

Amenity green space

Definition

- 9.1 This type of open space is most commonly found in housing areas. It includes informal recreation spaces and green spaces in and around housing. The primary purpose is to provide opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or to enhance the appearance of residential or other areas.

Picture 9.1 Mountfield Village Hall amenity green space (Site ID 381)



Strategic context and consultation

- 9.2 Much of the focus on the protection of green space in Rother District has concentrated on large open space areas such as playing fields and the areas of outstanding natural beauty. However, amenity green space can often be valuable in the 'greening' of an area but can suffer from development pressures. This is particularly true in urban areas.
- 9.3 The pressure for increased housing in Rother makes amenity green spaces particularly vulnerable to development so the protection of sites is particularly important for this typology.
- 9.4 Only a small number of respondents to the household survey stated that amenity green spaces were their most used open space type therefore the following results may not be representative of users who typically use such spaces. All users but one indicated that they drove to such facilities, with the majority taking less than 10 minutes to do so.

Setting provision standards

- 9.5 In setting local standards for amenity green spaces there is a need to take into account any national or local standards, current provision, other local authority standards for appropriate comparison, site assessments and consultation on local needs. Full justifications for the local standards are provided within Appendix G, H and I. The recommended local standards have been summarised below in the context of amenity green space sites in Rother District.

Current position

- 9.6 There are 205 amenity green spaces, encompassing an area of 74.95ha. The current District-wide provision level is 0.88ha per 1,000 population.

Quantity standard

- 9.7 The average size of an amenity green space in the District is 0.37ha. The rural areas had a larger number of amenity green spaces with East Rother having the largest average site size and West Rother the smallest.

Table 9.1 Analysis area breakdown

| Analysis area | Number of sites | Total hectares | Average site size (ha) (ha per 1000) |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Bexhill | 57 | 34.03 | 0.60 (0.84) |
| Battle | 24 | 8.28 | 0.35 (1.73) |
| Rye | 11 | 3.7 | 0.33 (0.92) |
| East Rother | 64 | 18.57 | 0.29 (1.05) |
| West Rother | 49 | 10.37 | 0.21 (0.55) |

- 9.8 The only national standard for amenity green space provided is by the *Rethinking Open Space report* – an average of all local authority standards – which is 2 ha per 1,000 population.
- 9.9 Other national standards make reference to amenity green space, including the National Playing Fields Association's (NPFA) Six Acre Standard. This recommends 2 acres (0.8 ha) per 1,000 population for 'playing spaces'. Some local authorities in the past have added an extra 1 acre (0.41ha) per 1,000 population intended for residential areas.
- 9.10 There is a split in public opinion regarding the amount of amenity green space. 45% of respondents to the household survey believe provision levels to be about right or too much. However, a further 42% state that levels are nearly enough or not enough.

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUANTITY STANDARD

1.73ha per 1,000
population

(District-wide)

- 9.11 A single quantity standard has been proposed for the whole district. The quantity standard has been set at the highest current provision level of all analysis areas. This recognises the principle of equality between the different areas of the District whilst accounting for the lack of student desire for increased provision levels. Therefore a quantity standard of 1.73 hectares per 1,000 population is proposed for all areas of the District.

Quality standard

- 9.12 There are currently no local quality standards for this type of open space. However Green Flag criteria indicates that sites should be 'a welcoming place, healthy, safe and secure, clean and well-maintained and well managed'.
- 9.13 From the household survey, user aspirations for amenity green spaces included: toilets, parking facilities, litter bins and good access to sites. These quality factors (together with other consultation findings) have formed the basis of the quality standard for amenity green spaces. Further justification is set out in Appendix I.
- 9.14 The average quality score for amenity green space sites in the District is 55%. This is a relatively low score compared to other local authorities where PMP have undertaken PPG17 assessments, partly due to the lack of ancillary facilities at sites. The worse scoring sites are:
- Chain Lane AGS, Battle (Site ID 264)
 - Northiam Scout Hut AGS, East Rother (Site ID 870)
 - Market Square Recreation Ground, Battle (Site ID 266).

RECOMMENDED LOCAL QUALITY STANDARD

"Amenity green spaces should have varied equipment and ancillary facilities suitable for the size of the site. A variety of vegetation should be provided to enhance the overall appearance of the local environment. Larger sites should be suitable for informal play opportunities and should be encouraged to become a community focus. Smaller sites should, as a minimum, provide an important visual amenity function. Safety and security should be considered wherever possible, including the provision of appropriate lighting."

- 9.15 The quality standard provides the vision for any new provision and also a benchmark for existing natural and semi-natural greenspace to achieve in terms of enhancement. Appendix I provides further explanation on the suggested approach to the future benchmarking of sites.

Accessibility standard

- 9.16 With regards to accessibility there are no definitive national or local standards.
- 9.17 The average accessibility score was 54% for amenity green spaces sites in the District. The worse scoring sites were:
- Chain Lane AGS, Battle (Site ID 264)

RECOMMENDED LOCAL ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD

**10 minute walk
(800m)**

- Levetts Lane AGS, West Rother (Site ID 418)
- Burnt Lodge Lane AGS, West Rother (Site ID 845)
- Cross Lane AGS, West Rother (Site ID 847).

9.18 The 75% threshold for amenity green space was a 10 minute walktime in the rural areas but a 15 minute walktime in the urban areas. It was felt, however, that it should be an aspiration for all Rother residents to have equal access to this typology, therefore the same standard has been set for all areas at 10 minutes. By their nature, amenity green spaces tend to be easily accessible on foot and 67% of respondents to the household survey stated this to be their desired mode of transport. This equates to a 800m distance along roads and footpaths, or a 480m straight line distance.

Applying provision standards – identifying geographical areas

- 9.19 In order to identify important geographical areas and those areas with local needs, we apply quantity and accessibility standards together. Quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards help determine where those deficiencies are important.
- 9.20 Map 9.1 overleaf shows the spatial distribution of amenity green space in the Rother District. It highlights that the West Rother analysis area is well served by this typology with no major towns or villages without a site. There are a couple of minor gaps in provision at the edge of settlements, mainly Ticehurst and Robertsbridge.
- 9.21 The provision gap in Ticehurst is covered by the St Augustine Church and Ticehurst Recreation Ground, therefore new provision is not recommended. The last area, Robertsbridge, has a provision gap to the west of the settlement and this has only wooded areas to compensate. Therefore it is recommended that it become a long term goal for the Council to provide a new amenity greenspace in this area.

AGS 1

The Council to consider new long term provision west Robertsbridge.

- 9.22 The East Rother analysis area has a good coverage of amenity green space sites however there is one settlement without provision. Broad Oak has limited amenity green space accessibility but has significant other open space resources, therefore new provision in this area should only be of a low priority.

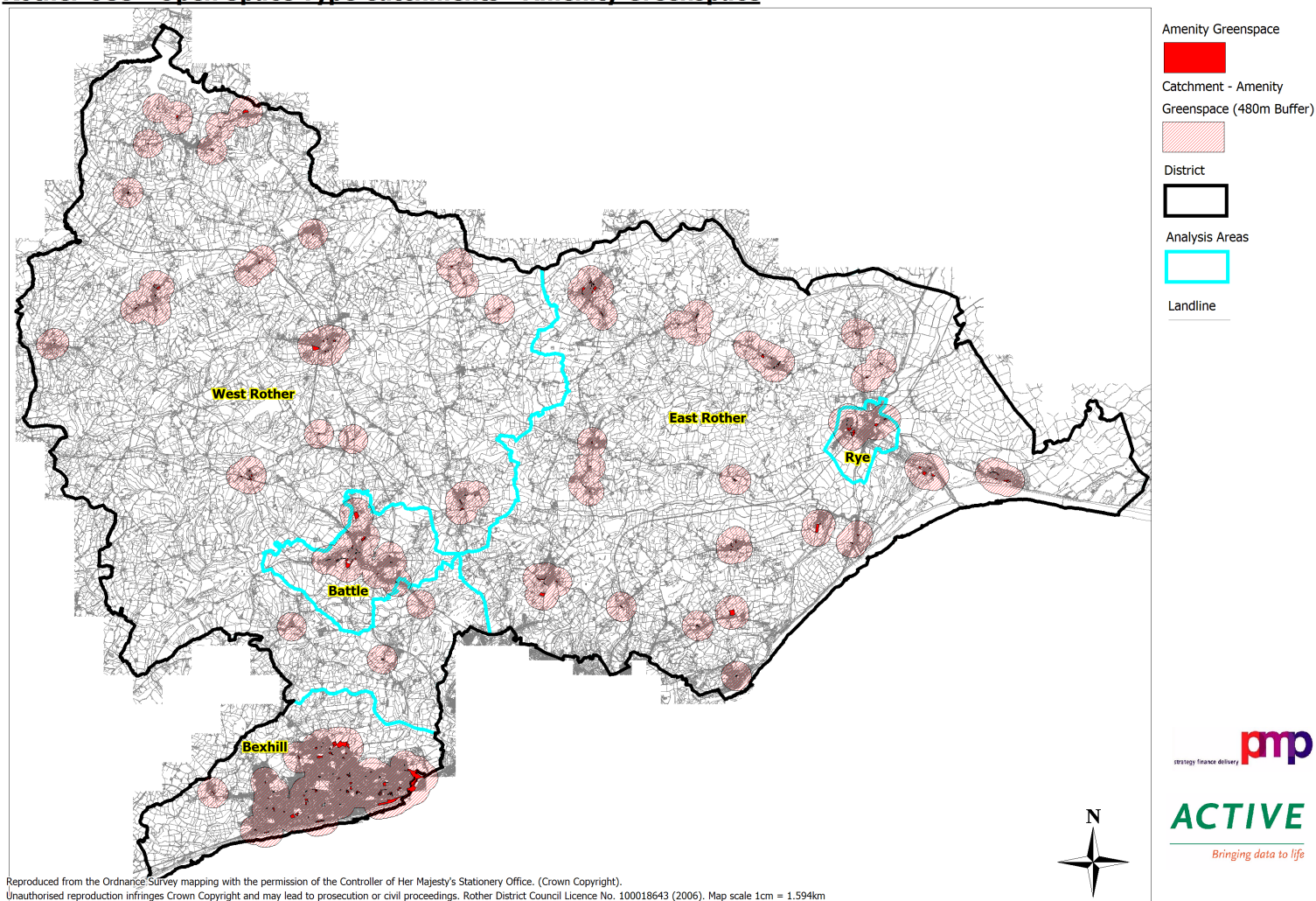
AGS 2

New provision in Broad Oak should be considered as a low priority.

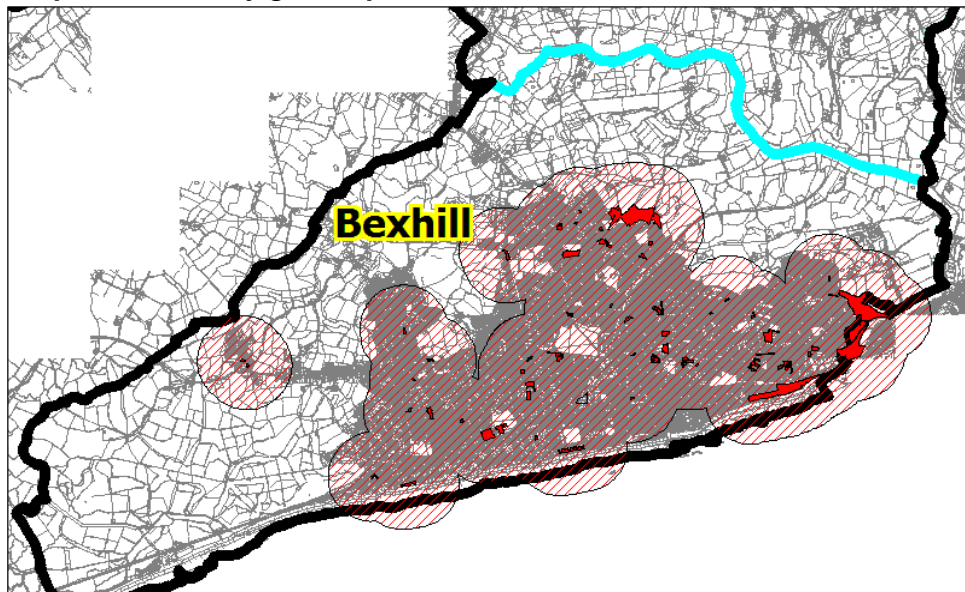
SECTION 9 – AMENITY GREEN SPACE

Map 9.1 Accessibility catchment for amenity green spaces

Rother OSS - Open Space Type Catchments - Amenity Greenspace



Map 9.2 *Amenity green spaces in Bexhill*

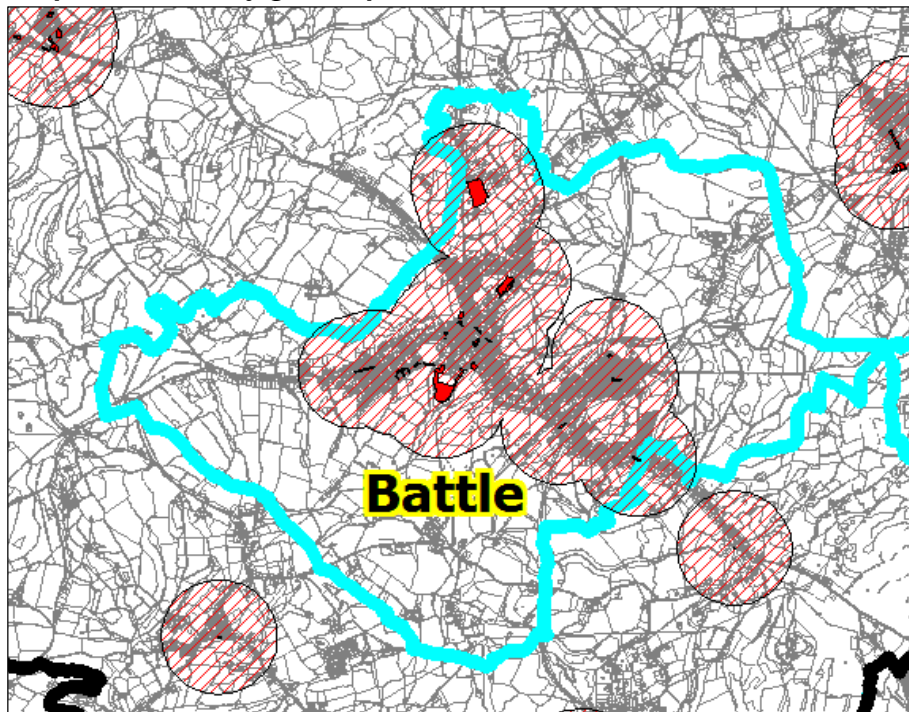


- 9.23 Map 9.3 shows that there is a good coverage of amenity green spaces in the Bexhill analysis area. Whilst most residential areas fall within a catchment area any further development to the west would place too much demand upon these more centrally located sites. There are significant open space resources at Collington and Gillham wood that serve a similar function and are accessible to residents west of Bexhill. The Council should prioritise improvements to these sites to ensure they are accessible to all rather than focus upon new provision.

AGS 3

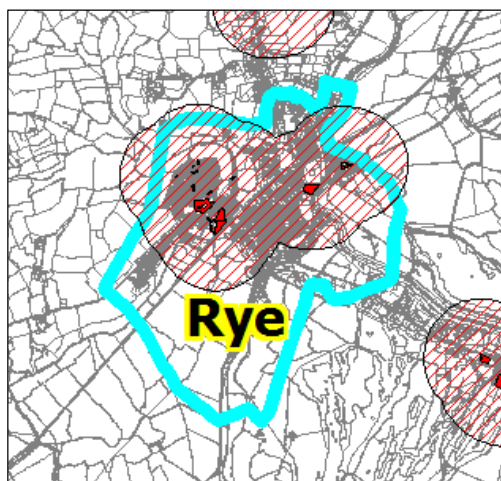
The Council to concentrate on qualitative improvements to Collington and Gillham wood in west Rother to help ensure these sites are accessible to all.

Map 9.3 Amenity green spaces in Battle



- 9.24 Map 9.3 illustrates that the Battle area is well served by amenity green spaces with only a small, sparsely populated area in the west without access. Due to the good coverage of amenity green space sites, the Council should seek to improve the standard of existing sites rather than provide new provision.

Map 9.4 Amenity green spaces in Rye



- 9.25 The Rye analysis area is also well covered by amenity green spaces. There is a small area to the north of Rye without access. However this area is well served by both a recreation ground and woodland, therefore new provision is not recommended. Instead the Council should concentrate on qualitative improvements in this area.

AGS 4

The Council to concentrate upon qualitative improvements to amenity green spaces in the Battle and Rye areas.

Value assessment

- 9.26 Sites that generally have a high quality score and high accessibility score frequently have a high level of usage as there is a direct correlation between these factors.
- 9.27 Amenity green space sites offer a recreational value, aesthetic value and natural buffer between roads and houses. The sites which scored highest for both quality and access are:
- Dane Court Close, Bexhill (Site ID 201)
 - Holliers Hill AGS, Bexhill (Site ID 198)
 - Sidley Community Centre, Bexhill (Site ID 187).
- 9.28 Sites which scored poorly for quality and access are:
- Chain Lane AGS, Battle (Site ID 264)
 - Northiam Scout Hut AGS, East Rother (Site ID 870)
 - Market Square Recreation Ground, Battle (Site ID 266).
- 9.29 Where sites have scored poorly from a value perspective the Council should aim to either improve the current standard of site or investigate the possibility of redesignating it to another open space typology. The latter option will not be applicable in many scenarios due to the small size of many amenity green space sites.

Summary and recommendations

- 9.30 It is a reasonable aspiration for all residents in urban areas to be within the catchment area of either a public amenity green space or a public park or garden. It should be a priority for the Council to help develop new open space sites in the areas identified in this study.
- 9.31 In addition to the new provision identified, there are some significant quality issues at some sites. The Council should use the quality standard developed as an aspiration for all sites within their control in the District and provide an action plan to attaining this standard.

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|--------------|--|
| AGS 1 | The Council to consider new long term provision west Robertsbridge. |
| AGS 2 | New provision in Broad Oak should be considered as a low priority. |
| AGS 3 | The Council to concentrate on qualitative improvements to Collington and Gillham wood in west Rother to help ensure these sites are accessible to all. |
| AGS 4 | The Council to concentrate upon qualitative improvements to amenity green spaces in the Battle and Rye areas. |