

### Informal Market Town Open Space

#### Introduction

- 3.1 PPG17 defines three types of informal open space, specifically parks and gardens, natural and semi natural open spaces and amenity green spaces. As highlighted previously, while each has different characteristics and functions, all have similar roles within the community.
- 3.2 The rural nature of Ryedale and the varying landscapes of the district influence the provision of formal open spaces and the demand for such facilities from residents. The close proximity of nearby accessible countryside including the Wolds and the Yorkshire Moors also impacts on aspirations for local provision, with many residents frequently visiting the countryside for recreational purposes. The Howardian Hills Area of Natural Beauty is also a key attraction to residents and visitors alike.
- 3.3 In light of the similar roles played by amenity spaces, parks and gardens and natural and semi natural areas it is important not to consider the provision of market town amenity space in isolation, but in the context of parks and gardens and natural and semi natural open space across the district.
- 3.4 The characteristics and provision of open space varies across the settlement hierarchies of Ryedale. For this reason, market town amenity green space and informal open space provision in villages has been considered separately. This section relates specifically to provision of market town amenity green space that is located in the market towns with the specific intention of meeting the needs of residents living in these areas. It also considers the provision of parks and the impact that these facilities have on the residents living within the market towns and the provision of natural and semi natural open spaces. The provision of village amenity open space and access to parks and gardens for residents living within the rural villages is considered separately within section 6.
- 3.5 This section sets out the background and definition, strategic context, consultation and current provision of market town amenity space, parks and gardens and natural and semi natural areas. Recommended local standards have been established and these are then applied together.

#### Definition

- 3.6 Parks and gardens provide an easily accessible open space for the public. Urban parks, formal gardens and country parks that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events are all included under the categorisation of parks.
- 3.7 Parks and gardens offer many wider benefits to the local community. They provide a sense of place, help to address social inclusion issues within wider society and also provide some form of structural and landscaping benefits to the surrounding local area. They also frequently offer ecological benefits. Parks are often a key attraction for visitors and tourists to the area.
- 3.8 Compared to parks and gardens, market town amenity space is more informal recreational space and includes greenspaces in around housing areas. Such spaces aim to provide opportunities for informal activities close to home or to enhance the appearance of a residential or other area. For the purposes of the audit, a minimum size of 100m<sup>2</sup> has been applied.

- 3.9 Natural and semi natural open space includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrubland, grasslands (eg downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, nature reserves and wastelands with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation and bio-diversity within the settlement boundaries. Derelict open land and rock areas have also been considered.
- 3.10 Only sites exceeding five hectares in size have been audited as part of the natural and semi natural typology. The size of these sites means they are strategic in nature and offer an important resource to the whole community of Ryedale. Smaller local natural and semi natural sites have been considered to offer amenity value and are therefore considered under the headings of market town and village amenity space.

### **Strategic context and consultation**

#### ***Strategic context***

- 3.11 A national survey commissioned by Sport England, the Countryside Agency and English Heritage was undertaken during 2003, studying the provision of parks within England. The aims of the survey were to establish:
- how many adults in England use parks?
  - what activities people take part in when visiting parks?
  - the reasons why people visit particular parks;
  - the levels of satisfaction with the amenities on offer; or
  - why non-users do not use parks?
- 3.12 The definition of a park used in the survey was very broad and included both formal provision such as town parks, country parks, recreation grounds and also less formal provision such as village greens and common land. This reinforces the importance of considering the provision of parks and gardens within the district in the context of the other types of open space provided.
- 3.13 The findings of the study included:
- just under two thirds of adults in England had visited a public park during the previous 12 months;
  - there is a distinct bias in the use of parks by social groups, with almost three quarters of adults from the higher social group visiting a park compared with only half of those from the lower social group;
  - people from black and ethnic minority communities also have relatively low participation as well as those adults with a disability;
  - over 8 in 10 adults who had used a park in the previous 12 months did so at least once a month during the spring and summer with almost two thirds visiting a park at least once a week, and women tended to visit parks more often than men;
  - it is estimated that the 24.3 million adults who use parks make approximately 1.2 billion visits to parks during the spring and summer months and 600 million visits during the autumn and winter months – a total of 1.8 billion visits a year; and
  - the most popular type of park visited was an urban or city park.

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- 3.14 The vital importance of parks and other green spaces in enhancing the environment and the quality of city life has been recognised in both the Urban Taskforce report and the Urban White Paper.
- 3.15 There are clear links demonstrating how parks and other green spaces meet wider council policy objectives linked to other agendas, like education, diversity, health, safety, environment, jobs and regeneration can help raise the political profile and commitment of an authority to green space issues. In particular they:
- contribute significantly to social inclusion because they are free and accessible to all
  - can become a centre of community spirit
  - contribute to child development through scope for outdoor, energetic and imaginative play
  - offer numerous educational opportunities
  - provide a range of health, environmental and economic benefits.
- 3.16 Major issues surrounding the improvement of parks and gardens and other green spaces and their integration into the management and maintenance of areas are highlighted; specifically:
- encouraging community involvement
  - forming and maintaining partnerships
  - resources
  - recognising the benefits of urban renewal.
- 3.17 CABE Space sets out a manifesto for better quality parks and public open space (2003) citing the huge national demand for improvement. Surveys repeatedly show how much the public values them, while research reveals how closely the quality of public spaces links to levels of health, crime and the quality of life in every neighbourhood. CABE Space 'manifesto for better public spaces' explains the 10 things that must be done to achieve this:
- 1) ensure that creating and caring for well-designed parks, streets and other public spaces is a national and local political priority
  - 2) encourage people of all ages – including children, young people and retired people – to play and active role in deciding what our parks and public spaces should be like and how they should be looked after
  - 3) ensure that everyone understands the importance of good design to the vitality of our cities, towns and suburbs and that designers, planners and managers all have the right skills to create high quality public spaces
  - 4) ensure that the care of parks and public spaces is acknowledged to be an essential service
  - 5) work to increase public debate about the issue of risk in outside spaces, and will encourage people to make decisions that give more weight to the benefits of interesting spaces, rather than to the perceived risks

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- 6) work to ensure that national and local health policy recognises the role of high quality parks and public space in helping people to become physically active, to recover from illness, and to increase their general health and well-being
  - 7) work to ensure that good paths and seating, play opportunities, signs in local languages, cultural events and art are understood to be essential elements of great places – not optional extras that can be cut from the budget
  - 8) encourage people who are designing and managing parks and public spaces to protect and enhance biodiversity and to promote its enjoyment to local people
  - 9) seek to ensure that public spaces feel safe to use by encouraging councils to adopt a positive approach to crime prevention through investment in good design and management of the whole network of urban green spaces
  - 10) encourage people from all sectors of the community to give time to improving their local environment. If we work together we can transform our public spaces and help to improve everyone's quality of life.
- 3.18 Further research by CABI Space highlights links between the quality of parks and the behaviour of users, suggesting that poorly maintained spaces attract anti social behaviour. A series of case studies outlining means of tackling the growing problems are provided with suggestions including:
- maximising the use of buildings in parks
  - involving the local community
  - engaging with problem groups
  - providing specific activities and facilities.
- 3.19 The recently established Natural England, recommends that all residents should be within five minutes of a green space, reinforcing the perceived importance of the provision of open space across both rural and urban areas.
- 3.20 English Nature Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) recommends at least 2 ha of accessible natural greenspace per 1,000 people based on no-one living more than: 300m from nearest natural greenspace / 2km from a site of 20ha / 5km from a site of 100ha / 10km from a site of 500ha. English Nature Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard (ANGSt) recommends 1 ha of LNR per 1,000 populations.
- 3.21 The Woodland Trust Access Standard recommends that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 2ha in size and that there should also be at least one area of accessible woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people's homes.
- 3.22 Documents published at a regional level, such as the Regional Spatial Strategy, recognise the importance of maintaining, promoting and enhancing this type of open space. The key theme of biodiversity is also referred to frequently in these documents – with RSS Policy ENV8 relating to safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity and geological heritage, and ensuring that the natural environment functions as an integrated network of habitats. Natural and semi natural open spaces have an important role to play in increasing and maintaining biodiversity.
- 3.23 The Ryedale District Council Local Plan 2002 (which will be superseded by the Local Development Framework) follows national priorities, recognising the importance of

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- providing a good range of sport and recreational facilities and protecting existing open spaces.
- 3.24 Chapter 15 of the adopted Local Plan relates to Landscape, Wildlife and Environmental Quality. It provides a list of the various sites of ecological and / or environmental importance, both locally and nationally. Generally these areas should be protected and guarded against detrimental development.
- 3.25 Policy ENV14 “semi- natural habitats” states that development that would materially detract from the ecological or landscape value of semi natural habitats will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of the development would clearly outweigh the importance of the site or feature. This emphasises the desire of the district council to protect natural spaces and the wider benefits that they bring.
- 3.26 The Plan makes specific reference to the value of amenity green space within the market towns and the importance of safeguarding these sites from development. Both the increasing pressures on sites within the market towns and the importance of ensuring that residents have access to facilities in order to increase quality of life and enhance the character of the surrounding area are recognised.
- 3.27 It is considered essential to provide outdoor play space (including amenity green space) within housing developments and the plan fully endorses the protectionist stance adopted by PPG17. Policy L7 reinforces this, stating that any development that would result in the loss of, or have any adverse effect on any area of public open space or other informal open area will not be permitted.
- 3.28 The plan also identifies new proposed public open spaces that will supplement the existing stock set out and discussed in this PPG17 study. These include the land alongside Pickering Beck and the creation of a linear park alongside the River Derwent in Malton / Norton.
- 3.29 One of the key objectives of the Local Development Framework, set out in the Core Strategy is to protect and enhance the provision of community facilities, recognising the particular importance in supporting the district’s rural and village communities and in increasing community viability and vitality. Open space, sport and recreation provision and protection can play a key role in the achievement of these objectives. The Local Development Framework will also drive the future provision of open spaces within Ryedale through the implementation of developer contribution policies and future site allocations. A key output of the Local Development Framework will be a focus on the provision of strategic open space, particularly in the context of the anticipated population growth in the market towns.
- 3.30 The Ryedale Open Space and Recreation Facilities Audit (completed by Gillespie’s) outlines a requirement for more public natural and semi natural greenspace. The document highlights a general perception that Ryedale has plenty of high quality open space, most of which is in private ownership. It also outlines the need to improve access to natural and semi natural greenspaces.
- 3.31 The report prepared as part of the audit of all open spaces also suggests two localised standards –
- a total of 5 hectares of good natural or semi natural greenspace within 1km from the edge of the settlement in Kirkbymoorside and Helmsley
  - a total of 10 hectares of good natural or semi natural greenspace within 1 km from the edge of settlement in Malton / Norton and Pickering.

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- 3.32 In terms of market town amenity space, the report suggests that additional amenity spaces are not needed and there should be a focus on the maintenance and enhancement of existing amenity spaces.
- 3.33 In contrast, the need for formal parks and gardens was reinforced across the district, with the vision stating that quality provision was essential if the district was to become increasingly popular for tourism and to create civic pride. It was suggested that two parks and gardens should be provided in Malton / Norton and Pickering and one each in Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside to ensure that all residents were able to access local facilities.
- 3.34 Imagine Ryedale, the community plan identifies six key themes and the provision of parks and market town amenity green space, alongside other key types of open space this can play a key role in the delivery of these key objectives. One of the key delivery objectives highlighted within the Landscape and Environment theme is ensuring that provision and maintenance of public space is maintained in the face of the development of additional dwellings and employment generation.

### **Consultation**

- 3.35 Consultation on the provision of parks and gardens and market town amenity space across Ryedale was undertaken through a variety of methods. The emerging findings, which have contributed to the formation of the local standards include:
- the household survey highlights that 32% of residents visit parks at least once a month and 16.6% don't use parks at all. Local market town amenity spaces are used more frequently, with 49% using them at least once per month, although almost a quarter of all respondents did not use these sites at all.
  - natural areas were the most popular type of open space amongst respondents, with over 36% of all respondents indicating that are their most frequently used type of open space. Only 7% of all respondents indicated that they never visit natural areas.
  - whilst strategic parks such as Duncombe Park in Helmsley were praised for their good facilities and the high level of maintenance and usage, a concern was expressed that these sites were not accessible to all and there was a need for high quality local provision in the market towns to act as a central focus. Entrance fees at some sites further reduce accessibility. This is probably reflective of the lower levels of use of parks and gardens by residents than market town amenity sites.
  - cleanliness and maintenance and a lack of litter was considered to be the most important determinant of quality for both parks and gardens and market town amenity spaces. The quality of parks was perceived to be good overall, with 58% of respondents to the household survey indicating that sites were good, as opposed to only 10% who felt that it was poor. Despite this, some site-specific issues were raised at drop in sessions. Dog fouling was highlighted as the most common problem experienced (by 45% of respondents to the household survey) and less than 30% experienced any other problems. In contrast, the quality of amenity spaces was rated as poor overall with high proportions of residents citing problems of antisocial behaviour, vandalism and graffiti. Workshop sessions identified that a lack of maintenance is problematic and showed a commitment for the improvement of existing facilities rather than the creation of new ones.

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- the overall quality of natural and semi natural open space was perceived to be good, with the main problems experienced being dog fouling and litter
- views on quantity of provision highlight that although there are perceived to be sufficient parks in the district, there is less satisfaction with the overall level of market town space. Residents in Malton and Pickering were also dissatisfied with the level of provision of parks and gardens, highlighting that there are perceived to be particular shortfalls of provision within these market towns. Consultations highlighted the particular value that residents of the market towns place on the open space in the area, with fears expressed that ongoing development may result in a loss of open space.
- in terms of natural and semi natural open space, the highest level of satisfaction was found in Helmsley (where 79% thought there was more than enough or about right) and Analysis Area 1 (Rural North) where the same figure was 70%. In contrast, 28% of residents in Malton felt that there were not enough natural areas available for public use. Overall, there is a general perception that there is sufficient natural open space across the district, with 66% feeling that additional provision was not required.
- there is a general perception that whilst Ryedale has plenty of quality open spaces, many of these are private and inaccessible for the general public. Despite the overall perception that there was sufficient natural open space in the district, many residents identified that there are issues of access to these facilities and that more local facilities are needed for those without transport. This was also reflected at the drop in sessions, where the importance of provision of smaller natural and semi natural sites within close proximity to the home was highlighted. It was suggested that these sites should be supplemented by larger sites located on public transport routes.
- the importance of the nearby Countryside, particularly the Moors and the Dales and the impact that this has on the overall demand for formal open space provision should not be underestimated. High levels of use of the countryside were a key theme emerging throughout consultations. Despite this, residents were keen that the presence of these countryside areas should not be seen as a justification for a lack of provision.

### **Current position**

- 3.36 The Green Flag Award is the National Standard for parks and greenspaces, providing a benchmark for excellence. No green spaces within Ryedale have been accredited with Green Flag Awards for 2006/2007.
- 3.37 The current provision of parks and gardens and amenity spaces in terms of quantity and quality is set out in table 3.1 overleaf and discussed in the text that follows. Natural and semi natural open spaces are discussed in table 3.2.

**Table 3.1: Parks and Market Town Amenity Spaces in Ryedale**

Analysis Area	Parks	Number of Market Town Amenity Spaces	Hectares	Hectares per 1000 population	Overall Quality	Key Issues
<b>Malton</b>		17	14.26	1.20	1 site poor – the only site in the district. 35% good	Four sites have no facilities. Over 50% rated as poor in terms of value. 59% good in terms of quality / maintenance
<b>Pickering</b>	Smiddy Hill	9	9.23	0.89	50% of sites considered to be good	Two sites have no facilities. 88% of sites are of moderate value. 75% good for landscape / maintenance
<b>Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside</b>	Duncombe Park	8	2.97	0.46	44% of sites rated as good. No sites considered to be poor	Four sites have no facilities, 67% considered poor in terms of facilities available. Only one site considered of high value. One site low value. All sites good for landscape and maintenance
<b>DISTRICT WIDE</b>		34	26.46	0.91		

3.38 The key issues arising out of table 3.1 above include:

- the distribution of open spaces across the district is uneven, with higher levels of provision per 1000 population in Malton (1.29) than in Pickering (0.89) and Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside (0.46)
- despite this, residents in this area exhibited the highest levels of dissatisfaction. This may correlate with the quality of sites – as can be seen above, the proportion of sites considered good is lower in Malton than in any other areas.
- although the number of sites in Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside is similar to levels of provision in Pickering, there is significantly less in hectareage terms, suggesting that sites are much smaller and potentially therefore have informal recreational value
- the majority of amenity spaces have facilities on site, something which was considered important by local residents. The proportion of sites containing facilities is however much lower in Kirkbymoorside and Helmsley than in the other areas, again supporting the suggestion that sites in this area have lower amenity value and higher landscape value.
- the overall quality of sites is good and a high proportion of market town amenity spaces were considered to be of value to the local community. On



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the whole cleanliness and maintenance was also perceived to be good. This contrasts to some extent with the findings of consultations which highlighted some significant issues.

- there is no formal park or garden within the Malton analysis area and there are no parks located within the urban areas of any of the market towns – the parks therefore offer limited local value.

3.39 The location of natural and semi natural open spaces across Ryedale District means that discussion of provision within the specific analysis areas is largely inappropriate. For example, Hildenley Wood falls within the Rural North analysis area, however its location with Amotherby ward on the outskirts of Malton means it serves the population of the nearby market town of Malton. Similarly, Beadale Wood is actually located within the Rural North analysis area, but meets natural and semi natural requirements of residents of Pickering. The distribution and roles of the audited natural and semi natural sites have therefore been considered taking into account the market town which the space is considered to be best serve.

3.40 This is discussed in table 3.2 overleaf.

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**Table 3.2: Natural and Semi Natural Open Spaces in Ryedale District**

Area	Number of Natural and Semi Natural sites over 5ha	Hectares	Parish Population	Quality of landscape	Disabled Access	Signage and interpretation	Sustainable Transport Links	Car Parking
<b>Malton</b>	1 – Hildenley Wood	83.6	5030	Moderate	Moderate	Poor	Moderate	Poor
<b>Pickering</b>	1 - Beadale Wood	20.6	6950	Good	Poor	Poor	Moderate	Poor
<b>Helmsley</b>	2 – Robson’s Spring, Temple Wood	75	1560	Good / Moderate	Moderate / Poor	Poor / Poor	Moderate / Moderate	Poor / Poor
<b>Kirkbymoorside</b>	3 - Kirkdale Woods, Hagg Wood, Woodland near Ravenswick	52.3	2880	Good / good / Good	Moderate / Poor / Poor	Poor / Poor / Poor	Moderate / moderate / good	Poor / Poor / Poor

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3.41 The key issues arising out of table 3.2 above include:

- the nature of the district lends itself to provision of natural open space and most residents suggests that due to the outlying countryside, there is reduced emphasis on providing formalised natural and semi natural sites in close proximity to market towns. This is reflected in the fact there is a significantly higher number of SSSIs (29) than audited sites (7). These sites complement the provision of natural and semi natural open spaces and more formal amenity spaces across the district.
- the quantity of audited natural and semi natural open spaces within Ryedale amounts to 231.63 hectares. Against a local population of 51,700 this is equivalent to a level of provision of 4.48 hectares per 1000 population.
- Hildenley Wood is the largest site within Ryedale, sitting on the outskirts of Malton. Despite its location, the lowest level of satisfaction was found in Malton where 28% felt there to be insufficient natural and semi natural open space. This is reflective of the views expressed relating to amenity space and parks, where the lowest levels of satisfaction were also in Malton.
- Beadale Wood is the nearest natural open space site for residents of Pickering. Whilst the quality of this site is good (in terms of maintenance and cleanliness), disabled access, signage and interpretation and car parking was considered poor.
- signage and interpretation was rated as “poor” for all natural and semi natural sites. Increasing the level of signage may result in raised awareness of the presence of sites and increased value placed on these local resources.
- there are a larger number of strategic sites (SSSIs and SINCs) than formal natural and semi natural sites (over 5 hectares) audited. These sites complement the provision of smaller open space sites across the district.
- Ryedale contains a large number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). The current provision of natural and semi natural open spaces in Ryedale in terms of quality and quantity is set out in table 3.3 and discussed in the text that follows.

**Table 3.3: Location of SSSIs in Ryedale**

Name of Parish	SSSIs
Amotherby (RN)	The Ings
Birdsall	Waterdale, Vessey Pasture Dale and Back Dale
Cropton (RN)	Bull Ings
	River Derwent
East Newton	Nunnington Cutting and Quarries
Firby	Kirkham Park and Riverside, Jeffry Bog

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	Jeffry Bog
Gilling East	Horsefield
Heslerton	East Heslerton Brow
Hovingham (RN)	West Quarry
Kirby Grindalythe	Nine Spring Dale, Stonepit and Nova Slacks
Langton	Three Dykes
Marton	Green Lane Pit
Normanby	Golder Hill Pit
Pickering	Newbridge Quarry, Haugh and Gundale Slacks
Scackleton	Dalby Bush Fen
Sherburn	Sked Dale
Thixendale	Thixen Dale and Long Dale
Thorpe Bassett	Wintringham Marsh
Welburn	Kirkdale Cave, Mount Pleasant Quarry
Westow	Beck Dale Meadow
Wharram	Cow Cliff Pasture, Wharram Quarry
Willerby	Fordon Chalk Grasslands
Wintringham	Ladyhills

### Setting provision standards

- 3.42 In setting local standards there is a need to take into account any national or existing local standards, current provision, other Local Authority standards for appropriate comparison and consultation on local needs.
- 3.43 A full assessment of local needs both district wide and within each area has been undertaken across Ryedale, and the key messages emerging from this assessment, coupled with an evaluation of the existing audit have been used to determine provision standards required to meet local needs.
- 3.44 The process for setting each type of standard is outlined in section two. The rationale for each recommendation, including assessment of local need, existing provision and consultation is provided in Appendix E, F and G. The recommended local standards and the associated justifications have been summarised below.

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- 3.45 Parks, natural areas and amenity spaces have been considered separately for accessibility and quality due to the different expectations and aspirations for these types of open space.
- 3.46 The quantity of provision for parks and amenity spaces has however been considered together, due to the interrelationships between the spaces and the impact each has on the other. Natural and semi natural sites have been considered separately, as only sites exceeding 5ha have been included within this category.
- 3.47 Following the justification for each standard, the standards are applied across the district of Ryedale in order to determine shortfalls, surpluses and areas of priority.

**Quantity Standard (see appendix E – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)**

<b>Parks and Gardens and Market Town Amenity Space</b>	
<b>Existing level of provision</b>	<b>Recommended standard</b>
0.91 ha per 1000	1.3 per 1000 population
<b>Justification</b>	
<p>The current level of provision of formal parks and gardens within the built up area of the market towns is very low. In contrast these settlements appear to be relatively well served by amenity green spaces. It is therefore important to consider the quantity and distribution of both types of space at the same time. Setting a standard for each may result in unrealistic expectations and requirements.</p> <p>There are a number of strategic sites outside of settlement boundaries which when considered alongside access to the surrounding countryside reduce the requirement for large increases in the level of provision. However, these sites have not been included within the audit used for setting standards as they would unrealistically skew the levels of provision.</p> <p>Consultation suggests that there are not enough local parks and gardens – particularly within the market towns of Pickering and Malton. It is therefore considered important to set a quantity standard that will enable the Council to address deficiencies given that the need for further parks and gardens is considered alongside the provision of market town amenity greenspaces, with both Malton and Pickering having over 14 and 9 hectares of provision respectively.</p>	

<b>Natural and Semi Natural Open Space</b>	
<b>Existing level of provision</b>	<b>Recommended standard</b>
4.46 hectares per 1000 population. (Only sites over 5 hectares have been audited)	4.46 hectares per 1000 population (sites over 5 hectares)
<b>Justification</b>	
<p>Given that the audit only includes larger sites of over 5 hectares, it is difficult to relate the consultation findings to exact levels of provision as the emphasis of the audit was on larger sites outside of settlement boundaries. There could be a number of smaller sites which fall under the audit threshold but which when applied with the accessibility catchments reveal that the coverage of natural areas is far different from that perceived when looking just at larger sites.</p> <p>As such setting a precise quantity standard based on solely sites over 5 hectares would deflect from the fact that there is potentially a wider variety of important natural and semi-natural sites which are important to overall provision. As such the standard is set for broad planning need only and provision of local sites should also be considered, both individually and in the wider context of amenity spaces and parks and gardens.</p> <p>The standard has been set at the existing level of provision to reflect the fact that the majority of residents think that the level of provision is currently about right. Setting a standard at the existing level of provision for larger sites means that the local authority can focus on improvements to the quality of sites and improving access to natural and semi natural green spaces whilst protecting existing sites.</p>	

**Accessibility Standard (see appendix G)**

<b>Parks and Gardens - Recommended standard</b>
<p><b>30 minute drive time – Town and Country Parks</b></p> <p><b>15 minute walk time (urban standard)</b></p>
<b>Justification</b>
<p>Setting a separate accessibility standards for town and country parks and local parks is consistent with PPG17 that makes reference to hierarchies of provision. This is in recognition of the fact that large facilities tend to attract users from a wider area and have a higher local profile. Residents are less likely to travel distances to local parks.</p> <p>Given the strategic nature of town and country parks, there is an emphasis in favour of driving in terms of both current travel patterns and expectations. The standard is set at 30 minutes based on the 75% threshold level district wide (PPG17 compliant). This encompasses all areas and is reinforced by the modal figure that was all 30 minutes across Ryedale.</p>

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Analysis of the household survey suggests that a small majority of residents expect to travel on foot to local parks. This was also mirrored in other consultations. It is recommended that the standard is set at 15 minutes as this is the 75% threshold level as advocated in PPG17 Companion Guide. It is perhaps more realistic to achieve than the modal answer of 10 minutes. Parks tend to be larger facilities offering a range of activities and it would not be realistic to expect this type of facility within each village. As such the standard is set as an urban standard and is also in line with the standard set for other authorities as these range from 10 – 15 minutes. Provision and distribution of parks and gardens should be considered in the context of the location of market town amenity green space.

### Market Town Amenity Green Space

10 minutes walk (480m)

#### Justification

Despite there being a slight emphasis on driving rather than walking in terms of the expectations of respondent, this has to be considered in the context of the level of respondents from rural areas, the majority of whom have indicated that they would drive. The 75% threshold levels are significantly higher in the rural north and rural south than in other areas and the standard has therefore been based on the general consensus from people living in the more urban areas.

Although the 75% threshold level district wide is a 15 minutes walk, and setting the standards at this level is in accordance with PPG17, the modal responses in each of the areas are between 5 and 10 minutes indicating that most residents expect to a shorter distance. As a key priority of the Council is to maximise the provision of market town amenity green space, a 10 minute walk time standard has been set, ensuring that the expectations of the majority of residents are met. This provides an ambitious target.

### Natural and Semi Natural Open Space

30 minutes drive time (sites over 5 ha)

15 minute walk (local natural spaces) 720m

#### Justification

Whilst more regular users of natural and semi natural drive than walk, in terms of expectations there is a slight emphasis of walking (52%) rather than driving (42%). The fact that so many people would expect to drive can be explained by the rural nature of Ryedale. In particular, a drive time catchment is considered to be particularly important when considering only sites of a strategic nature. The standard has been set at the 75% threshold of 30 minutes drive, recognising the preference of 42% of the population in addition to the current user patterns. In addition to ensuring that all residents can access large natural sites, consideration should be given to ensuring that local spaces are also available within walking distance for residents. In line with the 75% level taking into account those residents who indicated that they wished to travel on foot, a 15-minute walk time for local natural sites should be considered. This should be considered in the context of the distribution of parks and amenity spaces in both the towns and the villages.

**Quality Standard (see appendix F)**

<b>Parks and Gardens - Recommended standard</b>
<i>“A welcoming, clean and litter free site providing a one-stop community facility with a wide range of leisure, recreational and enriched play opportunities for all ages. These freely available sites should have varied and well-kept vegetation, appropriate lighting and ancillary accommodation (including benches, toilets in the locality and litter bins) and well-signed to and within the site. The safety of sites should be enhanced wherever possible (e.g. through appropriate planting, CCTV and a park ranger presence)”</i>
<b>Justification</b>
There is a general feeling that the existing parks and gardens are good quality, with a number of sites specifically mentioned as being well used. Cleanliness / maintenance / tidiness were seen to be critical in ensuring satisfaction with parks. The vision incorporates elements from public consultations particularly highlighting safety measures to combat vandalism and need for a clean litter free site, well-kept grass and toilets in the locality. In addition, the need for facilities for young people and an interesting environment to visit are reflected in the vision. The Green Flag Award criteria are also incorporated in the vision.

<b>Market Town Amenity Space - Recommended standard</b>
<i>“A clean and well-maintained site with appropriate ancillary accommodation (seating, toilets in the locality dog and litter bins etc), pathways and landscaping in the right places providing a spacious outlook and overall enhancing the appearance of the local environment. Larger sites should be suitable for informal play opportunities and should be enhanced to encourage the site to become a community focus, while smaller sites should at the least provide an important visual amenity function. The safety of sites should be enhanced wherever possible, including the provision of adequate lighting and CCTV on larger sites ”</i>
<b>Justification</b>
The local consultation highlighted the importance of market town amenity green spaces around the district, particularly given the lack of local formalised parks and gardens. One of the important aspects in the vision is for a spacious outlook and ensuring suitability for informal play. This is reflective of comments in the household survey that sites are currently confined to small cramped areas that aren't of sufficient size to enable informal play or more formalised play facilities. Market Town Amenity green spaces can serve an important function in urban areas breaking up the urban fabric. Experience from other studies has highlighted problems with providing small functionless areas of open space in new housing development, creating maintenance issues. As such, there is a focus on ensuring that smaller sites do provide an important function and promote a sense of ownership. The highest safety priority identified was adequate lighting and CCTV – and this has been reflected in the quality vision. A focus on maintenance and enhancement is also critical to meeting the needs of the public.



<b>Natural and Semi Natural Open Space - Recommended standard</b>
<i><b>‘A spacious, clean, well vegetated, litter free site with clear pathways and natural features that encourages wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental awareness across all open space sites, where appropriate. There should be a clear focus on balancing recreational and wildlife needs, while ensuring public access where appropriate and protection against flooding.</b></i>
<b>Justification</b>
<p>The main issues identified through local consultations centre around litter and dog fouling, which is reflected in the need for sites to be clean and litter free. There is an acceptance that current provision is good and that is echoed by the fact that these are the most commonly used sites as indicated in the household survey. Indeed, this level of pressure on wildlife sites from over-use could help explain some of the quality issues identified in the consultation.</p> <p>The need to balance recreation and wildlife needs is therefore reflected within the vision. There is also a need for the improvement of biodiversity and wildlife value of all open space sites and for this to be incorporated into current structures. Regular flooding was mentioned throughout the local consultation, and the quality vision reflects the need to safeguard against this.</p>

**Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas**

- 3.48 In order to identify geographical areas of importance and those areas with unmet local needs the quantity standard is applied together with the local standard for accessibility. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a much more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately and therefore helps with the prioritisation of sites.
- 3.49 The application of the standards for parks and gardens and market town amenity space together will ensure that the interrelationship between parks and market town amenity space is fully explored. These types of open space are then considered in the context of natural and semi natural open space provision.
- 3.50 In quantitative terms, the current supply of parks and gardens and market town amenity space is equivalent to 0.91 facilities per 1000 population, a level which is below the recommended local standard of 1.3 hectares per 1000 population. The level of provision is measured against only those people living within the market town areas of the district. When also taking into account the provision of natural and semi natural open space, there is an additional 4.46ha per 1000 population.
- 3.51 Given that future growth in Ryedale is likely to be largely concentrated in the market towns, it will be essential to ensure that there is sufficient green space to meet both current and future needs. The level of provision in each of the market town analysis areas when measured against the local quantity standard is set out in table 3.4 overleaf. When combined with the application of the recommended accessibility standards, this enables the identification of areas of deficiency. Natural and semi natural open spaces are excluded from this analysis as many of them fall into the rural analysis areas. Despite this, most of the spaces are located in close proximity to the towns and therefore serve these residents. This will be returned to later in this section.

**Table 3.4: Shortfalls / Surplus in provision for parks and market town amenity spaces.**

Analysis Area	Current provision per 1,000 population	Local Standard	Level of provision against local standard	Future requirement – Population Scenario 1	Future requirement – Population Scenario 2	Future requirement – Population Scenario 3
Malton	0.84	1.3	-1.13	-6.75	-5.63	-7.88
Pickering	0.76	1.3	-4.25	-7.07	-7.62	-6.50
Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside	0.40	1.3	-5.49	-7.18	-7.74	-6.62

- 3.52 As can be seen in table 3.4 above, there are quantitative shortfalls in provision when measured against the local standard in all three of the areas.
- 3.53 As a principle basis for sustainable development the Ryedale LDF will ensure that future population growth will be distributed on a settlement hierarchy. As discussed in section 1, this will see Malton / Norton as the principal service centre and main focus of growth within Ryedale. Pickering will be developed, as the main centre for the northern part of the District and Kirkbymoorside and Helmsley will see sufficient housing growth to support their roles as rural service centres.
- 3.54 Given the emphasis on these areas in terms of future growth, it is of fundamental importance that the implications of the agreed local standards in terms of the adequacy of provision both now and in the future are fully explored.

<b>MKT AGS 1</b>	All new developments should contribute to the provision of additional market town amenity space / parks and gardens.
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- 3.55 The largest shortfalls are currently located in Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside. It is important to consider the quantity of provision in the context of accessibility in order to fully understand the distribution of sites and areas where real deficiencies lie.
- 3.56 Figure 3.1 overleaf provides an overview of the distribution of market town amenity space and parks and gardens across the district. The distribution is then considered in more detail in each of the market town areas.

**Figure 3.1: Provision of Parks and Market Town Amenity Spaces in Ryedale**

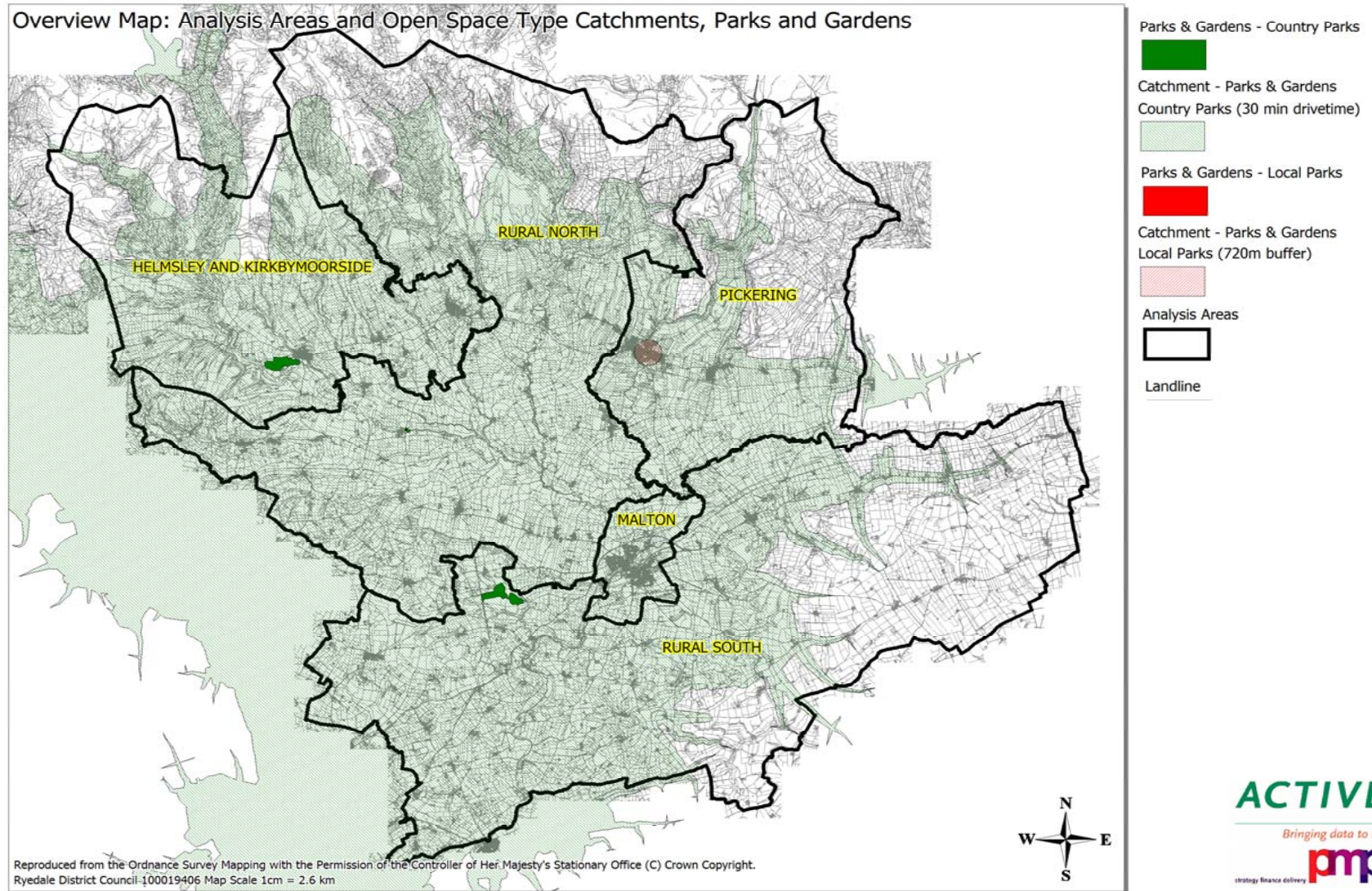
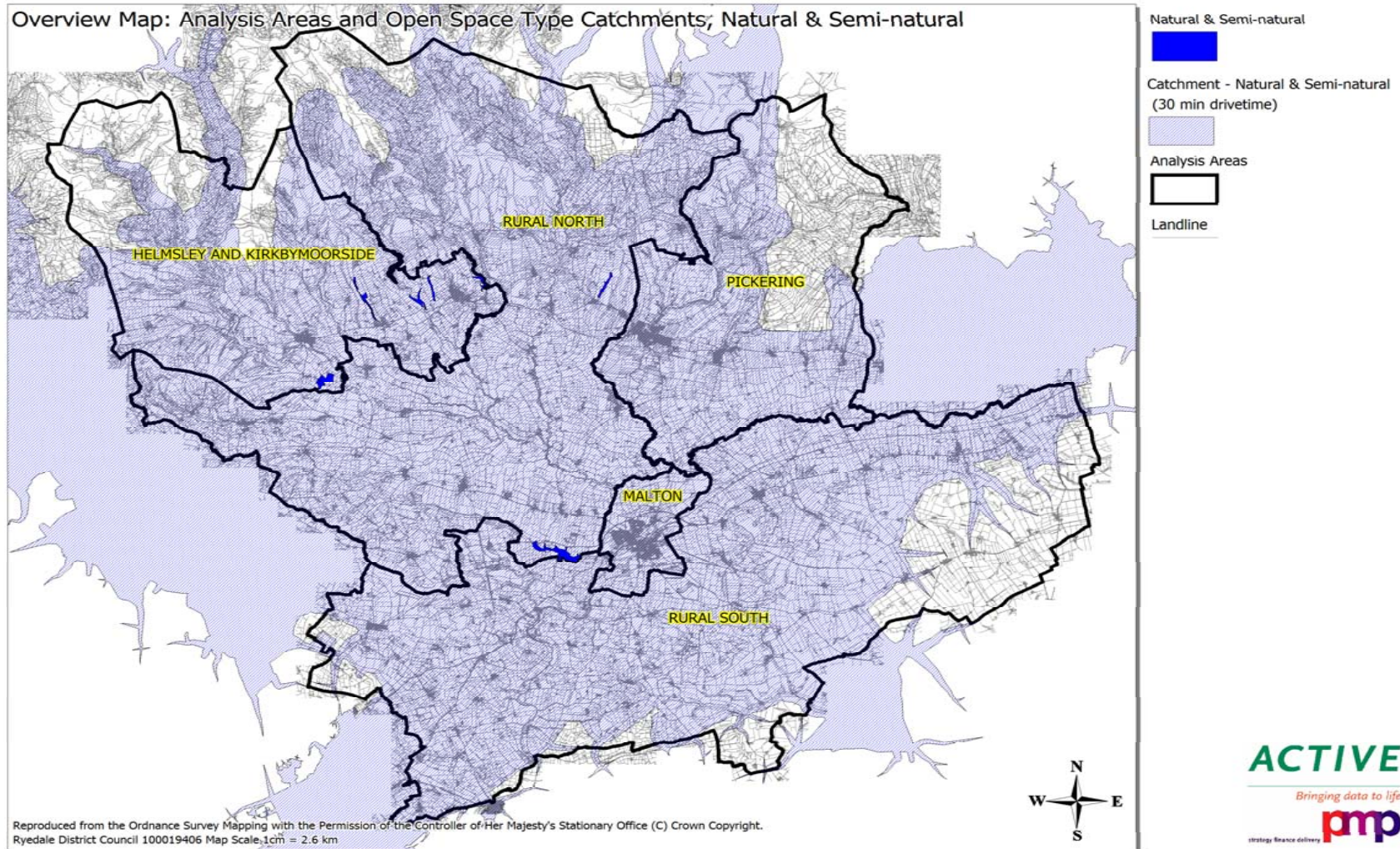




Figure 3.2: Provision of Natural and Semi Natural Open Space across Ryedale District



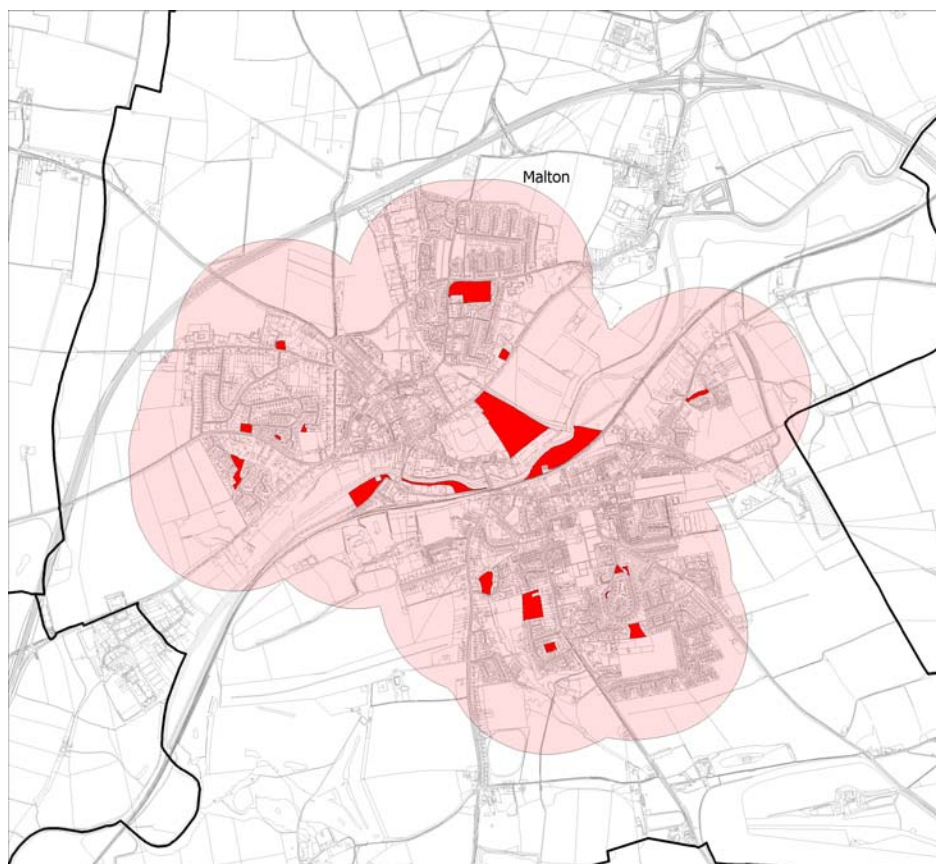
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- 3.57 As can be seen on figure 3.1 on the previous page, the distribution of parks across the district is relatively even. All sites are located outside of the market town centres, meaning that the majority of residents will need to travel by car or public transport to reach these sites, as is highlighted through the recommendation of the 30 minute drive time catchment.
- 3.58 Almost all residents within the district are able to access a town or country park within the recommended thirty-minute drive time. Only those residents living at the far north western and eastern extremities are unable to access parks.
- 3.59 Market Town Amenity Space provides more local informal recreation for residents living in the market towns (as does amenity space in the village settlements, discussed in section 6). The distribution of provision in each of the areas of the district is discussed below in the sections that follow.
- 3.60 Figure 3.2 indicates that all residents are able to access natural and semi natural open spaces within the recommended accessibility catchment. Most of these spaces are located on the periphery of the urban settlements. Furthermore, these spaces are complemented by the presence of an abundance of SSSI and SINCS sites across the district.

### Provision of informal open space in Malton

- 3.61 As can be seen in figure 3.3 below, provision of market town amenity space in Malton and Norton is currently well distributed across the town with at least one site in each residential area. The only area outside of the catchment area for any market town amenity space is Old Malton. All residents in the Malton area are able to access parks and gardens and natural open spaces.

**Figure 3.3: Provision of informal open space in Malton**

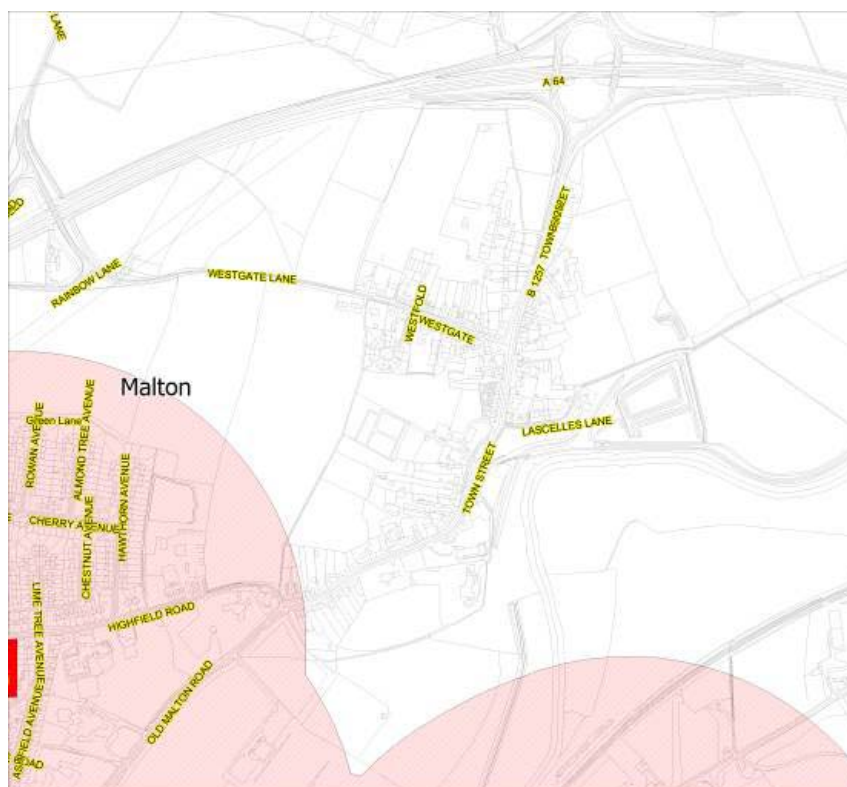




<b>MKT AGS 2</b>	Consider the development of recreational amenity space in Old Malton to offset current shortfalls of provision
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3.62 The area of Old Malton outside of the recommended catchment for amenity space is illustrated in more detail below:

**Figure 3.4: Provision of amenity space and parks and gardens in Old Malton**



3.63 Despite the fact that there is a good distribution of provision, residents in Malton indicated that there is insufficient provision in the town. Application of the quantity standards also suggests that provision is insufficient to meet the needs of residents in this area.

3.64 This suggests that the capacity of sites may be insufficient to meet the needs of residents, i.e. the number of people living within each catchment is greater than the local standard advocates. Some of the existing sites are very small and may not provide the recreational amenity expected by residents. This is particularly true in the South Eastern and Western areas of Malton and Norton.

<b>MKT AGS 3</b>	Investigate opportunities to extend existing sites or to provide new facilities, particularly in the South Eastern and Western areas where sites are currently insufficient to meet informal recreational needs
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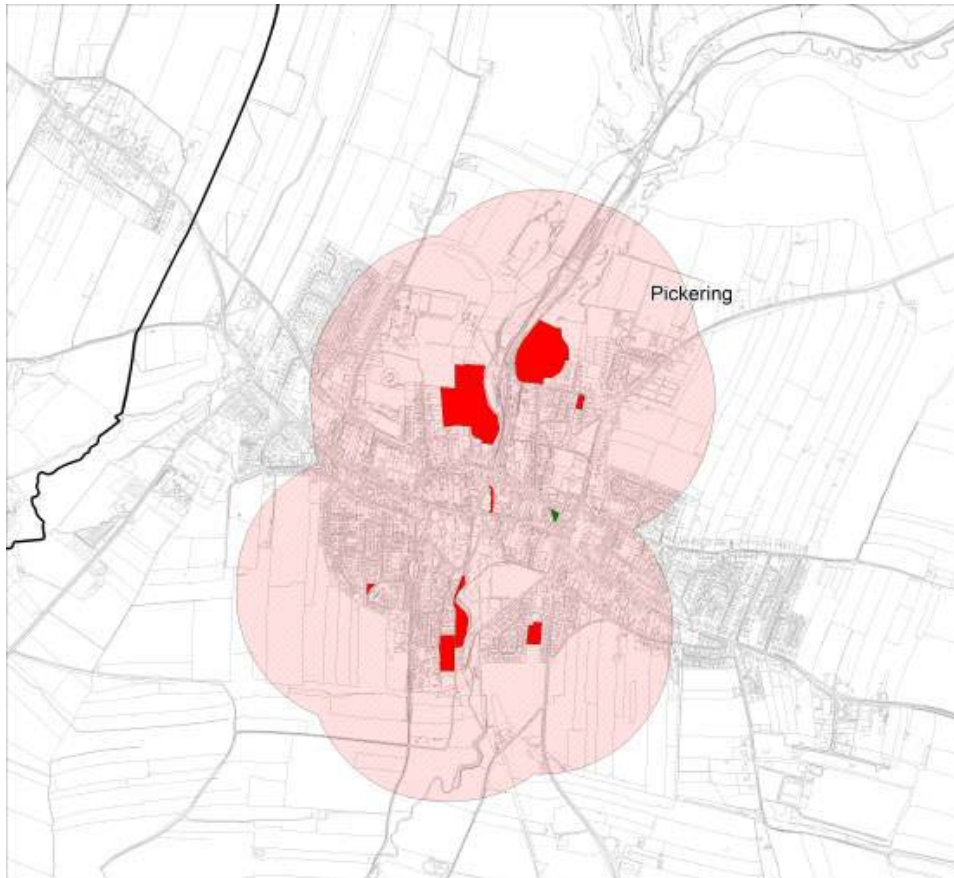
- 3.65 The projected levels of population growth in Malton and Norton will increase demand for facilities and will place increased pressure on existing sites and generate requirements for significant additional levels of provision. Efforts should be made to ensure that all new developments contribute to the provision of additional market town amenity space and ensure that new housing areas are within the appropriate catchment of green space.
- 3.66 Although all residents are able to access natural open spaces and parks within the recommended catchments, consultation highlights that there are perceived shortfalls of more formal park facilities within the urban area of Malton.

<b>MKT AGS 4</b>	Investigate opportunities to provide a formal park and garden within Malton and a further site in Norton. This may be through the development of new provision or alternatively, the conversion of a market town amenity space site into a more formal park.
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### Provision of informal open space in Pickering

- 3.67 The provision of market town amenity spaces in Pickering is illustrated on figure 3.5 below. As previously outlined, quantitative standards suggest that there are significant deficiencies in provision, which are likely to increase in light of the planned future growth.

**Figure 3.5: Provision of informal open space in Pickering**



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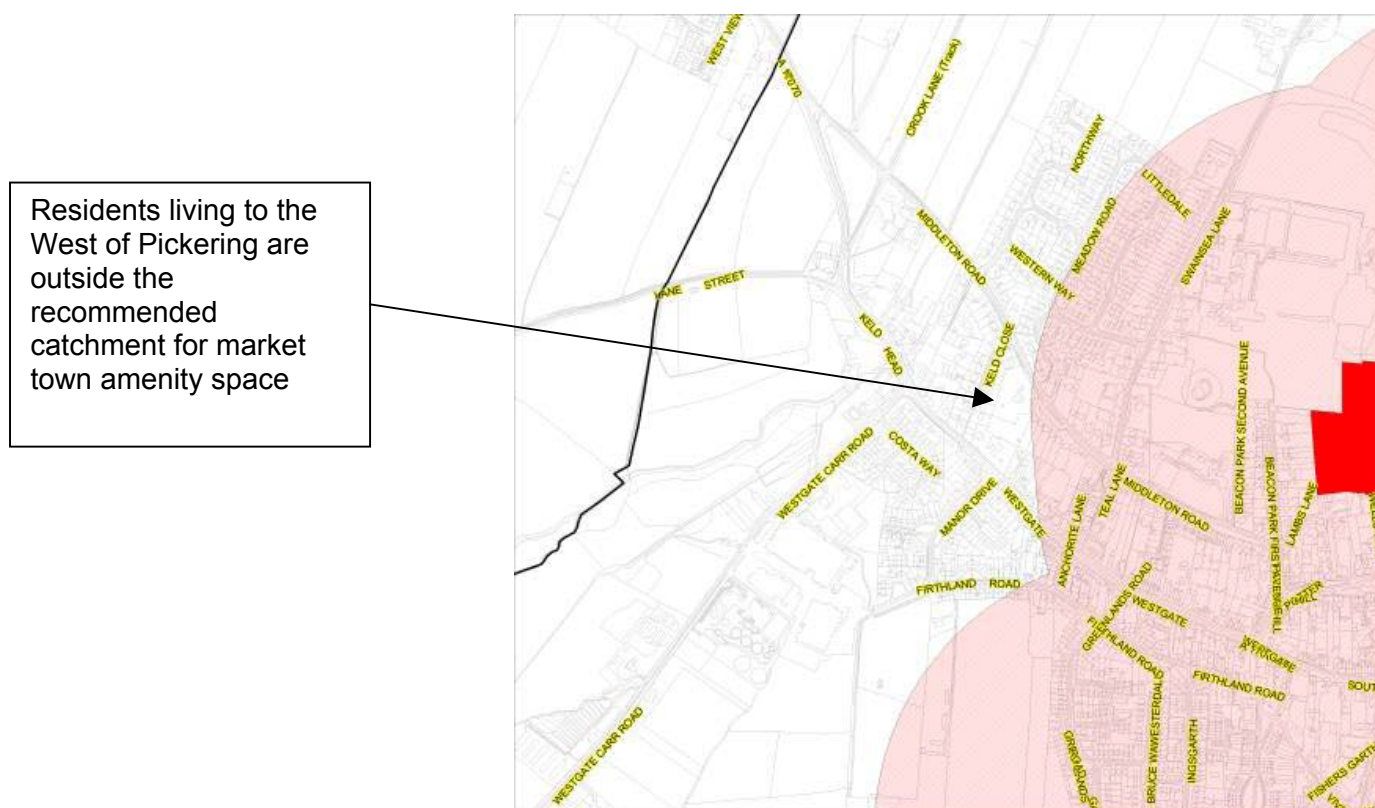
3.68 As can be seen, there are four large amenity space sites to the north and south of Pickering (and a scattering of smaller sites across the town) that meet the needs of most residents. Consultations highlighted that there are perceived deficiencies in provision and this is reflected in figure 3.5 above, where it can be seen that there are residents living in the east and west of the town without access to amenity space sites. These areas are illustrated in more detail overleaf. All residents are within the recommended 30-minute drive time of parks and gardens although there are no facilities within walking distance for the majority of residents. Additionally, all facilities are within the recommended drive time of strategic natural and semi natural open space sites as Beadale Wood is located on the periphery of the settlement.

**Figure 3.6: Provision of Market Town Amenity Green Space in East of Pickering**





**Figure 3.7: Provision of Market Town Amenity Green Space in West of Pickering**



<b>MKT AGS 5</b>	Address deficiencies in market town amenity space in East and West Pickering.
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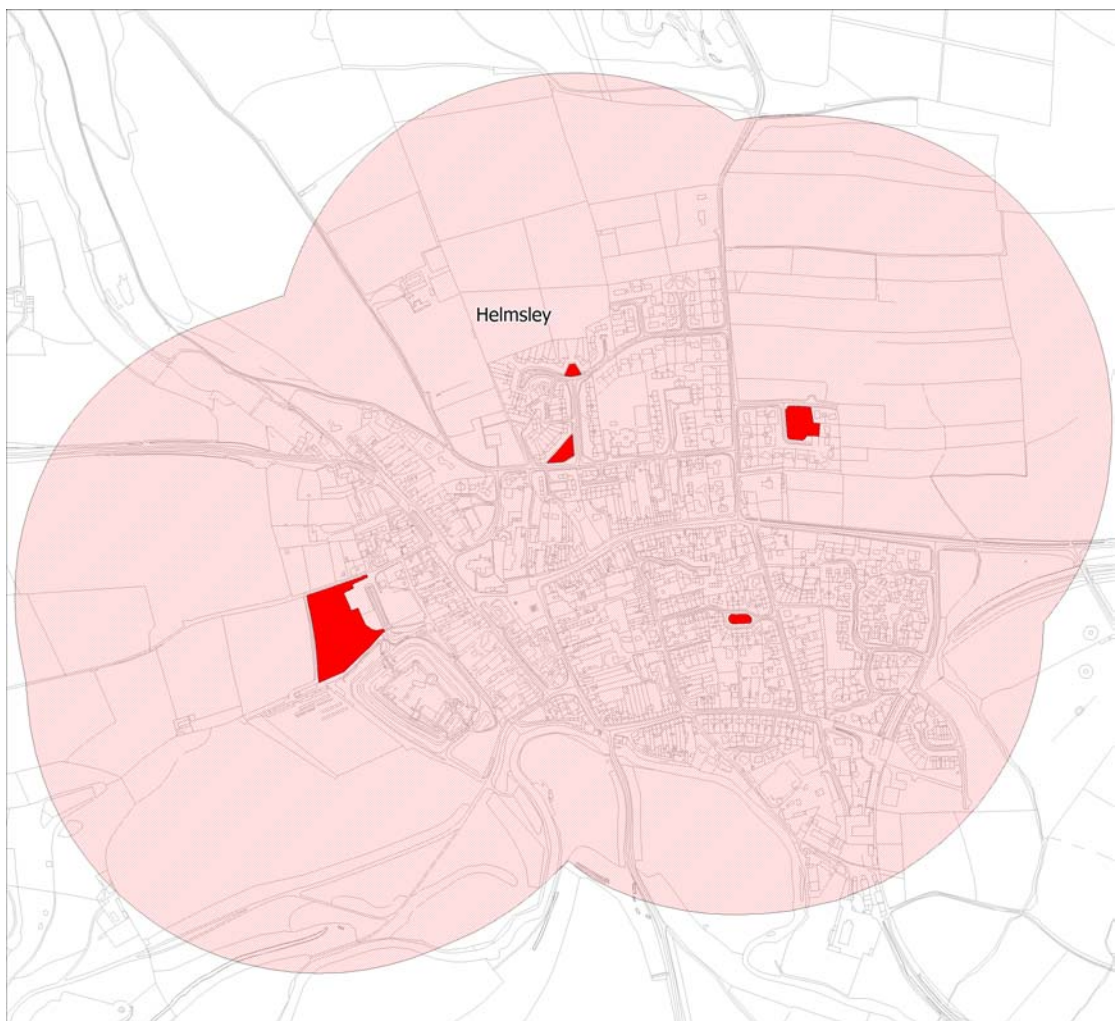
- 3.69 Existing deficiencies will be particularly important in light of projected future population growth. Addressing the deficiencies in East and West Pickering will become even more important if additional housing is located in these areas.
- 3.70 The existing deficiencies in provision of market town amenity space could be addressed through the provision of local amenity space, or in the form of a more formal park. A lack of formal park was a key issue throughout consultation with many residents feeling that they should have access to formalised local open space. This issue was expressed more forcefully in Pickering than in the other larger settlements in the district although the area down by the Riverside, which contains seating, was highlighted through consultation as a well-valued area.

<b>MKT AGS 6</b>	Investigate opportunities to provide a formal park in Pickering. This may be through the development of new provision in areas currently deficient in open space or alternatively, the conversion of a market town amenity space site into a more formal park.
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**Provision of informal open space in Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside**

- 3.71 The largest quantitative deficiencies of market town amenity space can be found in the Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside areas of the district. Despite this, all residents are able to access parks and gardens within the recommended drive time catchment.
- 3.72 As can be seen on figure 3.8 below, despite quantitative shortfalls, provision of market town amenity space is well distributed in Helmsley and all residents are able to access amenity spaces. With the exception of the large site to the eastern side of the town, all spaces are small in size, therefore providing only limited informal recreational opportunities. Although these sites are small in size they are serving large catchments that may potentially exceed that which they should be according to the recommended quantity standard.

**Figure 3.8: Provision of informal open space in Helmsley**



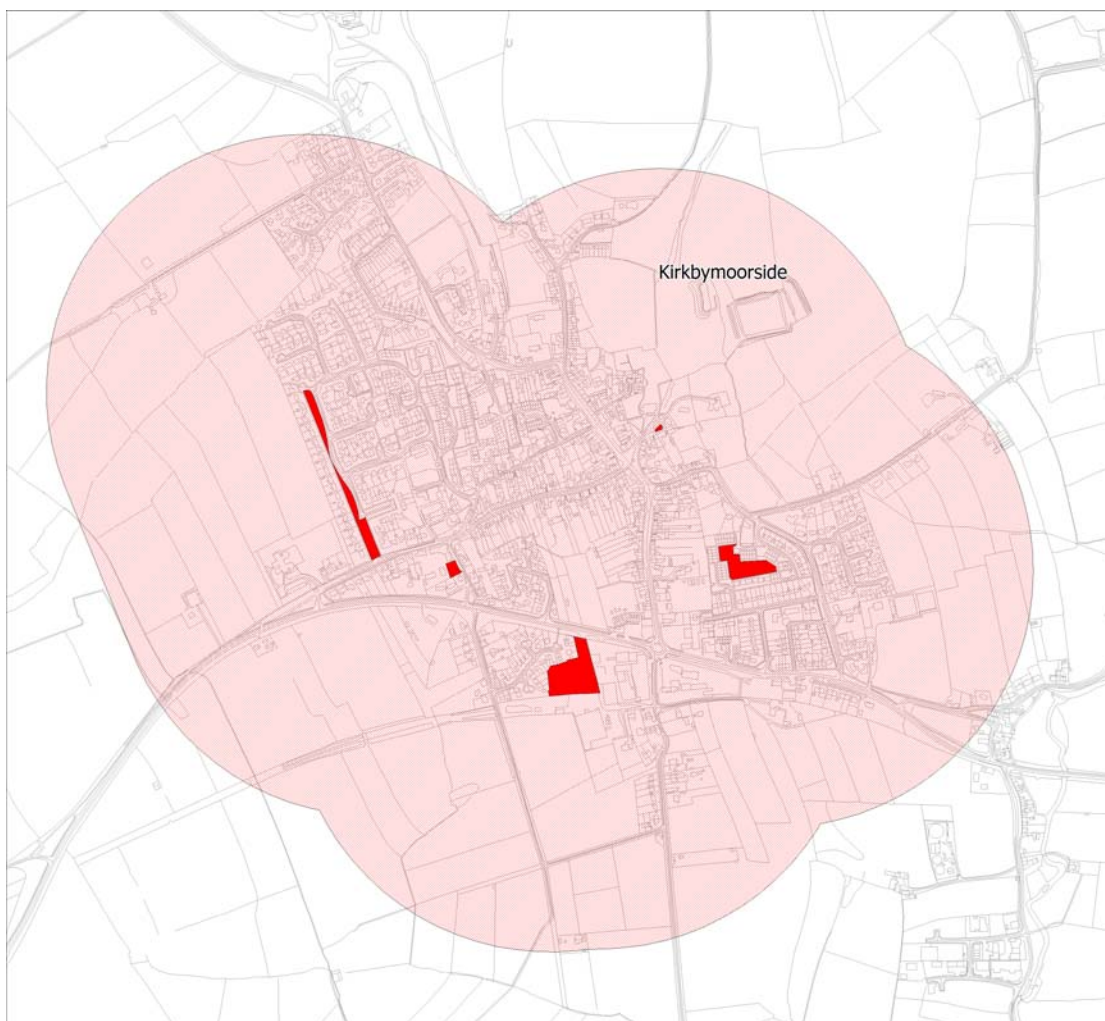
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- 3.73 Similar to residents in other market towns, people living in all areas of Helmsley and Kirkbymoorside are able to access natural and semi natural open spaces (as can be see in figure 3.2).

<b>MKT AGS 7</b>	Investigate opportunities to provide additional amenity spaces within Helmsley to meet local needs. Some of this space should be provided as a formal park and garden to identify the deficiency of this type of open space identified through consultation.
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- 3.74 In a similar fashion to Helmsley, all residents within Kirkbymoorside are able to access market town amenity space, indicating that there is a good distribution of facilities. Again however it is evident that with the exception of the two sites located towards the south of the town, sites are small in size and offer relatively limited amenity value. This is illustrated in more detail in Figure 3.9 below:

**Figure 3.9: Provision of informal open space in Kirkbymoorside**



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- 3.75 Residents in Kirkbymoorside in particular are well served in terms of access to natural spaces, with Kirkdale Woods, Hagg Wood and Ravenswick Wood all in close proximity to the settlement.

<b>MKT AGS 8</b>	Investigate opportunities to provide additional amenity spaces within Kirkbymoorside to meet local needs. This may include formalising an existing amenity space to address the identified deficiencies in parks and gardens
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### Value assessment

- 3.76 Value is an entirely different and separate concept from quality. It relates to the context, level and type of use and the wider benefits of each open space, sport and recreation facility.
- 3.77 PPG17 notes that in relation to context, a space or facility that is inaccessible is almost irrelevant to potential users and therefore may be of little value, irrespective of its quality. Similarly, if there is significantly more high quality provision in an area than needed, some of it may well be of relatively little value – and conversely if there is very little provision in an area, even a space or facility of mediocre quality may well be valuable and well used by the local community.
- 3.78 In addition to ensuring that there are sufficient open spaces, it is also important to maintain and enhance existing open spaces, ensuring they offer both a visual amenity and meet resident expectations. In light of the identified quantitative deficiencies of amenity space and the resulting increased levels of pressure on existing sites, all sites considered to be of poor quality should be enhanced.
- 3.79 The quality of sites was discussed early in this section and it was evident that there are significant variations in the quality of facilities and a public perception that amenity spaces are of poor quality.

<b>MKT AGS 9</b>	<p>Enhance the quality of the recreation ground in Malton, the only site perceived to be of poor quality through the site visits.</p> <p>Given that consultation identified a number of perceived poor quality facilities and local issues, quality of amenity space sites should be monitored on an ongoing basis and improvements made where required.</p>
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- 3.80 Where possible, providers of all sites, both now and in the future should strive to achieve the quality vision, ensuring that sites meet the identified needs of users. It should be ensured that any sites are designed in line with the identified quality vision.

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<b>MKT AGS 10</b>	All providers of market town AGS should strive to meet the quality vision. All new provision should also meet this identified standard.
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- 3.81 Market Town Amenity space should be considered not only in terms of the level of recreational value that the site brings, but also in the context of the wider landscape and visual amenity the site offers.
- 3.82 In addition to the recreational and amenity value highlighted by residents, a number of sites were highlighted as being particularly valuable in terms of the wider values they offer, particularly in terms of ecological designations, heritage, horticultural and landscape benefits.

<b>MKT AGS 11</b>	<p>Ensure the protection of valuable amenity green space sites, particularly those offering a vast array of wider benefits, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pickering Castle Surrounds, Pickering</li><li>• Lakesideway, Norton</li><li>• Derwentio Roman Fort, Malton</li><li>• West Pasture, Kirkbymoorside</li><li>• Norton Road Picnic Area</li></ul>
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- 3.83 PPG17 notes that poorly used spaces or facilities may be of little value (although the visual impact of a poorly used greenspace can be significant) while well used spaces and facilities are always of high value. The level of usage has not been assessed as part of this study. It is recommended that the Council gather this information to increase understanding of the value of existing sites. Almost all amenity space sites within the market towns serve unique catchments and are therefore likely to be particularly valuable to local residents.

### Summary

- 3.84 Consultation highlights that there is an overall perception of insufficient amenity space in the market towns of Ryedale. There is also a fear amongst residents that amenity spaces will be lost in light of the planned development and projected population growth across the market towns. The parks, located in the rural hinterlands of the market towns provide an important resource for all residents in Ryedale. Despite this, consultation identified the requirement for more localised provision of parks within the settlements.
- 3.85 While there is perceived to be insufficient amenity space, consultation also emphasises that there is an overall opinion that the quality is varying and indeed many residents highlighted that they perceived amenity spaces to be of poor quality. Natural and semi natural sites were perceived to of good quality, and these were the most frequently visited types of open space.
- 3.86 The recommended quantity standard reflects the local expectation for higher levels of provision and all three areas fall below the standard. Despite the quantitative



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shortfalls in provision, the application of the accessibility standards highlights an overall good distribution of facilities and there are few residents outside of the recommended catchment areas for these types of open space. In some instances however, amenity spaces are relatively small in size and have limited recreational value. This may also mean that they are serving more residents than is appropriate when measured against the recommended local standard, placing increased pressures on the spaces.

- 3.87 The identified deficiencies of parks should also be considered and it may be appropriate to formalise existing amenity spaces or develop new spaces to serve as parks to meet the needs of local communities.
- 3.88 All residents of market towns are within the recommended drivetime catchment area of natural and semi natural open space. Access to nearby open countryside further supplements this provision.