

Aylesbury Vale District

Cultural Facilities Audit and Needs Assessment

2004

Torkildsen Barclay
Wrest Park
Silsoe
Beds MK45 4HS
Tel: 01525 754898
Fax: 01525 754366
Email: office@torkbarc.com
www.torkbarc.com

Aylesbury
Cultural
Facilities
Assessment

Torkildsen
Barclay
LEISURE CONSULTANTS

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. KEY STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS.....	4
3. DETERMINING A SPATIAL HIERARCHY	4
Defining Clusters.....	4
Settlements	5
4. DETERMINING SUPPLY.....	6
Introduction	6
Cultural Facility Audit.....	6
Qualitative Assessments – Parks, Open Spaces & Equipped Play Provision.....	7
Club & Organisation Consultation	7
Club Survey.....	8
School Consultation	8
Establishing Standards – The Development of a Matrix.....	8
Quantity and Distribution of Open Space	11
Nature and Quality of Public Open Space	17
Facilities for Young People	19
Playing Pitches and Pavilions	20
Floodlit Synthetic Turf Pitches	22
Community Halls and Community Centres	22
Dry Sports Centres and Swimming Pools	23
Entertainment Complexes and Arts Centres.....	23
Heritage and Interpretation	24
5. APPLICATION OF STANDARDS	25
Principles.....	25
Parishes	26
Secondary Settlements.....	27
Buckingham.....	27
Haddenham	30
Wendover	32
Winslow	32
Primary Settlement.....	34
Aylesbury Town.....	34
6. SUMMARY	40

I. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This paper sets out the results of the study commissioned by Aylesbury Vale District Council to review cultural facility provision within the district of Aylesbury Vale. Its purpose is to audit and identify quantitative and qualitative deficiencies in facility provision from which supplementary planning guidance in line with Planning Policy Guidance 17 can be developed. The study, undertaken during 2003, covers:
- community and village halls,
 - parks and open spaces,
 - equipped play areas,
 - playing pitches and pavilions,
 - other outdoor sports facilities
 - indoor sports centres and swimming pools,
 - arts and entertainment facilities
 - facilities for young people
- 1.2 It became clear during the process of the study that a comprehensive database of cultural facilities and their locations, particularly within the Parishes, did not exist prior to this point and a significant proportion of the resources for the study have been focused on collating this information. The audit therefore provides a comprehensive base that will need to continue to be updated and refined.
- 1.3 The following sections of this report explain in detail the process and methodology of this study and how the recommendations have been developed. The report should then be subject to further consultation to ensure general consensus and agreement with its interpretation and findings. The next few paragraphs, however, summarise briefly the approach that has been taken in arriving at those conclusions.
- 1.4 The purpose of the study has been to provide a practical approach to identifying facility deficiencies within parishes, villages and towns that:
- a) is robust enough to support the development of supplementary planning guidance, and
 - b) will enable guidelines for future provision – irrespective of the funding source – to be established.
- 1.5 In doing so a combination of consultation, identification of local “best practice”, reference to national and local standards and guidance, and professional judgement, have been used to develop a matrix of recommended cultural facility provision for different sizes of settlement.
- 1.6 These different sizes of settlement are based on individual parishes graded according to population size, “clusters” of parishes, secondary settlements, community areas in primary settlements, and primary settlements.

- 1.7 The matrix can then be compared to the audit of existing cultural facility provision that has been undertaken of facilities across the district. This comparison is based on a grading system which in outline ranges from A (meets the recommended standard) to D (deficient – no provision, but provision needed). This is explained in more detail later in this report.
- 1.8 Reference to the grading for each facility type in each settlement shows where deficiencies in provision exist. Reference can then be made to the more detailed audit/site visit notes to identify the specific improvements required.
- 1.9 In evaluating provision against the matrix guidance it has been easy to use the guidance up to “cluster” level. For secondary and primary settlement areas evaluation requires consideration of a more complex palette of factors. These settlements have therefore been considered separately.
- 1.10 The following sections of the report set out in detail the process and methodology used.

2. KEY STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS

- 2.1 Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, and its companion guidance, sets out the need for quantitative, qualitative and accessibility assessments, underpinned by consultation and reference to local and national policies.
- 2.2 The Aylesbury Vale Cultural Strategy was produced as a result of extensive consultation and reference to other strategies and policies at all levels. Its conclusions are still current and this study has built upon the relevant findings as appropriate. As such the Cultural Strategy can be referred to as required for more detail on the community and policy influences on this assessment.

3. DETERMINING A SPATIAL HIERARCHY

Defining Clusters

- 3.1 The Aylesbury Vale Cultural Strategy states: “Access to cultural opportunities, whether they are facilities or activities, is often more difficult in rural areas, where the size of population makes it difficult to justify the provision of major cultural facilities (swimming pools, cinemas etc.), and particularly for those groups, such as the elderly and the young, who may not have their own private transport to access opportunities elsewhere.”
- 3.2 One of the Cultural Strategies actions in relation to provision of cultural opportunities for rural communities is: “ Where practical, and where there is a joint willingness to do so, investigate the viability of specific villages and parishes working together to provide complementary programmes and facilities, supported by local transport initiatives”. This is the concept of a “cluster” of parishes providing somewhere within their cluster specific cultural opportunities or facilities that individual parishes may themselves be unable to provide or support.
- 3.3 In order to arrange the parishes into manageable and workable units, the clusters were identified in consultation with the Council's planning department. Each of the District's 112 parishes were placed into what was considered an appropriate cluster, defined as “a mix of parishes within the same geographical area where shared use of community facilities is a possibility”. The parishes were

then consulted on these proposals and their comments and suggested changes taken into account in finalising the clusters to be used to assess provision. A map of the parish clusters as defined by this process is attached at Appendix 1.

Settlements

- 3.4 The size of the parishes and larger settlements within the district varies considerably. The needs of the parishes in terms of cultural facilities will vary according to their population as well proximity of facilities in neighbouring areas and other demand factors. In order to undertake a practical evaluation of existing provision against potential need, the settlements were defined by population size, with different provision being required for each level of settlement. The determination of the settlement levels was based on the detailed facility audits undertaken at each parish and settlement (see below). As a result of the audits a natural hierarchy of settlement suggested itself for the district, with each hierarchy in general requiring a “ratcheting up” of the level or size of cultural facility provision.
- 3.5 These settlement levels are set out in the table below.

Settlement Level	Population or Definition
Hamlet	Under 100 people
Rural Parish 1	100 – 300 people
Rural Parish 2	300 – 1000 people
Rural parish 3	1000 – 3000 people
Cluster	A mix of parishes within the same geographical area where shared use of community facilities is a possibility
Secondary Settlement	Buckingham, Winslow, Haddenham, Wendover
Primary Settlement Community Areas	Defined communities within Aylesbury Town based on consultation with Aylesbury Town Council
Primary Settlement	Aylesbury Town

4. DETERMINING SUPPLY

Introduction

- 4.1 This evaluation of facility supply and demand has not taken place within a vacuum, but within the context of extensive existing research and consultation. The Cultural Strategy sets much of the strategic background to this study and identifies key issues and policies as a result of widespread consultation with organisations, groups and individuals. Other studies, such as the district's playing pitch strategy begin to set the direction for future provision, and individual development studies have used models such as the Sport England Facilities Planning Model to help determine need in a specific area or as a result of proposed housing development.
- 4.2 However, no study has provided a near comprehensive audit of cultural facility provision within the district and set this within a demand/need framework that can be used to inform future development and funding priorities. Certain areas of research and strategy, particularly in relation to parks and amenity open space, have also been weak.
- 4.3 The work that has been completed for other studies and strategies feeds into this assessment. Set out below is the *additional* research and consultation that has been undertaken to inform this study.

Cultural Facility Audit

- 4.4 In order to identify all indoor and outdoor facilities provided for community activity within the District, a postal questionnaire was sent to all 112 parish or town clerks. The survey requested information about a number of issues:
 - Information about the presence, location and condition of facilities
 - Feedback on proposed Clusters that were suggested for grouping areas of population
 - Information about any development plans that parishes might have in the pipeline
 - Ideas for what facilities each parish would want if funding was not an issue
 - Suitable dates & times for site visits
- 4.5 Letters explaining the scope of the study were sent out with relevant enclosures (maps and surveys) with a deadline date for their return. A reminder letter was sent to parishes that did not subsequently return their questionnaire and a further reminder was issued via the District Council. A copy of the letter and questionnaire can be found at Appendix 2.
- 4.6 From the returns received, site visits were arranged with an appropriate representative of the Parish present to provide access to indoor facilities. Where indoor facilities did not exist or no response had been received, despite reminders, independent visits nonetheless took place, although access to indoor facilities was not possible. Most site visits were undertaken during the summer of 2003.

- 4.7 Detailed facility evaluation sheets were used to make notes on the facilities, and their locations marked on detailed maps of the parish. Facilities that the researchers saw during their visits, but had not been identified by the parishes, were also added to the lists and maps.
- 4.8 The net result was a qualitative and quantitative assessment of facility provision which could be cross referenced to direct feedback from the parishes on their specific needs, and the wider strategic issues. These assessments, together with the feedback from the parishes and other relevant data, have been collated in the parish-by-parish files that accompany this report.
- 4.9 Information on facility supply in Aylesbury Town was based on mapped data provided by the District Council.

Qualitative Assessments – Parks, Open Spaces & Equipped Play Provision

- 4.10 In addition to the above parks, open spaces and equipped play provision were separately assessed. Initially a review of the information of known facility provision as provided by the District Council was carried out together with the responses received from the parish councils to the surveys. Bespoke evaluation forms were then developed to record the findings of visits and a scoring system created to provide overview qualitative evaluations for each site.
- 4.11 Visits to each town and village were made to gain an overview of the nature of each settlement and to confirm, as far as practical, a definitive list of public open space provision taking account of:
- Site lists, and accompanying street maps provided by officers
 - Responses from the parish councils
 - Sites identified while driving around each area
- 4.12 Visits to each identified site were made in order to record the basic nature of each site, the range of facilities, and to undertake scored overview qualitative evaluations.
- 4.13 In addition detailed qualitative evaluations were carried out for six sites selected by the Council.
- 4.14 Development of local standards specifically for Aylesbury Vale were devised based on:
- National standards and perceived good practice
 - Local patterns of provision and the nature of that provision
 - Observations made by the parish councils
- 4.15 Assessment of provision was then evaluated against these standards.

Club & Organisation Consultation

- 4.16 Where it was felt appropriate to supplement or revisit previous research this was undertaken. Specifically a further club survey and school survey was undertaken to identify any notable changes in issues, demand or supply since the original Cultural Strategy research was undertaken.

Club Survey

- 4.17 A letter and questionnaire were issued to all indoor and outdoor sports clubs and all arts, cultural and community organisations sourced from the Council's mailing list of clubs and organisations. A copy of the letter and questionnaire can be found at Appendix 3.
- 4.18 The survey requested information about the club or organisation, about the facilities they used and the quality of those facilities. They were also asked about their level of satisfaction with facility provision and details of any unmet demand.
- 4.19 A summary of the results of this survey can be found at Appendix 4.

School Consultation

- 4.20 A letter and questionnaire was issued to 85 schools in Aylesbury Vale. Responses were received from 67 schools, an excellent response rate of almost 80%. Schools were asked to provide information about the facilities for cultural activities that they currently have or have planned, which facilities away from school that they use (if any) and what additional facilities the schools felt were needed to meet the demand. A copy of the letter and questionnaire can be found at Appendix 5.
- 4.21 The feedback from schools is summarised at Appendix 6.

Establishing Standards – The Development of a Matrix

- 4.22 In carrying out the study it became clear that a system of scoring and assessment would be needed to identify areas of deficiency of either quality or presence of facilities. As a result using a combination of the consultations with Parishes and Town Councils, identification of local "best practice", and reference to national and local standards a Facilities Matrix of recommended cultural facility provision for different sizes of settlement has been developed. This matrix is set out on the following page.

Matrix of Sport and Leisure facility provision standards in Aylesbury Vale

Settlement / Development Size	Public Open Space	Equipped Play Facilities	Youth Shelter / Meeting Area	Skateboard Facility	MUGA	Floodlit STP	Playing Pitches	Changing Pavilion	Community Centre	Diy Sports Centre	Swimming Pool	Heritage and Interpretation	Entertainment Complex	Arts Centre
Hamlet (under 100)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rural Parish 1 (100-300)	PO1	EP1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rural Parish 2 (300-1,000)	PO2	EP2	YS1	0	0	0	PP1	CH1	CC1	0	0	HI1	0	0
Rural Parish 3 (1,000-3,000)	PO3	EP3	YS1	SB1	MU1	0	PP2	CH1	CC2	0	0	HI1	0	0
Cluster	0	0	0	SB1	MU1	0	PP3	CH1	CC3a and b	0	0	HI1	0	0
Secondary Settlement (Buckingham, Winslow, Wendover, Haddenham)	PO4	EP4	YS2	SB1	MU2	ST1	PP4	CH1	CC3a and b	SC1	SW1	HI2	EC1	AC1
Primary Settlement Community Area	PO4	EP4	YS2	SB1	MU2	0	PP4	CH1	CC2	SC1	SW1	0	EC1	0
Primary Settlement	PO5	0	YS3	SB2	0	ST2	PP4	CH1	0	SC1	SW1	HI3	EC2	AC1

- 0 No provision required at this level; facilities will be provided elsewhere
- PO1 Central public open space approximately 0.25 - 1 ha. if an equipped play area is provided
- PO2 Central public open space of approximately 2 - 4 ha. providing natural and amenity areas with 50% non sports space.
- PO3 Main open space of approximately 4 to 8 ha providing amenity and natural areas with 50% non sports space. Local open space, min. 0.25 hectares, in areas of housing more than 300-400m away from main open space
- PO4 Central public open space of approximately 10-20 hectares. Local open space of around 2 ha providing amenity and natural land within 400m of all homes. Immediately local open space of 0.25 - 1 ha in housing within 300m of homes,
- PO5 Informal boundary areas providing for informal recreation, local play needs and buffering. Green linear routes within the built areas.
- EP1 LEAP level equipped play provision on central open space, where appropriate to local circumstances
- EP2 NEAP level equipped play provision on central main open space
- EP3 NEAP level equipped play provision on central main open space. LEAP level provision in areas of housing more than 300m-400m from main open space
- EP4 NEAP+ level equipped play provision in main park. NEAP provision in each local park. Further equipped play provision where appropriate to local circumstances
- YS1 Tubular frame youth shelter manufactured to British Safety Standards one in Main Open Space
- YS2 Tubular frame youth shelter & minimum of 9m x 9m hard surface, basketball/football goal unit in each Local Park

- YS3 Tubular frame youth shelter & minimum court set up of 20m x 20m with 2 basketball & football goal unit one in each District Park
- SB1 Skateboard facility with ramps and pipes as defined through consultation with local young people minimum 2 quarter pipes
- SB2 Floodlit skateboard facility with ramps and pipes as defined through consultation with local young people minimum equipment levels to include fun box, quarter pipe, half pipe & grind rail
- MU1 One Type 4 floodlit MUGA (unless local circumstances dictate other type) to accommodate five a side football in central main open space to Sport England and SAPCA recommended standards *A Guide to the Design, Specification and*
- MU2 One MUGA as defined in MU1 in main park and each local park, providing location and demographics permit
- ST1 Half Full Size Football/Hockey floodlit STP to guidance provided in A Guide to the Design, Specification and Construction of Multi Use Games Areas
- ST2 *Minimum* one Full Size STP per 60,000 population, accessible and available for public use as specified in guidance quoted in ST1
- PP1 One adult full size pitch - sport according to identified need at the time
- PP2 One adult and one youth pitch with space for mini soccer/rugby according to sports need
- PP3 Minimum as PP2 with floodlit grass training area
- PP4 Provision as identified in Aylesbury Vale Playing Pitch Strategy
- CH1 Pavilion/Clubhouse to standards for relevant pitch provision as set out in Sport England Design Guidance Note *Pavilions and Clubhouses*
- CC1 Small community centre with main hall<100m² with foyer, small meeting room, adequate storage, kitchen, toilet facilities & parking
- CC2 Medium sized community centre <250m², as CC1 with addition of meeting room(s), and stage
- CC3a Minimum 18m x 10m main hall and ancillary facilities suitable for sporting activities to standards set in Sport England Design Guidance Note *Village and Community Halls* plus fitness room to Cultural Strategy recommended standard a
- CC3b Minimum 18m x 10m main hall with fixed or demountable stage and ancillary facilities suitable for arts and performance activities to standards set in Sport England Design Guidance Note *Village and Community Halls* (note: this hall ma
- SC1 Dry sports centre to meet identified Sport England Facility Planning Model deficiencies, designed to Sport England Design Guidance
- SW1 Swimming Pool Provision to meet identified Sport England Facility Planning Model deficiencies, designed to Sport England Design Guidance
- HI1 Community information point to include interpretation relating to local history & heritage
- HI2 Community information point to include interpretation relating to local history & heritage, parish map & visitor guide
- HI3 Nationally Accredited Museum recording settlement history, library link to centre for local studies, visitor guide and town map.
- EC1 Community Hall / Theatre with stage & capacity for 200 people - should preferably be located within community school
- EC2 Multi purpose auditorium with capacity for 1200 , secondary theatre with capacity of 200
- AC1 Minimum of 4 arts workshop areas including wetroom & kiln.

4.23 The rationale behind the development of each local standard is given below.

Quantity and Distribution of Open Space

Aylesbury

4.24 National documents indicate that built areas might, and perhaps should, have an interlinked green space system with:

- Provision of parks and open spaces serving whole towns and each local area.
- Accessible natural space within urban areas.
- Sufficient provision for children's play in each locality.
- Sufficient space for outdoor sport.
- Access to the wider countryside.
- Levels and distribution of open space relative to the character of areas.
- Levels and distribution of open space relative to the fulfilment of environmental functions.

4.25 There is now emphasis on the need to develop a model hierarchy of parks and open space provision which relates to the local context in order to assess public open space provision rather than rely on national standards. However, national standards can play a role in helping interested parties to think about the local level of provision.

4.26 The London Planning Advisory Committee hierarchy of parks and open spaces highlights the idea of different size parks and open spaces, at certain distances from homes, serving different roles. The elements of the hierarchy relevant to this study are:

	Size	Distance from Homes
District parks.	20 ha.	1.2 km.
Local parks.	2 ha.	0.4 km.
Small local parks and open spaces.	Up to 2 ha.	0.4 km.
Linear open spaces.	-	-

4.27 Local parks or open spaces at 0.4 km need to accommodate:

- Contribution to landscape structure.
- Sufficient level grassed areas for robust ball games and informal recreational use.
- Access to managed natural areas.

- Equipped play provision.
- Perhaps some youth provision.

4.28 The minimum size that can realistically accommodate these needs is 2 ha.

4.29 Whilst taking account of local circumstances many of the local open space standards developed in recent years reflect this hierarchy.

4.30 The total quantity of public open space is now perhaps considered secondary to the size and distribution of open space sites.

4.31 The combined requirements of a number of standards indicate that, as set out below, reasonable provision of public open space of recreational value in built areas might be in the region of 4.4 ha. per thousand population, although some of the NPFA requirement detailed could be accommodated on private or education land.

	Ha per thousand population
English Nature Accessible Natural Green Space Standard (EN – ANGst).	2.0 ha.
National Playing Field Association (NPFA). - Outdoor Sport and Play Space.	2.4 ha.

	4.4 ha.

4.32 Hierarchies of provision tend to reflect this total level of provision.

4.33 The range of land covered by these standards highlights the need for balanced provision including in respect of specific parks and more general open space and in respect of general needs, outdoor sports space, play space and access to natural areas.

4.34 Perhaps the most contentious issue in considering public open space provision in any area is the level of immediately local open space in any locality. In relation to this, elements of two of the national standards need to be highlighted.

4.35 The NPFA Standard includes 0.8 ha. play space per thousand population and the following hierarchy of equipped play provision:

- Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP) at 600 m from homes (minimum size with buffer 8,400 m. sq.).
- Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) at 240 m from homes (minimum size with buffer 1,600 m. sq.).
- Local Area for Play (LAP) at 100 m from homes (minimum size without buffer 100 m. sq.).

- 4.36 The English Nature Accessible Natural Green Space Standard includes the principle of accessible natural green space within 300 m from homes.
- 4.37 The distances of 240 and 300 m within the NPFA and EN standards respectively are based on research in respect of the distance different aged children are allowed to go to open space sites either unaccompanied or accompanied by older children. Research behind the EN standard indicated that a 'straight line distance of 280 m from a local park describes the realistic catchment such sites are likely to cater for'. This is perhaps one scientific measure which can be taken into account in considering open space provision. Equally, it might be argued that in some areas open space provision at this very local level is not necessary. Certainly it can be considered that the NPFA standard in particular encourages a proliferation of very small grass areas often in areas where the spaces are of questionable play value (because of gardens and traffic calming measures built into developments) and the provision of spaces which are too small to accommodate the use they attract without disturbance to residents in neighbouring properties.
- 4.38 The assessment of the quantity and distribution of public open space in Aylesbury highlighted a number of issues which should be considered in developing a local open space standard:
- No open space acts as a town park serving the whole of the built area and no site is appropriately located or of sufficient size to do this.
 - The town is served by a number of larger parks and playing fields which generally relate to community areas. However, being in the range of 5 to 12 ha. these sites are quite restricted in size if they are to fulfil the needs of a district park and they are dominated by sports pitches.
 - If these sites are to fulfil the requirements of district parks some of the outdoor sports provision on each site would need to be relocated. This would create a need for additional outdoor sports space.
 - There are a number of local parks and open spaces in the region of 2 ha. which highlight the value of sites of this size within 400 m of homes acting as local parks. Areas without such provision further highlight the need for such provision over and above smaller and more local open space provision and open space opportunities provided by boundary areas.
 - The need for immediately local open spaces to be in the region of 0.25 to 1 ha. in order for them to function satisfactorily, particularly in respect of accommodating children's play needs without undue disturbance to neighbouring property.
 - The value of boundary areas but with the proviso that there is a need to ensure open space is not pushed to the edges of development at the expense of appropriate provision within developments.
 - The value of green linear routes but with the recognition of the need for routes to be sufficiently wide to ensure they are of an appropriate character as discussed below.
 - The absence of particularly extensive equipped play provision at potential district park sites – widely recognised as a key to the attraction and vitality of district parks.

4.39 Taking account of the national standards discussed and the above observations the following standard has been used in the assessment of public open space provision in Aylesbury:

- Central public open space serving each community area of 10-20 hectares.
- Local open space of around 2 ha providing amenity and natural land within 400 m of all homes.
- Immediately local open space of 0.25 to 1 ha. in housing areas within 300 m of homes, where appropriate to local circumstances.
- Informal boundary areas providing for informal recreation, local play needs and buffering but not at the expense of appropriate open space provision within developments.
- Green linear routes within built areas and of sufficient width to ensure appropriate character.
- Further land to accommodate outdoor sports pitches where needs cannot be accommodated within the above provision without undermining the nature of sites or the accommodation of other needs.
- NEAP+ equipped play provision in each district park, NEAP provision in each local park and further equipped play provision where appropriate to local circumstances.

Buckingham, Haddenham, Wendover and Winslow

4.40 The smaller towns in Aylesbury Vale are sufficiently large to warrant consideration of provision against the standard detailed in respect of Aylesbury itself, above. A major variation may be in respect of immediately local open space which perhaps should be varied in relation to each locality rather than in relation to each town.

4.41 A particular issue, outside of the scope of this study, is whether the development of quite wide distributor roads with tree and shrub plantings and wide linear pedestrian routes within housing is appropriate to the character of the small towns.

Villages

4.42 There is no published guidance as to the quantity and distribution of public open space in villages. The general principles of public open space provision dictate that where there is a significant number of houses grouped together there should be some form of public open space provision for the purposes of recreation. It is rare to find a village of any reasonable size where such provision has not been made.

4.43 The general pattern of provision is for a single recreation ground in each village. The key question here is what size of recreation ground should be provided

relative to the needs of each village. This in turn relates to the nature and range of provision desired.

4.44 Provision should perhaps accommodate:

- A strong landscape structure which contributes to the general landscape structure and the nature of the site.
- Space to accommodate robust informal ball games.
- Equipped play provision.
- Youth facilities.
- Outdoor sports facilities.
- Sufficient space to sensitively accommodate buildings, facilities and path provision.
- An accessible natural element.

4.45 The key importance of a natural element within open space provision in villages should not be underestimated. Such provision is desirable to provide easy access to contact with nature for the whole community, which cannot be satisfied by the wider countryside even in the rare circumstances where there is good access. Access to very local natural space is equally critical to children's play. Opportunities in this respect in the countryside are often as or even more limited than in towns.

4.46 The underlying need to provide accessible natural space in villages can be seen in the development of millennium greens and millennium woods, the development of natural areas on some open spaces and the development of nature gardens in a number of villages in the district.

4.47 The optimum situation in serving the open space needs of the whole community is perhaps the accommodation of all needs at a centrally located site. Although where some meaningful mixed provision is provided centrally additional sports needs and access to woodlands etc. could also be provided separately.

4.48 The overview visits indicate that the size of most village recreation grounds in the district are too small to accommodate the needs discussed satisfactorily. Generally the sites are dominated by sports pitch use, provide little scope for tree planting and natural elements and provide insufficient room to accommodate facilities and paths in a sensitive manner. The overview visits indicate that the following size sites should be sought:

- 300 - 1,000 population 2 to 4 ha.
- 1,000 - 3,500 population 4 to 8 ha.

4.49 It is interesting to note that this equates to the level of provision indicated by national standards of 4.4 ha per thousand population as set out in the discussion on public open space provision in Aylesbury, above.

- 4.50 To ensure the accommodation of all needs it would be appropriate to seek to ensure that only 50 % of any village recreation ground is set aside for outdoor sports use.
- 4.51 The optimum size of each individual village recreation ground will be very much dependent upon the level of outdoor sport facilities needed in respect of the catchment population and whether any of these needs are to be accommodated on private or educational land.
- 4.52 The provision of an equipped play area on a centrally located recreation ground would normally ensure that most residents in villages were within a reasonable distance of a facility. Given that this provision will be the only or main equipped play provision for the local population it would be reasonable to seek NEAP level provision.
- 4.53 Consideration will need to be given as to whether further open space/equipped play provision should be provided where:
- A village recreation ground is not centrally located and areas of a village are more than 300 m away from the main facility.
 - There are areas in larger villages which are more than 300 m away from the main facility.
- 4.54 In the absence of specific local studies the principles discussed in relation to immediately local open space/equipped play provision in Aylesbury should perhaps be used as a measure of provision in the villages. However, particular consideration would need to be given to the size of each local area in question, the age make up of the population, the level of affluence and the size of gardens. Affluence and the size of gardens presumably reducing the importance of providing immediately local public open space in villages.
- 4.55 The point at which a parish should have a defined recreation ground (as opposed to less defined amenity/village green areas) appears to be around the 300 population mark. Above a population of 350 provision is virtually universal. There are no recreation grounds in parishes with a population below 200. However, a number of the parishes with a population below 350 have equipped play provision with an area of amenity land.
- 4.56 Based on the existing levels of provision, responses from the parish councils and the levels of provision required to provide satisfactory provision it is suggested that the following levels of provision might be sought:
- 0 - 100 population. No provision.
 - 100 - 300 population. Provision of a LEAP level equipped play area with 0.25 ha to 1 ha. of open space where it is appropriate to provide equipped play provision.
- 4.57 There are many parishes in the district with a population of between 100 – 300 where it would not be appropriate to provide equipped play provision and associated open space because:
- The population is scattered.
 - The parish is dominated by a large estate with perhaps a National Trust property, hotel or leisure complex.

- Levels of affluence and large gardens.
- Quite remote areas with very quiet lanes.

Nature and Quality of Public Open Space

Aylesbury

4.58 Taking account of good practice highlighted by national documents the following principles were used as a vision to inform the assessment of the quality of public open space in Aylesbury, Buckingham, Haddenham, Wendover and Winslow:

- Good access and signage.
- Clear functional entrances in good condition with distinct formal entrances where appropriate.
- Appropriate information and signage within sites.
- Landscape which is appropriate and contributes to the character and setting of each built area. Requiring a strong structure of indigenous woody planting and the use of congruous hard landscaping materials, fencing and furniture.
- Good spatial quality - arising from the balance and layout of woody and non woody elements.
- Appropriate balance between amenity landscape and natural elements including water.
- Landscape provision, buildings and infrastructure relative to the site and relating well in visual terms.
- Appropriate range of facilities including seating.
- Path provision in relation to circulation and through route needs.
- Natural surveillance.
- Absence of areas of poor visibility.
- Absence of trapment points.
- Provision of lighting where considered appropriate.
- Fabric of the site in good condition.
- Good standards of maintenance.
- Good levels of cleanliness.
- Conservation and management of the landscape and habitats.
- Conservation and management of buildings and structural features.
- Access for disabled people (and wider community).

- Individual components of appropriate nature and in good condition.
- Freedom from problems and issues of concern which would undermine the community's use and enjoyment of sites.

4.59 These characteristics were taken as applicable to large parks and open spaces and distinct local open spaces. With the exception of signage they were also taken as applicable to immediately local open space of recreational value.

4.60 It was considered that it would be appropriate for larger parks and open spaces to have a wider range of facilities and more detailed information provision than local open spaces and that information provision at these sites would need to be of a different order to provision at local open spaces. It was also considered that it would normally be appropriate for entrances to larger parks and open spaces to be particularly distinct and for entrances to local open spaces to be functional but not unattractive.

4.61 The following characteristics were considered appropriate to green pedestrian routes:

- Bold, well structured indigenous tree, shrub and hedgerow planting to boundaries with natural margins.
- Use of only congruous fencing, furniture and hard landscape materials and techniques.
- Open central areas with wide paths and wide mown grass areas.
- Good visibility along routes and at entrances.

4.62 A particular issue in the smaller towns will be the desirability of protecting and reinforcing local character. It was considered that this would require a particularly strong emphasis on the use of indigenous trees and woody plantings and the use of hard landscaping materials, fencing and furniture which respect the character of each area.

Villages

4.63 Taking account of the need for multi-functional open spaces that contribute to the character and setting of each village, contribute to the landscape structure and biodiversity and encourage use by and provide for all members of the community the following vision was used to inform the assessment of the nature and quality of village public recreation grounds and other defined public open spaces:

- Strong boundary hedges with indigenous trees.
- Bold plantings of indigenous trees.
- Good spatial quality, sensitive incorporation of facilities and freedom from detractors.
- Buildings, fencing, furniture etc. in keeping with and contributing to the local character.
- Level grass areas for robust ball games.

- Accessible natural element.
- Good equipped play provision.
- Youth facilities.
- Outdoor sports facilities as appropriate.
- Appropriate path provision.
- Appropriate provision of seating.
- Appropriate car park provision.
- Good accessibility and entrances.
- Individual components of appropriate nature and in good condition.
- Good standards of grounds maintenance.
- Good standards of cleanliness.

4.64 The quality criteria used in the six detailed qualitative evaluations highlight the wide range of issues critical to the quality of public open space of recreational value.

Facilities for Young People

4.65 There is now widespread recognition of the need to provide youth related facilities within parks and open spaces. This relates to the need to ensure public open spaces serve the needs of the whole community including those of young people and the contribution that such provision can make to reducing crime and people's fear of safety and crime.

4.66 Whilst community centres, sports centres, pitches and swimming pools are just some of the cultural facilities that can partly provide for such needs, there is a general requirement for more informal activity areas and meeting spaces. The matrix includes three of these – skateboard facilities, youth shelter/meeting area, and MUGA (multi use games area).

4.67 The main issue in relation to location, is that these facilities should be:

- accessible for young people, and therefore located close to family housing with safe transport routes
- in a relatively safe and well lit location
- sited so as to minimise nuisance to residential properties
- sited to ensure users are able to indulge their natural exuberance without fear of censure

4.68 As far as possible the facilities should be "owned" by their users, and therefore developed in consultation with young people in the area.

4.69 Proposed standards for the facilities are as follows.

Skateboard Facility

- 4.70 Provision to be made from Rural Parish 3 level upwards. The facility to include ramps and pipes, with minimum two quarter pipes, as defined through consultation with local young people.
- 4.71 At primary settlement level i.e. Aylesbury Town, there should also be a floodlit skateboard facility of greater size and nature (see matrix definition), again as defined through consultation with young people.

Youth Shelter/Meeting Area

- 4.72 A youth shelter with tubular frame manufactured to BS standards should be provided in all settlement areas from Rural Parish 2 upwards within the central/main open space.
- 4.73 For secondary settlements and Primary Settlement Community Areas, the provision of a 9m x 9m hard surface with basketball/football goals units in each Local Park should be added.
- 4.74 For Aylesbury the minimum court set up of 20m x 20m with two basketball and football goal units should be provided in each District Park.

MUGA

- 4.75 MUGAs should be provided from Rural Parish 3 level upwards. For Rural Parish 3 and/or Cluster level, a floodlit Type 4 MUGA to accommodate five a side football in the central main open space, designed to Sport England and SAPCA recommended standards, should be provided.
- 4.76 For Secondary Settlements and Primary Settlement Community Areas one MUGA as defined above should be provided in the main park and each local park, providing demographics indicate the need.

Playing Pitches and Pavilions

- 4.77 Identification of both current and future demand for playing pitches is a complex process. It requires a detailed evaluation of the supply element – number and type of pitches, quality of pitch provision, ownership (parish, district, education, private, industrial, location, accessibility, etc.) – and of the demand element (number of clubs for each sport, league programmes and match days, waiting lists, sports development programmes, trends in pitch sports, demographic trends etc.). Supply is then compared with demand and pitch capacity, days of use, geographical location etc to arrive at an estimate of over and under supply and potential future need.
- 4.78 The guidance and methodology for the production of Playing Pitch Strategies was set out in *The Playing Pitch Strategy* produced in 1991 by Sport England, CCPR and the NPFA. More detailed guidance was then produced by Sport

England, based on the strategy approach, and set out in its Facilities FACTFILE 2 *Assessing Playing Pitch Requirements at the Local Level*. Utilising the basic principles of this guidance, together with other modelling data, consultants produced for Aylesbury Vale District Council an *Aylesbury Vale Playing Pitch Strategy* in 2000. This strategy sets out the key conclusions for the main pitch sports of football, cricket, hockey, tennis and bowls. Rugby is a notable omission.

- 4.79 Whilst the strategy sets out overall estimates of current and future demand, it does not provide site by site data and evaluation of pitch and pavilions quality, although some of the data should be available from the primary club research.
- 4.80 Since the production of the Aylesbury Playing Pitch Strategy new Sport England Guidance has been made available in early 2003. *Towards a Level Playing Field: A Guide to the Production of Playing Pitch Strategies* sets out a detailed assessment and evaluation process for determining current and future demand for facilities. A substantial proportion of the methodology simply builds on the previous guidance, but additional qualitative assessments and a more methodical approach to identifying future demand are notable improvements.
- 4.81 As part of this Cultural Facilities study the opportunity has been taken to utilise the new qualitative evaluation sheets produced by Sport England for assessing pitches and pavilions. When the data from these sheets is inputted into Sport England's electronic "toolbox" spreadsheet, an overall score for the facility is provided.
- 4.82 This study therefore uses the a range of factors including the results of the AVDC Playing Pitch Strategy, "best practice" provision as identified through the facility audits, and the qualitative assessments based on the Sport England "toolbox".
- 4.83 Two caveats must be placed on this:
- a) Whilst the qualitative evaluation is valid for the pavilions, the time of year that the majority of the site visits were made (spring/summer) is not the best time to assess the quality of pitches for winter sports, as they will have had the chance to recover from winter season use;
 - b) This cultural facilities assessment is not a substitute for the Playing Pitch Strategy, but builds upon it. Sport England recommend that a regular review of Playing Pitch Strategies is undertaken, and this will be worth considering for some point in the future.
- 4.84 The standards set for playing pitches are therefore:
- At Rural Parish 2 level and above one adult full size pitch - sport according to identified need at the time;
 - At Rural Parish 3 level one adult and one youth pitch with space for mini soccer/rugby according to sports need;
 - At Cluster level as above with floodlit grass training area;
 - At Secondary Settlement level and above, provision as identified in the Aylesbury Vale Playing Pitch Strategy.

4.85 The standards for all pavilions are Pavilion/Clubhouse to standards for relevant pitch provision as set out in Sport England Design Guidance Note *Pavilions and Clubhouses*.

Floodlit Synthetic Turf Pitches

4.86 Floodlit Synthetic Turf Pitches provide the opportunity for intensive training, five aside or tennis, and match play (specifically for Hockey which now requires matches to be played on STPs). Sport England standards are for one full size STP per 60,000 people, although this should be considered as a minimum requirement as smaller communities often support well used STPs. Additional provision may be required, therefore, dependent on the success of local teams, and the standard will therefore need to be regularly monitored and updated in line with local circumstance. The minimum standards set, therefore, are based on best practice within the district and reference to national standards.

4.87 These are:

- In each secondary settlement one Half Full Size Football/Hockey floodlit STP to guidance provided in *A Guide to the Design, Specification and Construction of Multi Use Games Areas*.
- For the primary settlement of Aylesbury a minimum one Full Size STP per 60,000 population, accessible and available for public use as specified in the guidance quoted above.

Community Halls and Community Centres

4.88 There are no national standards for the level of provision for community halls, village halls etc. This study has therefore examined actual provision across the district, particularly in relation to parishes, and identified the level, mix and size of facility for a particular population size that most parishes have decided are required to serve their local communities. This has then been cross referenced to comments received from Parishes about their facilities – highlighting strengths and weaknesses. Standards have then been identified.

4.89 Reference has also been made to the Cultural Strategy and the need to provide localised activity programmes and opportunities, and the standards therefore require provision as a minimum at Cluster Level of community halls that can accommodate some sport activities and some performance events. The proposed standards are:

- At Rural Parish 2 level a small community centre with main hall up to 100m² with foyer, small meeting room, adequate storage, kitchen, toilet facilities & parking;
- At Rural Parish 3 and Primary Settlement Community Area level a medium sized community centre up to 250m², as above with addition of meeting room(s), and stage;

- At cluster and secondary settlement level a minimum 18m x 10m main hall and ancillary facilities suitable for sporting activities to standards set in Sport England Design Guidance Note *Village and Community Halls* plus small fitness room to relevant Sport England guidance; *and* a minimum 18m x 10m main hall with fixed or demountable stage and ancillary facilities suitable for arts and performance activities to standards set in Sport England Design Guidance Note *Village and Community Halls*. These two halls may in practice be the same if either meets the other's specification.

Dry Sports Centres and Swimming Pools

- 4.90 The provision of purpose built and managed indoor facilities for dry sports (three badminton court hall size and above) and swimming (20m x 4 lane pool and above) requires a minimum size of population and demographic mix to justify, both from a sustainability and usage perspective. In general this will mean that provision will be made from secondary settlement level upwards.
- 4.91 The main mechanism for a demand assessment of these facilities is the Sport England Planning toolkit. This identifies theoretical demand based on the population profile within a given catchment. Demand is then compared to existing supply to calculate the nature of any deficit or oversupply in provision. It is based on research into participation patterns and profiles of users at facilities across England. The research identifies penetration rates and frequency of participation by age and gender, travel time and travel mode. By applying a set formula using peak hours and facility capacity, potential demand expressed in m² of pool water area or number of badminton courts can be calculated. Actual supply is then compared to demand within any given catchment and areas of under or over provision identified.
- 4.92 The toolkit for the Aylesbury Vale District shows that in volume terms, the provision of both sports halls and swimming pools exceeds the national average. There are, however, issues relating to the quality of a number of these sites.

Entertainment Complexes and Arts Centres

- 4.93 The same sustainability principle as for indoor sports centres and pools applies for purpose built entertainment venues and arts centres. As with sport, provision for performance events and participation within rural communities has been built into the standards for community centres, particularly at Cluster level.
- 4.94 There are, however, no recognised facility planning models for entertainment and arts complexes, although in general a site by site feasibility, taking into account catchment and competition will identify potential need. The Aylesbury Vale Cultural Strategy states:

"In general the residents of Aylesbury Vale are well serviced in terms of major cultural facilities and opportunities. This includes access to provision outside of the district for certain areas of the district e.g. to Milton Keynes and London. However, the residents' survey shows that many residents of the district look to Aylesbury Town for major cultural provision...and the gaps in major infrastructure provision need to be addressed."

- 4.95 Comparisons with "best practice" settlements of a similar size to Aylesbury (St. Albans, Watford, Wycombe) indicate that a sizeable performance venue for entertainments and shows, together with a central arts venue should be considered as minimum requirement. The use of the existing, but dated, Civic

Centre supports this, as does the consultation for the Cultural Strategy identifying the need for improved and affordable performance space for the arts.

4.96 As a result the standards recommended for entertainment venues are:

- For secondary and primary settlement community areas a Community Hall / Theatre with stage and capacity for 200 people, preferably located within a community school. This facility need may also be met by a Community Centre if the facilities meet the recommended standard.
- For Aylesbury a multi purpose auditorium with capacity for 1200, and a secondary theatre with capacity of 200.

4.97 For arts centres, the standards are:

- For Primary and Secondary Settlements a minimum of four arts workshop areas including wetroom & kiln.

Heritage and Interpretation

4.98 The Aylesbury Vale Cultural Strategy states that:

“Creating a sense of identity and community for people moving into the new residential developments has been highlighted earlier with the need - to quote the district's Community Plan's proposed five year objectives - to “encourage the development of communities rather than housing estates.”

“However, of equal importance is the development and maintenance of a sense of identity amongst existing communities. The communities of Aylesbury Vale are varied and distinctive, ranging from the rural areas to a wide mix of ethnic groups. This diversity should be celebrated and form part of an overall sense of community. However, this sense of community varies across the district. The Residents' Survey identified that the rural communities had the strongest sense of local identity; Buckingham residents were concerned that they were beginning to lose their sense of a “close knit community”; and Aylesbury residents felt that a sense of community identity did not exist. There are therefore issues about both preserving the identities that exist in the rural areas and Buckingham, and addressing the lack of identity expressed by residents in Aylesbury Town.”

4.99 The strategy recommends, amongst other actions, that:

“proposals for the sensitive public interpretation of the heritage and history of Aylesbury Vale are developed and implemented within the period of this Strategy”.

4.100 In terms of facility provision, the following minimum standards are therefore suggested:

- For Rural Parish 2 and 3 levels and Primary Settlement community Areas there should be a community information point to include interpretation relating to local history & heritage;
- For Secondary Settlements there should be a community information point to include interpretation relating to local history & heritage, parish map and visitor guide;

- For Primary Settlement Level there should be the above plus a Nationally Accredited Museum recording settlement history, library link to centre for local studies, visitor guide and town map.

5. APPLICATION OF STANDARDS

Principles

- 5.1 The demand matrix that sets out standards that can be compared to the audit of existing cultural facility provision. The comparison has been developed on the basis of on a grading system, which in outline ranges from A (meets the recommended standard) to D (deficient – no provision, but provision needed). For future planning or investment purposes, reference can be made to the grading for each facility type in each settlement to identify where deficiencies in provision exist. Reference can then be made to the more detailed audit/site visit notes for the relevant settlement to identify the specific improvements required. As improvements or new provision is made both the supply database and the evaluation scores can be altered accordingly.
- 5.2 The following criteria were devised to evaluate existing facilities:
- O = not required for this level of settlement
 - A = meets the standard
 - B = meets the standard but with some issues
 - C = meets the standard, but with serious issues
 - D = deficient, no provision but provision required under the standard
 - E = deficient, no provision according to the standard, but specific local circumstances mean that the recommended standard is not required.
- 5.3 Grading E requires some clarification. An example may be where the standard requires a parish to have some public open space, but the housing in the parish is of a high standard with large gardens. This may make the provision of formal public open space unnecessary.
- 5.4 A number of sites have been graded NA on the assessment sheets. This means that they have not been visited as the relevant parish did not respond and/or access was not possible. This information is to be updated on an ongoing basis through officer visits and annual surveys of parishes.
- 5.5 To maximise the benefit of the grading system for identifying deficiencies and need, the following process should be adopted:
1. The Facility Grading Sheets should be examined to immediately identify any perceived qualitative or quantitative deficiencies in provision;
 2. The relevant Parish Audit sheet can then be examined to ascertain more detail. This sheet also contains comments from the Parishes themselves,

and clubs and schools on items relevant to planned development or future need.

3. The Parks and Open Spaces evaluation sheets should also be referred to for more detail on the relevant parks and open spaces issues relating to that Parish.
 4. Reference can also be made directly to the indoor and outdoor club survey summaries if further information is required. Some clubs have identified that they are happy with their existing provision but would ideally like some improvements.
 5. Lastly, the information available is only a snapshot in time, and contact with the Parish or other relevant organisation will be needed to affirm that no changes/developments have occurred that will alter the gradings or perceived need.
- 5.6 The grading against identified facility standards works well at Parish level, providing an easy to use tool to assess facility provision in the rural areas. At secondary and primary settlement level, however, the issues surrounding the evaluation of supply and demand against the standards can become more complex and are discussed on a settlement by settlement basis below.

Parishes

- 5.7 Appendix 7 sets out the scoring against the matrix for each settlement at a parish level. The detailed information, together with individual comments from the Parish Councils in relation to their needs and/or other relevant site visit comments are also included within a separate database file which accompanies this study. Appendix 8 provides a summary of facilities within each Parish, and should be cross referenced to the more detailed database file and open space tables.
- 5.8 With respect to open space provision Appendix 9 lists public village recreation grounds and other public open space provision in excess of 0.2 ha. in the villages in Aylesbury Vale together with equipped play provision. The table provides a record of the basic nature of each site and range of facilities at each site, as such it also provides a record of youth facilities. The table further details the findings of scored overview qualitative evaluations undertaken on each site.
- 5.9 The matrix highlights the key needs in respect of open space provision in the villages.
- 5.10 Appendix 9 and the matrix communicate a considerable amount of information which could only be otherwise be brought out by a written appraisal in respect of each and every village.
- 5.11 In terms of the level and distribution of public open space provision in the villages there are a number of common issues:
- Recreation grounds which are too small to act as multi-functional open spaces;
 - Recreation grounds which are not central to the villages they serve and perhaps necessitating more local open space provision particularly in respect of children's play;

- Villages without a recreation ground;
- Larger villages which are served by a central main village recreation ground but limited local open space provision;
- Small areas of amenity land built into areas of new houses of little play/recreational value.

5.12 The overview qualitative evaluations highlighted concerns in respect of the nature and quality of open space provision in the villages. Although sharing weaknesses with open space provision in Aylesbury and the secondary settlements there are also issues which are specific to open spaces in villages. There are concerns across a range of key issues including:

- Boundary hedges and trees.
- Tree cover and nature.
- Grass areas for ball games.
- Equipped play provision.
- Path provision.
- Seating provision.
- The nature and incorporation of buildings.
- Car parks.

5.13 Supplementary text to Appendix 9 highlights the nature of weaknesses in provision and the issues which need to be addressed.

Secondary Settlements

5.14 Appendix 10 lists public open space provision in excess of 0.2 ha. in Buckingham, Haddenham, Wendover and Winslow together with equipped play provision. The table provides a record of the basic nature of each site and range of facilities at each site, as such it also provides a record of youth facilities. The table further details the findings of scored overview qualitative evaluations undertaken on each site.

5.15 The overview and detailed qualitative evaluations highlighted concerns with elements of the nature and quality of open space provision in Buckingham, Haddenham, Wendover and Winslow across the issues highlighted in respect of Aylesbury (see later). Supplementary text to appendix 10 highlights the nature of weaknesses in provision and the issues which need to be addressed.

5.16 The following provides a narrative on open space and other cultural facility provision in each of the secondary settlements.

Buckingham

Parks and Open Spaces

5.17 A detailed qualitative evaluation was undertaken of Bourton Park, Buckingham. This has been provided to the Council separately.

5.18 Public open space in Buckingham is characterised by:

- Key area of green space provision along the Great Ouse in the centre and through to the east comprising Bourton Park, Stratford Fields and associated private cricket and football club grounds.
- A number of linear green spaces.
- A peppering of medium to very small open spaces across the built area.

5.19 The Stratford Fields/Bourton Park spaces are valuable central facilities providing the potential for a highly accessible town park and access to natural areas. However, it could be argued that the more active area to the south and the more passive area to the north are the wrong way round in this respect and that the 'park' element should be close to the town centre (maximising access to facilities and linking to tourism). Furthermore, the nature of Bourton Park itself limits its potential to function as a town wide park with little scope for events and open areas for play/sitting. Therefore, it is considered that this area cannot act as a town park. There is now little potential to develop a 'town wide' park in Buckingham outside of a major redevelopment of the Stratford Fields/Bourton Park area.

5.20 In the absence of a town wide park it will be critically important to ensure that Buckingham is well served by local parks perhaps well in excess of 2 ha. Bourton Park and Maids Moreton Playing Field/extension area ensure that some areas of the town are within 400 m of a site which could act as a local park. Chandos Park is a little limited in size to act as a local park but probably serves this role in the absence of more extensive provision. The development of the heartlands area will also help to address this shortfall for the communities in the town centre. Many areas of Buckingham are not within 400 m of a site which could act as a local park, this shortfall is most notable to the north of the town.

5.21 The pattern of more local open space in Buckingham shares characteristics and issues as discussed in respect of Aylesbury:

- Some provision of local open spaces within the 0.25 to 1 ha. band but in the absence of the provision of local parks.
- Areas with smaller open spaces which might be considered inappropriate but which substitute for larger areas of immediately local open space and local park provision particularly in respect of children's play.

5.22 As in Aylesbury, poor open space provision within developments in Buckingham often occurs where emphasis has been placed on the provision of public open space to the edge of developments, most notably in respect of the Linden Village and Badgers Way developments.

5.23 The Embleton Road open space raises particular issues. Although in an area which would benefit from a distinct local park the site is too small to act as a local park.

5.24 Although served by a number of linear open spaces Buckingham's open space system is not interlinked. With the exception of riverside access in the Stratford

Fields/Bourton Park area these routes are isolated and in places have no path or poor path provision. The completion of the Buckingham Circular walk is one of the main priorities of the Buckingham Community Plan.

- 5.25 Although the exact level of open space provision in Buckingham is not known it would appear that the town has a reasonable level of provision of open space but that there are issues in respect of the distribution of provision.
- 5.26 Buckingham is served by a number of equipped play areas distributed across the built area which appear to give provision within 400 m straight line distance of most homes equating to provision at the local park level, although generally in the absence of local park provision.
- 5.27 A key issue in respect of the provision of equipped play areas in Buckingham is whether some play areas should have been set in more distinct local parks/open spaces or larger areas of immediately local open space:
- Separate provision currently in Stratford Fields → large central open space in Linden Village.
 - Otters Brook → large central open space in the Badgers Way development.
 - Ditto Overn Avenue and Meadway play areas.
 - Provision within a more local open space in the Hill Top Avenue/Page Hill Avenue area rather than reliance on provision at Maids Moreton Playing Field.
- 5.28 There is currently no equipped play provision in the Mount Pleasant area.
- 5.29 Only the Stratford Fields/Bourton Park/Otters Brook area and the Chandos Park/Bridge Street area have more local equipped play provision. Provision in the Stratford Fields/Bourton Park/Otters Brook area reflects a failure to develop appropriate immediately local open space in the Linden Village and Badgers Way developments.
- 5.30 There are no areas in Buckingham which have equipped play provision which should not have provision.
- 5.31 Buckingham benefits from a central skateboard facility and associated youth shelter and basketball facilities at Bourton Park and Maids Moreton Playing Field. Consideration should perhaps be given to further youth facilities in parks which act as local parks, in line with the recommended standards.
- 5.32 There is a reasonable to good level of provision of natural open space in Buckingham. However, much of the natural areas are not particularly accessible because:
- Absence of appropriate entrances and through routes as at Sand Pit and Castle House Wood.
 - Poor access as in respect of the Railway Walk and Moreton Avenue.
 - Failure to integrate natural areas with other open space provision as at The Spinney.

Other Cultural Facilities

- 5.33 Buckingham is generally well served in terms of other cultural facilities. The Residents' survey undertaken as part of the Cultural Strategy identified that Buckingham Town residents were by some way the most content, with 43 per cent describing the area as "very good" with "everything I want or need", and a further 37 per cent describing it as "good". This could be aggregated into a combined score of 80 per cent for being "good" as opposed to "neutral" or "poor").
- 5.34 The Buckingham cultural Forum identified that the positive aspects of cultural provision in Buckingham were deemed to be the range of small concert venues such as Radcliffe Centre, the Chantry Chapel and the Church of St. Peter and St. Paul; provision for drama; the Old Gaol Museum and Tourist Information Centre; Stowe Gardens; the coach education scheme provided by the District Council; the "Streetlife" project for young people run by a charitable trust; and the new floodlit synthetic turf pitch.
- 5.35 Negative aspects mainly related to the success of local clubs such as the Buckingham Rugby, Tennis and Cricket Clubs as well as a number of junior football clubs which has led to the need for new or improved facilities; and the general infrastructure of Buckingham e.g. number of cafes, public toilet provision and coach drop off points.
- 5.36 In terms of the audit the Swan Pool and Leisure Centre provides a good level of public and swimming provision, although the lack of a fully accessible public sports hall is a notable exception. The town also has a Synthetic Turf Pitch adjacent to the Leisure Centre.
- 5.37 In terms of community hall provision Buckingham has a recently refurbished Community Centre with facility for staged events and a capacity of around 250 people in the main hall. The facilities would therefore generally meet the standards for secondary settlement provision for both Community Centres and entertainment complex.
- 5.38 There is no clearly designated Arts Centre that meets the standards set out in the matrix, although there is scope for greater use of the University facilities.
- 5.39 There are expressed needs by clubs for more pitch provision for cricket and rugby, grass training for football, and for school use (Grenville School). The Council's Playing Pitch Strategy identifies the need for more pitches for football.
- 5.40 With the exception of the STP there appears to be a lack of MUGAs in the Town, and this is an identified deficiency. The provision of one Youth Shelter is also limiting for a Town of this size.
- 5.41 As with the other audits the Heritage Criteria were agreed subsequent to the visits, so a detailed assessment of this aspect was not possible.

Haddenham

Parks and Open Spaces

- 5.42 Haddenham is served by The Roberts Playing Field to the east and a very limited number of small and very small areas of open space to the west, south and north.

- 5.43 The Roberts Playing Field is sufficiently large to act as a local park. However, its location limits its catchment area. This is the only site in Haddenham which could be considered to have the potential to fulfil the role of a local park. The value of the site as a local park is currently limited by the domination of the site by sports pitch use.
- 5.44 Although not ideal the location of The Roberts Playing Field would enable the site to act as a town park. There is now no potential to develop a town park for Haddenham except perhaps to the outside of the current boundary of built development and in association with further development to provide a context to its setting.
- 5.45 Equally, it is a concern that there is very little immediately local open space in Haddenham.
- 5.46 The nature of Haddenham would warrant the provision of further sites to act as local parks/open spaces and further immediately local open space. If any part of the allotment site is surplus to need it could be developed as public open space to considerable benefit. Consideration could be given to relocating some allotment provision to another site to accommodate public open space provision on the current site.
- 5.47 The relocation of pitches from The Roberts Playing Field could be combined with providing open space at the edge of the built area to serve some local needs.
- 5.48 The level of equipped play provision in Haddenham appears inadequate in relation to the nature of the built area and provision at the Park and Run Furrow is poorly located and of limited value. Further equipped play provision should be considered in association with opportunities to develop further open space.
- 5.49 Youth facilities on open spaces in Haddenham are limited to the BMX cycle facility at The Roberts Playing Field which could benefit from refurbishment.
- 5.50 Access to natural public open space in Haddenham is limited to the pond at Church End.

Other Cultural Facilities

- 5.51 Haddenham Village Hall provides a mix of good facilities that meet the standards set out in the matrix for Secondary Settlements. The main hall accommodates around 250 people and has a portable stage. Both the Parish Council and facility users would like to see this be made permanent, together with improved storage space, which currently is at a premium, and better lighting and sound system. This would also it to meet the Entertainment Complex criteria for this level of settlement. The village also has a number of other smaller halls for hire.
- 5.52 The village has a central playing fields area and the Council would like additional provision, although no specific expressed demand from clubs has been identified. The audit of the pavilion indicates that investment is needed to upgrade and improve the facilities.
- 5.53 There is a lack of any significant facilities for young people and provision of a skateboard facility and floodlit MUGA are identified deficiencies.
- 5.54 There are no obvious Arts Centre facilities to meet the identified standard.

Wendover

Parks and Open Spaces

- 5.55 Wendover is served by the Witchwell/Hampden Meadow open space to the south including Rope Walk, Ashbrook Recreation Ground to the north, land in the vicinity of Tedder Road/Haddington Close in the east and a small number of very small areas of open space in housing particularly in the east. Residents also benefit from access to the canal.
- 5.56 The Witchwell/Hampden Meadow open space would attract people from across Wendover, but it is quite distant from housing in the north and east and is a little small to act as a town park. There would appear to be no opportunities to develop a site which could act as a town park for Wendover.
- 5.57 The three main open space sites in Wendover ensure many residents are within a reasonable distance of a site which could act as a local park or open space. However, the layout and nature of land in the vicinity of Tedder Road/Haddington Close determines that this area cannot act as a local park and acts as immediately local open space and accessible natural space and Ashbrook Recreation Ground is a little small in this respect.
- 5.58 It is probable that the area to the west of Wendover would benefit from the provision of a local park/open space and the area in the east would benefit from a more defined open space. In the absence of a local park/open space in the west, or in addition, provision of reasonable sized areas of immediately local open space could be considered in the west/central area particularly in respect of providing for children's play.
- 5.59 There are equipped play areas on each of the main open spaces in Wendover and also provision at Barlow Road, although this area is somewhat unsatisfactory because of its size and location. Further equipped play provision could be considered in association with opportunities for further open space in the west/central areas.
- 5.60 Youth facilities on open space in Wendover are limited to the skateboard facility at Ashbrook Recreation Ground. It is understood a BMX cycle facility is to be developed in the south.
- 5.61 The Witchwell/Hampden Meadow, Canal Walk and Tedder Road/Haddington Close areas ensure some but not good access to natural public open space.

Other Cultural Facilities

- 5.62 The Memorial Hall has the facilities and capacity to meet the criteria for a Community Centre, but qualitatively requires major refurbishment.
- 5.63 The village also has a swimming pool which is run by volunteers and open for limited hours. There is a range of outdoor sports facilities.
- 5.64 Notable deficiencies are in terms of facilities for Young People – youth shelter(s) and a MUGA.

Winslow

Parks and Open Spaces

- 5.65 Winslow is served by Winslow Recreation Ground to the centre, open space off Beamish Way in the east, the Spinney and adjacent open areas to the north east, a linear green route between Buckingham Road and Little Horwood Road and small to very small open spaces in housing areas to the north east, south east and very west. The town is also served by land at The Winslow Centre to the north west.
- 5.66 Winslow Recreation Ground is well located. In location terms it could act as a town park and also as a local park for much of the built area. It is a good example of how a central open space in a small town can make a significant contribution to fulfilling open space needs.
- 5.67 No other sites in Winslow could be considered to provide a defined local park/open space but most areas are served by the Recreation Ground in this respect.
- 5.68 There is a good level of immediately local open space in housing to the north east although there are weaknesses in respect of its layout in terms of providing local play space which can accommodate robust use and access to natural areas.
- 5.69 Immediately local open space in the west is extremely limited. The housing areas in the west are of a nature which would warrant some immediately local provision. The Winslow Centre will make some contribution in this respect in the north west but this is not a public open space. There is a particular need for provision in the south west, particularly in view of this area being the furthest from the Recreation Ground.
- 5.70 Equipped play provision in Winslow is limited to the Recreation Ground. Further equipped play provision could be considered in respect of existing open space provision or potential further open space provision. However, the arrangement of open space provision in housing in the east does not lend itself to the satisfactory incorporation of equipped play provision.
- 5.71 There are no youth facilities on open spaces in Winslow, an issue which has been raised on a number of occasions by residents, the Verney Road development should seek to address this shortfall.
- 5.72 Access to natural public open space in Winslow is limited to The Spinney and adjacent areas.

Other Cultural Facilities

- 5.73 Winslow's Public Hall has the size and capacity to fulfil its role as a Community Centre under both criteria for a settlement of this size. Qualitative issues have been raised, with the need to upgrade facilities, particularly toilets, kitchen facilities, storage, lighting and changing (the latter in relation to its use as an entertainment venue for performances).
- 5.74 The village has two five a side MUGAs, but lacks any significant facilities for Young People, with skateboard and Youth Shelter facilities being identified deficiencies.
- 5.75 The Winslow Centre provides further room hire and indoor sports facilities. There is outdoor pitch provision but no appropriate changing facilities for outdoor sports. The Bowls Club, however, have expressed a requirement for an extension to their club house and replacement changing rooms.

Primary Settlement

Aylesbury Town

Parks and Open Spaces

5.76 Appendix 11 lists public open space provision in excess of 0.2 ha. in Aylesbury together with equipped play provision. The table provides a record of the basic nature of each site and range of facilities at each site, as such it also provides a record of youth facilities. The table further details the findings of scored overview qualitative evaluations undertaken on each site.

5.77 Detailed qualitative evaluations were undertaken on five of the larger open spaces in Aylesbury – Alfred Rose Park, Bedgrove Park, Edinburgh Playing Field, Meadowcroft Playing Field and Vale Park. These have been provided to the Council separately.

5.78 Public open space provision in Aylesbury is characterised by:

- A number of larger sites across the built area in the very approximate range of 5 to 12 ha. primarily laid out as playing fields.
- A very diverse range of local open spaces within housing areas reflecting open space provision in housing developments over different periods including provision below 0.2 ha.
- Open space provision along much of the boundary of the built area.
- Number of green linear open spaces, primarily in association with the canal and river/stream side areas.

5.79 No open space in Aylesbury acts as a town park serving the whole of the built area and no site is appropriately located and of sufficient size to do this. Although reasonably centrally located Alfred Rose Park and Vale Park are both too small to serve this role.

5.80 The distribution of the larger open spaces ensures that each community area in Aylesbury is served by a site which could reasonably act as a district park in respect of the community area in which it is located.

5.81 All houses in Quarrendon are within 1.2 km of Meadowcroft Playing Field. Most houses in Coldharbour are within 1.2 km of Fairford Leys Playing Field. Houses in the Dickens Way/Meredith Drive area are more than 1.2 km from Fairfield Leys Playing Field but have reasonable access to Meadowcroft Playing Field. Most houses in Southcourt are within 1.2 km of Edinburgh Playing Field. Most houses in Emhurst and Watermead are within 1.2 km of Alfred Rose Park. Most houses in Bedgrove are within 1.2 km of Bedgrove Park. Oakfield and Manderville and Elm Farm do not have a larger district open space. However, Oakfield is within reasonable access of Alfred Rose Park and parts of Manderville and Elm Farm are within reasonable access of Edinburgh Playing Field and Bedgrove Park respectively. Aylesbury centre is reasonably served by Alfred Rose Park.

5.82 The accessibility of these sites is limited by three of the sites being to the edge of the built area. Each of the sites is limited in size relative to the needs of a district park. However, each site has the potential to act as a district park if desired. The

main limiting factors are the current poor nature of the sites, the limited range of facilities and the domination of the sites by sports pitch use.

- 5.83 Although most areas within Aylesbury are served by more local open space there are few sites of appropriate size and nature which could function as local parks. Furthermore, the potential of these sites to provide access to defined local parks is restricted by the location of the sites.
- 5.84 Cottesloe Green provides a near model relationship between a district park (Edinburgh Playing Field) and a local park. The catchment of Oakfield Green and the Narbeth Drive open space are restricted by their location to the edge of the built area. The catchment of Vale Park is also limited by its location.
- 5.85 A further concern in respect of sites which function or could potentially function as local parks in Aylesbury is the poor nature of sites and lack of facilities.
- 5.86 The limited number of sites in Aylesbury which could serve as local parks and the location and nature of sites results in Aylesbury having poor local park provision.
- 5.87 Some areas of Aylesbury have reasonable provision of more immediately local open space in the range of 0.25 to 1 ha. In the Southcourt and Walton Court areas and west of Wendover Road provision of this type of open space could be considered to provide a reasonable model in respect of play and general amenity space but only where there is good provision of sites which could serve as local parks and which could absorb robust play and youth facilities and provide access to more natural space. Provision of this nature is noticeably lacking west of Wendover Road.
- 5.88 Most of the built area has open space to the boundary running as a linear strip along the edge of the development. In addition to its clear buffering role this land provides for informal recreation including dog walking and children's play.
- 5.89 However, this approach has resulted in an open space system which gives no recognition of the role of local parks as part of a sustainable community, the provision of local play space or scope to provide youth facilities.
- 5.90 Many housing areas have some very small areas of open space often in the absence of other immediately local provision. This includes some areas with boundary open space as described above. Given issues in respect of maintenance and inappropriate use areas of open space below 0.25 ha. should perhaps only be considered in exceptional circumstances where local properties have no or minimum garden land. However, currently many of these areas substitute for larger areas of immediately local open space and local park provision, particularly in respect of children's play.
- 5.91 Although the open space system in Aylesbury is not interlinked there are a developing number of green linear routes. There are clear merits in seeking to develop a system of green linear routes over time. However, it is a concern that the development of linear routes appears to have been at the expense of defined local parks and reasonable provision of more defined immediately local open space, for example at Fairford Leys, the Whitehead Way area and in Bedgrove.
- 5.92 Although the exact level of open space provision is not known it would appear that most areas of Aylesbury have a reasonable level of provision of open space but there are issues in respect of the distribution of provision (as per the provision of local parks and immediately local open space as discussed). There is a

significant band of land running north west to south east through the centre of Aylesbury with limited open space provision.

5.93 If the larger open space sites in Aylesbury were to be developed as district parks it would be necessary to reduce the level of outdoor sports provision at these sites. This would create a consequential need to provide land for the development of alternative facilities. Increased emphasis on the development of local parks would provide some scope to accommodate some outdoor sports pitches, particularly local junior pitches. However, it will be equally important to ensure that local parks are not dominated by outdoor sports pitches.

5.94 The distribution of equipped play areas across Aylesbury appears to give provision within 400 m straight line distance of most homes equating to provision at the local park level. However, in the absence of local park provision facilities are accommodated on other areas of land.

5.95 There are a number of areas without equipped play provision at this level. These areas are:

- Either side of Oxford Road.
- The south west.
- West of Buckingham Road.
- Watermead.

5.96 Only the Fowler Road area (new and previous developments), the Whitehead Way area and the Oakfield Road area have more local equipped play provision. Provision at this level in the Fowler Road area and the Whitehead Way area reflects a failure to develop distinct local parks and integrate existing and new open space provision. Provision at this level in the Oakfield Road area is a consequence of open space being pushed to the edge of developments.

5.97 There are no areas which have equipped play provision which perhaps should not have provision, although some equipped play provision is poorly located. These include:

- Historic situations which reflect weaknesses in open space provision (Elm Green).
- New developments where open space provision has been dispersed more than it might have been (Bateman Drive).
- New development where opportunities have not been taken to resolve underlying historical problems (Simpson Place).
- Small equipped play provision on small sites where there is a need for a larger area of open space and more extensive equipped play provision (Galloway and Turnfurlong).

5.98 Apart from Meadowcroft Playing Field, the potential district park sites have equipped play provision. However, the level of provision at these sites is far too limited relative to district park sites.

5.99 The provision of youth facilities on open space in Aylesbury is very poor. This relates to the need to develop appropriate facilities at district park and local park sites.

5.100 The overview and detailed qualitative evaluations highlighted significant concerns in respect of the nature and quality of open space provision in Aylesbury across a range of key issues including:

- How welcoming sites are.
- Underlying nature.
- Information provision.
- Perception of safety and security.
- Access for the disabled.
- Tree cover and nature.
- Nature of landscape components.
- Path provision.
- Seating.
- Equipped play provision.
- Grass areas for ball games.

5.101 Supplementary text to Appendix 11 highlights the nature of weaknesses in provision and the issues which need to be addressed. There is also a clear need to ensure provision appropriate to district and local parks sites. It is also considered that there is a need to give greater consideration to the nature of the boundary open space particularly in respect of developing their buffering role and improved footpath provision.

5.102 Access to natural public open space at the edge of the built area in Aylesbury is good to reasonable in many places and is also good in Fairford Leys. However, access to natural open space elsewhere in Aylesbury is poor. This is due to:

- The nature of the largest open spaces.
- Weaknesses in the provision of defined local parks.
- Limited provision of linear routes.
- Open space provision pushed to the edge of the built area (limiting the total level of provision and potential for natural land within the built area).

Other Cultural Facilities

5.103 Facility provision in a town the size of Aylesbury is complex. There is a whole infrastructure of major facilities serving the whole town and further afield, smaller more localised provision and a myriad of specialist facilities serving interest

groups from scouts and guides through to amateur theatre, and a range of commercial leisure justified by the size of catchment.

- 5.104 In line with PPG17 this assessment is primarily concerned with the main facilities at town or community area level.
- 5.105 The residents' survey undertaken as part of the Cultural Strategy, showed that when respondents were asked where they go to take part in cultural activities 97% of Aylesbury residents used Aylesbury, as did a high proportion of residents of Eastern (52 per cent), Western (66 per cent) and Southern (68 per cent) Aylesbury Vale.
- 5.106 90% of Buckingham residents used Buckingham, as did 78 per cent of those in Central Aylesbury Vale.
- 5.107 55% of rural North Bucks residents use Milton Keynes. A high proportion of the rural areas also go elsewhere in addition to the destinations listed. Surprisingly, neither Oxford nor High Wycombe featured strongly as a cultural destination for or any part of the Vale.
- 5.108 The analysis emphasises the importance of the district's two main urban areas – Aylesbury and Buckingham, and particularly Aylesbury – as key hubs for cultural life for residents from many parts of the district.
- 5.109 Two Aylesbury Town forums were held and attendees felt that cultural provision in the Town was generally good with a range of facilities for sport, the arts, entertainment and eating out. Access to facilities in London and Milton Keynes also enhanced the Town as a place to live and work.
- 5.110 The growing Asian community in the Town was felt to increase the diversity of culture, but there was some concern expressed at the perceived lack of mixing between the different ethnic groups, a situation which it was felt could be improved through a wider range of community events.
- 5.111 There was considerable debate on the future provision of arts and performance spaces within the Aylesbury Town Centre and an emphasis on the important role both the Civic Centre and Queens Park Centre play in the delivery of cultural opportunities within the town. Views were expressed that any replacement facilities should offer enhanced performance and exhibition spaces at affordable costs to community groups.
- 5.112 Further discussion involved the need for more indoor sports hall space, more Junior playing pitches, all weather sporting facilities and better quality of pavilions.
- 5.113 The application of the Sport England Facilities Toolkit identified the good level of swimming pool and sports hall provision for the Town. In terms of swimming, however, the development of the Aqua Vale Pool together with the redeveloped Stoke Mandeville Stadium meets demand for the foreseeable future, particularly for the southern side of the town. There is a stronger expressed demand for quality indoor sports hall space, some of which is linked to education facilities with Aylesbury High and Thomas Hickman identifying the need for additional indoor facilities.
- 5.114 In relation to this national policy promotes the community use of school facilities and future education provision should be designed to ensure management for community participation. Health and activity agendas mean

that encouragement of sports participation during the early habit forming years are crucial, so that education facilities should be suitable from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective to cater for and stimulate such use. There are no set standards for the provision and mix of sports facilities in education premises linked to community use, but in Scotland such standards have been set and provide a best practice benchmark which could be incorporated into AVDC standards for future schools.

5.115 With regard to Synthetic Turf Pitches there is an expressed demand for further provision by Aylesbury Hockey Club, Aylesbury Grammar and Sir Henry Floyd School. If the **sportscotland** model is adopted the goal would be for each secondary school to have a full size floodlit STP ensuring a reasonable distribution of facilities across the town.

5.116 Staying with sport, the Aylesbury Vale Playing Pitch Strategy identifies a shortage of pitches for mini soccer and the lack of a venue that can accommodate several matches at a time or a mini-soccer festival. The need for more floodlit all weather training facilities was also identified.

5.117 However, the future development and demand for playing pitches should be considered in light of the earlier comments in relation to parks and open spaces. The need to relocate pitches to enable the creation of district parks is a real issue, and policy regarding future investment in and development of pitch provision should promote the creation of new playing pitch complexes with quality pavilions and ancillary accommodation to enable a re-designation and development of existing open space that could be better utilised for district and local parks.

5.118 Turning now to entertainment and arts provision, Aylesbury Town is an important location for major facilities. As discussed above the residents' survey shows that many residents of the district look to Aylesbury Town for major cultural provision, such as the cinema and entertainment, and this is likely to increase with the proposed country park, new sporting and fitness developments at the Aqua Vale and the Stoke Mandeville Stadium. With the expansion of the Town through new residential development, and attraction of new businesses to the area, the gaps in major infrastructure provision identified by the Strategy that need to be addressed are:

- The lack of a central Arts Centre with display and flexible and affordable arts performance space;
- The recently developed entertainments area in the centre of the town, with the cinema and the range of restaurants and bars has a strong focus on the younger, under 25 year old market. There are limited areas where the significant number of office workers in the central area of Aylesbury can go at lunch time or after work that offers a more varied choice of eating and drinking establishments, and for the older age groups in the evening. It is provision for the full spectrum of residents and workers that will enable the development of a vibrant evening economy and assist in attracting inward investment and new businesses to the district.

5.119 The developing "leisure corridor" in Aylesbury offers the opportunity to address both these issues.

- 5.120 The strategy recommended that the proposed redevelopment of the Exchange Street/Canal Basin site includes provision for a new Aylesbury Arts Centre which meets the need of a growing population and specifically encourages the attraction of a mix of leisure, restaurants and café/bars that extends the existing provision to a wider market. This process is now underway.
- 5.121 From a heritage perspective the Town is host to the county museum, but more localised heritage interpretation is limited and needs to be developed to engender a sense of historical and geographical place. A detailed strategy and action plan for developing such interpretation should be produced, as well as requirements being placed upon developers of new housing to integrate and interpret such developments within the broader heritage of the area.
- 5.122 Looking now at more localised provision, consultation with the Town Council has identified eight distinct community areas: Aylesbury Central, Bedgrove, Coldharbour, Elmhurst and Watermead, Mandeville and Elm Farm, Oakfield, Quarrendon, and Southcourt.
- 5.123 Each Community Area should have a minimum level of accessible community cultural facilities as defined in the demand matrix. Specifically these include a skateboard facility, MUGA, Youth Shelter, Community Centre, Community Hall/Theatre. It is a recommendation of the Cultural Strategy that new developments are integrated as far as possible within existing community areas and that the preparation of the Planning Briefs for the new residential developments should take account of existing local cultural facilities, and where practical and appropriate, and as an initial priority, should extend and improve existing provision to cater for the needs of new residents rather than create new independent cultural infrastructures.
- 5.124 At the present time Mandeville and Elm Farm, and Aylesbury Central are lacking in defined provision, whilst that at Oakfield is limited. These deficiencies should be rectified. Additional investment and expansion will depend on those centres best located to serve new residential developments and qualitative assessments should be undertaken of existing community centres when future development boundaries are finalised and the development timescale agreed.
- 5.125 In general facilities for Young People are limited in each of the Community Areas, with the new MUGA's at Meadowcroft providing a notable exception. The other major teen facility is the central skatepark located in Vale Park.

6. SUMMARY

- 6.1 This study has arrived at a range of criteria and standards, based on consultation, comparisons, local provision and best practice, for cultural facilities at each level of an agreed settlement hierarchy.
- 6.2 These criteria and standards have then been used as benchmarks against which to evaluate current facility supply. The results of these evaluations need now to be tested once more through consultation to ensure general agreement and confirm the robustness of the conclusions.
- 6.3 It must be noted that the assessment is but a snapshot in time and facility provision and quality is constantly changing, as indeed is the population of the district. However, by establishing the standards the tools are put in place to

enable this planning for change within a more strategic context, securing cultural facility provision for the current and future residents of the Aylesbury Vale.

Updated May 2006