



MID AND EAST ANTRIM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Position Paper 6

Open Space and Recreation

July 2015

Open Space and Recreation within Mid and East Antrim Borough Council.

- Purpose:**
- To inform members of the regional planning policy and broader government context in relation to open space, recreation and leisure provision;
 - To provide an overview of the existing provision of open space, recreational and leisure resources within Mid & East Antrim;
 - To consider the needs of the Council over the Plan period

Content: The paper provides information on:

- (i) the nature and benefits of open space
- (ii) the regional planning policy context for open space
- (iii) government strategies relating to open space and recreation
- (iv) the role of the local development plan in the protection and provision of open space
- (v) an overview of existing area plans
- (vi) an overview of the open space and recreational assets within Mid and East Antrim
- (vii) an analysis of outdoor space and children's play provision within Mid & East Antrim
- (viii) a consideration of other outdoor and indoor open space and leisure facilities

Recommendation: That the Committee notes the findings and consider how this preparatory study shall be used to inform subsequent policies and proposals in the Local Development Plan.

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SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

1.1 This paper refers to the diverse nature of open space and outdoor recreation and to the benefits it provides for people and communities. It also sets out the regional planning policy context and broader assessment objectives which underpin the policies and proposals brought forward in Local Development Plans (LDP's) for the provision and protection of open spaces of public value.

1.2 This paper will also provide an overview as to the open space and recreation provision and facilities across Mid & East Antrim Borough Council area, including a consideration of indoor leisure facilities. Other less formal, passive complementary areas of open space in Mid & East Antrim such as woodlands, historic parks, gardens and demesnes are also considered in so far as they also contribute to the overall provision of areas of open space, recreation and leisure in the Borough.

1.3 As highlighted in the previous preparatory papers, the new Borough comprises all of the previous districts of Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne, except for a small area at Greenisland, which was within Carrickfergus District. Unfortunately it has not been possible to obtain and disaggregate reliable statistics for the area subject to the boundary change, therefore the data used includes this small area

Definition and Explanation of Open Space

1.4 Open spaces, sport and recreational facilities underpin people's quality of life. Planning Policy Statement 8 states that, *"open space is taken to mean all open space of public value, including not just land, but also inland bodies of water such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs which offer important opportunities for sport and outdoor recreation and can also act as a visual amenity"*. It also illustrates the broad range of open spaces that are of public value:

- parks and gardens – including urban parks, country parks, forest parks and formal gardens;
- outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned) – including tennis courts, bowling greens, sport pitches, golf courses, athletic tracks, school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas;
- amenity green space (most commonly, but not exclusively in housing areas) – including informal recreation spaces, communal green spaces in and around housing, and village greens;
- provision for children and teenagers – including play areas, kickabout areas, skateboard parks and outdoor basketball hoops;
- green corridors – including river and canal banks, amenity footpaths and cycleways;
- natural and semi-natural urban green spaces – including woodlands, urban forestry, grasslands (e.g. meadows), wetlands, open and running water, and rock areas (e.g. cliffs);
- allotments and community gardens;
- cemeteries and churchyards; and
- civic spaces, including civic and market squares and other hard surface areas designed for pedestrians.



Green Infrastructure

1.5 Open space can also be referred to as green infrastructure. The European Commission defines green infrastructure as: *“the use of ecosystems, green spaces and water in strategic land use planning to deliver environmental and quality of life benefits. It includes parks, open spaces, playing fields, woodlands, wetlands, road verges, allotments and private gardens. Green infrastructure can contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, natural disaster risk mitigation, protection against flooding and erosion as well as biodiversity conservation”* (The Scottish Government, Green Infrastructure: Design and Placemaking). Green infrastructure incorporates green, blue and yellow space:

- **green space** - parks, natural spaces, river banks, village greens etc;
- **blue space** - ponds, rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands etc; and
- **yellow space** – beaches

Green Networks

1.6 The model shown in Figure 1.1 demonstrates how the value of individual open space areas can be greatly enhanced through multiple use and effective linkage with other open spaces in an integrated green network.

- Green Networks are connected areas of green infrastructure that together form an integrated and multi-functional network.
- The linking together of natural, semi-natural and man-made open spaces, including leisure and recreational facilities to create an interconnected network provides opportunities for physical activity, increases accessibility within settlements and to the surrounding countryside while enhancing habitats and the quality of the external environment.
- Green networks provide attractive settings for daily life, enhance the distinctive local identities for our settlements and can help guide future development proposals.
- They can also enhance the perception of areas and increase their attractiveness for developers, house buyers and businesses, offering easy access to parks, playgrounds and the countryside.
- Green networks can strengthen the benefits of green infrastructure by further improving health and well-being, enhancing bio-diversity, helping to mitigate against and adapt to climate change, providing business and educational opportunities, encouraging tourism and promoting sustainable use of scarce land resources.

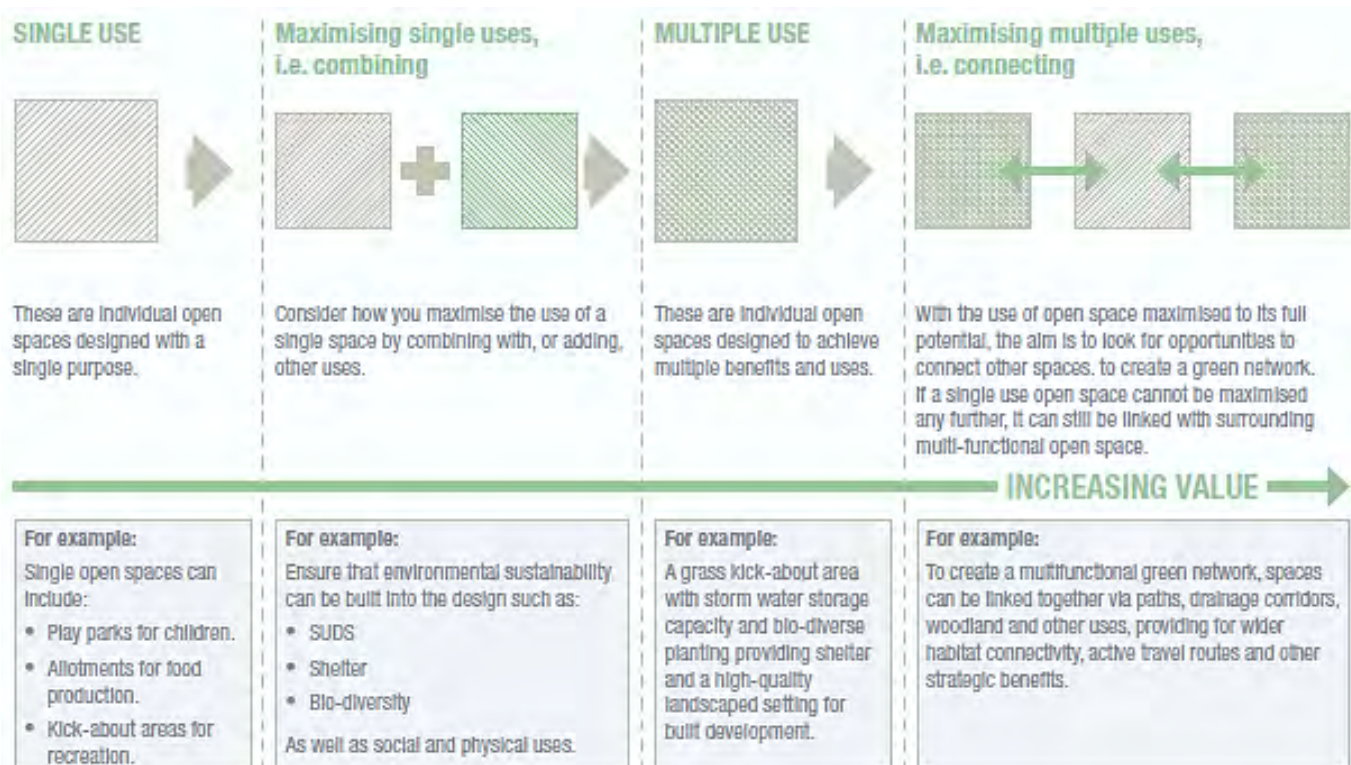


Fig 1.1 – Green Networks - Source: Clackmannanshire Council, Supplementary Guidance 6 - Green Infrastructure – November 2013

Definition and Explanation of Sport

1.7 A widely accepted definition of sport is *'all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.'* This paper focuses mainly on outdoor recreation, but it also briefly considers provision of indoor recreation in Mid & East Antrim.

Importance of open space, sport and outdoor recreation

1.8 The recent trend towards unhealthy lifestyles including lack of exercise and overeating is increasing levels of obesity, impacting on other health issues such as acute illnesses and life expectancy. Safe and enjoyable children's play spaces are increasingly important in encouraging a more active lifestyle from an early age. The provision of good quality outdoor facilities for young people and the sense that they are entitled to their own space has been demonstrated to help reduce anti-social behaviour and the costs of crime. Access to open space can improve the quality of life and independence of older people, and improve mental health for all.

According to Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (Fitter Future for All, 2012-2022):

- Physical activity through the presence of green space not only reduces the risk of heart disease (by up to 50%), but also has a positive impact on stress, obesity and a general sense of wellbeing. It also cuts the risk of premature death (by 20 – 30%);
- Green spaces link directly to levels of physical activity. Children with more green space are less likely to be over-weight. Children in greener neighbourhoods have a lower Body Mass Index.

Multi-Benefits of Open Space/Green Infrastructure

1.9 Open space, sport and outdoor recreation facilities provide many cultural, health, social, economic and environmental benefits. Open space can enhance the character of residential areas, civic buildings, conservation areas and archaeological sites. It can also help to attract business and tourism and thereby contribute to the process of urban regeneration. The use being made of the countryside for a range of sporting and outdoor recreational activities, particularly when associated with farm diversification, can contribute to the process of rural regeneration and help promote natural resource tourism.



Fig 1.2: Multi Benefits of Outdoor Recreation- Source: Our Great Outdoors, The Outdoor Recreation Action Plan for Northern Ireland, March 2014

Table 1.1 Functions and Benefits of Green Infrastructure – Source West of England Strategic Green Infrastructure Framework – May 2011

Cross-cutting Theme	Green Infrastructure (GI) Functions and Benefits
Promoting economic growth, employment and skills improvement	<p>Open spaces, trees, wildlife areas, river corridors, and even flood mitigation schemes can all increase the visual amenity of an area. This can encourage inward investment by creating the attractive environments desired by businesses for their employees and clients.</p> <p>A green, healthy environment is essential to creating successful places, in which people want to live and work. Some of the most prestigious and profitable residential, office and industrial spaces include high quality green spaces.</p> <p>A high quality and attractive built environment, which utilises GI, can encourage tourism and recreational visits to support local economies.</p> <p>An attractive natural environment can provide a stimulating and inspirational environment, promoting increased productivity and learning.</p>
Supporting resilient ecosystems and biodiversity	<p>Maintaining a GI network with corridors suitable for wildlife movement supports genetic exchange and allows species to adapt to the consequences of climate change and development through migration.</p>
Mitigating and adapting the natural and built environment to climate change	<p>Many GI assets, including open space, trees and water, counteract the urban heat island effect by providing natural air conditioning, shading and absorption of greenhouse gases.</p> <p>Green infrastructure, such as cycle routes, public rights of way, and tree-lined routes, can support and encourage green travel, contributing to a reduction of CO2 emissions from transport.</p> <p>Green infrastructure is an important source of biomass, which can be used to produce renewable heat and energy. Wood fuel, for example, is an important source of renewable energy.</p>
Recognising and enhancing a legible network of physical green spaces and corridors	<p>Green infrastructure corridors, such as rivers, cycle routes, public rights of way and linear wildlife sites, can link up green spaces, creating corridors for the movement of wildlife and people.</p> <p>Green travel routes provide a real, cheaper alternative to the private car, facilitating sustainable travel, and maximising opportunities to access green infrastructure within and outside of urban areas.</p> <p>The provision of green infrastructure, such as trees and shrubs, can create pleasant environments in areas dominated by transport and other grey infrastructure (e.g. rail, road, utilities). This can promote walking, cycling, and the movement of wildlife within and through the built environment.</p>
Reducing and managing flood risk	<p>Green spaces (such as a suitably located park and sports field), ponds and other bodies of water can be used as temporary floodwater storage when required, thus reducing strategic flood risk.</p> <p>Trees, soft surfacing and sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) reduce and control run-off, increase permeability and provide water storage capacity.</p>
Improving mental and physical health, and the cohesion of local communities	<p>Parks, football pitches, playgrounds and green travel routes can provide opportunities for exercise and active lifestyles. This can help to address health issues such as obesity, heart disease and mental illness. A number of outdoor gyms are located throughout Mid & East Antrim which encourage outdoors exercise and social interaction.</p> <p>Parks, allotments and river corridors can provide a focal point for social interaction. This encourages social cohesion and can help to reduce social exclusion and inequalities.</p> <p>Local air quality can be improved by the presence of forests, woodlands and street trees, with obvious health benefits.</p> <p>Easy access to green infrastructure, reduces levels of depression, aggression and violent behaviour.</p>
Increasing sustainable food production	<p>Protecting spaces capable of growing urban food (e.g. community orchards, market gardens, allotments and school grounds) can reduce food miles and encourage people to eat more healthily.</p> <p>Allotments and community orchards can foster community pride, improve social cohesion, and provide a focus for the community</p>
Maintaining and enhancing cultural heritage, landscapes and natural resources	<p>Retaining well-planned open spaces, street trees, and river corridors can contribute to place making, providing an attractive and locally distinctive environment.</p>

Sport and Recreation in Northern Ireland

1.10 District Councils are obliged to make provision for recreational facilities under the Recreation and Youth Service Order 1986. Other bodies who contribute to the provision of such facilities include Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL), the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) and the Education and Library Boards.

1.11 The report from the DCAL 2013/14 Continuous Household Survey (CHS) provides data in relation to sport participation by both the adult & young people population in Northern Ireland. http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/quick-links/research_and_statistics-3/statistical_publication.htm
This report illustrates a number of key findings:

- Over half the adult population (54%) had participated in sport within the last year;
- Walking for recreation was the most frequently cited *physical activity* with half of adults (48%) having participated at least once within the last year, while the most frequently cited *sport* was swimming or diving (21%) – see below;



Fig 1.3 – Top ten sports/physical activities participated in the last year - Source DARD Continuous Household Survey 2013/14

- Adults living in the most deprived areas in Northern Ireland were less likely than adults living in the least deprived areas to have participated in sport within the last year, or the last 4 weeks;
- Adults living in urban areas were more likely to have participated in sport within the last year (56%) than adults living in rural areas (49%);
- Adults who have a disability were less likely to have participated in sport within the last year, than those who do not have a disability (62%);
- In 2013, almost all young people in Northern Ireland (99%) had participated in sport and physical activity in the last 12 months;



- Similarly, almost all young people had participated in sport and physical activity in the last 7 days (96%);
- There were no differences in the proportions of children who are entitled to free school meals and those who are not, who participated in sport and physical activity in the last 12 months and the last 7 days.

Sport and Recreation in Mid & East Antrim

1.12 DCAL have also prepared a report for the new local government districts which is based upon a combination of the continuous household survey results for 2011/12, 2012/13 and 2013/14.

http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/index/quick-links/research_and_statistics-3/research_publications/cal-engagement-council-areas-2015.htm. This report illustrates the differences in sport participation rates amongst adults within the previous year. Mid & East Antrim is ranked fourth when compared to sport participation across the new local government districts and is also higher than the Northern Ireland average – see Figure 1.4 below.

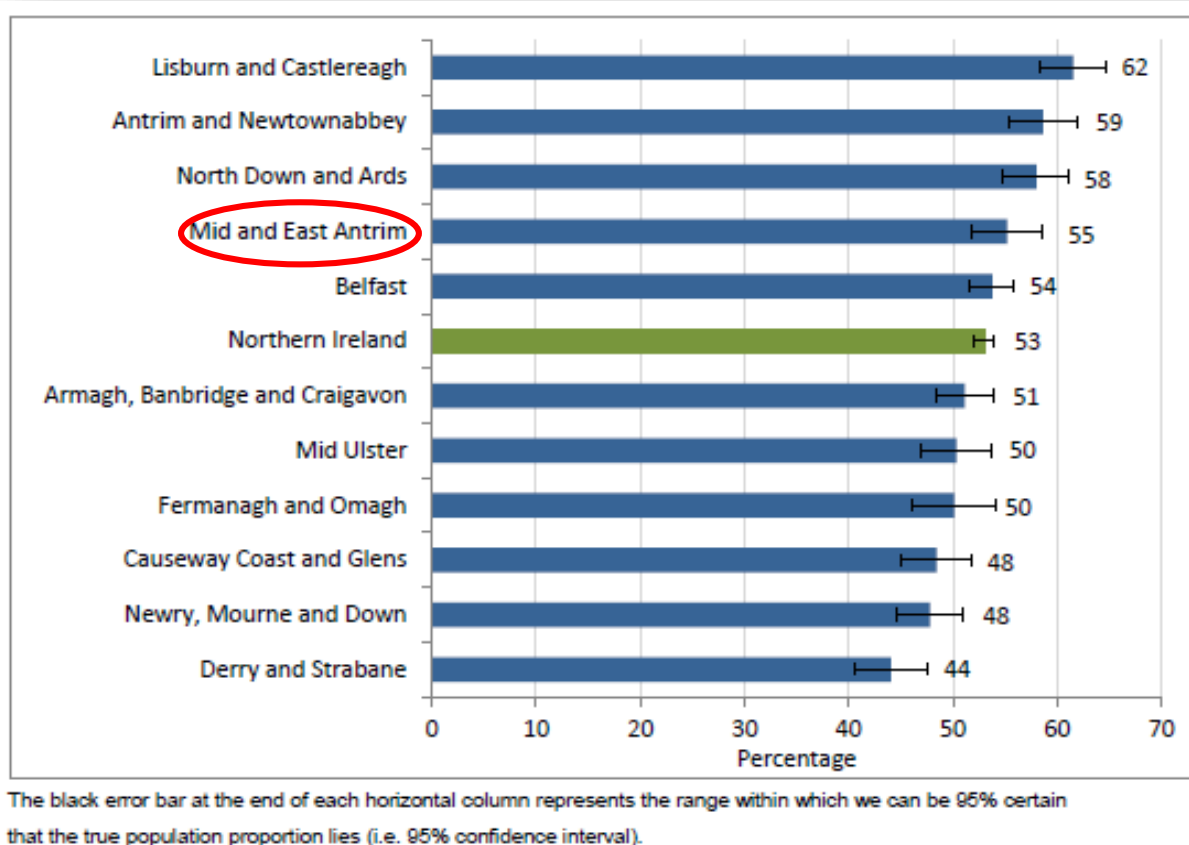


Fig 1.4 Sport participation within the previous year by Council area - Source - Engagement in Culture, Arts and Leisure by adults in Northern Ireland's new council areas – Findings from combined Continuous Household Surveys 2011 – 2014 May 2015

SECTION 2 - REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Regional Development Strategy 2035: Building a Better Future

2.1 The links between a quality environment and human health and well-being is one of the dominant themes of the RDS. Adequate provision of open space throughout the settlement hierarchy and in the countryside is promoted as a key part of the delivery mechanism, and accordingly this features in a number of the required planning guidelines.

2.2 Thus, Regional Guideline 7 (RG7) in supporting urban and rural renaissance places importance in promoting recreational space within cities, towns and neighbourhoods. It states that new developments or plans should make provision for adequate green and blue infrastructure. It highlights the significance of regeneration and the design and management of the public realm.



2.3 The RDS also supports the conservation, protection and enhancement of our built heritage and natural environment (RG11). Through the identification, protection and management of ecological networks, biodiversity can be conserved and enhanced. These networks are also promoted for their amenity and recreational value. For example by including walking and cycling routes linked to heritage and other areas of recreational interest, can encourage people to get active, and promote the health and well-being of those living in urban areas.

2.4 Finally, the RDS recognises the importance of open green spaces in mitigating and adapting to climate change (RG9), and in promoting a more sustainable approach to drainage and flood risk management (RG12).

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS AND ASSOCIATED GUIDANCE

A Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (draft SPPS), Planning Policy Statement 8 (PPS8): Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation; Planning Policy Statement 7 (PPS7) Quality Residential Environments.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS)

2.5 The Draft SPPS contains a number of core principles, underpinning the new two tier planning system, one of which is “*improving health and well-being*”. It highlights this is also a key priority of the Northern Ireland Executive which is reflected through the Programme for Government and the RDS. It states that the land use planning system can play an active role in improving the lives of people and communities by:

- Safeguarding and facilitating open space, sport and outdoor recreation
- Supporting quality design
- Providing for safe and secure environments
- Encouraging environmentally sustainable design
- Facilitating the protection and provision of green and blue infrastructure
- Supporting provision of jobs, and services
- Supporting broader government policy aimed at addressing for example childhood obesity, and health and well-being impacts arising through noise and air pollution.

2.6 It refers to the multiple benefits of green spaces, and how the protection of existing and provision of new open space within or close to settlements can play a vital role in promoting healthy living through facilitating play, sporting activities, passive activity and interaction with others.

2.7 Regional policy objectives in regards to open space, sport and outdoor recreation are to:

- safeguard existing open space and sites identified for future such provision;
- ensure that areas of open space are provided as an integral part of new residential development and that appropriate arrangements are made for their management and maintenance in perpetuity;
- facilitate appropriate outdoor recreational activities in the countryside;
- ensure that new open space areas and sporting facilities are convenient and accessible for all sections of society, particularly children, the elderly and those with disabilities;
- achieve high standards of siting, design and landscaping for all new open space areas and sporting facilities; and
- ensure that the provision of new open space areas and sporting facilities is in keeping with the principles of environmental conservation and helps sustain and enhance biodiversity.

The Role of Local Development Plans

2.8 The draft SPPS states that the Local Development Plan should:

1. Make adequate provision for green and blue infrastructure, informed by assessment of existing open space provision and future needs and by liaising with other interested bodies;
2. Undertake a survey of existing open spaces, both public and private, identifying the different needs they serve;
3. Assess existing provision against the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) recommended minimum standard of 2.4 hectares of "outdoor playing space) per 1000 population (commonly referred to as the 6 acre standard);
4. Take account of the provision and role of other forms of open space and the availability of indoor sports facilities;
5. Identify existing open space provision (and any proposals for future development of these areas);
6. Apply a general policy presumption against the loss of open space to competing land uses;
7. Identify and designate areas of open space which perform a strategic function such as community greenways and landscape wedges in urban areas.

2.9 It also states that zonings for future needs should take into account the following:

- accessibility to and from existing and proposed housing areas;
- the potential for any detrimental impact on biodiversity or on sensitive environmental areas and features;
- the contribution that open space can make to the quality of the environment and community life; and
- the importance of protecting linear open spaces such as pedestrian and cycle routes, community greenways, former railway lines and river and canal corridors many of which are valuable in linking larger areas of open space.

2.10 The draft SPPS also states that the NI countryside lends itself to accommodating a wide range of recreational activities, and that local development plans should contain policy for the consideration of development proposals for outdoor recreation in the countryside, and in doing so councils should have regard to a range of issues including:

- visual and residential amenity;
- public safety, including road safety;
- any impact on nature conservation, landscape character, archaeology or built heritage; and
- accessibility

2.11 In relation to intensive sports facilities the draft SPPS states that such facilities should normally be located within settlements in order to maximise the use of existing infrastructure.

Planning Policy Statement 8

2.12 [PPS8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation](#) which embodies the Government's commitment to sustainable development, to the promotion of a more active and healthy lifestyle and to the conservation of biodiversity. This PPS sets out the Department's planning policies for the protection of open space, the provision of new areas of open space in association with residential development and the use of land for sport and outdoor recreation. Since the publication of PPS8, it has been a requirement under Policy OS2 to provide 10% public open space within new residential developments of 1 hectare or 25+ units.

Planning Policy Statement 7

2.13 [Planning Policy Statement 7: Quality Residential Environments](#), aims to encourage good design and quality built environments. It emphasises the importance of open space provision in new developments, acknowledging its contribution to people's health, wellbeing and quality of life.

Planning Policy Statement 21

2.14 [Planning Policy Statement 21: Sustainable Development in the Countryside](#) sets out planning policies for development in the countryside. It states that planning permission will be granted for outdoor sport and recreational uses in accordance with PPS8.

Revised Planning Policy Statement 15

2.15 Revised [Planning Policy Statement 15: Planning and Flood Risk](#), sets out the policies to minimise and manage flood risk to people, property and the environment. This PPS seeks to prevent development within the flood plain, other than for specified exceptions. One of these allows for the use of the land in the flood plain for sport and outdoor recreation, amenity space or for nature conservation purposes, including ancillary buildings. This however does not include playgrounds for children. The PPS also refers to the importance of open space for flood risk management purposes, including planning for storm exceedance and sustainable drainage.



Guidance Documents - Creating Places & Living Places

2.16 Both PPS7 & PPS8 are complemented by the guidance document [Creating Places](#) which provides more detailed guidelines on securing quality design in new residential development. It highlights the importance of integrating “green” areas into the overall design concept.

2.17 [Living Places](#), “An Urban Stewardship and Design Guide for Northern Ireland” was published in September 2014 and aims to establish the key principles behind good place making. It seeks to inform and inspire all those involved in the process of managing (stewardship) and making (design) urban places, with a view to raising standards across Northern Ireland.

OTHER RELEVANT GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

2.18 There are a number of Departments, agencies and other bodies who are involved in the development of sport and leisure in Northern Ireland. Many of these organisations have strategies which could be considered and taken account of as part of the preparation of the local development plan. These are summarised below:

OFMDFM Play and Leisure Policy Statement for Northern Ireland

2.19 This policy statement was produced by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in 2011 and aims to improve current play and leisure provision for all children and young people between 0 – 18 years. It outlines the Executive’s commitment to children and young people’s play and leisure needs and their right to engage in these activities. This statement highlights that facilities used for play are frequently seen as focal points for communities and that good play provision and appropriately designed spaces for children create a positive environment and contribute to the sense of well-being and security children have with their surroundings.

Sport Matters: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009 – 2019

2.20 This document outlines a broader Government commitment to sport and physical recreation. It identifies 26 high level targets and sets the key strategic priorities for sport and physical recreation over the next ten years and will inform future investment by all stakeholders across the public, private and community/voluntary sectors. These targets reflect the current and anticipated needs of sport and physical recreation as expressed through consultation relating to:

- PARTICIPATION
- PERFORMANCE
- PLACES

It acknowledges that not everyone will wish to achieve in performance sport and that Northern Ireland will encourage the development and use of open spaces for a variety of recreational and outdoor pursuits.

Active Places Research Report and 2014 update

2.21 This report completed by Sport NI identified unmet demand and shortfalls for sports facilities such as sports halls, swimming pools, tennis courts, athletic facilities and pitches in Northern Ireland. It presents opportunities for facility providers to strategically address key issues and unmet facility demands which are identified in their existing and proposed geographical areas. Unlike the 2009 report, the 2014 update presents facility shortfall tables for pitches and sports halls only. It is noted that the facility shortfall tables presented in the 2009 report excluded school sports facilities due to their limited availability for community use.

DARD - The Rural White Paper Action Plan – June 2012

2.22 This action plan aims to identify and address the key challenges facing rural communities. One of the rural visions within this document is for the continuing development of linkages between rural and urban areas so that everyone can enjoy the beauty and uniqueness of rural places and the facilities and services of larger towns and cities. It sets out a number of policy priorities one of which includes: *“to safeguard the beauty and fabric of our rural areas and increase opportunities for all to enjoy the benefits of the countryside”*.

Our Great Outdoors – Outdoor Recreation Action Plan for Northern Ireland – Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure; Department of Enterprise, Trade & Investment and Department of the Environment – March 2014



2.23 This plan highlights the importance of making the outdoors accessible to everyone and the opportunities within rural areas and the urban fringes. It highlights that access to green space has been recognised across the world to be very important for people’s health, especially mental wellbeing. It acknowledges that Northern Ireland has extensive natural resources and wonderful landscapes which have the potential to be fully maximised through our great outdoor activities. The vision for the action plan is, *“a culture of dynamic, sustainable outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland”*.

Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety - Fitter Future for All (2012-2022)

2.24 This framework addresses the need for Preventing and Addressing Overweight and Obesity in Northern Ireland and recognises that there are a number of factors in relation to tackling obesity and improving health outcomes. It highlights the importance of urban design and planning in delivering green infrastructure and play areas to increase physical activity. It also highlights the importance of both facilities for play and recreation & associated programmes to increase physical activity, leading to healthier outcomes.



Our Passion, Our Place – NIEA Strategic Priorities 2012 – 2022

2.25 This document sets out the Northern Ireland Environment Agency’s priorities, two of which are applicable to green infrastructure:

- **Healthy Natural Environment** – ensuring Northern Ireland’s living and working places are green, clean and protected.
- **People & Places** – promoting health and well-being and influencing how we all behave towards the environment.

DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAY STRATEGIES

2.26 **Carrickfergus Borough Play Strategy 2013 – 2016** - This document provides direction and focus in regards to play provision within the Carrickfergus Borough from 2013 – 2016. It includes several objectives, under four strategic themes:

- Places and Spaces for Play;
- Community Cohesion & Inclusion,
- Animation Programmes; and
- Awareness & Outreach.

2.27 **Mid & East Antrim Borough Council** - have agreed that a play park strategy and framework will be developed for the new Borough.

SECTION 3 - LOCAL CONTEXT – EXISTING DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Ballymena Area Plan 1986 - 2001



3.1 The Ballymena Area Plan 1986 – 2001 was adopted in November 1989. In regards to open space, recreation and tourism this plan acknowledged that there was likely to be increased demand for such facilities over the plan period, and it referred to a number of recreational proposals within Ballymena and surrounding villages such as riverside walks. There was one open space zoning within the plan which was located in Ballymena town. This was the area now known as the Ecos Centre, which also extended across to the Seven Towers Leisure Centre. Refer to Figure A.1 within Appendix A.

Larne Area Plan 2010

3.2 The Larne Area Plan 2010 was adopted in 1998. This plan acknowledged that Larne is well served by a range of facilities catering for the needs of different groups including country parks, sports grounds, golf clubs, town parks, playgrounds and picnic areas as well as adequate indoor facilities. It contained four policies/proposals, three of which gave favourable consideration to the provision of (1) recreational pathways, (2) water based facilities and (3) informal/formal open space, where appropriate. The fourth policy/proposal referred to open space zonings, one within Larne town and the other within Ballycarry.



3.3 In addition to the areas of existing open space within Larne town, there were a number of open space zonings for both recreation & amenity and also passive open space. The villages of Ballycarry, Ballystrudder, Glenarm also included open space zonings. Refer to Figures A.2 – A.5 in Appendix A.

Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP)

3.4 [BMAP](#) was adopted on 9th September 2014 and replaces the Carrickfergus Area Plan 2001. It acknowledges open space plays a significant role in the life of the community within the Plan Area, and that the availability of indoor and outdoor facilities for both active and passive recreation is an important element in enhancing the quality of life for residents within the Plan Area. This plan contains an open space, sport and outdoor recreation strategy which comprises two policy elements:



1. Facilitating the development of a network of Community Greenway.

Policy OS1: Community Greenways

3.5 This policy states that planning permission will not be granted for development either within or adjacent to a designated Community Greenway which would prejudice the retention, enhancement or further development of an identified route. It also states that where appropriate, development proposals shall include open space linkages to designated Community Greenways. Community Greenway designations retain the opportunities to create links between the built-up area and the hills, valleys and coastline of the Plan Area.

2. Facilitating the provision of new open space.

Policy OS2: New Open Space Provision

3.6 This policy states that planning permission will be granted for the development of open space inside the Metropolitan Development Limit and Settlement Development Limits where the following criteria are met:

- satisfactory arrangements are provided for an appropriate landscaping scheme;
- there is no unacceptable impact on visual or residential amenity;
- there is no adverse impact on features of importance to nature conservation, archaeology or built heritage;
- ancillary buildings are designed to a high standard, are of a scale appropriate to the character of the local area or townscape and are sympathetic to the surrounding environment in terms of siting, layout and landscape treatment;
- the extra vehicular traffic generated by the proposal has no adverse impact on road safety, traffic or congestion levels;
- satisfactory arrangements are provided for linkage to the pedestrian and cycle network, and, where appropriate, access to the site by public transport; and
- satisfactory arrangements are provided for site access, car parking, drainage and waste disposal.

3.7 Within Carrickfergus there are numerous areas of existing and proposed areas of zoned open space which include a range of sizes and types. Within Greenisland and Whitehead there are also several zonings for existing open space. Refer to Figures A.6 – A.8 in Appendix A.

3.8 BMAP identifies several community greenways within Carrickfergus town, which enhance existing open space provision by linking areas together which have recreational, ecological and aesthetic roles. These greenways can also act as a cycle network, and as corridors linking areas of open space in urban areas with the countryside. These greenways are illustrated on Figure A.6 in Appendix A.

SECTION 4 - OVERVIEW OF EXISTING OPEN SPACE PROVISION

Introduction

4.1 Mid & East Antrim benefits from a wide range of existing open space and recreation assets which are integral to our heritage, identity and economy. As well as including numerous sports pitches, marinas and leisure centres, Mid & East Antrim offers:

- 10 Registered Historic Parks, Gardens and Demesnes;
- 9 Golf Courses;
- Approximately 105 kilometres (65 miles) of coastline
- 1 Ulster Wildlife Trust Wood, 5 Council Woodlands, 7 Woodland Trust Woodlands, 8 Forest Service Woodlands/Forests;
- 68 play parks;
- 14 outdoor gyms (including 2 under construction)
- 3 Council allotment sites;
- 18 Council Multi-Use Games Area's (MUGA's)



Planning for Open Space and Recreational Facilities within Mid & East Antrim Borough Council

4.2 As indicated above, both the SPPS and PPS8 allow for the protection of areas of open space, and the first step in the local development plan process will be to identify these areas. Whilst a detailed survey of existing open space provision has not been carried out as part of this preparatory paper, a general overview is provided as to the open space and recreational facilities that are on offer within Mid & East Antrim. Members should note that under PPS8, existing open space regardless of whether it is identified on plan maps or not, benefits from the protection afforded by Policy OS1, unless the site is identified for an alternative use in the plan itself.

4.3 Detailed surveys of existing open space provision will inform the LDP on such matters as the amount of open space, its quality and how accessible it is to those who currently use, or could use it. The Plan will take account of this information and of the views expressed by the public and stakeholders in bringing forward appropriate policies and proposals.

4.4 Sport NI are currently preparing a Sports Facilities Strategy, in partnership with the District Councils. This will identify sports facility needs across Northern Ireland and will include an assessment of need for each of the new 11 local government districts to identify what facilities are required and where. Sport NI have advised that this strategy will be published in September 2015, and this will provide key information as to the need for sports facilities within Mid & East Antrim.

4.5 It is worth noting that The Northern Ireland Sport and Physical Activity Survey 2010 <http://www.sportni.net/sportni/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/SAPASReport.pdf> illustrated that the proximity of facilities is the most important factor that would encourage those surveyed to participate in sport and recreational physical activity in the future. Therefore the proximity and accessibility of new open space and recreational facilities for users will be an important consideration in planning the location of such facilities through the LDP.

General Overview of Open Space and Recreation within Mid & East Antrim

Ballymena



4.6 Ballymena town offers a range of open space and recreational facilities including the Ecos Centre and Park, a 150 acre area of maturing woodlands with a duck feeding lake, willow tunnel and 8 km's of walks. A footpath links the Ecos Park to the Seven Towers Leisure Centre. The Ballymena Showgrounds adjacent to the Ecos Park offers a range of sporting facilities including the Ballymena United football stadium, 3G pitches, hockey pitches and stock car racing facilities. The town also benefits from the Peoples Park which has a children's playground, toddler area, floodlit tennis courts, bowling green and picnic areas.

4.7 Outside of Ballymena town, Slemish offers a spectacular landscape for walking and wildlife observation, with car parking and picnic facilities also available. The area also has several riverside and forest walks and fishing opportunities along the Rivers Braid, Maine and Bann. The marina at Portglenone offers 30 berths, canoe steps and a camping area overlooking the River Bann. Another recreational asset of the area is the award winning 18 hole Galgorm Castle Golf Club.

Carrickfergus

4.8 Within Carrickfergus town there are a range of open space and recreational facilities available, including the Marina which is the base for the Carrickfergus Sailing Club. There are several parks throughout the town including the popular Marine Gardens playpark. The town benefits from the Amphitheatre Leisure Centre, which has a range of indoor and outdoor sport and recreational facilities. In close proximity to this is the Carrickfergus skatepark.

4.9 Carrickfergus also offers allotments to local residents at the five hectare site at the Eden Allotment Gardens which provides opportunities for exercise and socialising, as well as growing fruit and vegetables. Throughout Carrickfergus there are four community greenways which are identified in BMAP, which serve as networks for walking, cycling and recreation. Just outside Carrickfergus lies Woodburn Forest which includes several reservoirs providing recreational opportunities for walkers, cyclists and anglers.



Larne



4.10 Due to Larne's coastal location there are many coastal walks on offer, including the Gobbins Path which is currently being restored. When complete it will be a significant recreational and tourist asset. In addition, Larne also benefits from several beaches across the district, three of which at Carnlough, Ballygalley, Brown's Bay have won the Rural Seaside Award Beaches in 2014. A section of the Ulster Way is within Larne and extends from Glenarm

through the countryside to Ballynure, just outside Mid & East Antrim.

4.11 Within Larne town the principle sport and recreational facility is the leisure centre. In addition, there are five main parks: Dixon Park, Town Park, Chainey Park, Smiley Park and Curran Park. These parks offer a range of facilities including tennis courts, children's playgrounds and open green spaces. Dixon Park is a 2014/2015 holder of a Green Flag award, which is awarded to parks and gardens. Carnfunnock Country Park lies just outside Larne, and includes woodland, gardens, a maze, walking trails with many other activities and events available.

Standards for Open Space, Sport and Recreation

4.12 Both PPS8 and the SPPS make reference to assessing existing open space provision against the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) which recommended a **minimum** standard for "outdoor playing space" of 2.4 hectares per 1000 population, and this is commonly referred to as the 6 Acre Standard¹ (SAS), comprising of 1.6 hectares (4 acres) for outdoor sport² and 0.8 hectares (2 acres) for children's play, see Table 4.1 below. The SAS was established as a guide to ensure that sufficient land is set aside in appropriate locations to enable the population to participate in sports, outdoor play, games and other physical recreation. It is highlighted that the National Playing Fields Association became the Fields in Trust (FIT) in 2007.

Fields in Trust – The Six Acre Standard (SAS)

4.13 The FIT does not regard 'outdoor playing space' to be the same as public open space, rather it is space that is safely accessible and available to the general public, and of a suitable size and nature, for sport, active recreation or children's play. Accordingly it is a significant component, but not the only form, of open space. 'Outdoor playing space' is made up of two main components. The first includes land provided for outdoor sport, principally for adults and youths. The second is playing space for children. It is noted that the SAS is not a legislative requirement, but this standard is commonly used as a benchmark in spatial planning throughout the United Kingdom.

¹ The former "6 acre standard" has been superseded in England by revised guidance published by Fields in Trust entitled "Planning and Design for Outdoor Sport and Play" in August 2008.

² The outdoor sport standard of 1.6 hectares (4 acres) per 1000 population is further refined to 1.2 hectares (3 acres) per 1000 population for pitch sports. The balance of 0.4 hectares (1 acre) is to be provided through other outdoor recreational facilities such as tennis courts.

Outdoor Sport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Facilities such as pitches, greens, courts, athletics tracks and miscellaneous sites such as croquet lawns and training areas owned by local authorities, at all tiers; ✓ Facilities described above within the education sector which are available for public use by written agreement; ✓ Facilities described above within the voluntary, private, industrial and commercial sectors which serve the leisure time needs for outdoor recreation of their members or the public. <p><i>Note – Included within the standard for outdoor sport is a specific allocation of 1.2 hectares per 1000 people for sports pitches.</i></p>	1.6 ha per 1000 population
Children's Playing Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Designated areas for children and young people containing a range of facilities and an environment that has been designed to provide focused opportunity for outdoor play; ✓ Casual or informal playing space within housing areas. 	0.8 ha per 1000 population
Minimum Standard	Total playing space	2.4 ha per 1000 population

Table 4.1 – FIT 6 Acre Standard – Source PPS8

4.14 This standard **excludes**: sports grounds and stadiums, verges, woodlands, commons, the seashore, nature conservation areas, allotments, ornamental parks and gardens, golf facilities, water used for recreation, indoor sports halls and leisure centres and commercial entertainment complexes and theme parks. The NPFA does recognise that there are circumstances where some of these can make a valuable contribution to the total recreational provision of communities, but these are not regarded as substitutes for elements of the NPFA standard.

Outdoor Playing Space

4.15 To measure outdoor playing space in the Mid & East Antrim District, the FIT Standard was used to assess provision in line with regional policy including the SPPS and PPS8. For the purposes of this paper, the assessment of outdoor open space provision will include formal sports and recreation grounds, playing pitches and children's play space. Other forms of open space in the plan area which are excluded from the definition of outdoor playing space but still provide important informal passive recreation such as parks, country parks and general amenity areas are identified within Appendix C for information but are excluded from the calculations.

4.16 The assessment also takes account of the Sport NI research report "Active Places – 2014 Update – Bridging the Gap", which presents facility shortfall tables for pitches and sports halls. Whilst the original 2009 "Active Places - Bridging the Gap" report excluded school sports facilities due to their limited availability for community use, in light of recent Community Use of Schools guidance the 2014 update report recognised the potential value of school sports facilities in addressing the facility

shortfalls throughout Northern Ireland. Accordingly it provides figures in two separate tables, including and excluding education grass pitches:

- Playing pitches, including educational synthetic but **excluding** grass; and
- Playing pitches, including educational synthetic and **including** grass.

These tables for all Council areas in NI can be found at Figures B2 and B3 within Appendix B.

Pitches

Table 4.2 Quantity of Pitches in the former legacy District Council Areas. Source: Sports NI – 2014 update of the Active Places Research Report

District Council	2011 Population Projection	Perceived Acres Shortfall (SNI Standard)*	Pitched Required (SNI Standard)*
All sites – including education synthetic but excluding grass			
Ballymena	61,039	71	28
Carrickfergus	40,096	75	30
Larne	31,243	45	18
All sites – including education synthetic and including grass			
Ballymena	61,039	22	9
Carrickfergus	40,096	58	23
Larne	31,243	16	6

**Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) – calculates the value of a synthetic surface to be four times that of a grass surface, whereas the SAS recommends the value of a synthetic pitch to be calculated as twice that of a grass pitch*

4.17 Table 4.2 above illustrates that there is a deficiency of pitch provision in Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne, even when educational grass pitches are included, and that the greatest deficit is in Carrickfergus.

4.18 The tables included within the 2014 Sport NI review were based on the *projected* 2011 population. However using the actual 2011 census figures, provision for playing pitches in Mid & East Antrim can be assessed more accurately. In addition, by applying the NISRA 2014 and 2030 population projections for Mid & East Antrim, current and future needs can be discerned – see Table 4.3 below. For a breakdown of how these figures were calculated, refer to Figures B.4 – B.9 in Appendix B.

	Population Figure	Perceived Acres Shortfall	Pitches Required
Quantity of playing pitches including education synthetic pitches but excluding education grass pitches			
2011	135,365	200	80
2014*	136,616	204	82
2030*	140,688	217	87
Quantity of playing pitches including education synthetic pitches but including education grass pitches			
2011	135,365	105	42
2014*	136,616	109	43
2030*	140,688	121	48

Table 4.3 Current and Future Needs for Pitch Provision within Mid & East Antrim

*Population projections for areas within Northern Ireland 2012-2037 (2012 based) published on 30 October 2014

4.19 Table 4.3 above illustrates that a significant shortfall of pitches within Mid & East Antrim is likely over the plan period and this therefore this should be taken into consideration in bringing forward the LDP. However it must be reiterated that whilst the above table indicates that there is a shortfall of playing pitches, this does not take account of all the other informal open space areas such as parks etc, and should not be interpreted that Mid & East Antrim has an overall deficit of open space/recreational facilities.

Children's Play Space Provision

4.20 Throughout the Council area, there are a number of outdoor play areas. Most of these are located within the towns, although several of the villages also benefit from equipped children's playgrounds. The total number of children's play areas provided by Mid & East Antrim Council is 68, with approximately half of these being located within the Ballymena district, as illustrated below.

Ballymena		Carrickfergus		Larne	
Settlement	Number	Settlement	Number	Settlement	Number
Ballymena	14	Carrickfergus	8	Larne	10
		Greenisland	2		
		Whitehead	3		
Villages	16	Villages	0	Villages	7
Small Settlements	0	Small Settlements	0	Small Settlements	1
Countryside	5	Countryside	0	Countryside	2
TOTAL	35		13		20

Table 4.4 Number of Children's Equipped Play Areas in Towns, Villages, Small Settlements and Countryside in Mid & East Antrim

4.21 The need for Children's play space relative to existing provision needs to be assessed on two tiers: the overall quantum and the spatial distribution. The FIT standard for children's play space is 0.80 hectares per 1000 population. However the spatial distribution is seen as the more important component as it relates to access to provision within the various settlements – in relation to children's homes. The FIT standard has been formulated essentially for urban areas, therefore this paper will assess the spatial distribution in the three regional towns Ballymena, Carrickfergus and Larne.

4.22 The FIT recommends different travel times, dependent upon the nature of the facilities and defines a three-tier hierarchy, each tier influencing a different catchment area:

Children's Space	Playing Walking Time	Pedestrian Route	Straight Line Distance
LAP	1 minute	100 metres	60 metres
LEAP	5 minutes	400 metres	240 metres
NEAP	15 minutes	1000 metres	600 metres

Table 4.5 Walking Times to Children's Playing Space - Source FIT

Local Area for Play (LAP)

4.23 These are unsupervised small open spaces specifically designed for young people for play activities close to where they live. Although without play equipment, LAP's have characteristics that make the area conducive to children's play. Such characteristics include ease of access, a relatively level site, informal surveillance and modest provision of landscaping so that play is not inhibited. As illustrated above, the FIT consider that LAP's should be within 1 minute walking time from home.

A Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP)

4.24 These are unsupervised play areas that are equipped for children of early school age. While sharing similar characteristics to LAP's, LEAP's feature a range of different types of play equipment. The FIT consider these should be located within 5 minutes walking time of home.

A Neighbourhood Equipped Area for Play (NEAP)

4.25 These are also unsupervised but they are intended to serve a substantial residential area. While sharing similar characteristics to LEAP's, NEAP's feature a significant range of different types of play equipment. It is equipped mainly for older children but also having opportunities for play for younger children. As Table 4.5 above illustrates, the FIT recommend that these should be located within 15 minutes walking time of home.

Ballymena

4.26 Ballymena town has 13 local and 1 neighbourhood equipped areas for play. An analysis of accessibility to LEAP's and NEAP's has been undertaken and is displayed in Figure B.13 in Appendix B. Local Areas of Play (LAP's) have not been analysed because with a catchment of 60 metres, they cannot be considered to be of strategic importance other than for serving the housing areas within their immediate vicinity.

4.27 From this analysis it can be seen that the East of the town around Harryville, Ballee and Ballykeel is best served by play park provision. The West of the town, particularly around the Galgorm Road, Old Galgorm Road & Old Park Road is deficient in play provision. The NEAP at the People's Park is located in close proximity to the town centre, and residential areas and is easily accessible by foot from the Ballymoney Road and Thomas Street. There are deficiencies of play provision towards the North of the Ballymoney Road area and also around Fry's Road.

Carrickfergus

4.28 Carrickfergus town has 7 local and 1 neighbourhood equipped areas for play. The majority of these are concentrated around the Southern and central sections of the town. Figure B.14 in Appendix B illustrates that there are large residential areas at North West, North East and East sections of the town that are deficient in equipped play provision areas. The main equipped play area in the town is at Marine Gardens which is a NEAP opened in 2012. This includes a wide range of play equipment and is located adjacent to, and is easily accessible from the town centre by foot.

Larne

4.29 Larne town has 9 local and 1 neighbourhood equipped areas for play. Figure B.15 in Appendix B illustrates that these are reasonably distributed around the town, although there is a deficiency towards the North of the town along the Old Glenarm Road and also towards the West of the town around the newer residential developments including The Beeches and The Hamptons. However it is highlighted that there is a children's play area approved within The Hamptons development and when constructed will help to address the deficiency in this area. It is noted that the play park within Carnfunnock Park is considered to be a NEAP given the range of equipment available, however this is located outside of Larne town and would therefore be less accessible by foot, with visitors more likely to travel by car.

Settlements without Council Children's Play Facilities

4.30 Table 4.6 below lists the settlements within Mid & East Antrim that do not benefit from children's play provision, generally the smaller settlements within Carrickfergus and Larne. Overall Mid & East Antrim is well served by equipped children's play areas and all of the towns and villages have at least one equipped play park. Many of these play areas, particularly in the villages are convenient and accessible for all sections of the community.

Ballymena	Carrickfergus	Larne	
N/A	Trooperslane	Browns Bay	Garron Point
	Knocknagulliagh	Carnageer	Glenoe
		Carnalbanagh	Kilwaughter
		Carncastle	Magheramorne
		Crosshill	Mill Bay
		Deerpark	Mounthill
		Drumcrow	Raloo
		Ferris Bay	Straidkilly
		Feystown	

Table 4.6 Settlements without Council Children's Play Facilities

Other Outdoor Facilities

4.31 In addition to playing pitches and children's play areas, there are many opportunities within Mid & East Antrim for other less formal recreation activities. These include walking, cycling, canoeing and passive recreational activities.



4.32 There is one 26 mile quality section of the Ulster Way which passes through Mid & East Antrim from Glenarm to Ballynure. Points of interest along this walk includes Glenarm, Glenarm Castle, Glenarm Forest, Scawt Hill, Linford, Sallagh Braes and Ballynure. There is also a "link section" which offers a poor weather alternative to the Moyle Way, and follows parts of the A2 Coast Road and quieter rural roads – refer to Figure C.2 in Appendix C for an illustration of these routes. Part of the National Cycle Network also passes through Mid & East Antrim between Ballymena and Glenarm, and also from Larne to Glenarm and beyond along the A2 Coast Road - refer to Figure C.3 in Appendix C for an illustration of these routes. A potential future cycling asset within Mid & East Antrim will be the mountain biking centre at Magheramorne, which will include downhill and cross country trails. This proposal currently benefits from outline planning permission.








4.33 In addition to the above, there are a number of public bodies including the Council who own and/or manage significant land holdings and provide public access to site based facilities such as forest parks, urban parks, lakes etc. These provide opportunities for informal walking/running and cycling. These are listed in Figure C.7 in Appendix C. This shows that there is a good distribution of informal and passive recreational opportunities spread across the plan area. Several of these parks are complemented by the provision of outdoor gym equipment and/or Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA's) for a list of these refer to Figure C.4 and C.5 in Appendix C.

The Coast

4.34 The coastline along Carrickfergus and Larne offers opportunities for water based sport and recreational activities within Mid & East Antrim, such as:

Canoeing and Rowing

4.35 As well as the availability of canoe clubs, there is the East Coast Canoe Trail which extends from Waterfoot to Strangford and is approximately 70 nautical miles long. It includes various access points along the route and several of these are within Mid & East Antrim:

 Carnlough Harbour
 Glencoy Bridge
 Glenarm
 Ballygalley
 Carnfunnock Country Park
 Drains Bay
 Sandy Bay
 Ballylumford Harbour

 Brown's Bay
 Portmuck
 Whitehead Harbour
 Co Antrim Yacht Club
 Carrickfergus Harbour
 Fisherman's Quay
 Carrickfergus Marina
 Carrickfergus Sailing Club

4.36 This route offers outstanding views of the Glens of Antrim, and coastal landmarks and features within Mid & East Antrim such as The Gobbins, Blackhead Lighthouse and Carrickfergus Castle. In addition there is the Lower Bann Canoe Trail from Lough Neagh, Toome to Atlantic Ocean, Castlerock includes access points in MEA at Newferry (east) and Portglenone.

4.37 Coastal rowing (gig racing) is a traditional activity which takes place at Cairndhu, Glenarm and Carnlough. There is an annual challenge event in May "Round the Rock", when teams compete the return journey from Carnlough Harbour to the Black Road on the far side of Carnlough Bay.

Sailing

4.38 Sailing incorporates cruising and racing, with the majority of sailors belonging to yacht clubs owing to the availability of suitable facilities such as slipways, winches and cranes. Within Mid & East Antrim there are sailing clubs at Carrickfergus, Whitehead, Larne (Coastguard Road & Magheramourne).

Diving

4.39 There are two main types of diving; scenic and wreck. There are three main focal points within the Causeway Coast and Glens area one of which is within Mid & East Antrim at Islandmagee which includes a scuba dive centre incorporating the exploration of wrecks off the Islandmagee Coast and Belfast Lough. This facility also offers boat tours along the Islandmagee coastline past the Gobbins Cliffs and Cliff path.



Existing Indoor Recreation and Leisure

4.40 Outdoor recreation and leisure facilities are also complemented by indoor facilities. Each of the three towns benefits from a leisure centre, incorporating swimming pools, sports halls, squash courts and health suites. Details of all the facilities provided are illustrated in Figure C.6 in Appendix C. Public provision of indoor recreation and leisure facilities in the villages and rural areas are mainly supplemented by various community halls and private football/GAA clubs.

Other Forms of Open Space and Recreation

4.41 There are numerous sports and leisure clubs across Mid & East Antrim which operate from public and privately owned open space, recreational and educational facilities, all offering a range of activities at various levels. In addition there is communal green space within publicly and privately owned residential developments.

4.42 There are schemes operating within Mid & East Antrim which utilise open space and recreational facilities for the community, one example is Parkrun. This is a not-for-profit organisation who organise a weekly 5km run Saturday mornings for runners of all standards at different locations throughout Northern Ireland & the UK. It is not designed to be a race but it is a timed run which can be for run or part of a training plan. This running event is free and within Mid & East Antrim takes place at Ecos Centre, the Amphitheatre Wellness Centre and at Carnfunnock Country Park.

4.43 It is acknowledged that some of the privately owned facilities these may be less accessible to the wider public, but regardless of this they still have public value. However in the case of school sport facilities, the Department of Education's "*Community use of School Premises: A Guidance Toolkit for Schools*" and Sport NI's "*Your School, Your Club*" were launched in January 2014 to encourage more schools to open up their facilities for use by the wider community. This is aimed at increasing sporting participation in the community and to promote health and fitness by encouraging people to get active. There are examples through Mid & East Antrim of such schemes already in operation for example at Larne High School.

Private Residential Development's

4.44 Since the publication of PPS8, it has been a requirement under Policy OS2 to provide public open space within new residential developments of 1 hectare or 25+ units. Influenced by this there are a number of residential developments within Mid & East Antrim which include open space provision. This is of benefit to the health and well-being of local residents, whilst also improving the quality of these residential developments, refer to Appendix D.1.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

4.45 Throughout Mid & East Antrim there are a number of housing estates owned by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE), some of which include large areas of open space for general amenity, recreation and community uses.



4.46 Whilst one of the objectives of PPS8 relates to the protection of open space, the policy also acknowledges that there are some NIHE housing estates that have open space areas which are ill designed and can take up an excessive amount of space that ends to be underused. It states that the redevelopment of such areas for other uses may be acceptable in certain circumstances where they will bring *substantial community benefits*. A joint protocol had been agreed between Planning Service and NIHE for dealing with such applications.

Conclusions

5.1 The purpose of this paper has been to provide an overview of open space provision within Mid & East Antrim, focusing on outdoor sport and children's play space provision. The distribution and accessibility of such provision has also been assessed at a general level.

5.2 The evidence presented provides the basis for developing an open space strategy for the LDP which takes into account the relevant objectives of the RDS and SPPS.

A summary of the key findings are as follows:

- The existing provision of outdoor space in terms of pitch provision is not adequately catered for in the Mid & East Antrim district. Application of the FIT standards demonstrates that there is a pitch deficiency of 43 based on 2014 population projections (when taking into consideration the provision education synthetic and grass pitches);
- Future need over the plan period to 2030 will require an additional 48 pitches (when taking into consideration the provision education synthetic and grass pitches)
- Outdoor space in terms of children's play provision appears to be adequately catered throughout the Borough's towns and villages;
- Certain residential areas of Carrickfergus are deficient in terms of both quantum and distribution of children's play provision;
- Many children's play areas are located within residential developments and provide safe, easily accessible facilities particularly to young children;
- Mid & East Antrim benefits from numerous informal and passive recreation facilities which are well distributed throughout the plan area, in both urban areas and the countryside. These are not included in the outdoor playing space calculations but do provide invaluable recreational spaces;
- Mid & East Antrim also benefits from indoor recreational and leisure facilities. However the Council owned indoor facilities are generally located within the towns. Villages in the district do not benefit from any such Council owned indoor leisure facilities.

Recommendations

6.1 As this paper is based on a desk top exercise; further work will be required including a detailed survey and analysis of open space, sport and recreational facilities within Mid & East Antrim, as well as consultation with relevant bodies (such as NI Housing Executive and Education authorities) who own or control significant quantities of open space;

6.2 The need for future sports pitches and facilities will need to be reassessed when Sport NI has published its Sports Facilities Strategy;

6.3 Members are advised to take account of the findings of this report in considering the strategic approach of the LDP in planning for open space and recreation in the Borough to the year 2030.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

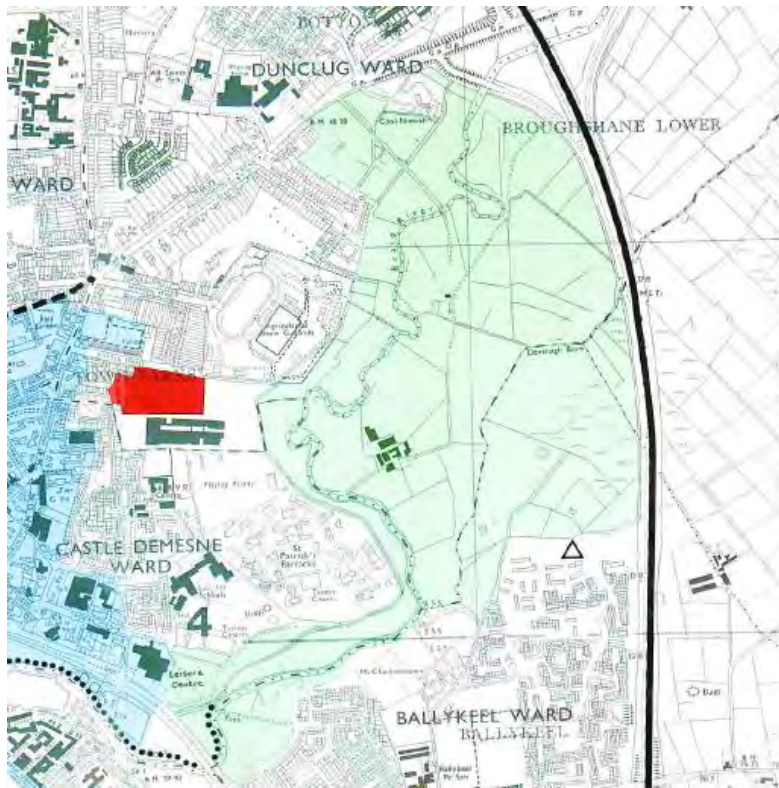


Fig. A.1 Open space zoning within Ballymena Area Plan 1986 – 2001

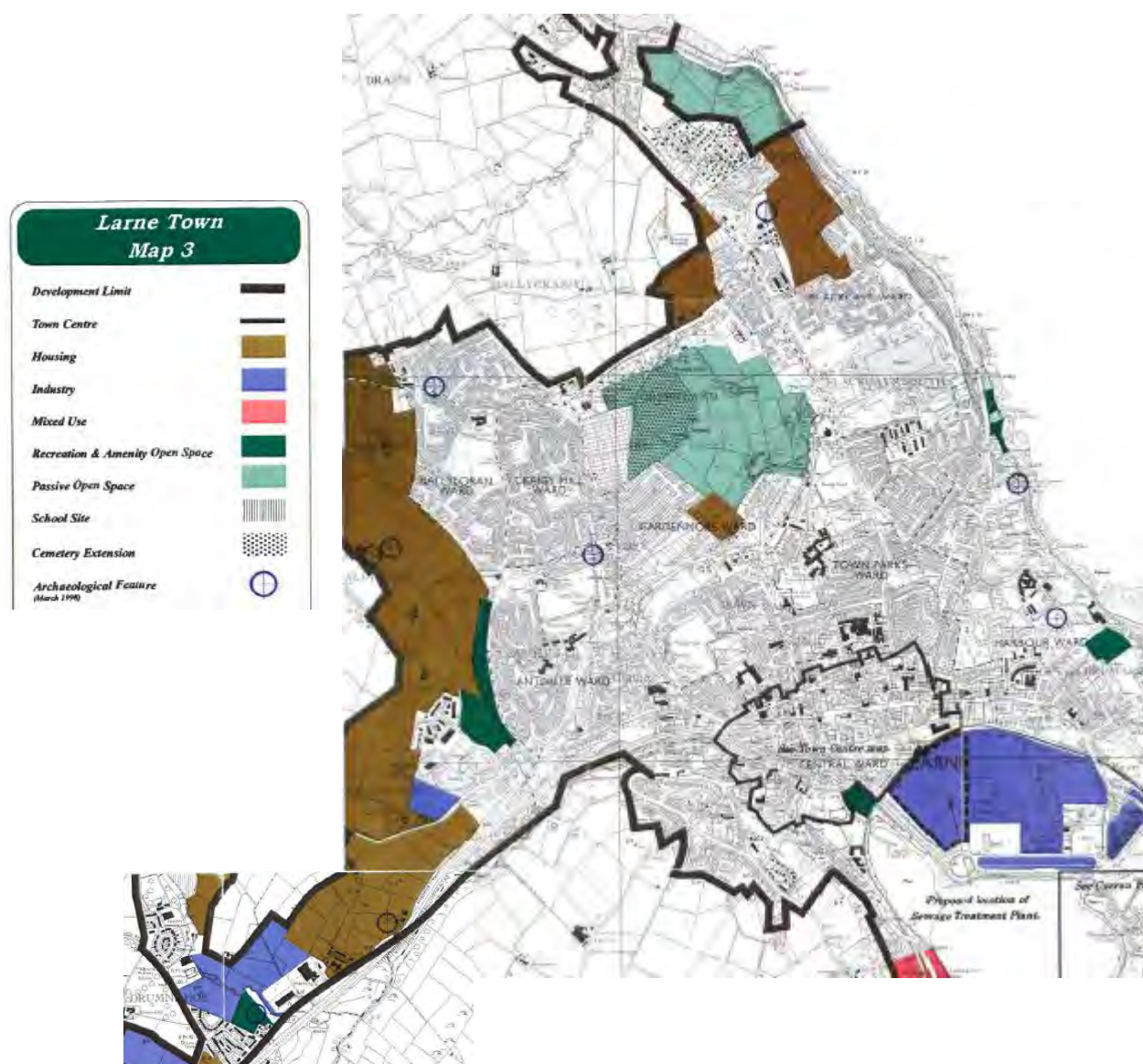


Fig. A.2 Open space zonings within Larne Area Plan 2010 – Larne Town

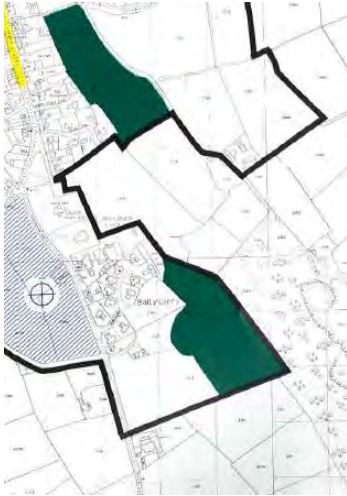


Fig. A. 3 Open space zonings within Larne Area Plan 2010 - Ballycarry



Fig. A.4 Open space zoning within Larne Area Plan 2010 - Ballystrudder

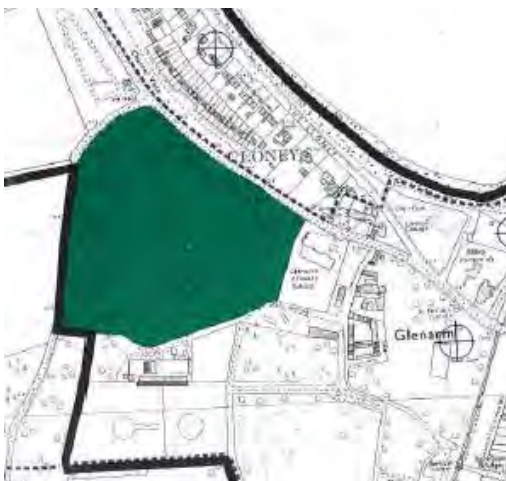


Fig. A.5 Open space zoning within Larne Area Plan 2010 - Glenarm

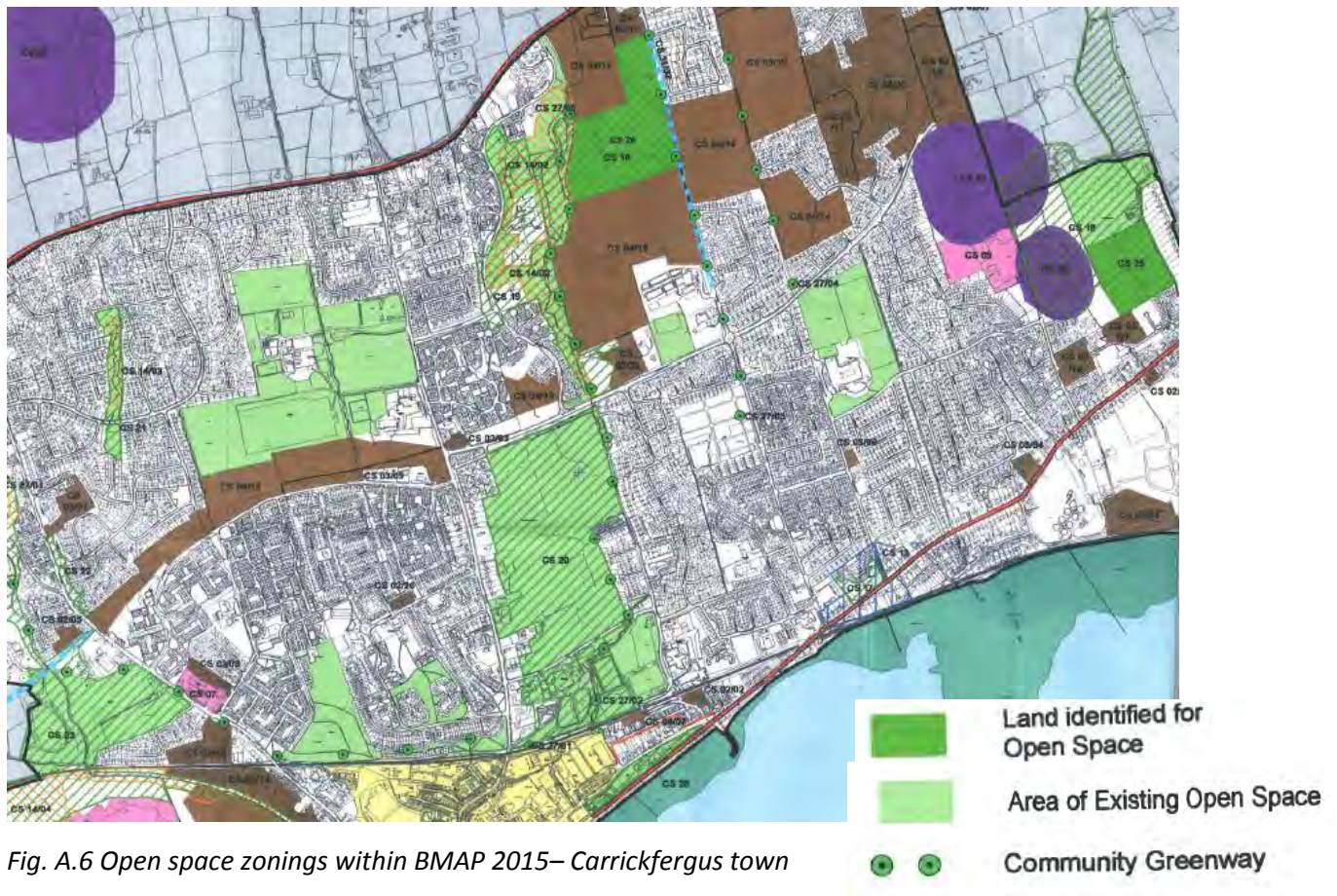


Fig. A.6 Open space zonings within BMAP 2015– Carrickfergus town



Fig. A.7 Open space zonings within BMAP 2015 – Greenisland



Fig. A.8 Open space zonings within BMAP 2015 – Whitehead

APPENDIX B

Fig B.1. All pitches/playing fields within in Mid & East Antrim – source Sport NI

All Saints GAC	Club
Antiville Playing Fields	Club
Ballymena RFC and Cricket Grounds	Club
Carrickfergus Cricket Club	Club
Carrickfergus Rugby Club	Club
Con Magee's GAC Glenravel	Club
Greenisland War Memorial Sports Club	Club
Inver Park	Club
Islandmagee FC	Club
Larne RFC	Club
Latharna Og GAC Brustin Braes	Club
Michelin Club	Club
Phoenix Park, Railway Street, Ballymena	Club
Pottinger Street Football Pitch	Club
Roger Casements GAC Portglenone	Club
St Mary's GAC Ahoghill	Club
Wellington Rec, Millbrook, Larne	Club
Shane O'Neills GAC, Feystown Road, Glenarm	Club
Carnlough Swifts, Stoneyhill Park, Carnlough	Club
Newington Rangers FC, The Knowe, Maghermorne	Club
Ahoghill Community Centre	Community
Ballee Community Centre	Community
Ballykeel Community Centre	Community
Ballymena North Business & Recreation Centre	Community
Broughshane Community Centre and Playing Fields	Community
Dunclug Community Centre	Community
Galgorm Community Centre	Community
Glenlough Community Centre	Community
Kells and Connor Community Centre	Community
Oakfield Community Development Centre	Community
Sunnylands Community Centre	Community
Millbrook Community Centre (indoor hall)	Community
Greenland Park Community Centre (indoor hall)	Community
Linn Road Community Centre (indoor hall)	Community
Kilwaughter Village Hall	Community
Tullygarley Community Centre	Community
Amphitheatre Wellness Centre	District Council
Ballymena Showgrounds	District Council
Barn Field Sports Complex	District Council
Broughshane Community Centre	District Council
Cargan Playing Field	District Council
Carnhill, Carning Road	District Council
Castleview Pavillion	District Council

Clough Community Centre	District Council
Cullybackey Community Centre	District Council
Dunfane Playing Fields	District Council
Eden Playing Fields (4 football pitches)	District Council
Galgorm Playing Fields	District Council
Glenarm Playing Field	District Council
Gracehill & Galgorm Community Centre	District Council
Greenisland - Knockleigh Drive	District Council
Greenisland Community Centre	District Council
Greenisland Playing Fields	District Council
Harryville Community Centre	District Council
Kells Playing Fields	District Council
Lamont Playing Field, Smithfield	District Council
Larne Leisure Centre (5 aside indoor pitch)	District Council
Peoples Park	District Council
Sandy Bay Football Pitch	District Council
Sentry Hill Sports Complex	District Council
Seven Towers Leisure Centre	District Council
Stoneyhill Park	District Council
Carrick Rangers FC	District Council
The Cliff Sports Complex	District Council
Town Park	District Council
Wakehurst Playing Fields	District Council
Waveney Playing Fields	District Council
Whitehead Recreation Grounds	District Council
Woodburn Community Centre (indoor hall)	District Council
Woodburn Playing Fields	District Council

Acorn Intergrated Primary School	Education
All Saints Primary School Ballymena	Education
Antiville Primary School	Education
Ballee Primary School	Education
Ballycarry Primary School	Education
Ballykeel Primary School	Education
Ballymena Academy	Education
Ballymena Primary School	Education
Braidside Integrated Primary School	Education
Broughshane Primary School	Education
Buick Memorial Primary School	Education
Cairncastle Primary School	Education
Cambridge House Grammar School	Education
Camphill Primary School	Education
Carniny Primary School	Education
Carnlough Controlled Integrated Primary School	Education
Carrickfergus Central Primary School	Education
Carrickfergus College	Education
Carrickfergus Grammar School	Education

Carrickfergus Model Primary School	Education
Clough Primary School Ballymena	Education
Corran Integrated Primary School	Education
Cullybackey High School	Education
Diamond Primary School	Education
Downshire Secondary School	Education
Dunclug College	Education
Dunclug Primary School	Education
Eden Primary School Carrickfergus	Education
Fourtowns Primary School	Education
Glenravel Primary School	Education
Gracehill Primary School	Education
Greenland Multi-Sports Arena	Education
Harryville Primary School	Education
Hazelbank Primary School	Education
Kells and Connor Primary School	Education
Larne and Inver Primary School	Education
Larne Grammar School	Education
Linn Primary School	Education
Loughan Special School	Education
Lourdes Primary School	Education
Moorfields Primary School	Education
Moyle Primary School	Education
Mullaghduh Primary School	Education
Northern Regional College - Ballymena	Education
Oakfield Primary School	Education
Olderfleet Primary School	Education
Portglenone Primary School	Education
Roddensvale Special School	Education
Seaview Primary School Ballymena	Education
Slemish College	Education
St Comgalls High School	Education
St John's Primary School Ballymena	Education
St Joseph's Primary School Ahoghill	Education
St Killian's College	Education
St Louis Grammar School	Education
St Macnissis College	Education
St Macnissis Primary School Larne	Education
St Mary's Primary School Portglenone	Education
St Nicholas Primary School Carrickfergus	Education
St Patrick's College Ballymena	Education
Sunnylands Nursery School	Education
Sunnylands Primary School	Education
Toreagh Primary School Larne	Education
Ulidia Integrated College	Education
Upper Ballyboley Primary School	Education

Victoria Primary School Carrickfergus	Education
Whitehead Primary School Carrickfergus	Education
Woodburn Primary School Carrickfergus	Education

Fig. B.2 - 2014 Quantity of playing pitches in District Council Areas – including education synthetic pitches but **excluding** grass pitches – Source Sport NI

District Council	2011 Population Projection	Acres Recommended by SAS	EXISTING PROVISION				SHORTFALLS	
			Grass	Synthetic		Total Acres SNI	SNI Standard	
			Total Grass Acres	Existing Acres	SNI by 4		Perceived Acres Shortfall	Pitches Required
Ards/North Down	155882	468	141	17	69	209	258	103
Lisburn City/Castlereagh	178544	535.632	168.97	19.03	76.12	245.09	290.54	116
Antrim/Newtownabbey	132389	397.167	121.05	15.44	61.76	182.81	214.36	86
Mid Antrim	132378	397.134	162.1	10.83	43.32	205.42	191.71	77
Derry City/Strabane	150592	451.776	206.22	11.41	45.64	251.86	199.92	80
Belfast	263313	789.939	377.41	49.07	196.3	573.69	216.25	86
Armagh City/Bann	190559	571.677	331.79	23.38	93.52	425.31	146.37	59
Causeway Coast	140436	421.308	316.46	14.6	58.4	374.86	46.448	19
Newry City/Down	164514	493.542	370.5	15.15	60.6	431.1	62.442	25
Fermanagh/Omagh	112400	337.2	260.36	6.61	26.44	286.8	50.4	20
Mid Ulster District Council	129915	389.745	316.93	21.97	87.88	404.81	- 15.07	-6
Totals	1750922	5252.77	2772.49	204.65	818.6	3591.09	1661.7	665

Parameters:	Dimensions	Sq. Mtrs	Acres
Gaelic Games	146 x 90	13,140	3.29
Soccer	110 x 70	7,700	1.93
Rugby	120 x 70	8,400	2.10

*Six Acre Standard (SAS) - calculates the value of a synthetic surface to be twice that of a grass surface.

**Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) - calculates the value of a synthetic surface to be four times that of a grass surface.

*** Pitches located within the school estate have not been included in this analysis.

**** This analysis calculates the average size of a pitch in Northern Ireland to be 2.5 acres.

Fig. B.3 - 2014 Quantity of playing pitches in District Council Areas – including education synthetic pitches and **including** education grass pitches – Source Sport NI

District Council	2011 Population Projection	Acres Recommended by SAS	EXISTING PROVISION				SHORTFALLS	
			Grass	Synthetic		Total Acres SNI	SNI Standard	
			Total Grass Acres	Existing Acres	SNI by 4		Perceived Acres Shortfall	Pitches Required
Ards/North Down	155882	468	180	17	69	249	219	88
Lisburn City/Castlereagh	178544	535.632	241.57	19.03	76.12	317.69	217.94	87
Antrim/Newtownabbey	132389	397.167	214.25	15.44	61.76	276.01	121.16	48
Mid Antrim	132378	397.134	257.79	10.83	43.32	301.11	96.024	38
Derry City/Strabane	150592	451.776	293.31	11.41	45.64	339.13	112.63	45
Belfast	263313	789.939	520.21	49.07	196.3	716.49	73.449	29
Armagh City/Bann	190559	571.677	460.27	23.38	93.52	553.79	17.887	7
Causeway Coast	140436	421.308	498.64	14.6	58.4	557.04	- 135.7	- 54
Newry City/Down	164514	493.542	546.55	15.15	60.6	607.15	- 113.6	- 45
Fermanagh/Omagh	112400	337.2	352.45	6.61	26.44	378.89	- 41.69	- 17
Mid Ulster District Council	129915	389.745	456.19	21.97	87.88	544.07	- 154.3	- 62
Totals	1750922	5252.77	4021.35	204.65	818.6	4839.95	412.82	165

Parameters:	Dimensions	Sq. Mtrs	Acres
Gaelic Games	146 x 90	13,140	3.29
Soccer	110 x 70	7,700	1.93
Rugby	120 x 70	8,400	2.10

*Six Acre Standard (SAS) - calculates the value of a synthetic surface to be twice that of a grass surface.

**Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) - calculates the value of a synthetic surface to be four times that of a grass surface.

*** Pitches located within the school estate have not been included in this analysis.

**** This analysis calculates the average size of a pitch in Northern Ireland to be 2.5 acres.

Calculations for Pitch Provision, based upon the 6 Acre Standard.

As previously explained within this preparatory paper, the 6 Acre Standard requires 1.2 hectares (3 acres) for each 1000 of the population.

- To calculate the required pitch provision, the population/projected population firstly needs to be divided by 1000;
- This figure then needs to be multiplied by 3, which will calculate the number of acres required for the population;
- The actual acres for the existing pitches then needs to be subtracted from the required figure, and this will indicate whether there is a shortfall or surplus of acres;
- This acreage figure can then be divided by 2.5 which is the average size of a pitch in Northern Ireland to give the number of pitches required.

*For the basis of these calculations, the figures relating to the existing pitch acreage are taken from the Sport NI "Active Places Research Report, 2014 Update, Bridging the Gap".

2011

Fig B.4 - Calculations for Pitches – Excluding Educational Grass – 2011 Census Figures

Census 2011 Population for Mid & East Antrim = 135, 365

$135,365 \div 1000 = 135.36 \times 3 = 406.095$ acres required

Total acres available in Mid & East Antrim (according to Sport NI)* = 205.42

$406.095 - 205.42 = 200.67$

(Acres of pitches required – acres of pitches available)

There is therefore a shortfall of 200.67 acres of pitches

$200.67 \div 2.5 = 80$

(Shortfall acres ÷ average size of pitch)

So there is a shortfall of **80 pitches**

Fig B.5 - Calculations for Pitches – Including Educational Grass – 2011 Census Figures

Census 2011 Population for Mid & East Antrim = 135, 365

$135,365 \div 1000 = 135.36 \times 3 = 406.095$ acres required

Total acres available in Mid & East Antrim (according to Sport NI)* = 257.79

$406.095 - 301.11 = 104.98$

(Acres of pitches required – acres of pitches available)

There is a shortfall of 104.98 acres of pitches

$104.98 \div 2.5 = 41.992$

(Shortfall acres ÷ average size of pitch)

So there is therefore a shortfall of **42 pitches**

2014

Fig B.6 - Calculations for Pitches – Excluding Educational Grass – 2014 Projected Population

2014 Population Projection for Mid & East Antrim = 136,616

$136,616 \div 1000 = 136.61 \times 3 = 409.84$ *acres required*

Total acres available in Mid & East Antrim (according to Sport NI)* = 205.42

$409.84 - 205.42 = 204.42$

(Acres of pitches required – acres of pitches available)

There is therefore a shortfall of 204.42 acres of pitches

$204.42 \div 2.5 = 81.77$

(Shortfall acres ÷ average size of pitch)

So there is a shortfall of **82 pitches**

Fig B.7 - Calculations for Pitches – Including Educational Grass – 2014 Projected Population

2014 Population Projection for Mid & East Antrim = 136,616

$136,616 \div 1000 = 136.61 \times 3 = 409.84$ *acres required*

Total acres available in Mid & East Antrim (according to Sport NI)* = 257.79

$409.84 - 301.11 = 108.73$

(Acres of pitches required – acres of pitches available)

There is therefore a shortfall of 108.73 acres of pitches

$108.73 \div 2.5 = 43.49$

(Shortfall acres ÷ average size of pitch)

So there is a shortfall of **43 pitches**

2030

Fig B.8 - Calculations for Pitches – Excluding Educational Grass – 2030 Projected Population

2030 Population Projection for Mid & East Antrim = 140,688

$140,688 \div 1000 = 140.68 \times 3 = 422.06$ *acres required*

Total acres available in Mid & East Antrim (according to Sport NI)* = 205.42

$422.06 - 205.42 = 216.64$

(Acres of pitches required – acres of pitches available)

There is therefore a shortfall of 216.64 acres of pitches

$216.64 \div 2.5 = 86.65$

(Shortfall acres ÷ average size of pitch)

So there is a shortfall of **87 pitches**

Fig B.9 - Calculations for Pitches – Including Educational Grass – 2030 Projected Population

2030 Population Projection for Mid & East Antrim = 140,688

$140,688 \div 1000 = 140.68 \times 3 = 422.06$ *acres required*

Total acres available in Mid & East Antrim (according to Sport NI)* = 257.79

$422.06 - 301.11 = 120.95$

(Acres of pitches required – acres of pitches available)

There is therefore a shortfall of 120.95 acres of pitches

$120.95 \div 2.5 = 48.38$

(Shortfall acres ÷ average size of pitch)

So there is a shortfall of **48 pitches**

Fig B.10 Equipped Children's Play Areas in Ballymena District Town, Villages and Countryside

Ballymena	Villages	Countryside
Ballykeel 1, Crebilly Road	Ahoghill (3)	Glenvale, Glarryford
Ballykeel 2, Orkney Drive	Broughshane (3)	Maine Valley, Glarryford
Ballykeel, Barra Drive	Cargan	Hazelwood Crescent, Craigywarren
Ballee Way	Cullybackey	McNeill Park, Moorfields
Dunclug Park	Clough	Carmossan Park, Slaght
Ecos Centre	Kells/Conor (3)	
Galgorm, Sand Road	Grange Corner	
Galgorm, Galgorm Road	Martinstown	
Harryville, Wilson Crescent	Portglenone (2)	
Harryville, Moat Road		
Harryville, King George V		
Lamont Park/Smithfield		
Peoples Park		
Tullygarley, Riverdale Park		
14	16	5

Fig. B.11 Equipped Children's Play Areas in Carrickfergus District Town, Villages and Countryside

Carrickfergus	Villages	Smaller Settlements	Countryside
Castlemara Drive/Prince Andrew Way	Greenisland (2)	N/A	N/A
Legg Park	Whitehead (3)		
Marine Gardens			
Windmill Park			
Sunnylands			
Hawthorn Avenue			
Oakfield Drive			
Ampitheatre Leisure Centre			
8	5	0	0

Fig. B.12 Equipped Children's Play Areas in Larne District Town, Villages and Countryside

Larne	Villages	Smaller Settlements	Countryside
Curran Park	Ballycarry	Mullaghboy	Carnfunnock
Dixon Park	Ballystrudder		Newpark, Newlands
Drains Bay	Ballygalley		
Town Park	Carnlough (2)		
Glynn Road	Glenarm		
Linn Road	Glynn		
Bardic Drive, Antiville			
Greenland Park/Old Glenarm Road			
Millbrook			
Seacourt			
10	7	1	2

Figure B.13 Ballymena Town Children's Equipped Play Areas

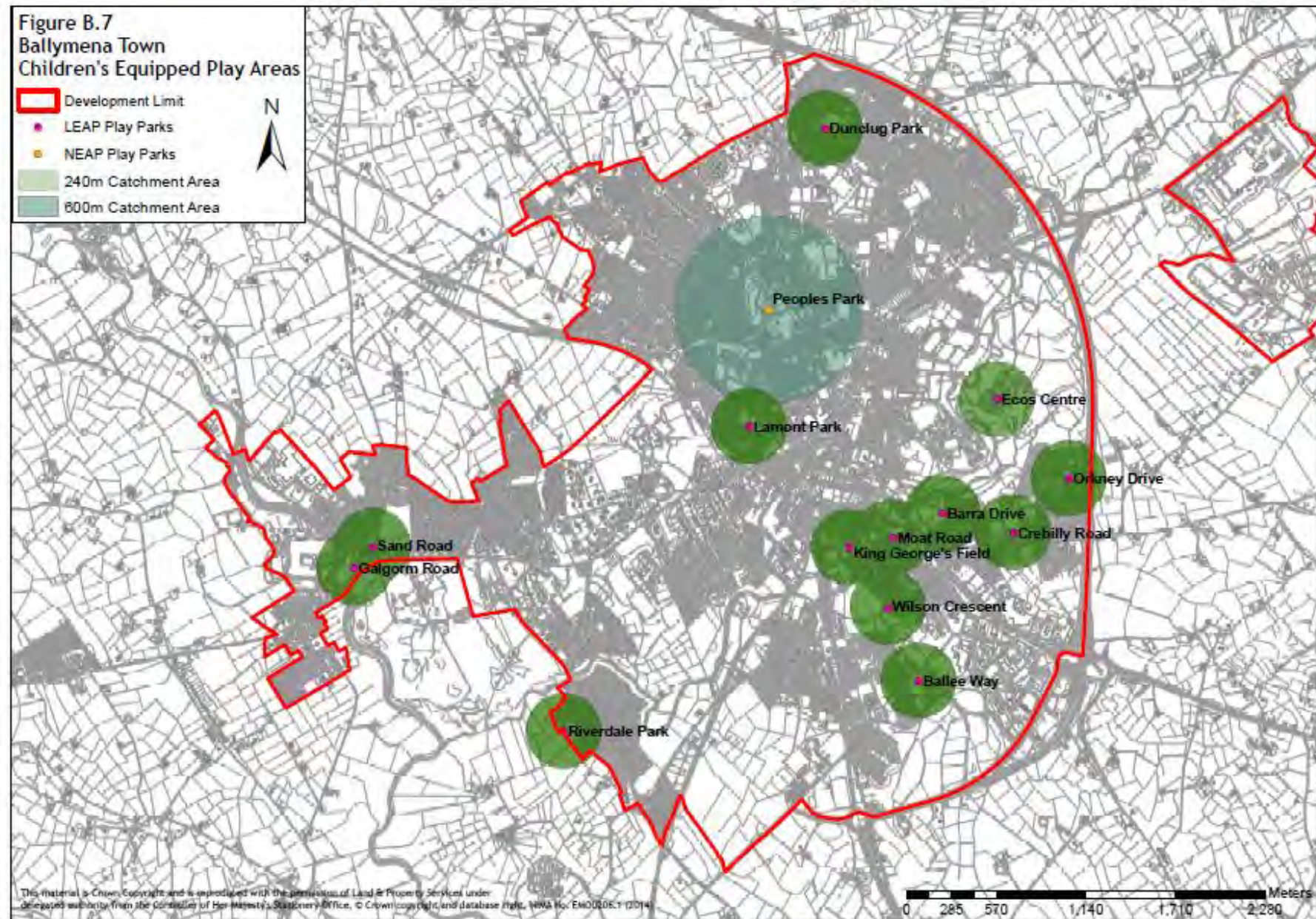


Figure B.14 Carrickfergus Town Children's Equipped Play Areas

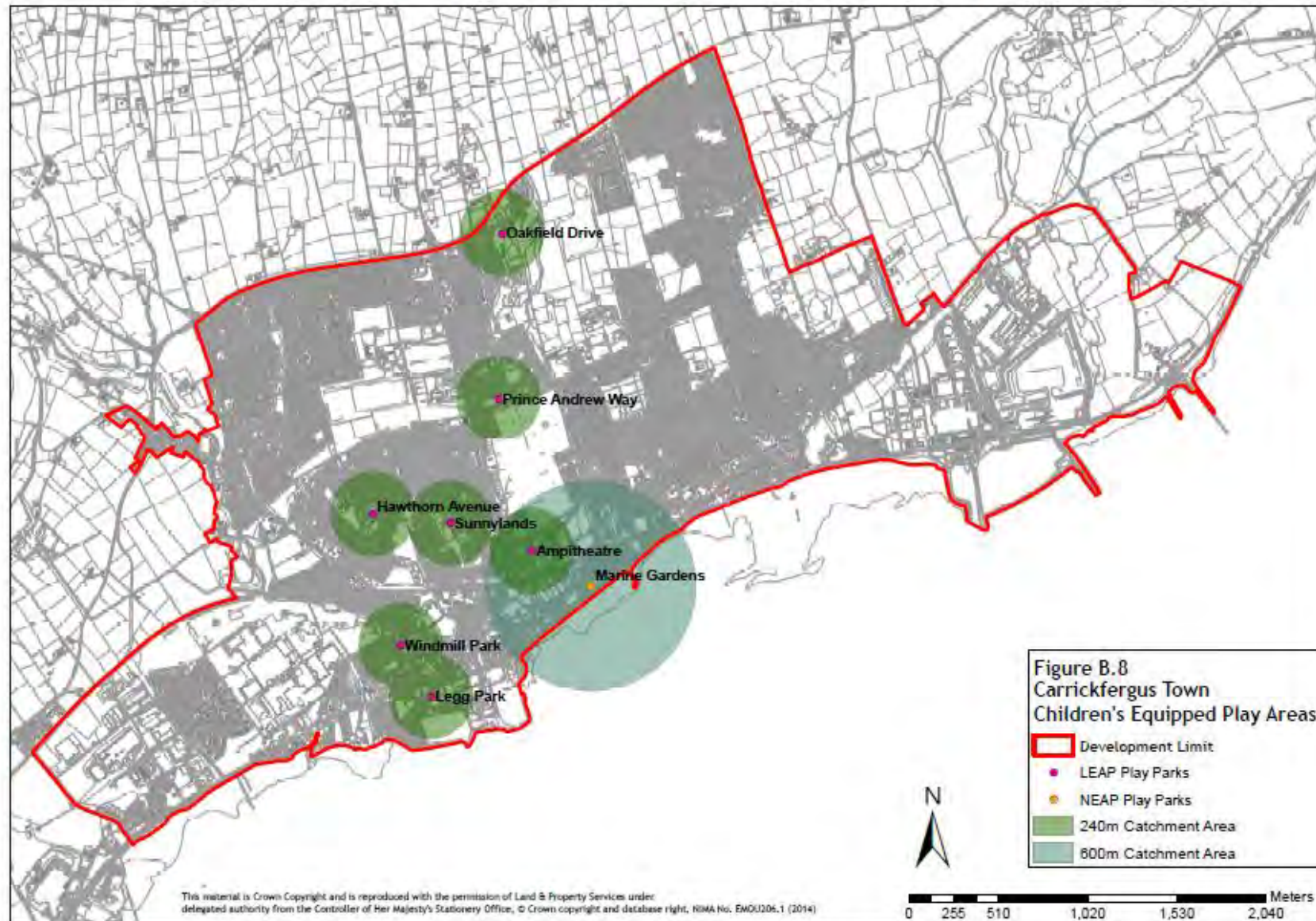
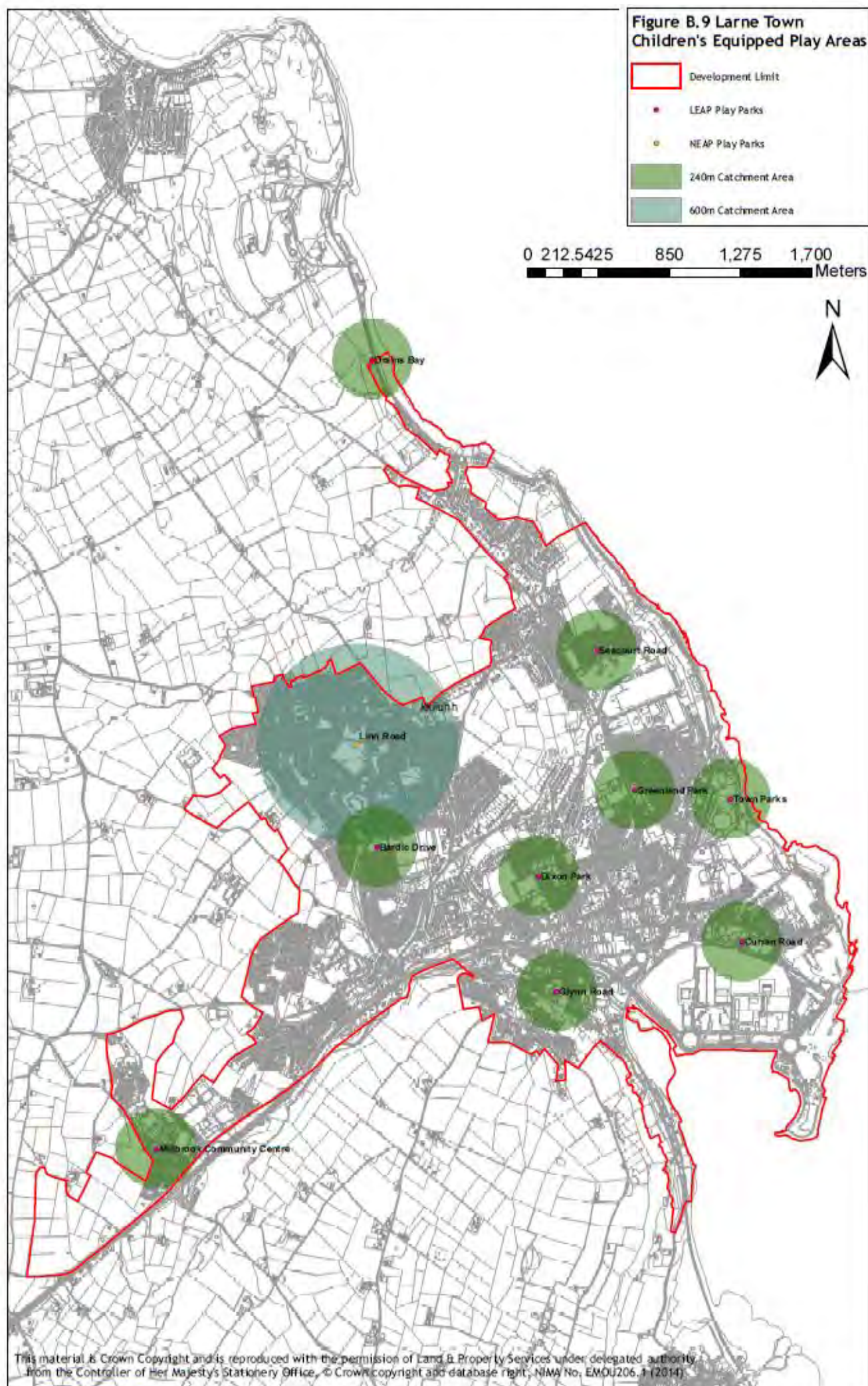


Figure B.15 Larne Town Children's Equipped Play Areas



APPENDIX C

Fig. C.1 List of walks and cycling trails within Mid & East Antrim

WALKS / PATHS / OPEN SPACES		Length Km
Ballee Paths	Path	3.5
Ballykeel II - Open Space	Path	
Broughshane - Buttermilk Walk	Path	2
Dunclug, Ballymena Open Space	Open Space	
Glenravel Open Space	Open Space	
Harryville Motte & Bailey	Open Space	0.8
Kells Pathway	Path	0.8
Tullygarley / Grange Road Path (Sourhill Rd to Grange Av)	Path	2.5
Tobar Park Village Green, Cullybackey	Open Space	
Ecos Paths	Path	8
Sainsbury Riverside Path, Ballymena	Path	0.4
Cullybackey Riverside Path	Path	0.5
Shellinghill Road, Cullybackey Open Space	Open Space	
Galgorm Manor / Cullybackey Path	Path	3
Galgorm Castle Path	Path	2
Slemish	Path	2
Bridgend/Gracehill Bridge, Lisnafillan	Path	1.7
People's Park	Path	2
Sentry Hill, Old Ballymoney Rd, Ballymena	Path	3
Skerry Rock, Newtowncrommelin	Path	1.6
Cargan Picnic Site	Path	0.4
Antrim Hills Way Marked Way	Path	14.5
Highway to Health - Ballymena (From Seven Towns Leisure Centre)	Path	3
Highway to Health - Ecos	Path	3
Highway to Health - Ballee (proposed)	Path	2
Dungonnell Way		15
Ulster Way Glenarm-Ballynure		
Carnfunnock Country Park	Path	8
Cranny Falls, Carnlough	Path	4
Straidkilly	Woodland	1
Layde Walk	Path	3.2
Glenarm Coast Walk		1
Larne Town Parks	Path	4.8
Inver River	Path	1.6
Linn Glen	Path	1.6
Glenoe Waterfall	Path	1.6
Skernaghan Point, Islandmagee	Path	4.8
Portmuck Walk, Islandmagee	Path	3.2

Gobbins	Path	
Highway to Health- Whitehead	Path	2
Whitehead Heritage and Wellbeing Trail	Path	
Blackhead Path, Whitehead	Path	3.8
Ulster Way- Greenisland-Knockagh Monument		
Highway to Health- Carrickfergus	Path	3.5
Timeless Trail, Carrickfergus town	Path	7.7
CYCLE ROUTES		
Ecos Trail NCN 97 (Ecos via Slemish to Glenarm)	Cycle Route	
Sustrans Route 93 (Larne-Garron Point & continues along north coast)	Cycle Route	
Loughshore Trail NCN 96 (Portglenone to Toome)	Cycle Route	
Galgorm Rd, Ballymena	Cycle Route	
Larne Road-Ballee, Ballymena	Cycle Route	
Ballykeel-Ecos	Cycle Route	
Larne Town Park	Cycle Route	
Belfast Road, Larne	Cycle Route	
Cycle NI Routes		
Slemish	Cycle Route	34
Portglenone	Cycle Route	34
Islandmagee	Cycle Route	27
Carnfunnock Country Parke	Cycle Route	1
Larne-Red Bay	Cycle Route	40
Larne-Browns Bay	Cycle Route	3
Knockagh	Cycle Route	18

Source: cycleni.com




Key	
	Ballymena
	Carrickfergus
	Larne

Fig C.2 The Ulster Way in Mid & East Antrim



Source: WalkNI.com

Quality Sections

The Quality Sections, as the name suggests, provide a truly quality walking experience. They are mainly on the already established Waymarked Ways which are predominantly off road, pass through Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and waymarked throughout their length.

Link Sections

The Link Sections are not waymarked and mainly on public roads some of which can be very busy. Walkers are actively encouraged to make use of public transport along these sections so they can make best use of their time on the more attractive Quality Sections.

Fig. C.3 - Cycle Routes in Mid & East Antrim

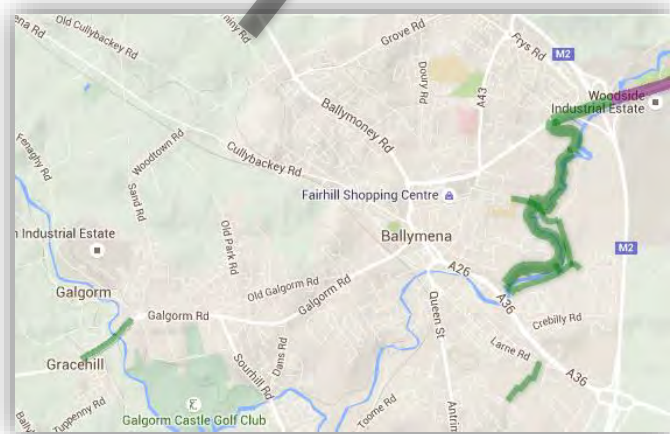
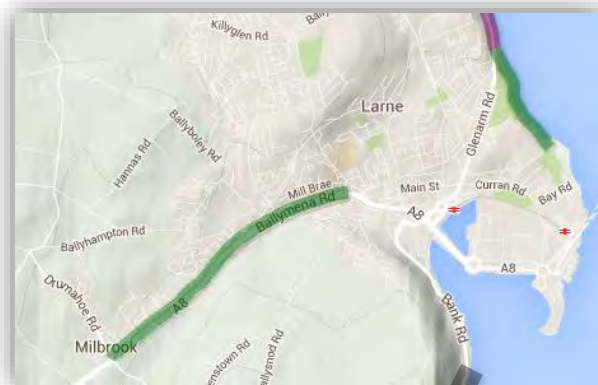
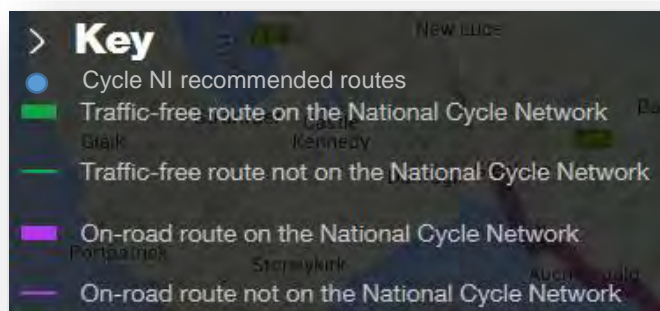


Fig C.4 - List of Outdoor Gyms within Mid & East Antrim

- Peoples Park
- Ecos Centre
- Cargan Playing Fields
- Broughshane (under construction)
- Ahoghill (under construction)
- Bashfordsland Wood, Carrickfergus
- Whitehead Diamond Jubilee Wood, Whitehead
- Blackhead Path
- Recreation Grounds, Whitehead
- Greenisland Playing Fields, Carrickfergus
- Carrickfergus Leisure Centre
- Town Park/Promenade
- Carnfunnock Country Park
- Jubilee Park Area, Glynn

Fig. C.5 MUGA's (Multi Use Games Areas) within Mid & East Antrim

Ballymena	Ballykeel Community Area; Clough Community Centre; Dunclug Play Area; Wakehurst; Kells; Ahoghill; Broughshane; Martinstown.
Carrickfergus	Woodburn, Hawthorne Avenue, Carrickfergus; Sunnylands, Carrickfergus; Greenisland, Knockleigh Drive, Greenisland; Whitehead Recreation Grounds, Whitehead.
Larne	Glenlough Community Centre, Croft Road, Carnlough; Town Parks, Larne (x2); Linn Road, Larne; The Factory Community, Ferris Park, Old Glenarm Road; Millbrook, Wellington Rec FC.

Fig. C.6 Main Leisure Centre Facilities in Mid and East Antrim Borough

Facility	Seven Towers Leisure Centre	Larne Leisure Centre	Amphitheatre Carrickfergus
Swimming Pool	•	•	•
Sports Hall	•	•	•
Fitness Suite	•	•	•
Free Weights		•	
Squash Court	•	•	•
Health Suite	•	•	•
Dance/Exercise Studio	•	•	•
Meeting Room/ Conference Facilities	•	•	
Children's Soft Play Facility			•
Cafe	•	•	•

Figure C.7 Public bodies including Council providing additional informal and passive recreation opportunities within Mid & East Antrim

WALKS / PATHS / OPEN SPACES		Length Km
Ballee Paths	Path	3.5
Ballykeel II - Open Space	Path	
Broughshane - Buttermilk Walk	Path	2
Dunclug, Ballymena Open Space	Open Space	
Glenravel Open Space	Open Space	
Harryville Motte & Bailey	Open Space	0.8
Kells Pathway	Path	0.8
Tullygarley / Grange Road Path (Sourhill Rd to Grange Av)	Path	2.5
Tobar Park Village Green, Cullybackey	Open Space	
Ecos Paths	Path	8
Sainsbury Riverside Path, Ballymena	Path	0.4
Cullybackey Riverside Path	Path	0.5
Shellinghill Road, Cullybackey Open Space	Open Space	
Galgorm Manor / Cullybackey Path	Path	3
Galgorm Castle Path	Path	2
Slemish	Path	2
Bridgend/Gracehill Bridge, Lisnafillan	Path	1.7
People's Park	Path	2
Sentry Hill, Old Ballymoney Rd, Ballymena	Path	3
Skerry Rock, Newtowncrommelin	Path	1.6
Cargan Picnic Site	Path	0.4
Antrim Hills Way Marked Way	Path	14.5

Highway to Health - Ballymena (From Seven Towns Leisure Centre)	Path	3
Highway to Health - Ecos	Path	3
Highway to Health - Ballee (proposed)	Path	2
Dungonnell Way		15
Ulster Way Glenarm-Ballynure		
Carnfunnock Country Park	Path	8
Cranny Falls, Carnlough	Path	4
Straidkilly	Woodland	1
Layde Walk	Path	3.2
Glenarm Coast Walk		1
Larne Town Parks	Path	4.8
Inver River	Path	1.6
Linn Glen	Path	1.6
Glenoe Waterfall	Path	1.6
Skernaghan Point, Islandmagee	Path	4.8
Portmuck Walk, Islandmagee	Path	3.2
Gobbins	Path	
Highway to Health- Whitehead	Path	2
Whitehead Heritage and Wellbeing Trail	Path	
Blackhead Path, Whitehead	Path	3.8
Ulster Way- Greenisland-Knockagh Monument		
Highway to Health- Carrickfergus	Path	3.5
Timeless Trail, Carrickfergus town	Path	7.7
CYCLE ROUTES		
Ecos Trail NCN 97 (Ecos via Slemish to Glenarm)	Cycle Route	
Sustrans Route 93 (Larne-Garron Point & continues along north coast)	Cycle Route	
Loughshore Trail NCN 96 (Portglenone to Toome)	Cycle Route	
Galgorm Rd, Ballymena	Cycle Route	
Larne Road-Ballee, Ballymena	Cycle Route	
Ballykeel-Ecos	Cycle Route	
Larne Town Park	Cycle Route	
Belfast Road, Larne	Cycle Route	
Cycle NI Routes		
Slemish	Cycle Route	34
Portglenone	Cycle Route	34
Islandmagee	Cycle Route	27
Carnfunnock Country Parke	Cycle Route	1
Larne-Red Bay	Cycle Route	40
Larne-Browns Bay	Cycle Route	3
Knockagh	Cycle Route	18

Source: cycleni.com

FORESTS & WOODS

Capanagh Forest, Starbog Rd, Larne	No facilities	Forest NI DARD
Ballyboley Forest, Larne	No facilities	Forest NI DARD
Glenarm Forest	No facilities	Forest NI DARD
Portglenone Forest	Toilets, jetty	Forest NI DARD
Top Wood, Finlaystown Rd, Portglenone	No facilities	Forest NI DARD
Bracknamuckley Forest, Gortgole Rd, Portglenone	No facilities	Forest NI DARD
Cleggan Forest, Carnmlough Rd, Broughshane	No facilities	Forest NI DARD
Woodburn Forest, Carrickfergus	No facilities	Forest NI DARD

Seaview Wood, Seacourt Larne	Woodland Trust
Clements Wood, Ballygowan Rd, Larne	Woodland Trust
Oakfield Glen, Oakfield Dr, Carrickfergus	Woodland Trust
Keel Wood, Kennelbridge Rd, Ballymena	Woodland Trust
Galgorm Wood, Cullybackey	Woodland Trust
Little Acorn Wood, Fir Park, Broughshane	Woodland Trust
The Drum, Cargan	Woodland Trust
Straidkilly Nature Reserve	Ulster Wildlife Trust Wood

(Source Woodland Trust Map:
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/map/Northern%20Ireland/54.6118278503418/-6.68582010269165/>)

Diamond Jubilee Wood, Whitehead	Council
Bashfordsland Wood, Carrickfergus	Council
Ecos Woodland	Council
Carnfunnock Woodland	Council
Woodland at Ampitheatre Mill Ponds	Council

LAND IN NATIONAL TRUST OWNERSHIP

Islandmagee at Skernahan Point, Portmuck, The Gobbins & Mullaghdoe
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Waterfall at Glenoe

(Source National Trust website map: <http://www.ntlandmap.org.uk/>)

PARKS

Carnfunnock Country Park

Dixon Park

Curran Park

Chaine Park

Town Park

Marine Gardens

Knot Garden

Shaftesbury Park

Peoples Park

Memorial Park

Moat Park

King George V Park

LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

Cranny Falls, Carnlough

Clements Wood, Larne

Ampitheatre Mill Ponds (declared March 2015)

NATIONAL NATURE RESERVES

Straidkilly

Swan Island

Lough Beg (partly in Mid & East Antrim)

CAMPSITES

Carnfunnock Country Park

Curran Court Caravan Park

Ford Form Camping Barn

Key

Ballymena

Carrickfergus

Larne

Figure C.8 – Main Outdoor Sports Activities available within Mid & East Antrim

Activity	Facilities
Bowling	Outdoor bowling greens and associated clubs at Ahoghill Portglenone and at the Peoples Park
	Outdoor bowling green and associated clubs in Larne at Curran Road and Glenarm Road
	Outdoor bowling facilities and associated at Carrickfergus, Greenisland and Whitehead
Clay Pigeon Shooting	Carnview Farms, Loughmagarry Rd, Ballymena
Angling/Fishing	Carrick -7 reservoirs hold a rich harvest of brown and rainbow trout.
	Sea fishing-off the rocks and piers at Carrickfergus and Whitehead and Larne/Carnlough
	Glenarm River
	Killylane Reservoir and Raloo Trout Fishery
	Braid River
	Kellswater River
	River Clough
	Cloughwater River
	Lower Bann- Course fishing
	Riverdale Fishery/Kilgad Fishery
	Hillhead Fly Fishery, Ballymena
	Maine River
Golf	Bentra Golf Club, Whitehead,
	Carrickfergus Golf Club
	Greenisland Golf Club, Carrick
	Whitehead Golf Club, McCreas Brae
	Cairndhu Golf Club
	Larne Golf Club, Ferris Bay
	Carnfunnock Country Park 9 hole
	Ballymena Golf Club, Raceview Rd
	Galgorm Castle Golf Club
Walking and Hiking	Ulster Way- Greenisland-Knockagh Monument
	Antrim Hills Way (part of Ulster Way)
	Carnfunnock Country Park
	Cranny Falls, Carnlough
	Glenarm forest
	Glenoe Waterfall
	Inver River, Larne
	Layde Walk, Glenarm
	Linn Glen
	Portmuck Walk, Islandmagee
	Skernaghan Point, Islandmagee (Nat Trust)
	Larne Promenade
	The Gobbins (Nat Trust)

	Buttermilk Bridge, Broughshane
	Slemish
	Ecos trails
	Lisnafillian Walk
	Maine Walk, Cullybackey
	People's Park
	Portglenone Forest
	Skerry Trail
	The Drum, Cargan
Cycling	Sustrans/National Cycle Routes 93 and 97 both pass through Larne and a circular cycling route through Islandmagee has been developed.
	Ecos Cycle Trail / Ballymena to Glenarm- Route 97 of the National Cycling Network.
	Portglenone to Drumoolish and Bellaghy Loop Cycle Route.
	Portglenone loop around Aughnaclesh Cycle Route
	Toome to Portglenone
Watersports	Carrickfergus Marina- Sailing
	Co. Antrim Yacht Club at Whitehead and Carrickfergus Sailing -Jet-Skiing, Wind-Surfing and Canoeing
	The East Coast Canoe Trail
	Sailing at East Antrim Boat Club in Larne Lough, Glenarm Harbour, Carnlough Harbour and Ballylumford Harbour
	Newferry Waterski club
	Portglenone Marina
	Lower Bann Canoe Trail from Lough Neagh, Toome to Atlantic Ocean, Castlerock includes access points in MEA at Newferry (east) and Portglenone.
	Blue Circle Cruising and Sailing club, Magheramorne
Diving	Islandmagee waters are some of the best in Ireland for diving. North Irish Lodge provide instruction for diving.
Horse Riding	Islandmagee Riding School and Rocklynn Riding Centre
	Galgorm Parks Riding School
	Jumpingdale Equestrian Centre, Moorfields
Tennis	Peoples Park
	Ballee High School
	Ampitheatre
	Town Park
	Castleview, Whitehead (5 seasonal courts)
	Larne Tennis Club, Glenarm Road
Cricket	There are several cricket clubs and grounds throughout Mid & East Antrim, including an artificial wicket at Larne Rugby Club, Glynn.
Gaelic Football and Associated Sports	Pitches at various locations across Ballymena including Woodside Road (Ballymena), Gortgole Road (Portglenone), Crosskeys Road (Ahoghill), Cushendall Road (Glenravel)
	Pitches in Larne at Brustin Brae Road and Feystown Road (Glenarm)
Rugby	Pitches and associated clubs and facilities throughout the District.

Soccer	Various public and privately owned indoor and outdoor pitches throughout the District.
Hockey	Various clubs throughout Mid & East Antrim, and also outdoor synthetic pitch available at Ampitheatre, Carrickfergus and also at the Showgrounds in Ballymena.

Please note the above list is not exhaustive, but it does indicate the main activities available.

APPENDIX D

Fig. D.1 – Examples of Open Space within Residential Developments in Mid & East Antrim

