

BASILDON BOROUGH COUNCIL

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OPEN SPACE ASSESSMENT GAP ANALYSIS

DECEMBER, 2015

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1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 The borough-wide PPG17 Open Space Assessment was completed in 2010 to provide baseline information in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 17. The study looked at the quantitative and qualitative audit and analysis of the supply and demand for open spaces in the Borough. The accessibility gap analysis indicated a few areas of significant under-supply of open space, but generally there is very good coverage within the borough, with the majority of under-served locations being more rural or on the periphery of urban areas, closest to the countryside.
- 1.2 The overall finding of the study was that the existing level of provision should be maintained into the future, while contributions should be secured to assist with their ongoing investment to help meet the pressures open spaces face from an increasing population.
- 1.3 Consequently, the Council set out a quantity standard for each appropriate open space typology within the borough in order to identify where the Council needs to target its attention on securing open space in the future, including as part of the planning application process. These standards are used to ensure that the current average quantity of open space available within Basildon Borough is largely maintained into the future, albeit permitting a redistribution of its location, where appropriate.

Purpose and Scope

- 1.4 The purpose of this work is to update the 2010 Open Space Assessment with information about open space losses, gains and investments since the initial report was prepared. This report informs the position of the Council in light of emerging practice and changes that have occurred in the interim. This will be used in the development of policy to inform future open space strategies and policies, having regard to adopted and/or recommended provision standards.
- 1.5 This gap analysis focuses on the quantity of open space currently provided in the Borough's administrative area as a whole (with the exception of Provision for Children & Young People which is audited separately), by determining the quantity of provision that has been lost or gained since the last assessment. This includes where additional sites may have been added through new development, where sites may have been extended in size, or where facilities may have been removed or lost to other development. It is not intended to provide the evidence necessary to inform features and aspects of quality and accessibility of open spaces at this stage, as this analysis is primarily concerned with information from a quantitative perspective. Work at a later date will be required to review the current quality of open spaces in the Borough.

Policy Guidance

- 1.6 The main changes that impact on the 2010 Open Space Assessment is the new national planning guidance, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which was adopted in March 2012. The NPPF replaces the library of planning policy statements, guidance, and circulars. The essence of the replaced PPG 17: Open Space, Sport and Recreation has however been retained in the NPPF, and paragraph 73 states that '*Planning policies should be based on robust and up-to-date assessments of the needs for open space, sports and recreation facilities and opportunities for new provision*' although there is no requirement as to how this assessment should be achieved.
- 1.7 Sport England is the organisation which provides the strategic lead for sport in the country, and encourages local planning policy to protect, enhance and provide for sports facilities based on robust and up-to-date assessments of need. Sport England encourages local planning authorities to carry out assessments of need and demand based on the typology and method outlined in the Companion Guide to PPG17.
- 1.8 Working within the provisions of the *NPPF*, Sport England encourages local planning policy to protect, enhance and provide for sports facilities. In order to help local authorities to undertake robust assessments of their existing and future needs of their communities for sport and recreation facilities, Sport England has also developed a suite of strategic planning tools which could be used to help assess demand and provision, including Playing Pitch Strategies.

Methodology

- 1.9 The amount of open space (with the exception of Provision for Children & Young People) currently provided for each type of open space in Basildon Borough was established through a mapping exercise undertaken in 2006. The survey was limited to all spaces over 0.2ha in size (with some smaller exceptions), regardless of ownership and therefore reflects the vast majority of open space in the Borough, but is not exhaustive. The 2010 audit then determined the amount of open space available to be approximately 1,381ha. The 2010 audit serves as the baseline used by the Council to update the amount of open space of each typology. This has assisted with the on-going monitoring of progress towards the recommended standards on an annual basis.
- 1.10 Every planning application submitted to the Council since 2010 either for 'a housing development on existing open space', or 'a housing development greater than 10 net units or more in the urban area' has been subject to the PPG17 Assessment, covering quality & intrinsic benefit, quantity, and accessibility standards. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, as well as other material planning considerations, planning decisions have been made which have either resulted in the loss of existing open space; new sites delivered as part of or alongside new developments; or improvements to existing ones from planned investment or secured through S106 Agreements.

1.11 The outcome of these planning decisions are stored in the Council's database, providing a record of existing provision, which can be monitored and updated to reflect changes to the quantum of provision. The monitoring exercise is largely a desktop based exercise, updated as and when new information becomes available about a site. The monitoring database represents the reference point of planning related open space information and the principal source of data for this assessment.

2 GAP ANALYSIS

2.1 This section analyses and presents the findings of the gap analysis, including the assessment of the current offer of open spaces, and the quantitative analysis of open space provision. The analysis will show whether there is sufficient or under provision of each typology of open space against the recommended standards.

Total Recorded Open Space, 2010

2.2 The 2010 audit identified 346 areas of public and private open space, of a size of 0.2ha and over, classified according to their Primary Use and the PPG17 based Open Space Typologies as set out in *Table 1* below:

Table 1: Quantitative Supply of Open Space (2010)

Typology	Area (hectares)	Area (ha/1000 population) (2001 Census)
Urban Parks and Gardens	301.4ha	1.82ha
Natural and semi-natural open space	434.45ha	2.62ha
Amenity Green Space	220.93ha	1.33ha
Provision for children and young people*	151 play areas	0.98 spaces
Outdoor Sports Facilities	262.43ha (Inc. Barleylands Farm)	1.58ha
Allotments and community gardens	8.9ha	0.054ha
Cemeteries and churchyards	19.9ha	0.12ha
Education Fields	129.5ha	0.78ha
Civic Space	4.03ha	0.024ha
Total**	1381.54ha	8.3ha

*Provision for Children and Young People have been audited separately.

**Excluding Provision for Children and Young People.

Total Recorded Open Space, 2015

2.3 *Table 2* below shows the recorded area (in hectares) assigned to each typology of open space within the Borough as at 1st December 2015. As described in the methodology section, a full breakdown of how quantities are calculated and monitored for open space provision within the Council can be found in *Appendix 1*.

2.4 The total number of public and private open space of a size of 0.2ha and over, within the Borough now stands at 347. The Land Adjacent to Rosebay Avenue, previously categorised as an amenity green space, has been lost to development, with the remnant space being less than 0.2ha. In other instances where open space has been lost to development, only partial losses have been recorded leaving significant amounts of open space either undeveloped or as part of the development. In the same light, two sites have been added to the Borough's open spaces including a former Foyer at Moat House School, and the former College & agricultural pasture at Nethermayne.

Table 2: Running Totals of Open Space within the Borough (2015)

Typology	Area (hectares)	Area (ha/1000 population) (ONS Mid-year Estimates, 2014)
Urban Parks and Gardens	302.1 ha	1.67 ha
Natural and semi-natural open space	445.8 ha	2.47 ha
Amenity Green Space	214.8 ha	1.19 ha
Outdoor Sports Facilities	260.9 ha	1.45 ha
Allotments and community gardens	8.9 ha	0.05 ha
Cemeteries and churchyards	19.9 ha	0.11 ha
Education Fields	129.5 ha	0.72 ha
Civic Space	4.03 ha	0.022 ha
Total	1385.92 ha	7.7 ha

Net Change in Total Site Area, 2010-2015

2.5 *Table 3* below shows how the position of open space provision in Basildon Borough has changed, in comparison to the same measures recorded in 2010.

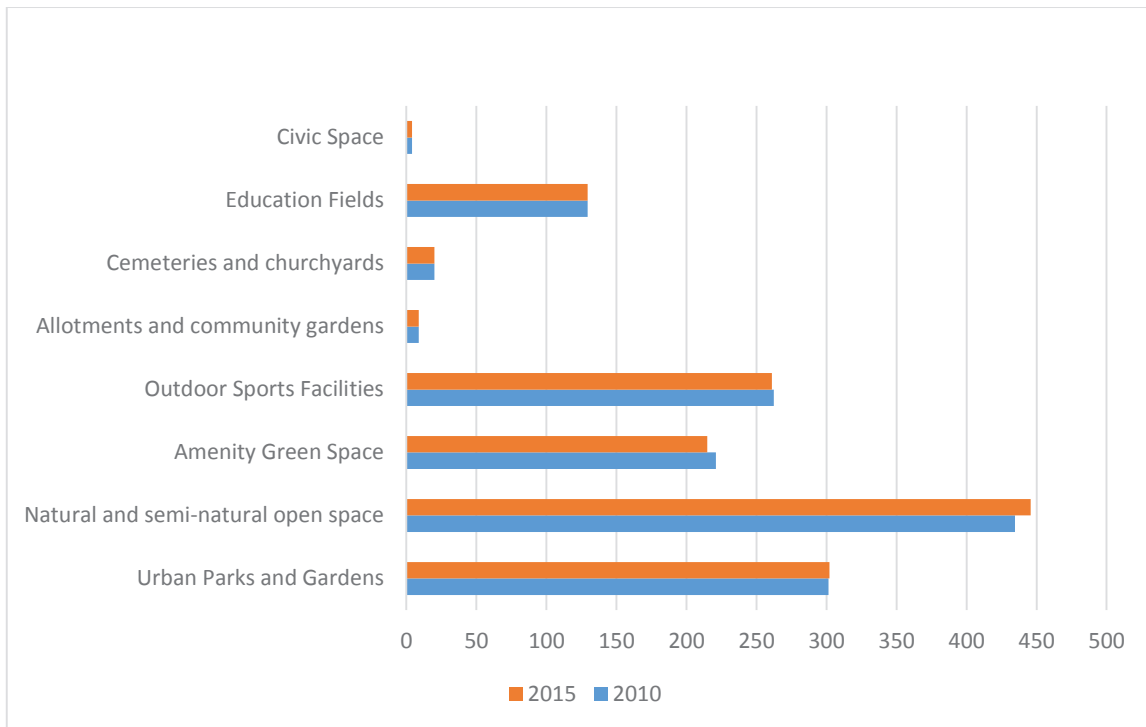
Table 3: Comparison of Site Area (in Ha.) of Open Space recorded within the Borough between 2010 and 2015

Typology	2010 Site Area (hectares)	2015 Site Area (hectares)	Change between 2010 and 2015
Urban Parks and Gardens	301.4 ha	302.1 ha	0.7 ha
Natural and semi-natural open space	434.45 ha	445.8 ha	11.35 ha
Amenity Green Space	220.93 ha	214.8 ha	-6.13 ha
Outdoor Sports Facilities	262.43 ha	260.9 ha	-1.53 ha
Allotments and community gardens	8.9 ha	8.9 ha	-
Cemeteries and churchyards	19.9 ha	19.9 ha	-
Education Fields	129.5 ha	129.5 ha	-
Civic Space	4.03 ha	4.03 ha	-
Total	1381.54 ha	1385.92 ha	4.38 ha

2.6 As can be seen from *Table 3*, audited Open Space within the Borough has increased in the time that has elapsed since the last assessment was carried out, although a number of sites have been lost to development or other uses during the period. The greatest increase in terms of the area of individual typologies relates to natural and semi-natural open space, while the greatest decrease relates to the loss of amenity green spaces. The increase recorded is as a result of new open space provision that has been delivered alongside new housing development achieved through the regeneration of swathes of previously developed land particularly Land at Nethermayne, Basildon.

2.7 As at the 1st December 2015, the total combined area of sites recorded was 1385.92 Hectares. This represents a net increase of 4.38 Hectares (or 0.32% increase) in the total area of open space recorded when compared to the 1381.54 Hectares recorded in 2010. *Figure 1* provides an overview of the area of each typology in 2010 and 2015, and identifies the net change between these two points in time.

Figure 1: Net Change between 2010 and 2015 in Open Space per Typology (using area in Ha.)



Net Change in Area (ha/1000 population), 2010-2015

2.8 The 2010 assessment set a quantity standard for each appropriate open space typology within the Borough. The aim of the standard is to ensure that an appropriate amount of open space is available in an area to provide for the population, maintaining a decent living environment in line with the aspirations set out by the Council. Quantity Standards are expressed as the area of land available for open space purposes per 1000 population. *Table 4* below summarises the 2010 adopted quantity standards per 1,000 population, for Basildon Borough’s administrative area as a whole.

Table 4: Basildon Borough Open Space Quantity Standards

Typology	Area (ha/1,000 population) (2001 Census)	Recommended Standard (per 1,000 population)
Urban Parks and Gardens	1.82 ha	1.82 ha
Natural and semi-natural open space	2.62 ha	2.62 ha
Amenity Green Space	1.33 ha	1.33 ha
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.58 ha	1.58 ha
Allotments and community gardens	0.054 ha	Meet Demand
Cemeteries and churchyards	0.12 ha	Meet Demand
Education Fields	0.78 ha	No minimum Standard
Civic Space	0.024 ha	No minimum Standard

- 2.9 Applying these standards would provide a total of 7.52ha of open space per 1000 residents (approx. 75m² per resident), excluding education fields and civic space. Removing outdoor sports facilities, allotments and cemeteries & churchyards from the calculation (as these are function-specific open spaces that will be provided based on demand for pitches, allotment plots and burial space rather than by area), the quantity standard for open space in Basildon Borough becomes 5.77ha per 1000 population (~58m² per resident).
- 2.10 The above recommended standards are available to help maintain provision, and to meet the pressures open spaces face from an increasing population. In 2010, Basildon had a population of 165,604 residents. According to the ONS Annual Mid-year Population Estimates 2014, the estimated population of Basildon now stands at 180,521 residents, with implications on the availability of open space and other infrastructure. *Table 5* below gives an analysis of the current supply of open space typologies per 1000 population, given the established changes in site area as well as population increases.

Table 5: Comparison of Area (ha/1000 population) of Open Space recorded within the Borough between 2010 and 2015

Typology	2010 Area (ha/1000 population)	Recommended Standard (ha/1,000 population)	2015 Area (ha/1000 population)	Change between 2010 and 2015
Urban Parks and Gardens	1.82 ha	1.82 ha	1.67 ha	-0.15 ha
Natural and semi-natural open space	2.62 ha	2.62 ha	2.47 ha	-0.15 ha
Amenity Green Space	1.33 ha	1.33 ha	1.19 ha	-0.14 ha
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.58 ha	1.58 ha	1.45 ha	-0.13 ha
Allotments and community gardens	0.054 ha	Meet Demand	0.049 ha	-0.005 ha
Cemeteries and churchyards	0.12 ha	Meet Demand	0.11 ha	-0.01 ha
Education Fields	0.78 ha	No minimum Standard	0.72 ha	-0.06 ha
Civic Space	0.024 ha	No minimum Standard	0.022 ha	-0.002 ha

2.11 While the total site area of open spaces within the Borough has increased in the last four years, this increase in site area has not matched the corresponding increase in population size as can be deduced from *Table 5* above.

2.12 Urban parks and gardens with amenity green spaces now fall below the combined recommended standard of 3.1ha/1000 population by 0.24ha. Natural and semi-natural open space also falls below the recommended standard of 2.6ha/1000 population by 0.15ha. Outdoor sports facilities fall short of previous supply by 0.13ha/1000 population.

2.13 For all other typologies of open space - allotments and community gardens, cemeteries and churchyards, education fields, and civic spaces – their supply has stayed constant since the 2010 assessment. While there are no minimum recommended standards for these typologies, the quantity of land currently available for their provision should not be reduced so as to accommodate existing and predicted additional demand for these spaces.

3 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1 Since 2010, there hasn't been a notable net increase in open space provision within the Borough, with only 4.38 hectares recorded across 3 sites as at 1st December 2015. A number of spaces have also been lost to development or other uses over this same period. However, it is the increase in population that has the most effect on open space availability when measured against recommended quantity standards of provision.
- 3.2 The Council's policy approach to open space is to protect, enhance, and ensure the timely delivery of new provision where necessary, in order to cater for the increasing demand placed on spaces by new developments and/or population growth. This assessment suggests a shortfall in current policy in achieving the recommended standards which should be addressed through on-site provision of open space within new development proposals, particularly those development proposals where private land can be brought into use for public open space purposes. However, it is important to note that this assessment should not be read in isolation, but must be considered with the other standards relating to quality, intrinsic benefit and accessibility.
- 3.3 Going forward, it is recommended that the Council continues to monitor the effectiveness of its policy approach to open space provision, through up-to-date assessment of the open spaces as well as other relevant data sources. Based on the analysis undertaken in producing this report, a number of improvements to the way in which changes are recorded have been identified. This includes:
- Adopting a consistent approach to the types of planning applications that are subject to the PPG17 Assessment;
 - Indicating as part of its monitoring framework, when new sites have entered the audit or existing ones been reduced or removed from the audit; and
 - Being more explicit in recording the types of gains acquired from S106 or other developer contributions towards improvements to open spaces.
- 3.4 These changes will be implemented immediately and should help to improve the value of future monitoring by enabling more a comprehensive and detailed analysis, and hence reporting.

APPENDIX 1: RUNNING TOTALS FOR MONITORING

Year	Reference	Status	OS reference	OS Type	Area	Loss to OS	Gain?	Application	Pop	urban parks	natural and semi-natural	outdoor sports	amenity	allotments	churchyards	educational fields	civic space	total
								Baseline Data	165.604	1.82000	2.62342	1.58468	1.33408	0.05374	0.12016	0.78198	0.02433	
									165604	301.4	434.45	262.43	220.98	8.9	19.9	129.5	4.03	1381.5
2010	10/00341/FUL	Granted	Not OS	Residential/Unaudited Space	0.55	0	None defined		165.604	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	10/00130/FUL	Granted	Not OS	Former Foyer	0.54	0	S106			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	10/00806/OUT	Granted	104	Urban park	0.54	0	S106			-0.54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-0.54
2010	10/01386/FUL	Granted	Not OS	Vacant /School	0.7	0	S106			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	10/00220/FUL	Granted	Not OS	Residential	0.29	5	None defined			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	10/00642/FUL	Granted	245	Outdoor sports	1.65	1.65	Plan defines improvement to open space			0	0	-1.65	0	0	0	0	0	-1.65
2010	10/00110/FUL	Granted	Not OS	Former Foyer	1.61	0	Area defined as POS in plan			0.3347	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.3347
2010	10/00151/FUL	Allowed	Not OS	Car park	0.2	0	None defined			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	10/00816/FUL	Allowed	Not OS	Office	0.16	0	None defined			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	10/01000/FUL	Granted	Not OS	Residential	0.08	0	None defined			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2010	10/00097/FUL	Allowed	Not OS	Housing	0.28	0	None defined			0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
									301.1947	434.45	260.78	220.93	8.9	19.9	129.5	4.03		1379.68
								per 1000 pop/	1.818765	2.623427	1.57472	1.334086	0.053743	0.120166	0.781986	0.024335		8.33122
																		8
2011	11/00111/FUL	Granted	100	Urban Parks Garden	4.02	4.02	S106/Development Agreements		174.5	-4.02	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-4.02
2011	11/00949/FUL	Granted	6	Amenity Green	0.48	0.48	None defined			0	0	0	-0.48	0	0	0	0	-0.48

2011	11/00719/FUL L	Granted	261 and 262	Amenity Green/Residential	6.31	0.25 9	Plan defines open space in the centre of the development, as well as small areas spaced around the site, together with the new Village Green.
2012	12/00841/FUL L	Allowed	Not OS	Car dealership	0.76	0	S106
2012	11/01332/FUL L	Granted	321	Amenity Green	4.82	0.23	None defined
2013	12/01080/OUT	Granted	Not OS	College & Agricultural Pasture	50.2 1	0	Potential on-site and off-site provision. Reserved Matters approved 15/00734/REM
2013	13/01119/FUL L	Granted	Not OS	Unaudited Amenity Green Space	0.25	0	S106
2014	14/00041/FUL L	Granted	Not OS	Public House & Car Park	0.63	0	S106
2015	15/00189/FUL L	Granted	Not OS	Retail	0.10	0	S106
2015	15/00385/FUL L	Granted	Not OS	Unaudited Amenity Green Space	0.10	0	None defined

	0	0	0	-0.259	0	0	0	0	-0.259
	297.1747	434.45	260.78	220.191	8.9	19.9	129.5	4.03	1374.92 6
per 1000 pop/	1.703007	2.489685	1.494441	1.26184	0.051003	0.11404	0.74212	0.023095	7.87923
	175	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	-0.23	0	0	0	0	-0.23
	297.1747	434.45	260.78	219.961	8.9	19.9	129.5	4.03	1374.69 6
per 1000 pop/	1.698141	2.482571	1.490171	1.25692	0.050857	0.113714	0.74	0.023029	7.85540 4
	176.5	3.99	9.67	0.07	2.53	0	0	0	16.26
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	301.1647	444.12	260.85	222.491	8.9	19.9	129.5	4.03	1390.95 6
per 1000 pop/	1.706316	2.516261	1.477904	1.260572	0.050425	0.112748	0.733711	0.022833	7.88076 9
	176.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	301.1647	444.12	260.85	222.491	8.9	19.9	129.5	4.03	1390.95 6
per 1000 pop/	1.706316	2.516261	1.477904	1.260572	0.050425	0.112748	0.733711	0.022833	7.88076 9
	180.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

