

4A KEY FINDINGS FROM SURVEY AND CONSULTATION CHRISTCHURCH

This section examines identified local need for various types of open space, sports and recreation opportunity. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques. The extent of the consultation reflects the breadth and diversity of the study and a consequent need to engage with as wide a cross section of the community as possible. The following questionnaire surveys were undertaken:

- Residents survey
- Town and Parish Councils survey
- Local sports clubs (pitch and non-pitch) survey
- Play groups, pre-school clubs and nurseries survey
- Schools surveys
- Visitors survey

In addition to the above the following 'theme based' focus group meetings/activity based consultations were undertaken as below:

- Sports and education interests;
- Young people;
- Natural Environment; and,
- Access.

The result of this consultation and other analyses (as will be explained) has helped amongst other things to inform the content of the recommended local standards as well as possible priorities and actions, in other ways. Crucially it has also helped the study to understand local people's appreciation of open space and recreation facilities, and the values attached by the community to the various forms of space. This appreciation should have implications for the way in which open spaces are treated and designated in the emerging Christchurch and East Dorset Local Development Framework.

The following pages summarise the key findings of the overall consultation exercise. More detailed points are contained within Appendix 4A (will be renumbered in Final Report).

4.1 Key Findings From Residents Survey

356 completed questionnaires were received from a survey via the Citizen's Panel in Christchurch. This is statistically valid. Results have been incorporated throughout the Study; key information relating to standards of provision is contained with Section 5. This section relates some of the other information obtained. Further local detail is contained within the Local Need Area Profiles.

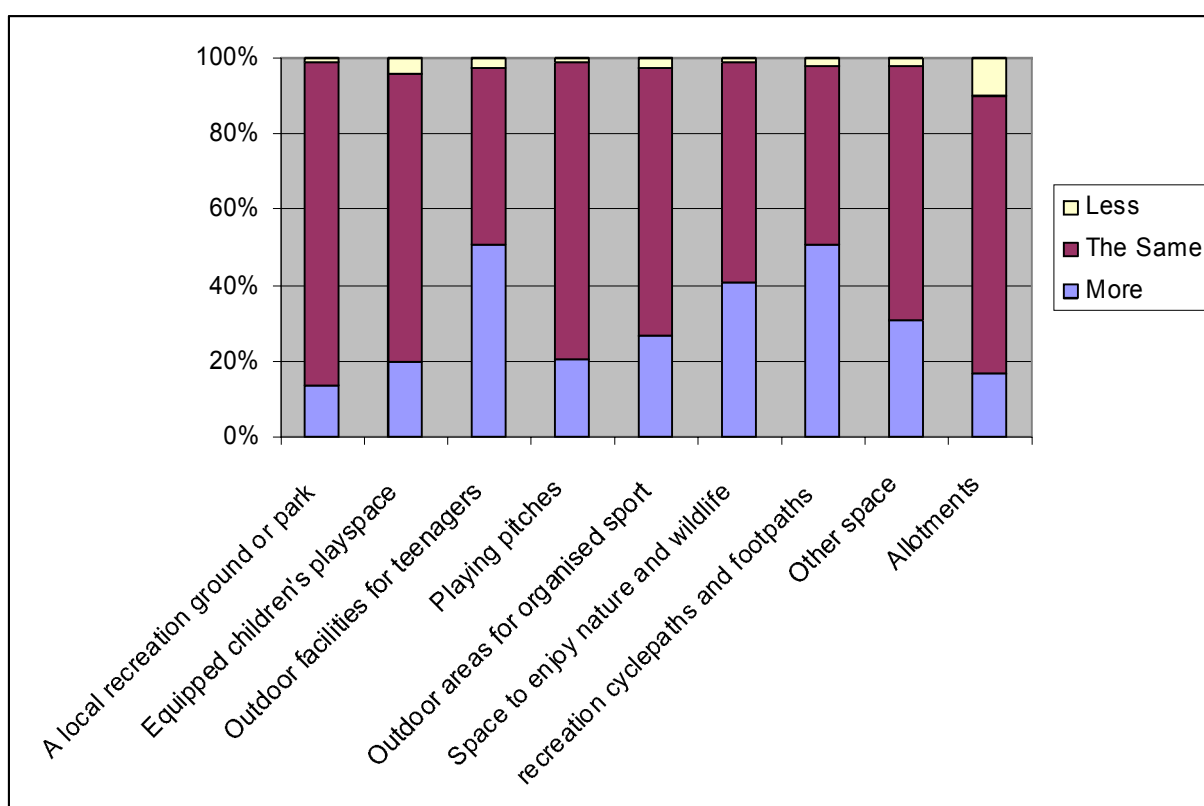
The results of community consultation will help greatly to inform the development of local standards in respect of the three required components (quantity, quality, and accessibility), and following figures and associated comments illustrate this point.

Residents Survey Findings on Quantity, Quality and Accessibility of Provision

Levels of provision and quality

Householders were asked if there should be more, less, or the same of the following types of open space in their area, with the following results.

Figure 1: Should there be more, less, or the same of the following types of space (Christchurch Borough)



Comment: It is in respect of:

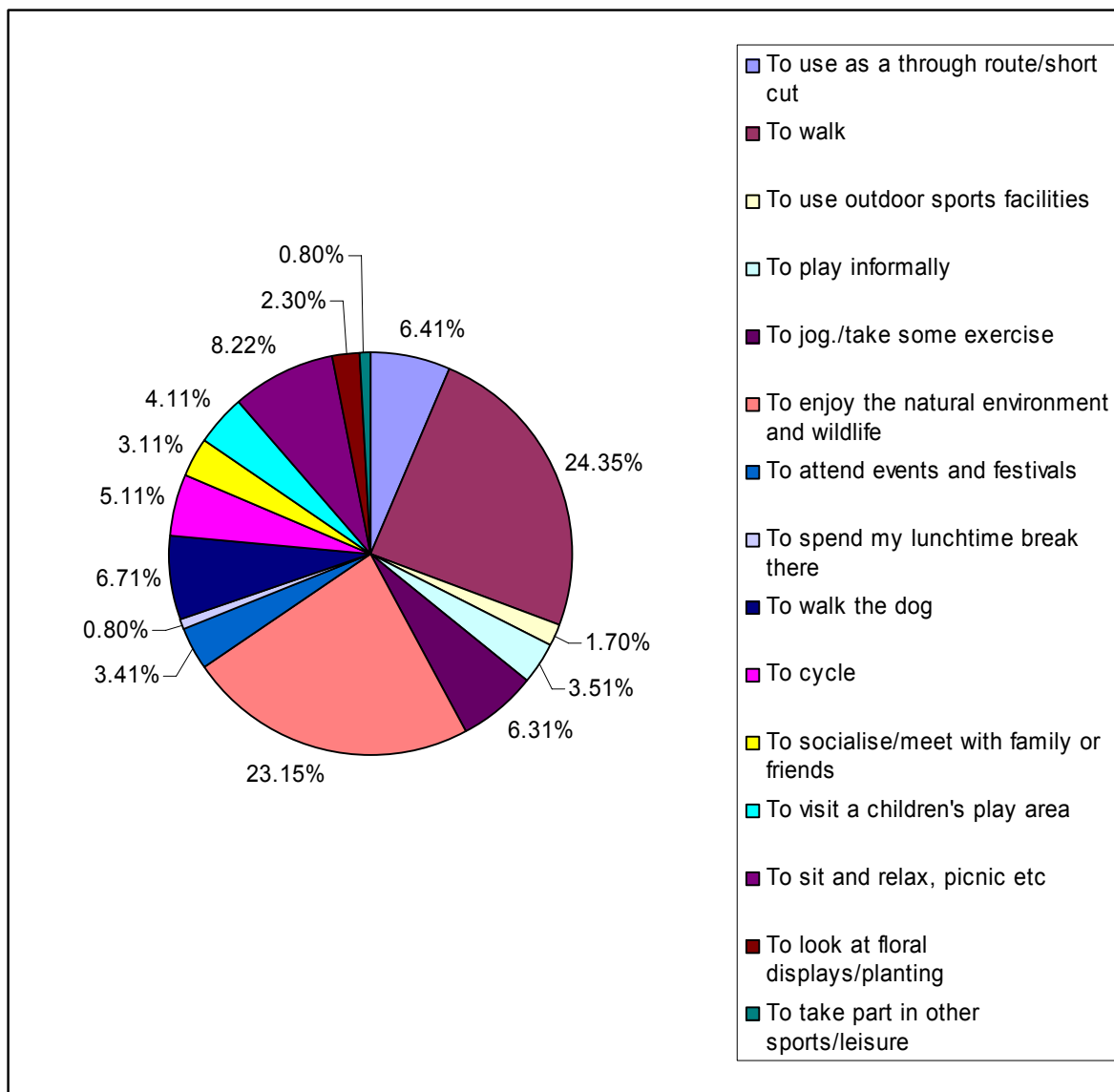
- Teenage provision
- Natural space
- Recreation foot and cycle paths

where there appeared to be most desire to see more space provided. None of the above forms of space are explicitly recognised within existing standards.

Reasons for visiting local areas of open space

Householders were asked the reasons they used their most visited local space open space, with the following results.

Why people visit their most used space (Christchurch Borough)



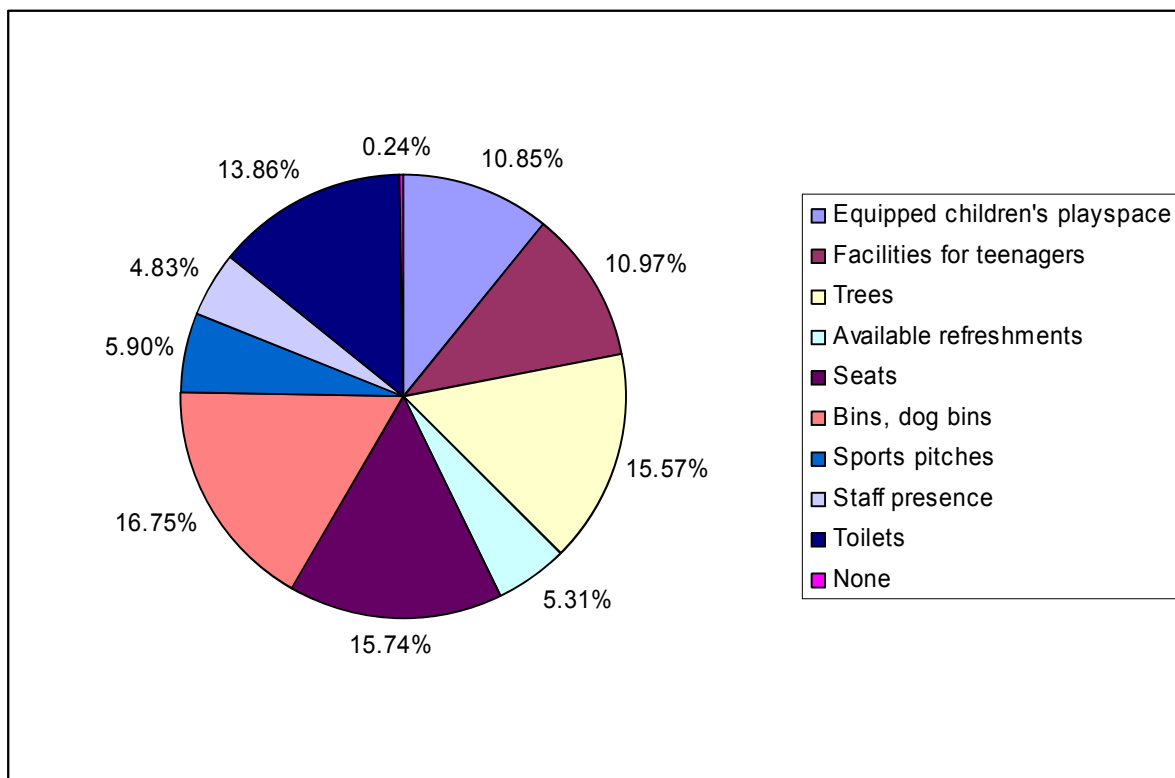
Comment: The most important reasons for visiting open space were:

- To walk
- To enjoy the natural environment and wildlife
- About half use their most frequently visited facility for walking and enjoying nature and wildlife (reflecting the nature of these facilities).
- around 8% use them as places to sit and relax, 7% use them to walk a dog and 5% socialize or meet with family and friends, 6% jog/take exercise.
- Other activities were mentioned less frequently, and tended to involve certain age groups, specialist interests (cycling, events and festivals) or equipment (visits to play equipment).

None of these reasons are reflected explicitly in the existing standards of provision.

Facilities important to have nearby

Householders were asked what facilities they considered important to have near them, with the following results.

What facilities did people think it was important to have near them (Christchurch Borough)

Comment: the following were generally cited to be the most important facilities:

- Bins/dog bins
- Trees
- Seats
- Provision for children and young people

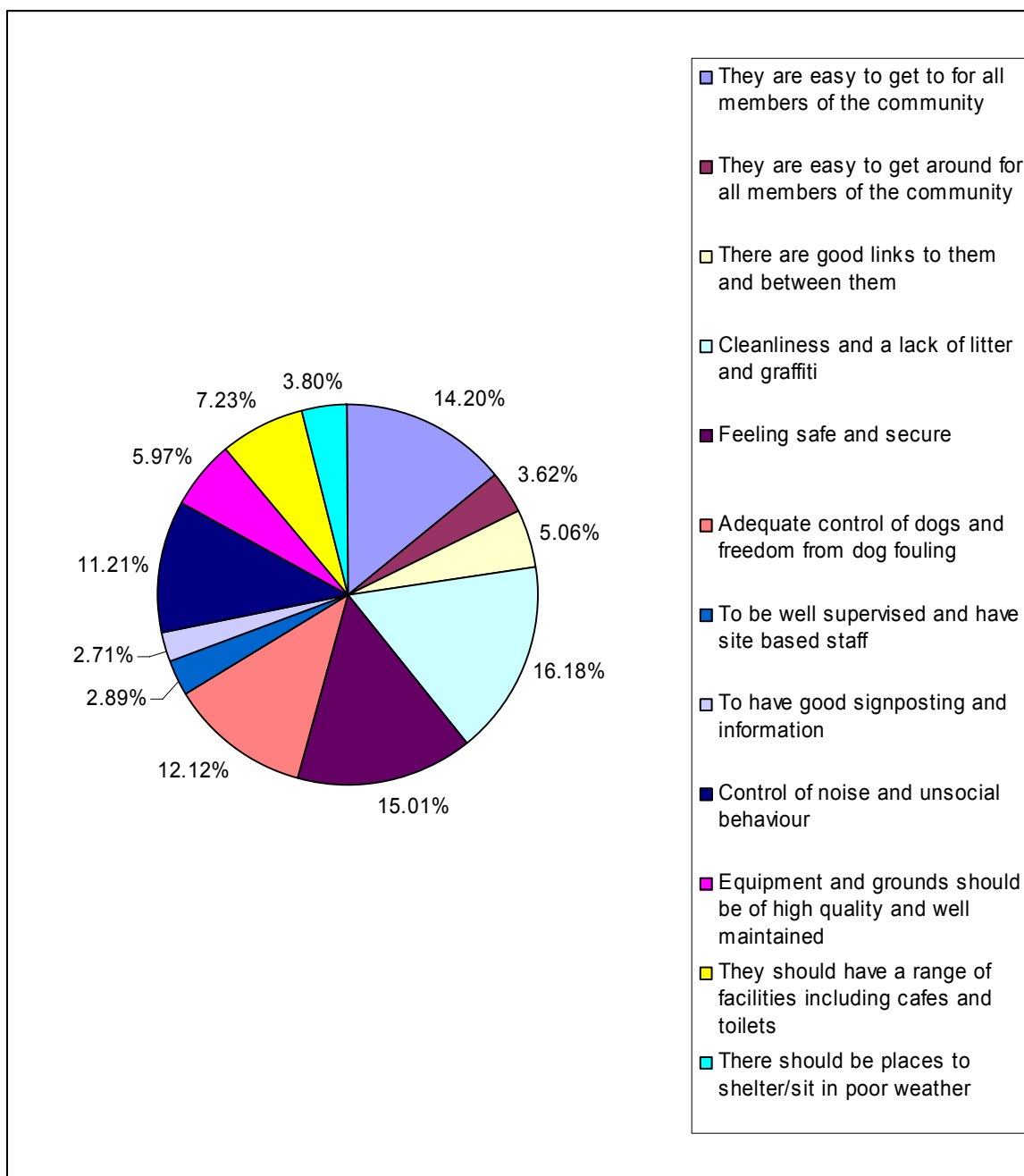
Once again, many of these features are not explicitly reflected in the existing local standards of provision.

- Ease of getting around these spaces, the control of anti-social behaviour and dogs, and cleanliness are also important. On-site supervision, more signposting and information and ease of getting around outdoor areas appear to be of lesser importance.

Most important issues in planning, provision and maintenance of open space

Householders were asked what they considered to be the most important issues to be addressed with respect to the planning, provision and maintenance of open space, with the following results.

Which of the following are the most important issues in respect of open space (Christchurch Borough)



Comments: the following were the most prominent issues:

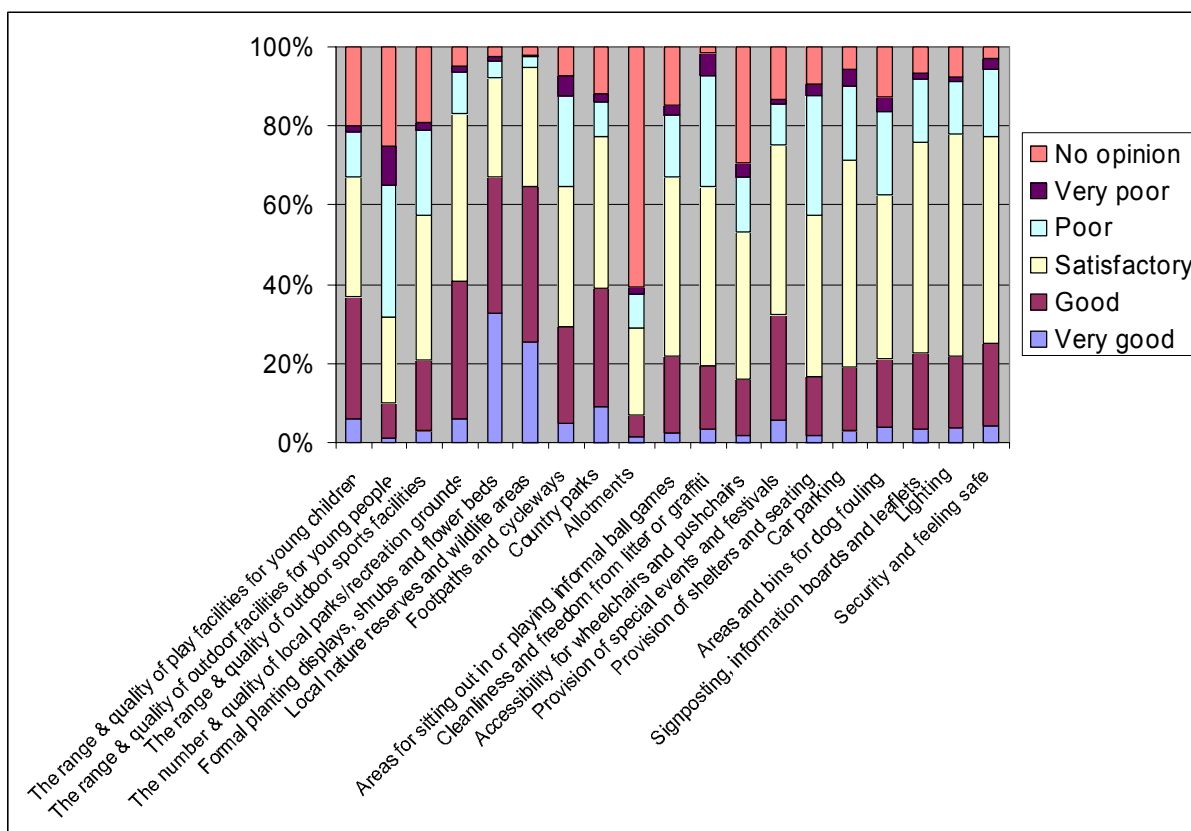
- Cleanliness and lack of graffiti
- (Sense of) safety and security
- Ease of access for everyone
- Control of dogs and freedom from dog fouling

- The 3 most important issues for women were; they are easy to get around for all members of the community, equipment/grounds should be of high quality/well maintained and they should have a range of facilities including cafes/toilets.
- For men they were: there are good links to and between them, to be well supervised and have site-based staff and signposting and information about what's available.
- According to age group, 18 to 44 year olds thought cleanliness and a lack of litter and graffiti, adequate control of dogs and freedom from dog fouling and high quality/well maintained equipment/grounds were the most important issues. For people over 65, signposting and information about what's available, a range of facilities including cafes/toilets and places to shelter/sit in poor weather were the most important.
- Parents of children under 12 were in favour of adequate control of dogs and freedom from dog fouling and equipment/grounds should be of high quality/well maintained.
- People with access to a car as transport thought the most important issue was: to be well supervised and have site-based staff.
- Employed or self-employed people were in favour of feeling safe and secure and also regarded as important that equipment/grounds should be of high quality/well maintained. Whereas, people with more time on their hands (the retired and those not working), thought the most important issues were they should have a range of facilities including cafes/toilets and there should be places to shelter/sit in poor weather.
- People who are sick or disabled thought the main issue was that there should be places to shelter/sit in poor weather.

Quality of provision and maintenance of different types of open space

Householders were asked to rate the quality of provision and maintenance of different types of space with the following results.

Perceptions of quality (Christchurch Borough)



Comment:

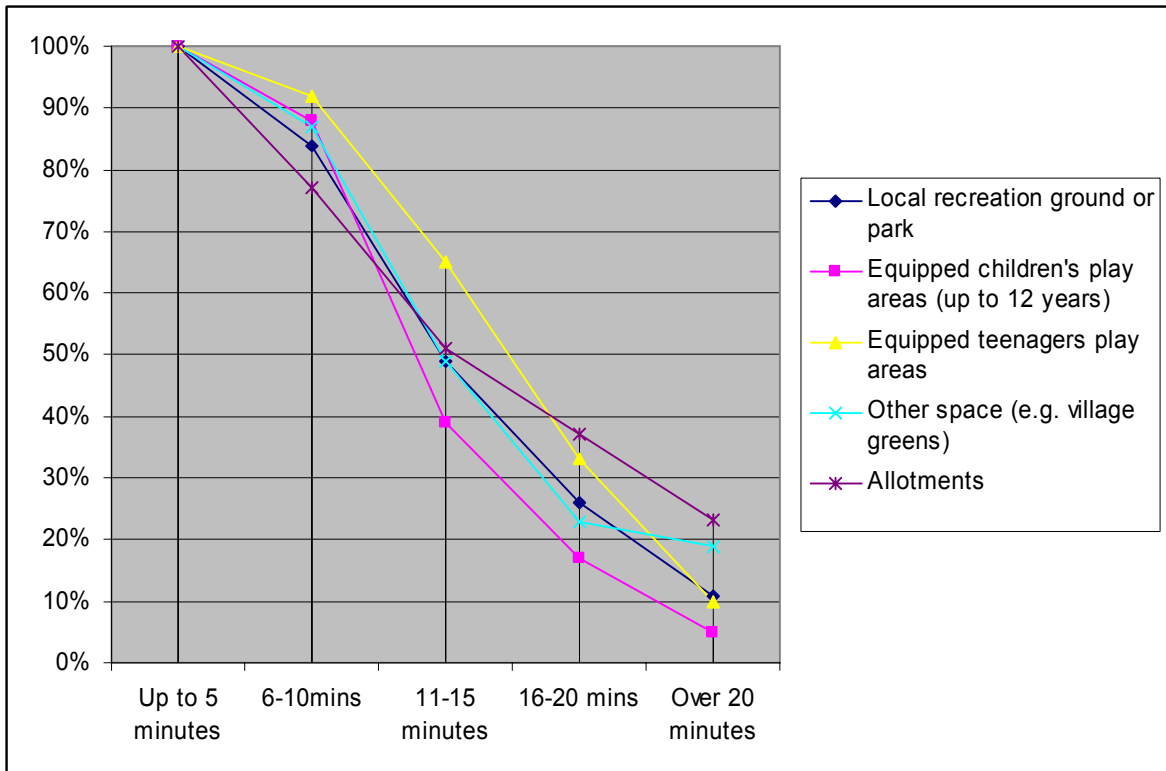
- The highest scoring characteristics were 'local nature reserves and wildlife areas' and 'formal planting displays'.
- The number and quality of local parks, the range and quality of facilities for younger children and country parks were also rated generally as very good or good.
- The poorest rated characteristics were cleanliness, provision of shelters and seating. The range and quality of offerings for young people was also thought lacking by many, as were footpaths and cycle ways.

Accessibility

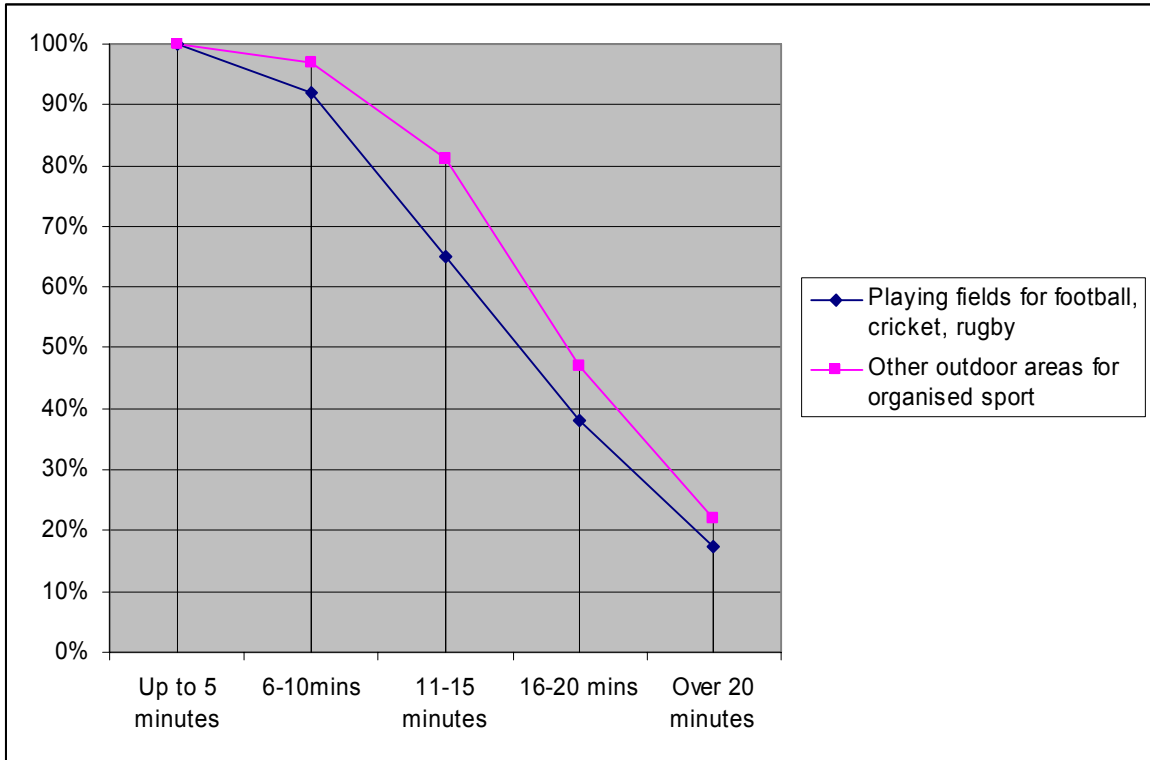
At the outset this report has emphasised that different kinds of open space and recreation facility serve varying needs, and that depending on the nature of the opportunity people may be willing to travel to a lesser or greater degree to take advantage.

To illustrate this point the following diagrams illustrate graphically the findings of the household survey in relation to people's preparedness to travel to different types of open space and built facility.

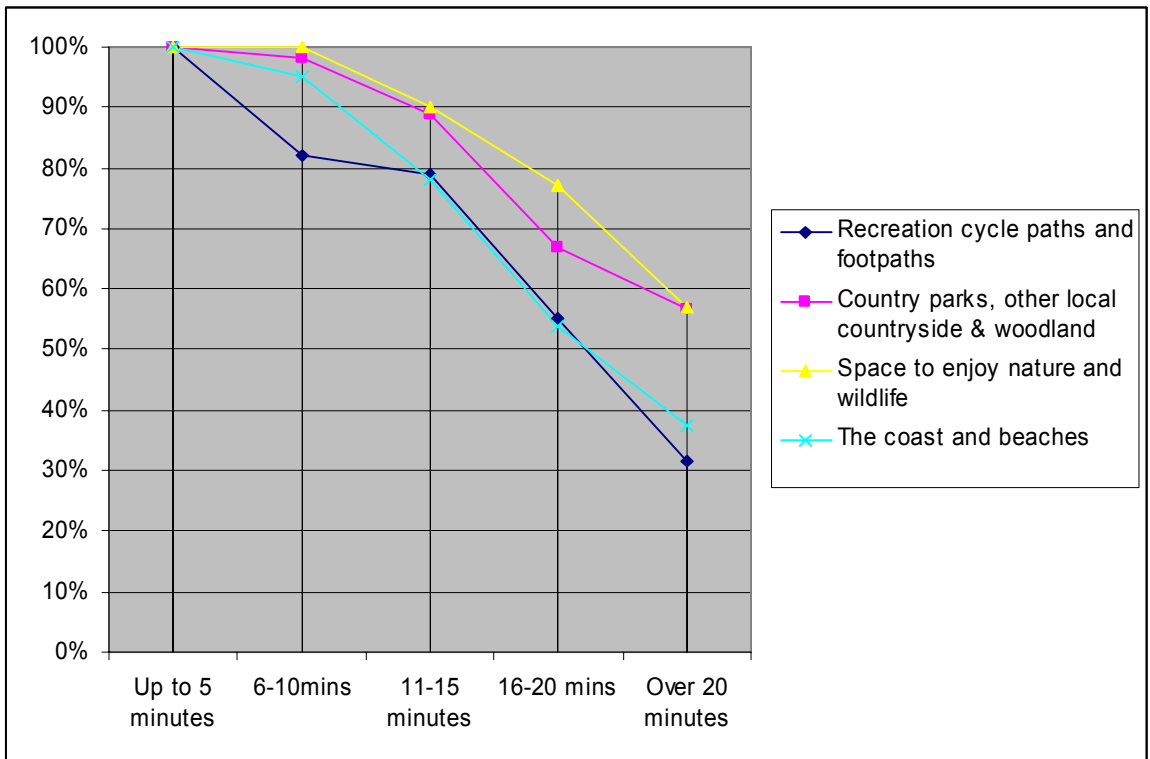
Preparedness to travel: Local open space (Christchurch Borough)



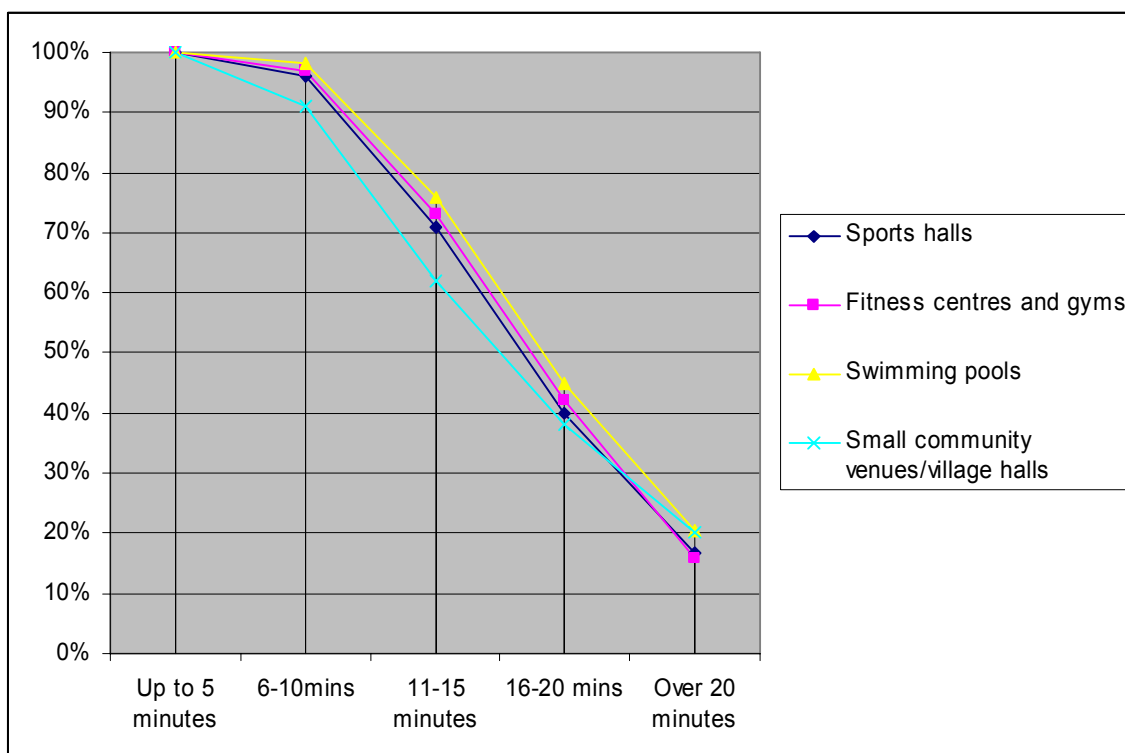
Preparedness to travel: Outdoor sport (Christchurch Borough)



Preparedness to travel: Informal/natural/countryside (Christchurch Borough)



Preparedness to travel: Built Facilities (Christchurch Borough)

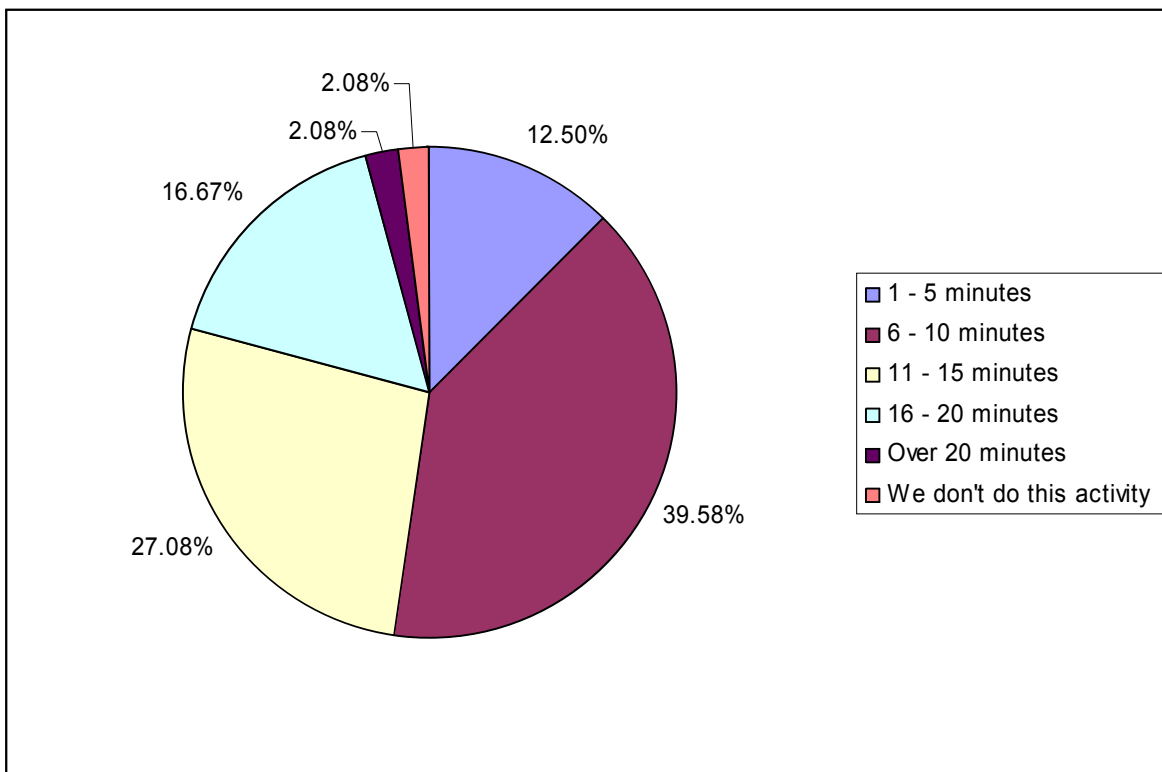


Comment on the above tables:

- A general finding is that people are not prepared to spend so much time travelling to local and informal recreation provision as they are to larger, formal, facilities (such as sports grounds and major built facilities). Having said this, the differences are not large in real terms.
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- In terms of critical thresholds somewhere between 10 and 15 minutes appears to be the general threshold over which less than 75% of the respondents would not be prepared to spend time travelling. (The method of travel will be discussed shortly).

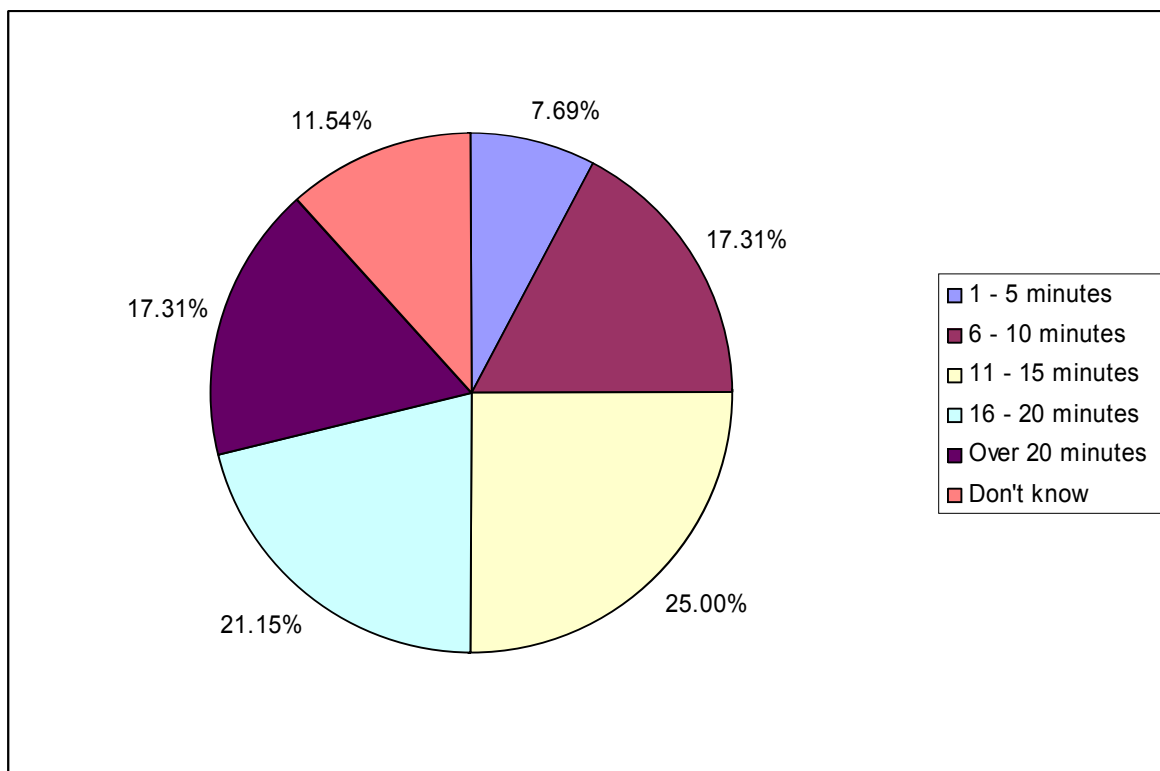
To act as a 'check' on the above overall responses with regard to provision for the younger age groups (who will generally have to walk to facilities), respondents in both areas (where they were parents) were asked how long they would be prepared to accompany young children, or anticipate their older children travelling to appropriate provision, with the following results:

Preparedness of parents to walk with under 12s to a play area (Christchurch Borough)



Comment: For the under 12 age group the above answers tend to suggest a travel time sensitivity with a lower threshold than 10 minutes (compared to the answer to the earlier question) for at least 75% of potential users.

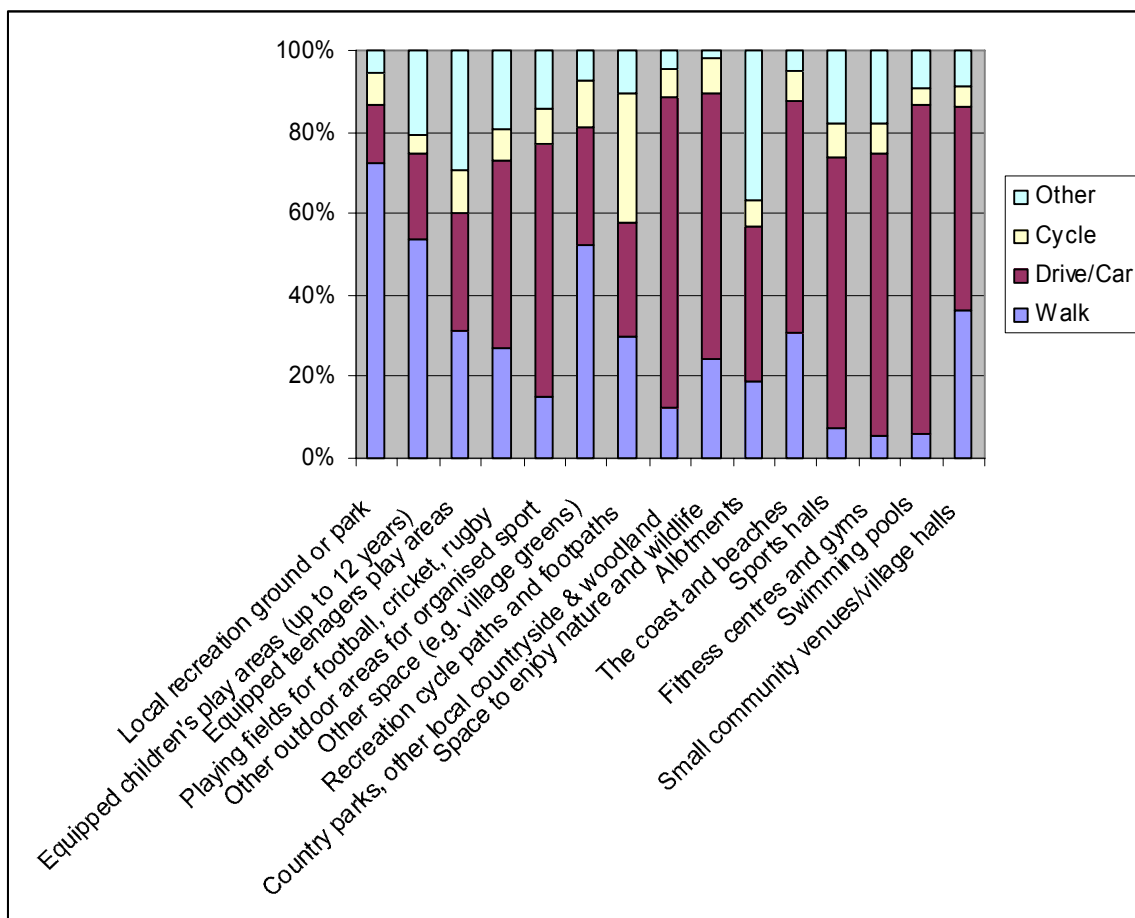
Preparedness of over 12 year olds to walk to teenage provision (Christchurch Borough)



Comment: For the over 12 age group the above answers (again) tend to suggest a travel time sensitivity with a lower threshold than 10 minutes (compared to the answer to the earlier question) for at least 75% of potential users.

Householders were asked to identify the travel mode they were most likely to use to access various types of open space and built facility, with the following results:

Trip mode to various facilities (Christchurch Borough)



Comment: Unsurprisingly perhaps, there is a much greater desire/expectation to walk to local informal provision and play areas, and a greater expectation to have drive to large and/or formal provision further away. Respondents suggest they expect largely to drive to areas of natural space.

4.2 Summary of findings from the Residents Survey

The above and other key findings from the Residents Survey can be summarised as:

- The types of open space most frequently visited by people living in Christchurch are local recreation grounds and public gardens (parks), the beaches and cycle and footpaths. Nearly half of residents said they visited their local recreation ground or park almost every day.
- The areas of open space visited most frequently by people living within Christchurch are Avon Beach, Christchurch Quay, Friars Cliff, Highcliffe Beach, Mundeford Quay, St Catherine's Hill, Stanpit Marsh, Steamer Point and Chewton Common. Outside the borough, Hengistbury Head, Moors Valley Park, the New Forest generally and nearby beaches (e.g. Bournemouth and Southbourne) are particularly popular.

- The natural beauty of the area – both the coast and inland - is highly prized.
- The majority of residents said they would like to make more use of open space nearby. For those who work, perceived lack of spare time is a determining factor, but overall a significant number said they would be encouraged to do this by improvements to facilities, if they felt 'safer and more secure' and if they had more information about what was available. Older people who may be less mobile find getting to places can be a deterrent.
- Most people are prepared to travel between 10 and 15 minutes to reach areas of open space and different types of facilities; younger people and children require facilities nearer to them (less than 10 minutes). There is a much greater desire/expectation to walk to local informal provision and play areas, and a greater expectation to have drive to large and/or formal provision further away. Respondents suggest they expect largely to drive to areas of natural space.
- The types of open space facilities which people would most like to see more of and have easier access to are facilities for young people, natural green space and recreation cycle and footpaths.
- By far and away the most important reasons for visiting open space are to walk and to enjoy the natural environment and wildlife.
- Generally, the type of facilities which people most value in their open spaces and wish to have more of are relatively simple and are really around making better use and enhancing the natural environment – seats, trees and dog bins (i.e. to address the seriously perceived problem of dog fouling).
- Cleanliness and lack of graffiti, a sense of safety and security and ease of access for everyone are regarded as the other main priorities for open space.
- 'Local nature reserves and wildlife areas' and 'formal planting displays' are regarded as of especially high quality within Christchurch.
- The number and quality of local parks, the range and quality of facilities for younger children and country parks are also rated generally as very good or good.
- The poorest rated characteristics are cleanliness and the provision of shelters and seating; not surprising, given that these have already been identified as facilities requiring improvement and more attention. The range and quality of offerings for young people is also thought lacking by many, as are footpaths and cycle ways.

4.3 Key Findings From Parish Councils & Residents Associations

There are only two parish councils in Christchurch, both of which responded to the survey (Burton and Hurn Parish Councils). Responses were also received from four Residents' Associations: Winkton, Stanpit and Mudeford, Highcliffe and Friars Cliff. The concerns are most appropriately considered within the individual LNAs, but common issues to arise are:

- Perceived deficiencies in the provision of multi use games areas and tennis courts, informal open space within villages and the urban areas, and indoor halls for sport.
- Considerable scope for community use of school facilities and playing fields.
- Any other comments tended to be around the management of areas of open space catering for more than one use e.g. sport and informal recreation; vandalism and control of unauthorised use.

4.4 Key Findings From Sports Clubs

The information obtained from Sports Clubs, and from officer meetings, visits to facilities and consultation with sports development officers has been taken into account in formulating standards of provision and presented in the Local Need Area profiles. Some of the key topics to emerge are:

- The importance of water as an open space resource, for sailing, angling, rowing, canoeing, sailboarding etc
- Deficiencies in pitch provision: deficiencies in football and cricket pitch provision
- Shortages of training facilities for pitch sports (indoor and outdoor)
- Shortages of Synthetic Turf Pitches
- Unmet demand for health and fitness/gym facilities within Christchurch
- Unmet demand for five-a-side football and lack of outdoor facilities
- Competition from indoor facilities outside the Borough, notably the Littledown Centre
- Issues around use of Mudeford Wood Community Centre
- No large dedicated sports halls (with or without community use) at any schools within Christchurch. Limited opportunities for increasing dual use to school sports facilities, but opportunities for joint provision (sports hall and/or STPs)

4.5 Key Findings From Play Groups, Pre-Schools And After School Clubs

13 pre-schools, after-school clubs and day nurseries responded. The key points to arise are:

- Generally felt that enough open space for U12s, but more equipped areas and especially more adventure play areas required.
- There are not enough facilities for older children and teenagers. Other most desired new facilities are adventure/wild play areas, cycle paths and places to cycle, such as BMX tracks.
- Greater use of open space and play facilities could be best encouraged by providing different and improved equipment, more suitable open spaces nearer their homes and more information about what is available.
- The natural environment of Christchurch and its parks are well regarded; the existing network of open space could be further enhanced to offer a greater range of experiences – with areas to rest, explore, play etc Play areas should have a range of play opportunities for different age groups, be clean and tidy and safe and secure.

4.6 Key Findings From Young People

100 children from secondary schools in Christchurch completed questionnaires and a focus group was held with children from local youth clubs. The key points to arise from these were:

- Areas and facilities near to where they live are of great value to young people: between 30% and 40% of those surveyed take less than 5 minutes and two thirds, up to 10 minutes, to get to their most used local area of open space.
 - Important and well used areas in Christchurch for young people are Two Rivers Meet Skate Park, Stanpit Marsh, Christchurch Recreation Grounds, Mundeford Quay and Woods, Steamer Point, Waterman's Park in Somerford, Highcliffe Recreation Ground, Riverway Park and Barrack Road Recreation Ground.
- Young people think there is enough 'open space' and young children's play areas, but not enough teenage facilities and interestingly – outdoor sport facilities.
- Teenagers go with their friends to open space areas, just to chill and relax; although a significant minority like to play sport. Specialist provision, such as skateparks, are not regarded as a priority by most. Of far more importance are just places to meet and simple things like shelters and seats, adventure areas and accessible tennis/basketball facilities.
- For children and young people, the most important factor is easy accessibility. As public transport is not an option (either because it is not available or too expensive), safe footpaths and cycleways become of paramount importance.

Cycling is a very popular way to get around for the younger teenagers; as they get older, they are more prepared/likely to walk.

- Most young people also set great store on open space areas and facilities being clean and tidy.
- Between the ages of about 11 and 13 young people's use of open space changes. The younger children in this band tend to go to places with their families and thus often travel by car; as they get older, getting to places under their own steam with, or to meet, their friends, become of greater importance. Younger children would like more active outdoor spaces - adventure areas, places to play basketball and tennis and cycle paths – not just places to meet (which is what teenagers primarily would like).

4.7 Key Findings From Visitors Survey

252 visitors to Christchurch and East Dorset – 113 within Christchurch and 125 in East Dorset – were interviewed face-to-face about open space, sport and recreation facilities by researchers from the Market Research Group, Bournemouth University in the summer of 2006. A separate Report has been prepared by The Market Research Bureau, Bournemouth University; the key findings were as follows:

Average ratings of types of open space and facilities

('poor' = 1; 'very good' = 5)

	Christchurch	East Dorset	All
Local Parks	4.4	4.3	4.4
Children's play facilities	4.3	4.3	4.3
Outdoor areas for teenagers	3.2	3.2	3.2
Outdoor sports facilities	4.1	4.2	4.2
Indoor sports facilities	3.9	4.2	4.1
Local Nature Reserves & wildlife areas	4.7	4.5	4.6
Country parks and heathland areas	4.7	4.7	4.7
Areas for sitting out in	4.3	4.2	4.2
Indoor swimming pools	4.1	4.4	4.2
Coastline & beaches	4.9	4.8	4.9
Average ratings across all facilities	3.2	3.2	3.2

- On average the coastline and beaches were the highest rated facilities across all groups (4.9). Ratings for country parks and heath land areas (4.7), children's play facilities (4.3), and outdoor areas for teenagers (3.2) remained consistent regardless of interview location. Christchurch respondents rated the coastline and beaches (4.9), nature reserves and wildlife areas (4.7), areas for sitting out and informal ball games (4.3) marginally higher than East Dorset respondents. East Dorset respondents, on average, rated indoor swimming pools (4.4), outdoor sports facilities (4.2) and indoor sports facilities (4.2) marginally higher than Christchurch respondents.

- Christchurch respondents most frequently visited Mudeford Quay (56%), Christchurch town (39%), Christchurch quay (35%), and Christchurch Priory (32%). Other specific sites mentioned by between 5% and 10% of respondents were Moors Valley Country Park, the New Forest and Steamer Point.
- Over the whole sample the most frequently cited favourite facilities within Christchurch and East Dorset were Moors Valley Country Park (19%), Mudeford Quay (16%) and Wimborne Town/Minster (7%). Christchurch respondents' most frequently cited favourite facilities were; Mudeford quay (31%), Christchurch Priory (11%) and Christchurch quay (10%).
- Out of three given characteristics of open space, security and feeling safe was rated the highest and remained consistent across all groups (4.6). The control of noise and unsocial behaviour (4.3) and cleanliness and freedom from litter (4.3) were rated marginally higher by Christchurch respondents (4.3 & 4.3 respectively) than East Dorset respondents (4.0 & 4.2 respectively).

4.8 Key Findings From Focus Groups And Meetings

Three Focus Groups were held on the following topics: Sports and Education; the Natural Environment and Access. These were combined between Christchurch and East Dorset; the key findings to emerge with relevance to Christchurch are:

- Many young people are interested in sport and there are a lot of enthusiastic teachers, coaches and parents. Children of varying levels of ability and interest are encouraged and many clubs have positive attitudes towards young people.
- Secondary schools offer a wide range of activities and school-club links are beginning to develop; primary schools are clearly beginning to take a more serious interest in physical activity. Notwithstanding timetable constraints, there is scope for greater use/appreciation of the natural environment nearby by schools.
- Cycling is popular, and could be developed further if more segregated cycle lanes and routes were available, especially on school routes.
- There is a good range of alternative activities to indoor and pitch sports available in Christchurch such as water sports, skateboarding, dance activity. However, large sections of the teenage age group are not reached and could be better catered for.
- Given shortages of land, it is important to make the best use of existing provision. There is scope to enhance and improve opportunities for the local community to use school facilities.
- Because of the proximity of water Christchurch is an important location for watersports. Several clubs desperately need new and improved facilities, and new

development/residents will put extra pressures on these facilities.

- The widespread opportunities provided by the natural environment around Christchurch to experience peace and relaxation away from the man-made environment. However, recreation pressures on sensitive environments must be managed carefully and open spaces, including smaller local areas, must be protected.
- The concept of 'green gyms' – open space as a resource for health and fitness, to combat obesity for example – could be further developed and promoted.
- There are opportunities for:
 - greater community involvement in looking after local spaces
 - softening formal recreation space, especially the marginal areas where it is not possible to use them for sport
 - creating a link network of off-road bridle ways and to develop strategic routes
 - enhanced green links between major new development and existing/planned open space
- Access to the parks and gardens and green open spaces in Christchurch is generally good.
- However, there are issues specifically around access and facilities for people with disabilities and who are less mobile – some basic needs e.g, wheelchair ramps, smooth paths, toilets and adequate car parking are not being met.

4B KEY FINDINGS FROM SURVEY AND CONSULTATION EAST DORSET

This section examines identified local need for various types of open space, sports and recreation opportunity. It has drawn upon a range of survey and analytical techniques. The extent of the consultation reflects the breadth and diversity of the study and a consequent need to engage with as wide a cross section of the community as possible. The following questionnaire surveys were undertaken:

- Residents survey
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- Schools survey
- Visitors survey

In addition to the above the following ‘theme based’ focus group meetings/activity based consultations were undertaken as below:

- Sports and education interests;
- Young people;
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The result of this consultation and other analyses (as will be explained) has helped amongst other things to inform the content of the recommended local standards as well as possible priorities and actions, in other ways. Crucially it has also helped the study to understand local people’s appreciation of open space and recreation facilities, and the values attached by the community to the various forms of space. This appreciation should have implications for the way in which open spaces are treated and designated in the revised Local Development Framework.

The following pages summarise the key findings of the overall consultation exercise. More detailed points are contained within Appendix 4A (will be renumbered in Final Report).

4.1 Key Findings From Residents’ Survey

448 completed questionnaires were received from a survey via the Citizen’s Panel in East Dorset. This is statistically valid. Results have been incorporated throughout the Study; key information relating to standards of provision is contained with Section 5. This section relates some of the other information obtained. Further local detail is contained within the Local Need Area Profiles.

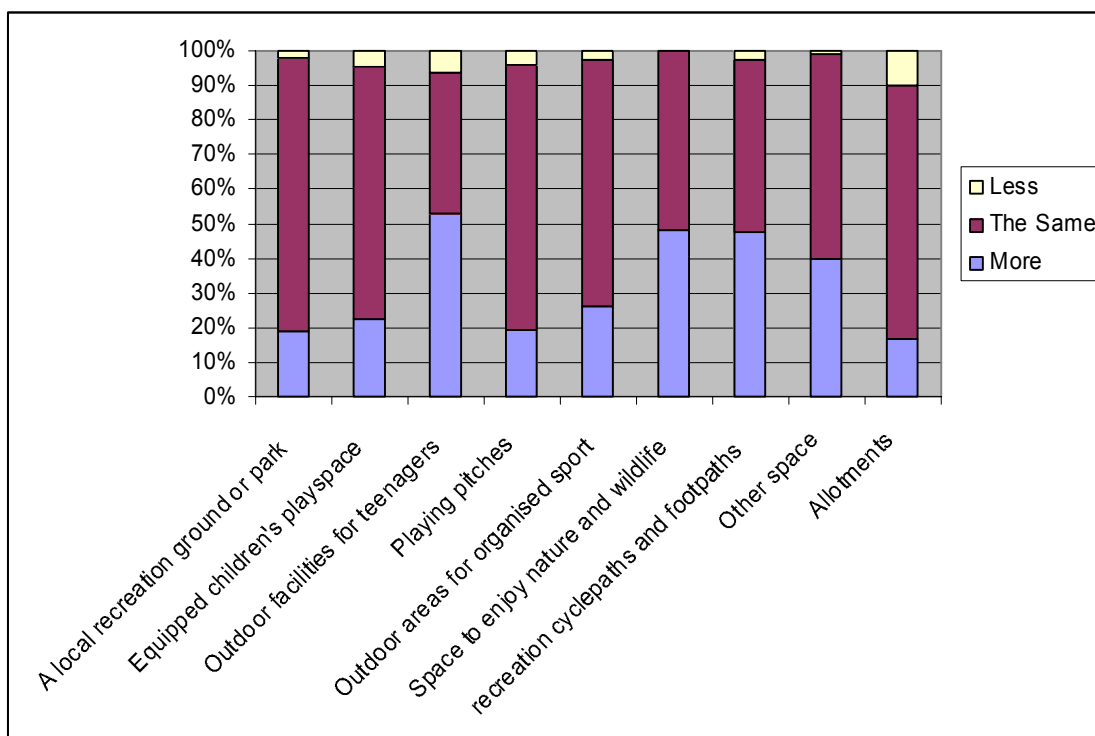
The results of community consultation will help greatly to inform the development of local standards in respect of the three required components (quantity, quality and accessibility) and following figures and associated comments illustrate this point.

Residents Survey Findings on Quantity, Quality and Accessibility of Provision

Levels of provision and quality

Householders in each of the local authority areas were asked if there should be more, less, or the same of the following types of open space in their area, with the following results.

Figure 4.1: Should there be more, less, or the same of the following types of space (East Dorset District)



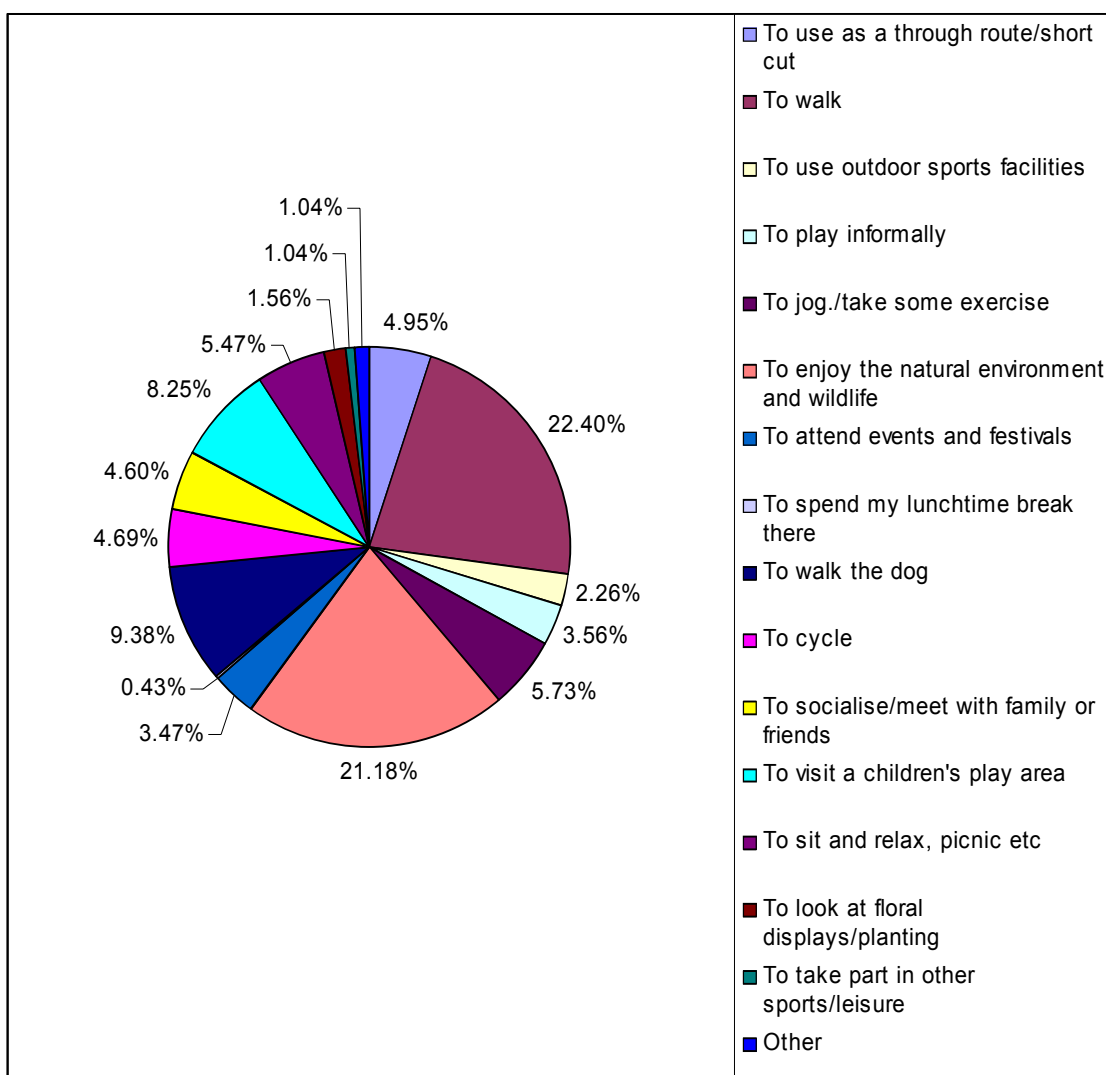
Comment: It is in respect of:

- Teenage provision
- Natural space
- Recreation foot and cycle paths

where there appeared to be most desire to see more space provided. None of the above forms of space are explicitly recognised within existing standards.

Reasons for visiting local areas of open space

Householders were asked the reasons they used their most visited local space open space, with the following results.

Figure 4.2: Why people visit their most used space (East Dorset District)

Comment: By far and away the most important reasons for visiting open space were:

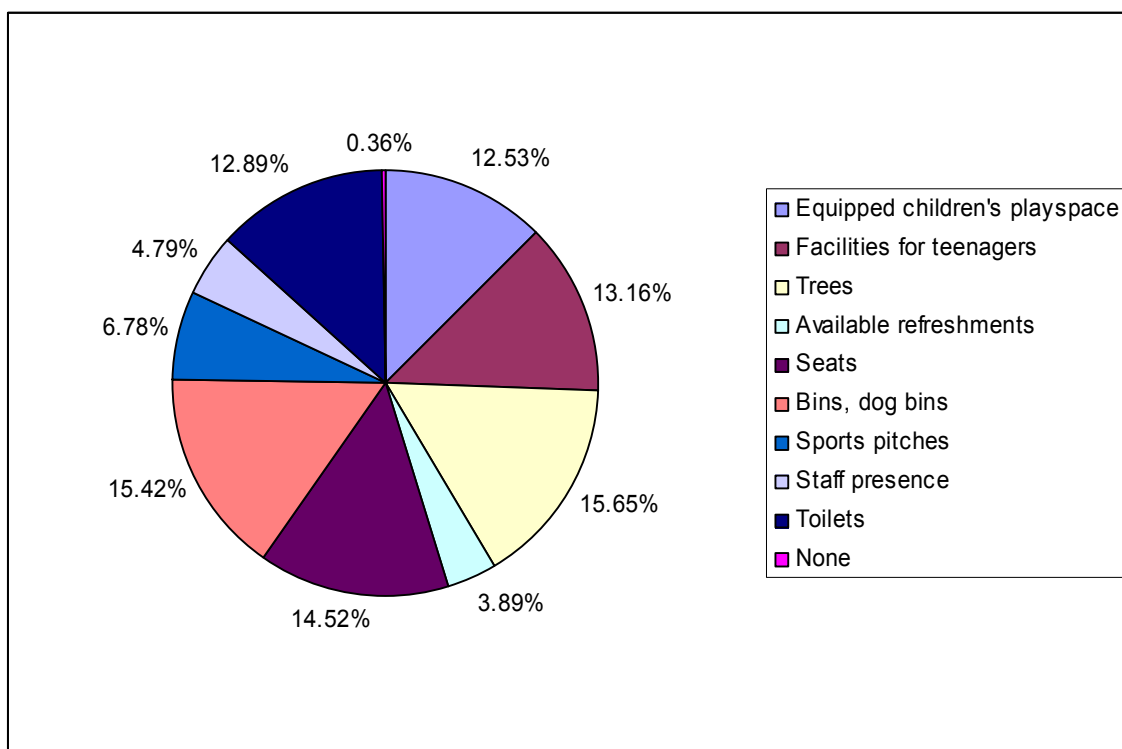
- To walk
- To enjoy the natural environment and wildlife
- About half use their most frequently visited facility for walking and enjoying nature and wildlife (reflecting the nature of these facilities).
- around 8% use them as places to sit and relax, 7% use them to walk a dog and 5% socialize or meet with family and friends, 6% jog/take exercise.
- Other activities were mentioned less frequently, and tended to involve certain age groups, specialist interests (cycling, events and festivals) or equipment (visits to play equipment).

None of these reasons are reflected explicitly in the existing standards of provision.

Facilities important to have nearby

Householders were asked what facilities they considered important to have near them, with the following results.

Figure 4.3: What facilities did people think it was important to have near them (East Dorset District)



Comment: the following were generally cited to be the most important facilities:

- Bins/dog bins
- Trees
- Seats
- Provision for children and young people

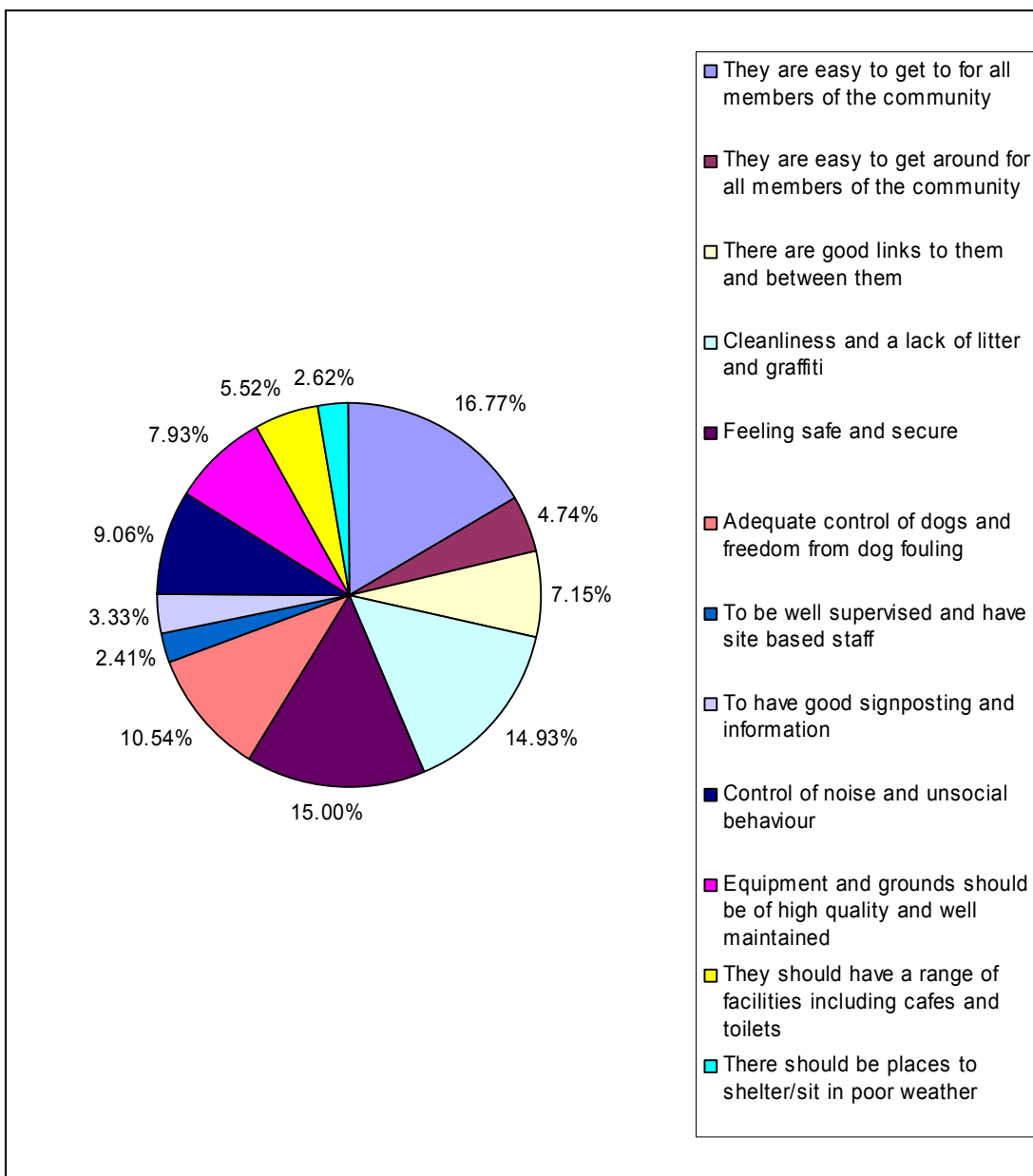
Once again, many of the features are not explicitly reflected in the existing local standards of provision.

- Ease of getting around these spaces, the control of anti-social behaviour and dogs, and cleanliness are also important. On-site supervision, more signposting and information and ease of getting around outdoor areas appear to be of lesser importance.

Most important issues in planning, provision and maintenance of open space

Householders were asked what they considered to be the most important issues to be addressed with respect to the planning, provision and maintenance of open space, with the following results.

Figure 4.4: Which of the following are the most important issues in respect of open space (East Dorset District)



Comments: the following were the most prominent issues:

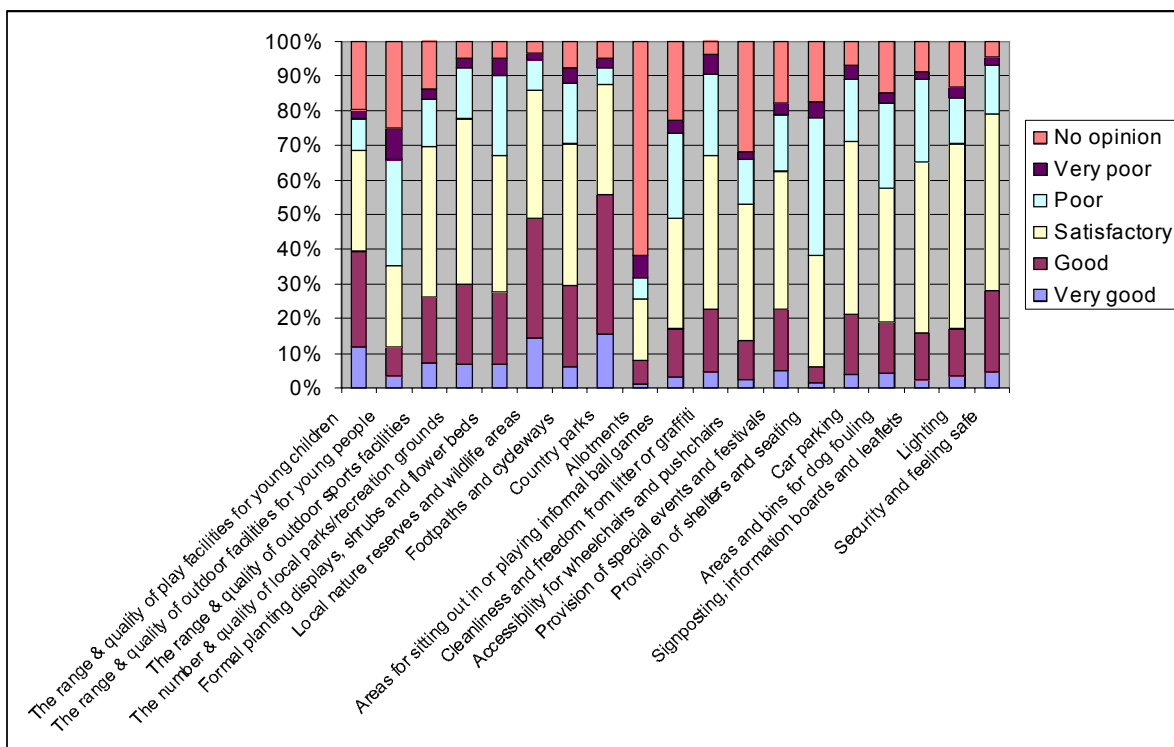
- Cleanliness and lack of graffiti
- (Sense of) safety and security
- Ease of access for everyone
- Control of dogs and freedom from dog fouling

- The 3 most important issues for women were; shelters/somewhere to sit in bad weather, feeling safe and secure and adequate control of dogs. For men they were; to be well supervised and have site-based staff, cleanliness and a lack of graffiti/litter and signposting and control of noise and unsocial behaviour.
- According to age group, 25 to 44 year olds thought equipment/grounds should be of high quality/well maintained was the most important issue and people over 65 thought signposting and information about what's available.
- Parents of children under 12 were in favour of equipment/grounds being of high quality/well maintained.
- People with access to a car as transport thought the most important issue was; to have good links to and between them, the same reason was given by people who are sick or disabled.
- Employed or self-employed people also thought there should be good links to and between them. Whereas, people with more time on their hands, thought the most important issues were they should have a range of facilities including cafes/toilets and there should be places to shelter/sit in poor weather.

Quality of provision and maintenance of different types of open space

Householders were asked to rate the quality of provision and maintenance of different types of space with the following results.

Figure 4.5: Perceptions of quality (East Dorset District)



Comment

- The highest scoring characteristics were 'local nature reserves and wildlife areas' and 'country parks'.
- The range and quality of facilities for younger children and outdoor sports facilities were also rated generally as very good or good.
- The poorest rated characteristics were cleanliness, provision of shelters and seating. The range and quality of offerings for young people was also thought lacking by many, as were areas for sitting in.

Accessibility

At the outset this report has emphasised that different kinds of open space and recreation facility serve varying needs, and that depending on the nature of the opportunity people may be willing to travel to a lesser or greater degree to take advantage.

To illustrate this point the following diagrams illustrate graphically the findings of the household survey in relation to people's preparedness to travel to different types of open space and built facility.

Figure 4.6: Preparedness to travel: Local open space (East Dorset District)

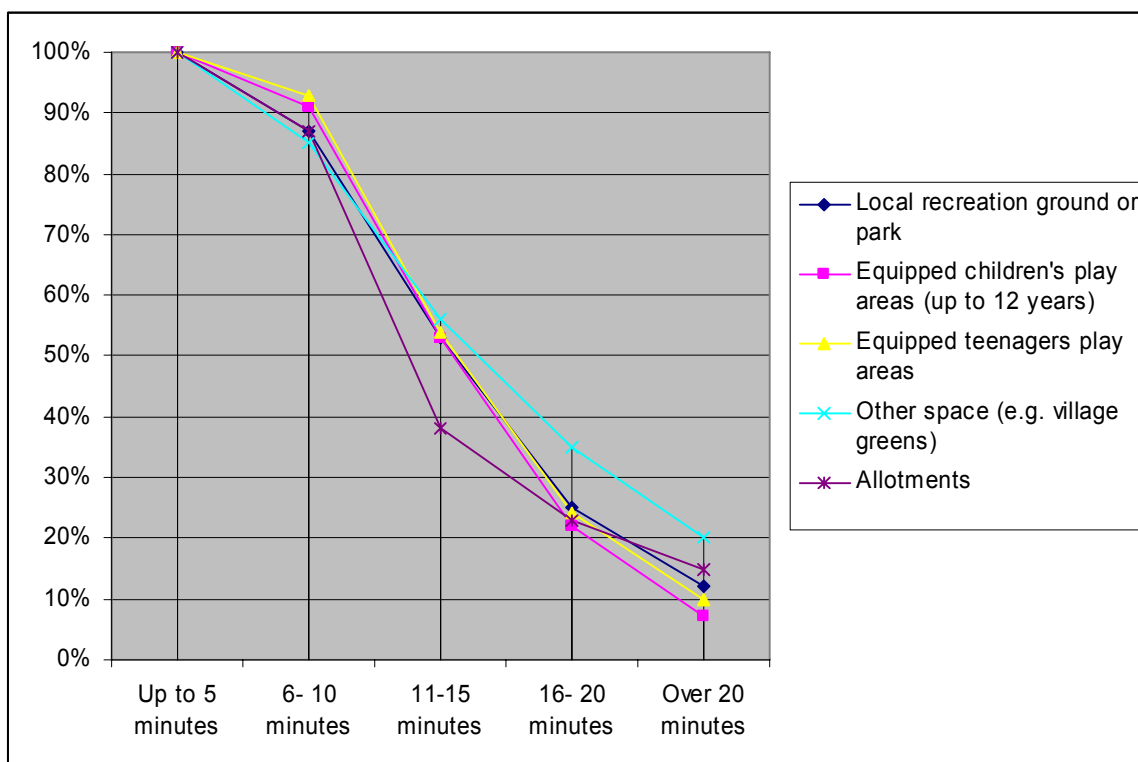


Figure 4.7: Preparedness to travel: Outdoor sport (East Dorset District)

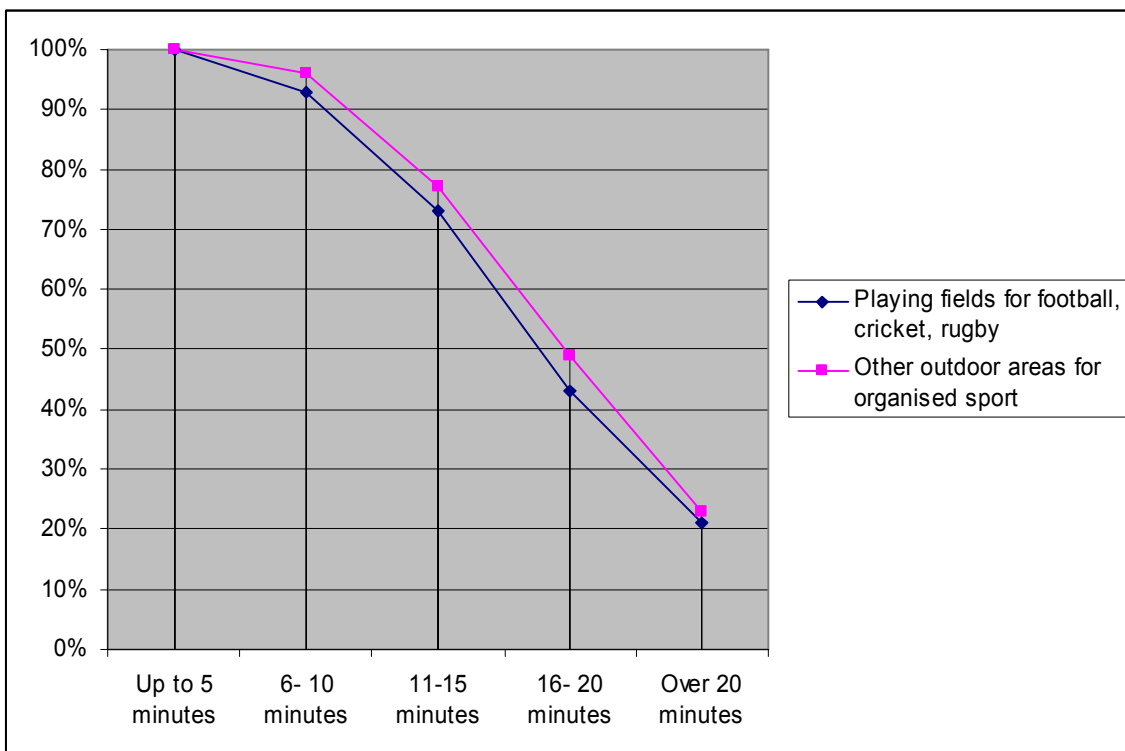


Figure 4.8: Preparedness to travel: Informal/natural/countryside (East Dorset District)

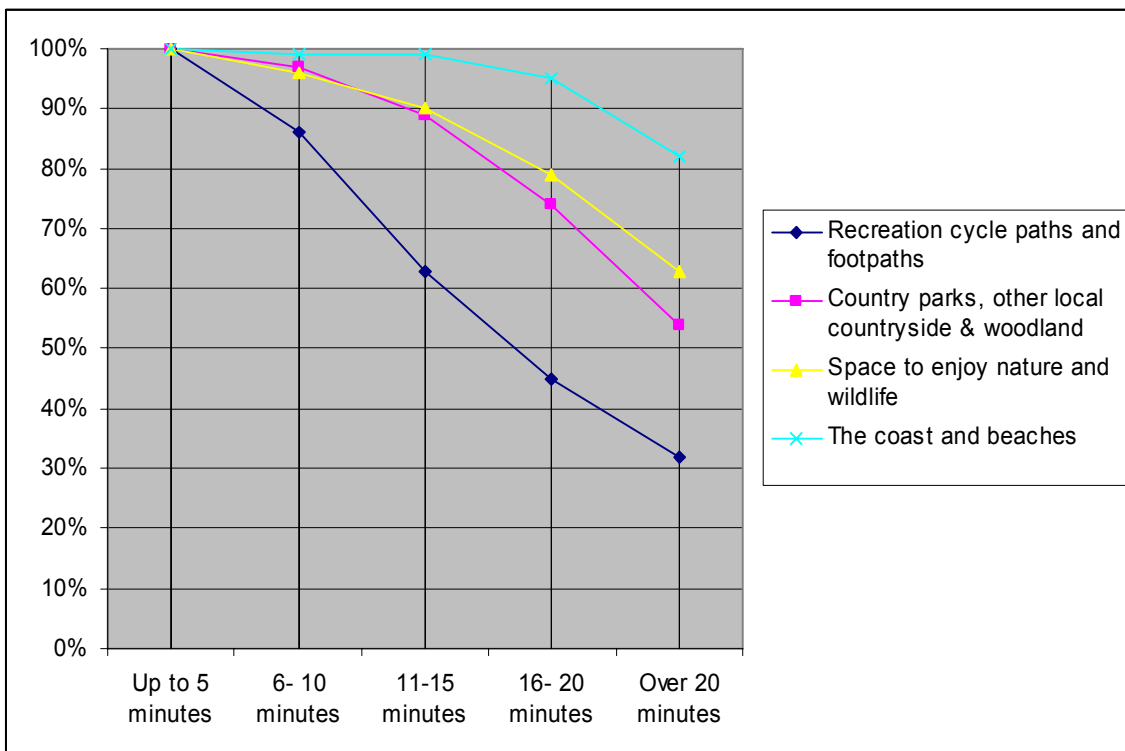
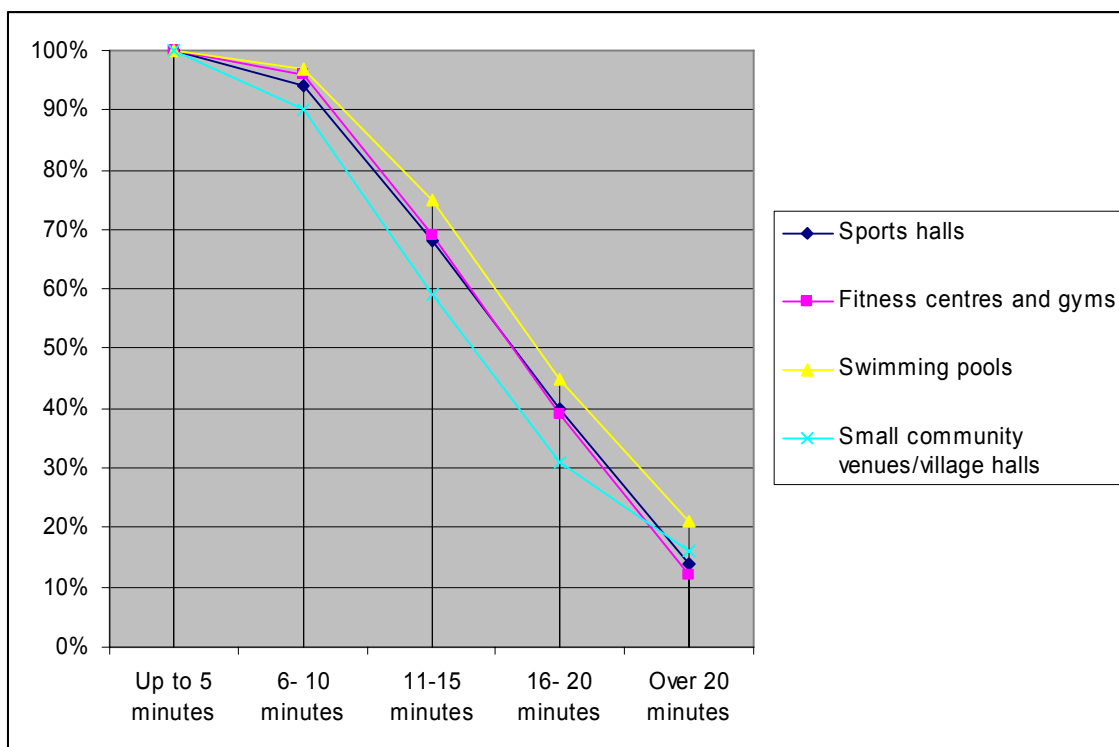
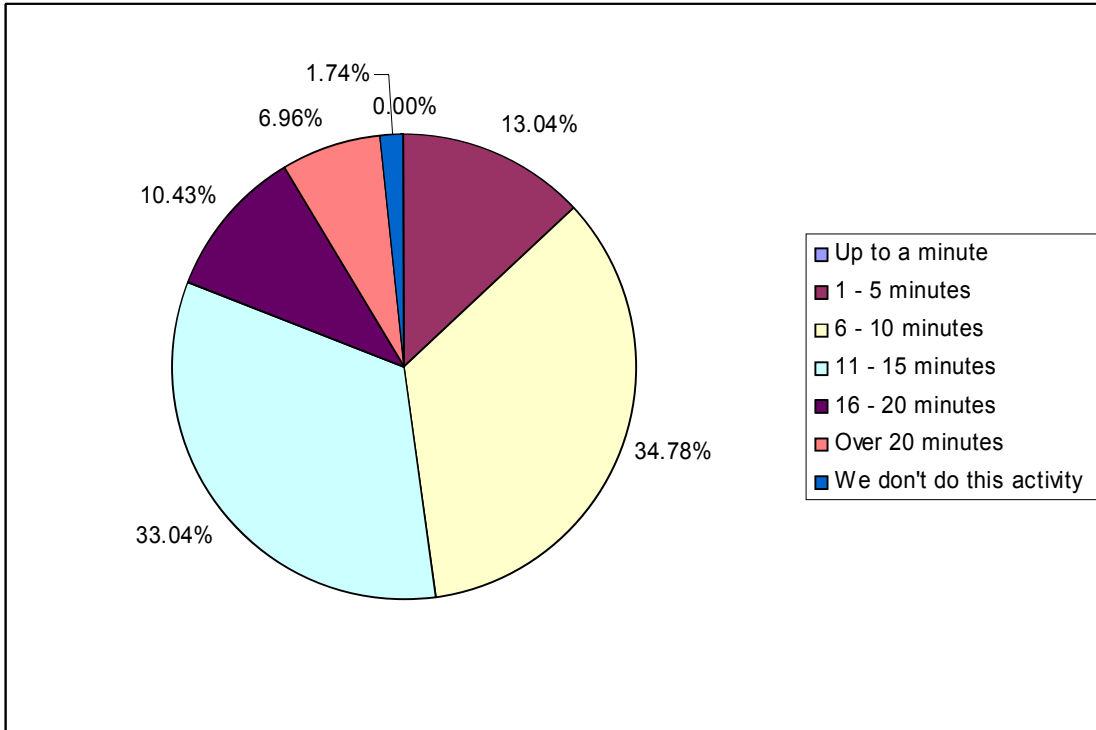


Figure 4.9: Preparedness to travel: Built Facilities (East Dorset District)**Comment on the above tables:**

- A general finding is that people are not prepared to spend so much time travelling to local and informal recreation provision as they are to larger, formal, facilities (such as sports grounds and major built facilities). Having said this, the differences are not large in real terms.
- In terms of critical thresholds somewhere between 10 and 15 minutes appears to be the general threshold over which less than 75% of the respondents would not be prepared to spend time travelling. (The method of travel will be discussed shortly).

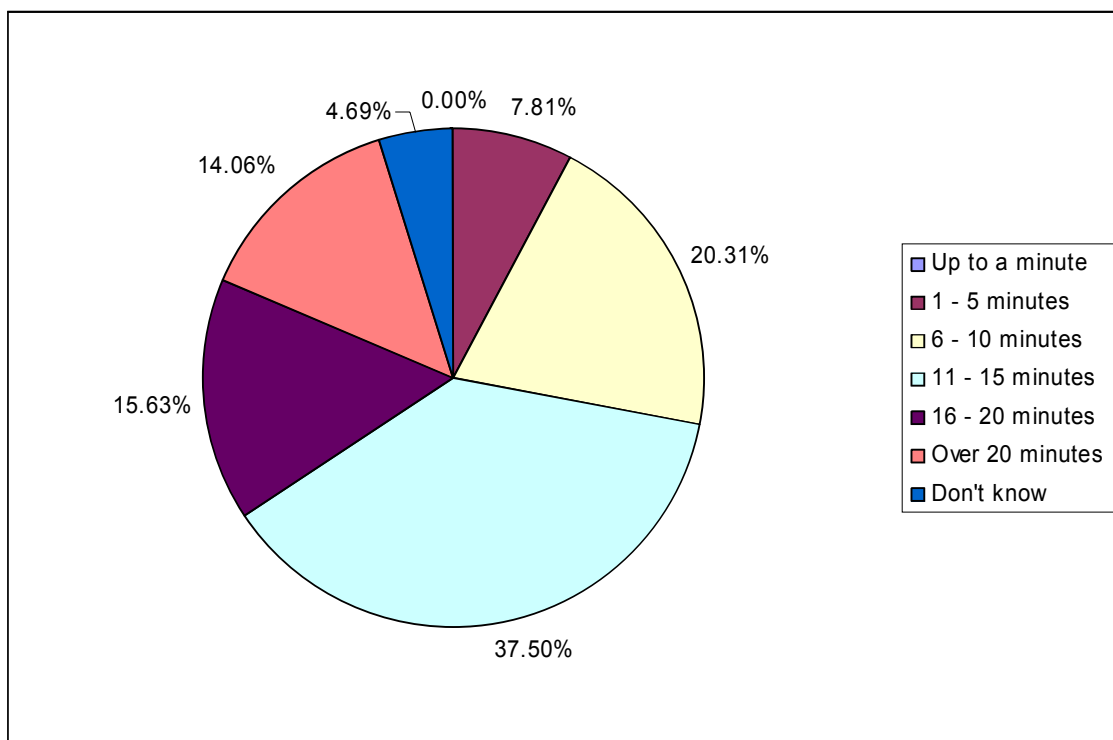
To act as a 'check' on the above overall responses with regard to provision for the younger age groups (who will generally have to walk to facilities), respondents in both areas (where they were parents) were asked how long they would be prepared to accompany young children, or anticipate their older children travelling to appropriate provision, with the following results:

Figure 4.10: Preparedness of parents to walk with under 12s to a play area (East Dorset District)



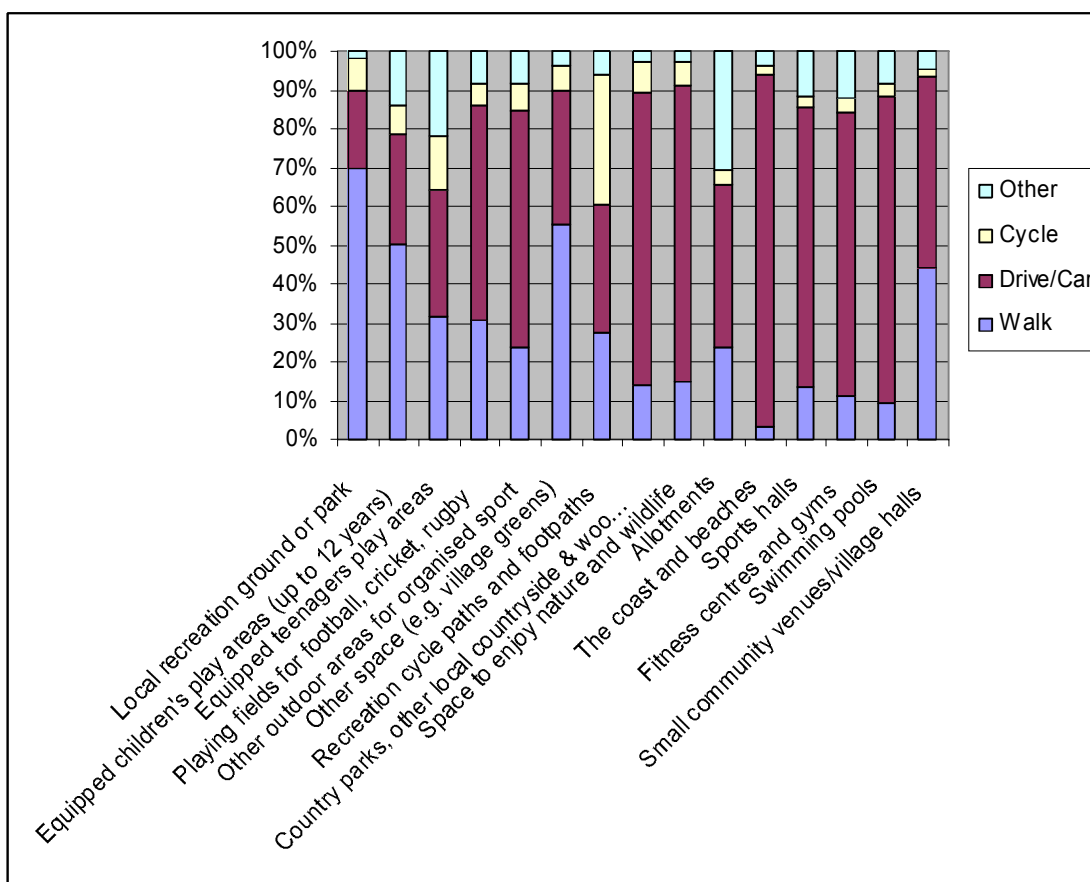
Comment: For the under 12 age group the above answers tend to suggest a travel time sensitivity with a lower threshold than 10 minutes (compared to the answer to the earlier question) for at least 75% of potential users.

Figure 4.11: Preparedness of over 12 year olds to walk to teenage provision (East Dorset District)



Comment: For the over 12 age group the above answers (again) tend to suggest a travel time sensitivity with a lower threshold than 10 minutes (compared to the answer to the earlier question) for at least 75% of potential users.

Householders were asked to identify the travel mode they were most likely to use to access various types of open space and built facility, with the following results:

Figure 4.12: Trip mode to various facilities (East Dorset District)

Comment: Unsurprisingly perhaps, there is a much greater desire/expectation to walk to local informal provision and play areas, and a greater expectation to have drive to large and/or formal provision further away. Respondents suggest they expect largely to drive to areas of natural space.

4.2 Summary of Findings from Residents' Survey

The above and other key findings from the Residents Survey can be summarised as:

- The types of open space most frequently visited by people living in East Dorset are local recreation grounds and public gardens (parks), country parks, cycle and footpaths and open spaces to enjoy nature and wildlife.
- The areas of open space most frequently visited by people living within East Dorset tend to be their local (village) recreation grounds (Potterne Park, Corfe Mullen Recreation Ground). Other than these, Moors Valley emerges as a key destination for people from right across the district. Outside the district, beaches in Bournemouth, Sandbanks and around Poole and the Purbeck area around Swanage are particularly popular.

- The natural beauty of the area – especially in the north of the district - is highly prized.
- The majority of residents said they would like to make more use of open space nearby. For those who work, perceived lack of spare time is a determining factor, but overall a significant number said they would be encouraged to do this by improvements to facilities, if they felt 'safer and more secure' and if they had more information about what was available. Older people who may be less mobile find getting to places can be a deterrent. Younger people especially are keen to become more active.
- Most people are prepared to travel between 10 and 15 minutes to reach areas of open space and different types of facilities; younger people and children require facilities nearer to them (less than 10 minutes). There is a much greater desire/expectation to walk to local informal provision and play areas, and a greater expectation to have to drive to large and/or formal provision further away. Respondents suggest they expect largely to drive to areas of natural space.
- The types of open space facilities which people would most like to see more of and have easier access to are facilities for young people, natural green space and recreation cycle and footpaths.
- By far and away the most important reasons for visiting open space are to walk and to enjoy the natural environment and wildlife.
- Generally, the type of facilities which people most value in their open spaces and wish to have more of are relatively simple and are really around making better use and enhancing the natural environment – seats, trees and dog bins (i.e. to address the seriously perceived problem of dog fouling) and toilets.
- Cleanliness and lack of graffiti, a sense of safety and security and ease of access for everyone are regarded as the other main priorities for open space.
- 'Local nature reserves and wildlife areas' and 'country parks' are regarded as of especially high quality within East Dorset.
- The range and quality of facilities for younger children and outdoor sports facilities are also rated generally as very good or good.
- The poorest rated characteristics were cleanliness, provision of shelters and seating. The range and quality of offerings for young people was also thought lacking by many, as were amenity areas for sitting in.

4.3 Key Findings From Town And Parish Council Survey

The main findings from the Town and Parish Councils are contained within the Local Need Area Profiles. However, some common themes emerged:

- All the 16 Town and Parish Councils responding said that there was a need for more open space, sport and recreation facilities. Two thirds mentioned deficiencies in provision for teenagers and a half highlighted shortages or poor quality of play areas. Otherwise, deficiencies in provision for pitch sports, multi use games areas, open space and indoor halls for sport tended to be identified on a more localised basis.
- Improvements or new facilities which would benefit their areas: many parishes mentioned facilities for teenagers (skate parks, kickwalls, teen shelters, BMX facilities) and several, play areas. Multi use games areas were also often highlighted.
- Potential scope for increasing the community use of local schools, especially primary schools in rural areas certainly needs to be investigated.
- From a Town and Parish Council management point of view, the most important attributes of open space were that they should be safe and secure, be well maintained and have a range of play equipment for different age groups.
- The most important and used areas of open space varied between the Parishes: for most it was their local recreation ground.

4.4 Key Findings From Community Organisations

Six Parish Plan and Local Action Groups responded; detailed results are contained within the Local Need Area Profiles. However, as with the Town and Parish Councils, common themes emerged:

- These groups did not think there were enough facilities for teenagers or informal outdoor space, but other types of open space and outdoor provision were adequate.
- They were asked: how would you encourage greater use of open space? Cheaper and better public transport was highlighted, as was general improvement of facilities currently provided (different equipment in play areas for example), and many mentioned the need for better access to new areas and types of facility which better meet the needs of residents.

4.5 Key Findings From Sports Clubs

The information obtained from Sports Clubs, and from officer meetings, visits to facilities and consultation with sports development officers has been taken into account in formulating standards of provision and presented in the Local Need Area profiles. Some of the key topics to emerge are:

- Indoor sports venues: issues over concurrent programming of community use with dual use facilities on school sites (Ferndown). Inadequate facilities to meet demand for indoor sport and cater for whole community (Verwood).
- Demand for STP (Ferndown).

- Localised deficiencies in pitch provision; need for appropriate ancillary changing and floodlighting facilities (Wimborne, Ferndown)

4.6 Key Findings From Play Groups, Pre-Schools And After-School Clubs

15 pre-schools, after-school clubs and day nurseries responded. The key points to arise are:

- Generally felt that enough provision for U12s, but more facilities for older children and teenagers required – adventure play, skateparks and courts.
- Most desired new facilities are places to meet outdoors, adventure/wild play areas and equipped play areas.
- Greater use of open space and play facilities could be best encouraged by providing different and improved equipment and more facilities such as seats, cafes and toilets (to sit and shelter in wet weather). Management of older children/teenagers and dogs are important in maintaining a welcoming environment.
- The local countryside and Moors Valley Country Park are very highly regarded. However, with public transport limited in many areas, the need is for more localised areas – particularly in the more rural parts of the district – which younger people and the less mobile can use more easily.

4.7 Key Findings From Young People

Just under 100 children in total for a middle and secondary school in East Dorset, completed questionnaires and children from Alderholt were also interviewed. The key points to arise from these were:

- Areas and facilities near to where they live are of great value to young people: between 30% and 40% of those surveyed take less than 5 minutes and half, up to 10 minutes, to get to their most used local area of open space. In East Dorset, the children on average have to travel a little further than children in Christchurch to reach their favourite places.
- Important and well used areas in East Dorset for young people vary because of the size and diversity of the district (also most of the pupils surveyed came from the Wimborne and Verwood areas. The sites most mentioned were Verwood Recreation Ground, Leigh Park, Potterne Park, Wimborne Skate Park and beaches (outside the district) are also popular destinations.
- Young people think there is enough 'open space' and young children's play areas, but not enough teenage facilities and interestingly – outdoor sport facilities.
- Teenagers go with their friends to open space areas, just to chill and relax; although a significant minority like to play sport. Specialist provision, such as skateparks, are not regarded as a priority by most. Of far more importance are just places to meet and simple things like shelters and seats, adventure areas and accessible

tennis/basketball facilities. Many young people are interested in bands and music, and tying this in with use of open space areas would be good.

- For children and young people, the most important factor is easy accessibility. Poor transport into towns from West Moors, Ferndown and Verwood areas; difficult for youngsters to get about and very expensive – buses are generally perceived as not being affordable. Moors Valley Country Park is very good, but perceived to be expensive by young people and difficult to get to.
- Most young people also set great store on open space areas and facilities being clean and tidy.
- Between the ages of about 11 and 13 young people's use of open space changes. The younger children in this band tend to go to places with their families and thus often travel by car; as they get older, getting to places under their own steam with, or to meet, their friends, become of greater importance. Younger children would like more active outdoor spaces - adventure areas, places to play basketball and tennis and cycle paths – not just places to meet (which is what teenagers primarily would like).
- If a good facility goes in, it will attract youngsters from a wide area e.g. new skatebowl at Potterne Park is attracting from Romsey and Bournemouth.

4.8 Key Findings From Visitors Survey

252 visitors to Christchurch and East Dorset – 113 within Christchurch and 125 in East Dorset – were interviewed face-to-face about open space, sport and recreation facilities by researchers from the Market Research Group, Bournemouth University in the summer of 2006. A separate Report has been prepared by The Market Research Bureau, Bournemouth University; the key findings were as follows:

Average ratings of types of open space and facilities

('poor' = 1; 'very good' = 5)

	Christchurch	East Dorset	All
Local Parks	4.4	4.3	4.4
Children's play facilities	4.3	4.3	4.3
Outdoor areas for teenagers	3.2	3.2	3.2
Outdoor sports facilities	4.1	4.2	4.2
Indoor sports facilities	3.9	4.2	4.1
Local Nature Reserves & wildlife areas	4.7	4.5	4.6
Country parks and heathland areas	4.7	4.7	4.7
Areas for sitting out in	4.3	4.2	4.2
Indoor swimming pools	4.1	4.4	4.2
Coastline & beaches	4.9	4.8	4.9
Average ratings across all facilities	3.2	3.2	3.2

- On average the coastline and beaches were the highest rated facilities across all groups (4.9) (where). Ratings for country parks and heath land areas (4.7), children's

play facilities (4.3), and outdoor areas for teenagers (3.2) remained consistent regardless of interview location. Christchurch respondents rated the coastline and beaches (4.9), nature reserves and wildlife areas (4.7), areas for sitting out and informal ball games (4.3) marginally higher than East Dorset respondents. East Dorset respondents, on average, rated indoor swimming pools (4.4), outdoor sports facilities (4.2) and indoor sports facilities (4.2) marginally higher than Christchurch respondents.

- East Dorset respondents most frequently visited Wimborne Town/Minster (52%), Moors Valley Country Park (43%) and Mudeford Quay (20%).
- Over the whole sample the most frequently cited favourite facilities within Christchurch and East Dorset were Moors Valley Country Park (19%), Mudeford Quay (16%) and Wimborne Town/Minster (7%). East Dorset respondents' most frequently cited favourite facilities were; Moors Valley Country Park (33%) and Wimborne Town/Minster (14%).
- Out of three given characteristics of open space, security and feeling safe was rated the highest and remained consistent across all groups (4.6). The control of noise and unsocial behaviour (4.3) and cleanliness and freedom from litter (4.3) were rated marginally higher by Christchurch respondents (4.3 & 4.3 respectively) than East Dorset respondents (4.0 & 4.2 respectively).

4.9 Key Findings From Focus Groups And Meetings

Three Focus Groups were held on the following topics: Sports and Education; the Natural Environment and Access. These were combined between Christchurch and East Dorset; the key findings to emerge with relevance to East Dorset are:

- Village halls frequently offer activities such as yoga, judo, badminton and table tennis but there is scope for more use to be made.
- The problems of access to facilities for students/young people living in rural areas, and lack of funding and reduced budgets is always a problem.
- People's perception of the availability of sporting opportunities often focuses on schools. Some people within the area use school facilities for sport and leisure activities and increasingly, schools are being regarded as a source of further opportunities and potential, even by local residents.
- There is scope for better promotion of existing opportunities, especially to youngsters. Given shortages of land, it is important to make the best use of existing provision. There is scope to enhance and improve opportunities for the local community to use school facilities.
- Secondary schools offer a wide range of activities and school-club links are beginning to develop; primary schools are clearly beginning to take a more serious interest in physical activity. Notwithstanding timetable constraints, there is scope for greater use/appreciation of the natural environment nearby by schools.

- The widespread opportunities provided by the natural environment in East Dorset to experience peace and relaxation away from the man-made environment. Moors Valley Country Park emerges as a key district wide facility. However, recreation pressures on sensitive environments must be managed carefully and open spaces, including smaller local areas, must be protected.
- The concept of 'green gyms' – open space as a resource for health and fitness, to combat obesity for example – could be further developed and promoted.
- There are opportunities for:
 - greater community involvement in looking after local spaces
 - softening formal recreation space, especially the marginal areas where it is not possible to use them for sport
 - enhanced green links between major new development and existing/planned open space
- However, there are issues specifically around access and facilities for people with disabilities and who are less mobile – some basic needs e.g. wheelchair ramps, smooth paths, toilets, adequate car parking, not being met. The new inclusive playground opened last year in Ferndown is singled out as an example of good practice.