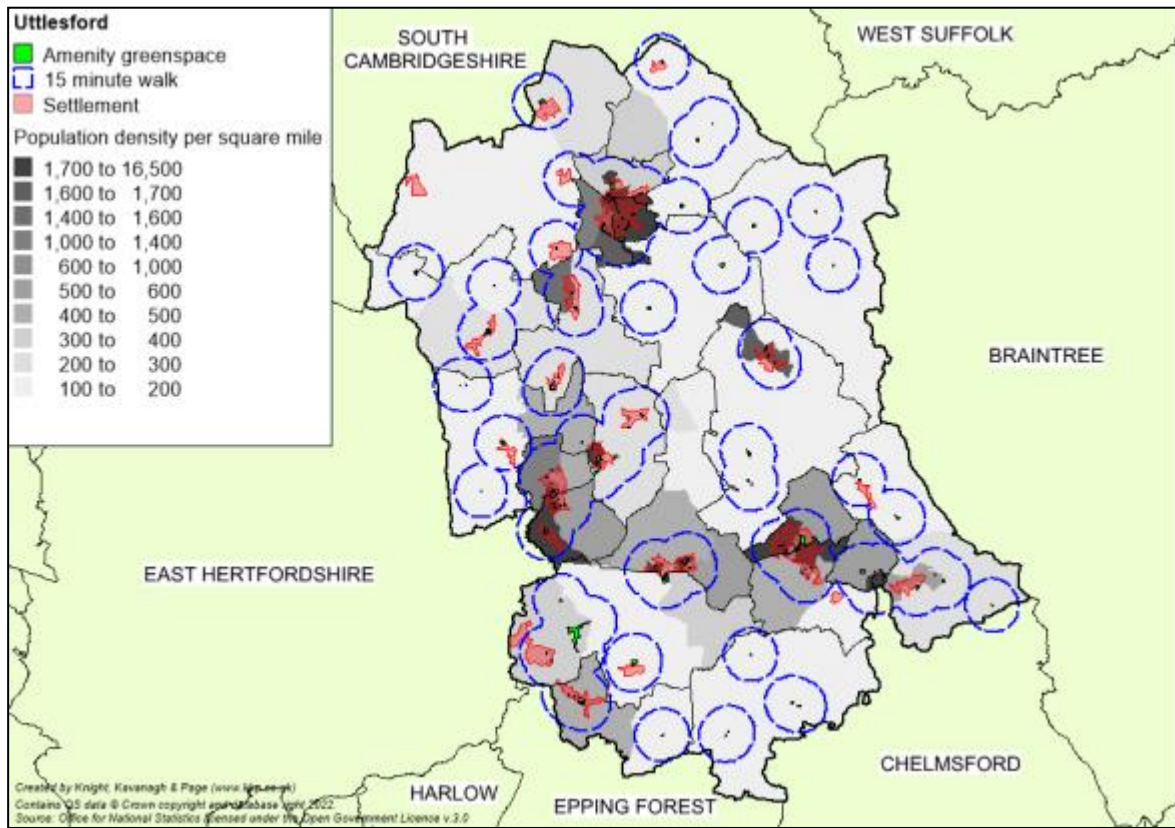
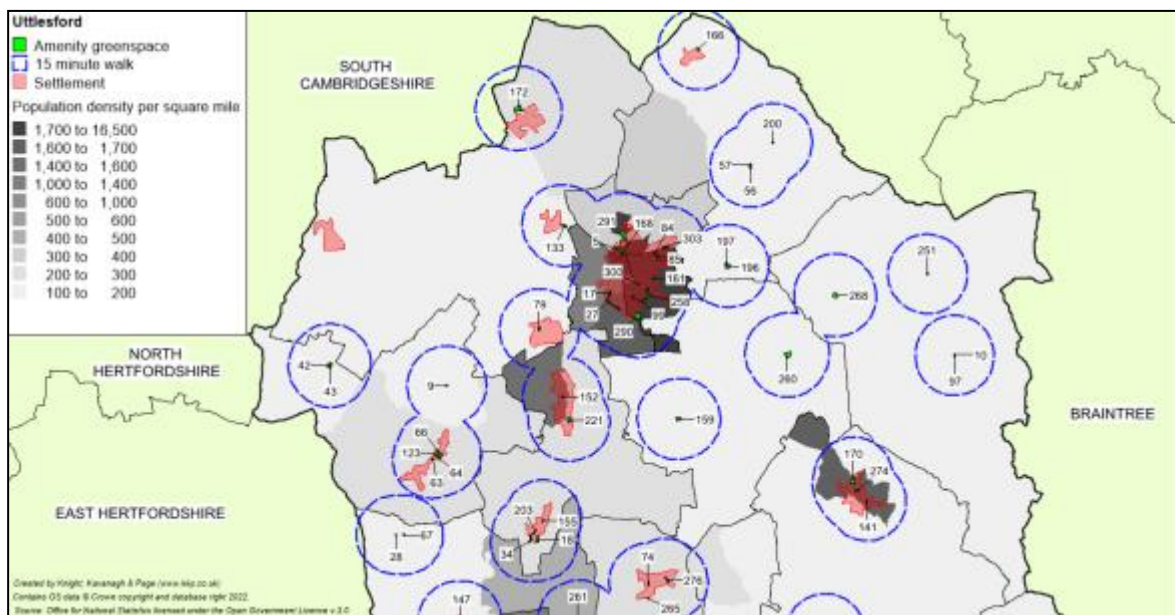


Figure 6.2: Amenity greenspace mapped - North



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Figure 6.3: Amenity greenspace mapped - South

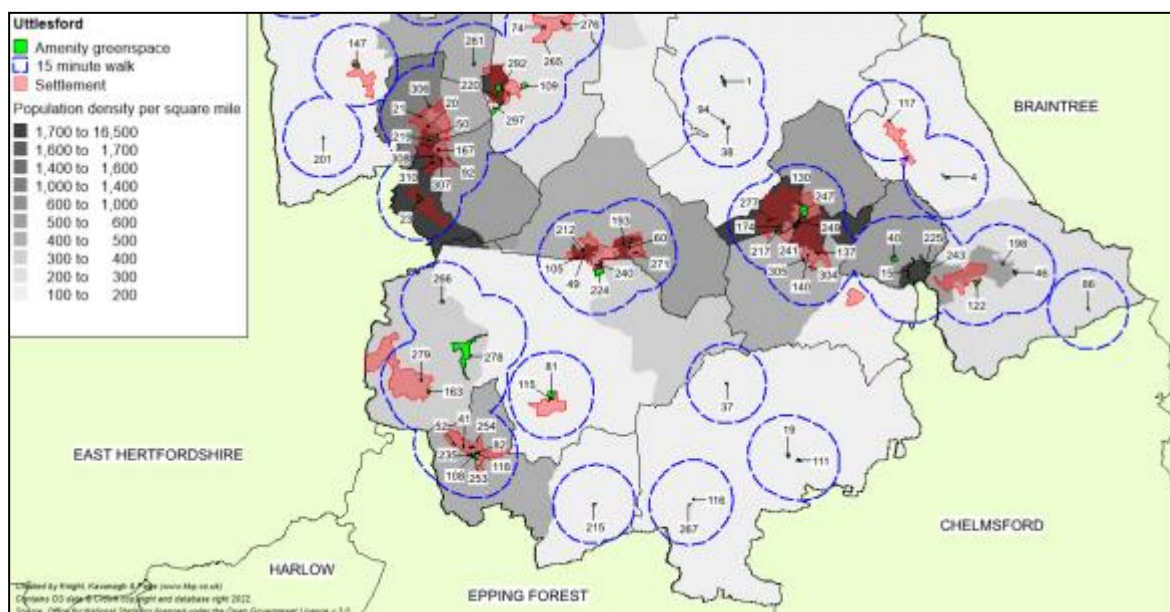


Table 6.2: Key to sites mapped

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish	Quality score	Value score
1	Abbey View	Great Easton	41.6%	28.0%
4	Allcotts Playing field	Stebbing	35.0%	32.0%
5	Anglo American Playing Fields	Saffron Walden	80.4%	35.0%
9	Arkesden Recreation ground	Arkesden	68.7%	29.0%
10	Baptist Church Field, Great Sampford	Great Sampford	30.8%	22.0%
15	Baynard Avenue	Flitch Green	50.5%	38.0%
17	Beeches Close	Saffron Walden	45.3%	22.0%
18	Belchams Lane	Quendon and Rickling	40.7%	33.0%
19	Bellhouse Villas	High Easter	41.1%	29.0%
20	Bentfield Gardens public open space	Stansted Mountfitchet	51.9%	33.0%
21	Bentfield Green	Stansted Mountfitchet	50.0%	28.0%
23	Birchanger Lane	Birchanger	78.5%	39.0%
27	Blacklands Avenue / Seven Devils Lane	Saffron Walden	80.8%	28.0%
28	Bonneting Lane	Berden	50.5%	33.0%
34	Brixton Lane	Quendon and Rickling	50.0%	28.0%
37	Broadfield Playing field	High Roding	53.7%	33.0%
38	Brocks Mead	Great Easton	46.3%	28.0%
40	Brook Street Recreation Ground	Little Dunmow	45.8%	38.0%
41	Broomfields	Hatfield Heath	49.1%	28.0%
42	Bull Lane cricket field	Langley	60.7%	28.0%
43	Bull Lane village green	Langley	55.6%	23.0%

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ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish	Quality score	Value score
46	Burnstie Road, Bannister Green	Felsted	69.6%	34.0%
49	Chapel Fields	Takeley	38.8%	22.0%
50	Chapel Hill War memorial	Stansted Mountfitchet	77.1%	34.0%
52	Chestnut Drive	Hatfield Heath	69.2%	44.0%
56	Church End playing field	Ashdon	36.9%	27.0%
57	Church Field	Ashdon	34.6%	33.0%
60	Clarendon Road, Priors Green	Little Canfield	56.5%	28.0%
63	Clatterbury Lane 2	Clavering	55.6%	21.0%
64	Clatterbury Lane 3	Clavering	62.6%	28.0%
66	Clatterbury Lane/Hill Green	Clavering	57.0%	38.0%
67	Clavering Road Village Hall	Berden	44.4%	33.0%
74	Crow Street	Henham	68.7%	44.0%
79	Duck Street	Wendens Ambo	43.0%	28.0%
81	Dunmow Road recreation ground	Hatfield Broad Oak	43.0%	29.0%
82	Dunmow Road, Hatfield Heath	Hatfield Heath	36.4%	29.0%
84	Elizabeth Way 1	Saffron Walden	34.6%	16.0%
85	Elizabeth Way 2	Saffron Walden	50.5%	27.0%
86	Evelyn Road, Willows Green	Felsted	62.1%	27.0%
92	Foresthall Park	Stansted Mountfitchet	49.1%	28.0%
94	Great Easton Playing Field	Great Easton	46.3%	28.0%
97	Great Sampford Recreation ground	Great Sampford	75.7%	40.0%
99	Greenways	Saffron Walden	34.6%	23.0%
105	Harvest Fields	Takeley	72.0%	28.0%
108	Hatfield Heath War Memorial	Hatfield Heath	48.6%	38.0%
109	Henham Road Cricket Club	Elsenham	22.9%	23.0%
111	High Easter playing fields	High Easter	62.6%	34.0%
115	High Street Village green	Hatfield Broad Oak	79.0%	60.0%
116	Holloway Crescent	Leaden Roding	43.9%	28.0%
117	Hornsea Villas playing field	Stebbing	44.4%	34.0%
118	Hunter Meet/ Chelmsford Road	Hatfield Heath	48.1%	23.0%
122	Jollys Boy Lane North Playing Field	Felsted	57.9%	29.0%
123	Jubilee Field, Claterbury Lane	Clavering	43.5%	39.0%
130	Lime Tree Hill	Great Dunmow	32.2%	22.0%
133	Littlebury Recreation Ground	Littlebury	59.3%	39.0%
137	Lower Mill Field	Great Dunmow	50.5%	27.0%
140	Lukins Mead/Nusery Rise	Great Dunmow	36.4%	23.0%
141	Magdalen Green	Thaxted	48.6%	22.0%
147	Manuden playing fields	Manuden	56.1%	33.0%
152	Meadow Ford	Newport	52.3%	23.0%
155	Memorial area	Quendon and Rickling	66.8%	43.0%

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ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish	Quality score	Value score
159	Mill Road Recreation ground	Debden	79.9%	40.0%
161	Monk's Hill	Saffron Walden	52.3%	28.0%
163	Motts Green AGS	Little Hallingbury	39.3%	38.0%
166	Moules Lane recreation ground	Hadstock	49.5%	23.0%
167	Mountfitchet Road	Stansted Mountfitchet	80.8%	35.0%
168	Museum Street	Saffron Walden	68.7%	48.0%
170	Newbiggen Street playing field	Thaxted	65.4%	33.0%
172	Newmarket Road Playing field	Great Chesterford	70.1%	33.0%
174	Newton Green	Great Dunmow	61.7%	28.0%
193	Priors Green	Takeley	35.5%	23.0%
196	Radwinter Road playing field	Sewards End	76.6%	29.0%
197	Radwinter Road Village Hall	Sewards End	46.3%	22.0%
198	Ravens Crescent	Felsted	73.8%	28.0%
200	Rectory Lane playing field	Ashdon	66.4%	38.0%
201	Rectory Road	Farnham	47.2%	39.0%
203	Rickling Green Road AGS	Quendon and Rickling	50.9%	35.0%
212	Silver Jubilee Hall, Takeley	Takeley	44.4%	28.0%
215	St Martin's Close	White Roding	52.3%	27.0%
217	Stane Street	Great Dunmow	67.8%	39.0%
219	Stanstead Park recreation ground	Stansted Mountfitchet	59.8%	34.0%
220	Stansted Road	Elsenham	62.6%	38.0%
221	Station Road Common, Newport	Newport	42.5%	29.0%
224	Station Road Recreation ground	Takeley	64.5%	40.0%
225	Station Road, Flitch Green	Flitch Green	66.8%	28.0%
235	Stortford Road 1, Hatfield Heath	Hatfield Heath	77.6%	29.0%
240	Takeley Park	Takeley	46.3%	28.0%
241	Teybards Lay	Great Dunmow	65.4%	39.0%
243	Tanton Road Lake	Flitch Green	83.6%	44.0%
247	The Causeway Recreation ground	Great Dunmow	64.5%	55.0%
249	The Downs, Great Dunmow	Great Dunmow	68.2%	50.0%
251	The Glebe AGS	Hempstead	44.9%	27.0%
253	The Heath Cricket pitch	Hatfield Heath	67.8%	33.0%
254	The Shaw	Hatfield Heath	53.3%	29.0%
258	Tukes Way AGS	Saffron Walden	50.9%	29.0%
260	Tye Green, Wimbish	Wimbish	63.6%	35.0%
261	Ugley Green	Ugley	65.0%	28.0%
265	Vernons Close playing field	Henham	37.4%	28.0%
266	Village Hall, Great Hallingbury	Great Hallingbury	35.5%	32.0%
267	Village Hall, Leaden Roding	Leaden Roding	49.1%	22.0%
268	Walden Road Recreation Ground	Radwinter	53.7%	34.0%

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ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish	Quality score	Value score
271	Warwick Road, Priors Green	Little Canfield	54.2%	28.0%
274	Weaverhead Close	Thaxted	36.4%	28.0%
276	Woodend Green	Henham	59.3%	35.0%
277	Woodlands Walk	Great Dunmow	65.0%	29.0%
278	Woodside Green	Great Hallingbury	29.9%	43.0%
279	Wrights Green	Little Hallingbury	53.3%	27.0%
290	Herbert's Farm Playing Fields	Saffron Walden	60.3%	29.0%
291	Lime Avenue	Saffron Walden	40.2%	28.0%
292	Elsenham PC Recreation Ground	Elsenham	77.6%	35.0%
297	Franklin Drive	Elsenham	70.1%	44.0%
300	Allard Way	Saffron Walden	71.0%	35.0%
303	Miller Street	Saffron Walden	65.9%	29.0%
304	Hibbert Drive	Great Dunmow	71.5%	34.0%
305	Hedgerow Grove	Great Dunmow	62.1%	34.0%
306	Oxlip Road	Stansted Mountfitchet	63.6%	29.0%
307	Herrington Avenue	Stansted Mountfitchet	71.0%	29.0%
308	Wilkin Crescent	Stansted Mountfitchet	54.7%	33.0%
310	Reeve Road	Stansted Mountfitchet	41.5%	28.0%

6.4 Quality

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance); the scores from site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for amenity greenspaces. A threshold of 45% is applied to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 6.3: Quality ratings for amenity greenspace in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low (<45%)	High (>45%)
24%	56%	84%	26	93

A total of 78% of assessed amenity greenspace sites in Uttlesford rate above the threshold for quality. The highest scoring sites for quality are:

- ◆ Tanton Road Lake (84%)
- ◆ Mountfitchet Road (81%)
- ◆ Blacklands Avenue and Seven Devils Lane (81%)
- ◆ Anglo American Playing Fields (80%)

The four sites are observed as having good levels of maintenance and cleanliness, resulting in a positive overall appearance. In addition, they provide user security as well as recreational opportunities. The sites all have bins to prevent excessive littering as well as

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seating. These add to the quality and use of the sites. In addition, Anglo American Playing Fields and Mountfitchet Road contain play provision with the latter also featuring a MUGA.

High Easter Playing Fields (62%) scores above the quality threshold. High Easter Parish Council highlights that there are issues with the playing field surface due to poor drainage. This affects quality of play, particularly hindering football, which suffers as a result.

Sites scoring below the threshold are generally smaller in size and are observed as being basic pockets of green space. However, despite having little recreational use and fewer ancillary facilities, it is important to recognise they may provide a visual amenity. The lowest scoring amenity greenspace sites in Uttlesford are:

- ◀ Henham Road Cricket Club (24%)
- ◀ Baptist Church Field, Great Sampford (32%)
- ◀ Elisabeth Way (35%)

These sites lack ancillary features and formal pathways. They also score lower for entrances and personal security. Henham Road Cricket Club appears to be a disused cricket ground.

Some Parish Councils highlight a lack of amenity greenspace in their area. For example, Thaxted Parish Council cite there is not enough greenspace and they aim to extend the amount of amenity provision wherever possible. Similarly, Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council consider there to be a need for more open space provision in the settlement.

It is important to recognise that despite some sites rating below the threshold for quality, they may still have the potential to be important to the community. For instance, if a site is the only form of open space locally it may be of higher value given it is the only provision of its type. It may also provide a visual function. Such sites can have a wider contribution to local areas, in relation to community viability, quality of life and health and wellbeing.

6.5 Value

To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) site assessments scores are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results. A threshold of 20% is applied to identify high and low value. Further explanation of the value scoring and thresholds can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 6.4: Value ratings for amenity greenspace in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low (<20%)	High (>20%)
16%	32%	60%	1	118

All except one amenity greenspace rate above the threshold for value. Elisabeth Way rates below the value threshold. The site serves more as a visual amenity and scores low for usage due to being overgrown with no facilities. Should a site be less attractive, or provide less recreational opportunity, people are less likely to visit the site.

Some of the highest scoring sites for value in Uttlesford are:

- ◀ High Street village green (60%)
- ◀ The Causeway recreation ground (55%)

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- ◀ The Downs, Great Dunmow (50%)

High Street village green (60%) scores the highest for value. It is an attractive greenspace, containing a pond and meeting the needs of several users. The Causeway recreation ground has a fitness trail, further adding to its amenity and health value. Each is observed as a good or excellent local amenity, attractive and well used.

Hatfield Heath War Memorial (38%) has a war memorial, adding cultural heritage value. Moreover, consultation with Hatfield Heath Parish Council highlights that festivals and car shows are hosted here. It is consequently highlighted as an important site for the village.

Numerous amenity sites have the additional benefit of sporting opportunities. The following are examples of sites to have either football goals or cricket squares:

- ◀ High Easter playing fields
- ◀ Dunmow Road recreation ground
- ◀ Belchams Lane
- ◀ Bellhouse Villas
- ◀ Hornsea Villas playing field
- ◀ Littlebury recreation ground
- ◀ Stansted Park recreation ground
- ◀ Birchanger Lane
- ◀ Rectory Lane playing field
- ◀ Arkesden recreation ground

Amenity greenspace should be recognised for its multi-purpose function, offering opportunities for a variety of leisure and recreational activities. It can often accommodate informal activities, such as casual play and dog walking. Some sites in Uttlesford offer a dual function and are amenity resources for residents as well as being visually pleasing. These attributes add to the quality, accessibility and aesthetics of amenity greenspace. Combined with the presence of facilities (e.g., seating, landscaping and trees) this means that the better-quality sites are likely to be more respected and valued by the local community.

6.6 Summary

Amenity greenspace summary

- ◀ There are 119 amenity greenspace sites in Uttlesford: over 146 hectares of provision.
- ◀ Over three quarters (78%) of amenity greenspace sites in Uttlesford rate above the threshold for quality. Several of the low scoring sites are marginally below the threshold.
- ◀ The majority of sites scoring below the threshold are smaller sites and are observed as being basic, small pockets of green space and lack ancillary features.
- ◀ In addition to its multifunctional role, amenity greenspace makes a valuable contribution to visual aesthetics for communities – hence nearly all sites rate above the value threshold.
- ◀ Only one site rates low for quality and value. This is due to quality impacting on value. A less attractive site provides less recreational opportunity, with people less likely to visit the site.

PART 7: PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

7.1 Introduction

This includes areas designated primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, ball courts, skateboard areas and teenage shelters.

Provision for children is deemed to be sites consisting of formal equipped play facilities typically associated with play areas. This is usually perceived to be for children under 12 years of age. Provision for young people can include equipped sites that provide more robust equipment catering to older age ranges incorporating facilities such as skate parks, BMX, basketball courts, youth shelters and MUGAs.

7.2 Current provision

A total of 88 sites in Uttlesford are identified as provision for children and young people. This combines to create a total of nearly 10 hectares. This is an increase of 15 sites, an increase of 1ha since 2019. No site size threshold has been applied and as such all known provision is identified and included within the audit.

Table 7.1: Distribution of provision for children and young people

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Saffron Walden	9	1.67	0.11
Great Dunmow	9	0.77	0.07
Rural Area	57	6.47	0.11
Stansted Mountfitchet	13	0.79	0.10
Uttlesford	88	9.69	0.11

Fields In Trust (FIT) suggests 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard. Overall, Uttlesford has a current provision level of 0.11 hectares per 1,000 population.

A frequent comment within the responses to the community survey is the concern from respondents about a lack of play equipment catering for older children.

7.3 Accessibility

Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 show the location of provision for children and young people across Uttlesford with a 10-minute walk time catchment applied, as well as a 15-minute walk time catchment applied for those sites with skate parks or BMX tracks. This is based on the catchments used in the 2019 study.

The mapping highlights that nearly all settlements across the district have access to at least one form of play area. The exceptions are Little Hallingbury and Rickling Green.

The greatest amounts of provision can be seen in the areas of highest population density (Saffron Walden, Dunmow, Birchanger and Stansted Mountfitchet).

Figure 7.1: Provision for children and young people mapped

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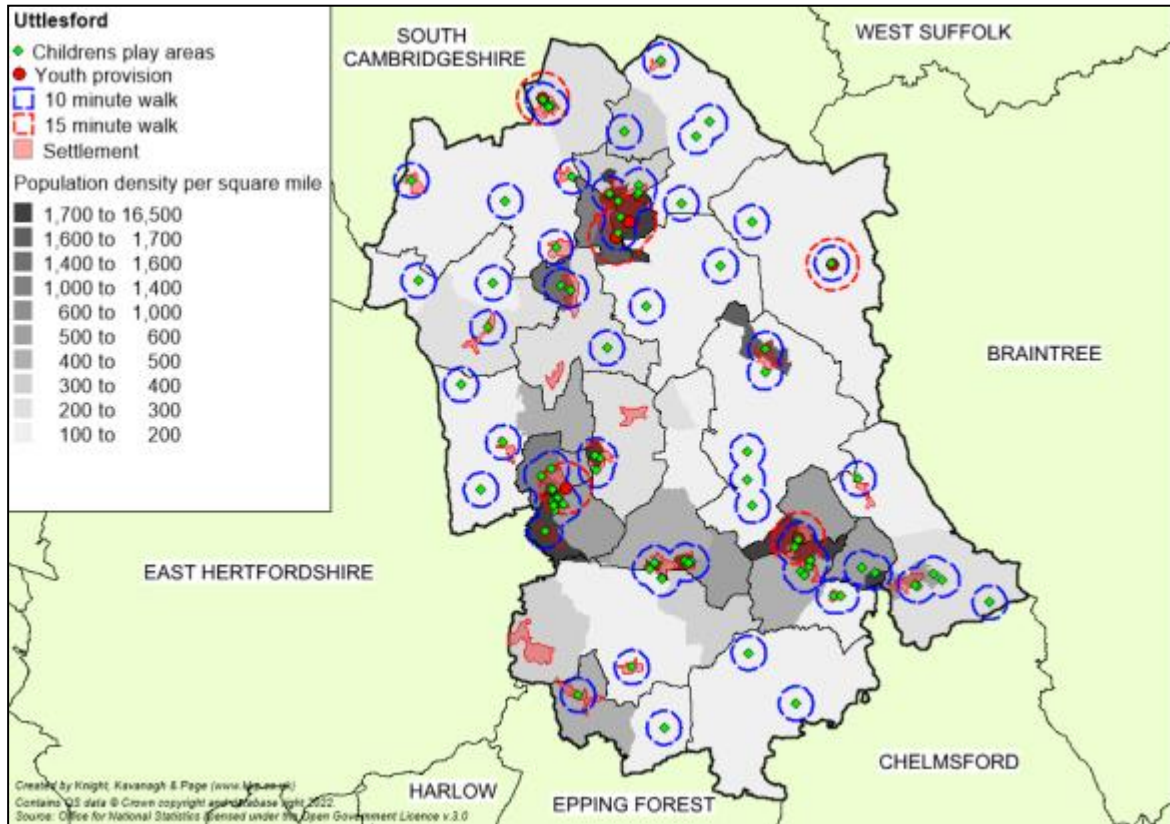
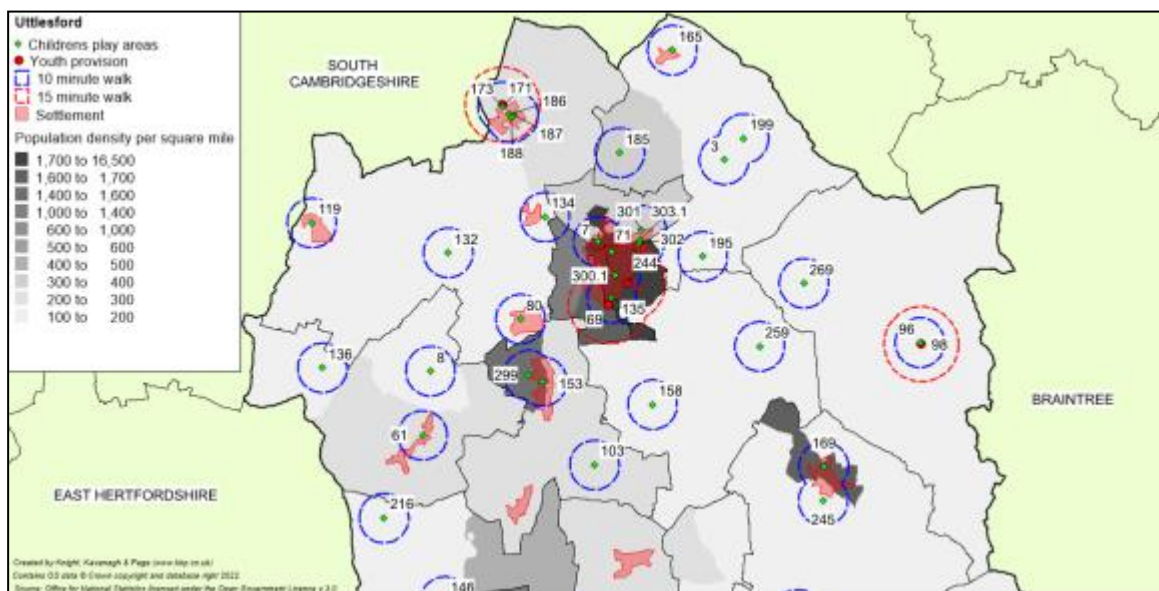


Figure 7.2: Provision for children and young people mapped – North



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Figure 7.3: Provision for children and young people mapped – South

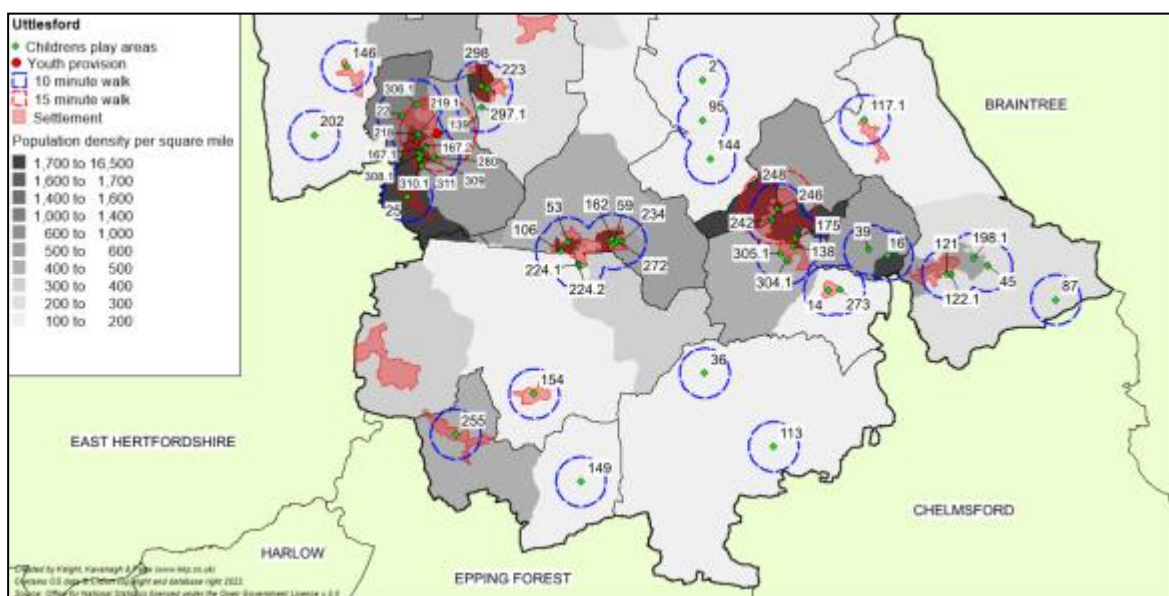


Table 7.2: Key to sites mapped

ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish area	Quality score	Value score
2	Abbey View play area	Great Easton	46.4%	45.5%
3	All Saints Close play area	Ashdon	66.3%	38.2%
7	Anglo American Playing Fields play area	Saffron Walden	48.5%	54.5%
8	Arkesden play area	Arkesden	46.0%	38.2%
14	Barnston Village Hall play area	Barnston	45.0%	41.8%
16	Baynard Avenue play area	Flitch Green	61.9%	20.0%
22	Bentfield Green play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	45.7%	41.8%
25	Birchanger Lane recreation ground	Birchanger	52.2%	50.9%
36	Broadfield play area	High Roding	70.1%	41.8%
39	Brook Street play area	Little Dunmow	44.0%	41.8%
45	Burnsite Road play area	Felsted	49.5%	38.2%
53	Chestnut Way play area	Takeley	47.4%	41.8%
59	Clarendon Road play areas	Little Canfield	60.8%	54.5%
61	Claterbury Lane play area	Clavering	47.4%	41.8%
69	Claypits Plantation BMX	Saffron Walden	29.9%	38.2%
71	Common play area	Saffron Walden	62.9%	54.5%
80	Duck Street play area	Wendens Ambo	46.4%	41.8%
87	Evelyn Road, Willows Green play area	Felsted	47.4%	34.5%
95	Great Easton Playing Field play area	Great Easton	40.2%	38.2%
96	Great Sampford play area	Great Sampford	48.1%	45.5%
98	Great Sampford skate park	Great Sampford	43.3%	41.8%

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ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish area	Quality score	Value score
103	Hamel Way play area	Widdington	60.8%	38.2%
106	Harvest Fields play area	Takeley	62.9%	32.7%
113	High Easter Village Hall play area	High Easter	48.5%	41.8%
117.1	Hornsea Villas play area	Stebbing	43.3%	38.2%
119	Jigneys Meadow adventure playground	Chrishall	42.3%	41.8%
121	Jollys Boy Lane North play area	Felsted	59.1%	38.2%
122.1	Jolly Boys Lane North MUGA	Felsted	52.6%	41.8%
132	Littlebury Green play area	Littlebury	50.5%	41.8%
134	Littlebury recreation ground play area	Littlebury	45.4%	38.2%
135	Long Horse Close play area	Saffron Walden	73.9%	54.5%
136	Long Lea play area	Langley	44.0%	38.2%
138	Lower Mill Field play area	Great Dunmow	69.4%	38.2%
139	Lower Street skate park	Stansted Mountfitchet	71.8%	45.5%
144	Manor Road play area	Little Easton	52.6%	38.2%
146	Manuden play area	Manuden	52.6%	41.8%
149	Marks Hall Lane play area	White Roding	47.4%	27.3%
153	Meadow Ford play area	Newport	63.2%	38.2%
154	Meadows Mead play area	Hatfield Broad Oak	45.4%	41.8%
158	Mill Road play area	Debden	71.1%	41.8%
162	Mortymer Close play area	Takeley	41.2%	34.5%
165	Moules Lane play area	Hadstock	48.5%	38.2%
167.1	Mountfitchet Road play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	51.2%	41.8%
167.2	Mountfitchet Road MUGA ³	Stansted Mountfitchet		
169	Newbiggen Street play area	Thaxted	70.1%	41.8%
171	Newmarket Road play area	Great Chesterford	70.8%	45.5%
173	Newmarket Road skate park	Great Chesterford	48.5%	41.8%
175	Oakroyd Avenue play area ⁴	Great Dunmow		
185	Petlands play area	Saffron Walden	45.4%	38.2%
186	Pilgrim's Close play area 1	Great Chesterford	51.5%	38.2%
187	Pilgrim's Close play area 2	Great Chesterford	30.9%	27.3%
188	Pilgrim's Close play area 3	Great Chesterford	61.2%	20.0%
195	Radwinter Road play area	Sewards End	69.1%	41.8%
198.1	Ravens Crescent play area	Felsted	46.4%	38.2%
199	Rectory Lane play area	Ashdon	53.3%	29.1%
202	Rectory Road play area	Farnham	48.5%	41.8%
216	St Nicholas Field play area	Berden	54.6%	45.5%
218	Stanstead Park play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	59.5%	45.5%
219.1	Stansted Park recreation play area	Stansted Mountfitchet		

³ Assessed as part of 167.1

⁴ Site appears to be temporarily closed

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ID	Site name	Settlement/ Parish area	Quality score	Value score
223	Station Road play area, Elsenham	Little Canfield	50.5%	41.8%
224.1	Station Road MUGA ⁵	Takeley	64.6%	41.8%
224.2	Station Road play area	Takeley		
234	Stokes Road, Priors Green play area	Canfield	69.1%	34.5%
242	Teybards Lay play area	Great Dunmow	56.4%	45.5%
244	Saffron Walden skate park	Saffron Walden	75.3%	54.5%
245	Thaxted Youth Club	Thaxted	56.7%	27.3%
246	The Causeway play area	Great Dunmow	70.1%	41.8%
248	The Causeway skate park	Great Dunmow	48.5%	41.8%
255	The Shaw play area	Hatfield Heath	58.8%	41.8%
259	Tye Green play area	Wimbish	44.3%	38.2%
269	Walden Road recreation play area	Radwinter	49.5%	38.2%
272	Warwick Road, Priors Green play area	Little Canfield	41.2%	38.2%
273	Watts Close play area	Great Dunmow	59.1%	20.0%
280	Walson Way play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	61.9%	54.5%
297.1	Franklin Drive play area	Elsenham	62.9%	38.2%
298	Barley Way play area	Elsenham	71.5%	41.8%
299	Wicken Gardens play area	Newport	63.2%	41.8%
300.1	Allard Way play area	Saffron Walden	72.9%	45.5%
301	Mapletoft Avenue play area	Saffron Walden	50.9%	41.8%
302	Howlands Close play area	Saffron Walden	57.7%	41.8%
303.1	Miller Street	Saffron Walden	40.2%	29.1%
304	Hibbert Drive play area	Great Dunmow	72.9%	41.8%
305.1	Hedgerow Grove play area	Great Dunmow	48.1%	38.2%
306.1	Oxlip Road play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	54.0%	50.9%
308.1	Wilkin Crescent play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	49.5%	38.2%
309	Childs Lane play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	61.5%	47.3%
310	Reeve Road play areas	Stansted Mountfitchet	49.1%	47.3%
311	Felsted Crescent play area	Stansted Mountfitchet	52.2%	38.2%

⁵ Assessed as part of 224.2

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7.4 Quality

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by guidance); the scores from the site assessments have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for play provision for children and young people. A threshold of 45% is applied to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of the quality scoring and thresholds can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 7.3: Quality ratings for provision for children and young people in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low (<45%)	High (>45%)
30%	54%	75%	11	76

The quality of provision is generally good across Uttlesford with 86% of sites assessed as above the threshold. There are 11 sites rating below the threshold. Notably there is a significant spread (52.6%) between the highest and lowest scoring sites, with Hornsea Villas play area (22.7%) compared to Saffron Walden skate park (75.3%).

Saffron Walden skate park, along with other high scoring sites, has entrances that open onto safe overlooked areas, good boundary fencing or controls to prevent illegal use, seating, litter bins and signage. Additionally, they are maintained to a high standard, with no significant wear and tear to equipment or evidence of litter or vandalism.

Examples of other high scoring sites include Long Horse Close play area, Lower Street skate park and Mill Road play area, which scored 73.9%, 71.8% and 71.1% respectively. The high-quality score for Lower Street skate park is unsurprising, given that it is relatively new.

The Shaw play area, although scoring well above the threshold at 58.8%, is reported to suffer from vandalism. This is highlighted through consultation with Hatfield Heath Parish Council.

Sites scoring lower for quality include Claypits Plantation BMX (29.9%), Pilgrim's Close play area 2 (30.9%), Miller Street play area (40.2%) and Great Easton Playing Field play area (40.2%). These sites generally have fewer ancillary features or equipment and are often reported to have evidence of wear and tear. Furthermore, overall maintenance and cleanliness of the sites is not as high.

7.5 Value

To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) site assessment scores are colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table overleaf summarises the results of the value assessment for children and young people. A threshold of 20% is applied to identify high and low value. Further explanation of the value scoring and thresholds can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

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Table 7.4: Value ratings for provision for children and young people in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low (<20%)	High (>20%)
20%	40%	55%	0	87

All play provision in Uttlesford is rated as being above the threshold for value. This demonstrates the role play provision provides in allowing children to play but also the contribution sites make in terms of giving children and young people safe places to learn, for physical and mental activity, to socialise with others and in creating aesthetically pleasing local environments.

Sites scoring particularly high for value tend to reflect a good range of quality equipment available at sites:

- ◀ Anglo American Playing Fields play area (54.4%)
- ◀ Birchanger Lane recreation ground (50.0%)
- ◀ Clarendon Road play area (54.4%)
- ◀ Long Horse Close play area (54.4%)
- ◀ Saffron Walden skate park (54.4%)

The sites are observed as being well maintained with a good to reasonable variety of equipment, as well as having sufficient access. The sites are also assumed to be well used given their range and quality of equipment.

Despite Anglo American Playing Fields play area scoring above the value threshold, it is observed as appearing old with the basketball courts having no lights.

Diverse equipment to cater for a range of ages and abilities is important and can significantly impact on value. Provision such as skate park facilities and MUGAs are often highly valued forms of play.

It is also important to recognise the benefits of play in terms of healthy, active lifestyles, social inclusion and interaction plus developmental and educational value. The importance of play and of children's rights to play in their local communities is essential.

7.6 Summary

Provision for children and young people summary

- ◀ There are 88 play provision sites in Uttlesford: a total of nearly 10 hectares.
- ◀ FIT suggests 0.25 hectares per 1,000 population as a guideline quantity standard. Overall, Uttlesford has a current provision level of 0.11 hectares per 1,000 population.
- ◀ The mapping highlights that nearly all settlements across the district have access to at least one form of play area. The exceptions to this are Little Hallingbury and Rickling Green.
- ◀ Quality of provision is generally good with 86% of sites assessed as above the threshold.
- ◀ All play provision rates above the threshold for value; reflecting the social, healthy and developmental benefits provision can provide.

PART 8: ALLOTMENTS

8.1 Introduction

Allotments are a typology which covers open spaces that provide opportunities for those people who wish to do so, to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social interaction. This includes provision such as allotments, community gardens, city farms and community food growing areas.

8.2 Current provision

There are 29 sites classified as allotments in Uttlesford, equating to over 18 hectares. This is an increase of 2 sites and 1ha since 2019. No site size threshold has been applied to allotments and as such all known provisions are identified and included within the audit.

Table 8.1: Distribution of allotments

Analysis area	Number of sites	Total hectares (ha)	Current provision (ha per 1,000 population)
Saffron Walden	6	5.71	0.38
Great Dunmow	1	1.26	0.12
Rural Area	20	10.86	0.19
Stansted Mountfitchet	2	0.78	0.09
Uttlesford	29	18.62	0.20

The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) suggests a national standard of 20 allotments per 1,000 households (20 per 2,000 people based on two people per house or one per 100 people). This equates to 0.25 hectares per 1,000 populations, based on an average plot-size of 250 square metres (0.025 hectares per plot).

Based on Uttlesford’s current population (91,306) it does not meet the NSALG standard. Using this suggested standard, the minimum amount of allotment provision for Uttlesford is 22.83 hectares. The existing provision of 18.62 hectares therefore does not meet this guideline.

The majority of allotment sites are managed by parish councils. Therefore, exact plot number and waiting lists are difficult to fully attain. Information has; however, been obtained for some allotment sites and is set out in Table 8.2.

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Table 8.2: Allotment information (where known)

ID	Site	Information
270	Waldgrooms allotments	Managed by Great Dunmow Town Council and has circa 100 plots. No waiting lists due to recent changeover of tenants. Water bills.
93	Frambury Lane allotments	Owned and managed by Newport Parish Council. Plot numbers not specified. However, there is currently no waiting list. New development in area will provide allotments too.
142	Magdalen Green allotments	Managed by Thaxted Parish Council. This site and KKP 13, Bardfield Road Allotments have circa 17 plots. Rarely any waiting lists. No need for any more.
58	Church Lane allotments	Managed by Elsenham Parish Council. Site owned by the church. Circa 22 plots. Church will require land for burial in 10 years. A new allotment as part of housing development is to be provided. Currently 20 people on the waiting list for this (five from the existing allotment). A new site now exists.
131	Little Walden Road allotments	Managed by Saffron Walden Town Council. Only statutory allotments. Circa 40 plots.
73	Crocus Fields allotments	Managed by Saffron Walden Town Council. Is on 50-year lease from farmer. Circa 28 plots.
275	Windmill Hill allotments	Managed by Saffron Walden Town Council. Land owned by farmer.
110	High Easter allotments	Managed by High Easter Parish Council. Circa six plots.
237	Stortford Road allotments, Clavering	Managed by Clavering Parish Council. Number of plots not identified. Currently no waiting list.
157	Mill Road allotments	Managed by Debden Parish Council. Circa 36 plots. Currently no waiting list.
160	Mill Road/Station Road allotments	Managed by Felsted Parish Council. Circa 67 plots. Currently no waiting list.
114	High Roding allotments	Managed by Aythorpe Roding Parish Council. Circa nine plots. Currently no waiting list.
293	Hatfield Heath allotments	21 plots. Well used. Waiting lists exists. Access to water. Car park.

8.3 Accessibility

Figure 8.1 show allotments mapped against analysis areas, with a 15-minute walk time applied. This is based on the catchments used in the 2019 study.

Takeley is the largest settlement without allotment provision within a 15-minute walk time catchment.

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Figure 8.1: Allotments mapped

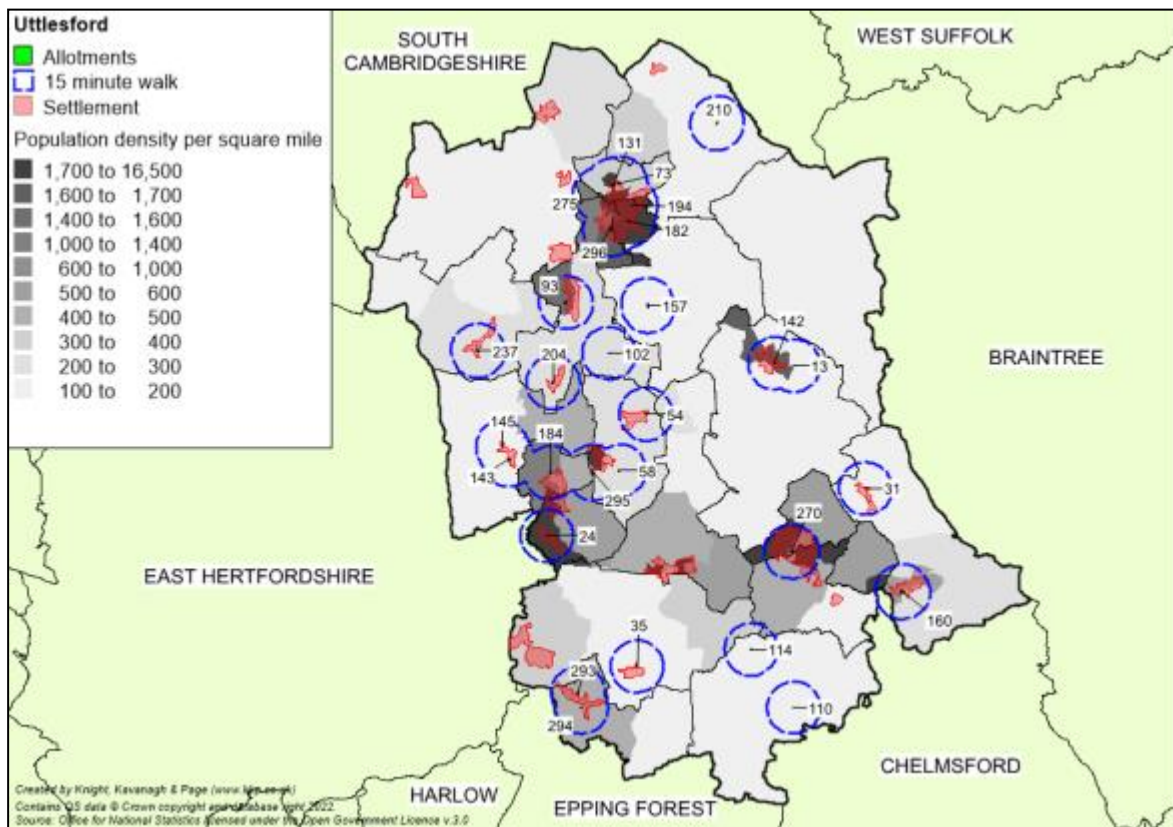


Table 8.3: Key to sites mapped

ID	Site name	Parish	Quality Score	Value score
13	Bardfield Road allotments	Thaxted	46.2%	21.9%
24	Birchanger Lane allotments	Birchanger	51.7%	27.6%
31	Brick Kiln Lane allotments	Stebbing	46.2%	21.9%
35	Broad Street allotments	Hatfield Broad Oak	44.5%	21.9%
54	Chickney Road allotments	Henham	51.1%	26.7%
58	Church Lane allotments	Elsenham	31.9%	23.8%
73	Crocus Fields allotments	Saffron Walden	48.9%	21.9%
93	Frambury Lane allotments	Newport	61.5%	21.9%
102	Hamel Way allotments	Widdington	48.9%	21.9%
110	High Easter allotments, The Street	High Easter	46.7%	21.9%
114	High Roding allotments, The Street	High Roothing	41.2%	23.8%
131	Little Walden Road allotments	Saffron Walden	50.6%	22.9%
142	Magdalen Green allotments	Thaxted	50.0%	21.9%
143	Mallows Green Road allotments	Manuden	41.2%	21.9%
145	Manuden allotments, The Street	Manuden	42.9%	21.9%
157	Mill Road allotments	Debden	50.6%	21.9%

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ID	Site name	Parish	Quality Score	Value score
160	Mill Road/Station Road allotments	Felsted	45.6%	23.8%
182	Peaslands Road allotments	Saffron Walden	42.3%	22.9%
184	Pennington Lane allotments	Stansted Mountfitchet	36.8%	23.8%
194	Radwinter Road allotments	Saffron Walden	40.3%	22.9%
204	Rickling Green Road allotments	Quendon and Rickling	46.7%	21.9%
210	Roger's End allotments	Ashdon	46.2%	32.4%
237	Stortford Road allotments, Clavering	Clavering	47.8%	21.9%
270	Waldgrooms allotments	Great Dunmow	58.8%	23.8%
275	Windmill Hill allotments	Saffron Walden	41.2%	23.8%
293	Hatfield Heath allotments 1	Hatfield Heath	48.9%	26.7%
294	Hatfield Heath allotments 2	Hatfield Heath	59.3%	28.6%
295	Smith Road allotments	Elsenham	65.7%	23.8%
296	Rowntree Way allotments	Saffron Walden		

8.4 Quality

To determine whether sites are high or low quality (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) the site assessment scores have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results of the quality assessment for allotments. A threshold of 40% is applied to identify high and low quality. Further explanation of how the quality scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 8.4: Quality ratings for allotments in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low (<40%)	High (>40%)
32%	48%	66%	2	26

The majority of sites rate above the quality threshold (85%), suggesting a high standard of allotment provision in Uttlesford. The highest rating sites are:

- ↳ Smith Road Allotment Gardens (66%)
- ↳ Frambury Lane allotments (61.5%)
- ↳ Hatfield Heath allotment 2 (59.3%)
- ↳ Waldgrooms allotments (58.8%)

The sites score highly for general levels of maintenance and cleanliness, surrounding fencing and controls to prevent illegal use, as well as a sense of personal security on site and informative signage. Smith Road, Hatfield Heath, Waldgrooms and Frambury Lane also have onsite parking and well cared for sheds and greenhouses.

The two sites which score below the quality threshold are not identified as having any specific quality issues and their lower quality scores can be attributed to fewer features and pathways which are not maintained to as a higher standard.

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8.5 Value

To determine whether sites are high or low value (as recommended by the Companion Guidance) site assessments scores have been colour-coded against a baseline threshold (high being green and low being red). The table below summarises the results. A threshold of 20% is applied to identify high and low value. Further explanation of how the value scores and thresholds are derived can be found in Part 2 (Methodology).

Table 8.5: Value ratings for allotments in Uttlesford

Scores (%)			No. of sites	
Lowest score	Average score	Highest score	Low (<20%)	High (>20%)
22%	24%	32%	0	28

All allotments rate above the threshold for value. This reflects the associated social inclusion and health benefits, amenity value and the sense of place offered by such forms of provision.

Allotments should generally be considered as highly valued as they are often identified by the local community as important forms of open space provision.

8.6 Summary

Allotments summary

- ◀ There are 29 sites classified as allotments in Uttlesford, equating to over 18 hectares.
- ◀ Based on Uttlesford's current population (91,306) it does not meet the NSALG standard. Using this suggested standard, the minimum amount of allotment provision for Uttlesford is 22 hectares. The existing provision of 18 hectares therefore does not meet this guideline.
- ◀ The majority of allotment sites are managed by parish councils.
- ◀ The majority of sites rate above the quality threshold (93%), suggesting a high standard of allotment provision in Uttlesford. The four sites to score below the quality threshold are not identified as having any specific quality issues.
- ◀ All allotments rate above the threshold for value. This reflects the associated social inclusion and health benefits, amenity value and the sense of place offered by such forms of provision.

PART 9: PROVISION STANDARDS

The provision standards used to determine deficiencies and surpluses for open space are set in terms of quality, accessibility, and quantity.

9.1: Quality and value

Each type of open space receives a separate quality and value score. This also allows for the application of a high and low quality/value matrix to further help determine prioritisation of investment and to identify sites that may be surplus, as a particular open space type.

Quality and value matrix

Assessing the quality and value of open spaces is used to identify those sites which should be given the highest level of protection, those which require enhancement and those which may no longer be needed for their present purpose. When analysing the quality/value of a site, it should be done in conjunction with the quantity and/or accessibility of provision in the area (i.e., whether there is a deficiency).

The high/low classification gives the following possible combinations of quality and value:

	High Quality	Low Quality
High Value	All sites should have an aspiration to come into this category. Many sites of this category are likely to be viewed as key forms of open space provision.	The approach to these sites should be to enhance their quality to the applied standard. The priority will be those sites providing a key role in terms of access to provision.
Low Value	The preferred approach to a site in this category should be to enhance its value in terms of its present primary function. If this is not possible, consideration to a change of primary function should be given (i.e., a change to another open space typology).	The approach to these sites in areas of identified shortfall should be to enhance their quality, provided it is also possible to enhance their value. In areas of sufficiency a change of primary typology should be considered first. If no shortfall of other open space typologies is noted then the site may be redundant/ 'surplus to requirements'.

There is a need for flexibility in the enhancement of low-quality sites. In some instances, a better use of resources and investment may be to focus on more suitable sites for enhancement as opposed to trying to enhance sites where it is not appropriate or cost effective to do so. Please refer to the individual typology sections as well as the supporting excel database for a breakdown of the matrix.

9.2: Accessibility

Accessibility catchments are a tool to identify communities currently not served by existing facilities. It is recognised that factors underpinning catchment areas vary from person to person, day to day and hour to hour. For the purposes of this process the concept of 'effective catchments' is used, defined as the distance that most users would travel. The accessibility catchments do not consider if a distance is on an incline or decline. They are therefore intended to act as an initial form of analysis to help identify potential gaps.

Table 9.2.1: Accessibility catchments

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Open space type	Catchment
Parks & Gardens	15-minute walk time
Natural & Semi-natural Greenspace	30-minute drive time 15-minute walk time
Amenity Greenspace	15-minute walk time
Provision for children and young people	10-minute walk time 15-minute walk time for skate parks
Allotments	15-minute walk

If an area does not have access to provision (consistent with the catchments) it is deemed deficient. KKP has identified instances where new sites may be needed, or potential opportunities could be explored to provide comprehensive access (i.e., a gap in one form of provision may exist but the area in question may be served by another form of open space). Please refer to the associated mapping to view site catchments.

The following tables summarise the deficiencies identified from the application of the accessibility standards. In determining any subsequent actions for identified gaps, the following are key principles for consideration:

- ◀ Increase capacity/usage to meet increases in demand, or
- ◀ Enhance quality to meet increases in demand, or
- ◀ Commuted sum for ongoing maintenance/repairs to mitigate impact of new demand.

These principles are intended to mitigate the impact of increases in demand on existing provision. An increase in population will reduce the lifespan of certain sites and/or features (e.g., play equipment, maintenance regimes etc.). This will lead to the increased requirement to refurbish and/or replace such forms of provision.

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Great Dunmow

Table 9.2.2: Great Dunmow accessibility summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◀ Gaps in 15-minute walk time catchment.	◀ Gap is served by other forms of provision such as amenity (e.g., the Causeway recreation ground and Teybards Lay).
Amenity Greenspace	◀ No gaps in 10-minute walk time catchment.	n/a
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◀ No gaps in 30-minute drive time or 15-minute walk time.	n/a
Provision for children and young people	◀ No gaps in walk time catchments.	n/a
Allotments	◀ No significant gaps in 15-minute walk time catchment.	n/a

Rural Area

Table 9.2.3: Rural area accessibility summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◀ Gaps in 15-minute walk time catchment noted in settlements with greater density such as Thaxted and Newport.	◀ Gaps are served by other forms of provision such as amenity greenspaces e.g. Newbiggen Street playing field (Thaxted), Station Road Common (Newport) and Meadow Ford (Newport).
Amenity Greenspace	◀ No significant gaps in 10-minute walk time catchment. ◀ Chrishall is the only settlement observed as not being served by provision.	◀ Given the low population density it is unlikely new provision will be required. If opportunities are presented to provide such provision, this should be explored.
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◀ No gaps in 30-minute drive time. Minor gaps in 15-minute walk time noted in settlements with greater population density such as Felsted and Newport.	◀ Gap covered by 30-minute drive time. ◀ May also be served to some extent by other forms of provision such as Jollys Boy north playing field (Felsted), and Station Road common / meadow ford (Newport).
Provision for children and young people	◀ No significant gaps in walk time catchments.	n/a
Allotments	◀ Gap in 15-minute walk time catchment observed to settlement of Takeley.	◀ Opportunities to create provision should be explored.

Saffron Walden

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Table 9.2.4: Saffron Walden accessibility summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◀ Minor gap in 15-minute walk time catchment to south.	◀ Gap is served by other forms of provision such as amenity greenspaces (e.g. Greenways, Blacklands Close and Beeches Close).
Amenity Greenspace	◀ No significant gaps in 10-minute walk time catchment	n/a
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◀ No gaps in 30-minute drive time or 15-minute walk time.	n/a
Provision for children and young people	◀ No significant gaps in walk time catchments.	◀ n/a
Allotments	◀ No significant gaps in 15-minute walk time catchment.	n/a

Stansted Mountfitchet

Table 9.2.5: Stansted Mountfitchet accessibility summary

Typology	Catchment gap	Action
Parks and gardens	◀ Gap in 15-minute walk time catchment.	◀ Gap is served by other forms of provision such as amenity greenspaces (e.g., Stansted Park recreation ground, Bentfield Gardens, Herrington Avenue and Mountfitchet Road).
Amenity greenspace	◀ No gaps in 10-minute walk time catchment.	n/a
Natural and semi-natural greenspace	◀ Gap in 15-minute walk catchment.	◀ Likely to be served to some extent by provision, such as Hatfield Forest and Birchanger Wood.
Provision for children and young people	◀ No significant gaps in walk time catchments.	n/a
Allotments	◀ No significant gap in 15-minute walk time catchment.	n/a

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9.3: Quantity

Quantity standards can be used to identify areas of shortfalls and help with determining requirements for future developments.

Setting quantity standards

The setting and application of quantity standards is necessary to determine shortfalls in provision and to ensure new developments contribute to the provision of open space across the area.

Shortfalls in quality and accessibility standards are identified across the district for different types of open space (as set out in Parts 9.1 and 9.2). Consequently, the Council should seek to ensure new developments contribute to the overall provision of open space.

The current provision levels are used as a basis to inform and identify potential shortfalls in existing provision. These can also be used to help determine future requirements as part of new developments.

Table 9.3.1: Summary of current provision levels

Typology	Quantity level (Hectares per 1,000 population)
Parks & gardens	0.10
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	5.58
Amenity greenspace	1.60
Provision for children & young people	0.11
Allotment	0.20

Current provision levels are used to inform quantity as opposed to benchmarks such as those suggested by FIT. The national benchmark quantity standards are not deemed as appropriate for use as they do not take into consideration the local circumstances, distribution, and historical trends of the area.

An approach using locally derived quantity standards ensures more reflective standards are set as they are based on and take consideration to current local provision levels and views.

The current provision levels can be used to help identify where areas may have a shortfall. Table 9.3.2 shows the position for each sub-area as to whether it is sufficient or identified as having a shortfall for each type of open space.

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Table 9.3.2: Current provision shortfalls by analysis area (hectares per 1,000 population)

Analysis area	Parks and gardens		Natural & semi-natural		Amenity greenspace		Allotments		Play provision	
	0.10		5.58		1.60		0.20		0.11	
	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -	Current provision	+ / -
Saffron Walden	0.59	+0.49	0.08	-5.50	0.96	-0.64	0.38	+0.18	0.11	level
Great Dunmow	-	-0.10	2.02	-3.56	1.28	-0.32	0.12	-0.08	0.07	-0.04
Rural Area	0.002	-0.098	8.11	+2.53	1.95	+0.35	0.19	-0.01	0.11	level
Stansted Mountfitchet	-	-0.10	2.48	-3.10	0.81	-0.79	0.09	-0.11	0.10	-0.01

All analysis areas are observed as having shortfalls in some form of open space. Against the recommended standards, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet are identified as having quantity shortfalls against all open space types.

9.4: Identifying priorities and recommendations

Several quantity shortfalls in the open space typologies are highlighted. However, creating new provision to address these shortfalls (particularly any quantity shortfalls) is often challenging (as significant amounts of new forms of provision would need to be created). Often a more realistic approach is to ensure sufficient accessibility and quality of existing provision.

The following provides a summary of the key findings through the application of the standards. It incorporates and recommends that the council should be seeking to help address the issues highlighted.

Recommendation 1

- ◀ ***Provision standards should be used to inform and help determine future requirements***

Exploring opportunities to enhance existing provision and linkages to these sites should be endorsed. Further insight into the shortfalls is provided within each provision standard summary (Parts 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3).

Quantity levels should still be utilised to indicate the potential lack of provision that any given area may have. However, this should be done in conjunction with the accessibility and quality of provision in the area.

The current provision levels could be used to determine the open space requirements as part of new housing developments. In the first instance, all types of provision should look to be provided as part of new housing developments.

If this is not considered viable, the column signalling whether an area is sufficient or has a quantity shortfall may be used to help inform the priorities for each type of open space within each area (i.e., the priorities may be where a shortfall has been identified).

Recommendation 2

- ◀ ***Sites helping, or with the potential to help, serve areas identified as having gaps in catchment mapping, should be prioritised as opportunities for enhancement***

Part 9.2 identifies sites that help or have the potential to serve existing identified gaps in provision (p49-51).

These sites potentially help to meet the identified catchment gaps for other open space typologies. Where possible, the council may seek to adapt these sites to provide a stronger secondary role, to help meet the gaps highlighted.

Often this is related to parks, amenity greenspace and natural and semi-natural greenspace. The council should explore the potential/possibility to adapt these sites through formalisation and/or greater provision of features linked to other types of open space. This is to provide a stronger secondary role as well as opportunities associated with other open space types.

This may, in some instances, also help provide options to minimise the need for creation of new provision to address any gaps in catchment mapping. For play provision, sites could be

explored for opportunities to expand the amount and breadth of equipment at existing play sites.

These sites should therefore be viewed as open space provision that are likely to provide multiple social and value benefits. It is also important that the quality and value of these sites is secured and enhanced.

These sites should first look to be enhanced in terms of quality. Consideration should be given to changing the primary typology or strengthening the secondary function of these sites, to one which they currently help to serve a gap in provision, even if their quality cannot currently be enhanced. For some sites, such as natural and semi-natural greenspace, the ability to adapt or strengthen secondary roles may be limited due to the features and characteristics of the site.

It is important that other factors, such as the potential typology change of a site creating a different catchment gap and/or the potential to help serve deficiencies in other types of provision should also be considered. The council may also be aware of other issues, such as the importance of a site for heritage, biodiversity or as a visual amenity that may also indicate that a site should continue to stay the same typology.

Recommendation 3

- ◀ ***Keeping data, report and supporting evidence base up to date to reflect changes over time***

The study provides a snapshot in time. Whilst significant changes are not as common for open space provision, inevitably over time changes in provision occur through the creation of new provision, loss of existing provision and/or alterations to site boundaries and management. Population change and housing growth are also another consideration to review when undertaking any form of update as this may impact on quantity provision levels and standards. It is therefore important, particularly given the growing recognition of open space provision because of Covid-19, for the council to undertake regular reviews of the data and/or actions informed by it.

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PART 10: FUTURE GROWTH SCENARIO

Future need for open space will arise from the population increases from potential housing growth developments. The standard methodology identifies a housing requirement of 684 dwellings per annum for Uttlesford⁶. Over a 10-year period this would be 6,840 dwellings.

The indicative population figure (16,416) assumes that population growth will average 2.4⁷ persons per dwelling.

Please note that the scenario should be updated as required over the Local Plan period to reflect changes in population projections and average household sizes.

The recommended quantity provision standards for Uttlesford are applied to determine the requirement for open space provision if the current levels of provision are to be maintained.

The formula to determine the initial amount of open space provision required is:

$$\text{New/additional population from development} \times \text{quantity standard} / 1000$$

On this basis, the following open space requirements are calculated:

Table 10.1: Future open space requirement

Open space type	Quantity standards (per 1,000 population)	Future requirement (hectares)
Parks & gardens	0.10	1.64
Natural & semi-natural greenspace	5.58	91.60
Amenity greenspace	1.60	26.27
Allotment	0.20	3.28
Provision for children & young people	0.11	1.81

The figures provide an initial indication of the levels of open space provision required because of new housing growth for the current levels of provision to be maintained. It should be treated as a starting point for further exploration and negotiation to ensure new populations are served by adequate open space provision.

It can also help to further strengthen existing plans. For example, there have previously been suggestions of a country park within the district as part of future plan proposals. This could help alleviate some of the pressures at significant sites such as those highlighted at Hatfield Forest. The creation of a country park could also contribute in a multifunctional role to the levels of park provision and natural greenspace need as part of future open space requirements.

⁶ 5 year Land Supply Statement and Housing Trajectory (December 2022)

⁷ Source: ONS Household and resident characteristics (Census 2021)

