

APPENDIX 3 - QUALITY AUDIT ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

To have a better understanding of the quality of the Borough’s open space sites a detailed quality audit and survey was conducted between October 2009 and January 2010. The audit included visits to over 350 open spaces across the Borough including parks and open space, natural and semi-natural greenspace, allotments, cemeteries, etc:

- **To gauge the quality of each site at a given time, through the evaluation of the site infrastructure its condition and quality. The sites are measured in a consistent and objective way and the audit reflects the condition of sites from a visitors perspective**
- **To identify site characteristics and features that result in some sites being low quality and to provide information regarding the opportunity for improvement**
- **To establish a quality standard for the Borough’s open space provision**
- **To identify sites that the Council should protect and those that would benefit from improvement**

Quality relates to the range of facilities and physical infrastructure contained within individual sites, the audit considers factors such as accessibility, safety, management, maintenance and overall impression it also considers the presence of fixtures such as benches, bins, gates, signage hedges trees and paths.

Although the audit was primarily driven by PPG17, the information collated will provide the Borough with a comprehensive overview of the condition of the open space provision and will provide a level of management information not previously available. The information will enable the Borough to make informed decisions with regards to the resources required to undertake improvements in site management and maintenance.

The scores provide a means of comparing sites both by type and within the individual hierarchical tiers that have been developed as part of this study. The audit also gives a clear and robust overview of the physical condition of open space across the Borough and within defined areas.

Quality Inspections have been undertaken via a site visit and the completion of a scored proforma. The quality assessment proforma is based on a number of key criteria encompassing the quality aspects of the Green Flag Programme, ILAM Parks Management Guidance and the Tidy Britain Scheme. The sites are classified by type and scores are translated into a percentage and then measured against the quality line rating below:

Quality Line

0% - 15%	16% - 30%	31% - 45%	46% - 60%	61% - 75%	76% +
Very Poor	Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent

The quality audit provides an indicative rating of quality out of 100%. It is important to note that the quality score represents a “snapshot” in time and records the quality of the site at the time of the visit audit.

In order to benefit from this it is important that an audit is undertaken annually across a proportion of sites to maintain and track quality improvement. Ideally all sites should look to be visited at least once within a five year period.

Sites are classified in accordance with type and then measured against elements that would be expected based on best practice for example an amenity greenspace provided in amongst housing as a space for people should provide a bench and a litter bin as well as a sign informing of site name or plot number and ownership contact detail, whereas amenity greenspace designed as a landscaped area with a no ball games sign would not need a bench or a bin, but should still have some form of signage to identify the site.

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TYPOLOGY	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA	
LARGE PARK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Entrance • Side Entrance • Signage • Boundary • Roads / Paths • Young Trees ** • Mature Trees ** • Grass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bins • Seats • Parking • Lighting • Information Board • Cleanliness • Events
LOCAL PARK OR RECREATION GROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage • Paths • Mature Trees ** • Grass • Bins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seats • Information Board • Cleanliness • Lighting * • Parking *
FORMAL GARDENS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Entrance • Side Entrance • Signage • Boundary • Paths • Flower Beds • Shrub Beds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mature Trees ** • Grass • Bins • Seats • Information Board • Cleanliness
NATURAL & SEMI-NATURAL GREENSPACE / WOODLAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Entrance • Signage • Boundary • Paths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mature Trees ** • Bins • Seats • Cleanliness
GREEN CORRIDORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Entrance • Side Entrance • Signage • Paths • Mature Trees ** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass • Bins • Seats • Cleanliness
FORMAL OUTDOOR SPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Entrance • Signage • Grass • Bins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seats • Parking • Lighting • Cleanliness
AMENITY GREENSPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage • Grass • Cleanliness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bins *** • Seats ***

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CIVIC SPACE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage • Paths • Bins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seats • Cleanliness
CEMETERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Entrance • Signage • Boundary • Path • Mature Trees ** 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grass • Bins • Seats • Graves • Cleanliness
ALLOTMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main Entrance • Signage • Boundary • Paths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toilets • Parking • Allotments

* Only applicable for Recreation Grounds

** If there are only Young Trees on site then Mature Trees are not an essential criteria.

*** Active Amenity space only.

The individual elements that are measured for quality are outlined below and they are scored according to the number of sub categories within each element. For example a site with a large park would be expected to have a main entrance and that main entrance should be:

- **Easy to find**
- **Obvious**
- **Safe**
- **Clean**
- **Well maintained**
- **And have a litter bin dog bin**

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The detail behind the assessment score considers such factors as outlined below which is an example of the detail considered for the assessment criteria main entrance and the sub criteria 'Easy to Find'

Easy to Find	Welcoming/ Advisory sign, appropriate to site, clearly defined as main entrance, well presented clean and tidy safe to use, fully accessible	5
	Well maintained, site name and signage , adequately clean safe to use, inviting and wheelchair friendly	4
	Signs poorly located, threshold and posts not well presented (flaking paint graffiti weeds) give impression not sure if you can go in, uninviting to wheelchairs	3
	Poor condition, not defined untidy and cluttered no signage no access to wheelchairs	2
	Poorly maintained, vandalism, uninviting, locked very limited access	1

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QUALITY AUDIT: KEY CRITERIA & SUB CRITERIA

KEY CRITERIA	SUB CRITERIA											
MAIN ENTRANCE	Easy to Find	Obvious	Safe	Clean	Well Maintained	Litter Bin/Dog Bin						
SIDE ENTRANCE	Safe	Clean	Well Maintained									
SIGNAGE	Welcoming	Contact Detail	Name of Site	Site Map	Information	Well Maintained	Opening Closing Times					
BOUNDARY/ HEDGES / GATES/ FENCES	Well Maintained	Clearly Defined										
ROADS / PATHWAYS/ CYCLEWAYS/ ACCESSES	Suitable Materials	Level/Safe for use	Disabled Access	Well Defined Edges	Surface Clean	Weed Free						
FLOWER BEDS	Suitable use of plants	Weed Free	Edged	Well Maintained								
SHRUB BEDS	Suitable use of plants	Weed Free	Edged	Well Maintained								
YOUNG TREES	Appropriate mix	Well Maintained	Tree Ties Maintained	Trees Tagged								
MATURE TREES	Well Maintained	Adequate crown lifting	Trees Tagged									
CLOSE-MOWN GRASS AREAS	Full Grass Cover	Cleanly Cut	No Weed	No Clippings								
NATURALISTIC GRASS AREAS	Litter Free	Adequate Mowing Margins										
BINS	Numerous	Well Maintained	Emptied Regularly	Surfaced								
SEATS	Numerous	Well Maintained	Ease of Access	Provision for Disabled	Litter Bin Nearby							
TOILETS	Easy Access	Well Maintained	Good Condition	Safe to Use	Visible	Well Signed	Provision for Disabled					
PARKING	Adequate Spaces	Clean and Tidy	Good Condition	Well Signed	Safe to Use	Surface Markings						
LIGHTING	Good Lighting	Well Maintained										
INFORMATION BOARDS	Site Name	Adequate and up to date										
PLAY PROVISION	Signed	Rules	Safe	Well Maintained	Fence	Self Closing Gate	Bench	Bin	Equipment	Connected via path		

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KEY CRITERIA	SUB CRITERIA											
CLEANLINESS	Litter	Dog Fouling	Graffiti	Chewing Gum								
CEMETERY	Upright Graves	Vandalism	Tidy	Overgrown								
TENNIS COURTS	Surfacing	Fence	Posts	Nets	Line Marking	Secure Entrance	Correct Size	Adequate runoff	Floodlights	Information Board	Charges	Club House
BOWLING GREENS	Bench	Clean Gullies	Backboards	Turf	Fenced	Club House	Notice Boards	Floodlights	Staffed			
MUGA	Surfacing	Fence	Goals /Posts	Nets	Line Marking	Secure Entrance	Correct Size	Adequate runoff	Floodlights	Information Board/ Charges	Vandalism	
ALLOTMENTS	Water Supply	Condition of Plots	Disabled Access	Meeting Point	Composting							