



Green and Blue Spaces Provision in Maidstone Borough

Quantitative Assessment (May 2014)

Maidstone Green Spaces Strategy 2004

In 2004 Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) was one of the first councils to produce a green spaces strategy. This was done through a consultant, JMP. A large part of the work carried out by JMP, was to identify exactly what green space there was in the borough.

The green space was categorised into 8 different green space types and requests sent out to all parishes and ward councillors for information on their green space. All of the consultees replied telling JMP about the green space that they were aware of in their area. All of these areas were then given one of the eight categories and mapped using GIS. This then produced tables showing the type and amount of green space in all of the wards across the borough.

As part of this consultation consultees were asked if they were happy with the amount of green space in the borough. As most people were happy with the amount of green space and the table detailing all of this green space a standard based on this was agreed.

These 2004 green space types and adopted standards can be seen in the table below:

GREEN SPACE TYPE	HECTARE (Per 1000 population)	
	URBAN	RURAL
Parks and Gardens	2.30	N/A*
Natural and semi-natural areas	ANGSt standard	ANGSt standard
Amenity Green space	0.7	0.8

Provision for Children and Young Peoples (Equipped Play)	0.12	0.09
Green Corridors	N/A	N/A
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.4	2.7
Allotments and Community Gardens	0.21	0.18
Cemeteries and Graveyards	0.66	0.59

As Maidstone was one of the first authorities to produce a Green Spaces Strategy there were several issues with the provision tables

produced, these being:

1. That no differentiation was made between green space that could be accessed by members of the public and that which could just be seen,
2. One of the green space types, Green Corridors, were more of an aspirational concept and could not actually be measured.
3. The ANGSt standard used as a measure for Natural and Semi Natural areas was actually an accessibility standard not a quantitative standard, so was very difficult to alter.

2007 Update

The data captured in the 2004 Green Spaces Strategy was updated as new green spaces became available to MBC, often as part of a S106 Developer Contribution, but the core data remained unchanged. The latest data available as a comparison was the 2007 data.

2014 Green and Blue Infrastructure

The new Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy which is currently being produced will supersede the 2004 Green Spaces Strategy, will plug into the MBC Core Strategy which will help to shape future development in the borough.

Before this work was completed it was agreed to carry out a brief review of the green space provision tables and GIS maps to update some of the changes and errors that have been identified over the last 10 years. It soon became apparent that the lack of clarity in 2004 between publicly accessible and non publicly accessible green space made it worth while reviewing all of the data to make it as accurate as possible.

There were also a number of other improvements that were made to how the green space provision data was captured.

1. The number of Green Space types was reduced for the following reason:
 - a. **Parks and Gardens** – This category was dropped as the only thing that separated parks and gardens from other green space types was having

park or garden in the title. For example this meant that South Park and Parkwood Recreation ground were in entirely different categories when essentially they are the same.

- b. **Green Corridors** – This was an aspirational concept to connect the countryside to the centre of Maidstone town. Whilst a very good idea and a good aspiration, it is not possible to measure so not recorded as a green space type.
 - c. **Cemeteries and Grave Yards** – As the number of closed church yards alters little and once they are closed they are usually left for wildlife it was considered appropriate to include them in the Natural/Semi Natural Category. There are only a handful of open church yards with the majority of the capacity coming from Maidstone Cemetery. This capacity should be reviewed for the future but does not need to be in its own category so was again added to the natural semi natural category.
2. To avoid confusion an improved definition of what open space is, and is not, for the purpose of this study was produced and is as follows:

Publicly accessible green space is all open access land which is owned by MBC, KCC, Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust, Parish Council, Housing Associations; or

1. Open Access land (land which has been voluntarily dedicated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000); or

2. land which has been voluntarily deemed as publicly accessible by the landowner through other legal means.

Please note that land crossed by a Public Rights of ways (footpaths, bridleways, etc) is NOT deemed as publicly accessible (only the path is publicly accessible)

3. Also more rigid definitions of the new types of open space were produced, these being:

	Green Space Type	Definition	Colour on Map
1	Amenity Green Space	Informal recreation spaces, recreation grounds, village greens, urban parks, formal gardens and playing fields	
2	Equipped Play Areas	Equipped play areas, ball courts, outdoor basketball hoop areas, skateboard parks, teenage shelters and 'hangouts'.	
3	Outdoor Sports Facilities	Outdoor sports pitches, tennis, bowls, athletics and other sports.	
4	Allotments	Land used for the growing of own produce, including urban farms. Does not include private gardens.	
5	Natural/Semi-Natural	Includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands, wetlands, open and running water, banks to rivers, lakes and ponds; wastelands; closed cemeteries & graveyards.	

4. In the 2004 Green Spaces Strategy single areas were only included as a single category. For example Mote Park in Shepway North ward was measured only as a park, which meant that even though there are 9 winter sports pitches, huge amounts of natural and semi natural conservation area and large areas of amenity grass in the park, none of these were counted and Shepway is recorded as being deficit in other green space types. For the updated 2014 study parks have been "cookie cut" with sports pitches, natural and semi natural areas and amenity grass areas being counted as such.

Method

A temporary member of staff was brought in top oversee the updating of the green space provision tables.

Firstly the new definitions and types were agreed and then using the 2007 green space provision maps as a starting point a desk top survey was carried out reviewing all of the green spaces mapped in the borough. These site included thousands of individual GIS polygons and took a number of weeks to complete. Any areas where there was uncertainty about the ownership or accessibility to the public further investigation was carried out. This ranged from land searches, speaking to local councillors, searching on the internet and visiting the individual site.

Once we were happy that we had most of updated information correct we then updated ward and parish maps showing all of the know green space types printed them off and sent to consultees. These included all Ward Councillors, all Parish Councils, any environmental bodies (such as Kent Wildlife Trust) who may have owned or managed publicly accessible land and other parties who we hoped could help.

We had most of maps returned and updated, and where able to make a number of updates to the maps.

These maps were then finalised on GIS and updated provision tables produced.

Major Findings

Once we began reviewing the original 2007 data it became obvious that there were large discrepancies in the original data. This was caused by the lack of differentiation between accessible and non accessible open space. Examples of this are as follows:

- a. If a private wood had a public footpath going through or around it then in 2014 all of the wood was included as publicly accessible land.
- b. Many school playing fields were included (although not all) in the 2004 data and should only be included if the school agreed to the public using the field.
- c. Large areas of farmland on the downs were included when no access agreements were in place.
- d. A large number of private green space that could be seen but not accessed was included.

Results

The tables below show the total green space provision and total provision per 1000 population for urban and rural wards.

Urban Ward	Population 2014	Allotments	Provision (m2)/1000 population	Amenity	Provision (m2)/1000 population	Natural	Provision (m2)/1000 population	Play	Provision (m2)/1000 population	Sports	Provision (m2)/1000 population
ALLINGTON WARD	6930	0	47,812	6,899	72,634	10,481	12,916	1,864	78,470	11323	
BARMING WARD	2360	18,507	7,842	18,170	7,699	57,373	24,311	1,276	541	0	
BEARSTED WARD	8250	8,474	1,027	25,730	3,119	109,029	13,216	809	98	23,790	2884
BOXLEY WARD	8500	8,196	964	93,343	10,982	4,567,731	537,380	6,799	800	599,791	70564
BRIDGE WARD	5920	32,596	5,506	50,479	8,527	40,536	6,847	3,497	591	0	0
DOWNSWOOD AND OTHAM WARD	2800	8,217	2,935	37,665	13,452	70,450	25,161	3,981	1,422	8,001	2858
EAST WARD	8650	1,154	133	94,067	10,875	38,808	4,486	7,774	899	9,882	1142
FANT WARD	9860	45,165	4,581	26,012	2,638	39,269	3,983	6,130	622	17,094	1734
HEATH WARD	5970	2,035	341	54,365	9,106	24,382	4,084	26,183	4,386	6,679	1119
HIGH STREET WARD	9880	6,660	674	33,521	3,393	20,669	2,092	2,469	250	10,652	1078
LOOSE WARD	2320	22,547	9,719	23,769	10,245	2,077	895	813	350	0	0
NORTH WARD	9900	43,840	4,428	14,169	1,431	99,536	10,054	5,071	512	0	0
PARK WOOD WARD	7040	0	0	52,486	7,455	33,361	4,739	4,322	614	16,072	2283
SHEPWAY NORTH WARD	9030	3,299	365	67,473	7,472	1,727,765	191,336	5,920	656	144,987	16056
SHEPWAY SOUTH WARD	5860	0	0	49,063	8,373	77,220	13,177	4,615	788	0	0
SOUTH WARD	8650	24,338	2,814	96,428	11,148	78,883	9,119	5,804	671	36,515	4221
Total	111920	225,028	784,552	7,059,723	98,379	951,933					
M2/1000 Population		2,011	7,010	63,078	879	8,505					
Ha/1000 Population		0.20	0.70	6.31	0.09	0.85					

Rural Ward	Populati on 2014	Allotments	Provision (m2)/ 1000 populati on	Amenity	Provision (m2)/ 1000 populati on	Natural	Provision (m2)/ 1000 populati on	Play	Provision (m2)/ 1000 populati on	Sports	Provision (m2)/ 1000 populati on
BOUGHTON MONCHELSEA AND CHART SUTTON WARD	2680	15,297	5,708	77,556	28,939	223,629	83,444	1,077	402	15,230	5683
COXHEATH AND HUNTON WARD	3680	18,912	5,139	75,828	20,605	423,867	115,181	5,327	1,448	17,197	4673
DETLING AND THURNHAM WARD	3060	6,500	2,124	14,446	4,721	731,201	238,955	1,354	442	0	0
HARRIETSHAM AND LENHAM WARD	5520	9,405	1,704	125,954	22,818	356,673	64,615	4,377	793	18,168	3291
HEADCORN WARD	5260	7,758	1,475	56,788	10,796	22,682	4,312	2,898	551	10,928	2078
LEEDS WARD	2430	0	0	14,893	6,129	14,353	5,907	1,213	499	20,703	8520
MARDEN AND YALDING WARD	7810	12,034	1,541	112,541	14,410	226,466	28,997	4,269	547	52,661	6743
NORTH DOWNS WARD	2440	0	0	36,890	15,119	782,057	320,515	3,175	1,301	5,814	2383
STAPLEHURST WARD	5960	0	0	33,812	5,673	15,825	2,655	3,041	510	40,537	6802
SUTTON VALENCE AND LANGLEY WARD	2860	21,965	7,680	62,629	21,898	99,720	34,867	2,243	784	1,560	545
Total	41700	91,871		611,337		2,896,473		28,974		182,798	
M2/1000 Population		2203		14660		69460		695		4384	
Ha/1000 population		0.22		1.47		6.95		0.07		0.44	