



INSPLACE PLANNING LTD

**Christchurch Borough Council
PPG17 Open Space Study**

**Section 6
Area Profile:
Christchurch West**

May 2007

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3.0 DESCRIPTION OF LOCAL NEED AREA – CHRISTCHURCH WEST

This Local Need Area covers the south of St Catherine's and Hurn ward and the built up areas of the Jumpers, Portfield and Town Centre wards. In the north of this LNA the neighbourhood has expanded out to its natural boundaries and whilst the northern reaches of the LNA are in fairly accessible reach of countryside areas, the urban areas are not particularly well served by open space. To the north east is the coniferous forest of St Catherine's Hill, to the east the Avon floodplain and to the west the River Stour. The LNA is effectively divided into two – the north and the town centre – separated by the railway line.

The areas of heath and conifer forest along the St Catherine's Ridge and Hurn Forest provide extensive areas of open access land, although sections of this are interrupted by the A338 Trunk Road. However, there is no significant parking for St Catherine's Hill and access is through residential estates;. Although it is a prominent visual feature, its role as a Borough-wide asset is diminished due to the nature designations (SPA) associated with the site and recreation is therefore not encouraged by this report.

North of the railway line, the principal areas of open space are the natural green space areas at either side of the built up area alongside the River Stour (including River Way Recreation Ground and the Old Iford Sports Ground) and River Avon, Grove Copse (natural green space), Jumpers Cemetery, Jumpers Common Recreation Ground, Rutland Road Allotments and the natural green space areas of St Catherine's Hill to the north. Other space is mainly school playing fields, such as Christchurch Junior School site off Clarendon Road just north of the railway line. The lack of an internal network of open space areas is to some extent compensated for by the access opportunities to the adjacent riverside open land.

In the south of the LNA – the town centre – the outer boundaries of the neighbourhood are formed by the mainline railway and River Stour to the north and west and the River Avon to the east. Smaller local neighbourhoods are set around the focus of the main town. The setting of the water meadows and the natural sheltered harbour created by the combined river estuary is a distinctive coastal environment in its own right. With low lying inter tidal areas and marshland, this area provides an open maritime setting to the town.

The town centre is one of the few areas that provide public civic spaces and open parklands. These are concentrated around the historic core area and serve both local residents and visitors to the Borough. The public open spaces here surround the historic core: principally Barrack Road Recreation ground and Druitt Gardens down to the Quomps / Christchurch Quay open space next to the Stour.

Christchurch Quay is an open space alongside the River Stour to which all side streets through the Priory and Mill Stream lead, with a bandstand and café. There are riverside walks upstream to the west and while some open space areas have been achieved along the river, there is no sense of a continuous route for visitors. The open space here contrasts with the built up town centre.

Barrack Road Recreation Ground is split into a large open area of amenity grassland and the more intimate New Zealand Gardens. Druitt Gardens is sandwiched between the car

parks as an area of mature evergreen woodland, leading to New Zealand Gardens. There is a footpath walk along 'The Creedy' which interlinks these areas.

There are extensive playing fields at Twynham Comprehensive School. The Priory Church sits within an open green space adjoined by the bowling green and land around the Motte and Bailey Castle. The area is enclosed by the route of the Mill Stream and adjacent path that encircles it, providing an open area accessible to visitors and part of a wider trail around the town.

4.0 SUMMARY OF PROVISION AND QUALITY OF OPEN SPACE

4.1 Open Space within Christchurch West

The Map shows the location and typology of open space within Christchurch West. The following sites have been mapped; many were included in the quality assessments and detailed scores of the assessments are held on the GIS database and should be referred to as required.

Active Sports Space

- Kings Arms Bowling Green
- Iford Bridge Bowling Green
- Christchurch Tennis Facility, Iford Bridge

Space for Children and Young People

- Barrack Road rec ground play area
- Quomps play area
- Endfield Road (Cemetery) play area
- Rutland Road play area
- Knapp Mill play area
- River Way Recreation Ground play area
- Darwin Avenue play area
- Melbourne Road play area
- The Bailey Bridge pub play area

Amenity Green Space

- Land along Suffolk Avenue, adjacent Cambridge Gardens
- Land at The Meridians
- Lands at Rutland Road
- Regency Park
- Land along Hillside Drive, northeast of Whitby Close
- Land between Jumpers Cemetery and Crofton Close
- Recreation area at Knapp Mill Avenue

Natural and Semi Natural Green Space (includes Green Corridors)

- River Avon (Town Centre section)
- Land formerly known as Millhams, river bank south of Christchurch Bypass
- Land formerly known as Millhams, river bank north of Christchurch Bypass
- Old Iford Sports Ground, Iford Bridge
- Grove Copse
- River bank beach at Quomps
- The Meridians river bank
- River bank west of Meridians marina
- Island river bank at Iford Bridge
- Land spit at Rossiters Quay
- Land along Dragoon Way and River Stour
- Mill Stream (Christchurch Town Centre)
- River bank along River Avon east of Avon Trading Park

Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens

Bernards Mead (lower)
Christchurch Quay / Quomps recreation ground
Jumpers Common recreation ground
Bernards Mead (upper)
Priory Gardens
Priory Rose Garden (entrance to Priory House)
Druitt Gardens
New Zealand Gardens
Constable's House, Christchurch Castle & surrounding gardens
River Way recreation ground
Barrack Road recreation ground

Education Outdoor Sports Facilities

Christchurch Junior School - junior swimming pool
Priory Primary School MUGA
Twynham Comprehensive School MUGA
Christchurch Junior School MUGA
Priory Primary School - playing field
Twynham Comprehensive School - playing field
Christchurch Junior School - playing field

Allotments

Rutland Road allotments
Douglas Avenue allotments

4.2 Quality of sites in Christchurch West

4.2.1 Active Sports Space

Site	Quality
Kings Arms Bowling Green	87%
Iford Bridge Bowling Green	53%
Christchurch Tennis Facility, Iford Bridge	60%

Three specific stand alone Active Sport Spaces were identified in Christchurch North, however sport facilities that form a part of a larger multi function sites have been identified in Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens. The Bowling Green and Tennis courts at Iford Bridge require attention; the condition of the facilities is very poor.

4.2.2 Space for Children and Young People

Site	Quality
Barrack Road rec ground LEAP	70%
Quomps LAP	80%
Endfield Road (Cemetery) LAP	65%
Rutland Road play area	50%
Knapp Mill play area	60%
River Way Recreation Ground LEAP	70%
Darwin Avenue LAP	60%
Melbourne Road LAP	60%
The Bailey Bridge pub play area	85%

The sites vary in quality, many need improving to bring them up to a decent standard. Rutland Road requires urgent attention, the site is not suitable for use in its current state.

4.2.3 Amenity Green Space

Site	Quality
Land along Suffolk Avenue, adjacent Cambridge Gardens	67%
Land at The Meridians	73%
Lands at Rutland Road	67%
Regency Park	87%
Land along Hillside Drive, northeast of Whitby Close	80%
Land between Jumpers Cemetery and Crofton Close	87%
Recreation area at Knapp Mill Avenue	60%

In general, the management and maintenance of amenity green spaces across Christchurch West was moderate to good. A number of sites offer opportunity for improvement, including land at Rutland Road, recreation area at Knapp Mill Avenue and land along Suffolk Avenue, adjacent to Cambridge Gardens.

4.2.4 Natural & Semi Natural Space and Green Corridors

Site	Quality
River Avon (Town Centre section)	80%
Land formerly known as Millhams, river bank south of Christchurch Bypass	40%
Land formerly known as Millhams, river bank north of Christchurch Bypass	40%
Old Iford Sports Ground, Iford Bridge	40%
Grove Copse	70%
River bank beach at Quomps	60%
The Meridians river bank	65%
River bank west of Meridians marina	60%
Island river bank at Iford Bridge	60%
Land spit at Rossiters Quay	75%
Land along Dragoon Way and River Stour	60%
Mill Stream (Christchurch Town Centre)	80%
River bank along River Avon east of Avon Trading Park	53%

In general, the management and maintenance of natural and semi natural green spaces across Christchurch West could be improved. All the sites require improvements, appropriate management plans for all sites is required to bring them up to an acceptable standard. Most low scores are a result of poor accessibility such as the Land formerly known as Millhams and the River Bank East of Avon Trading Park. The Old Iford Sports Ground provides the best opportunity for improvement in the LNA.

4.2.5 Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens

Site	Quality
Bernards Mead (lower)	63%
Christchurch Quay / Quomps recreation ground	97%
Jumpers Common recreation ground	60%
Bernards Mead (upper)	63%
Priory Gardens	83%
Priory Rose Garden (entrance to Priory House)	83%
Druitt Gardens	47%
New Zealand Gardens	87%
Constable's House, Christchurch Castle & surrounding gardens	77%
River Way recreation ground	53%
Barrack Road recreation ground	83%

The quality of Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens varies greatly; Jumpers Common, Bernards Mead and River Way recreation grounds are not at an acceptable quality standard for the level of use they sustain. Barrack Road recreation ground would benefit from a management plan and construction of a pavilion. Public Gardens are generally at a high standard although Druitt Gardens requires major investment (soon to be delivered through an existing planning brief).

4.2.6 Education Outdoor Sports Facilities

Site	Quality
Christchurch Junior School - junior swimming pool	65%
Priory Primary School MUGA	67%
Twynham Comprehensive School MUGA	73%
Christchurch Junior School MUGA	67%
Priory Primary School - playing field	60%
Twynham Comprehensive School - playing field	68%
Christchurch Junior School - playing field	64%

The above schools within Christchurch West have no formal dual use agreements, but some dual use has been recorded (see below); they should in any event have a future roll in providing for formal sport and recreation. School sites are generally of better quality, as they are secure and generally have some on site management presence.

4.2.7 Allotments

Site	Quality
Rutland Road allotments	67%
Douglas Avenue allotments	63%

With 2 sites, Christchurch West is the best served LNA for allotments. Both are of a reasonable standard and plots appear well looked after.

5.0 SUMMARY OF ACCESSIBILITY TO OPEN SPACE

5.1 Overall access to open space

Section 5 of the Report outlines access standards to different types of open space within the Local Need Area. A summary of the main standards is shown in Table 2:

Table 2 Access standards for open space

Typology	Access Standard
Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens	450 metres
Amenity Green Space	450 metres
Natural & Semi Natural Green space	600 metres
Space for Children & Teenagers	450 metres
Active Sports Space	600 metres
Routeway/Green Corridor	n/a
Cemeteries and Churchyards	n/a
Allotments	600 metres

The accompanying Catchment Maps show local access standards for the various typologies (i.e. Space for Children and Young People, Amenity Open Space, Natural and Semi Natural Green Space, Active Sports Space, Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens and Allotments).

5.2 Access to different types of open space

Table 3 makes observations on access to different types of open space within the catchment area, using the adopted access standards, as shown on the accompanying maps.

Table 3 Access to open space in the area

Typology	Provision against access standard
Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens	Access Standard not met; large gaps in centre, north and east of the LNA
Amenity Green Space	Access Standard not met; large gaps in northwest and south of LNA
Natural & Semi Natural Green Space	Access Standard almost met, apart from small gap in centre and north of the LNA
Space for Children & Teenagers	Access Standard almost met: gaps in north and far west of the LNA
Active Sports Space	Access standards not met; large gaps in north, centre and south of LNA
Routeway/Green Corridor	No standards set
Cemeteries and Churchyards	No standards set
Allotments	Access Standard not met; large gaps in north, west and southeast of LNA

Comment

- The analysis of access to different types of open space highlights its multi functional nature, particularly the overlapping function of recreation grounds, amenity open space and natural and semi natural greenspace (all of which to some extent cater for informal recreation) and of recreation grounds where there are formal sports facilities and the 'Active Sports Space' category.
- St Catherine's Hill is not dealt with in the Study as an accessible natural greenspace, as this is a sensitive environment with a specialist, strategic role; people should have access to other natural green spaces within easy walking distance without using this resource.
- Considering access to areas for informal recreation: the LNA is well covered if Recreation Grounds (in the south and west of the LNA) and Amenity Open Space (in the east of the LNA) are considered together; however, the amenity open spaces are very small and do not meet the need for larger, multifunctional opportunities.
- Although the LNA appears fairly well served by Natural and Semi Natural Greenspace, most of the areas are on the boundaries, and are linear sites bordering the two rivers
- Active Sports Sites: The 3 sites categorised as active sports sites have limited facilities – 2 bowling greens and tennis courts. The only pitches to serve this LNA are at Barrack Road Recreation ground and the two small junior pitches at River Way Recreation Ground.
- Space for Children and Young People: There are a number of play areas serving this area; however, other than the larger facilities at Knapp Mill Avenue, Quomps and the LEAPs at Riverway and Barrack Road Recreation Grounds these are fairly limited in size and opportunities. One is within the curtilage of a pub. The north of the LNA is not well served.
- Education Facilities: As in other areas, school playing fields are a key element of the open space network within this LNA. Priory Primary school right in the south of the LNA has a small playing field with no community use at present. The other two schools in the LNA are critical, as Christchurch primary is the only school north of the railway line and has playing fields with some outside bookings. Twynham Comprehensive is near Barrack Road but has extensive playing fields which could make a contribution: the MUGA accommodates some outdoor use e.g. Highcliffe Hawks Girls football team but no other outside use recorded. Both Christchurch Primary and Twynham Comprehensive's playing areas would need investment in maintenance to improve drainage, flooding and maintenance of good surface.

6.0 FINDINGS FROM SURVEY AND CONSULTATION

Citizen's Panel

70 people living in Christchurch West LNA responded to the Survey, From the Citizen's Panel Survey, people living in this part of Christchurch are slightly more frequent (compared to the borough as a whole) visitors to local recreation grounds and parks and children's play areas, and less frequent visitors to country parks and local countryside.

The types of open space respondents would like to see more of in this area are space for teenagers and recreation cyclepaths and footpaths. For them, the most important attributes of open space are that they should be clean, safe and secure and easy to get to, and the most important facilities to have in nearby open space areas are: trees, seats and dog bins.

60% of respondents would like to use open spaces near them more often: more spare time would make the most difference to this, but more information and the provision of new facilities and open space areas would help.

Most Visited Local Areas of Open Space by residents in Christchurch West:

It was a finding of the Citizen's Panel Survey that people in Christchurch visit areas of open space throughout the Borough, but those living in the West LNA particularly mentioned Christchurch Quay, St Catherine's Hill, Stanpit Recreation Ground, Christchurch Recreation Ground, Mudeford Quay and Quomps as frequently visited areas. Other regularly visited sites outside the Borough are Hengistbury Head, New Forest and Southbourne Beach.

The overwhelming reasons for visiting these areas are to go for a walk and to visit areas of nature interest and value.

Other comments made highlighted:

Comments made by those living in this part of Christchurch focused on the value of the natural open space – which people are very appreciative of, but the following issues were raised:

- Within such a small borough, open space is important but not always valued – (ref: to development at Hoburne Lane
- Issues with groups of youngsters using areas late in the evening developing into anti-social behaviour/vandalism/drinking etc - Christchurch Quay. Often smaller play areas for children just become a site for youths to gather and in which to leave their cans and litter. Anti social behaviour is inevitable – maybe solution is CCTV coverage or park wardens
- For those who are less mobile, difficulties in getting to places from bus stops
- Although I only cycle in summer months for pleasure, it is disappointing to suddenly find 'no cycling' signs i.e. St Catherines Hill now.
- In this area children play in the street as it's safer for them than using parks which are unsupervised or the swing parks.

- Enhancement of natural areas required, particularly:
 - the Riverbank along the Stour
 - Landscape Druitt Gardens, so that it is less dark and more inviting for rest and relaxation
- Keeping sites litter free: More litter bins or the type cannot be vandalised and animal proof. Litter and dirty pavements are a real problem in this area - litter bins are not emptied often enough - overflow particularly in busy periods. As we are a holiday area, cleanliness is most important to impress visitors.
- Maintenance: grass cutting needs to be more frequent and cuttings cleared up. Fence in children's park down by Quay to protect from dogs and danger of children falling river.
- Control of dogs and dog fouling: big problem in some areas – people should be fined more. The amount of litter and dog fouling on Sandy Lane and the access to St Catherine Hill is disgusting. People do not clean up after dogs efficiently in long grass. Concerned about dogs on grass playing fields including school playing fields (Twynham). Dog bins often overflowing.
- Open space is important not only for humans but for wildlife which in turn gives us a lift and appreciation of other things in our busy lives.
- We have access to a good range of open space from formal gardens to the New Forest. Specifically the garden between the Priory and the Mill Leat could be much more interesting.
- The importance of public transport and safe cycling areas for those of reduced mobility that do not have a car.
- The aspect which I feel is most often overlooked is adequate seating, we all get tired!
- Open spaces in Christchurch are generally satisfactory.

Hurn Parish Council

Hurn Parish Council, although covering an area larger than the LNA, have identified a need for additional footpaths/bridleways/cycleways and a wildlife area; in particular they feel that horse riders are not well catered for and that improved management of the commons (not subject to constant felling of trees) at Town and Sopley (out of Borough) would improve walking and horse riding facilities. The commons and St Catherine's Hill are the most used open spaces in the parish. The Parish Council feel that there is an ongoing situation in the parish whereby commercial interests are taking over. This is making the roads and country lanes increasingly busy and dangerous. In addition trees, in excess of 16,000, are being felled to return the land to heathland. Dog walkers, rambles, twitchers, horse riders and the wildlife are all going to suffer.

Play groups located in Christchurch West made the following comments:

- Safe and Sound Out Of School Club cover Bournemouth and Christchurch, they need to walk for 11 to 15 minutes to reach their play area. They identified there are not enough adventure play areas and would like to see more tennis courts. They believe there are ideal and existing open space/parks which could be improved and developed in the area. If this was done, these places could be a vital asset for the whole community. A mixture of areas to play, explore, rest etc and that would also appeal to older children would be very beneficial and needed.
- Three Bears Pre School cover the whole of Christchurch, time taken to get to a play area varies as to which one they use. They feel there are not enough parks, play

areas or skateparks and would like to see more 5 aside football pitches and seating areas.

- Poppers Pre School also cover the whole of Christchurch but is only a 5 minute walk from a play area. They also identified there are not enough play areas or skateparks and would like to see more shelters and meeting places for teenagers. They believe teenagers need plenty to occupy them; maybe this would discourage disruptive behaviour.
- Christchurch Montessori caters for children from West Christchurch and have to walk for 15 minutes to reach a play area. They agreed with the other play organisations about the lack of parks and play areas. They would like to see more nature areas, and said the following about places; Moors Valley is a open space child orientated area, Highcliffe Castle with its access to grassed areas and the beach is a safe environment and not too busy, Hengistbury Head is a good environment for all ages, the play area at the Quay needs to be in enclosed and a younger play area is needed near the water works in Fairmile. Open space, rest areas, safe play facilities, good natural environment and toilet facilities are desirable everywhere.

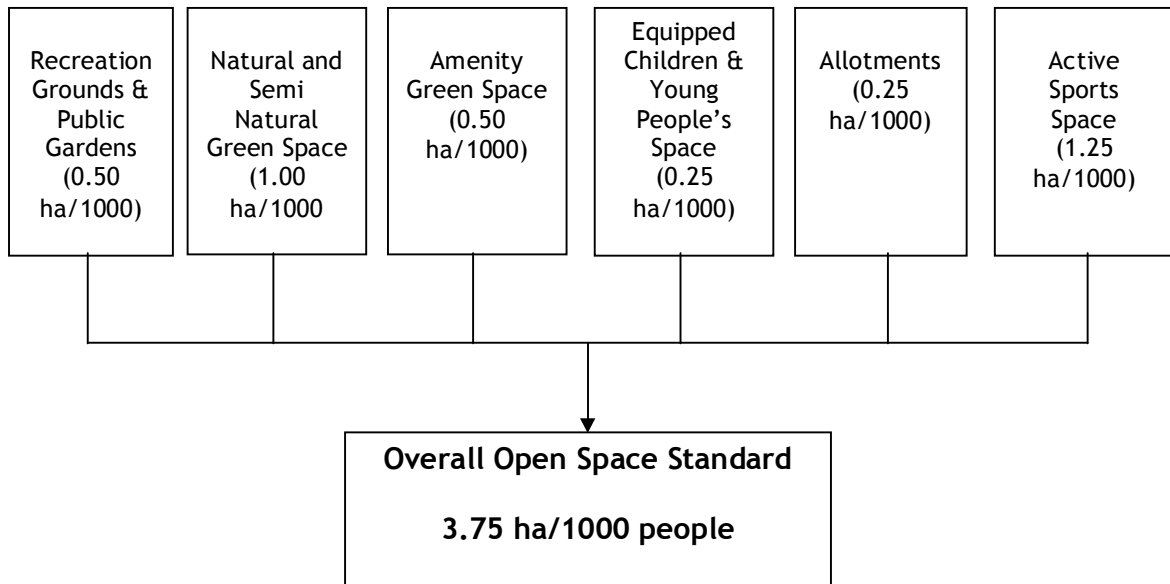
Sports Clubs

- Iford Bridge Bowling Club who lease Iford Bridge Bowling Club, commented that all the facilities were good except for the changing rooms which are only adequate.
- Bournemouth BMX Club use Iford Lane Playing field, commented that the changing facilities and equipment is poor. They mentioned there are new plans for a changing/shower block.

7.0 QUANTITY OF OPEN SPACE

7.1 Quantity standards for open space

Section 5 of the report outlines the quantity standards for open space within the District; a summary of these draft minimum standards is shown below:



7.2 Quantities of different types of open space

These standards have been applied at a local level to determine the provision of different types of open space across the adopted minimum standard; this is summarised in Table 4 which shows:

- the existing quantity of open space (existing provision);
- the required quantity of open space for the population of the area (required provision);
- the surplus or deficiency of open space (in m² and has);
- Supply against the standard.

**Table 4 Quantities of open space within the area:
CHRISTCHURCH WEST (population 14328)**

Typology	Existing provision (ha)	Recommended provision (ha)	Area of open space above/below the recommended minimum level of provision (ha)
Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens	19.49	7.16	12.33ha
Natural and Semi Natural Green Space	28.55	14.33	14.22ha
Active Sports Space	0.52	17.91	-17.39ha
Children & Young People's Space	0.56	3.58	-3.02ha
Amenity Green Space	2.64	7.16	-4.52ha
Allotments	2.11	3.58	-1.47ha

7.3 Key Points: Quantitative Provision of Open Space

Christchurch West meets the proposed standard for Recreation Grounds and Public Gardens and Natural & Semi Natural Greenspace but is undersupplied with Amenity Green Space, Active Sports Space, Space for Children and Young People and Allotments.

8.0 SUGGESTED PRIORITIES FOR OPEN SPACE

- The West LNA extends across a range of residential and business uses, with the dense street pattern and retail sectors of the town centre in the south, together with high intensity use amenity open space and recreation grounds/public gardens which are key attractions for visitors and residents, through the relatively high density residential areas of Jumpers and Fairmile to the more low density developments near St Catherine's Hill.
- Because of its proximity to the Quay, to 2 Riversmeet and even to Mudeford/Stanpit (although outside the LNA itself), the south area is relatively well served by all types of open space provision, except amenity green space – but the Recreation Grounds compensate for this.
- Within the housing estates to the north of the railway line there is little incidental amenity space and just a few play areas. Whilst there is a substantial amount of natural green space, this is on either side of the built up area and there is no comprehensive network of footpath links or open space routes that would improve access. A priority is to improve access from the central section to the areas of natural green space and Recreation Grounds along the Stour, in particular, and the Avon, perhaps by planting along key streets which lead there, with cycle provision.
- Improving community access to facilities at Twynham Comprehensive should be investigated; the junior school also may hold possibilities for greater community use and would help with filling the gap for active sports space.
- There is little prospect otherwise of additional land for new developments.
- A play area should be considered to serve the north of the LNA.
- Low key improvements to amenity open space through improved shrub and tree planting.
- Improve Druitt Gardens as a natural walkway and greenlink behind the town centre. At present its poor tree condition and public access is such that this area fails to enhance Town centre in the way that it could as a potential green setting to the High Street
- Many other of the issues raised relate to the management of different uses and client groups (teenagers, visitors) on the high intensity use open space areas in the centre of the town.
- There are opportunities for further development of the facilities at Iford Bridge, particularly on the Old Iford Sports Ground
- Across the Borough, provision of allotments is low and many LNAs have no allotment sites. As set out in Section 5, this Report recommends a new look at the burgeoning interest in allotment gardening, and how new sites can be brought into use to cater for growing demand.

-  Local Need Areas
-  Recreation Grounds & Public Gardens
-  Allotments
-  Amenity / Informal Green Space
-  Other Open Space
-  Children & Young People's Space
-  Education Outdoor Space
-  Natural & Semi Natural Green Space
-  Active Sports Space
-  Natural & Semi Natural Green Space covered by international ecological designations

CHRISTCHURCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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CHRISTCHURCH WEST

