

## APPENDIX 4: DEVELOPMENT OF ACCESS STANDARDS

This appendix sets out the detail behind the development of the access standards for public open space, as summarised in Section 6.3 of the main report.

### 1.0 Overview

Evidence from previous studies and consideration of national benchmarks and existing standards, including benchmarking with neighbouring local authorities have been used to develop access standards for open space.

The access standards have been applied to different types of open space, to produce a series of maps (and a GIS database) which show walk time and straight line buffers. This enables the key gaps in access within the city to be identified. The detailed methodology explaining how the access buffers have been created is set out in Appendix 3.

### 2.0 Existing local standards

The aspirational access standards set within the **Oxford Green Space Strategy (2013)** are:

- that people do not have to walk more than 1900m to their nearest large park (and allotments);
- not more than 750m to their nearest medium park; and
- not more than 400m to their nearest small park.

### 3.0 National guidelines/benchmarks

***The Fields in Trust ((FIT)-Previously known as the National Playing Fields Association) Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play report 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard'***

FIT propose the following walking distance guidelines for the different typologies of open space:

- Amenity green space: 480m.
- Parks and gardens: 710m.
- Playing pitches and outdoor sports: 1,200m.
- Equipped play areas: 100m for LAPs, 400m for LEAPs, 1000m for NEAPs.
- MUGAs and skateboard parks: 700m
- Natural and semi-natural green space: 720m.

***Natural England Accessible Natural Green Space Standards (ANGSt)***

ANGSt recommends that everyone, wherever they live should have accessible natural greenspace:

- Of at least 2 hectares in size, no more than 300 metres (5 minutes' walk) from home;
- at least one accessible 20 hectare site within two kilometres of home;

- one accessible 100 hectare site within five kilometres of home; and
- one accessible 500 hectare site within ten kilometres of home; plus
- a minimum of 1 hectare of statutory Local Nature Reserves per thousand population.

### ***The Woodland Trust Woodland Access Standard (WASt)***

The Woodland Trust believe that the WASt can be an important policy tool complimenting other access standards using in delivering green infrastructure for health benefits.

The WASt is complimentary to Natural England’s ANGST and is endorsed by Natural England. The Woodland Access Standard recommends:

- that no person should live more than 500m from at least one area of accessible natural woodland of no less than 2ha in size.
- that there should be at least one area of accessible natural woodland of no less than 20ha within 4km (8km round-trip) of people’s homes.

## **4.0 Neighbouring Local Authorities (LA’s)**

Benchmarking with neighbouring LA’s and two urban LA’s with similar populations has been undertaken to help inform the standards. The findings are summarised in the table below.

<b>TYOLOGY</b>	<b>West Oxfordshire (2013)</b>	<b>Vale of White Horse (Nov 2016)</b>	<b>South Oxfordshire (Jan 2017)</b>	<b>Cherwell (May 2020)</b>	<b>Mansfield<sup>1</sup> (May 2018)</b>	<b>Gloucester<sup>2</sup> (Feb 2021)</b>
<b>Parks &amp; Gardens</b>	600m (12 – 13 minute walk time)	5,625m drive time	1,000m (15 – 20 minute walk time)	1,200m	District park – 1,200m (15 minute walk time)	800m (9.5 minute walk time)
<b>Accessible Natural Green Space</b>	600m (12 – 13 minute walk time)		2.0ha size site within 2km.  20ha size site within 5km.  100ha size sites within 10km.	800m	800m (10 minute walk time)	1ha size site within 5 minute walk time.  20ha size site within 2km.  100ha size site within 5km.

<sup>1</sup> Population of 171,958 compared to Oxford of 171,380

<sup>2</sup> Population of 150,053 compared to Oxford of 171,380

TYOLOGY	West Oxfordshire (2013)	Vale of White Horse (Nov 2016)	South Oxfordshire (Jan 2017)	Cherwell (May 2020)	Mansfield <sup>1</sup> (May 2018)	Gloucester <sup>2</sup> (Feb 2021)
						500ha size site within 10km.
<b>Amenity Green Space</b>	480m (10 min walk time)	480m walk time	600m (10 – 15 minute walk time)	400m		500m a site 1ha or larger (6 minute walk time)
<b>Children’s Play Space</b>	480m (10 min walk time)	400m walk time for LEAP and 1,000 walk times for NEAP	600m (10 – 15 minute walk time)	400m LAP 400m LEAP 1,00m, NEAP	400m (5 minute walk time)	400m (5 minute walk time) – LEAP  1,000m (12 minute walk time) – NEAP
<b>Youth Facilities</b>	600m (12 – 13 minute walk time)	1,000m walk time	MUGA facilities: 600m in towns and large settlements.  8,000m everywhere else.	1,000m	1,200m (15 minute walk time)	1,500, (18 minute walk time)
<b>Allotments</b>	480m (10 min walk time)	1,000m walk time	600m (10 – 15 minute walk time)	1,000m		1,200m (14.5 minute walk time)

## 5.0 Access standards justification

Access standards have been developed for allotments, amenity green space, parks and recreation grounds, children’s play spaces, youth play spaces and accessible natural greenspaces, as set out below.

### **Allotments**

- It is considered that the availability of allotments is more important than having them very close to home, nevertheless facilities should be relatively nearby.
- The walking distance set within the Oxford Green Space Strategy (2013) is 1,900m.

- When considering neighbouring/similar sized local authorities, access standards for this typology vary from 480m to 1,200m.
- With the above in mind, a standard of no more than **15 minutes' walk time** (720m straight line distance) is recommended.

#### ***Amenity green space***

- Informal green spaces provide important local access to green space for informal recreation and therefore should be close to home.
- FIT 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' proposes a walking distance guideline of 480m.
- The Oxford Green Space Strategy (2013) does not include an aspirational standard for amenity green space, but the recommendation for small (local) parks is a walking distance guideline of 400m.
- When considering neighbouring/similar sized local authorities, access standards vary from 400m to 600m.
- With the above in mind, a standard of no more than **10 minutes' walk time** (480m straight line distance) is recommended.

#### ***Parks and recreation grounds***

- Due to the variation in parks from providing an important local and neighbourhood resource to destination level spaces, it is considered that access standards should be based on a hierarchy approach.
- The Oxford Green Space Strategy (2013) walking distance for small parks is a guideline of 400m, 750m for medium parks and 1,900m for large parks.
- FIT 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard' proposes a walking distance guideline of 710m for parks and gardens and 1,200m for playing pitches and outdoor sports.
- When considering neighbouring/similar sized local authorities, access standards vary from 600m to 1,200m (and a drive time standard for Vale of White Horse which is a very rural area).
- With the above in mind, it is considered that a balance is needed between keeping parks and recreation grounds relatively local, while recognising that the availability of parks is more important than having them very close by.
- Therefore, a walk time standard of **12 – 13 minutes'** (600m straight line) is recommended for **local and neighbourhood parks**; and a **20 minute walk time** (960m straight line) for **destination sites**.

#### ***Children's and youth play space***

- Generally, there is a requirement for children's play spaces closer to home, due to the reliance on walking, whereas for youth play spaces older children can walk further and will often use other modes of transport such as cycling.
- This is reflected in the FIT 'Beyond the Six Acre Standard', which proposes a walking distance guideline of 100m for Local Areas for Play (LAPs), 400m for Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAPs) and 1000m for Neighbourhood Equipped Areas for Play (NEAPs). For MUGA's and skateboard parks FIT propose a walking distance guideline of 700m.

- When considering neighbouring/similar sized local authorities, access standards for children’s play space tend to be around 400m, whereas for youth play spaces it is generally further – from around 600 to 1500m.
- Considering the above, the following access standards are recommended:
  - Children’s play space - **10 minutes’ walk time** (480 metres straight line)
  - Youth play space – **15 minutes’ walk time** (720 metres straight line).

### **Accessible natural green space**

- The FIT guidance ‘Beyond the Six Acre Standard’ recommends a walking distance of 720m for natural and semi-natural green space.
- The Natural England **ANGSt Standards** recommend different access standards based on the sizes of sites and will be applied to identify key gaps in access. However, it is acknowledged that the standard of 300m for sites above 2ha in size is difficult to achieve in many cases, and consideration of access to smaller spaces below 2ha in size is also needed.
- It is therefore recommended that an access standard of **15 minutes’ walk time** (720m straight line) is used to identify key gaps in access to all accessible natural green spaces (above 0.15ha in size), alongside the ANGSt Standards.

## **6.0 Summary of access standards**

<b>Open Space Typology</b>	<b>Proposed Access Standard</b>
Allotments	15 minutes’ walk time (720m straight line)
Amenity Green Space (above 0.15ha)	10 minutes’ walk time (480m straight line)
Parks and Recreation Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local and Neighbourhood Parks: 12 – 13 minutes’ (600m straight line)</li> <li>• Destination Parks: 20 minute walk time (960m straight line) for destination sites.</li> </ul>
Children’s Play Space	10 minutes’ walk time (480 metres straight line)
Youth Play Space	15 minutes’ walk time (720 metres straight line).
Accessible Natural Green Space (above 0.15ha)	15 minutes’ walk time (720m straight line) + Natural England ANGSt