



INSPLACE PLANNING LTD

**Christchurch Borough Council  
PPG17 Open Space Study**

**Section 6**

**Area Profile:  
Christchurch East**

**May 2007  
(Final)**

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### **3.0 DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL NEED AREA - CHRISTCHURCH EAST**

This Local Need Area is based around Highcliffe, the most eastern neighbourhood of the Borough, comprising the wards of North Highcliffe and Walkford, West Highcliffe and Highcliffe. It is separated from the Christchurch Central LNA in the south by the area around Highcliffe Castle, the golf course (which is in Central LNA) and the A337. Walkford Brook in the east forms a boundary to the New Forest area. The residential layout is less dense than in Christchurch Central and West with lots of open plan, good quality housing.

Overall, the area has developed as a large village/small town with extensive suburban housing around a local commercial high street and has a strong separate identity within Christchurch as 'Highcliffe'. In the south, modest cliff slopes lead down to beaches and along to southern side of the village. Much of the area was originally country houses in the woodland area on the higher ground. The built up area is now contained on the northern side by A35 and the railway line. The settlement is almost exclusively residential.

The principal areas of open space in the southern part of the LNA are the open space around Highcliffe Castle, the coastal strip along the beaches and cliffs and Highcliffe Recreation Ground. In the east they are Highcliffe Junior and St Marks Primary schools and Chewton Common. In the centre, Nea Meadows and Wingfield Recreation Ground; and in the west: Highcliffe Comprehensive School and an area at Cornflower Drive, south of Roeshot Hill (includes Roeshot Copse).

There is a woodland setting to the castle and this area links with the more natural cover of the Steamer Point Nature Reserve in the Christchurch Central LNA. These woodland areas separate Highcliffe from Friars Cliff and shelter a links golf course. All these areas combine to provide a significant green space between neighbourhoods and an important recreational area within the overall borough.

Chewton Common and other areas within Walkford comprise a series of heavily wooded spaces tightly constrained by housing. The Commons provide an unusual setting and, as pointed out in the Christchurch Borough Wide Character Assessment, provide direct connections to a more semi natural environment than more 'traditional' amenity open spaces. They are largely 'hidden' within the residential areas.

## **4.0 SUMMARY OF PROVISION AND QUALITY OF OPEN SPACE**

### **4.1 Open Space within Christchurch East**

The accompanying Map shows the location and typology of open space within Christchurch East. The following sites have been mapped and many are included in the quality assessments; detailed scores of the assessments are held on the GIS database and should be referred to as required.

#### **Active Sports Space**

- Nea Meadows Bowling Green
- Hoburne Caravan Park outdoor swimming pool
- Hoburne Caravan Park outdoor tennis courts

#### **Space for Children and Young People**

- Highcliffe Recreation Ground play area
- Hoburne Caravan Park childrens play area
- Bluebell Close play area
- Bellflower Close play area
- Upper Gordon Road play area
- Vetch Close play area
- Saffron Drive play area

#### **Amenity Green Space**

- Land at Woodfield Gardens
- Land at Vetch Close
- Lakewood
- Land fronting 20-26 Broadlands Close
- Land in front of 72 Braemar Drive
- Private amenity spaces at Latimers Close
- Amenity space at Oakwood Road
- Lawn by Saulfland House
- Land fronting 46-49 Upper Gordon Road
- Land west of 28 & 30 The Meadway
- Chewton Bunny (west) recreation ground
- Land at Saffron Drive

#### **Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens**

- Highcliffe Top recreation ground
- Highcliffe Castle grounds
- Wingfield recreation ground
- Highcliffe recreation ground

#### **Education Outdoor Sports Facilities**

- Highcliffe Secondary School - tennis courts
- Highcliffe Junior School MUGA
- Highcliffe Junior / St Marks Primary School - playing field
- Highcliffe Secondary School - playing field
- Junior Swimming Pool at Highcliffe Junior School

## Allotments

Walkford Road allotments

### 4.2 Quality of sites in Christchurch East

*In the tables below n/s means 'Not Scored'*

#### 4.2.1 Active Sports Space

Site	Quality
Hoburne Caravan Park outdoor tennis courts	80.0 %
Hoburne Caravan Park outdoor swimming pool	80.0 %
Nea Meadows Bowling Green	73.3 %

Three specific stand alone Active Sport Spaces were identified in Christchurch East, however sport facilities that form a part of a larger multi function sites have been identified in Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens. The facilities are in good condition, although the Hoburne Caraven Park facilities may not be accessible to the public all year round and are primarily intended for park guests.

#### 4.2.2 Space for Children and Young People

Site	Quality
Highcliffe Recreation Ground play area	75%
Hoburne Caravan Park childrens play area	85%
Bluebell Close play area	50%
Bellflower Close play area	55%
Upper Gordon Road play area	60%
Vetch Close play area	55%
Saffron Drive play area	50%

The condition and maintenance of the sites is generally poor. Bluebell Close, Vetch Close, Bellflower Close and Saffron Drive require immediate attention.

#### 4.2.3 Amenity Green Space

Site	Quality
Land at Woodfield Gardens	80%
Land at Vetch Close	80%
Lakewood	73%
Land fronting 20-26 Broadlands Close	87%
Land in front of 72 Braemar Drive	73%
Private amenity spaces at Latimers Close	67%
Amenity space at Oakwood Road	93%
Lawn by Saulfland House	67%
Land fronting 46-49 Upper Gordon Road	80%
Land west of 28 & 30 The Meadway	73%
Chewton Bunny (west) recreation area	64%
Land at Saffron Drive	68%

In general, the management and maintenance of amenity green spaces across Christchurch East was reasonable. A number of sites offer good opportunity for improvement, including Saffron Drive, Latimers Close, the lawn at Saufland House and Chewton Bunny recreation area.

#### 4.2.4 Natural & Semi Natural Space (includes Green Corridors)

Site	Quality
Nea Meadows - inland water	67%
Pond at south edge Cranemoor Common	47%
Pond at Lakewood	73%
Nea Meadows - meadow land	70%
Land at Cornflower Drive, south of Roeshot Hill	44%
Nea Meadows - woodland	73%
Woodland within Highcliffe Castle grounds	80%
Woodland at Ashmore Grove and Marston Grove	70%
Woodland south of Jesmond Avenue	70%
Land at Buckland Grove	70%
Land fronting 1 to 9 Fir Tree Lane	80%
Roeshot Copse	60%
Haslemere Copse	70%
Copse at Haslemere Avenue	70%
Chewton Common	80%
Copse at Hoburne Gardens	70%
Cranemoor Common (area within Christchurch Borough)	60%
Coastal slope along seafront from Steamer Point to Chewton Bunny	60%
Shelley Copse and wooded areas running east to Nea Meadows	53%
Chewton Bunny	70%
Woods along Hinton Wood Avenue, south of Braemar Drive	60%
Woods along Hinton Wood Avenue, between Brookside Way and Lakewood Road	60%

The quality of management and maintenance of natural and semi natural green spaces across Christchurch East is varied and in many places could be improved. Particular sites for attention include Cranemoor Common (limited access), Land at Cornflower Drive, Roeshot Copse and Shelley Copse

#### 4.2.5 Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens

Site	Quality
Highcliffe Top recreation ground	70%
Highcliffe Castle grounds	87%
Wingfield recreation ground	70%
Highcliffe recreation ground	70%

Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens are at an acceptable quality standard for the level of use they sustain. Each of the recreation grounds would benefit from more formal provision on site.

#### 4.2.6 Education Outdoor Sports Facilities

Site	Quality
Highcliffe Secondary School - tennis courts	70%
Highcliffe Junior School MUGA	73%
Highcliffe Junior / St Marks Primary School - playing field	68%
Highcliffe Secondary School - playing field	68%
Junior Swimming Pool at Highcliffe Junior School	60%

Quality of the school facilities was found to be quite good. In particular the two school playing fields appear well maintained.

#### 4.2.7 Allotments

Site	Quality
Walkford Road allotments	63%

The quality of Walkford Road allotments is reasonable; improvements to the entrance, access road and paths are required to bring it up to a higher standard.

## 5.0 SUMMARY OF ACCESSIBILITY TO OPEN SPACE

### 5.1 Overall access to open space

Section 5 of the Report outlines access standards to different types of open space within the Local Need Area. A summary of the main standards is shown in Table 2:

**Table 2 Access standards for open space**

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Access Standard</b>
Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens	450 metres
Amenity Open Space	450 metres
Natural & Semi Natural Green space	600 metres
Space for Children & Teenagers	450 metres
Active Sports Space	600 metres
Routeway/Green Corridor	n/a
Cemeteries and Churchyards	n/a
Allotments	600 metres

The accompanying Catchment Maps showing local access standards for the various typologies (i.e. Space for Children and Young People, Amenity Open Space, Natural and Semi Natural Green Space, Active Sports Space, Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens and Allotments).

### 5.2 Access to different types of open space

Table 3 makes observations on access to different types of open space within the catchment area, using the adopted access standards, as shown on the accompanying maps.

**Table 3 Access to open space in the area**

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Provision against access standard</b>
Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens	Access standard not met; large gaps in east, centre and west of LNA.
Amenity Open Space	Access standard largely met; gap in centre south of LNA
Natural & Semi Natural Green Space	Access Standard met
Space for Children	Access standard not met; large gaps in the centre and north of the LNA in particular
Space for Teenagers	Access standard not met; virtually no coverage of LNA
Active Sports Space	Access standard not met; large gaps in north, centre and south of LNA
Routeway/Green Corridor	No standards set
Cemeteries and Churchyards	No standards set
Allotments	Access standard not met; only minimal coverage in far east and west of LNA

## Comments

- The analysis of access to different types of open space highlights its multi functional nature, particularly the overlapping function of recreation grounds, amenity open space and natural and semi natural greenspace (all of which to some extent cater for informal recreation) and of recreation grounds where there are formal sports facilities and the 'Active Sports Space' category.
- Considering access to areas for informal recreation: the LNA is well covered if Recreation Grounds (at the north and south of the LNA) and Amenity Open Space (covering the northern and eastern halves of the LNA) are considered together; however, the amenity open spaces are quite small and do not meet the need for larger, multifunctional opportunities.
- There is almost complete coverage of natural green space which, unlike the other Christchurch LNAs, lies within the catchment, rather than on the periphery. This is a particular characteristic of this LNA. Nea Meadows, a local nature reserve, is a particularly valued site.
- Active Sports Sites: The 3 sites categorised as active sports sites have limited facilities – 1 bowling green at Nea Meadows and tennis courts and a small outdoor pool at a caravan park, with limited public access. The only pitches to serve this LNA are at Wingfield Recreation ground – 2 full size football and 1 cricket pitch and Highcliffe Recreation Ground (1 football pitch), which on a 450m catchment leave the north and east of the LNA poorly served.
- Space for Children and Young People: The play areas are located to the east and west of the LNA leaving the centre poorly served. All of them, other than the LEAP at Highcliffe Recreation Ground are quite small.
- Allotments: There are allotments at Walkford Road in the far north east corner of the LNA
- Education Facilities: As in other areas, school playing fields are a key element of the open space network within this LNA. There are three schools here: Highcliffe Junior and St Marks Primary (which share a playing field) and Highcliffe Secondary. The MUGA at Highcliffe Junior School hosts Mudeford Wood Tennis Club and the playing field is used regularly by Highcliffe Hawks. The secondary school playing fields do not appear to have outside use.

## 6.0 FINDINGS FROM SURVEY AND CONSULTATION

### Citizen's Panel

111 people living in Christchurch East LNA (wards of Highcliffe, North Highcliffe & Walkford and West Highcliffe) responded to the Survey; compared to the rest of the Borough, people living in this area are more frequent visitors to beaches and the coast, local countryside and country parks and community centres/halls (probably including local halls in Highcliffe within this category).

In common with the rest of Christchurch, respondents would particularly like to see more recreation cyclepaths and footpaths, areas for teenagers and spaces to enjoy nature and wildlife (perhaps surprising giving the relatively good level of natural and semi-natural greenspace). For residents in this area, the most important attributes of open space are that they should be clean, with dogs well controlled and be easy to get to. The most important facilities to have in nearby open space areas are: trees, seats and dog bins. Just over half of the respondents would like to use open spaces near them more often: more information about what is available was highlighted as an important way of encouraging this.

### Local Areas of Open Space in Christchurch East

Sites all over Christchurch are local areas of open space frequently visited by people in this LNA: Mundeford Beach and Quay, Steamer Point, Avon Beach and Friars Cliff, various beach paths, Christchurch beach and quay, Highcliffe Recreation Ground, Nea Meadows and Stanpit Marsh.

Sites mentioned outside the borough include Bournemouth beaches, the New Forest, Moors Valley Country Park and the Littledown Centre.

The overwhelming reasons for visiting these areas are to go for a walk and to visit areas of nature interest and value.

### Other comments made highlighted:

Comments made by people in this LNA highlighted the following:

- Lack of litter bins generally, especially around Mundeford Woods, the Quay and Hengistbury Head.
- For some areas, an approach of 'do nothing' is fine e.g. the cliff top at Highcliffe is used for a wide range of quite informal activities particularly 'family ones' – cyclists, rounders, kickabout and doesn't need any further development.
- Recognise that need to protect open spaces
- Car parking is important – e.g. more adjacent car parking required to enable more elderly people to enjoy more of the very good recreational facilities available. Stanpit marshes need a larger car park. (Price of car parking also raised)
- Here, as elsewhere in Christchurch, dog fouling is perceived as a major problem. Several mentions: Request for complete dog ban from some beaches for the whole year, at all time. Several mentions, where are the dog wardens?
- Several people commented that the quality of all open space in the Highcliffe area is very good; but sometimes safety and hygiene risks deter use. 'Wanton vandalism leaves so many of us frustrated.

- Specific problems with misuse of certain open spaces e.g. Nea Meadows by people drinking, leaving litter etc
- Improving accessibility through the provision of more cycle paths and lanes, especially for making it easier for children to get to paths/playgrounds on their own from a certain age.
- More attention to pavement areas away from town centre, particularly overgrown hedges, tree shoots and tree roots. Possible thoughts on less use of cherry trees on pavements due to damage by roots.
- The most important consideration of all is our need to defend all our open spaces from predatory DEFRA or developments. This government is "anti" open spaces and is always trying to build on them
- Need for care in increasing use of a site by information displays. I think some local sites are being overused and damaged e.g. Stanpit Marsh.
- Enforcement of local by-laws eg no cycling along promenades, beach hut owners taking over the promenades which are often over half the width. Sort out use of bicycles on footpaths. This survey excludes views of grandparents on facilities for children.
- Several comments on teenagers: More supervised areas for teenagers ie Highcliffe Recreation ground. There is nowhere for them to gather, skateboard or BMX tracks within Highcliffe. In my locality the lack of recreational area for teenagers is a big loss and therefore a problem for them. There should be more available for teenagers (elderly resident). Some comment on 'minimal facilities for the young' in Highcliffe

#### *Highcliffe Residents' Association*

Highcliffe Residents Association identify a needs for a range of facilities: for additional tennis/netball courts, bowling green, changing facilities, teenage areas, indoor hall suitable for sport and footpaths/bridleways/cyclepaths. Young people in particular are not well catered for and they would like to see a shelter on the playing field, skatepark; also another play area and an indoor facility. The closure of the youth club has impacted badly on opportunities available and there may be scope for increasing the use of school facilities, which also need improving. The most used open space in the area is Lymington Road recreation ground (Highcliffe).

#### *Play groups*

Dell Cottage Day Nursery cover the Walkford and Highcliffe areas, they are a 20 minute walk from a play area. They identified there were not enough parks or play areas. They think that the river and park area in Christchurch is particularly attractive and the park there is good, although it would be good to have a park in walking distance for walking with little ones.

Rainbow Community Pre School covers the Highcliffe area and has to walk 10 to 15 minutes to get to their nearest play area. They believe there are not enough play and adventure areas and would like to see more sports facilities for children of all ages. They enjoy the nature reserve at Highcliffe Castle and think it gives children a great opportunity to explore and learn about the local area.

#### *Other Sport*

There are few facilities capable of accommodating indoor sport in Highcliffe. The Methodist Church Hall is used for shortmat bowls and the club there would like to see better availability of halls for short mat bowls in Christchurch.

Highcliffe Bowling Club hire the pavilion and bowling green at Nea Meadows, they have identified that the facilities are adequate, but the changing facilities are poor. They mentioned that plans have been agreed for disabled facilities to be installed.

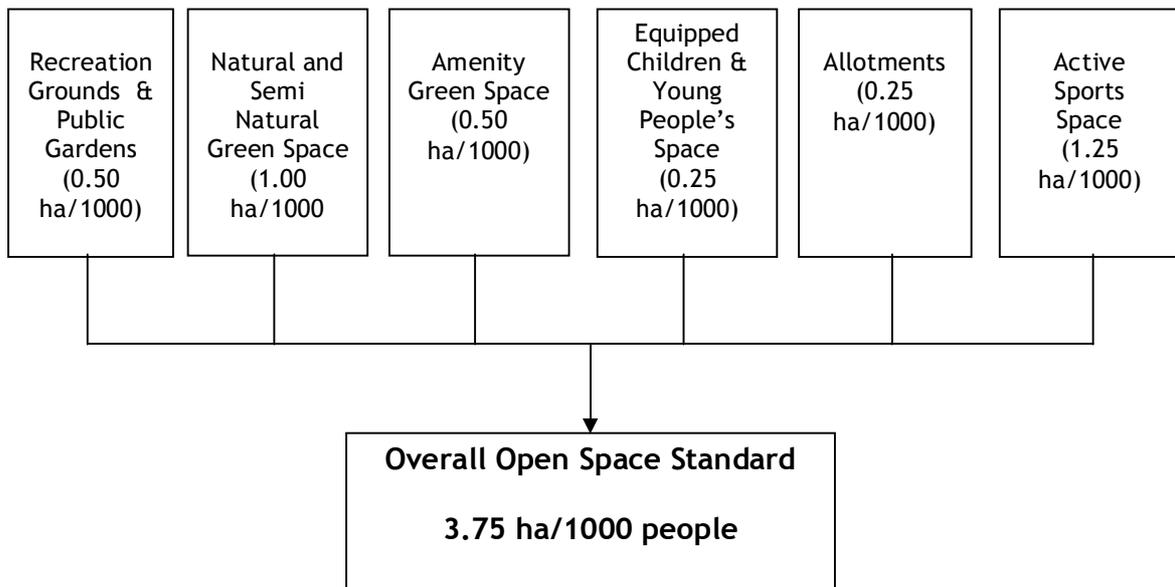
*Schools*

Highcliffe Comprehensive wishes to upgrade the outside muga/tennis courts and sports hall. There is limited community use of these facilities, but not of the playing field

## 7.0 QUANTITY OF OPEN SPACE

### 7.1 Quantity standards for open space

Section 5 of the report outlines the quantity standards for open space within the District; a summary of these draft minimum standards is shown below:



### 7.2 Quantities of different types of open space

These standards have been applied at a local level to determine the provision of different types of open space across the adopted minimum standard; this is summarised in Table 4 which shows:

- the existing quantity of open space (existing provision);
- the required quantity of open space for the population of the area (required provision);
- whether the amount of open space is above or below the minimum level of provision
- Supply against the standard.

**Table 4 Quantities of open space within the area – CHRISTCHURCH EAST (Pop. 10912)**

<b>Typology</b>	<b>Existing provision (ha)</b>	<b>Recommended provision (ha)</b>	<b>Area of open space above/below the recommended minimum level of provision (ha)</b>
<b>Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens</b>	8.52	5.46	3.06ha
<b>Natural and Semi Natural Green Space</b>	89.15	10.91	78.24ha
<b>Active Sports Space</b>	0.37	13.64	-13.27ha
<b>Children &amp; Young People’s Space</b>	0.34	2.73	-2.39ha
<b>Amenity Green Space</b>	4.28	5.46	-1.18ha
<b>Allotments</b>	1.28	2.73	-1.45ha

Christchurch East meets the proposed standard of provision for Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens and Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace, but is undersupplied with amenity green space (although better than Christchurch West and Central), Active Sports Space, Space for Children and Young People and Allotments.

## **8.0 SUGGESTED PRIORITIES FOR OPEN SPACE**

- Highcliffe has a distinctive feel with more open space, including much natural green space and wooded areas deep within the residential and built up areas and plenty of tree cover. The relatively ‘green’ coastline and asset of Highcliffe Castle Grounds/Steamer Point also contribute to this. This environment is highly valued locally and does much to contribute towards Highcliffe’s village feel. Future maintenance and proposals for development need to enhance this as much as possible by low key improvements to access and pathways, seating, litter bins, etc
- To make the most of the smaller areas of amenity open space through improved shrub and tree planting, seats, linkages to other areas of open space
- Consider the ‘public accessibility’ of the amenity open space along the sea front.
- The LNA lacks children and young people’s play space particularly in the centre, and the opportunity here is to make the most of the existing areas. Nea Meadows probably provides a natural playground and could perhaps be enhanced to meet slightly more structured needs (dens, tunnels etc) Wingfield Recreation Ground is also a possible site if this can be managed alongside its use for formal sport.
- The fact that teenagers in particular are not well catered for is highlighted by so many groups, and again, it is making the best use of existing open spaces which provide the best options i.e. shelters in recreation grounds. Provision needs to be

considered on a borough wide basis to work towards a hierarchy of provision for such facilities

- As with the other LNAs in Christchurch, the potential of the schools could be more fully explored, as sites for both formal sport and structured play. Highcliffe Comprehensive has aspirations to improve indoor and outdoor facilities.
- Management plans for key recreation grounds and areas of Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace.
- Various improvements as set out in this profile relating to different types of open space
- Across the Borough, provision of allotments is low and many LNAs have no allotment sites. As set out in Section 5, this Report recommends a new look at the burgeoning interest in allotment gardening, and how new sites can be brought into use to cater for growing demand.

