

# BOROUGH PLAN BACKGROUND PAPER: Green Infrastructure and Open Space

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Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council

2015



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## Introduction

1. The purpose of this background paper is to show how the policy background and evidence base studies have shaped the policy approach for Green Infrastructure and Open Space.

## Legal and Policy Background

### Government White Paper 'The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature' (DEFRA, 2011)

2. The Government considers that a healthy, properly functioning natural environment is the foundation of sustained economic growth, prospering communities and personal wellbeing. It wants this to be the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than it inherited. To achieve so much means taking action across sectors rather than treating environmental concerns in isolation. The Government will mainstream the value of nature across our society by:
  - facilitating greater local action to protect and improve nature;
  - creating a green economy, in which economic growth and the health of our natural resources sustain each other, and whereby markets, business and Government better reflect the value of nature;
  - strengthening the connections between people and nature to the benefit of both; and
  - showing leadership in the European Union and internationally, to protect and enhance natural assets globally.
3. One element relevant to this paper is the identification of urban green infrastructure in helping to complete the links in the national ecological network. Urban green space allows species to move around within, and between, towns and the countryside. It also has a number of other functions:
  - Cooling urban areas and reducing flood risk, along with helping communities to adapt to a changing climate.
  - Playing a key role in regeneration projects and supporting local economic growth.
  - Greening neighbourhoods and improving access to nature to improve public health and quality of life and reduce environmental inequalities.
  - Providing varied ecosystem services and contributing to coherent and resilient ecological networks.
4. The National Ecosystem Assessment (NEA) highlights reductions in both the quality and the quantity of urban green space over the past half century and identifies the underperformance of urban ecosystems. The benefits of green infrastructure are unevenly distributed throughout society, and one in six urban local authorities says its green spaces are declining. The Government wants urban green spaces to be recognised as an essential asset and factored into the development of all our communities. They should be managed to provide diverse functions for the benefit of people and wildlife.

5. The White Paper defines green infrastructure:

**Green infrastructure** is a term used to refer to the living network of green spaces, water and other environmental features in both urban and rural areas. It is often used in an urban context to cover benefits provided by trees, parks, gardens, road verges, allotments, cemeteries, woodlands, rivers and wetlands.

Green infrastructure is also relevant in a rural context, where it might refer to the use of farmland, woodland, wetlands or other natural features to provide services such as flood protection, carbon storage or water purification. Green infrastructure maintains critical ecological links between town and country.

Around the country local partnerships are seeking to use green infrastructure to drive economic growth and regeneration and improve public health, wellbeing and quality of life. It can also support biodiversity and the functioning of natural systems such as rivers and flood plains and help reduce the negative impacts of climate change.

National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG, 2012)

6. The National Planning Policy Framework says:

Relevant NPPF requirement	NPPF sub requirement	Relationship with policy
Core Principle - contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework.		The Green Infrastructure policy identifies specific habitats and locations for protecting and enhancing.
Core Principle - promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production);		The Green Infrastructure policy identifies the priority green infrastructure assets that will be created, protected, managed and enhanced through the development proposals of the Borough Plan.
Core Principle - take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient		The Green Infrastructure and Open Space policies protect and enhance green infrastructure and open space assets across the Borough that can contribute

Relevant NPPF requirement	NPPF sub requirement	Relationship with policy
community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.		to the well-being of the existing and future residents of the Borough.
37. Planning policies should aim for a balance of land uses within their area so that people can be encouraged to minimise journey lengths for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities.		The Green Infrastructure recognises the need to join walking and cycling routes to create a network of routes to key destinations.
70. To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:	Plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments.	The Green Infrastructure and Open Space policies plan for new provision of green infrastructure and open space to accompany new development. They also protect existing assets.
	Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.	The Retaining Community Facilities policy sets out the local approach to the loss of such facilities.
73. Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities. 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. The assessments should		The Green Infrastructure and Open Spaces policies recognise the need for green infrastructure and open space in terms of the impact on mental and physical health. The Open Space policy is informed by an assessment of open space quantity and quality.

Relevant NPPF requirement	NPPF sub requirement	Relationship with policy
<p>identify specific needs and quantitative or qualitative deficits or surpluses of open space, sports and recreational facilities in the local area. Information gained from the assessments should be used to determine what open space, sports and recreational provision is required.</p>		
<p>74. Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or</li> <li>• the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or</li> <li>• the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss.</li> </ul>	<p>The Open Spaces assessment and Open Spaces Strategy will form the basis for identifying whether a site is surplus to requirements or not in terms of open space.</p>
<p>75. Planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way and access. Local authorities should seek opportunities to provide better facilities for users, for example by adding links to existing rights of way networks including</p>		<p>The Green Infrastructure policy identifies potential links to expand the Green Infrastructure network.</p>

Relevant NPPF requirement	NPPF sub requirement	Relationship with policy
National Trails.		
114. Local planning authorities should set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure.		The Green Infrastructure policy sets out a framework to create, protect, manage and enhance green infrastructure within the Borough.

### Emerging Borough Plan

#### 7. The following issues are relevant to the Green Infrastructure and Open Space Policies:

- The distribution of open space and recreation grounds is uneven with most concentrated in the north around Barpool and neighbouring areas.
- The areas around Bulkington and the south west of the Borough are not well served by green corridors. This reduces biodiversity and opportunities for leisure activities in these areas.
- Life expectancy is the lowest in Warwickshire and lower than the national average. There are notable variations across the Borough with those living in the most deprived areas having the lowest life expectancy. Links can be made to poor health, lack of physical activity and obesity, all of which are high in the Borough.
- Few travel by public transport, cycle or walk. Improvements to provide more walking and cycling networks, cycle parking facilities, pedestrian priority areas and crossing facilities along with the need to address issues such as the frequency, reliability, integration and cost of public transport is required to facilitate benefits to the environment and health.
- There are only three LNR in the Borough. Accessibility to woodland is also lower than elsewhere in Warwickshire.
- The legacy of coal mining, quarrying and heavy engineering has had a negative impact on the landscape. The Borough has over 100 hectares of derelict land and more than 3000 potentially contaminated sites.

#### 8. The following Spatial Objectives are relevant:

**Objective 5** - To ensure that all new development and investment contributes to a significant improvement in infrastructure and facilities that serve the Borough. In particular:

- a) A step change in public transport provision along a north south corridor to link Nuneaton and Bedworth to Atherstone and Hinckley in the north and Coventry, Warwick and Leamington in the south.

- b) Improved access to existing facilities, particularly the Borough's two Town Centres and major leisure and community facilities (e.g. Bermuda, George Eliot Hospital, the Colleges and the Pingles and Bedworth Leisure Centres).
- c) Retention and improvement of local shopping, health and other community facilities.
- d) New development that integrates the required infrastructure and service provision to support it and where appropriate includes improvements to existing infrastructure and services. This includes:
  - A Northern Distributor Road
  - Connectivity improvements
  - Education provision
  - Leisure improvements
  - Sustainability measures
- e) A Green Infrastructure network of high quality, well connected, multi-functional open spaces, corridors and links that deliver benefits to the landscape, wildlife and the public in line with the priority projects identified from the Borough's five green infrastructure zones.

**Objective 6** - To create healthy and strong communities by:

- a) Creating and improving networks that increase opportunities to walk and cycle to a range of facilities.
- b) Enabling access to a range of high quality open spaces.
- c) Enabling participation in active sport by building on the strengths of Pingles Leisure centre and other local facilities.
- d) Reducing crime and antisocial behaviour through good design, raising aspirations and providing opportunities for the young.
- e) Creating well planned and integrated communities that foster cohesion and accessibility for all.

**Objective 7** - To ensure that new development enhances and improves the quality and appearance of the existing urban area. In particular:

- a) Important open spaces such as Riversley Park, Miners Welfare Park, Whittleford Park and Community and Local parks are protected and enhanced. Landscape character, historic, geological and natural features such as Arbury Historic Park and Garden, Stockingford Railway Cutting and Ensor's Pool are protected and enhanced.

- b) Derelict, contaminated and untidy sites are brought back into beneficial use.
- c) Minimise the negative impact of development and make improvements where possible to air quality in Air Quality Management Areas.
- d) Maximise opportunities to use the River Anker, Wem Brook, the Coventry Canal and Ashby Canal as attractive focal points for open space and new development where there is no negative impact on the green network or the water quality.
- e) Infill development positively responds to local character and does not result in town cramming.
- f) High quality and sustainable design and construction in line with design standards.

**Objective 8** - To address climate change and encourage sustainability in all new development. In particular:

- a) Avoid where possible sites that are at risk of flooding now or in the future.
- b) Utilising appropriate sustainable urban drainage systems for flood or surface water attenuation and using water sustainably.
- c) Protect and enhance the Borough's ecological network, in particular priority habitats and species and minimising impacts on biodiversity.
- d) Maximise energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy, particularly those with greatest potential in the Borough. For example, combined heat and power district energy, biomass energy, ground source heat pumps, solar photovoltaics and solar thermal, along with any future renewable or low carbon technology that may become more suitable for the Borough during the plan period.
- e) Ensure development makes links to cycling and walking networks to encourage green travel.

#### Issues and Options Consultation 2009

9. The issues and options consultation did not specifically mention green infrastructure but it did mention issues which fall under the umbrella of green

infrastructure. For example, nature reserves, parks and recreation grounds and the green corridor network.

### Borough Plan Preferred Options Consultation 2013

10. The following issues were raised during the consultation:

- Warwickshire Wildlife Trust consider the policy places too much emphasis on open space at the expense of multi-functional green infrastructure. It requests:
  - A separate open space policy
  - A criteria based policy for GI to protect and enhance existing assets and to create new assets
  - Secure green infrastructure through Section 106 or CIL
  - Refer to ecosystem services and link to the delivery of GI.
- The Environment Agency requests:
  - Include water networks as part of the ecological network
  - Include sustainable drainage systems to reduce water run-off and improve water quality
  - High quality employment development should provide 10% open space for amenity, recreation, biodiversity and urban heat island, sustainable water management.
- Woodland Trust promote the benefits of trees and woodlands and their access to woodlands standard
- WCC request we refer to the Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy (2013) as an evidence base document and as evidence of Duty to Co-operate.
- Canal and Rivers Trust ask that we refer to the canal network as a significant element of GI in terms of wildlife corridors, access to green space and for walking and cycling.
- Sport England concerned that there is no mention of playing fields or the Playing Pitch Strategy. It requests that the Playing Pitch Strategy needs updating to ensure that there are adequate playing pitches to meet the demand create by new development.
- No policy on new opportunities for sport and recreation or criteria based approach for where existing open space, sport and recreation buildings and land can be built on.
- Update habitat and biodiversity data for site allocations.
- There should be no further building on greenfield land in the Borough.

### **Evidence Base**

#### Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Study (Land Use Consultants, 2011)

11. The purpose of the study was to gather and analyse existing information to provide a shared evidence base for supporting a consistent approach to Green Infrastructure (GI) planning across the sub-region (Coventry, North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Rugby, Solihull, Stratford on Avon and Warwick).
12. A key aspect of the study was to define and agree what would be considered to be a GI asset of sub-regional importance. It was agreed that GI assets would be considered if they fell within the sub-region itself or within a 10km buffer outside

of the sub-region. A set of criteria was established to systematically define and identify those GI assets in the study area that could be considered to be of sub-regional importance i.e. assets that have importance to people beyond their own local authority boundaries. These criteria are:

- 1) Sites over 100ha (County and Sub-Regional level sites as defined by ANGSt);
  - 2) Canals, main rivers (not tributaries), large water bodies;
  - 3) Long distance walking and cycling routes of national, regional or county level importance.
  - 4) Clusters of sites that are within 500m of each other that collectively are over 100ha.
  - 5) Sites that are under 100ha that may still be considered a sub-regional asset as nominated by each authorities POG representative.
13. The Study indicates that there are two sub-regional GI sites located within Nuneaton and Bedworth District; the Arbury Estate and Arbury Hall. Arbury Hall is a Registered Park and Garden. The Hall and the Estate both have limited access to the public (Arbury Hall is only open Sunday and Monday on each of the summer bank holidays and has a pay per entry policy). Despite, the Arbury Estate and Arbury Hall being located close to Nuneaton, the study considers, due to its limited accessibility, that Nuneaton and Bedworth is deficient in accessible sub-regional GI sites.
14. Nuneaton and Bedworth is deficient in accessible sub-regional GI sites. The Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy identifies four GI priorities for the sub-region. The National Forest to Cotswolds link is most relevant for the Borough. It is a proposed north / south walking and cycling route to link the main cities and towns in the sub-region (Nuneaton, Bedworth, Coventry, Leamington Spa, Warwick and Stratford Upon Avon) with two significant areas of countryside, whilst also providing a useful commuter link between the settlements. Whilst further work is required, the cost of the project is estimated at £3 to £3.5 million.

#### Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Study (CSWAPO, 2013)

15. Building on previous work, the Sub Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy collates evidence about green infrastructure for Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull. It focuses on landscape, biodiversity and accessibility to natural green space. The Strategy's approach is to identify:
- The main strategic areas of opportunity for strengthening landscape character;
  - The biodiversity assets and strategic areas for reconnecting habitats;
  - Accessibility assets and areas with deficiencies using Natural England's Accessible Natural Green Space standard and the Woodland Access standard.

#### Green Infrastructure Plan (Land Use Consultants, 2009)

16. The Green Infrastructure Plan sets the context and the baseline for the Borough's environment and socio economic character. It looks at a range of green infrastructure functions and standards including: accessible green space, biodiversity, landscape character and distinctiveness, water quality, flooding,

climate change, food, fuel, cultural heritage, health and well being and sustainable active travel.

17. From this analysis, the Green Infrastructure Plan identifies key messages and, landscape zones and key projects..

18. The key messages for the green infrastructure plan are:

- Landscape and biodiversity – Place and landscape as the integrator – the starting point for planning for multi-functionality
- Climate Change Adaptation – Providing greater resilience for the environment in the face of climate change, and providing opportunities for responsible travel choices
- Community and socio economic – Providing accessible recreational and educational green space resources for every age and social age group; restating communities’ historic links to their landscapes

19. Landscape zones are as suggested as a framework for Green Infrastructure. The zones respond to distinctive aspects of the landscape and environmental character of the Borough. The following zones are identified:

- **Forest of Arden landscape enhancement zone** for conservation, wider accessibility and greater resilience for this diverse historic landscape
- **Post industrial discovery zone** for understanding, accessing and enjoying the Borough’s post industrial geological heritage
- **Urban waterways and wetland zone** for restating the town’s relationship with its landscape and its strategic corridors (rivers and canals) and for creating connections for people and wildlife
- **Urban greening zone** for creating spaces for people and wildlife in town centres and creating microclimates with urban cooling to adapt to climate change (what about the wider urban environment?)
- **Strategic and local greenways and corridors** for a linked network, accessible by all users, of radial routes between key greenspaces connecting townscape and landscape

20. A range of projects were also identified in the Green Infrastructure Plan:

1a	Woodland Management
1b	Arbury Gateway Park
2c	Canal towpath enhancements (Nuneaton South)
2d	Midland Quarry Waterbody
3a	Wetland management at Camp Hill (Whittleford Park/Barpool Valley)
3b	Floodplain Parklands
3e	Anker Valley East – Floodplain Parklands
3f	Keresley Wetland Park
3g	Bulkington Community Park
4a	Street tree planting
4b	Restoration of landscape structure to Nuneaton North
5a	Improved urban greenway link for Bedworth town centre
5c	New green track on old Mineral Railway Line

5e	New green track on disused railway line north of Nuneaton town centre
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Open Space Assessment (Jones Plus Ltd, January 2007)

21. The report provides a quantitative and qualitative open space audit of sites of 0.2ha and above of various open space typologies, in line with Assessing Needs and Opportunities – A Companion Guide to PPG17. The Assessment:

- Identifies Local Needs through the use of questionnaires to households and nurseries, schools and colleges.
- Undertakes an Audit of Local Provision in terms of the quantity and quality of existing open space.
- Identifies Accessibility through maximum walking distance and driving distance thresholds for different types of open space
- Develops Local Provision Standards for quantity, quality and accessibility for different types of open space.

22. Appendix 1 gives details of accessible provision by typology as assessed by the Open Space Assessment.

Quantity, Quality and Accessibility of Open Space

23. A number of the Borough's larger urban parks have been accorded significant local importance. Some of these have notable cultural/philanthropic associations, having been gifted to local communities, such as Miners Welfare Park within Bedworth, and Riversley Park, Nuneaton.

Accessible Natural Green Space Standard

24. The Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Study tells us that the sub-regional scale green spaces at Arbury Hall and Estate have limited public access. The Green Infrastructure Plan and the Open Spaces Strategy indicate that the nearest large scale green space is at Hartshill Hayes Country Park (55 hectares within 1km of Borough boundary, Coombe Abbey Country Park (154 hectares within 10km) and Kingsbury Water Park (260 hectares within 9km). The Borough, therefore, has a deficiency in sub-regional green space.

25. The largest open space within the Borough is Whittleford Park and Barpool Valley at Camp Hill (43 hectares). It comprises a swathe of semi natural green space, walking and cycling routes and an interpretive trail associated with the site's industrial heritage.

Scale of Provision	Size	Distance threshold	Deficiency	Where
Sub regional	Sites or habitats over 500ha	Within 10km	Yes	Boroughwide
County	Sites or habitats over 100ha	Within 5km	Yes	Boroughwide

District	Sites or habitats over 20ha	Within 2km	Yes	Bulkington, Keresley, Ash Green and Neals Green
Neighbourhood sites	Sites or habitats over 2ha	Within 300m	Yes	Specific locations in Bulkington, Bedworth, Keresley, Ash Green, Neals Green, Stockingford, Weddington, St Nicolas and Whitestone

26. The Open Space Assessment also shows that the quantitative standard is not being met as a large proportion of the Borough's natural and semi-natural greenspace is not accessible to the general public. Therefore, when considering policy implications emphasis should be placed on protecting existing provision whilst seeking to increase access within privately owned and/or inaccessible sites, such as the Arbury Estate and Newdigate Colliery. By allowing access, this would increase the amount of accessible natural and semi-natural greenspace provision.

#### Quantity of Open Space

Type of Provision	Deficiency	Where
Parks and Gardens	Yes	Arbury, Galley Common, Weddington and Whitestone
Natural and Semi-Natural Green Space	Yes	Bede, Heath and St Nicolas, Attleborough, Bar Pool, Bulkington, Kingswood and Whitestone
Green Corridors	Yes	Bulkington, Keresley, Ash Green and Neals Green
Outdoor Sports	Yes	Specific locations in Bulkington, Bedworth, Keresley, Ash Green, Neals Green, Stockingford, Weddington, St Nicolas and Whitestone
Amenity Green Space	Yes	Abbey, Attleborough, Bede Exhall and Poplar
Children and Young People	Yes	All wards
Allotments	Yes	Bedworth, Bulkington
Cemeteries, Disused Churchyards and Other Burial Grounds	Yes	

## Quality of Open Space

27. The quality of open space varies across the Borough. There are specific issues concerning:
- The variability of play provision in parks and gardens;
  - A lack of basic amenities on natural and semi-natural green space;
  - A lack of street furniture and signage for green corridors;
  - Council maintained outdoor sports pitches are overused and lack basic facilities.
28. Existing parks and gardens should be protected, and importantly, the sites identified within this assessment should form the basis of the proposed parks and open spaces strategy. In addition, despite local opinion stating that there is adequate provision of parks and gardens, the audit identified that there are spatial inequalities in the Borough-wide distribution, resulting in some deficiencies of provision.

## Open Spaces Strategy (NBBC, 2011)

29. Following on from the Open Space Assessment, the Borough Council has put together an Open Spaces Strategy. This includes a strategic assessment of open space sites within the Borough to identify:
- The spatial distribution of open spaces
  - The quality, quantity and accessibility of sites
  - The surplus and deficits in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility of sites
  - The open spaces to be given priority for improvement and investment to meet standards
  - The locations where new open space is required to accompany new housing development. Need to ensure that open space is provided as part of housing development in the right places, of the right quantity and standards.

## Hierarchy of Sites

30. The Strategy identifies a typology and hierarchy of sites to create a publically accessible Green Network. Criteria are set for each type of open space in terms of the scale of open space and the facilities that will be provided by each type of open space in the hierarchy. The following are included in the hierarchy:
- Regional Parks
  - Destination parks
  - Community Parks
  - Neighbourhood Parks
  - Incidental Open Space
  - Cemeteries
  - Allotments
31. It also looks at the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces. Standards are also set for quantity, quality and accessibility. The key findings are:

## Quantity

32. There is more than 500 hectares of accessible green space in the Borough. The quantity of accessible green space is summarised:

Accessible Green Space by Open Space Typology – Managed by NBBC		
Typology	Provision (hectares)	Quantity per 1000 population
Regional	Nil	Nil
Destination Parks	120	0.99
Community/Neighbourhood Parks	177	1.47
Local Parks	50	0.41
Incidental	110	0.91
Allotments	36	0.30
Cemeteries	16	0.13
TOTAL	509	4.22

33. Using the six acre standard (2.4 hectares per 1000 population), there is an overall deficit given that there is only 2.06 hectares per 1000 population. This includes open space managed by the Council. However, using the Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGST), which includes space managed and maintained by others, there is sufficient accessible green space at 2.24 hectares per 1000 population. These levels are comparable to the average levels of provision across the West Midlands.

34. Whilst, the quantity of open space is currently sufficient, there are other factors to take into consideration:

- Future growth and the increase in population and households proposed by the Borough Plan.
- The quality and accessibility of open space.

### Quality

35. The Council will continue to strive to meet the standards of the Green Flag award scheme. Destination Parks will be managed to seek a 'Good' standard on the scale and other parks will be managed to reach a 'Fair' standard as a minimum. A total of 69 sites were initially assessed using a methodology derived from the Green Flag standard. No sites currently meet this standard and so there is a need to raise standards for all open spaces across the Borough.

36. The following standards, based on the Green Flag quality scale, are set out in the Open Spaces Strategy:

Type of Site	Green Flag Quality Scale	Current Average Score
Destination Sites	Good ie minimum score of 65%	51%
Community/Neighbourhood Sites	Fair - minimum score of 50%	43%
Local Open Spaces	Fair – minimum score of 45%	34%

## Accessibility

37. Walking distances thresholds identified by taking account of results of consultation on the Open Spaces Strategy. These are:

Type of Site	Catchment Area Radius	Walking Times
Destination Park	1000 metres	15-20 minutes
Community Park	600 metres	10-12 minutes
Local Park	400 metres	5-8 minutes

38. The catchment areas of the different types of parks in the hierarchy were mapped to identify areas of deficiency in terms of accessibility. This shows that the majority of the Borough is within walking distance of a Destination Park. The rest of the population live within a short journey by alternative forms of travel. The Destination parks serve the function of both Local and Community Parks for a large proportion of the Borough.

39. To meet accessibility targets the Open Spaces Strategy indicates that all residents will have access to a Community Park. Deficiencies are identified at:

- East of Whitestone, including the estate served by Thornhill Drive
- North of St Nicholas Park Drive, including the estate served by Milby Drive
- North end of The Longshoot, which borders Hinckley and the A5
- Ash Green and Wheelwright Lane, bordering Coventry
- West of Dark Lane, including the estate served by Cardigan Road
- East of Bulkington served by Wolvey Road.

40. To ensure all residents have access to a Community park, the current deficiencies will be addressed by:

- Improving and upgrading the following open spaces to create Community Parks at Changebrook Close, Buttermere Recreation Ground, St Giles, Blackberry Lane and Anderton Road;
- Providing new open space in Whitestone, the Longshoot and Bulkington.

## Children and Young People

41. The Open Spaces Strategy recognises the need for all children and young people to have access to play provision and teenage facilities to meet their needs in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. These standards are directly linked to the hierarchy of open space sites.

42. Appendix 2 sets out the current open space requirements for on site and offsite provision of play provision and teenager facilities for new development. This information is currently set out in the Residential Design Guide 2004.

## Cemeteries

43. Cemeteries are an important part of the Borough's green space. They act as functional burial grounds and also as places of sanctuary for the bereaved, for quiet contemplation, areas for wildlife and biodiversity and as a historical archive.

44. The Council has five active sites and is currently looking for additional land to sustain burial space for the next 50-100 years. The Open Space Assessment

notes that the Council already recognises that it will need to provide additional land for burials within the next 10 years. It indicates that when looking to identify new cemetery sites, the accessibility standard should be considered. At present, there are small pockets within the southeast and southwest of the Borough that fall outside of the 15 minute driving catchment. Therefore, new sites should be located in areas that would address this.

45. The adopted Local Plan allocated land at Eastboro Way, Nuneaton for cemetery use but the Environment Agency has confirmed that this land is unsuitable for burial land. The Council has therefore considered alternative options. It should be noted that the Environment Agency has indicated that these options will require further assessment to ensure their suitability for burial land. This involves investigation of the sub strata of the land, previous uses, flood risk, proximity to open water source and location of adjacent properties.
46. The Council considered a number of sites in Nuneaton including land at Golf Drive, Lutterworth Road, Willow Road, Whittleford Park and Weddington Road. None of these were considered suitable due to unfavourable responses from landowners, flood risk and landscape issues. Potential sites at Attleborough Recreation Ground, Kingswood Road Recreation Ground and Stanley Road Recreation Ground were considered further. In addition, the potential to extend the existing cemetery at Marston Lane, Bedworth was also considered. Further details are available in the Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel Report for 20th November 2014 attached as Appendix 3.
47. Cabinet at its meeting on 3rd December 2014 considered the recommendations of the Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel met on 20th November 2014 to consider a report on the current burial land availability within the existing cemeteries and several options for a new site within the Nuneaton area. Cabinet RESOLVED that:
  - (i) the Council looks at the other land around Nuneaton as it becomes available for use as a cemetery;
  - (ii) the extension of Marston Lane Cemetery for use as a Borough Cemetery be approved; and
  - (iii) no recreation land be used for a new cemetery.
48. The Open Space policy therefore includes provision for the extension of the existing cemetery at Marston Lane, Bedworth to accommodate the need for additional burial land.

### Allotments

49. The Council has prepared an Allotment Strategy. The strategy includes an audit of the quantity and quality of allotment sites and sets standards for allotment sites. There are 23 council owned sites and a further 6 privately run sites within or close to the Borough boundary. These form an integral part of the strategic network of green space. At the time of writing, There are currently no sites considered to be at risk of closure or loss to other forms of development.
50. In terms of quantity, the National Society of Allotment & Leisure Gardeners (NSALG) recommends a minimum standard of 20 plots per 1000 households. Using this standard and a standard allotment size it is calculated that there should

be 31 hectares of allotment land. The council owned and privately run sites total to 36 hectares. Currently, there are enough allotment sites in the Borough.

51. However, when the NSALG accessibility standard of 1000 metres (or 15-20 minutes walk) is taken into account some areas of the Borough are deficient in provision. This includes Galley Common (Village), Bermuda (Village), Whitestone (East), Keresley (Village), Hawkesbury Junction and Bulkington. It also underlines the strategic importance of sites such as 'The Cabbage' in Stockingford, for which the surrounding urban development, not only serves to provide a significant catchment area, but also make it difficult to replace in the event of its loss.
52. In addition, the population of the Borough will grow over the Plan period. Further allotment provision is therefore required.
53. The Strategy considers that for a site to be easily managed there needs to be at least 20 plots on a site or 5,800 sq.m. This does not mean that smaller sites are not viable, simply that they are a less efficient use of land, resources, such as utilities and it may be difficult to ensure a long term robust and sustainable management structure. The strategy adopts the following standard:
  - Allotments being within 1000m of new homes;
  - The minimum size of any new allotment site to be 0.58 Ha.
54. Where there is a deficiency, we will seek to provide new allotments through new residential development by;
  - Providing for allotments on strategic housing sites proposed in the Borough Plan.
  - Developments of more than 1000 dwellings will trigger the requirement for on-site provision. This will include sites where the overall capacity is over 1000 dwellings but smaller sites are being developed in phases.
  - Contributions by developers in lieu of on-site provision to be based upon the cost of laying out a 20 plot site, (0.58 Ha) inclusive of all services & facilities, but excluding the land cost. Expressed as a cost per dwelling this would be, £40.11 (2013).
  - Seek to include allotment provision as part of the Community Infrastructure Levy.
55. An assessment of the quality of allotment sites was undertaken in 2009. This identified both the responsibility for boundaries, access points and haulage ways, onsite parking, communal buildings, toilets, water supplies etc. and assessed their condition on a scale of 1 - 10 using 'Green Flag' judging criteria.
56. For existing allotment sites it intended to work towards a minimum quality standard during the life of the Allotment Strategy. New sites shall meet standards, for access gates, boundary fences, haulage ways, pathways, water supply, toilets and communal stores, as a minimum.

### Outdoor Sport Provision

57. The background paper for the health policy covers this subject.

### **Policy Approach**

58. Two policies are proposed:

- Green Infrastructure
- Open Space

59. This takes account of the comments made that the policy on Green Infrastructure in the Preferred Options Borough Plan focussed too heavily on the accessibility to open space and not other aspects of green infrastructure. The Green Infrastructure policy builds on the framework set out in the Green Infrastructure Plan to identify priority green infrastructure projects to support the strategic development proposals of the Borough Plan. The Open Space policy focuses on building a network of open spaces by protecting the hierarchy of existing open spaces and setting standards for the provision of new open space to support new development.

60. It is also recognised that a number of other elements contribute to multi functional green infrastructure. These are dealt with by separate policies on Flood Risk and Water Quality, Biodiversity and Geodiversity and Landscape Character.

### **Green Infrastructure Policy**

The Borough's Green Infrastructure assets will be created, protected, managed and enhanced. New development proposals will create new and enhance existing Green Infrastructure assets. To ensure connectivity and multi-functional benefits development will take account of the following zones and projects within the Green Infrastructure Plan to:

Conserve, enhance and increase access to the diverse historic Forest of Arden landscape by:

- Planting broadleaved trees and woodland to strengthen the landscape structure, to restore wildlife habitats and corridors, to conserve and enhance the landscape of Arbury Park and to act as a buffer to Ensor's Pool;
- Creating a country/community park at Arbury to increase access to nature, to provide new habitat and corridors to link to Bermuda Lakes and the Coventry Canal.

Understand, access and enjoy the Borough's industrial heritage and geology as part of a network of green spaces by:

- Providing new routes to link Camp Hill to Hartshill Hayes Country Park, Coventry Canal and North Arden Heritage Trail long distance routes.
- Conserve and enhance existing quarry sites and geological exposures to maintain the geological record and to conserve cultural heritage assets.
- Conserve and enhance the Open Mosaic habitats associated with former quarry sites and increase access to nature at such locations.
- Improve the Coventry Canal for people and wildlife by upgrading the towpath and links to the canal to give access for walking and cycling, restoring the canal vernacular and conserving and enhancing wildlife habitats.

Restore the town's relationship with its river valley corridor landscapes by:

- Restoring the River Anker corridor as an important feature through

Nuneaton town centre and Riversley Park balancing amenity, access, wildlife and recreation objectives;

- Seeking greater access to the River Anker corridor through the town centre for walking and cycling.
- Improving wildlife habitats, particularly within the river channel.

Create spaces for people in town centres and microclimates to adapt to climate change by:

- Planting trees within Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres to create urban cooling and visual connections to green spaces.
- Restoring a strong landscape structure to Nuneaton North to create a sense of place, improve habitat connectivity, achieve urban greening, integrate development into its context and maintain separation between Nuneaton and Hinckley.

Create a linked network of signed strategic and local greenway routes for walking and cycling connecting the Green Network of key green spaces and townscape and landscape by:

- Strengthening the north south links of the Coventry Canal and Wem Brook corridor by linking to Ashby Canal and Bulkington.
- East to west cycle routes from Paul's Land via Wem Brook and Bermuda station to Bermuda and Arbury.
- Linking Bermuda and Arbury to Nuneaton town centre via Cat Gallows bridge.
- Linking Bermuda to Bedworth town centre and Bayton Road Industrial Estate.
- Creating east to west links from Bedworth Heath to Bedworth town centre and Nicholas Chamberlaine School.
- Improving Weddington Walk by linking to Nuneaton town centre to the south and MIRA in the north.
- Improving links between strategic sites and town centres and key green spaces;
- Delivering the strategic cycle network plans.

### Evidence Base

- Nuneaton and Bedworth Green Infrastructure Plan (Land Use Consultants, 2009)
- Open Spaces Strategy (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, 2011)
- Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy (Land Use Consultants, 2011)
- Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy (CSWAPO, 2013).

### Delivery Mechanisms

• Green infrastructure requirements and mitigation for strategic housing sites; Implementation of the following policies: INF1 Health, INF3 Sustainable Transport, CLIM 3 Managing Flood Risk and Water Quality, ENV1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity, ENV2 Landscape Character and Locality Areas;

- Delivery of Open Spaces Strategy;
- Delivery of Green Infrastructure Plan;
- Delivery of Allotments Strategy;

- Delivery of the proposed strategic cycle network plans.

### Monitoring

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Green infrastructure	Provision of Green Infrastructure to support development in line with Framework
Distance of Strategic network cycle routes	Delivery towards strategic cycle network plans.

### **Open Space Policy**

New development will create an improved Green Network of publically accessible and linked open spaces to support growth by:

- a) Protecting and enhancing the hierarchy of open spaces – Destination Parks, Community Parks and Local Parks. This includes: improving open spaces at Change Brook Close, Buttermere Recreation Ground, St Giles, Blackberry Lane and Anderton Road to create Community Parks and providing new Community Parks at Whitestone, The Long Shoot and Bulkington;
- b) Creating new open spaces and links for the strategic housing sites;
- c) Improving access to nature where there is a deficit of space;
- d) Addressing deficiencies of open space in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility through new provision or improving existing provision in line with standards set out in the Open Spaces Strategy;
- e) Providing new allotments or improving existing allotments for communities to grow food where deficiencies exist in line with standards set out in the Allotments Strategy;
- f) Providing new or improving existing children’s play facilities and facilities for young people in line with the standards in the Open Spaces Strategy;
- g) Providing new playing fields in line with the Playing Pitch Strategy;
- h) Creating a network of Strategic and Local walking and cycling routes to increase the connectivity of open spaces.

Land for a cemetery extension is allocated at Marston Lane, Bedworth.

### Evidence Base

- Open Spaces Assessment (Jones Plus Limited, 2007)
- Nuneaton and Bedworth Green Infrastructure Plan (Land Use Consultants, 2009)
- Open Spaces Strategy (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, 2011)
- Playing Pitches Strategy (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, 2010)
- Allotment Strategy (Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, 2013)
- Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy (Land Use Consultants, 2011)
- Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy (CSWAPO, 2013).

### Delivery Mechanisms

- Open space requirements for strategic housing sites;
- Delivery of Open Spaces Strategy;
- Delivery of Green Infrastructure Plan;
- Delivery of Allotments Strategy.

### Monitoring

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>
Change to open space	No net loss of open spaces – Destination Parks, Community Parks, Neighbourhood Parks or Allotments – to development.
New cemetery land	2 hectares of land is developed for a cemetery to accommodate burials for 50-100 years.

### **Alternative Policy Options Considered at Preferred Options Stage**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Reason for Rejection</b>
Separate policies, (or a variation) for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Biodiversity / Geodiversity</li><li>• Green Infrastructure</li><li>• Open Space</li></ul>	The preferred policy recognises the linkages between the different aspects of green infrastructure.

## APPENDIX 1 Open Space Provision

Total Accessible Open Space Provision (ha) and Total Accessible Provision (ha) per 1000 People																
Ward	Parks & Gardens (0.6Ha)		Natural and Semi-Natural (2Ha)		Green Corridors (0.357ha/1000)		Outdoor Sports Facilities (1.6Ha)		Amenity Greenspace (0.9 Ha)		Children & Young People (0.6 + 0.3 Ha)		Allotments (0.3 Ha)		Cemeteries- - no set standard	
Abbey	2.409	0.33 3	9.333	1.29	0.818	0.113	5.607	0.77 5	2.385	0.33	0.06 5	0.00 9	0.772	0.10 7	0	0
Arbury	0	0	14.30 6	2.61	0	0	14.35 4	2.61 8	10.76	1.96 3	0.07 6	0.01 4	0.38	0.06 9	0	0
Attleborough	0.876	0.11 6	5.598	0.74	0	0	14.10 4	1.86 5	1.863	0.24 6	0.14 3	0.01 9	1.681	0.22 2	1.30 1	0.17 2
Bar Pool	21.11 2	2.83 3	3.457	0.46 4	2.233	0.3	8.111	1.08 9	7.372	0.98 9	0.14 8	0.02	8.074	1.08 4	0	0
Bede	6.169	0.91 3	0	0	0	0	6.605	0.97 7	0.204	0.03	0.25 4	0.03 8	2.135	0.31 6	4.62 6	0.68 4
Bulkington	1.313	0.20 8	4.154	0.65 9	4.199	0.666	11.17 1	1.77 2	0.842	0.13 4	0.14 6	0.02 3	1.554	0.24 7	0	0
Camp Hill	3.144	0.42 9	42.16 9	5.75 7	0.591	0.081	3.279	0.44 8	14.33 5	1.95 7	0.24 4	0.03 3	1.239	0.16 9	0	0
Exhall	2.984	0.40 4	9.907	1.34 2	0	0	20.95 8	2.83 9	1.348	0.18 3	0.98 2	0.13 3	2.441	0.33 1	0	0
Galley Common	0	0	22.77 8	3	6.207	0.817	4.907	0.64 6	13.99 6	1.84 3	0.27 7	0.03 6	0	0	3.54 8	4.67
Heath	3.142	0.49 3	0	0	0	0	4.616	0.72 4	6.192	0.97 1	0.10 1	0.01 6	2.792	0.43 8	0	0
Kingswood	3.772	0.54 8	4.044	0.58 8	0	0	11.37 7	1.65 4	5.518	0.80 2	0.13 4	0.02	3.46	0.50 3	0	0
Poplar	8.758	1.27 9	10.89 3	1.59	4.538	0.662	25.65 8	3.74 6	1.793	0.26 2	0.38 8	0.05 7	0.947	0.13 8	0	0
Slough	2.177	0.30 8	13.41 6	1.90 1	1.679	0.238	0.955	0.13 5	4.459	0.63 2	0.24 5	0.03 5	3.525	0.49 9	0	0
St Nicolas	2.245	0.31	0	0	6.769	0.957	14.81	2.09	5.952	0.84	0.28	0.04	1.527	0.21	7.08	1.00

Total Accessible Open Space Provision (ha) and Total Accessible Provision (ha) per 1000 People																
Ward	Parks & Gardens (0.6Ha)		Natural and Semi-Natural (2Ha)		Green Corridors (0.357ha/1000 )		Outdoor Sports Facilities (1.6Ha)		Amenity Greenspace (0.9 Ha)		Children & Young People (0.6 + 0.3 Ha)		Allotments (0.3 Ha)		Cemeteries- - no set standard	
		7					2	4		2	8	1		6	5	2
Weddington	0	0	8.475	1.16	9.585	1.316	25.52	3.50	8.334	1.14	0.06	0.00	1.93	0.26	0	0
Wem Brook	5.16	0.72	13.07	1.84	5.871	0.829	15.61	2.20	19.65	2.77	0.38	0.05	2.967	0.41	0	0
Whitestone	0	0	0.386	0.05	0	0	3.787	0.50	5.153	0.69	0.21	0.02	1.013	0.13	0	0
<b>Total Provision</b>	<b>63.26</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>162</b>		<b>42.49</b>		<b>191.5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>110.1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>36.43</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>6</b>

Source: Open Space Assessment 2007

## **APPENDIX 2 Current Open Space Standards**

### **APPENDIX A to the RESIDENTIAL DESIGN GUIDE 2004 RECREATION, PLAY AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS**

#### **Amount of land required**

In accordance with the advice contained within PPG 17: Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation (2002), the Council has adopted a standard based on the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) minimum requirements of 2.4-2.6 hectares per 1,000 population, which takes account of local circumstances.

The number of new dwellings requiring the full NPFA requirement will be calculated as follows:

1,000 (population) / 2.6 (average household size of Borough) = 385 dwellings

For simplicity the Council has rounded the figure up to 400. Where a planning application is in outline a theoretical density of 35 dwellings per hectare will be used.

Developers of less than 200 dwellings will not be expected to make on site provision but instead will be asked to make a financial contribution. The Council recognises that on smaller developments the area provided would be impractical to create a play area. A minimum threshold of 200 houses has been chosen, as this size of development is sufficient to provide an equipped children's play area. This is in line with the policy of providing fewer but larger and more central facilities. It does not however mean that developments of less than 200 dwellings will not meet the recreational needs of the new occupants, merely that the contribution will be made in another way. The money will be added to that collected from other developments in the area and used either to upgrade existing provision or, when funds are sufficient, to purchase land and lay out a new play area, in the vicinity. Contributions sought will relate to a clearly identified need, which results from new development.

Developers of between 200-400 dwellings will be expected to provide on site an equipped children's play area with associated informal buffer, and asked to make a financial contribution for the number of dwellings above 200. This will be calculated and used in the same way as for less than 200 dwellings (above).

Developers of more than 400 dwellings will be expected to provide on site the full NPFA standard (facilities for children, youths and adults). A financial contribution will be requested for the number of dwellings over 400. This will be calculated and used in the same way as for less than 200 dwellings (above). Recreation, play and open space facilities should be designed to be fully accessible to all and have regard to the Council's design guide 'Designing for Accessibility in Warwickshire'. A development brief will usually be prepared for large sites, setting out the requirement for any additional on site provision. If no such brief exists the matter will be subject to negotiations between the Council and the developer.

### **Dedication and maintenance of land**

Most developers will want to dedicate open areas to the Council, rather than maintain liability once they have moved on. If so, the Council will require payment to cover the estimated cost of maintenance, normally for 20 years. This is usually covered by a Section 106 Agreement.

The Agreement shall where applicable: -

- (i) ensure that play areas are fenced and appropriately signposted once development has begun and will give the Council the ability to carry out the work and charge for it in default;
- (ii) require that the open space and play areas are provided before an agreed number of dwellings are occupied to ensure that the facilities are available for use without delay. Provision will be on a sliding scale to be agreed with the Council. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Council be prepared to agree to the open space and play area being provided after more than 40% of the dwellings are occupied.
- (iii) provide for the conveyance of the open space and play area to the Council as soon as possible following completion of the works. The developer shall be responsible in every way for the whole site until conveyance and for the cost of conveyance.
- (iv) detail the financial contribution from the developer towards the cost of maintaining and/ or providing the play area and open space. The Council will estimate the current cost of maintaining the facility for 20 years. The developer will normally make payment prior to the commencement of development or on larger developments at phased intervals to be agreed with the Council; and
- (v) require the Council to establish a central fund into which the contributions will be paid. The contributions shall be calculated according to the section headed "Amount of Land Required". All money shall be paid before the last house is occupied.

## **APPENDIX 3 Environment and Planning Overview and Scrutiny Report 23/10/2014**

[Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel - Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council](#)

### **NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Report to: Environment Scrutiny Panel  
Date: 23rd October 2014  
From: Parks & Countryside Officer – Paul Daly  
Subject: Cemetery Land Provision  
Portfolio: Arts & Leisure – Cllr Ian Lloyd  
Corporate Aim: Key Aim 1, priorities 3 and 4  
Key Aim 2, priorities 1 and 2  
Key Aim 3, priorities 1 and 2  
Key Aim 4, priorities 1 and 3

#### **1. OBJECTIVES OF SCRUTINY**

1.1 To provide the Panel with current burial land availability within our existing cemeteries and the options available for a new site within the Nuneaton area.

#### **2. WHAT IS THE PANEL BEING ASKED TO CONSIDER**

2.1 The Members of the Panel are being asked to consider the information relating to the necessary requirements/criteria to take into account for a new site, the varying land options that have been looked at and the options that are available.

#### **3. WHO CAN THE PANEL INFLUENCE?**

3.1 The Panel can examine the information, question and make appropriate recommendations to cabinet.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

##### **4.1 Current Position**

4.1.1 An assessment was undertaken of the existing burial land availability during week commencing 25th August and can confirm the position as follows:

	Oaston Road	Stockingford	Marston Lane
Muslim Section	20/23	n/a	n/a
C of E Section	110	n/a	n/a
Roman Catholic Section	50	n/a	n/a
Graves (no denomination )	n/a	72	810
Cremation plots	85	105	570

This does not include an unallocated area of approximately 100 graves at Oaston Road and a section at Marston Lane Cemetery.

4.1.2 The number of burials undertaken at the cemeteries for the last two

years are as follows:

Oaston Road Cemetery

2012-13	New Full Burials 44 (6 Muslim burials)	New Cremated Remains 32
2013-14	New Full Burials 32 (14 Muslim burials)	New Cremated Remains 25

Stockingford Cemetery

2012-13	New Full Burials 15	New Cremated Remains 15
2013-14	New Full Burials 23	New Cremated Remains 25

Marston Lane Cemetery

2012-13	New Full Burials 25	New Cremated Remains 21
2013-14	New Full Burials 27	New Cremated Remains 14

Therefore utilising the burial trends over the last two years it is estimated that we:

#### **4.2 Main requirements/Criteria to Consider With a New Cemetery Site**

Following the confirmation that the land at Eastboro Way is not suitable for burial, the following matters have to be fully considered and taken into account when looking at any potential site:

- The element of time is the most critical. Paragraph three above outlines the available space and the current burial rates.
- Irrespective of location, it is now stipulated by the EA that we undertake an assessment of the land.

This must take into account,

- 1 the sub-strata of the land
- 2 previous uses
- 3 flooding potential
- 4 where it lies in relation to an open water source
- 5 its location in relation to adjacent properties

It will be necessary therefore to undertake either a level 1 assessment which is desk based in the main, or Level 2 if the EA feel it warrants it for the required protection of water sources in the area. (This is the two year long testing process we undertook at Eastboro Way). Any testing under a Level 2 assessment would require at least one year of ground water monitoring.

- There will need to be for a full planning application, design and tendering exercise which is estimated at 40 weeks.
- We if we were to consider the Compulsory Purchase Order of a piece of land, there will be a significant time element to the purchase, together with the capital cost and then we would have to undertake the necessary assessments with the possibility that it may not be suitable.
- Privately owned pieces of land – sites will need to be located; owners asked to agree a land sale (which may not be forthcoming); and the associated land transaction that would have to follow.
- Look at options outside of The Borough with adjacent authorities.
- We proceed with one of our own existing sites that we believe is suitable, this would require a requisite piece of land being made available if it is currently for

recreational purposes. With the timescales diminishing, this may be the most likely outcome, subject to providing any necessary mitigation to any impacts arising from that use.

- That we utilise Marston Lane Cemetery going forward as a Borough wide Cemetery.

#### **4.3 Land that has been considered**

- Land at the end of Golf Drive – this is in private ownership, that was put forward into the SHLAA, for consideration for Housing potential. As it stands at doesn't form part of the proposed allocation and we therefore wrote to the owners seeking their views on disposal. We did not receive a favourable response, as they may believe they have "hope value" going forward.
- Golf Club land off of Lutterworth Road – this is in private ownership and put forward within the SHLAA. This is a relatively small piece of land of 2.8 acres and on contacting the agents, we did not receive a favourable response, so again they may believe it has "hope value".
- We have via colleagues in Estates contacted both Arbury Estates and Warwickshire County Council to request whether they have any land available for disposal, at this present time. To date they have not made any suggestions as to land holdings they may have which they are willing to put forward, but have intimated that they may be able to make a piece of land available for recreational use in lieu of land that we may consider from our own land holding.
- Green field sites within the Borough boundaries, as development is permissible for cemetery purposes. They would be subject to the full testing requirements. If not in our ownership then we default to the criteria set above, in relation to purchase etc. The possibility of "hope-value" for developers, particularly if the site is within one of the "preferred options", is a major obstacle.
- Land at Willow Road. This is potentially contaminated land given that it was previous land fill and at the same time, it is part of the Barpool Valley flood zone, so is not suitable.
- Whittleford Park identified by forms part of the Barpool Valley flood area, so is not suitable.
- Land off of Weddington Road. Two large fields to the right of the Weddington Walk that go all the way up to the A5. This piece of land has also been considered for use as a "natural" or "green" burial area, thus ensuring limited change to the character. This site were considered as part of the Borough Plan in terms of housing. However, it was ruled out because it is important in landscape terms. It was also considered from a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and there are some areas of flood risk associated with the watercourse crossing the land. There are areas of Flood Zones 2 and 3 crossing the site along the route of the unnamed watercourse. National Planning Policy aims to steer new development to areas with the lowest probability of flooding.
- We have taken a detailed look at the land within our own land holding, attempting to look at those that meet the criteria set above, has good access arrangements, good topography, a reasonable size to allow burials for at least 50 years and that may only require the Level 1 assessment given the time frame we have available to us. We would have to provide a piece of sports/recreational land of a similar size in the same locality.

This assessment has identified three sites:

- Attleborough Recreation Ground

- Kingswood Road Recreation Ground
- Stanley Road Recreation Ground

(Plans of the sites are attached for information as **Appendices A-C.**)

**Attleborough Recreation Ground** is the most favourable, given its location adjacent to an existing cemetery site, it only has existing properties on two of its boundaries, its overall size (in excess of 5 acres) existing infrastructure, its geographical location within the Town and its location relating to a watercourse.

Development of this site would require the re-siting of recreational land elsewhere within the Borough as recompense and the re-location of the playground equipment on the site, which could be housed on an existing site within the ward at Anker Mills. Initial discussions with Development Control have indicated that they could see no reason in principle to why this site could not be utilised as a cemetery.

**Kingswood Recreation Ground** area of approximately 3.75 acres, it is currently utilised as recreational site but is vested as HRA land and would have to be appropriated for the General Fund if this option was followed.

It is surrounded by properties on three sides and the railway on the other. It would require a full infrastructure of roadways, fencing, water, landscaping etc. and would create an area for approximately 30 years burials. It has good access although there are speed humps within Kingswood Road itself.

It houses a Multi Use Games area, Teenage shelter and POD which would all require re- locating and the re-siting of the recreational land.

**Stanley Road Recreation Ground** area of approximately 3.25 acres, it currently house a football pitch and is bordered on two sides by property, the other boundaries are the railway and what was the school playing field of Manor Park School. The canal is located within 100m of the site so a full Stage 2 EA assessment would be required. The site has good access off of Vernons Lane and would require a full infrastructure of roadways, fencing, landscaping etc..

It would be necessary to relocate the recreational area and football pitch.

**Appendix A** –Attleborough Recreation Ground

**Appendix B** – Kingswood Recreation Ground

**Appendix C** – Stanley Road