



**Open Spaces Strategy  
Easy Read Consultation.  
March 2015.**

# 1. What are we asking in this consultation?

This consultation with the community asks some questions to try and find out what people think is important about **open spaces**, how people use **open space** and what they want to see in the future.

All of the questions that the Council are asking you are written in blue boxes so that they are easy to find.

First we need to know what sort of **open spaces** the community want to use. At the moment we have 7 sorts of open space.

# 2. What is an Open Space ?

There are 7 different sorts of places which are called **open spaces**. You can see the different open spaces in the table below.

Name of Open Space	What the name means	Main Uses of the open space
Parks and gardens	This includes parks in towns, formal parks and country parks	These do not cost money to use, are close to a bus route, and are well looked after. They are for people to enjoy and for community events such as fetes and shows
Natural and semi-natural Greenspaces, including urban and rural Woodland and Country Parks	These are publicly accessible woodlands, woodlands in towns, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, ponds, lakes and running water and wastelands.	They are mainly for wildlife and are places where animals and plants live and can grow without being damaged

<b>Amenity Greenspace</b>	Most often found near houses. They include informal green spaces and village greens.	These are areas where people can play games with friends, close to their homes or work. These spaces also help to make housing and other areas look nice
<b>Outdoor sports facilities</b>	Grass pitches or artificial pitches either publicly or privately owned used for sport and play. Includes school playing fields.	Used for playing outdoor sports such as football, rugby, cricket, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports
<b>Provision for children and Young people</b>	This is an area for children and young people to play and meet up with friends	These areas would usually include play areas which have play equipment, like slides and swings. They would also include ball courts for 5 a side football, skateboard areas and teenage shelters for meeting up with friends
<b>Allotments, community gardens</b>	Areas for people who wish to grow their own fruit and vegetables This sort of <b>open space</b> may also include farms in towns.	Opportunities for people who want to grow their own fruit and vegetables, and allow them to grow things in a healthy and sustainable way
<b>Cemeteries, disused Churchyards and other burial Grounds</b>	Cemeteries and other places where people have been buried.	Places where people can go to think about people who have died. They are often a place where wildlife, animals and plants can live and grow without getting damaged..

In this document all of the 7 different sorts of **open space** are grouped together and called **open space**.

Do you think that all the sorts of **open spaces** above, and the way that people use them, are important?

The Council could make some new sorts of **open spaces**. We would like to know whether you think that these new sorts of **open space** would be used by the community and liked by everyone.

The 2 new sorts of **open spaces** that the Council could include in the **Open Spaces Strategy** are shown below.

Name of Open Space	What the name means	Main Uses of the open space
<b>Civic Spaces</b>	This means places like the Market Squares in Market Harborough and Lutterworth. It could also include other areas with hard surfaces for people to walk on like St Marys Place in Market Harborough.	These spaces are mainly used for outdoor markets, fun events for the community like Harborough By The Sea. They also allow people to shop easily in the Towns

Name of Open Space	What the name means	Main Uses of the open space
<b>Green Corridors or Greenways</b>	These include towpaths and walkways alongside canals and riverbanks, cycleways, public footpaths and railway lines that are not used anymore.	These sorts of open spaces are mostly used for walking, cycling or horse riding. They could be used for fun, or for getting to work or to the shops. Because these greenways are left with trees and bushes they can also be used by wildlife.

Do you think that it would be a good idea to have these new sorts of **open spaces** included in our **Open Spaces Strategy**?

Do you think that Greenways for cycling would be important for healthy cycling and walking and also useful for people to get to work?

Do you think that Harborough District Council should try and work with other people to build cycle routes using railway lines that are not used anymore? This would be like the Brampton Valley Way and would be useful to help people keep fit and healthy.

### 3. Why is Open Space Important?

Parks and open spaces are good for communities and local people. They help to improve people's health, fitness and wellbeing. They also help the local economy and businesses like shops and cafes and make people feel safe in their community.

Open Spaces generally make people feel good about the place that they live in.

Living close to green space makes the value of houses go up and increases the number of business premises in an area.

### 4. What is an Open Spaces Strategy?

An **Open Spaces Strategy** is a document that allows the Council to plan the protection of **open spaces** already in the area, and decide where new **open spaces** should be put in the future.

The **Open Spaces Strategy** does not look at each separate **open space**; it looks at all of the **open spaces** in the whole Harborough District. It will help deal with the things that are important for the community.

Giving your ideas and feelings in this consultation is very important as it helps the Council to understand how communities use **open spaces** and what is important to them.

## 5. How much open space should be provided?

For the Council to be able to plan for the future, they need to know how much open space the community think is okay. This is called the **Quantity Provision Standard**, and means the smallest amount of **open space** that should be provided for each 1000 people in the community.

The current minimum **Quantity Provision Standard** is written in the table below:

(Hectare is a word which describes the size of an area. One hectare is just a bit bigger than a full sized football pitch)

Name of Open Space	Quantity Provision Standard
Parks and Gardens	0.4 Hectare per 1000 people in the population
Natural and Semi-natural areas	8.5 hectare per 1,000 people (in a country area) 1.5 ha per 1,000 people population ( in a city or town area)
Green Corridors	Because this sort of open space is usually a long thin footpath or cycle route, the Council decided we could not really measure the area.
Amenity Greenspace	0.9 hectare per 1000 people in the population
Provision for Children and Young People	0.3 hectare per 1000 people in the population
Outdoor Sports Facilities	A national organisation called 'Fields in Trust' tries to protect all outdoor sports pitches and has suggested that a sensible amount of pitches to provide for each 1000 people would be 1.6 hectares. This is the number that Harborough District Council has agreed to in the past.

Allotments and Community Gardens	0.35 hectare per 1000 people in the population
Cemeteries and Burial Grounds	0.35hectare per 1000 people in the population
Civic Spaces	There is not a normal amount for this sort of <b>open space</b> . The Council would look to provide new pedestrian spaces when a new shopping centre is built

Do you think that the amount of **open space** that we have written down sounds okay?

Are there any **open spaces** that you think there should be more of or less of? This might be because the ones you use are very busy or it might be because they do not get used at all. It might be that you and your friends do not live close enough to a particular sort of open space to be able to walk to it.

## 6. How far are you prepared to walk or travel to an open space?

This is a very important question. There is no point in having all of the **open spaces** a long way from where people live. The answers to this question will help the Council to decide what the **Accessibility Provision Standard** of **open spaces** should be.

The **Accessibility Provision Standard** means that you might want the Council to put a play area very close to where children live, but it would be okay to put some sorts of **open space** a bit further away as long as they are still accessible, maybe by using a bus.

Think about the sorts of **open spaces** we have written down. Which of these **open spaces** needs to be very close to people’s homes?

How long do you think it should take to walk to the **open spaces** which are close to people's homes?

Are there any sorts of **open space** that would be okay if they were put further away?

How long would you be happy to travel to these **open spaces** either by foot, bike or bus?

Do you think that it is important that any **open spaces** that you have to travel to are close to a bus route?

The **open space close** to us isn't very exciting, what can the Council do about that?

Sometimes open spaces do not have all the things that people want. For example, there may not be any play equipment, or it may be the wrong sort of equipment, or just very old equipment. There might also be damaged benches or litterbins, or you might feel that you don't want to walk through the open space after dark because you don't feel safe.

Tell us if you have any open spaces that you use, where the things that are provided are old, damaged or there needs to be more equipment and facilities.

This will help the Council decide which **open spaces** need extra money to help improve them. This is known as the **Quality Provision Standard**.

## 7. What does the Council do with the information you have given?

When new houses are built, the Council needs to make sure that the houses are well planned and built well. The Council also needs to make sure that they are in a nice place to live, and that there are enough trees, shrubs, play areas and grass areas for everyone to feel happy and enjoy their home.

The Council will use the information that you give to help find out where certain sorts of **open space** need to be provided, or where there is too much of the same sort of **open space**. This is done by using the **Quantity Provision Standard**.

The Council will also decide where **open space** should go, and make it close enough to where people live so that it is well used and enjoyed by as many people as possible. This is done by using the **Accessibility Provision Standard**

The information you give can also help the Council know where some **open spaces** need to be improved. This is by using the **Quality Provision Standard**.

This will help the Council give information to builders and get the right sort of **open space** in the right places. It will also help the Council to plan for the future and understand what people would like to have in their **open spaces**.

### What happens now?

The Council will use the answers they get from this consultation to start writing the Council's **Open Spaces Strategy**.

The Council will write what is called a **vision** for open space. This is a short statement that says what people would like to see from **open spaces** in the future.

The **vision** that the Council has at the moment is:

***Our vision is to provide quality open space that is what the community wants and is valued and enjoyed by everyone***

We would like to hear your thoughts about this **vision** and whether you think it is too short or too long and how it might need to be changed.

Once the Council has decided on a new **vision** they will use the feedback that they have from residents and other people to write some plans or aims for **open space**.

The Council already has some ideas about the aims for **open space**, because the aims will need to fit in with the Council’s priorities.

The Council have listed their ideas about the aims below and would like you to tell them if you have any thoughts about these aims and whether you think that they will provide you with **open spaces** that you will like.

Aim Picture	Aim	HDC Priority Supported	What this means
	<p><b>Aim 1.</b> To provide and maintain appropriate and good quality open space that is open to all and protected for future generations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with Communities to develop places in which to live and be happy.</li> <li>Support the vulnerable in the communities where they live</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will make sure that open space is the sort of open space that people want, is well maintained, and protected for everyone in the future</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Aim 2.</b> Conservation and habitat is enhanced and protected</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with Communities to develop places in which to live and be happy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will make sure that animals and plants are given areas where they can live and grow</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Aim 3.</b> To ensure open spaces are safe and litter free</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with Communities to develop places in which to live and be happy.</li> <li>Support the vulnerable in the communities where they live</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will make sure that people feel safe at all times of day when they use open spaces, and that open spaces are clean and don't have litter all over the place.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Aim 4.</b> Voluntary groups are supported to use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working with Communities to develop places in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will support groups that want to use open spaces for</li> </ul>

	and manage open spaces	<p>which to live and be happy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the vulnerable in the communities where they live</li> </ul>	<p>activities. These might be support groups for vulnerable people or sports clubs. We will also try and encourage groups to look after open spaces that are important to them.</p>
	<b>Aim 5.</b> Deliver value for money services when managing open space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide public services which are effective and deliver value for money.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will ensure that the things that we do on open space, and improvements that we make are good value for money, and money is not wasted.</li> </ul>
	<b>Aim 6.</b> Open Space supports business and income is maximised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage a vibrant and sustainable business community intent on prosperity, employment and learning opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will try and find ways to help business by providing good quality open spaces, and try and find new ways to get an income from open spaces where it is appropriate.</li> </ul>
	<b>Aim 7.</b> Ensure that open spaces support health and wellbeing of local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working with Communities to develop places in which to live and be happy.</li> <li>• Support the vulnerable in the communities where they live</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will ensure that open spaces can be used for sport and recreation, which will help keep people fit, healthy and happy. We will also ensure that open spaces can be used by all sorts of people for all sorts of different reasons even if they just want to sit, chat and meet friends.</li> </ul>

What do you think of the aims, and what they mean to you?

Do you think that any of these aims should be changed? If so how should they be changed?

The Council will use your answers to start writing policies for each of the 7 sorts of **open space in the Harborough District**.

A Council policy is a statement that helps the Council make decisions about what it will do in the future.

By having clear policies, members of the public and other people can see that the Council has made the right decisions based on what the people want the Council to do.

You will be able to comment on the draft policies for the **Open Spaces Strategy** later on this year. The Council would like all residents to make comments on these policies so that you can help to decide what the Council does, and make sure that it is right for you.

## 8. When will the Open Spaces Strategy start being used?

Once the Council has written a draft (or practice copy) of their **Open Spaces Strategy** they will make sure that everyone has the opportunity to comment on the aims and policies that they have written about. This will make sure that people can check that the Council has listened to your comments, and put them in the **Open Spaces Strategy** as far as possible.

The Council hope that the 1st draft of the **Open Spaces Strategy** will be ready for people to read in April or May this year. You will then be able to tell us if we need to make any more changes.

Once the Council have heard any new ideas that you make about their 1st draft **Open Spaces Strategy** they will make any changes needed and write a 2nd draft. This 2nd draft **Open Spaces Strategy** will be ready for you to talk about

in October or November, and the Council will be asked to agree the **Open Spaces Strategy** by the end of 2015.

When the new **Open Spaces Strategy** is agreed it will become a Council policy and will help to make sure that **open spaces** are protected, are available for use by people that want to use them, are in the right places for people to walk to or travel to and that they have the right equipment and facilities for people to enjoy.

The Council are looking forward to hearing your ideas about **open spaces** and your thoughts on the new **Open Spaces Strategy**. **The Council would also** like you to let them know what you think about the next draft of the **Open Spaces Strategy** when it has been written.

#### **For more information contact**

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