

## **SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS**

### **Methodology**

2.1 The method for undertaking the study comprised:

- A review of existing policy, strategies and consultations
- Analysis of a consultation on needs
- An audit of a number of green space sites and facilities across the District
- A review of the results and formation of standards for provision

### **Summary of Key Tasks**

2.2 In summary the following key tasks have been undertaken to inform the study:

- A questionnaire survey to 82 Parish and Town Councils, Parish meetings and Parish groups
- Site audits of 283 sites identified in the District, including 68 sites for outdoor sport, 33 allotment sites, 42 stand alone play areas, 58 parks and gardens (including recreation grounds), 36 natural and semi natural greenspaces, 30 amenity greenspaces, 11 cemeteries and 5 indoor sports facilities. In total 392 audits have been undertaken.
- Postal surveys to more than 100 sports clubs to ask for views about quantity, quality and access to facilities.
- Stakeholder interviews with identified stakeholders – 20 face-to-face / telephone interviews
- A door to door survey encompassing 500 interviews with local residents
- An internet based self-completion questionnaire
- Consultation via questionnaires in local libraries, and via youth workers
- A review of existing consultation and market research undertaken
- A FREEPHONE consultation service operating for a five-week period which was promoted through the Council's website, libraries and leisure centres
- The opportunity for people to respond to the survey was advertised through posters in libraries and leisure centres, and an online survey on the Council website arranged by Council officers
- A questionnaire to all Council staff who live within West Dorset
- A number of mapping exercises to assess levels of provision and accessibility
- Demand modelling for indoor facilities using the parameters of the Sport England Facilities Planning Model
- The use of demographic data sets to determine the propensity to participate in key leisure activities
- Recommendations for local standards of provision with regard to quantity, quality and accessibility for inclusion within the emerging Local Development Framework
- The formation of baseline policy principles to support emerging new Development Plan Policy (in the Local Development Framework).

### **Overview of the District of West Dorset**

2.3 West Dorset is situated in the South-West region of England. 71% of the district is designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the coastline is a Natural World Heritage Site.

2.4 West Dorset District Council covers an area of 108,703 hectares and greenspace represents 0.5% of this total area providing 6.2 hectares per 1,000 head of population.

2.5 It is also important to consider the demographic make up of the District as key demographic and socio-economic characteristics are known to influence demand characteristics. For example certain age-groups are known to register higher participation rates in a number of sport and leisure activities; deprived communities often experience issues relating to access to services and opportunities; cultural backgrounds may result in some passive and active recreation pursuits being favoured over others; and car ownership levels can impact on the range of facilities that can be accessed.

2.6 A brief review of the key demographics for the area shows that the District has a population of 92,360 of which 48% are male and 52% female.<sup>2</sup> The population of West Dorset at time of the 2001 Census was older than the average in England & Wales.

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<sup>2</sup> Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2001

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- 2.7 The distribution across key age groups shows that West Dorset has a higher number of persons than the national average for each age group between the ages 45-65 and over and a lower number of persons within each band under the age of 45. It is important to consider key differences in profile as some age groups have a higher propensity to participate in sport and active recreation than others (particularly young people).
- 2.8 Significant differences within the District are:
- A higher percentage of people aged 65 and over than the average in England (24.47% and 15.89% respectively)
  - A lower percentage of people 20-44 years old compared to the national average for England (26.45% compared with 35.31%)
- 2.9 **Ethnicity.** Compared with regional and national averages, the District has a low minority ethnic population with approximately 1.3% of the District's population falling in this category. 98.7% of the population are white, in comparison to the England & Wales average which is 90.9%; the next largest ethnic group is mixed comprising 0.5% of the total population.
- 2.10 **Deprivation Indices.** The 2004 Indices of Multiple Deprivation (DCLG), based on a series of 'super output areas' showed that the most deprived areas of the district were Bridport Court Orchard, Bridport Skilling, and Dorchester Town Centre. More localised assessments undertaken by Dorset County Council's Research & Information Group in 2005, based on smaller output areas, confirmed that deprivation is concentrated in Dorchester and Bridport, with pockets of deprivation in Beaminster and Sherborne, and more isolated areas of deprivation at Chickerell and Crossways.
- 2.11 West Dorset's population is expected to grow steadily (according to the Office of National Statistics 2003-based population projections), resulting in an estimated population of just over 114,400 in 2021.
- 2.12 A figure for the current population (more recent than the 2001 Census result) has been provided by the County Council's Demographic Services, taken from the 2005 Patient Register. This indicates a population of 100,172 people and this figure will be used for the purpose of this report.

### Strategic Review & Policy Background

- 2.13 The results and conclusions of the study will inform the review of existing planning policy through the preparation of the new Local Development Framework (LDF). The report will:
- Underpin policies to be set out in the emerging Core Strategy Development Plan Document
  - Support existing leisure strategies
  - Provide robust evidence to justify the amount and provision of open space and recreational facilities associated with new development
  - Provide a basis from which a high quality network of a range of types of open space and recreational facilities will be maintained and developed
  - Look to rationalise existing facilities whilst highlighting those areas that have no to very little recreational value
  - Take into consideration WDDC local strategies and state their relationship to open space and recreation
  - Provide guidance on planning for new and enhancing existing facilities.

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### National and Local Policy Context

- 2.14 The need for improved use and management of open spaces, particularly public parks in urban areas, has seen increased commitment demonstrated in national regional and local government policy. The following key documents summarised in Figure 2.1 below have provided the impetus for the development and preparation of this strategy. They include:

Figure 2.1 - National and Local Policy Framework (Planning guidance and community plans)

POLICY/GUIDANCE	Objective
<b>Planning Policy Guidance Note 17.</b> <i>(Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2002)</i>	Outlines the importance for local authorities to undertake robust assessments of the local need for quality open spaces, in order to develop local standards which are based on local supply and demand for facilities.
<b>“Living Places – Cleaner, Safer, Greener”</b> <i>(Office of the Deputy Prime Minister 2002)</i>	Gives a commitment to develop a clearer national framework for urban parks and greenspaces.
<b>Urban Greenspaces Task Force “Greenspaces, Better Places”</b>	Recognises that parks and open spaces have the potential to make a significant contribution to urban regeneration by making places more liveable and sustainable whilst also enriching the quality of people’s lives and local communities.
<b>The Framework for Sport in England</b>	These documents provide the national sporting context for this study.  The importance of a range of facility provision is identified, encompassing formal sporting facilities, and an environment that facilitates informal active recreation.
<b>West Dorset District Local Plan Adopted July 2006</b>	The vision for the future of the District, which forms the basis for the Local Plan, is of a more sustainable environment, economy and society.  The Plan will contribute towards meeting this vision by guiding development so that it helps to meet the needs of the local community and economy, whilst promoting a high quality environment and safeguarding scarce natural resources.
<b>Dorset Strategic Partnership: Community Strategy for Dorset</b>	County-wide community strategy intended to improve the social economic and environmental well-being of Dorset and contribute to sustainable development in the UK.
<b>West Dorset Partnership Community Plan 2006-2010</b>	This plan has been developed by the West Dorset Partnership (WDP) and describes the type of West Dorset people have said they wish to live in and how that will be achieved. The strategy is intended to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of Dorset and contribute to sustainable development in the UK.  Includes the overall Vision for West Dorset and 8 priority areas.
<b>The Sporting Challenge: A Strategy for Sport in West Dorset 2000-2010</b>	This strategy is the first pure sports strategy to be produced by West Dorset District Council and is designed to provide clear direction for the host of individuals and organisations with an interest in sport in West Dorset.  The document sets out 7 site/sport specific issues and 8 general issues. From these issues a new overall policy is stated from which 8 objectives and relating action plan are set.

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POLICY/GUIDANCE	Objective
<b>Dorset Sports Strategy 2006</b>	<p>The strategy will be used by the County Council to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in close partnership with the District/Borough Councils and other agencies involved with sport at all levels within the county to support the valuable work currently being undertaken by those organisations in the management and delivery of sports opportunities</li> <li>• Clarify roles and responsibilities of each agency</li> <li>• Increase the profile of sports development and delivery across the county</li> <li>• Identify short, medium and long term priorities</li> <li>• Encourage the development of best practice and a co-ordinated delivery of quality sporting opportunities for all</li> </ul>
<b>Dorset Play Strategy 2004</b> ( <i>Dorset Community Action</i> )	<p>This strategy has been prepared in order to guide future provision and management of play facilities in the Dorset area.</p> <p>The purpose of the study was to assess the current demand for play and the desired types of play facilities, through consultation with all age groups. An overall vision has been devised for future provision of play in Dorset.</p>
<b>West Dorset District Council Supplementary Guidance Public Open Spaces &amp; Recreational Facilities Developer Contributions (Draft)</b>	<p>This draft document sets out policies relating to the monetary and other contributions developers must give towards maintaining public open spaces and recreational facilities when building.</p>
<b>Action Plan for Sherborne and Surrounding Area 2006-2009</b>	<p>A draft action plan for Sherborne and surrounding areas. The plan sets out, in response to community consultation, the local based actions required to make the Sherborne area a better place to live.</p> <p>The consultation identified eight themes including People and Active Communities.</p>
<b>Dorchester Area Partnership – Local Action Plan 2003</b>	<p>This document was published in response to local issues raised through local consultation events. The action plan will be used to inform the policies and strategies of West Dorset District Council, Dorset County Council and others as part of their community planning role.</p>
<b>LymeForward Community Plan – 2006 (draft)</b>	<p>In 2004, Lyme Regis was accepted onto the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative (MCTI), a community based regeneration programme for market and coastal towns and their surrounding areas. The initiative helps local communities and their partners to prepare plans for the future covering all aspects of community life. This plan contains seven areas for improvement within Lyme Regis with each theme having a vision, aim and objective.</p>
<b>Bridport Local Area Partnership – Action Plan 2006</b>	<p>Action plan produced by the local area partnership identifying their priorities for action over the coming year.</p>
<b>Beaminster Town Action Plan 2003 (updated 2005)</b>	<p>The Beaminster Town Action plan covers a range of areas that are viewed as important to the people of the town.</p>

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- 2.15 The recent **Urban Parks Assessment** undertaken through the DCLG illustrates the shortfall in budgets for public greenspace nationally to be in excess of £1.3 billion.
- 2.16 A prescribed methodology for the assessment of playing pitch provision is detailed in **“Towards a Level Playing Field”** (Sport England, CCPR, 2002). In addition to the assessment methodology, a number of policies to oppose the loss of playing fields are detailed.

### The Community Plan

- 2.17 **West Dorset Partnership** has developed the Community Plan for the District. This plan describes how people have said they would like West Dorset to be in the future, and how that will be achieved.
- 2.18 This breaks down into 8 priority themes and key objectives:

Theme	Key Objectives
<b>1. Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase stock of affordable housing</li> <li>• Link housing provision to employment potential and local needs</li> </ul>
<b>2 Transport and Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce need to travel by ensuring services are available close to homes, and improve alternatives to the private car, including community transport, public transport, walking and cycling facilities</li> <li>• Develop transport opportunities to allow people of all ages to access services</li> <li>• Reduce traffic speed and improve safety for walking and cycling</li> <li>• Flexible, appropriate, accessible and affordable transport solutions.</li> </ul>
<b>3 Our Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and help the development of a viable agricultural sector that protects and enhances our unique heritage</li> <li>• Ensure all waste is reused, recycled or recovered</li> <li>• Promote and develop communities in ways that enhance our heritage</li> <li>• Raise awareness of greener lifestyle choices</li> </ul>
<b>4 Local Prosperity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support agriculture, local business and the development of local products</li> <li>• Support new and existing local business including social enterprises</li> <li>• Improve relevant access and local delivery of training to meet local needs, especially young people</li> <li>• Increase wages</li> <li>• To understand and promote the wider economic opportunities and benefits presented by the hosting in Dorset of the sailing as part of the Olympics in 2012</li> </ul>
<b>5 Safer Communities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take action to reduce the fear of crime</li> <li>• Reduce anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Address anti-social behaviour and alcohol abuse through licensing</li> <li>• Consider a strategic approach to providing CCTV across the District</li> <li>• Increase in visible police presence</li> <li>• Promote and assist households to become safety conscious</li> </ul>
<b>6 Health and Well-Being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve our understanding of rural deprivation</li> <li>• Develop new ways of supporting people living in rural settings who find it difficult to access services</li> <li>• Tackle health inequalities by focusing on particular effort and support on people who experience the worst health</li> <li>• Improve the overall health of people in West Dorset</li> <li>• Encourage and support community health initiatives</li> </ul>

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Theme	Key Objectives
<b>7 Activities and Opportunities for the Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase access to learning, sports, arts and entertainment facilities through improved provision, particularly for young people</li> <li>• Increase community participation in decision making, particularly by young people</li> <li>• Ensure that barriers to participation, particularly cost and transport are recognised and addressed</li> <li>• Support communities through training and building capacity</li> <li>• Support local groups to develop sustainable community solutions</li> <li>• Ensure equal access to support and advice for voluntary and community groups across the District, particularly in the north and west</li> </ul>
<b>8 Equality and Diversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving access to services and transport for those with disabilities</li> <li>• Improve transport access to services and facilities, particularly for younger and older residents</li> <li>• Improve availability of information about services, in a range of different formats for all users</li> <li>• Work to meet needs of gypsies and travellers and support the local community to understand cultural differences</li> <li>• To promote good relations between people of different ethnic backgrounds</li> </ul>

2.19 The Community Plan builds on a wide variety of other detailed plans and actions already being delivered by organisations working in West Dorset. It focuses on:

- Issues which have been identified as priorities following consultation and studying relevant data.
- Making more effective use of WDP partners' resources by working more closely together.
- Obtaining additional external resources.

### West Dorset District Local Plan

2.20 The adopted local plan covers the period up to 2016 and forms the current planning framework against which planning applications are judged. It is divided into three main sections:

- General Strategy towards the location of new development
- Community Needs- local needs for housing, employment, services and facilities, transport and infrastructure
- Design- detailed design and layout requirements including sustainable construction

2.21 The three main sections are then followed by separate chapters of site-specific proposals.

2.22 The vision within the local plan is to provide the people of West Dorset with a more sustainable environment, economy and society.

2.23 The emphasis of the Local Plan is on sustainable approaches to planning to ensure that local people's needs are met in ways that can be carried out in the long term with minimal impact on the future global environment. The plan considers how to improve the economic and social well being for people today and the needs of future generations whilst protecting the environment.

2.24 The plan seeks to balance the interaction between economy, environment and society. A key aim is to secure a balanced improvement in these three components of sustainable development. The plan also sets the framework for future land use planning within the District and seeks to ensure that new development:

- Helps meet the needs of the community for commercial and industrial development, new homes, other facilities and infrastructure, food production, minerals extraction, whilst respecting environmental objectives
- Sustains and develops the tourism sector so that it benefits visitors and increases local job opportunities, whilst minimising harm to the environment or quality of life of residents
- Concentrates development in previously developed and accessible areas in an efficient way, designed to minimise the need to travel and create attractive places in which to live and work; and conserves our cultural heritage and natural resources (including plants and animals, landscape, water, soil and air quality)

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2.25 The Local Plan has the following key objectives:

- Safeguard the District's natural and man made assets
- Avoid risk to life, property and livelihoods from hazards such as flooding, instability, pollution, noise or traffic congestion through control and appropriate location of developments
- Direct new development to the larger settlements with facilities in order to support the role of the District's coast and market towns and minimise the development of greenfield sites
- Allow for the regeneration of rural communities and their economies whilst respecting their landscape setting and heritage
- In accordance with Structure Plan and Regional Spatial Strategy housing requirements, ensure an adequate supply of housing land that will meet the needs of the community
- Support a prosperous economy sustaining a range of business enterprises, including in particular the diversification of the rural economy and promotion of the District's tourism industry
- Support social progress through the viability of existing centres of commerce and the provision of community facilities
- Achieve a safe and integrated transport network; reduce the need to travel by car and facilitate walking, cycling and the use of public transport
- Through careful planning and collaboration with other providers and users, ensure that development improves the provision of infrastructure and amenities where it is needed
- Design new developments to maintain and enhance the distinctive local character of West Dorset's towns, villages, countryside and coastline; provide a sense of community and security; and deter crime
- Promote energy efficiency, the use of renewable energy and other measures to reduce the impact of development on the wider environment

2.26 The current Local Plan contains a comprehensive suite of policies that are relevant to open space, outdoor sport and recreational facilities namely:

- Policy C5 New local community facilities
- Policy C7a Retention of playing fields
- Policy C7b Retention of open space and recreational facilities
- Policy C8 Countryside recreation
- Policy IN4 Recreational space in new housing developments
- Policy DA3 Scale and form of settlements and patterns of streets and spaces

2.27 There are a number of other policies that are relevant to open space, recreation and sports provision namely:

- Policy SA6 Land of Local Landscape Importance
- Policy SA7 Green Corridors
- Policy SA8 Protection of sites of international importance for nature conservation
- Policy SA9 Protection of National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Importance
- Policy SA10 Protection of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest and Local Nature Reserves
- Policy SA11 Other land of nature conservation interest
- Policies SA16 and SA17 Historic Parks and Gardens of international/national/regional and county importance

### **National Policy Guidance: Planning Policy Guidance Note 17**

2.28 PPG17 provides guidance on the management, enhancement and development of open spaces, sports and recreational facilities. PPG17 aims to ensure that there is an adequate provision of open space, sports and recreational facilities and that they are well designed, meet modern standards and are safe. PPG17 outlines the importance of robust assessments of the local need for quality open spaces in order to develop local standards which are based on demand for facilities.

2.29 This guidance seeks to ensure that Local Authorities plan effectively for open space, sport and recreation by using a number of tools, including:

- Assessments of needs and opportunities - Local Authorities are required to carry out open space assessments and to consult with local people to identify local needs

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- Setting standards - National standards such as the NPFA standards for outdoor sport and children's play will be replaced by local standards set in development plans that must include quality, quantity and accessibility and are based on local needs
- Maintaining an adequate supply of open space and sports and recreational facilities:
  - Existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land should not be built on unless the land can be shown as surplus to requirements ( A key driver for PPG17 is not to dispose of sites rather ensure local people have access to a range of good quality provision)
  - High quality open spaces and those of particular value to communities should be protected through development planning policies
  - Planning conditions or obligations can be used to enhance the quality of existing spaces or create new ones where an assessment recognises a deficit in provision of open spaces, sport or recreational facilities
  - Local Authorities should also ensure that commercial and industrial developments do not just include landscaping, but also consider visitors' needs such as accessibility and safety and ensure the development has an element of open space provision
  - Obligation funding can also be used as investment in parks, open spaces and tourist areas to improve the quality and accessibility for local people
  - Provision should be based on local need and the crux of the guidance is the improvement and enhancement of what is already there, rather than necessarily providing more of the same.

2.30 The guidance states that when planning new open space and sports and recreational facilities, local authorities should:

- Develop and locate intensive recreational uses where they can contribute to town centre vitality and viability
- Strive to avoid any significant loss of amenity to residents, neighbouring uses or biodiversity
- Aim to improve quality through good design
- Seek to promote accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport, and ensure that facilities are accessible for all
- Continue to add to and enhance the range and quality of existing facilities
- Seek to promote areas of open space in commercial and industrial areas
- Consider using any surplus land for open space, sport or recreational use, weighing this against alternative uses
- Assess the impact of new facilities on social inclusion; and consider the recreational needs of visitors and tourists
- Meet the regeneration needs of areas
- Consider security and personal safety, especially for children

2.31 PPG17 maintains that open spaces, sport and recreation all underpin people's quality of life. Well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are therefore fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives.

2.32 PPG17 stresses the importance of protecting and enhancing the public right of way network for walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The guidance also stresses that parks, recreation grounds, playing fields and allotments must not be regarded as 'previously-developed land'.

2.33 PPG17 states that open space and sports and recreational facilities that are of high quality, or of particular value to a local community, should be recognised and given protection by local authorities through appropriate policies in plans. Areas of particular quality may include small areas of open space in urban areas that provide an important local amenity and offer recreational and play opportunities:

- Areas of open space that provide a community resource and can be used for informal or formal events such as religious and cultural festivals, agricultural shows and travelling fairs. Travelling fairs may also require suitable winter quarters
- Areas of open space that particularly benefit wildlife and biodiversity



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### Assessing Needs and Opportunities: A Companion Guide to PPG17

- 2.34 The document accompanies PPG17 and provides guidance on how to deliver desirable outcomes from undertaking a PPG 17 Assessment at the local level. These are:
- To provide local people with networks of accessible, high quality open spaces and sports and recreation facilities in both rural and urban areas, which will meet the needs of LOCAL people and visitors
  - PPG 17 strives to provide a balance between enhancing existing provision and new provision
  - To provide clarity and reasonable certainty to land owners and developers with regard to the requirements and expectations of the local planning authority in respect of outdoor sport, recreation and open space
- 2.35 The guide essentially sets out a methodology for fulfilling the requirement for local authorities to undertake audits of local provision and assessment of local needs– it also recognises that it is not the only methodology and that it is valid for local authorities to develop their own approach as long as it is “compliant with the policy requirements of PPG17”.
- 2.36 The publication is split into four sections:
- Tools and techniques which local authorities may find useful when undertaking assessments and drafting policies
  - Concepts and guiding principles which underpin the delivery and effective planning of accessible, high quality and sustainable open spaces and sport and recreation facilities
  - A five-step process which authorities can follow when undertaking local assessments
  - A suggested framework for the implementation of policies and provision standards through the development control process
- 2.37 The study undertaken in the District has followed the framework provided in the Companion Guide to PPG17, namely the identified five key Stages to undertaking an assessment of playing pitches, indoor facilities and open space. These are broadly:
- **Stage 1** – Identifying Local Needs
  - **Stage 2** – Auditing Local Provision
  - **Stage 3** – Setting Provision Standards
  - **Stage 4** – Applying Provision Standards
  - **Stage 5** – Policy Recommendations
- 2.38 A number of key tasks have been undertaken to complete the assessment and develop standards of provision and recommendations. These are summarised below:

### Stage 1: Identifying Local Needs

#### Aims

- The identification of residents' and users' needs
- A review of existing planning policies and strategies
- The development of a strategic vision for open space, outdoor sport and recreational facilities

#### Key Tasks

- A review of the implications and priorities of existing strategies to identify links with existing strategic priorities
- A review of existing policies and provision standards relating to open space, sport and recreation facilities
- Consultation with the community and stakeholders via sports club surveys, school surveys, young people's survey and face-to-face meetings. Additionally, a door-to-door survey of 500 householders has been undertaken throughout the District to capture the views of facility users and non-users.

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### **Stage 2: Audit of local provision**

#### **Aims**

- An audit of existing resources, what is present (quantity) the spatial distribution of facilities in relation to where users are and how far they travel (accessibility) and the current condition (quality)
- Consultation with facility providers

#### **Key Tasks**

- Classification and identification of site typologies, distance thresholds and hierarchies of provision
- Review of quantitative information held by the District
- Site visits to all known open space, sport and recreation facilities with community use (across all sectors)
- GIS capture of sites and mapping facilities in respect of location and catchment area

### **Stage 3: Setting Provision Standards**

#### **Aims**

- Analysis of the audit data and the correlation of existing resources and provision standards

#### **Key Tasks**

- Quantity Standards set using the findings of facility audits, local consultation and demand modelling
- Quality Standards set using the findings of facility audits and local consultation
- Accessibility Standards set using the findings of facility audits, local consultation and mapping catchment areas

### **Stage 4: Application of Provision Standards**

#### **Aims**

- Applying provision standards to existing resources and identifying specific deficiencies in accessibility and quality and any deficiencies or surpluses in the spatial distribution of resources to support identifying future investment

#### **Key Tasks**

- Identification of deficiencies in accessibility
- Identification of deficiencies in quality
- Identification of surpluses or deficiencies in quantity

### **Stage 5: Policy Recommendations**

#### **Aims**

- Identifying provision and priorities for maintaining good quality provision
- Identifying important sites in need of quality improvements
- To set the context for the council to work with local communities on locally important sites, this may involve a change in character of sites to redress deficiencies

#### **Key Tasks**

- The findings of the process undertaken have allowed a number of key recommendations to be made and the identification of a number of key strategic priorities for the future
- Identifying future provision needs and where sites need to be protected
- Recommended standards for future provision

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### Auditing Local Provision

2.39 The assessment and strategy development have been undertaken with consideration given to the **quantity, quality and accessibility** of facilities.

2.40 The assessment has considered:

2.41 **Quantity.** A number of key questions have been considered, including:

- Is there enough provision adequately to serve the needs of local residents and the sporting community?
- Is current provision in the right place?
- Is there enough provision to serve the District adequately in the future, taking into account changes to demography and the national and local strategic context?
- What is the current mix of provision across all providers?

### Assessing Quantity

2.42 The assessment of quantity has been undertaken on the basis of:

- A review of the number of sites and size of provision, in relation to local population
- Comparison of specific types of facilities e.g. playing pitches and allotments against known demand

### Assessing Quality

2.43 The assessment has considered a number of key questions, including:

- Is the provision available of sufficient quality to be “fit for purpose”?
- Does the quality of provision affect usage and potential usage?
- How is quality perceived by users and non-users?

2.44 The assessment of quality has been undertaken on the basis of:

- Site visits to community accessible facilities to rate a number of key criteria affecting quality
- Quality ratings from key users, residents and specific user groups

2.45 The site quality audits undertaken are based upon the national quality standard for parks and open space ‘The Green Flag Award’. The assessment considers sites from a visitor’s perspective. Appendix 1 contains the site audit proforma.

2.46 The overall quality scores place a site within certain key categories along the “quality value line”. Strategic Leisure have developed the quality ratings and value lines to address the variations in quality assessments undertaken for certain typologies. These various quality lines are illustrated below.

#### Quality Line – Open Space (Parks, Natural, Green Corridors, Amenity)

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

#### Quality Line - Allotments

0% - 19%	20% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 79%	80% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

#### Quality Line – Playing Pitches

0% - 30%	31% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 89%	90% +
Poor	Below Average	Average	Good	Excellent

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### Quality Line – Bowling Greens, Tennis Courts,

0% - 19%	20% - 39%	40% - 59%	60% - 79%	80% +
Very Poor	Poor	Average	Good	Excellent

2.47 Play areas are assessed against a model based on the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) play value criteria. These are identified later in the report in Section 3.

### Assessing Access

2.48 In relation to accessibility, a number of key questions were posed, including:

- Is provision physically accessible to the local community?
- Is pricing (where prices apply), and the level of fees and charges a barrier to usage?
- Is provision in the right place to serve local communities?
- How does the management of facilities impact on access?

2.49 The assessment of accessibility has been undertaken on the basis of:

- Auditing factors known to affect the access to certain types of facility
- Consultation with local residents
- Mapping exercises to identify catchment areas for different types of provision

2.50 The assessment has looked at facilities on both a District-wide and sub-area basis: six sub-areas based around the towns and their surroundings were used for this purpose.

2.51 The PPG17 Companion Guide provides guidance on a number of key categories (Typology) of open space, sport and recreation provision. Consultation with officers from the leisure and planning policy teams at the Council, together with a review of key audit data, has led to the adoption of a typology of provision, specific to the District. This is summarised in Figure 2.2 below:

Figure 2.2 - West Dorset District Typology

Typology		Primary Purpose
<b>Formal Open Space (Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Park or Recreation Ground</li> <li>• Formal Garden</li> </ul>		These are high quality sites that offer a wide range of facilities for formal and informal recreation and community events. Local parks and recreation grounds are defined as sites with formal outdoor sports facilities or playing fields that also have alternative amenities on the site such as a children's play area or multi-use games area (MUGA) or are used as informal areas for recreation. Formal gardens are aesthetic areas laid out with floral landscaping, formal grass areas and seating.
<b>Natural And Semi Natural Green Spaces</b>		Including Nature Reserves, woodlands, wildlife conservation, bio diversity, environmental education awareness and countryside recreation such as walking or cycling.
<b>Formal Outdoor Sport</b>		Sites specifically for participation in outdoor sports such as pitch sports, tennis and bowls.
<b>Amenity Green Space</b>	<b>Active</b>	Highly accessible areas which provide opportunities for informal activities e.g. dog walking or to take part in a 'kick about'.
	<b>Visual</b>	Areas that improve the visual appearance of residential or other areas.
	<b>Civic Spaces</b>	Civic and market squares and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

Typology	Primary Purpose
<b>Provision For Children And Young People</b>	Areas designed primarily for play and social interaction involving children and young people, such as equipped play areas, multi use games areas, skateboard areas and teenage play zones.
<b>Allotments</b>	Opportunities for those people who wish to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion these include allotments provided by the Council and those managed by allotment societies.
<b>Cemeteries and Crematorium</b>	Quiet contemplation and burial of the dead, often linked to the promotion of wildlife conservation and biodiversity.
<b>Indoor Sports Facilities</b>	Provision of facilities (sports hall, swimming pool, health and fitness) for participation in indoor sport and leisure activities.
<b>Indoor Community Facilities</b>	Provision of facilities such as Community Centres and Halls

### Current Quantity Standards of Provision

- 2.52 The West Dorset District Local Plan does not include an adopted quantity standard for open space provision required from new residential development, but states that adequate provision must be made, and makes reference to the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) quantity-based standard of 2.4 hectares (6 acres) of outdoor playing space per 1,000 people. This standard is broken down into the following types of provision:
- For outdoor sport, principally for adults and youths, 1.6 hectares ( 4 acres), including facilities such as pitches, greens, tennis courts, athletics tracks with a minimum standard of 1.2 hectares for sports pitches
  - Children's playing space, principally for children and young people, 0.8 hectares (2 acres). These include sites containing a range of facilities and providing an environment providing focused opportunities for outdoor play, as well as casual and informal play space within housing areas.
- 2.53 An important element of the NPFA recommended standard is the need for a specific allocation of 1.2 hectares for sports pitches within the total outdoor sport standard. The NPFA also recommend a minimum standard for outdoor spaces for children and young people of 0.8 hectares per 1,000 people. This ratio is based on the total population figures and not the number of children and young people aged 2-19 years.
- 2.54 The Council has also developed further provision standards within the draft Supplementary Planning Guidance which seeks public open space provision of 0.5 hectare (1.25 acres) per 100 dwellings to be provided on site, pro rata, by the developers in new housing developments. Where the provision of useable open space on site is not practical, or for security reasons is inappropriate, the District Council will seek a commuted payment towards open space provision, or a recreational facility, which is related to the needs of the development and is reasonably accessible from it. In this respect the Council will seek to enter into a S106 Agreement with the developer. It should however be noted that this draft guidance has not been progressed to adoption (at the time of this study) due to the priority of preparing the local plan and core strategy, and the expectation of revised government guidance on planning obligations.
- 2.55 The draft guidance explains that the standard is based on the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) recommendations and is made up of the following elements:
- 0.38 ha for playing fields
  - 0.04 ha for play areas for the under 5 years old, and
  - 0.08 ha for children's youth and amenity open space and play areas.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

- 2.56 Where it is difficult or undesirable to provide public open space on site, or there are other opportunities or proposals on sites in the locality that could better meet the open space needs of the development and/or the needs of the community, it may be acceptable to negotiate a sum of money in the form of a developer contribution in lieu of on-site provision. In these cases, the money can be used to cover or contribute to the cost of open space provision, or other recreational facility, off-site.
- 2.57 PPG 17 guidance advises the setting of standards for different types (typologies) of open space provision and to move away from the traditional NPFA type standards as outlined above.
- 2.58 The NPFA based standards are primarily based on formal provision and do not take into account areas such as semi- natural greenspace. The standards referred to in the local plan and draft supplementary planning guidance do not currently include parks or natural/semi-natural green space.
- 2.59 The above provision standards do not appear fully to consider the long term maintenance and staff resource implications of ensuring that the facilities are maintained to appropriate standards. Nor are they based on demand for facilities; this often results in facilities that do not best fit with local people's needs or aspirations and can potentially lead to conflict of opinion e.g. the standards stipulate that play provision is to be made but do not identify for which age group the play area is to cater, nor recognise that the demands made by toddlers and juniors is far different from the needs of teenagers.
- 2.60 The current provision standards are generic in approach and do not appear to consider the need for quality. For example the provision of a sport pitch on its own is inadequate and will have a limited purpose if it is not supported by appropriate drainage, car parking and changing facilities; most importantly it needs to be clear that there is a need for such provision. Likewise the provision of allotments, which is very much demand led; as a minimum quality, provision should be served by water, toilets and car parking to ensure best practice standards are met, and quantitative provision standards on their own are inadequate. The quantitative findings and an overview of the effectiveness of these provision standards are detailed later in this strategy.
- 2.61 Developers are given clear guidance as to the amount of space or type of provision required dependant upon the size of the potential development proposed. What appears to be lacking is design guidance to ensure provision is made to a 'good quality' and is consistent with recognised 'Best Practice,' or the requirement for additional provision based on local need.
- 2.62 Figure 2.3 below sets out the space requirements for the more popular outdoor games and sports as indicated by the NPFA. (It is worth noting that the figures do not include the recognised pitch run offs).

**Figure 2.3 - Space Requirements by Sport Type**

Type of facility	Area in hectares	Area in acres
<b>Athletics (overall rectangular site area)</b>		
6 Lane Track	1.9	4.7
8 Lane Track	2.0	5.0
<b>Tennis courts for recreational use</b>		
1 Court	0.06	0.17
2 adjacent courts	0.12	0.30
3 adjacent courts	0.18	0.44
for each further adjacent court	0.05	0.12
<b>Association Football</b>		
Mini Soccer:	0.83-0.90	2.0-2.22
For 2 pitches	0.70	1.65
<b>Hockey</b>		
Mini and seven-a-side Hockey:	0.62	1.51
For 2 pitches	0.50	1.24
<b>Netball</b>	0.05-0.07	0.13-0.16
<b>Rugby Union</b>	1.26	3.1
<b>Basketball</b>	0.06	0.15
<b>Lacrosse</b>	0.65	1.60
<b>Bowling greens: Flat and crown</b>	0.14	0.35

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

Type of facility	Area in hectares	Area in acres
<b>Cricket</b>		
1 square with boundary of 46m	1.50	3.70
1 square plus 2 senior soccer pitches	2.05	5.07
1 square plus hockey/senior soccer	2.01	4.98

### Current Quality Standards

2.63 There are no prescribed quality standards in the Local Plan for West Dorset or any of the other Council strategies or plans for outdoor provision and open space. However there are recommended standards from the National Playing Fields Association.

### National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) Quality Standards

2.64 **Children's play areas** - As a matter of general practice, children's play areas should be:

- Fitted with play equipment that has been designed, manufactured, installed and maintained in full accordance with EN1176, EN1177 and BS7188
- Sited in open welcoming locations and not be tucked away on backland sites with access via narrow alleys or paths enclosed by high fences
- Provided with seating for parents and carers

2.65 **Outdoor playing space for children** the standard contains two specifications for provision namely the 2 acre per 1000 head of population and the 'NEAP / LEAP/ LAP' system of categorising types of equipped play areas, as defined in Figure 2.4 below;

Figure 2.4 - Categories of Play Areas

	Local Area for Play (LAP)	Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)
<b>Location</b>	Adjacent to a well used pathway overlooked by houses and on a flat site that is well drained	Adjacent to a well used pathway and on a flat site that is well drained	Adjacent to a well used pathway and on a flat site that is well drained
<b>Minimum activity zone</b>	100m <sup>2</sup>	400m <sup>2</sup>	1,000m <sup>2</sup> divided into 2 parts; at least 465m <sup>2</sup> of hard surface area and equipped play space area
<b>No. and type of play equipment</b>	Demonstrative play features to enable children to identify space as their own domain	At least 5 types of play equipment where at least 2 are individual items rather than part of a combination. Impact absorbing surface beneath/around play equipment	At least 8 types of play equipment to allow developmental play amongst younger children and moderate/adventurous play for older children
<b>Buffer zone</b>	5m depth including planting	10m depth including planting feature	30m depth including planting and other physical features

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

	Local Area for Play (LAP)	Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)	Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)
<b>Fencing</b>	600mm high fencing and barrier to limit speed of child entering or leaving the facility	1m high fencing with two pedestrian gates and barriers to limit speed of child entering/leaving the facility	1m high fencing with two pedestrian gates and barriers to limit speed of child entering or leaving the facility
<b>Furniture</b>	Seating	Seating and a litter bin	Seating and litter bins at each access point. Secure bicycle parking facilities.
<b>Signs and notices</b>	Area solely used for children and that adults are not allowed unless accompanied by children	Area solely used for children and that adults are not allowed unless accompanied by children, and name and tel. no. of facility manager	Area solely used for children and that adults are not allowed unless accompanied by children, and name and tel. no. of facility manager.

2.66 The NPFA also recommend a 3 phase approach to strategic planning for outdoor playing space provision namely:

- Define local standards of facility supply per 1000 people
- Undertaking a detailed local assessment
- Adoption of the NPFA minimum standard as a general measure of land required for a given population

2.67 **The Two Acre Standard** –the difficulty facing any local authority when assessing provision against the 2 acre (0.8 hectare) component is the definition of what constitutes children’s playing space. The guidance refers to two elements:

1. Designated areas for children and young people containing a range of facilities and an environment that has been designed to provide focused opportunities for outdoor play
2. Casual or informal playing space within housing areas

2.68 Most authorities measuring (i) as outlined above find it a fairly straightforward exercise but difficulties can arise where play areas are not defined by a boundary such as a fence; or with older sites which may have play equipment scattered across a wide area. For these sites and in these cases, calculation of the total area can be problematic.

2.69 However this component is less problematic for sites identified in (ii) above as these sites appear to be unequipped so this will entail the authority surveying its (and others) land portfolio and assessing the amount of land that meets this loose definition.

### Current Accessibility Standards

2.70 There are no prescribed accessibility standards for open space and recreation facilities adopted by the District Council in the local plan or any other Council strategies or plans. However there are recommended standards from the National Playing Fields Association.

### Outdoor playing space for children

2.71 There are national standards adopted by National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) in the Six Acre Standard setting maximum distances of children’s play areas to dwellings. The distances are set dependent upon the classification of children’s play provision, namely:



## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

Figure 2.5 - Categories of Play Areas

<b>LAP ( Local Area of Play)</b>	1 minute walking time	Walking distance of 100m	100m <sup>2</sup> in size	5m From the Nearest Dwelling (to the forward most part of dwelling that faces LAP)	Small low key games area that may include demonstrative play feature
<b>LEAP( Local Equipped Area for Play)</b>	5 minute walking time	Walking distance of 400m	400m <sup>2</sup> in size	10m from Activity zone to nearest dwelling( to property boundary)	5 types of play equipment, small games area
<b>NEAP (Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play)</b>	15 minute walking time	1000m walking distance	1000m <sup>2</sup> in size	30m from Activity Zone to nearest dwelling( to property boundary)	8 types of play equipment, opportunities for ball games or wheeled activity

2.72 The NPFA recommendation to achieve 0.8 ha (2 acres) of outdoor space is to be achieved by:

- Providing LAPs, LEAPs and NEAPs in locations based upon walking time
- Proving the balance as casual playing space within areas of amenity open space
- Accessibility for the general population

2.73 The NPFA also recommends a travel time of approximately 20 minutes by motor transport to synthetic pitches or athletic tracks, and a 10-15 minutes cycle ride or walk to local facilities is reasonable. In this context it is important that local playing fields are available within 1.2 kilometres (three-quarters of a mile) of all dwellings in major housing areas to provide opportunities for outdoor sports.

### Accessibility for children in terms of walking time

2.74 The NPFA standard supports a hierarchical approach and pushes for the need for the location of children's play areas to be based on accessibility that is related to time rather than distance. As the standard uses straight line distances the figures need to be treated with some caution on an area plan to ensure that no obstacles, including private land, need to be crossed to reach the play facility. Generally, children's play areas should be accessible without having to cross main roads, railways or waterways.

2.75 It is important to note that the District Council has only partially adopted the NPFA 6 acre standard in recognising the rural nature of the District and the fact that children's play provision is partially devolved down to the town and parish level in terms of provision.

### Identifying Local Needs

2.76 In order to develop a strategy and set local policies from it, it is essential to consult with the local community to gain an insight into local needs and aspirations. It is also important to ascertain the views of local communities as part of the Best Value and community planning process.

2.77 Consultation with the community was undertaken to establish and identify:

- The views of local residents according to the levels of appropriate provision of different types of open space, indoor sports facilities and community provision within the neighbourhoods within the District
- Local people's attitude to existing provision
- The expectation and needs of local people in terms of the quality of provision of greenspaces, sport and community recreation facilities in their area
- To identify the reasons for non use

## **SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS**

2.78 Within the key tasks identified earlier in the report is a breakdown and indication of the extent of the public consultation undertaken as part of the development of this report.

### **Consultation - Key Consultees**

#### **2.79 Community Enabling Manager, WDDC**

- Functions include managing arts and museums, sport and leisure facilities, within the district. This includes Gryphon Leisure Centre and Thomas Hardy Leisure Centre (both dual use sites). The department consults on funding for projects and provides grants and rate relief to local organisations.
- To allocate Section 106 agreement money the District Council liaises closely with the parish and town councils in the district.
- At present the department use the findings set out in the Sports Strategy (1999) and eagerly await the findings of the PPG 17 assessment.
- Once negotiations have taken place with developers the District Council aims to allocate and spend Section 106 money as soon as possible.
- Current priority for sport is a new swimming pool in Dorchester, and a proposal at the Thomas Hardy School site is currently supported. A sum of up to £5 million is being considered by West Dorset District Council and the Duchy of Cornwall has also allocated £1 million.
- Recent funding applications include plans to build new changing facilities behind Bridport F.C. to serve St Mary's Playing Field as part of the Bridport football community partnership.
- There is a requirement for better quality facilities in West Dorset rather than developing more facilities.

#### **2.80 Strategic Community Development Officer, WDDC (also on behalf of Community Facilitator)**

- Oversees community facilitator role.
- Works with local community partnerships based around towns of Dorchester, Sherborne, Bridport, and Lyme Regis (The remaining towns of Beaminster and Chickerell do not currently have such partnerships)
- Liaises with Planning Policy division regarding the Local Development Framework
- Also works with the Community Planning Officer (based in Planning Policy Division) who works with the district level community partnership and has provided summarised information on the content of Parish Plans across the district.
- The Community Facilitator/Equalities Officer is the main contact for the Focus Group consultation. Works with groups such as people with disabilities, people with low income, black and minority ethnic, and women and girls carers, etc
- Dorset Community Action – involved with Play Strategy – developed in 2004. All partners have signed up to the strategy
- One of the actions was to develop a facilities database – Access database, should include all facilities in WDDC
- Sherborne partnership – through the action plan consultation play equipment came out as strong need. There is a 'Children and Families Forum' responsible for looking at the provision (Sherborne LAP – looking to consult with families re the play equipment)
- There are Youth Forums in each of the market towns which are representative of the young people within those areas – they are in the process of forming a District wide forum which will have representatives from each of these

#### **2.81 Development Services Manager, WDDC**

- Development Services deals with the processing and determination of planning applications, listed building consents, planning controls and enforcements.
- The District Council currently negotiates with developers for contributions for open space on developments of 4 dwellings and above.
- Development Services also work closely with the corporate officer-level 'Strategic Sites group' and liaise closely with parish and town councils, to help allocate Section 106 agreement money.

#### **2.82 Grounds Maintenance, Dorset Works**

- Dorset Works are the contracting division of Dorset County Council undertaking highway maintenance and construction activities throughout the county.
- This grounds maintenance service currently maintains over 400 sites throughout Dorset, from large comprehensive schools to small office complexes. Parks, gardens and sports grounds are also maintained.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

- Dorset Works also manages the county's tree stock.
- General feeling that pitches at large school sites tend to be overused and there is a need to facilitate more community use agreements.
- More schools would also benefit from synthetic turf pitches.

### 2.83 County Sports and Funding Officer, DCC

- The county sports and funding officer provides a strategic role in encouraging wider community engagement in physical activities across the county.
- The role includes:
  - Identifying gaps in sports provision.
  - Supporting funding bids for the development of sports facilities in Dorset.
  - Establishing partnerships.
- County Sports Strategy identifies key priorities for funding, sporting opportunities and initiatives.
- Specific new developments in West Dorset include:
  - 2 court sports hall adjacent to Beaminster School
  - Sports field drainage scheme at Cheselbourne School
  - MUGA at Maiden Newton
- The County Council allocates funding to village halls for refurbishment, providing there is full community use.
- The key is to sustain existing facilities in Dorset rather than build new

### 2.84 Sports Development Officer, WDDC Leisure

- Sports development role includes supporting voluntary clubs and providing coaches and activities
- Large and small grants scheme £50+ to £5k - guide and support clubs to access funding
- Also oversee health and safety, event programmes, etc.
- Provide support to Town Councils – Bridport, Dorchester, Chickerell, Lyme Regis, Beaminster, Sherborne
- All pitches within West Dorset are owned and managed by town or parish councils
- Generally pitches are good quality – what is lacking is the existence of quality changing or car parking provision and ancillary facilities.

### Door-to-Door Consultation

- 2.85 In order to develop a strategy and set local policies from it, it is essential to consult with the local community to gain an insight into local needs and aspirations.
- 2.86 Previous consultation with organisations, clubs and groups held by the District has been reviewed along with a door to door survey of 500 resident households that were randomly selected across the District. The questionnaire responses have been analysed, and a database has been established that will provide the Council with detailed analysis for types of open space and areas of residence. The survey was made available via a link on the Council's website and distributed among Council staff known to reside in the District. The analysis of the online survey and staff survey has been excluded from the door-to-door analysis but are detailed later in the report.
- 2.87 The resident survey simplified the typologies in order that local people could relate to the spaces in West Dorset, for example recreation grounds are categorised within parks and gardens, amenity space is open space near to home and natural and semi natural greenspaces are identified as wild areas.
- 2.88 It was important that respondents understood the difference between a green corridor and a public right of way. These were explained to residents by the market researchers to ensure they understood.
- 2.89 The survey was designed to assess views of residents, their attitude and aspirations with regard to open space, indoor and outdoor sport and community recreational facilities across the District. In particular the survey set out to identify and establish the following:

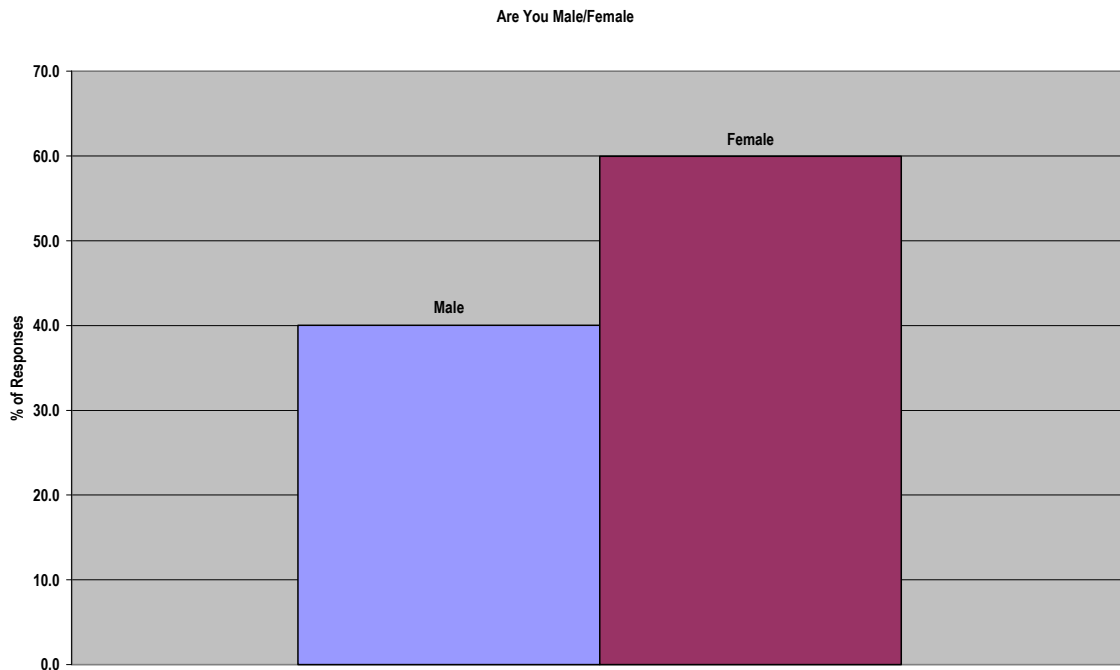
## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

- The usage of open space, sport and community recreational facilities by residents within the District
- The value local people attach to open space, sport and community recreation facilities
- The attitude of local residents towards open space, sport and community recreation facilities
- Attitudes to the level of existing provision and facilities
- The frequency of use by local residents to the differing types of provision
- The main mode of transport local residents use to access open space, sport and community recreational facilities
- The views of residents on the accessibility of open space, sport and community recreational facilities
- The barriers that prevent or reduce local use of open space, sport and community recreational facilities
- Local needs and expectations

### Sample Selection

- 2.90 Participants from the random sample addresses, provided by the Council, were selected to cover all demographic aspects of the population. The results of the door to door survey are attached as Appendix 2
- 2.91 Of the 500 respondents to the survey, 40% (199) are male and 60% female (298). (3 respondents did not answer the question). 95.7% of respondents identified themselves as being white, 1.2% as White Irish, 1.4% White other, 0.8% Black Caribbean , 0.2% Black African and 0.4% as White and Asian (7 respondents failed to identify their ethnicity).

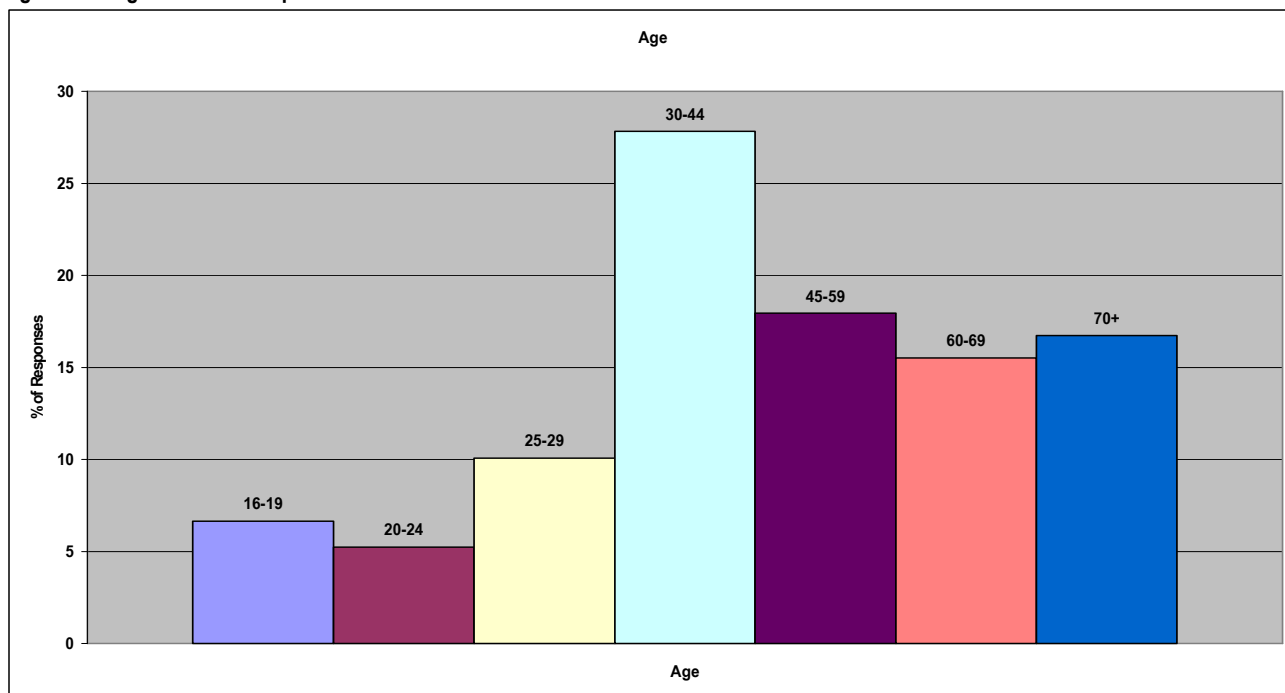
Figure 2.6 - Gender of Respondents



- 2.92 Figure 2.7 overleaf gives a breakdown of the age of respondents from the 500 people surveyed, the survey shows that all age categories ( over 16 years) are well represented with the middle age ranges of 30-44 (28%) being the main respondent age groups.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

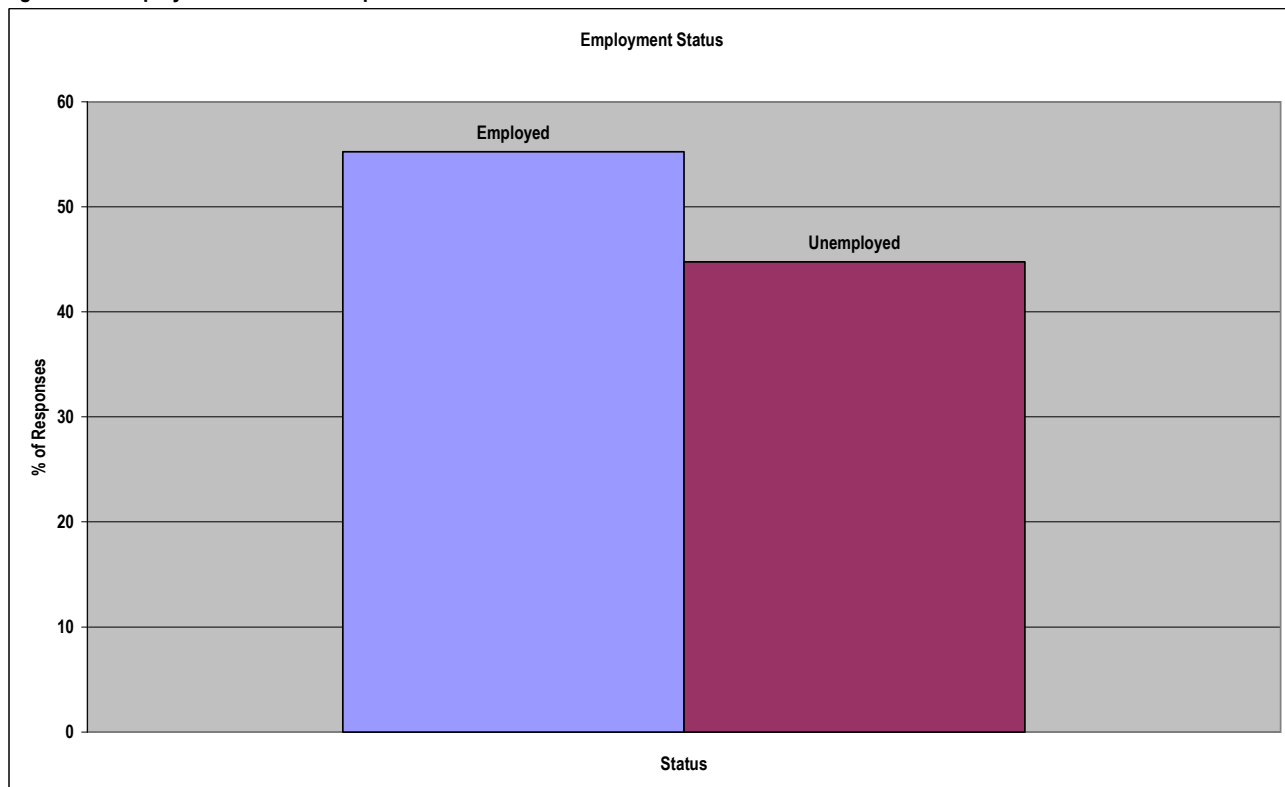
Figure 2.7 - Age Profile of Respondents



2.93 14% of respondents identified themselves as having a disability.

2.94 55% of respondents identified themselves as being employed.

Figure 2.8 - Employment Profile of Respondents



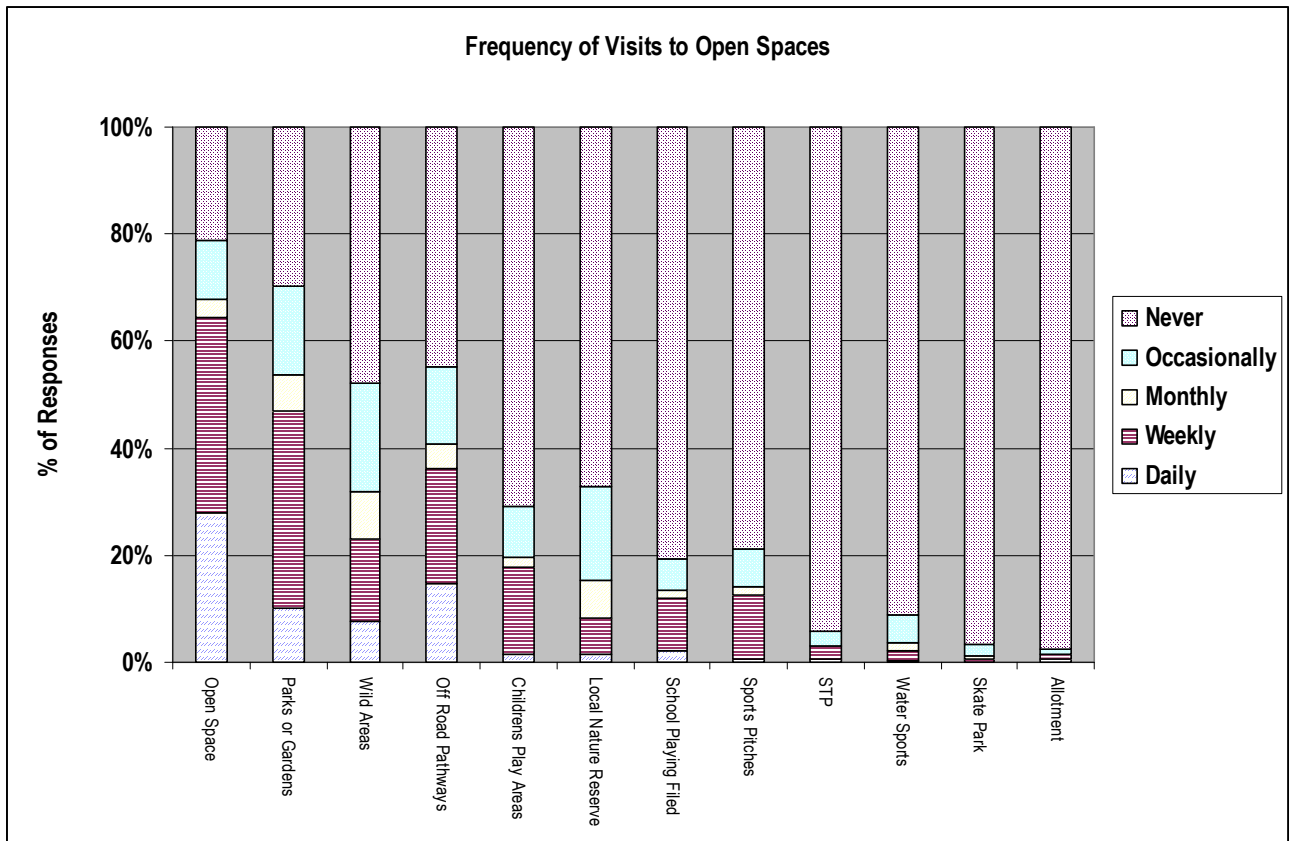
## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

### Usage of Open Space

2.95 54% of respondents (271 people out of 500 surveyed) identified using open space.

2.96 Figure 2.9 identifies the frequency of use per different type of open space. Local people identified using parks and gardens and open space near to where they live on a regular (daily / weekly) basis whereas more specialist provision such as local nature reserves and allotments are used less frequently. Responses relating to the use of play areas need to be kept in context as the responses from the door-to-door survey will mainly be from parents or older family members visiting facilities with children.

Figure 2.9 – Respondents' Use of Outdoor Facilities



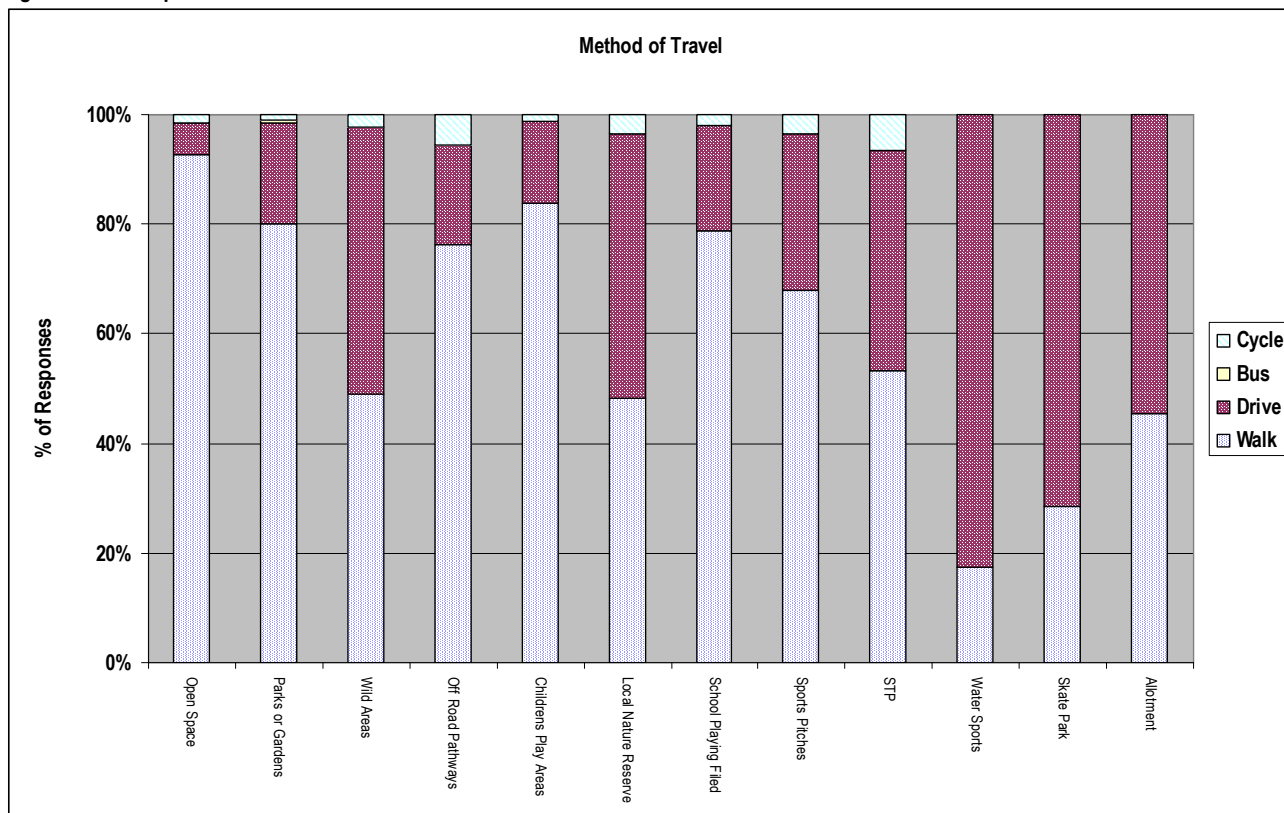
2.97 From the diagram, two typologies stand out as the most used facilities by those questioned. These are: parks and gardens; and amenity open space. 37% of respondents identified using parks and gardens, 36% use amenity open space, 16% use children's play areas and 12% use sports pitches on a weekly basis. Respondents identified using wild areas (20%) and Local Nature Reserves (natural and semi natural greenspace) (18%) occasionally.

2.98 Of those questioned, the least used facilities by the sample of residents are allotments, skate parks and water sports. These typologies have specialised usage. It is important to note that no further assessment has been undertaken regarding water sport.

2.99 Figure 2.10 overleaf indicates the response given by respondents in the door to door survey as to the main method of travel to open space in West Dorset. The figure shows that the main method of travel to facilities is walking. The main exception to this was local nature reserves and wild areas (natural and semi natural greenspace) where respondents identified the main method of travel as split between walking and driving by car. This is probably due to the nature and location of these sites. The main mode of transport identified by respondents when using allotments is to drive by car (55%).

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

Figure 2.10 – Respondents' Identified Method of Travel to Facilities in West Dorset

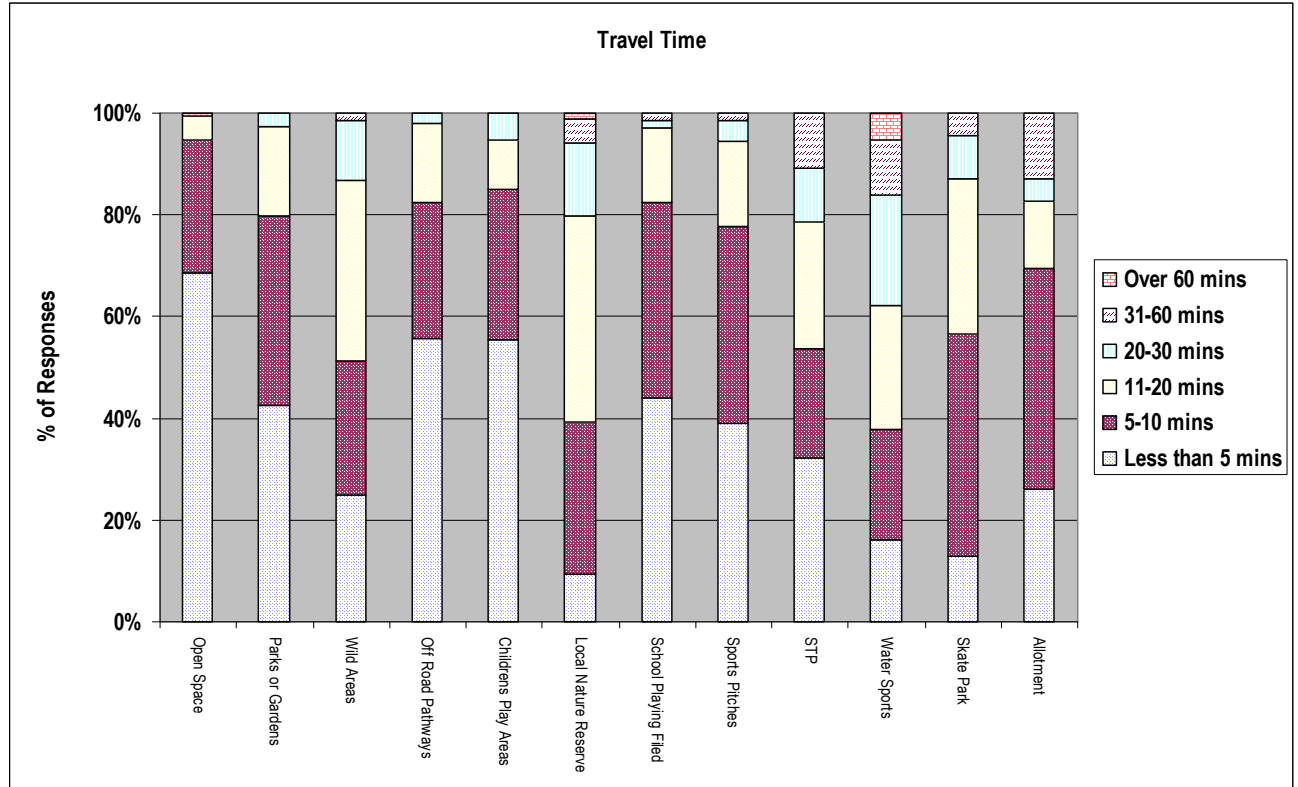


## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

### Local residents' perceptions on the accessibility of open space

2.100 Local residents were asked how long it takes them to walk to each of their nearest open space facilities. The results are summarised in Figure 2.11.

Figure 2.11 – Respondents' Travel time to nearest facility



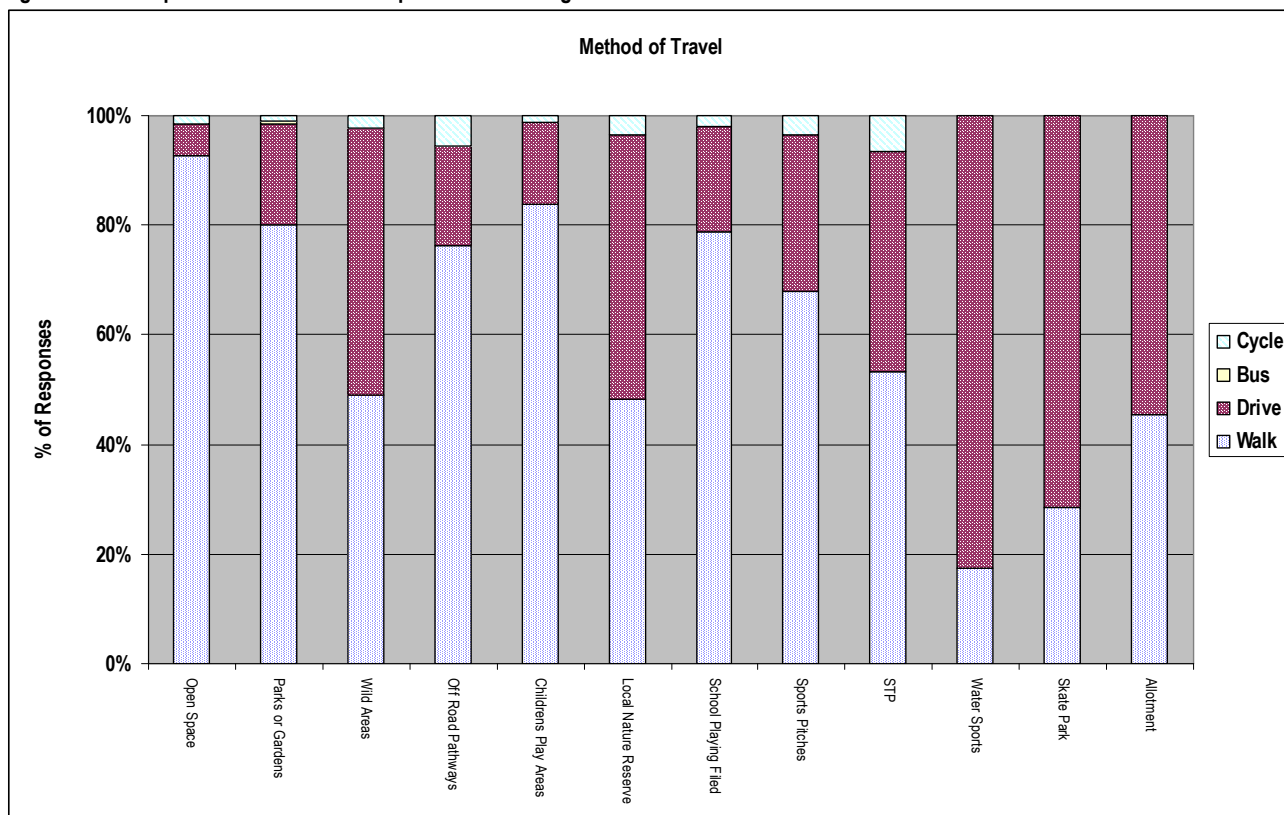
2.101 Open spaces near to home (Amenity greenspace) are perceived by residents as taking the least travel time to access with 69% of respondents identifying they travel less than 5 minutes to access sites:

- 55% of respondents identify having access to a children's play area within 5 minutes travel time.
- 41% of those questioned are within 20 minutes of a local nature reserve.
- 43% state they can access a park or garden within 5 minutes travel time.
- 44% of respondents travel 6-10 minutes to access an allotment.
- Residents used their car most frequently to travel to wild areas (49%)
- Only a very small percentage of residents who responded reported that they cycle to open space in West Dorset.
- None of the respondents identified using public transport to access the majority of outdoor facilities, the exception being parks and gardens where 0.5% or 1 respondent reported using public transport to visit the site.



## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

Figure 2.12 – Respondents' Mode of Transport When Visiting Facilities

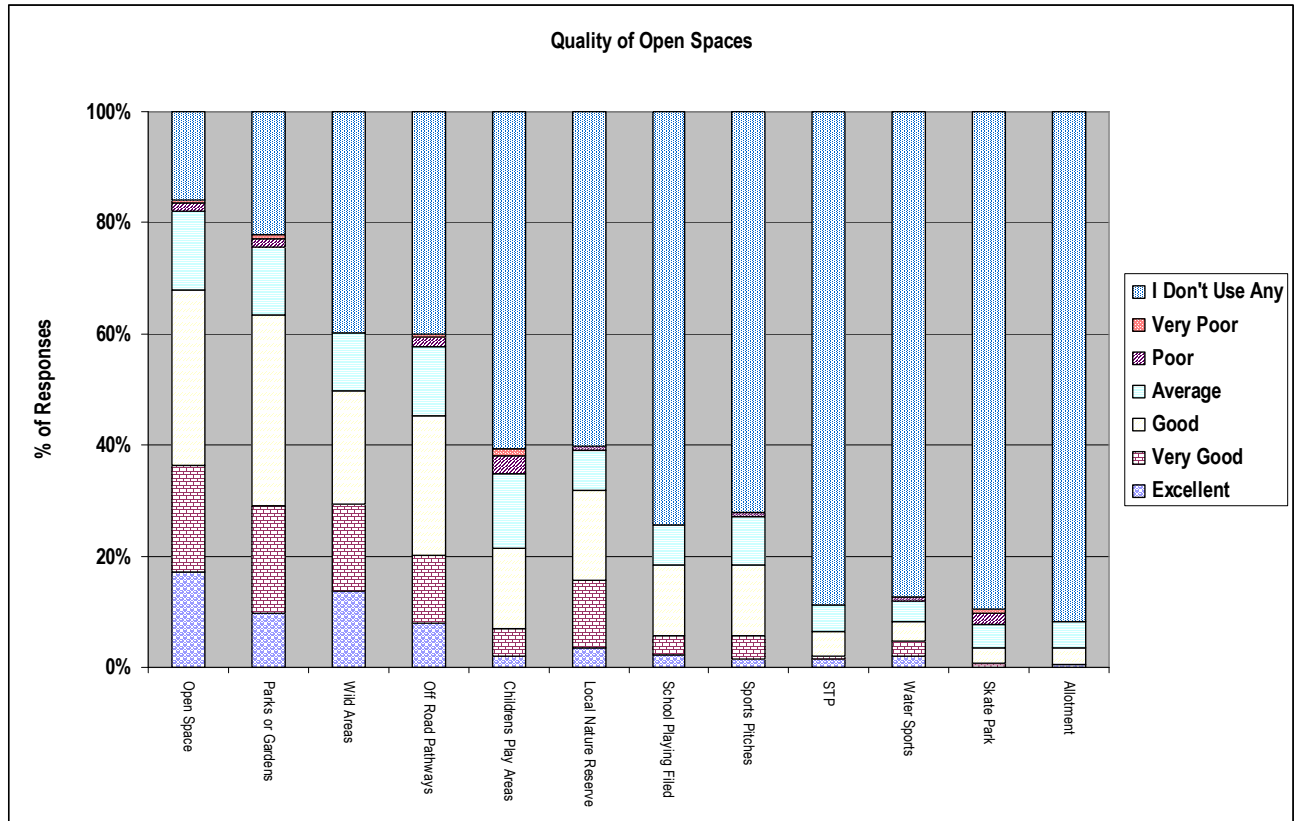


## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

### Local residents' perception of the quality of provision

2.102 Local residents were asked to rate the quality of facilities using the descriptions – excellent, very good, good, average, poor and very poor. Figure 2.13 summarises the responses of those residents who use the facilities.

Figure 2.13 – Respondents' Quality Rating of Facilities in West Dorset



2.103 It is important to recognise that in a random sample response rates to the use of specialist provision such as allotments or skate parks will be low: respondents in a door to door survey have to be 16 years of or over age and therefore it restricts responses to parents or relatives who may take children to these facilities.

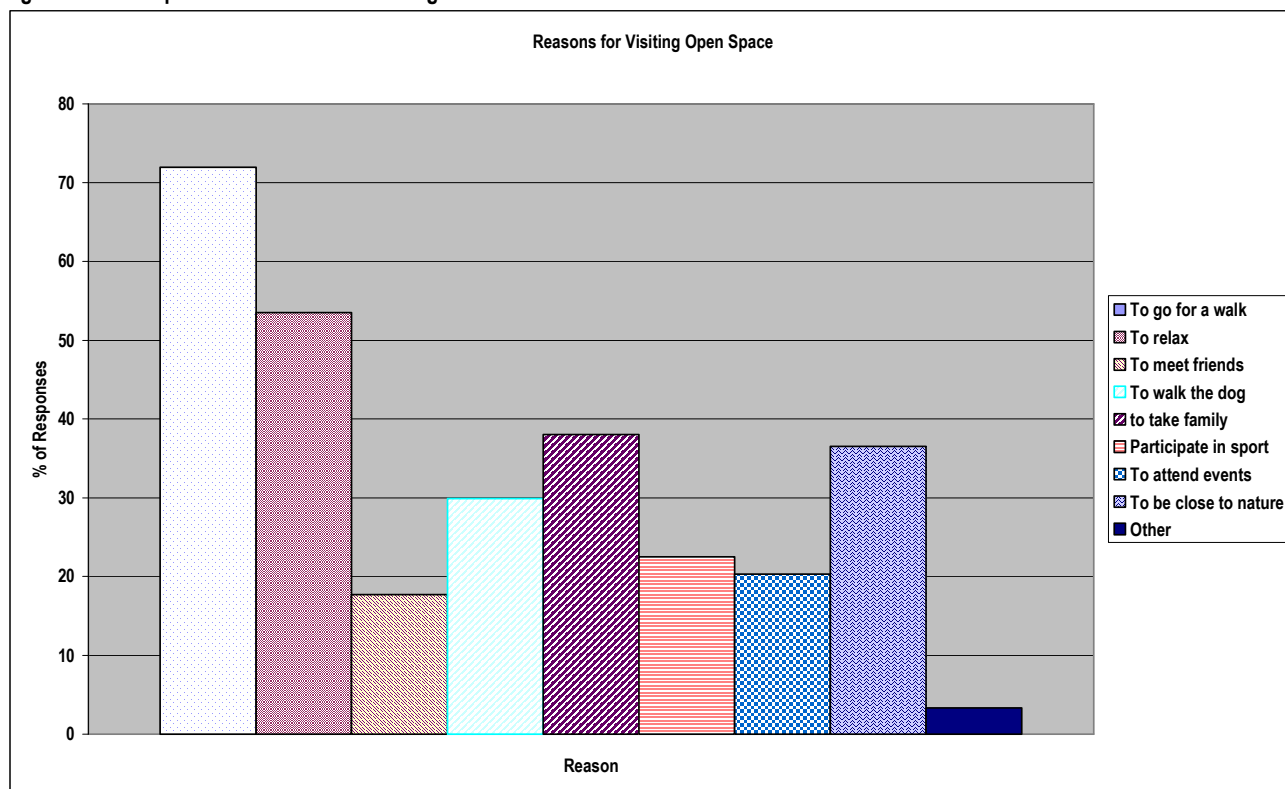
2.104 From the above, the general opinion of people in West Dorset appears to be that the quality of outdoor provision is on the whole good across all typologies, (even those with a low response rate). A more detailed analysis is given later under each individual typology.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

### Local residents' perceptions on the use of outdoor facilities (public open space)

2.105 Local residents were asked the reason they visited outdoor facilities, Figure 2.14 below identifies the reasons given for using West Dorset outdoor facilities. Almost 72% of respondents identified the main use of outdoor facilities was to go for a walk, 38% stated it was somewhere to take the family and 54% believe it was somewhere they could relax. Participation in sport (23%) and walking the dog (30%) were other reasons identified by residents.

Figure 2.14 – Respondents' Reasons for Using Outdoor Provision

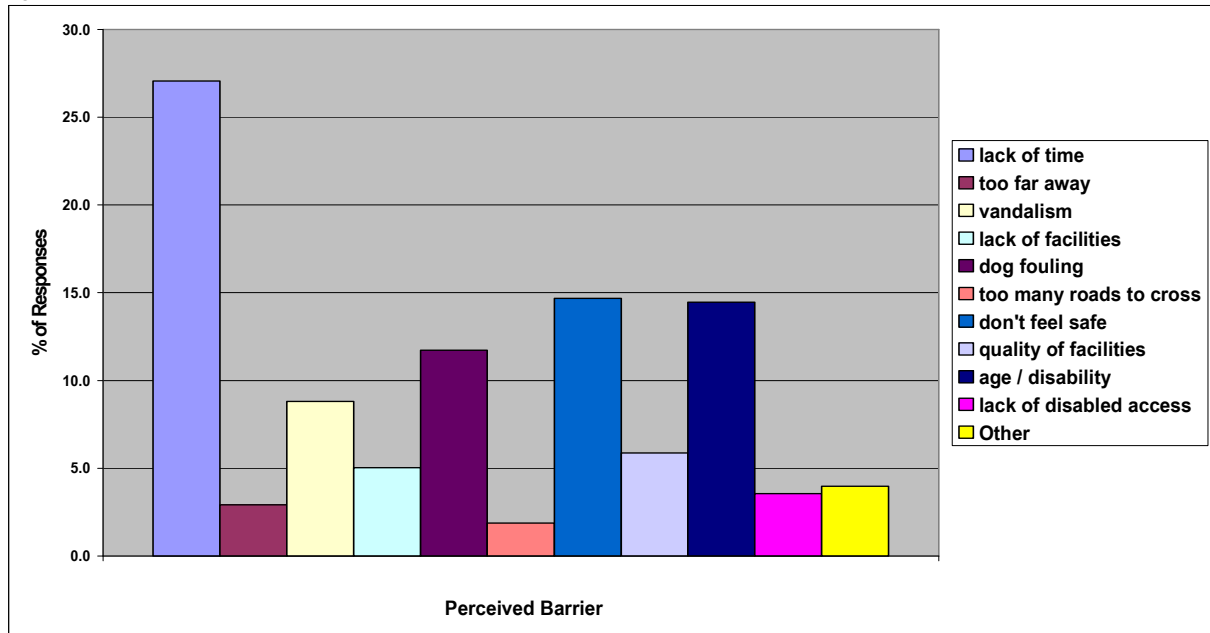


## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

### Local residents' perceived barriers to use

- 2.106 Residents were asked if there was anything that prevented them from visiting parks, open spaces or play areas.
- 2.107 The most common reasons given as a barrier for use were; lack of time (27%), not feeling safe (15%), age / disability (15%) and dog fouling (12%). All responses are summarised in Figure 2.15.

Figure 2.15 – Respondents' Perceived Barriers to Use

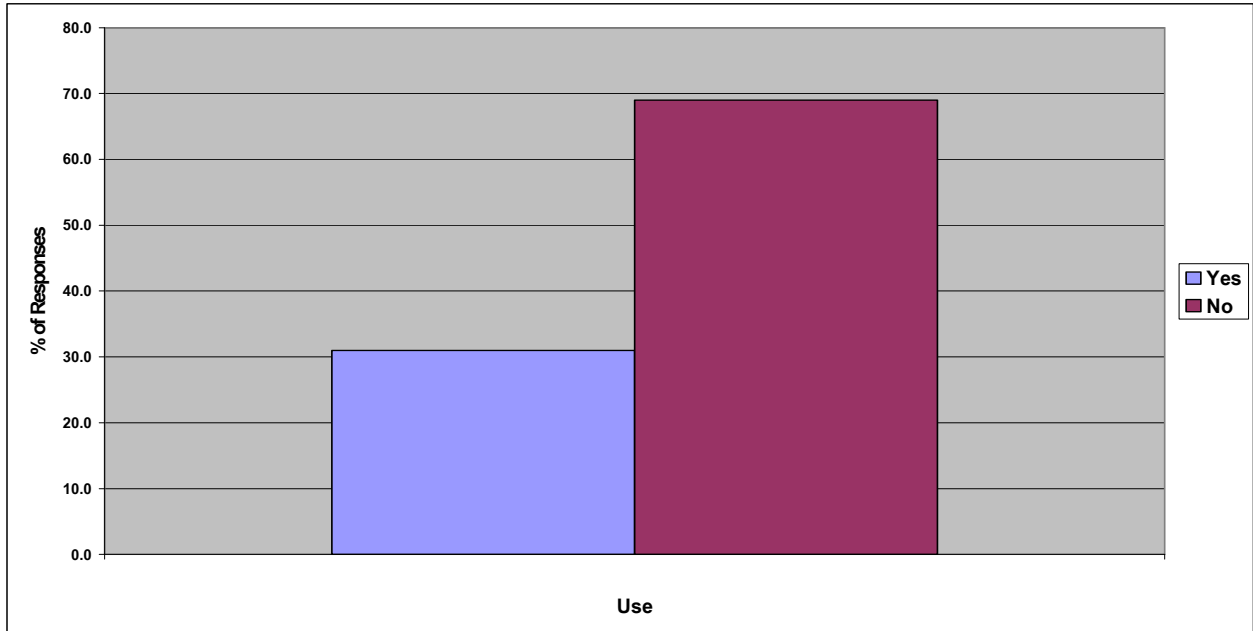


- 2.108 Local residents were asked if they had enough publicly accessible open space in their area, 73% of respondents (361 people out of 498 who gave a response) believe they do have enough accessible public open space.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

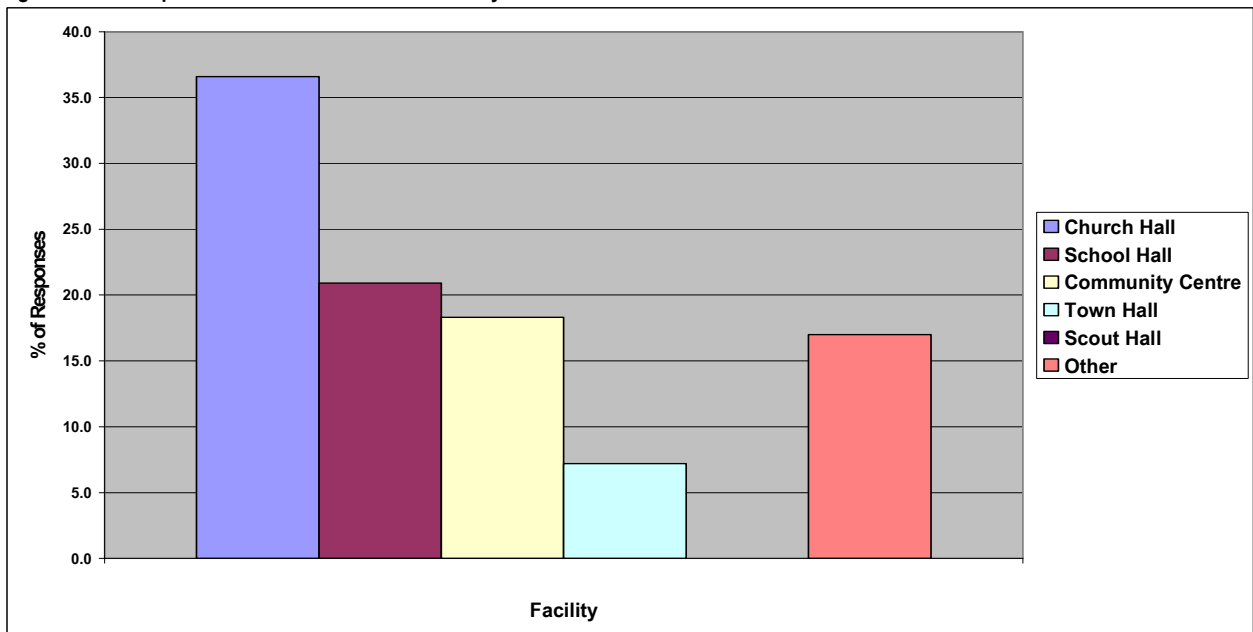
### Indoor Community Facilities

Figure 2.16 – Respondents' use of Indoor Community Facilities



- 2.109 From Figure 2.16 above, 31% of respondents (155 out of 500) stated that they use indoor community facilities. From the responses given, a more detailed breakdown of the use of the different types of indoor community facilities is illustrated in Figure 2.17 below.

Figure 2.17 – Respondents' Use of Indoor Community Facilities

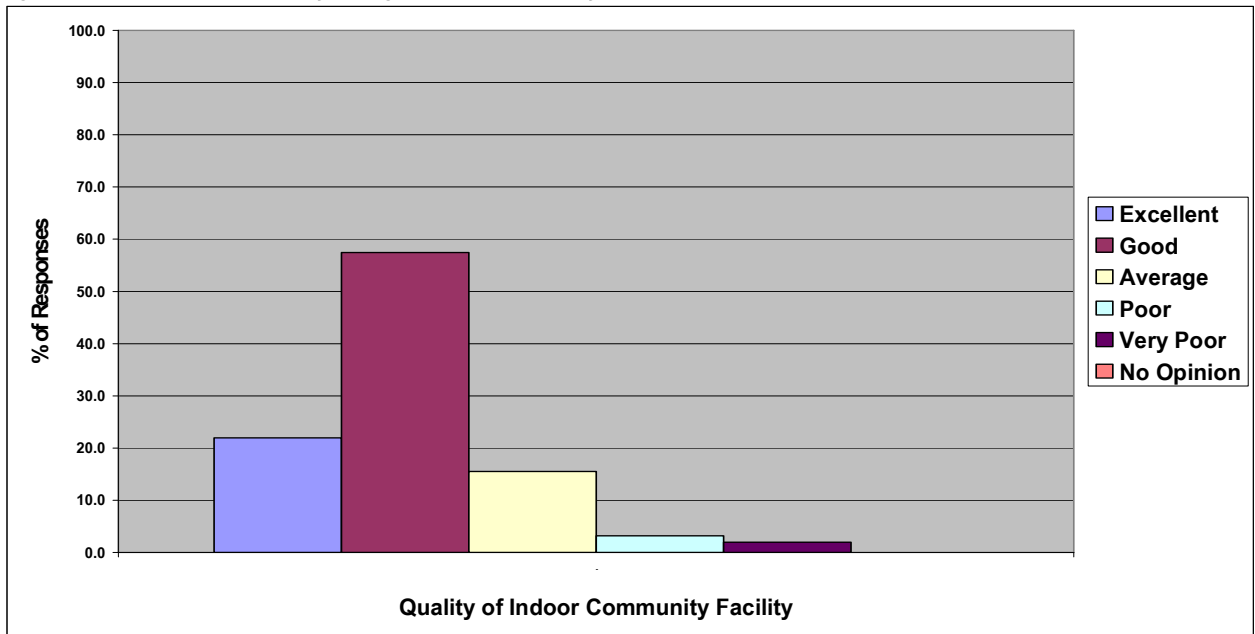


- 2.110 Figure 2.17 above shows that in terms of indoor community facilities, church halls are the most commonly used facility, used by 37% of the respondents (56 people out of the 155). 21% use school halls (32 people out of 155), 18% use community centres (28 of the 155 people), and 17% identified using other indoor community facilities. These references to the use of other facilities were mainly single responses relating to particular village halls or school facilities. Willow Bed Hall at Chickerell was however identified by 8 people, and libraries were identified by 5 people.

- 2.111 Local residents were asked to rate the quality of the indoor community facilities they use and Figure 2.18 overleaf identifies the result of the local opinion.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

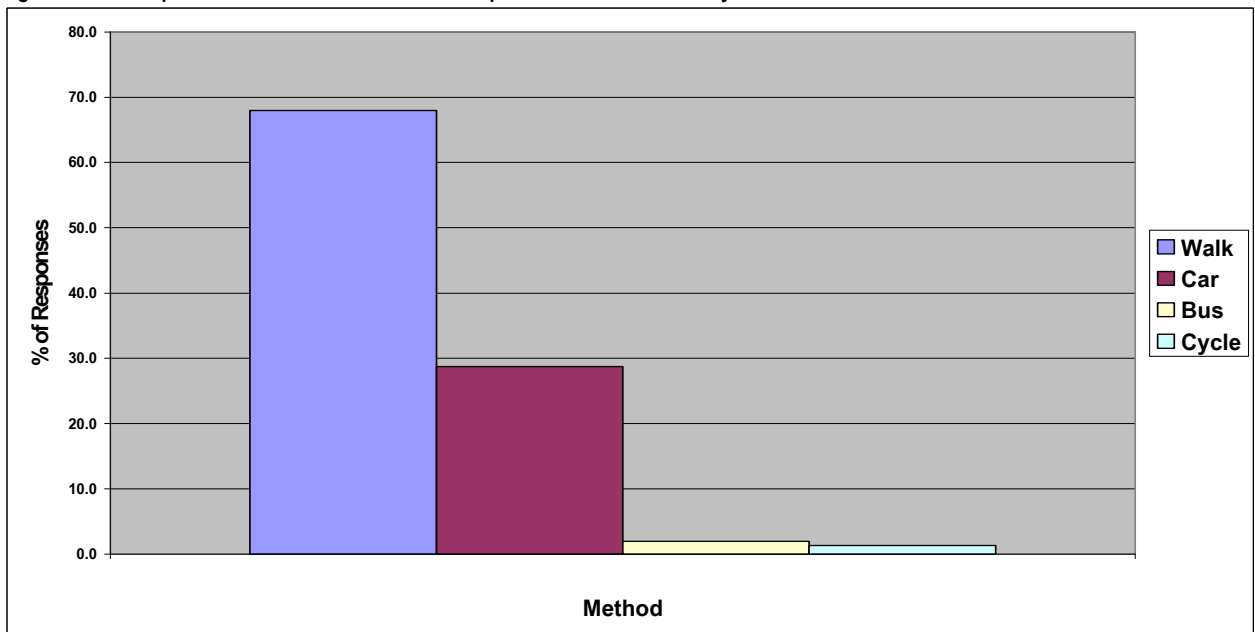
Figure 2.18 – Respondents’ Quality Rating of Indoor Community Facilities



2.112 From Figure 2.18 above local people overall rated the quality of their local indoor community facility as being Good (57%, or 89 people from 155 who responded). 16 % of respondents (24 people out of 155) rated them as average, 3% of respondents rated them as poor, and encouragingly 22 % (34 people) rated the quality of indoor community facilities within West Dorset as excellent.

2.113 In terms of accessibility to indoor community facilities Figure 2.19 identifies the most popular method of travel when accessing indoor community facilities.

Figure 2.19 – Respondents’ Preferred Mode of Transport to Indoor Community Facilities

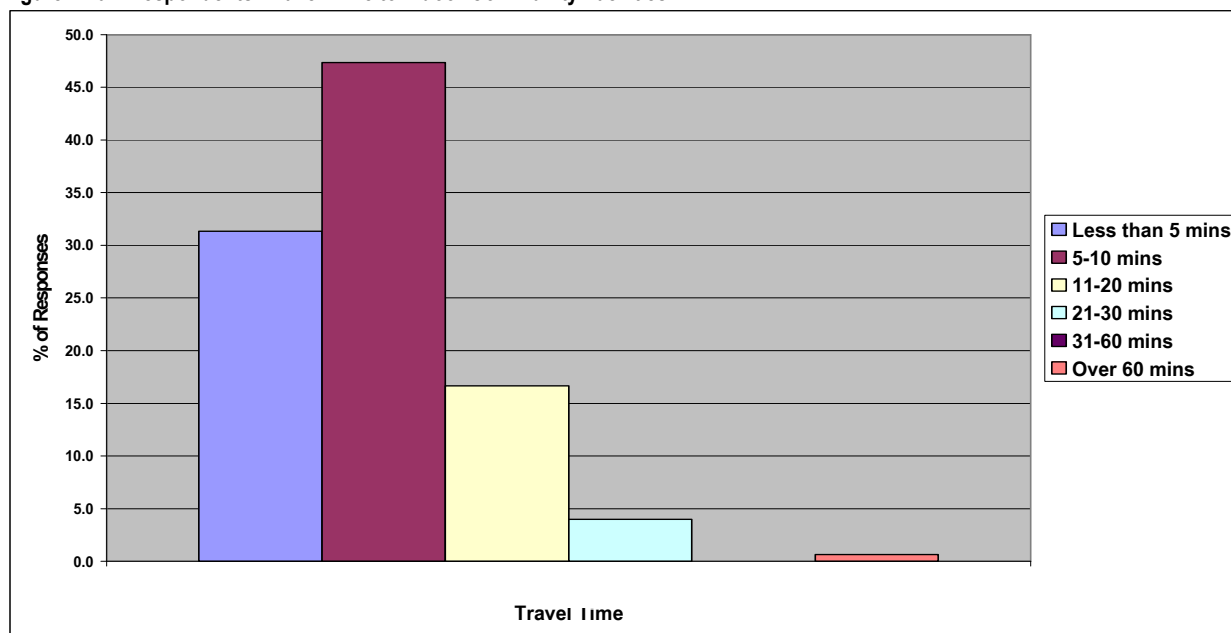


2.114 From the Figure above the most popular means of travel to indoor community facilities is walking, chosen by 68% or 104 of the 153 people who responded to the question. 29% of those who responded identified using a car as a mode of travel to indoor community facilities (44 out of 153 people), and 2% identified travel by bus.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

2.115 Figure 2.20 indicates respondents' travel time to the indoor community facilities they use.

Figure 2.20 – Respondents' Travel Time to Indoor Community Facilities

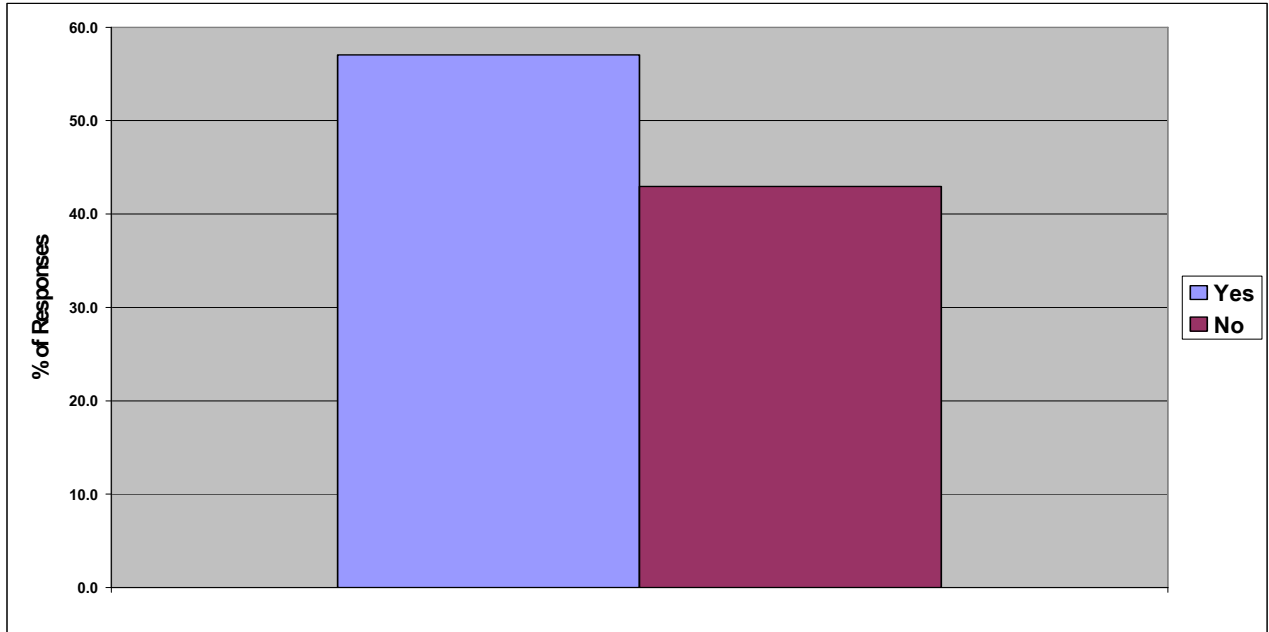


2.116 47% of respondents (71 people of the 150 who responded) travel between 5-10 minutes to access indoor community facilities, 31% of respondents (47 people) travel less than 5 minutes, 17% of respondents (25 people) identified travelling between 11-20 minutes and 4% travel between 21-30 minutes. The total number of responses per each travel time is used to calculate the average travel time to indoor community facilities in West Dorset and equates to an average travel time of 8.21 minutes.

2.117 Respondents were asked to comment on their perception of whether there were enough indoor community facilities in their local area. Figure 2.21 indicates the response from local people.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

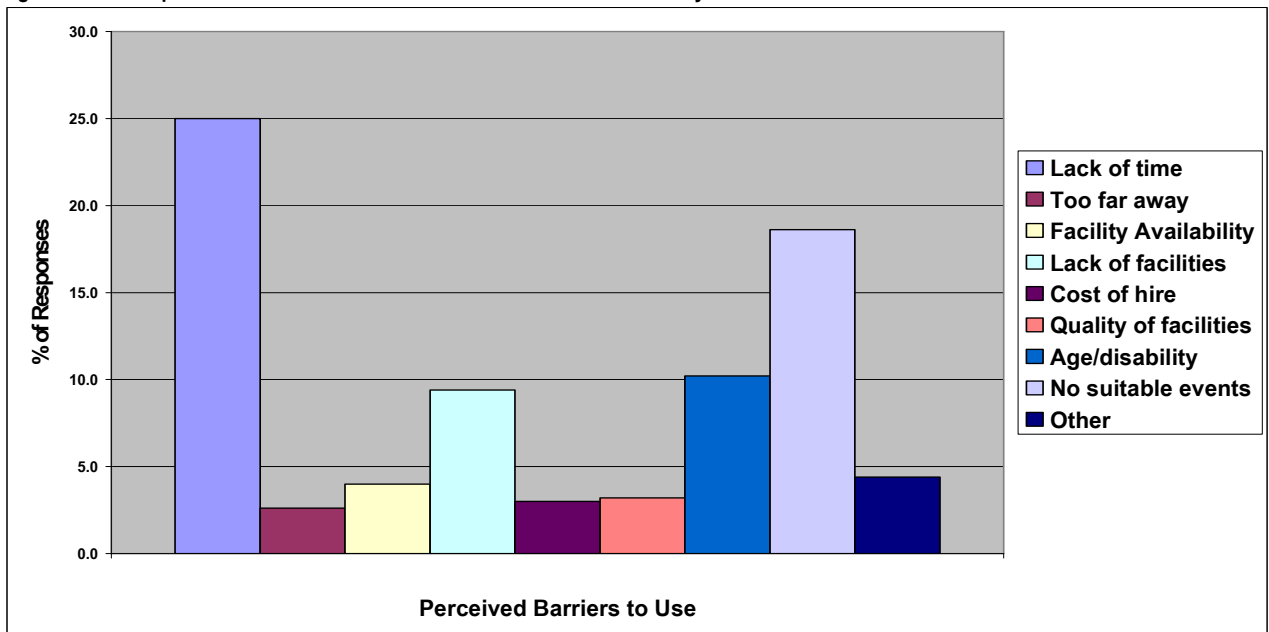
Figure 2.21 – Respondents' View Regarding Sufficient Indoor Community Facilities in Their Local Area



2.118 From the above figure the perception of local people as indicated through the door to door survey is that local people believe they have sufficient indoor community facilities within their local area (57% of respondents, 275 people out of 482 who answered the question).

2.119 The key barriers to use identified by local people are indicated in Figure 2.22.

Figure 2.22 – Respondents' Perceived Barriers to Use of Indoor Community Facilities



2.120 From Figure 2.22 above, the key barrier to use identified by local people is “Lack of Time”: 25% of respondents gave this as the key reason (125 responses out of 402 respondents). 19 % stated that the lack of suitable events was the main barrier to use (93 people), 9% identified the key barrier as being a lack of facilities (47 people), and 3% believed the facilities to be too far away (13 people). Cost of hire (3%) and quality of facilities (3%) were other barriers mentioned.

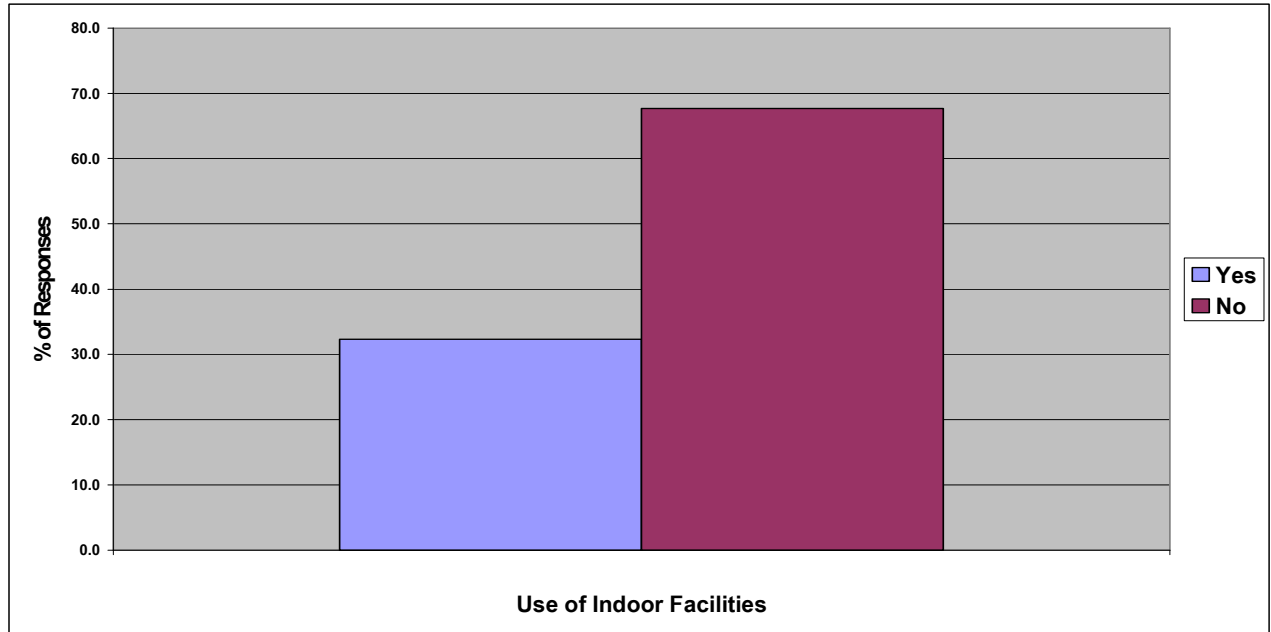


## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

### Indoor Sports Facilities

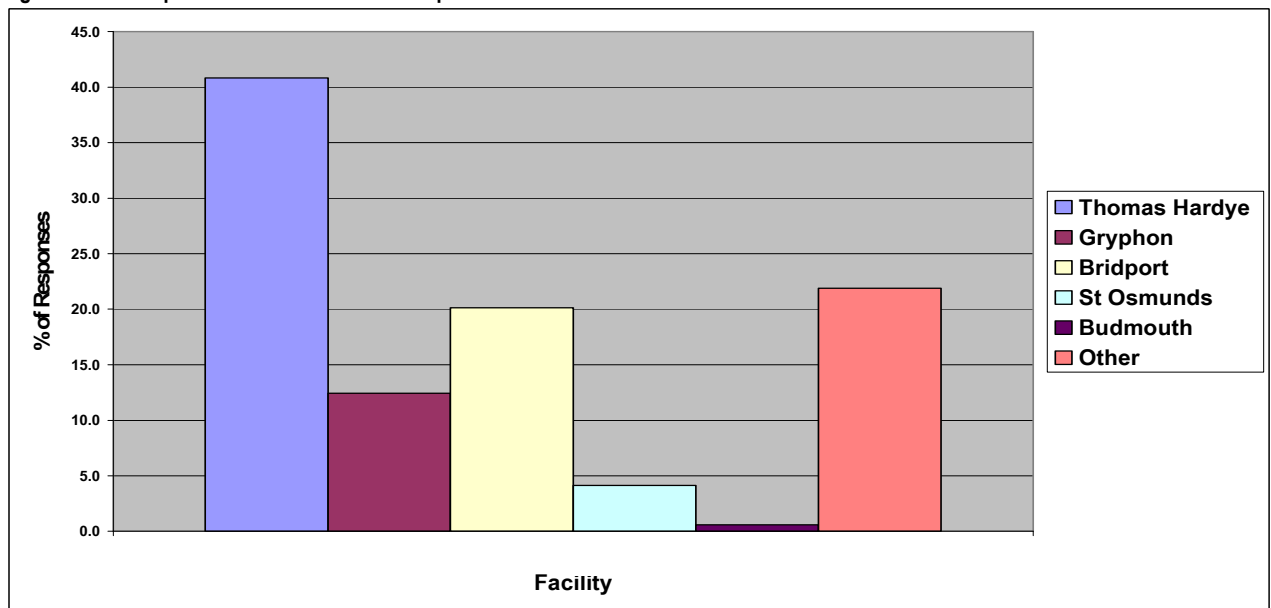
2.121 Local residents were asked if they use indoor leisure facilities. From the respondents (498 people answered the question) 32% (161 people) identified using indoor sports facilities. 68% (337 people) do not use the facilities.

Figure 2.23 – Respondents' Use of Indoor Sports Facilities



2.122 Respondents who identified using indoor facilities were asked which facilities they use most regularly. Figure 2.24 identifies the response to facilities used.

Figure 2.24 – Respondents' Identified Indoor Sports Facilities Used



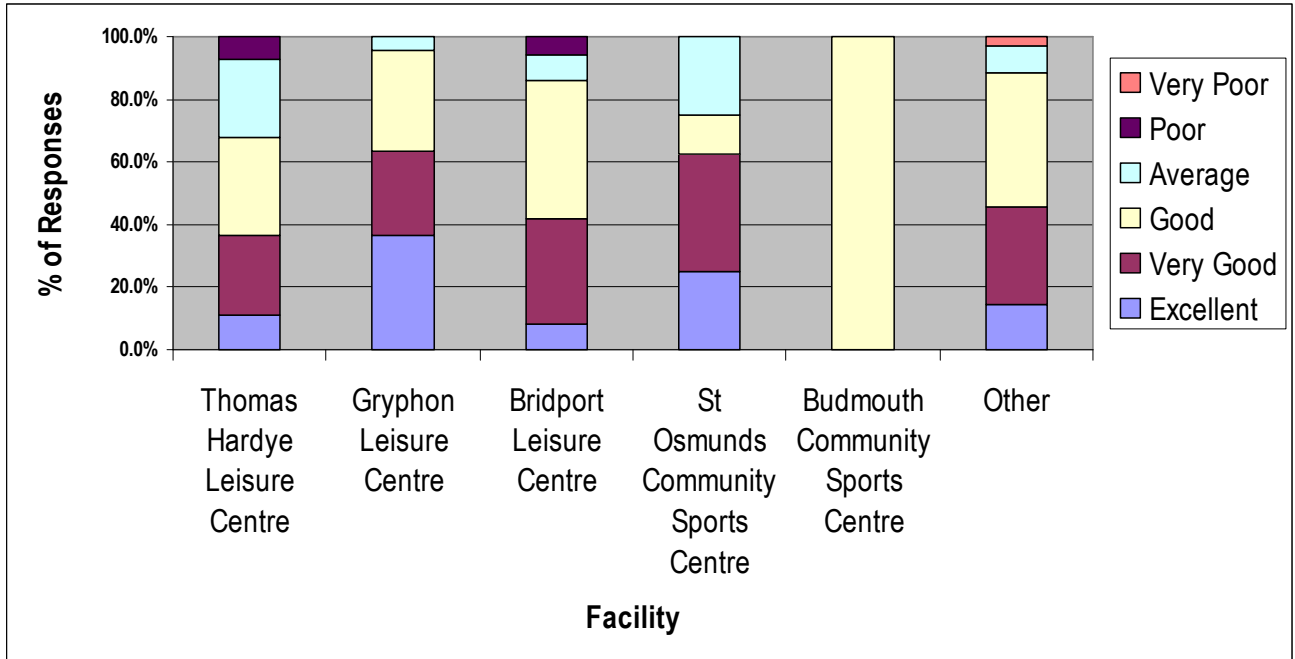
2.123 The Thomas Hardye Leisure Centre was identified as the facility most used by respondents (41% or 69 people out of 169 who identified using facilities) followed by Bridport Leisure Centre (20%) and the Gryphon Leisure Centre (12%).

2.124 Other facilities that were stated as being used include Weymouth Pool, Axminster Pool (Flamingo) and Weymouth Sports Club (Redlands) all of which are outside the District.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

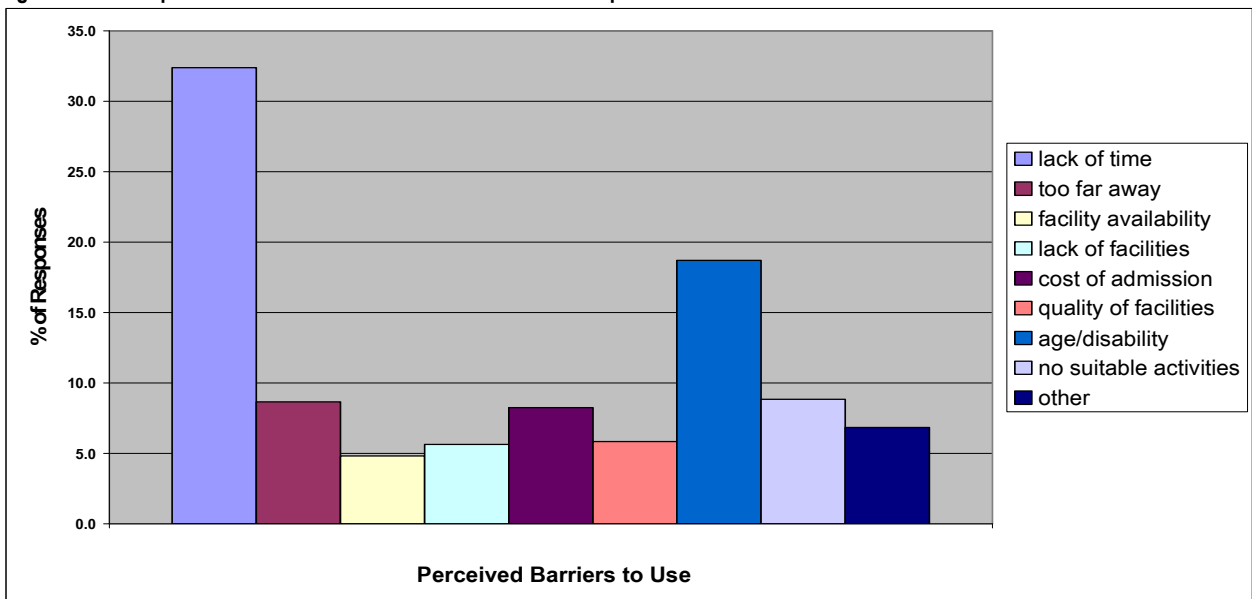
2.125 Local residents were asked their opinion regarding the quality of the facilities provided, and the results are indicated on the figure below. Of the 5 main leisure centres, Thomas Hardy was rated as 'good' or above by 67.7%, the Gryphon by 95.5%, Bridport by 86%, and St Osmunds by 75%. Only 1 person from the door to door survey identified using Budmouth and rated it as good.

Figure 2.25 – Respondents' Quality Rating of Leisure Centres in West Dorset



2.126 The most common reasons cited for not using leisure centres were lack of time (32.4%) followed by age/disability (18.7%), facilities too far away (8.7%), cost (8.2%) and quality of provision (5.8%).

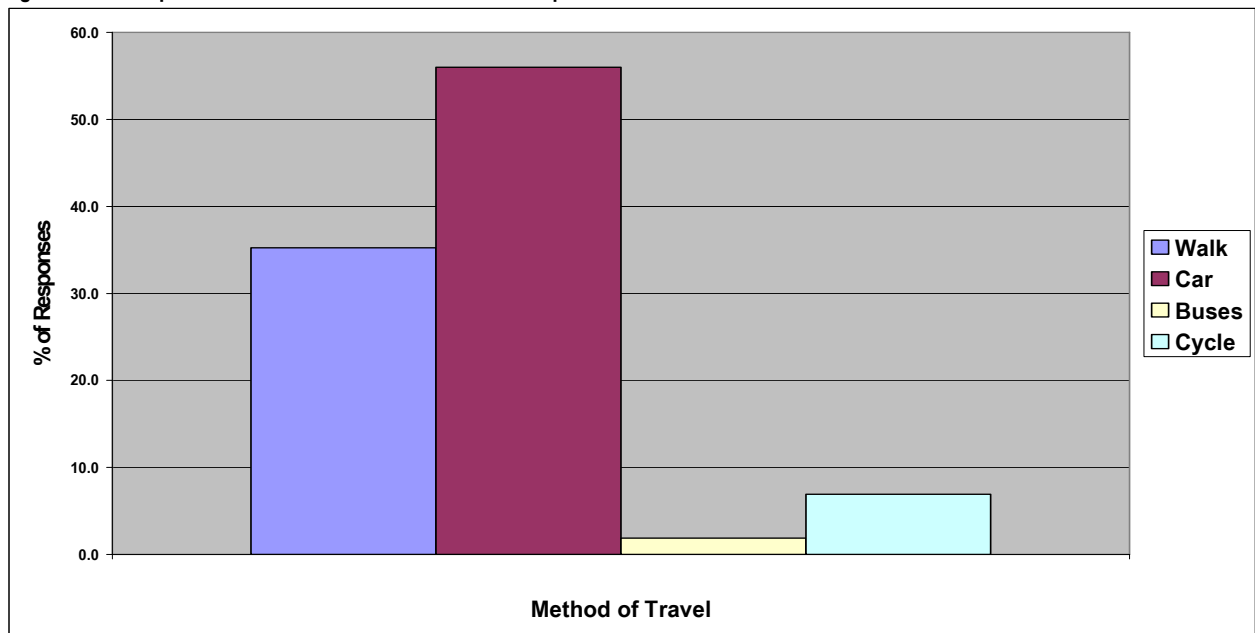
Figure 2.26 – Respondents' Perceived Barriers to Use of Indoor Sports Facilities



2.127 The residents state that average travel time to indoor leisure centres is 11.10 minutes. Using an average walking time of 3 mph or drive time of 20 mph, this equates to 0.56 miles if walking or 3.70 miles travelling by car. Figure 2.25 below illustrates that 56% of those who use indoor leisure centres travel by car, 35.2% walk to leisure centres, 6.9% cycle and 1.9% take the bus.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

Figure 2.27 - Respondents Main Mode of Travel to Indoor Sports Facilities



- 2.128 The door to door survey asked people if they would like a mobile fitness centre that could travel the District. The majority, 63% (312 people), do not want a mobile fitness centre, compared to 37% who would like a mobile centre.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

### Accessibility to Facilities

2.129 Local residents were asked to identify how long it took for them to travel to facilities. Figure 2.30 below identifies the average travel time to the different types of provision. (Times are shown in decimal form rather than as minutes and seconds).

Figure 2.28 - Average Travel Time and Distance Travelled

Typology	Description used in door to door survey	Average Acceptable travel time	Equivalent distance walking At 3mph (Miles)	Equivalent distance by car At 20mph (Miles)
Parks and Gardens	Parks and Gardens	7.42 minutes	0.37	2.47
Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace	Wild areas	11.81 minutes	0.59	3.94
	Local Nature Reserves	14.81 minutes	0.74	4.94
Amenity Open Space	Open space near your home	4.58 minutes	0.23	1.53
Provision for Children and Young People	Play Areas	6.58 minutes	0.33	2.19
	Skate Parks	12.67 minutes	0.63	4.22
Outdoor Sport	School Playfield	7.48 minutes	0.37	2.49
	Sports Pitches	8.34 minutes	0.42	2.78
Allotments	Allotments	13.17 minutes	0.66	4.39
Indoor Sport	Leisure Centre	11.10 minutes	0.56	3.70
Indoor Community Facility	Community Centre	8.21 minutes	0.41	2.74

### WDDC Staff Consultation

2.130 As a further part of the consultation work, the residents' survey was distributed to those staff known to live within the District. This was attached to employees wage slips. 67 staff members responded, 17 were male (25%) and 49 female (73%), 1 person did not respond to this question. All respondents classified themselves as white British.

### Indoor Community Facilities

- 28 respondents (42%) said that they use indoor community facilities.
- 7 of these 28 respondents (25%) rate the overall quality of the indoor community facilities as average. 14 (50%) rate the quality as good while 3 respondents (11%) rate quality as excellent.
- Using the car is the most popular method of transport to indoor community facilities (54%). Walking (40%) was the second most popular method of transport.
- 66% of respondents think there are enough indoor community facilities where they live. 22% believe there are not enough facilities. 8 people did not respond to this question.
- Reasons given for preventing the use of indoor community facilities were as follows: no suitable events (17 responses), lack of time (14 responses), cost of hire (8 responses), quality of facilities (8 responses) and lack of facilities (6 responses)

### Indoor Sport and Leisure Facilities

- 49 respondents (73%) use indoor sport and leisure facilities.
- The car is the most popular method of transport (57%), while 23% walk and 7% cycle to these facilities.
- Lack of time (21 respondents) is the most common reason for not using indoor leisure facilities. Other reasons include facility availability (8 respondents), cost of hire (7 respondents), quality of facilities (6 respondents) and too far away (6 respondents).
- 31 respondents (46%) to the survey said they would like to see more mobile sport and play facilities visit their local area.

## SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS

### Open Space

- 55 respondents (82%) said they visit or use open spaces in West Dorset.
- 78% visit open space to go for a walk, 52% to relax, 34% to be close to nature, 30% to take family, 27% to walk the dog, 24% to participate in sport and 22% to attend events.
- Again lack of time (40%) is the most common reason that prevents people from visiting open spaces in their area. Other reasons given are dog fouling (22%), too far away (9%) and don't feel safe (9%).
- 49 respondents (73%) feel there is enough publicly accessible open space, 24% thought there was not enough. 2 people did not respond to the question.

### Online Residents' Survey

2.131 As a further part of the consultation work, the residents' survey was made available online via a link to the Council's website. 17 residents responded, 7 were male (41%) and 9 female (53%), 1 person did not respond to this question. 88% identified themselves as white British, 6% other white background and 6% other ethnic group.

### Indoor Community Facilities

- 14 of the 17 respondents (82%) said that they use indoor community facilities.
- 3 people (18%) rate the quality of facilities as excellent, 10 people (59%) rate the quality of facilities as good, 3 rate them as average (18%) and 1 as poor (6%).
- 11 respondents said they walk to indoor community facilities when using them. A further 7 said they use the car, 1 uses the bus and 1 respondent cycles (several respondents stated they used more than one method of transport).
- 71% believe that there are sufficient indoor community facilities where they live.
- 24% blame facility availability as a reason for not using indoor community facilities, 18% say quality of facilities prevents them, 12% say lack of facilities and 12% cost of hire.

### Indoor Sport and Leisure Facilities

- 12 of the 17 respondents (71%) said they use indoor sport and leisure facilities.
- 2 respondents stated it takes 5-10 minutes to travel to the leisure centre they use the most, 6 respondents said it takes between 11-20 minutes, 2 respondents travel 21-30 minutes.
- Travelling by car (65%) is the most common method of transport to use.
- Reasons given for preventing people using indoor sport and leisure facilities are; cost of hire (29%), too far away (24%), lack of time (18%), age/disability (18%), quality of facilities (12%) and facility availability (12%).
- 41% said that they would like to see more mobile sport and play facilities visit their local area.

### Open Space

- 13 of the 17 (77%) respondents visit or use open spaces.
- 14 respondents stated they use open space to go for a walk, 11 to relax, 11 to be close to nature. Other reasons included to take family (7), to walk the dog (5) and to participate in sport (6)
- There is not one specific reason that prevents people from visiting open spaces. Responses were as follows; lack of time (3 respondents), lack of facilities (3 respondents), dog fouling (3 respondents), don't feel safe (3 respondents) and quality of facilities (3 respondents).
- 11 respondents (65%) think that there is enough publicly accessible open space in their area.

### Elected Members' Survey

2.132 All 48 elected members of West Dorset Council were consulted via a questionnaire survey distributed through the Council's internal mail system. 13 councillors responded to the survey – a response rate of 27%. The following points summarise the responses;

- 5 of the 13 respondents highlight lack of facilities in parks and gardens as a major issue
- 4 of the 13 respondents believe under investment in parks and gardens to be a major issue

## **SECTION II - IDENTIFYING LOCAL NEEDS**

- The quality of parks and gardens are rated by 5 of 13 councillors as above average. A further 3 respondents rate the quality as average.
- Under investment in natural and semi natural greenspaces is the main issue raised by 3 councillors.
- 4 of the 13 respondents rate the quality of natural and semi natural green spaces as above average. 3 councillors rate the quality as average.
- For outdoor sport sites main issues raised are under investment (3) and lack of facilities (4).
- Responses to the question on the quality of amenity open space are wide ranging: excellent (2), good (3), average (3) and poor (3)
- 5 of the 13 respondents highlight lack of outdoor play facilities as an issue
- 8 of the 13 respondents rate play provision quality as average, 3 rate quality as good
- 5 of the 13 respondents highlight lack of facilities at allotments as a main issue
- 2 respondents rate allotments as excellent, 4 rate good and 2 rate average
- 6 councillors rate quality of cemeteries as good, 3 rate them as excellent and 2 rate them as average
- Under investment in existing indoor community facilities is the main issue highlighted by respondents (3).
- 3 of 13 rate quality of indoor community facilities as average, 2 rate quality as poor, 1 very poor and 1 excellent.
- A village hall would be the priority for new indoor facilities for 4 of the 13 respondents. Other priorities are a community centre (3), youth club (3) and use of the school hall (2)
- 4 of the 13 respondents see providing additional new facilities as a priority for the provision of indoor sports. Other responses are to engage young people through sports development (2), improving the quality of existing facilities (1), capital investment for improvement and ongoing maintenance (1) and a new swimming pool in the Weymouth / Chickereil area.